

Valley County Planning and Zoning

PO Box 1350 • 219 North Main Street
Cascade, ID 83611-1350



Phone: 208-382-7115
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| STAFF REPORT: | SUB 25-018 Tripod View - Preliminary Plat - Addendum |
| MEETING DATE: | November 13, 2025 |
| TO: | Planning and Zoning Commission |
| STAFF: | Cynda Herrick, AICP, CFM Planning and Zoning Director |
| APPLICANT / PROPERTY OWNER: | Steven Emerson 10016 W Broadford DR, Star, ID 83669 |
| REPRESENTATIVE: | James Fronk Consulting LLC PO Box 576, McCall, Id 83638 |
| SURVEYOR: | Dunn Land Surveys 25 Coyote Trail, Cascade, ID 83611 |
| LOCATION: | Part of parcels RP10N02E130606 and RP10N02E131915 located in the NE ¼ Section 13, T.10N, R.2E, Boise Meridian, Valley County, Idaho |
| SIZE: | 46 acres |
| REQUEST: | 12-Lot Single-Family Residential Subdivision |
| EXISTING LAND USE: | Single-Family Residential Parcel |

On October 16, 2025, the PZ Commission tabled C.U.P. 25-023 to November 13, 2025. Please refer to the previous staff report for additional information. Additional information requested from the applicant includes wells, structural fire protection, and water sources for fire suppression.

FINDINGS:

1. On October 16, 2025, the PZ Commission tabled C.U.P. 25-023 to November 13, 2025, at 6:00 p.m. The public hearing was closed but can be reopened since new information has been submitted by the applicant. The applicant previously submitted a Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) Fire Protection Plan [Exhibit 1, October 16, 2025].
2. Legal notice was posted in the *Star News* on October 23, 2025, and October 30, 2025.
3. Additional Submittals from the Applicant received November 5, 2025:
 - 1) Letter including personal introduction, reason for application and site selection, and responses to questions from previous meeting.
 - Cattle Grazing
 - Ground water / Wells
 - Fire Hazard
 - Noticing

- Subdivision Location
- Applicant's Character
- 2) Map of Nearby Wells, Depth and Flow
- 3) Wildland Urban Interface Fire Protection Plan

4. All Agency comment received:

Steven Hull, Cascade Rural Fire Chief, stated this development is outside the Cascade Rural Fire Protection District (CRFPD) boundary . However, EMS response is provided. The site is 27 miles away from Cascade with a 50-minute drive in good weather. The area is not accessible from Cascade during the winter months. CRFPD's opinion is that future developments outside of fire districts should meet the same requirements as those within for the safety of the public. Recommendations for roads, driveways, and fire protection water supply. Existing homes in this area are unable to get homeowners insurance due to the lack of structure fire protection. CRFPD does not recommend approval of Tripod View Subdivision due to location and access. (September 26, 2025)

Brent Copes, Central District Health, stated groundwater data and engineering report are required. (September 30, 2025)

Jeff McFadden, Valley County Road Superintendent, stated County-maintained roads that would see increase traffic included High Valley Road and Dry Buck Road. He recommends a 35-ft right-of-way to the public for property owned by the owner immediately adjacent to Dry Buck Road. Prior to final acceptance of C.U.P., the developer should agree to provide an appraisal for the value of the ROW, a legal description, and a warranty deed. He recommends that the developer mitigate impacts to transportation services by paying a proportionate share of road improvement costs. Recommendations should be memorialized in a future voluntary development agreement. (September 23, 2025)

Megan Myers, Valley County Communications Supervisor, and Laurie Frederick, Valley County Cadastral Specialist III, approve the proposed road name Haven Ranch Road. (July 9, 2025; July 11, 2025; July 13, 2025; July 14, 2025)

Brandon Flack, Idaho Fish and Game Regional Technical Assistance Manager, submitted general recommendations for subdivisions, which include controlling pets, vegetative recommendations, prohibiting feeding of wildlife, riparian barriers around wetlands, pond requirements, and wildlife friendly fencing. (November 21, 2024)

5. All Public comment received:

Jennifer Hunn, adjacent landowner, spoke as undecided during testimony on October 16, 2025. See attached meeting minutes.

Rich Summers, Wilderness Lake Ranch Subdivision, is opposed. The pond referenced during the public hearing on October 16, 2025, is not full of water year-round. Wildfire is a high concern for area. What would lot owners do for trash removal? He takes travel to a transfer trailer in Ola on Saturdays. The increase of traffic on roads not well-maintained is a concern. Water table is a concern. The public hearing sign should have been more visible to High Valley residents. (October 29, 2025)

STAFF COMMENTS / QUESTIONS:

1. This site is within Water District 65A. It is not within an irrigation district nor a fire district.
2. Dry Buck Road does not currently receive winter maintenance by Valley County Road Department.
3. Valley County Code 9-5C-2.C states that frontage on a public or private road shall not be less than 30-ft for each lot. All lots appear to meet this minimum.
4. Plat Note 3 refers to a Storm Water Drainage Report; this has not been submitted to the PZ Office.
5. Plat Note 6 should be modified to include Planning and Zoning Commission.
6. Approval of a variance will be required for cul-de-sac longer than 900-feet long (Valley County Code 10-4-4.F.6)
7. Shall remove the reference to South Ranch Subdivision from Plat Note 11.
8. Will power lines be underground?
9. Question 6 of the Impact Report states that there are two intermittent streams with small amount of jurisdictional wetlands. All wetlands must be shown on the final plat.
10. The Declaration of Private Road must permit the use by the owners of the adjacent properties to the south.

Question to P&Z Commission:

1. Does this subdivision meet the minimum standards in Title 9, Chapter 5, of the Valley County Code in regards to frontage, lot size, etc.? If not, which ones does it not comply with?
2. Does this subdivision meet the minimum standards in Title 10 of the Valley County Code in regards to the access road, etc.?
3. Are impacts being properly mitigated? If not, which impacts are not mitigated?

Standard of Approval:

1. Will the application result in an increase in value of private property? VCC 9-5-2(B)(3).
2. Will the approval of the application result in an undue adverse impact on the environment? VCC 9-5-2(B)(3).
3. Will the approval of the application result in an undue adverse impact on adjoining properties? VCC 9-5-2(B)(3).
4. Will the approval of the application result in an undue adverse impact on governmental services? VCC 9-5-2(B)(3).
5. Is the application consistent with the Valley County Comprehensive Plan? VCC 9-5-2(B)(3).

6. Conditional uses may be approved only after a C.U.P. has been evaluated to determine that the impacts can be mitigated through conformance with conditions of approval. VCC 9-5-2(A).

These six standards should be a significant focus of attention during the public hearing and deliberations because they need to be resolved in order to justify approval. VCC 9-5-1(C) directs the decision-making body to encourage conditional uses where noncompatible aspects of the application can be satisfactorily mitigated through development agreements for the costs to service providers and impacts to surrounding land uses. Because mitigation measures are a requirement of approval the applicant needs to understand that he/she will be required to perform some off-site improvements. They are not mandatory but without them the application cannot satisfy the mitigation of impacts requirement and would be denied under the ordinance.

ATTACHMENTS:

- Proposed Conditions of Approval
- Draft Minutes – October 16, 2025
- Applicant's Submittal Received November 5, 2025
- Additional Responses Received

Proposed Conditions of Approval

1. The application, the staff report, and the provisions of the Land Use and Development Ordinance are all made a part of this permit as if written in full herein. Any violation of any portion of the permit will be subject to enforcement and penalties in accordance with Title 9-2-5; and, may include revocation or suspension of the conditional use permit.
2. Any change in the nature or scope of land use activities shall require an additional Conditional Use Permit.
3. The issuance of this permit and these conditions will not relieve the applicant from complying with applicable County, State, or Federal laws or regulations or be construed as permission to operate in violation of any statute or regulations. Violation of these laws, regulations or rules may be grounds for revocation of the Conditional Use Permit or grounds for suspension of the Conditional Use Permit.
4. A Development Agreement may be required for mitigation of off-site impacts. The applicant shall work with the Valley County Engineer or Road Superintendent and Planning and Zoning Director on an agreement for off-site infrastructure improvements that will be approved by the Board of County Commissioners.
5. The final plat shall be recorded within two years, or this permit will be null and void.
6. A Deed transferring the road right-of-way to Valley County shall be prepared by the applicant.
7. Sanitary Restrictions must be removed by Central District Health prior to recording the final plat.
8. The Wildland Urban Interface Fire Protection Plan shall be approved by the Valley County Wildfire Mitigation Program Director.
9. Shall record the Wildfire Urban Interface Protection Plan with the final plat.
10. Must have a fencing plan with neighboring properties if they run livestock for over 30 days per year.

11. All easements shall be shown on the final plat.
12. A Declaration of Installation of Utilities shall be noted on the face of the plat referencing electrical power, phone, and fiber.
13. Shall place addressing numbers at the residence and at the driveway entrance if the house numbers are not visible from the road. Said numbers shall contrast with their background and be at least three and one-half inches (3 ½-in) height.
14. CCR's, if recorded, should address lighting, noxious weeds, septic maintenance, wildfire prevention, fire wise wildland urban interface landscaping requirements, prohibiting yews in landscaping, dogs being a nuisance to adjacent agricultural uses, and limit each lot to one wood-burning device.
15. CCR's should provide for long-term maintenance of requirements in the Wildland Urban Interface Fire Protection Plan.
16. The following notes shall be placed in the notes on the face of the final plat:
 - "The Valley County Board of Commissioners have the sole discretion to set the level of service for any public road; the level of service can be changed."
 - "All lighting must comply with the Valley County Lighting Ordinance."
 - "Only one wood burning device per lot."
 - "Surrounding land uses are subject to change."
 - Wildfire Urban Interface Protection Plan recorded as instrument # _____."
 - "Shared Driveway Maintenance Agreement was recorded as Instrument # _____."
 - Declaration of Private Road was recorded as Instrument # _____."
 - Lots shall not be reduced in size without prior approval from the Health Authority and Valley County Planning and Zoning Commission.

END OF STAFF REPORT

Valley County Planning and Zoning Commission

PO Box 1350 • 219 North Main Street
Cascade, ID 83611-1350



Phone: 208-382-7115
Email: cherrick@co.valley.id.us

Ken Roberts, Chairman
Carrie Potter, Vice-Chair

Brad Mabe, Commissioner
Ben Oyarzo, Commissioner
Heidi Schneider, Commissioner

MINUTES

Valley County Planning and Zoning Commission
October 16, 2025
Valley County Court House - Cascade, Idaho
PUBLIC HEARING - 6:00 p.m.

A. OPEN: Meeting called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Chairman Roberts. A quorum exists.

| | |
|------------------------------------|---------|
| PZ Director – Cynda Herrick: | Present |
| PZ Commissioner – Brad Mabe | Excused |
| PZ Commissioner – Ben Oyarzo: | Present |
| PZ Commissioner – Carrie Potter: | Present |
| PZ Commissioner – Ken Roberts: | Present |
| PZ Commissioner – Heidi Schneider: | Present |
| PZ Planner II – Lori Hunter: | Present |

B. MINUTES: Commissioner Schneider moved to approve the minutes of September 11, 2025, with the corrected condition of approval for C.U.P. 25-020. Commissioner Potter seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

C. OLD BUSINESS:

- 1. C.U.P. 25-022 Paikka Bakery - Amendment of C.U.P. 22-13:** Finn Place LLC is requesting an amendment to a conditional use permit to allow the public to pick up orders on-site five days per week, to modify approved site plan, and to add an additional greenhouse. The existing septic system and individual wells would be used. The 3-acre site is addressed at 14118 Highway 55 and located in Finn Barn Subdivision Lot 1 Block 1 in the SENE Section 18, T.18N, R.3E, Boise Meridian, Valley County, Idaho. *Tabled from September 11, 2025.* Action Item.

Chairman Roberts introduced the item and asked if there was any exparte contact or conflict of interest; there was none. Commissioner Schneider moved to approve C.U.P 25-022 Paikka Bakery from the table. Commissioner Potter seconded. Motion passed unanimously

Director Herrick presented the staff report and displayed the site and GIS map on the projector screen.

Chairman Roberts asked for the applicant's presentation.

Commissioner Schneider moved to approve the conditional use permit and preliminary plat for SUB 25-017 Moss Landing with the stated conditions.

COA: Dark sky lighting requirements shall be included in CCRs.

COA: A "Lots are Available for Sale" sign is allowed on the subdivision entrance sign until such time lots have been sold.

COA: Micheal Leedom must approve the language in CCRs concerning the irrigation easement. If no agreement can be reached, the conditional use approval will not be nullified.

In addition, the Commission recommends (1) approval of variance for a cul-de-sac road longer than 900 feet, and (2) a pullout area for a cluster mailbox which should be included in the grading plan.

Commissioner Oyarzo seconded the motion. Commissioner Oyarzo, Commissioner Potter, and Commissioner Schneider voted in favor; Chairman Roberts voted in opposition. Motion carried.

There is a 10-day appeal period to the Board of County Commissioners in accordance with Valley County Code 9-5H-12.

8:48 p.m.

5. **SUB 25-018 Tripod View - Preliminary Plat:** Steven Emerson is requesting a conditional use permit for a 12-lot, single-family residential subdivision on 46 acres. Proposed lot sizes range from 1.8-acres to 4.2 acres. Individual septic systems and individual wells are proposed. The lots would be accessed from a new private road onto Dry Buck Road, a public road. Variances are requested for shared driveways and a cul-de-sac road longer than 900-ft. The site is part of parcels RP1ON02E130606 and RP1ON02E131915 located in the NE ¼ Section 13, T.10N, R.2E, Boise Meridian, Valley County, Idaho. Action Item.

Chairman Roberts introduced the item and asked if there was any exparte contact or conflict of interest; there was none. Director Herrick presented the staff report, displayed the site, GIS map, and preliminary plat on the projector screen, and summarized the following exhibits:

- **Exhibit 1** – Wildland Urban Interface Protection Plan (October 12, 2025)

Director Herrick referred to the pictures within Exhibit 1 which show open sagebrush and scatter conifers. Other subdivisions in the High Valley area were reviewed on the GIS map. The site does have electrical power.

Chairman Roberts asked for the applicant's presentation.

Steven Emerson, Star, Idaho, purchased 650 acres in the area [multiple parcels]. He intends to live full time on the property; the remainder will be used for timber, livestock grazing, and hay growing. Funds from the sale of these lots would be used to preserve the remainder of the ranch property. This site was selected as it would have the least impact on the overall ranch operation and provide building sites with views.

Jim Fronk, McCall, represented the applicant. The site abuts up against the hill and is somewhat open. There would be view corridors of Tripod. He referred to the WUI Plan (**Exhibit 1**). The CCRs and HOA documents will include recommendations of the Fire Plan. He discussed building design criteria and HOA design review. Solar panels are likely to be used by future lot owners; however, electrical power will be provided to the subdivision. Director Herrick stated a conditional use permit would be required if solar panels were ground mounted.

The road grade follows the natural contours, with approximately 6-7% slope and limited cuts and fills. The adjacent neighbors have their own dedicated access which will not be destroyed but each one of those lots were provided crossover to reach the main road. There is a hammerhead at the end of the new road and turnaround at shared driveways as required by Valley County Code. The lots meet the frontage requirements.

It is the applicant's intent to meet the recommendations of the Cascade Fire Chief; however, Cascade Fire District does not service the area. Property insurance is being lost throughout the country. The applicant does not wish to bury a water tank for fire suppression as no fire district apparatus would be available to connect to a tank. The applicant prefers onsite mitigation such as sprinklers. U.S. Forest Service and Southern Idaho Timber Protection Association (SITPA) would respond to wildfires in this area. The existing building and driveway are shown on preliminary plat for adjacent Parcel F.

Chairman Roberts stated he likes the shared driveways.

Chairman Roberts opened the public hearing and asked for proponents. There were none. Chairman Roberts asked for undecided.

Jennifer Hunn, Boise, owns adjacent 141 Dry Buck Road located to immediate south. Without seeing the proposed CCRs, her concerns include wildfire, water, and grazing rights. Her property has two wells; neither provides enough water for the home. One well is 280-ft deep through fractured granite and provides 1 gallon of water per minute. They fill a cistern with buckets. The overall area has fire breaks created by meadows, roads, and livestock grazing. There are currently five homes in the area. This proposal would increase the number of homes and the likelihood of wildfire. The existing cattle grazing provides an economic benefit as well as reduction in fuel (grass) for a wildfire.

The production of the three wells in the area were reviewed by Saff and Commissioners.

Chairman Roberts asked for opponents. There were none.

Chairman Roberts asked for rebuttal from the applicant.

Mr. Fronk stated that currently Mr. Emerson's cows graze the site. Wells were discussed with Commissioners. A test well could be done. Residences could also use water storage methods. Requiring fire sprinklers would be possible in kitchens and high-flammable areas. That is expensive but so is a water tank. The WUI plan includes clearing spaces and fuel breaks. SITPA could use the creek or existing ponds at the subdivision entrance and north of lots for water. The pond at the entrance could be made deeper. The proposed road and existing easements are on the applicant's property.

Steve Emerson has had many conversations with John Lillehaug. The road from Smith's Ferry to Dry Buck Road is closed approximately six months every year; the Cascade Fire District has stated they would not respond to a structure fire. Thus, a water tank would not be used and would be expensive to install and maintain. It would be more effective to follow the WUI Plan and spend money on fuel breaks.

Chairman Roberts closed the public hearing. The Commission deliberated. Chairman Roberts is concerned about the effects on the health and safety for future lot owners. Commissioners agreed that fire risk is the primary concern; how would this be mitigated. Director Herrick stated the Commission could require a dry hydrant in the pond and require the CCRs to regulate

maintenance, similar to a project in Round Valley. Size and locations of existing ponds were discussed. Does water exist year-round? Could the ponds be made bigger? Only a portion of the pond by the entrance is on the applicant's property. The site and pond was reviewed on the GIS map. Sprinklers could be required in the home. The WUI Plan would be implemented. WUI plan does not address water source for fire protection. A dry hydrant would not be helpful if there was not a fire truck available to pump it. SITPA would respond to a wildland fire, not a structural fire. A pond is helpful but more information on size is needed; could the pond be used as a dipping site by a helicopter? There is also a large pond at Wilderness Lake Ranch approximately three miles away.

The production of wells in the area was reviewed by Staff and Commissioners. Not all well logs are on the Idaho Department of Water Resources website, nor are all the marked locations precise.

Commissioner Potter moved to table SUB 25-018 Tripod View to November 13, 2025, at 6:00 p.m., for more information from the applicant on wells, structural fire protection, and water sources for fire suppression. Commissioner Schneider seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

Director Herrick stated the applicant might consider speaking to a fire district in the Ola area in Gem County.

9:35 p.m.

- 6. VAC 25-001 Zrile Vacation of Utility Easements:** Albin Zrile is requesting vacations of 12-ft utility easements that are centered on the lot lines between Little Donner Subdivision Tract II Lots 29, 30, and 33 in order to build over the easements. The 2.62-acre site is addressed at 67, 73, and 77 Mountain Air Drive and located in the NE ¼ Section 11, T.14N, R.3E, Boise Meridian, Valley County, Idaho. Action Item.

Chairman Roberts introduced the item and asked if there was any exparte contact or conflict of interest; there was none. Director Herrick presented the staff report and displayed the site and GIS map on the projector screen.

No utilities are located in these easement areas. Staff has not yet heard from Idaho Power.

Chairman Roberts asked for the applicant's presentation.

Aaron Bell, Idaho City, represented the applicant. He is the applicant's land surveyor. The applicant would like to build over the lot lines. An application has also been submitted to Idaho Power Company.

Director Herrick stated the property owner will be required to combine the lots in order to build over the lot line. The Assessor's Office would combine the lots for tax purposes; this process does not remove the actual lot line from the plat.

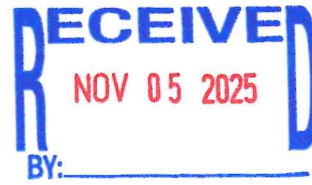
Chairman Roberts opened the public hearing and asked for proponents. There were none. Chairman Roberts asked for undecided. There were none. Chairman Roberts asked for opponents. There were none.

Chairman Roberts closed the public hearing. The Commission deliberated. Commissioners had no issues as long as Idaho Power is in favor.

Commissioner Schnieder moved to recommend approval of VAC 25-001 to the Board of County Commissioners. Commissioner Potter seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

November 5, 2025

Valley County Planning and Zoning
Cynda Herrick, AICP, CFM
Planning and Zoning Director
PO Box 1350
219 North Main Street
Cascade, ID 83611-1350



RE: SUB 25-018 Tripod View – Preliminary Plat

To: Valley County Planning & Zoning Commission and Staff:

Thank you for considering my application for subdividing a small portion of the land that I acquired in early 2024, located in High Valley Idaho. Given the time constraints of a public hearing, I don't feel I was able to adequately address the commission with a proper introduction of my wife Jonna and myself, and our long-term vision for living on and actively "working" our ranch property. And, given that there has been considerable misinformation sharing in social media about who we are and our plans, I am providing the following written statement and background information in attempt to give you better understanding and context to who we are and the purpose of the proposed project.

Personal Introduction:

My personal background is one of a very rural/agricultural upbringing. My entire youth was spent on a dry-land wheat farm and cattle ranch located in the very SE corner of Washington State (Garfield and Columbia Counties). I learned to drive a vehicle at age 5, drove myself the two miles of dirt lane to a gravel county road for school bus pickup beginning in 3rd grade, leaving the car at the end of the road so my brothers and I could drive ourselves home after the 1 hour and 45-minute school bus ride back to the ranch. I learned to operate heavy farm equipment at a young age and grew up active in 4-H and FFA raising registered Yorkshire hogs and Angus/Hereford cross cattle. While High Valley is remote, our neighbors in High Valley are much closer than the farm I grew up on, and the multiple existing subdivisions in High Valley are about 17 miles closer to us than the closest "neighborhood" I experienced as a youth. We snow plowed and maintained our own roads, experienced frequent power outages, lived with a "party line" phone, and missed school every winter due to snow and/or spring thaw (mud). Family Friday night pizza for us was more than an hour drive each way! I love living in a rural setting but was not afforded that opportunity. So off to college I went to study business and accounting at Northwest Nazarene University (college at the time) where I worked and supported myself through college.

I have been married for more than 30 years to my lovely wife, Jonna. We have 4 amazing children, and one grandchild. For the past 30 years, Jonna and I have worked very hard and lived conservatively in hope that we could find and afford a rural ranch/legacy property to acquire, live on, and share with our kids and grandkids. In 2023, we found the property we now own. After much thought, prayer, and due diligence (including multiple visits with Valley County Planning and Zoning Staff to discuss future

Response to questions from the October Meeting:

Concerns identified in our October meeting included cattle grazing, fire mitigation, and well water. I will attempt to respond to each of these issues separately.

- **Cattle Grazing:**

- This one is difficult to respond to based on the comments made in opposition at the October public hearing. However, I suspect the concern is centered in the neighbors to my south historically enjoying having the cattle from my property graze upon their property. One landowner has their property fenced, so the cattle do not graze there, but other properties do not, and the owners have expressed their desire for that to continue. If a subdivision is placed between their property and the remainder of the ranch, it will be more difficult for this practice to continue.
- It should be noted that in the fire mitigation plan, cattle grazing is referenced as a planned continued activity within the subdivision until individual lots are sold, and then it would be up to end owner to place fencing if desired.

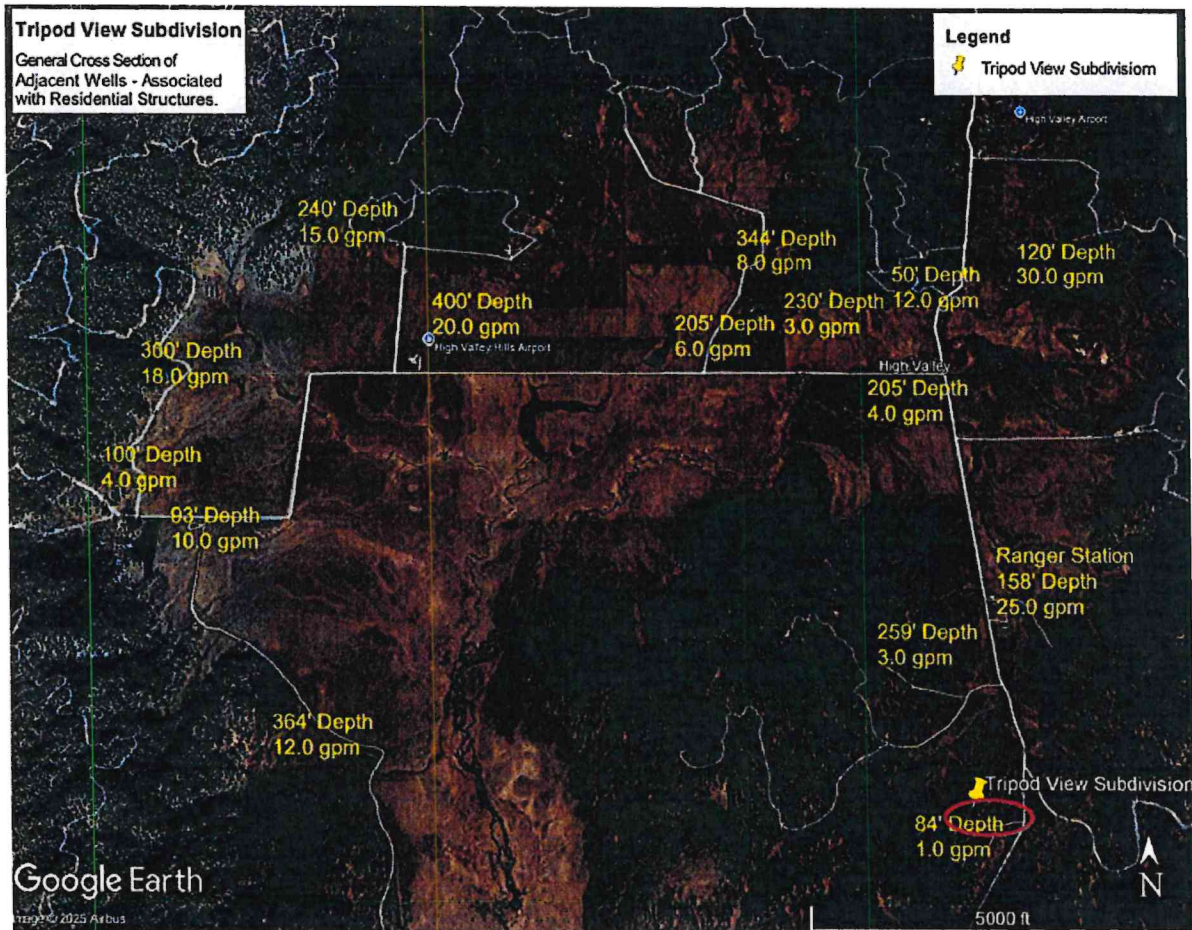
- **Ground Water:**

- What water is available underground cannot be known for certain, but the following report gives some indication of what is available in the area. Generally, well logs indicate a minor water source at shallow depths, and better water in the 300-400 foot range.
- A sample well log map shows low water flow in a 84 foot well directly adjacent to the proposed development, and good water just down the road at the ranger station at 158 foot depth.
- **Please see the Tripod View - Adjacent Wells attachment. This attachment is a general cross section of some of the adjacent wells to the Tripod View Subdivision that are listed on IDWR well location map web site. The attachment only includes some wells that can be associated with residential structures, this attachment also includes the Bunk Houses at the U.S. Forest Service Ranger Station. The purpose of the Adjacent Wells attachment is to give a general cross section look at the viable wells located in the High Valley area with associated well depths and production rates.**

In additional the Adjacent Wells the attachment helps also show the many water sources for Wildfire Protection as stated in the Wiland Urban Interface Fire Protection Plan Authored by John Lillehaug (Helicopter and Equipment draft sites).

Thank you,

Jim Fronk
James Fronk Consulting, LLC.
208 634 8093



- **Fire Hazard:**
 - Please see attached Fire Mitigation Plan from John Lillehaug who will be present at the meeting to provide further context.
 - Wildfire and Structure Fire is a real concern for everyone, including for my neighboring ranch. Both can be mitigated, and neither eliminated. In effort to address this risk, I have supplied a report from John Lillehaug which contains a fire mitigation plan. It is both John and my recommendation that our efforts are focused on mitigations that are of immediate and persistent value. These would include reduction of fuel loads and creation of defensible spaces (see John's report), along with CC&R's which address construction materials, defensible spaces, and potential structure fire suppression tools.
 - By addressing fuel loading and building materials type, we can mitigate risk. Planned CC&R's can direct these activities, and Valley County can help enforce through the building permitting process.

- It is noteworthy that Cascade Fire District and the Ola Fire Station do not include High Valley in their area, which negates the value of any infrastructure for trucks to utilize.

Concerns about process expressed publicly since the October meeting:

- **Neighbor communication**
 - Consultant Jim Fronk was engaged to notify neighboring property owners, and a meeting was held on July 24. Both Jonna and I attended the meeting.
- **Public Notic Signage**
 - Concerns have been raised that I placed the sign in a location to hide the planned development and that the development would occur in a different, more prominent location (High Valley Road)
 - Placement of public notice signs are the responsibility of the County Planning and Zoning, not the developer. I am not an expert on the signage laws, but the sign appears properly placed on the proposed site.
- **Concern about subdivision location**
 - Some confusion seems to be prevalent about the location of the subdivision. The application and Valley County Planning & Zoning staff reports are very clear of the location, which is on the SE corner of our property, approximately 1.4 miles south of the High Valley Rd/Dry Buck Rd intersection.
- **Character**
 - Given some fairly significant and slanderous attempts to impune character, I have attached a character reference from a respected neighbor in High Valley, Bill Gardiner.

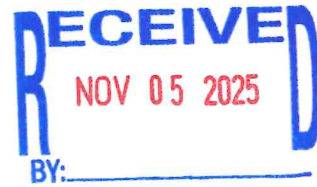
Thank you again for your consideration.

Respectfully,



Steven and Jonna Emerson

Enc. Fire Plan
Water Map
Character Reference



Bill Gardiner
High Valley Resident
7 Arrows Edge Pl
Cascade, ID 83611

October 30, 2025

Valley County Planning and Zoning Commission
219 N. Main Street
Cascade, ID 83611

Dear Members of the Valley County Planning and Zoning Commission,

I am writing in support of Mr. Steven Emerson. I have known Steve for several years and have always found him to be an honest, sincere, and upstanding individual.

Steve is a God-fearing man who consistently demonstrates integrity in both his personal and professional life. He coached my children in basketball for several seasons, and through that experience, I witnessed firsthand his patience, fairness, and genuine care for the young people he worked with. He has always treated others with kindness and respect, earning the trust and admiration of those around him.

In every interaction I've had with Steve, he has conducted himself with honesty and a strong moral compass. Regardless of your decision involving his property in High Valley, please know that you are dealing with an honest and good man.


Respectfully,

Bill Gardiner

Tripod View Subdivision

General Cross Section of
Adjacent Wells - Associated
with Residential Structures.


Legend

 Tripod View Subdivision

 High Valley Airport

240' Depth
15.0 gpm

400' Depth
20.0 gpm

 High Valley Hills Airport

300' Depth
18.0 gpm

100' Depth
4.0 gpm

93' Depth
10.0 gpm

344' Depth
8.0 gpm

230' Depth
3.0 gpm

205' Depth
6.0 gpm

50' Depth
12.0 gpm

120' Depth
30.0 gpm

High Valley

205' Depth
4.0 gpm

Ranger Station
158' Depth
25.0 gpm

259' Depth
3.0 gpm

364' Depth
12.0 gpm

 Tripod View Subdivision

84' Depth
1.0 gpm

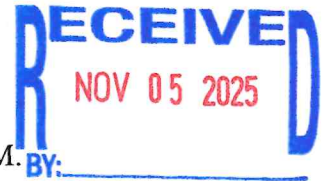


WILDLAND URBAN INTERFACE FIRE PROTECTION PLAN

Valley County Idaho
Title 10 Chapter 7

TRIPOD VIEW

A proposed subdivision in Parts of NE Sec. 13 T10N, R2E B.M. BY: _____



John Lillehaug
PO Box 1250 McCall, ID. 83638
(208) 630-4076
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Purpose

Valley County's Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) acknowledges that wildfire hazard areas exist throughout the county. Therefore, wildfire mitigation actions are prudent to enable safe habitation in these fire environments. The existence of said plans will assist Valley County Planning and Zoning Commission and the structural fire districts plus the wildland fire agencies in satisfying the current subdivision regulation, subsection 10-3-2-6D7 of Valley County's Code of Ordinances (Ord. 10-07, 8-26-2010).

The Wildland Urban Interface (hereafter referred to as WUI) consists of *the area where developed lands interact with undeveloped lands and include the infrastructure and natural resources communities rely on for existence*. The character of the WUI ranges from urban areas adjoining wildlands to isolated ranches or cabins. Since 1993, the number of structures in the WUI has doubled and soon will triple. As the number of structures in the WUI continues to increase, concerns over public safety and the protection of improvements increase. The highest human-caused ignition sources in WUI are miscellaneous and debris burning.

Executive Summary

The proposed subdivision consists of a parcel of land (approximately 50 plus acres in size) that is planned to be divided into twelve (12) various sized Lots that will eventually add more structures to the Valley County WUI. This *Fire Protection Plan* will assist in providing recommendations to minimize the wildfire risk to the property and proposed individual Lots.

The property that is planned for this proposed subdivision is approximately 55% forested with the rest either sagebrush or grass dominate ground cover. It lies within Valley County's Geographic Hazard Assessment Wildland Urban Interface **high** level condition for overall wildfire risk. There is *NO* structural fire protection district designated within the High Valley area,

General treatments to be completed to mitigate the wildfire hazard and provide protection for future homes are outlined in **Section B Wildfire Risk Mitigation** portion of this document and include the following:

1. The shaded fuel break along Haven Ranch Road must be completed before the final plat is granted or the work to be accomplished financially guaranteed.
2. Maintain the current grazing regime throughout the proposed subdivision area. An individual Lot owner will be responsible for installing a fence to keep cattle from grazing.

3. Individual Lot owners will be responsible for constructing their driveway and site for a residence or RV. The private driveway must meet Valley County standards and provide a shaded fuel break to meet the same specifications set for Haven Ranch Road. The future homesite must have Defensible Space Zones installed upon construction of the pad site (see attached Defensible Space Zones in Appendix).

Section A *Wildfire Risk Assessment:*

1. Site Description:

Tripod View proposed subdivision lies within parts of NE Sec. 13, T10N, R2E, B.M. and is owned by Steven and Jonna Emerson.

The development lies in High Valley, an area about seven (7) air miles northeast of Ola and consists of about 50 acres. Year around access is provided only from Ola via the High Valley Road, a county gravel surface road then onto Dry Buck Road, a native surface county road. There is a Class II stream that flows through the eastern portion of Lots 1 and 2. This stream flows underneath Haven Ranch Road at the entrance of the development. There is also an intermittent Class II stream that flows through parts of Lots 3 and 4 which only flows during spring snow melt. Both streams are tributaries of Little Squaw Creek. The proposed subdivision consists of twelve (12) buildable lots ranging from 1.69 to 5.21 acres in size.

2. Existing Vegetative and Fuel Hazard Conditions:

Approximately 27 acres have a 100% canopy conifer tree cover consisting of Ponderosa pine (95%) and Douglas-fir (5%) with a few Grand Fir. The understory vegetation consists of Aspen, Huckleberry, snowberry, Serviceberry, and willows along with various forbs and grasses. The remaining acreage consists of sagebrush and grass with a few scattered Ponderosa pine.

The overall existing timber stand is an uneven-aged (multi-storied) stand with three basic age groups:

1. **The seedling/sapling age group:** Trees range from one foot to 25 feet tall, have diameters up to six inches D.B.H., and ages from one to 25 years. This age group is a low to medium component of the overall timber stand.

2. **The pole size age group:** Trees range in size from six to 10 inches D.B.H. and ages from 30 to 50 years. This age group is a medium component of the overall timber stand often found growing in overcrowded clumps with sapling age trees that may have up to 500 trees per acre or as individual suppressed trees growing underneath a larger tree.
3. **Overstory:** This age group was harvested as part of the larger ownership within the past 15 years, the last entry leaving good quality trees. Trees range from 10 to 25 plus inches D.B.H., heights range from 80 to over 100 feet tall, and ages range from 55 to over 100 years.

Proposed Lots 9-12 are 100% forested; Lots 6-8 range from 30 to 60% forested and the rest sagebrush; Lots 1-5 range from 10-15% forested the rest primarily sagebrush. The sagebrush cover is dense and with strong wind a fire could have flame lengths 5 to 10 feet tall.



Figure 1: Overcrowded clump of young trees typical of the Lots that are heavily forested.



Figure 2: Lots that are dominated by sagebrush with few trees.

4. Fire History

Fire history records from all jurisdiction agencies show a very low occurrence from lightning or humans caused ignitions in the past. As more structures are built the probability of human-caused ignitions will increase.

5. Existing Roads and bridges

Haven Ranch Road is an existing native surface road along the south boundary that currently serves as access for four privately owned parcels that were split off the original ranch. This road and two short spurs will be reconstructed to Valley County private road standards to provide access to all the proposed Lots. There is also an existing road north of the proposed development that serves as the main access to the main timber stand of Mr. Emerson's property.

6. Location of existing building structures and estimate of property density

Currently there are no existing structures within the proposed subdivision area. There are several structures on the adjacent privately owned property along the south boundary. **Tripod View** subdivision is planned to provide a density of one single family unit per about 3.75 acres.

7. Infrastructure that may affect wildfire risk

The timber stand consists of overcrowded clumps of young trees. The main ranch property was commercially thinned about 10-15 years ago leaving good quality fire resilient tree species. The overstory is well spaced to minimize the risk of a crown fire. There are numerous small slash piles that were not burned scattered throughout the development that were left after the harvest entry. Approximately 40% of the ground cover (eastern third of the proposed subdivision) consists of dense sagebrush where a ground fire supported by a strong wind could exhibit flames lengths 5-10 feet tall. There is limited availability of water that could be used for drafting firefighting equipment located within the development. However, there are several ponds in the area that could be utilized by aircraft for dipping and Little Squaw Creek for drafting capability.

8. Description of existing features that may assist in wildfire control.

High Valley Road and Dry Buck Road will provide good access for wild land firefighting equipment. Haven Ranch Road being reconstructed to meet Valley County private road standards in combination with the proposed *Shaded Fuel Break* installed on both sides of the road will minimize the risk of fire entering or leaving the property along the south boundary. The existing main ranch access road north of the proposed development could also provide a fire break. Along with two ponds (one south of Haven Ranch Road where it flows underneath the road and the other north of proposed Lot 7) that could be used for aircraft dipping or drafting by firefighting equipment.

9. Current structural and wildfire jurisdiction agencies

There is **no** structural fire jurisdiction for the High Valley area, the closest fire department being in Ola. The Idaho Department of Lands Southwest Area provides wildfire protection for all timber lands in the area.

Wildfire Risk Assessment Summary:

The property lies within Valley County's Geographic Hazard Assessment Wildland Urban Interface **high** level condition and the overall wildfire risk is high for the following reasons:

- The current timber stand is dense with young trees growing with crowns touching each other and limbs to the ground. Also, numerous small slash piles were left unburned after the previous timber harvest.

- There are limited water sources available on or close by the property to draft water.
- The proposed subdivision is surrounded on three sides by continuous fuel (thick timber stands in various stages of management) and dense sagebrush on the eastern side.



Figure 3: Dense timber stands and heavy sagebrush layer surround the proposed subdivision.

Section B *Wildfire Risk Mitigation:*

The Fire Behavior Triangle consists of three factors that combine to determine how a fire burns- they are topography, weather, and fuels. Topography is fixed as it changes very slowly over time. Weather is highly variable and the ability to predict is somewhat limited. Fuel (anything that burns and changes from season-to-season or time of day) is the only factor that can be manipulated to minimize wildfire risk.

1. Access-Planned ingress and egress routes

High Valley Road and Dry Buck Road are the primary access routes as well as the primary escape route to travel away from the property. The Haven Ranch Road and two short spur roads will be the primary roads within the development and must be reconstructed to meet County private road standards with the appropriate turnarounds installed at each end. However, these roads will still be a dead-end road which can pose problems if evacuation is necessary.

2. Water supply for structural and wildland fire responses

Water supply for structural fire will depend on either the well located on the individual Lot or what is supplied by a Structural Fire Department if responding. Water supply for wildfire could be provided by aircraft dipping from any nearby ponds or engines drafting from nearby streams.

3. Estimated response time and distance for jurisdictional fire agencies

The estimate response time from the Ola Rural Fire District is at least 45 minutes depending on weather conditions. The IDL Southwest Area response is even greater with engines coming from Boise. The extended response time could be critical in stopping or slowing wildfire from impacting residences.

4. Proposed internal fire protection systems.

No internal sprinkler systems within future residences are planned currently.

5. Proposed infrastructure (including driveways, signage, and power connections).

The future driveways to each residence should not exceed 10% grade, be at least 12 feet running surface wide excluding shoulders, have an unobstructed vertical clearance of 13.5 feet, and should be maintained to support fire apparatus up to 70,000 pounds.

New structures are strongly urged to utilize building materials meeting a standard of fire resistance advocated by the Valley County Building Department and the International Fire Code (IFC).

All new residences will have the address number posted as per Valley County standards (i.e., numbers posted at the entrance to the driveway or on the house and the numbers must be at least 3 and 1/2 inches tall with a reflective coloring).

Electrical power is planned to be provided to the individual Lots via an underground service.

6. Evacuation and Pre-incident planning.

A pre-incident action plan will be developed and instituted in the Community Covenants (CCR's). This action plan should address the escape route and evacuation plan to encourage pre-planning by residents for preparation in the event of an incident. Every five years the IDL Southwest Area fire staff and the future residents should formulate an assessment of the existing structures and vegetation that will aid in addressing whether the current action plan needs to be updated.

7. Planned vegetation treatments to reduce fuel loads.

Vegetation treatments that need to be completed to reduce the **High** Wildland Urban Interface Hazard Assessment level include the following:

A. Install a *Shaded Fuel Break* on both sides of Haven Ranch Road and the two short spurs while the roads are being reconstructed to Valley County standards. The shaded fuel break should be at least 20-30 feet wide on each side utilizing the following specifications:

- Young trees (i.e., sapling/pole size age group) leave trees spaced about 12-15 feet apart to obtain a minimum of 6–8 foot live crown distance. Prune

these trees at least 6-8 feet above ground level of the lowest branch leaving at least 40% of the tree height in live crown.

- Overstory age group leave trees spaced about 20-25 feet apart to obtain a minimum of 10 live crown distance. Prune these trees 8-10 feet above ground level of the lowest branch.
- Masticate all slash created from the thinning and pruning activity plus any dead material lying on the ground that is less than 10 inches DBH and 50% sound wood. Masticate all the small slash piles that were left from the previous timber harvest.

- B. Driveway construction will be the responsibility of the individual Lot owner. Construction specifications should meet the minimum standards as stated in #5 above. In addition, installing a *Shaded Fuel Break* on both sides of the driveway to minimize fire risk and the ability for evacuation is necessary.
- C. Future Lot owners should install the following **Firewise Defensible Space Zone** guidelines as the pad is constructed for a future structure or parking a RV as they will greatly minimize the risk of loss from wildfire.

The recommended **Firewise Defensible Space Zone** treatments are as follows:

1. **Immediate Zone**- 0 to 5 feet around the future building structure.
 - i. Recommend using rock or gravel instead of flammable vegetation or mulches next to the house.
 - ii. Trim branches from large trees or shrubs that overhang the home, porch, or deck.
 - iii. Do not stack firewood on or under decks.
2. **Intermediate Zone**- the next 5 to 30 feet from the building structures.
 - i. The landscape vegetation should consist of a well-maintained greenbelt. Utilize native low-lying plants that are fire resilient (visit idahofirewise.org for list). Favor deciduous trees and shrubs over evergreens, although Ponderosa pine and Douglas-fir can be fire resilient due to their thick bark. Keeping this zone green as much as possible in the hot dry summer months will also minimize surface fire from reaching the buildings.
 - ii. Shrubs can be limited to small clusters or groups of a few each to break up the continuity of vegetation across the landscape.
 - iii. Place propane tanks on gravel or concrete pads at least 30 feet from structures and surround them with non-flammable fencing.

3. *Extended Zone*- the next 30 to 100 feet from the building structures.

- i. Space trees to have a minimum of 15-20 feet between the crowns.
- ii. Remove the ladder fuel by pruning the lower branches at least 6-10 feet from the ground not to exceed 1/3 of the overall tree height.
- iii. Remove dead trees and shrubs. Also remove large accumulations of ground litter/debris.

8. Long-term maintenance schedule to sustain fuel treat effectiveness.

- Maintain the current grazing regime to minimize the amount of fuel loading and height of grasses.
- Promote the opportunity to maintain or return to native plant species and resistance to fire (such as Ponderosa pine, Western Larch, and Douglas-fir).
- Keep the shrubs and tree branches cut back along Haven Ranch Road and future driveways to provide good access for firefighting equipment.
- Future Lot owners should thin the timber stand or reduce the sagebrush density to reduce fuel loading which will ultimately minimize wildfire risk.
- Woody debris and vegetation encroachment within the 100' zone of each structure will be reduced annually. This may be accomplished by the homeowner, during a community workday, or by a professional contractor hired by the homeowner.
- No debris burning will be allowed during the closed burn season (May 10- October 20) without a approved burn permit. Fire pits at the residence site, if installed should be maintained to prevent a fire from escaping the structure. Recommend using metal containers for the fire pit.
- Periodically (1-5 years) the current Lot owner or HOA meet with the respective structural and/or wildland fire organizations meet to review trends and projections of future fire risk and fire risk reduction capabilities to ensure that mitigation measures are adequate.



Portion of Haven Ranch Road that needs reconstruction to meet county standards and a shaded fuel break installed on both sides of the road.



Small slash piles that were left from the previous harvest that need to be masticated or disposed of to reduce fuel load.



Thinning of the overcrowded younger trees will minimize wildfire risk and improve the health of the trees (reduce mortality losses from bark beetles like the red needle trees at right).



Minimizing the density of the sagebrush by providing openings where grasses can grow will reduce the continuity of the tall shrubs to carry a fire into the trees.

From: richsummers56@gmail.com [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, October 29, 2025 1:53 PM
To: Cynda Herrick <cherrick@valleycountyid.gov>
Cc: Valley County Commissioners <commissioners@valleycountyid.gov>
Subject: Proposed Subdivision for High Valley

Dear Ms. Herrick,

My name is Rich Summers, and I've been a full-time, year-round resident of High Valley for the past 5 years. I own property in the Wilderness Lake Ranch subdivision.

I am concerned about the proposed 12 home subdivision that is to be located off Dry Buck Rd and developed by Steve Emerson. I am opposed to this subdivision and hope that you and the other Planning and Zoning Commissioners deny this request.

I watched the video of the meeting with Mr. Emerson and his supporters. If we have a dry summer in High Valley, that small pond they reference is not full of water year-round. They'd be lucky to put out a campfire at times.

High Valley is a high-risk wildfire area, and if they are going to put in a subdivision, what are they going to do to help fight or prevent fires in the event one breaks out in their new subdivision? A dry hydrant in a pond that at times is less than 1/3 full. Please...

What are they going to do for waste and refuse removal? As it is now, we have to take our garbage to a transfer trailer in Ola on Saturday mornings. That means even more traffic on High Valley Road. As it stands now, High Valley Road is not maintained well by Valley County. It is full of washboards, large rocks coming through the surface, and at times is more like off-roading than driving on a country road. The increase in traffic from building contractors, new residents, utility companies and their equipment, and people who will be coming to view the potential lots, is going to put even more stress and wear on High Valley Road. Their own landfill is NOT an option. That will do nothing more than attract bears, coyotes, and other scavengers to the valley. We already have plenty of issues with bears and coyotes without providing a buffet for them.

I am also concerned about the water table in High Valley being drawn down, affecting those of us who currently have wells that do not produce a good rate of return. For example, the lady who said her well only produces 1 gallon a minute. The gentleman that commented that it doesn't take that much water to run a residence, has obviously never opened his tap to see silt and particulate coming out when the well has been drawn down.

I could go on with several other concerns, but I'll save those for the next meeting on November 13. Which, as I understand it, is going to be VERY well attended by residents of High Valley now that they are aware of the situation.

The placement of the public notice sign was, in my opinion, an attempt by Mr. Emerson (while within the law for such postings), was done so strategically in hopes that none of the current residents of High Valley would see it or be made aware of the recent meeting. And he apparently was correct. In my opinion, if Mr. Emerson can afford to purchase 650 acres for a cattle ranch, he does not need a 12-home subdivision to subsidize his ranching operation. In my opinion, this is

nothing more than the beginning of a land and money grab, and an attempt to turn High Valley into another Stanley or McCall, where developers come in and drive-up property taxes and make it impossible for people like me to be able to afford to continue to live here.

I would ask that each of you and each of the county commissioners make the trip to High Valley. Look at where he's proposing this subdivision and talk with residents up here about their feelings and concerns BEFORE November 13. The Smith's Ferry side of Dry Buck/HV Road is still passable as of today. I'm certain that some of the local residents with large shops or barns would be willing to hold a public forum before November 13.

I would also ask that you share my email with the P&Z Commissioners, so all five can be made aware prior to the 11/13 meeting of the concerns of not only me, but a large majority of the people who live up here now and own property up here now.

If Mr. Emerson wants to live up here full time and run a cattle ranch that's fine. In my opinion, he does NOT need to develop a subdivision to sustain the ranching operation.

I'd be more than happy to entertain phone calls, answer question, or even show you around if you decide to come see this firsthand.

Respectfully,
Rich Summers
Wilderness Lake Ranch
High Valley
