

Rural Census 2013

Overview

The county began a Rural Lands Review project in 2008 to review the effectiveness of its land use policies in preserving rural lands and rural economic opportunities. The project to date has had four phases. The first phase involved the convening of a Rural Lands Task Force. The group worked with Rural principles and values to define what rural Clark County is and should be. In the second phase, the task force looked at rural economic development opportunities, including the recommendations of the Agriculture Preservation Advisory Committee (APAC). The result of this phase was a number of Rural Lands Task Force recommendations. Many of these recommendations were addressed through the county's Retooling Our Code project.

A number of recommendations from the task force require review beyond simply amending the code. In 2011, the Board of County Commissioners authorized the Rural Lands Study, which was the third phase of the Rural Lands Review. The Rural Lands Study began in September 2011 and was completed in 2013. The Study consisted of three phases:

Phase 1 - Identify rural land trends in Clark County;

Phase 2 - Examine policy ideas that support preservation of rural lands and economic opportunities.

This phase resulted in a series of policy options that were presented to the Board in a work session in June 2012; and

Phase 3 – Policy recommendations were drafted for further consideration by the public, the Clark County Planning Commission and the Board of County Commissioners.

Phase 4 of the Rural Lands Review began in 2013 when the Board directed staff to focus on the possibility of clustering on resource lands (zoned agriculture and forest), on the possibility of a smaller minimum parcel size for resource lands, and on developing a rural planned unit development (PUD) ordinance. To gauge the interest in a smaller minimum parcel size, the Board gave direction to look into feasibility of contacting property owners whose property may be affected by proposed changes and the associated costs. The Agriculture (AG-20) and the Forest (FR-40) zones were the two zones identified for consideration of amending minimum lot sizes.

Methodology

Only property owners with a minimum parcel size of 10 acres in AG-20 zoning or a minimum of 20 acres in an FR-40 zone were included in the Preference Census. Each group was sent a letter and a postcard with pre-paid return postage. The letters described the reason for collecting property owner's preference. Each letter included a unique Census ID and PIN number to access the census questions at the following website. (www.clark.wa.gov/ruralcensus) Each postcard contained the same two questions available online and included the Census ID and owner name. (See attached)

There were a total of 1,079 property owners who received a letter and postcard. There were 679 property owners with a minimum of 10 acres and Ag-20 zoning and 400 property owners with a minimum of 20 acres and FR-40 zoning.

Responses

We received a total of 618 responses out of 1,079 for an overall 58% response rate. Property owners in both the AG-20 and FR-40 zone would prefer a smaller minimum parcel size by a margin of 72% to 28% and 82.5% to 17.5%, respectively (see Table 1 below). Property owners in both zones would also prefer the flexibility of clustering new lots on their property by 68% and 73%, respectively. Table 2 shows the

responses from property owners who have enough acreage to divide their property with a smaller minimum parcel size. Property owners in this category prefer the smaller zoning in the AG-20 and FR-40 zones by a 73% to 27% and 77% to 23%, respectively. These property owners also indicated a preference for clustering new lots by 69% to 31% in the AG-20 zone and 70% to 30% in the FR-40 zone.

The online version of the census required answers to both questions; however 86 of the 558 postcards returned to the county preferred to answer only one of the two questions, which accounts for the difference in total responses between question 1 and 2. In addition 7 postcards were returned with no preference. Nine of the letters were returned from the post office with no forwarding address (6 AG-20 and 3 FR-40 letters). Two letters were returned with insufficient address those two were re-addressed and re-sent.

Table 1. All property owners with at least 10 acres in AG-20 Zone or 20 acres in FR-40 Zone

Question 1: Keep Current Zone

	All		AG-20		FR-40	
Keep Current Zone	153	24.8%	118	28.2%	35	17.5%
Smaller Zoning	465	75.2%	300	71.8%	165	82.5%
Total	618		418		200	
Response Rate	58%		62%		50%	

Question 2: I Prefer Clustering New Lots

	All		AG-20		FR-40	
Yes	409	70%	273	68%	136	73%
No	177	30%	126	32%	51	27%
Total	586		399		187	

FR-40 Property owners 397
 AG-20 Property owners 673
 All Property owners 1070

Table 2. All property owners with at least 20 acres in AG-20 Zone or 40 acres in FR-40 Zone

Responses from properties eligible for dividing

Question 1: Keep Current Zone

	All		AG-20		FR-40	
Keep Current Zone	90	27%	78	27%	12	23%
Smaller Zoning	248	73%	207	73%	41	77%
Total	338		285		53	
Response Rate	65%		68%		55%	

Question 2: I Prefer Clustering New Lots

	All		AG-20		FR-40	
Yes	215	69%	182	69%	33	70%
No	95	31%	81	31%	14	30%
Total	310		263		47	

FR-40 Property owners	96
AG-20 Property owners	422
ALL	518

Data Charts and Graphs

Below are six graphic representations of the data in Tables 1 and 2 above. These charts and graphs can also be found at the following links below.

<http://gis.clark.wa.gov/gishome/RuralCensus/index.cfm?pid=results>

http://gis.clark.wa.gov/gishome/RuralCensus/index.cfm?pid=results_revised

Rural Lands Review

Rural Census

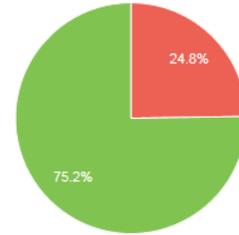
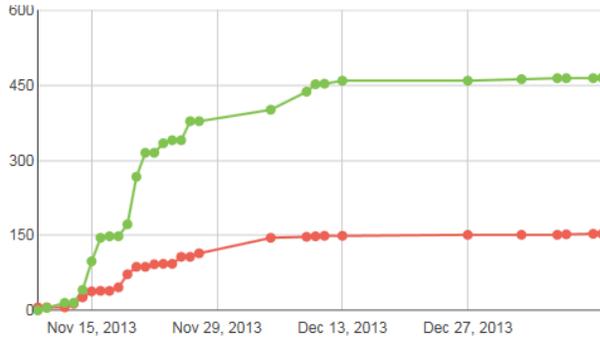
Responses from all census properties

Question 1: Keep Current Zone

All

AG-20

FR-40



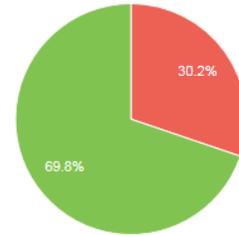
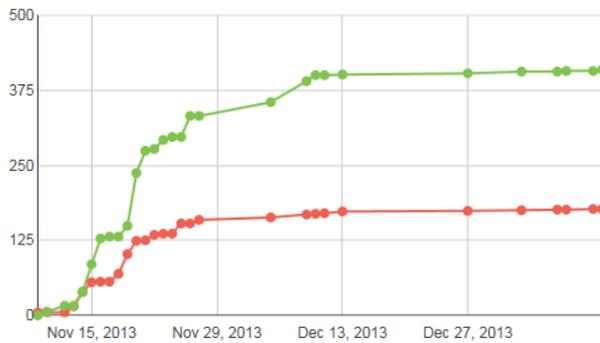
Keep Current Zone Smaller Zoning

Question 2: I Prefer Clustering New Lots

All

AG-20

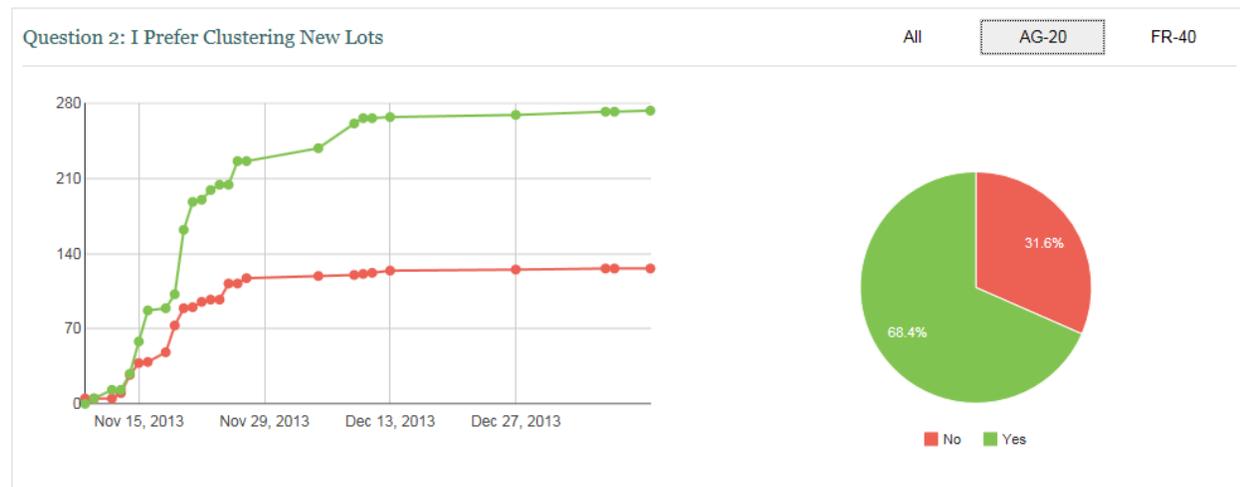
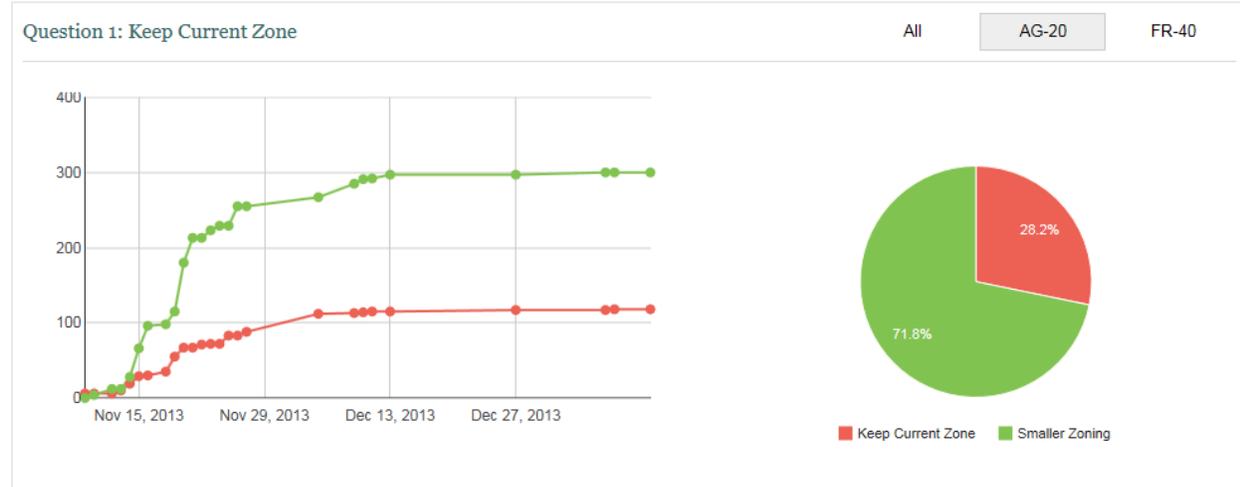
FR-40



No Yes

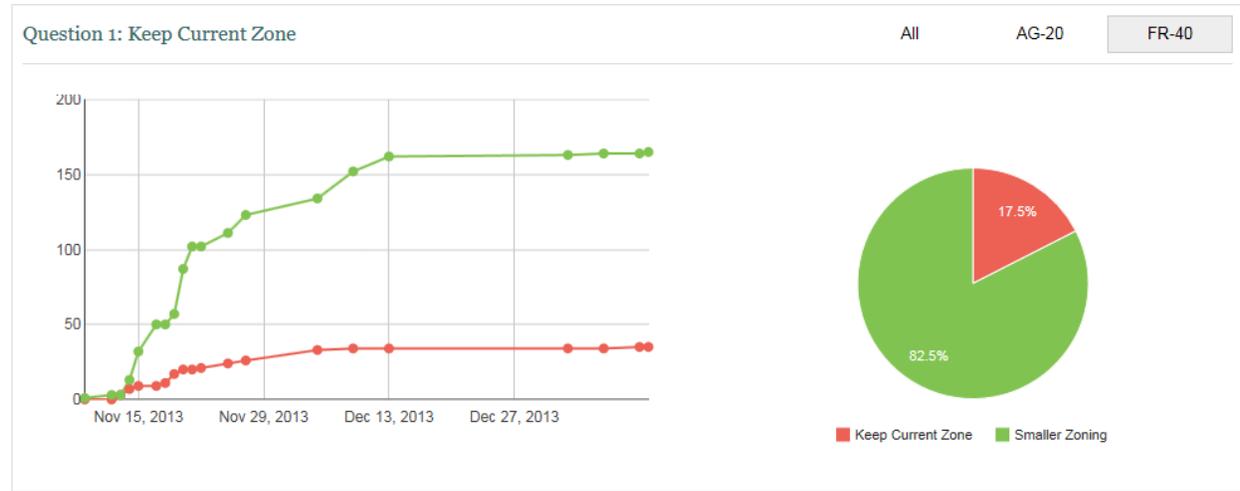
Rural Census

Responses from all census properties



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Responses from all census properties



Rural Census

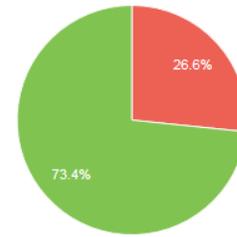
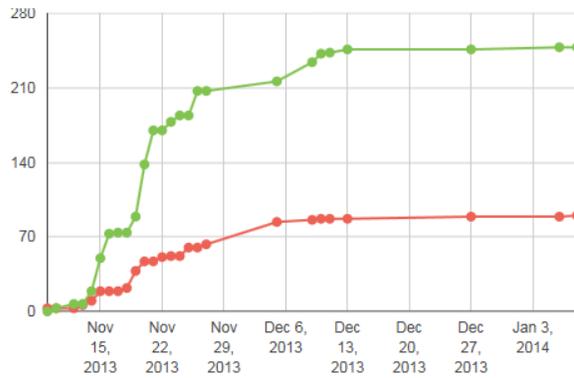
Responses from properties eligible for dividing

Question 1: Keep Current Zone

All

AG-20

FR-40



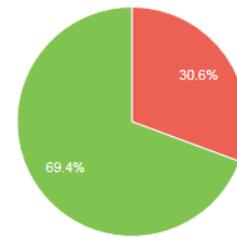
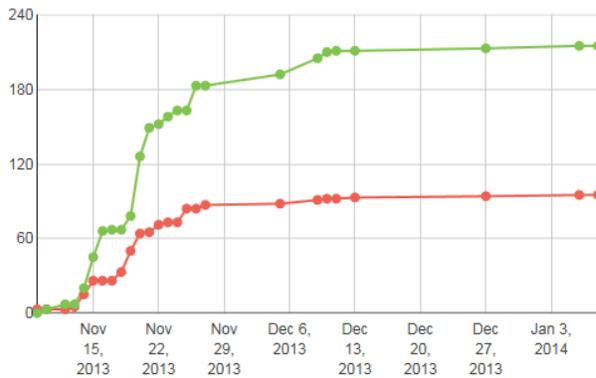
Keep Current Zone Smaller Zoning

Question 2: I Prefer Clustering New Lots

All

AG-20

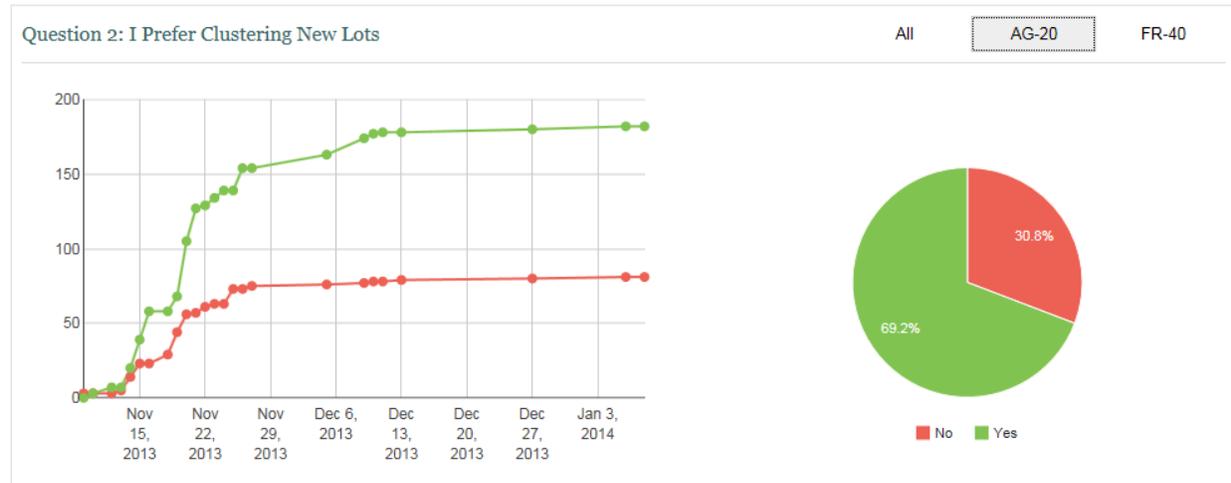
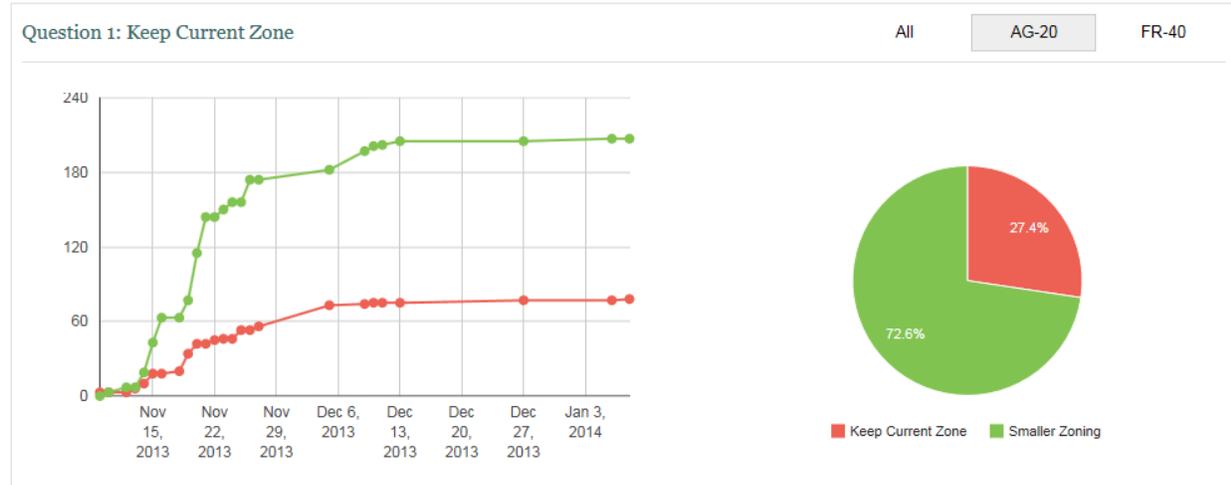
FR-40



No Yes

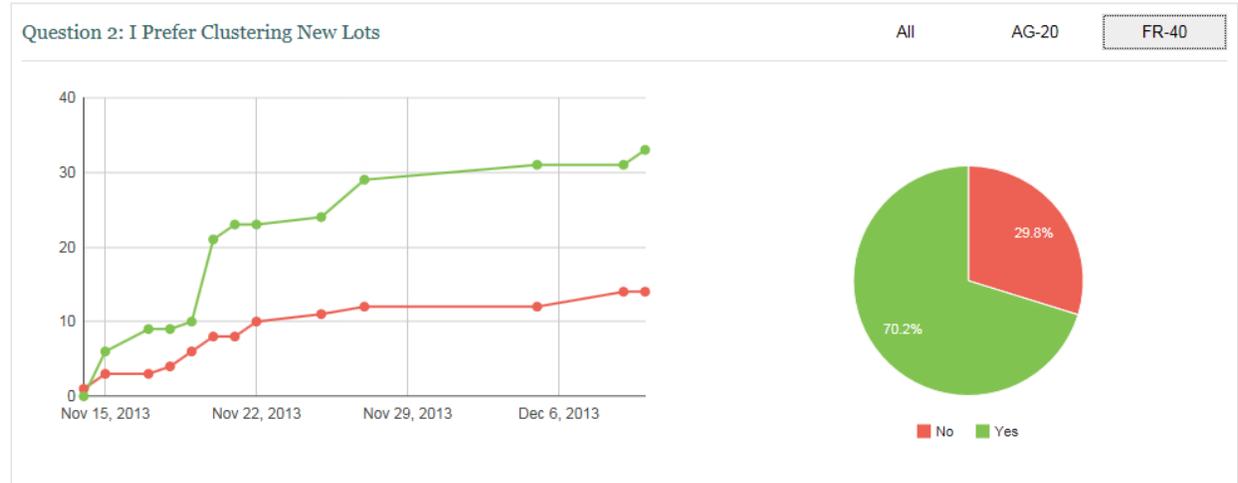
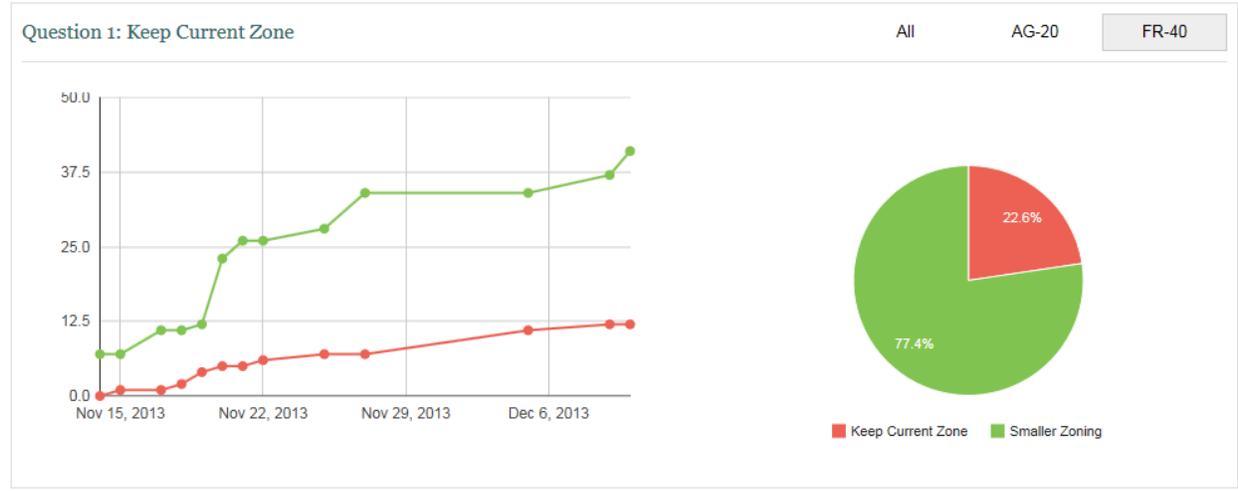
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Responses from properties eligible for dividing



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Responses from properties eligible for dividing



Summary Comments

In addition to the postcard responses property owners sent in individual comments or made comments on the return postcards

There were 28 property owners in the AG-20 zone who wrote in that they would prefer a parcel size less than 10 acres. In the FR-40 zone 11 property owners wrote in a preference for less than 20 acres.

The most **common question** from property owners was the following:

What effect will this have on my property values/property taxes?

What is clustering?

How is this going to affect me? (People with less than 20 acres in AG-20 or 40 acres in FR-40)

Verbatim Comments

- Cluster could go either way, depends on what state or county thought best.
- Adopt Urban Growth Boundaries like Oregon.
- Would prefer to have some small part of this county remain rural and ag. Thought question 2 was a leading question.
- 137th Ave? Industrial? Mixed Use/Com?
- 20 acres minimum of DFL lands. Flexibility is key.
- Please hurry, been waiting for this for 30 years.(2)
- These changes would help tremendously.
- Something I would expect from Nazi's. This is the worst money grabbing move I have seen thus far – Democrats of course like Murray. Not only no but Hell no. I moved out here to be left alone. Should have moved out of Clark County. There isn't enough space to tell you how I feel about this. Gov't works for citizens I don't work for you.
- I only have 10 acres. (AG)
- We're adjacent to 5 acre zoning on south and west as well as close to business.
- Cannot get onto the site you said to go to go on line? I do not understand the option of 20A or 10A as I put in a subdivision and was allowed 2 1/2 acre minimum. I have a 11.77A lot that would have been 2 lots when I subdivided, but my developer Lawson left on vacation & was not here to make a French drain & so I lost 1 lot. I would like to have prop# 235612014 made into 2 lots.
- It ain't broke don't fix it. You must have extra money to throw away. I sure don't.
- Need better roads etc. first.
- Would like choices.
- Prefer to remain in Forest until divided.
- (Prefer FR-20) Provided no loss of use vs FR-40 (or additional restrictions)
- It is only a 20 acre tract now
- Prefer .5 acre parcels with reduced single family homes and maximum 20% lot coverage of entire property.
- Lot divided to 20 acres prior to 12-31-94 so 20 acre zoning would make sense!
- I discussed with Jose Alvarez to return to 5 acre zoning as was approved in 1998.
- You need to be consistent.
- I would prefer the zone to be changed to Industrial/ or included into an urban growth boundary.
- Only have a little over 20-acre.
- (Prefer clustering) or divide 1/2 -1- 2 1/2 -5 acre parcels and people can choose a lot size & live in a park everyday with room for options. (2)
- (Prefer 10 acre minimum) If it doesn't increase my taxes.
- (Preference) Whatever zoning was when we bought property
- My greatest preference: I would prefer the right to divide my 20 acre plot into 5 acre lots.
- Prefer R-5 zoning like all my neighbors.
- 5 would make more sense.