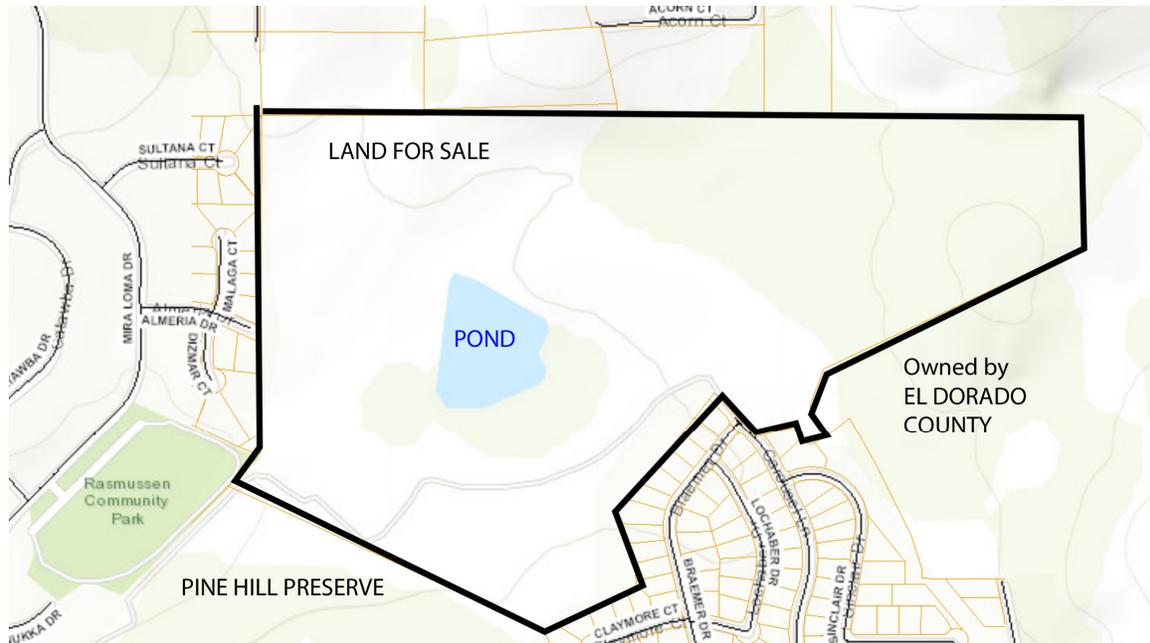


The Case for the Preservation of Rasmussen Pond and its Meadows as a Nature Park

A very special place in Cameron Park

The property, locally known as “Rasmussen Pond” (aka Pine Hill Reservoir, Pine Hill Preserve Reservoir) is a 104 acre parcel of land east of Rasmussen Park in Cameron Park. Although it is privately owned, over the last 40 years it has been discovered by 100’s of local residents as a place “to get away from it all”.



MapSource: www.gotnet.net

Rasmussen Pond and the area surrounding it is presently FOR SALE and could have over 400 houses built on it if sold to a land developer.

(reference: EDC zoning R1A and land use HDR)

Asking price is \$6.9 million (\$66,000 per acre). The sale is “Pending” to a land developer. There is no doubt that to recoup the price of 6.9 million dollars the developer plans to build 5 houses to the acre with minimal offsets for trails around the pond and streams. Such development would have many other significant detrimental impacts on the region.

Before the public was notified that it was for sale, the American River Conservancy, the Bureau of Land Management(BLM) and El Dorado County(EDC) were offered the land. They were not interested because it did not have endangered plant species plus the asking price was too high.

That this particular parcel does not have all of the endangered plant species found on the immediately adjacent parcels is most likely due to the agricultural development of ploughing/grading and pasture planting it has undergone in previous years. It has the

same soil as the adjacent areas and if left alone it is most likely that the endangered plant species could spread into the area and aid in their preservation.

It could be argued that the asking price is not out of the ballpark considering the price paid by BLM and EDC for the adjoining properties.

EDC purchased the land to the southeast in 2014 for \$18,000 per acre.
BLM (PHP) purchased the land to the southwest in 2000 for \$35,000 per acre.



The pond is nestled in a small valley far enough away from roads and housing developments that it provides a feeling of “being in nature” for those who visit. And visit they do - at least 700 per week. They walk (with/without dogs), run, bicycle, photograph, bird watch etc. Many with family and friends.

A group of residents formed to find a way of preserving this natural gem in the heart of Cameron Park. At this time a website has been setup and the potential sale publicized on internet social platforms. There are more than expressions of support to preserve this area as a nature park. See: www.RescueRasmussenPond.com

Many of the visitors to the website have expressed their feelings about the area. A list of names and comments have been provided.

The group has had discussions with El Dorado Community Foundation and Cameron Park Community Service District (CP CSD). All have been supportive.

It is of interest to note that, in the latest CP CSD Parks and Recreation Report, that one of the objectives is to alleviate the pressure on Cameron Park Lake. See: Big Picture Strategies in <https://www.cameronpark.org/files/34b0939a6/Park-Improvement-Plan-PPT.pdf>

It is not surprising that so many people visit Rasmussen Pond area. In the Cameron Park CSD Park and Recreation Master Plan 2014, is tabulated the “Predicted Activity Preference” of residents. Of the 37 activities surveyed, the top of the list is Bird watching 68%, closely followed, in order by Backpacking/Hiking 60%, Bicycling - mountain in/road 57%, Education courses 55%, and Photography 55%.

ref: <https://www.cameronpark.org/files/1e8833a15/Cameron-Park-CSD-Parks-and-Recreation-Master-Plan-Update-Final-2014-05-14.pdf> p42)

It is most likely that if it was public land, and advertised as a park by the CP CSD, many more people would visit as it is within walking and cycling distance of more than 1000 homes and a 5 to 10 minute drive from most of Cameron Park.

Even though it is private land, many of the trails are described on websites such as: alltrails.com, trailforks.com, eldoradohiking.com. Also it has at least six entry points with good off street and on street parking away from major roads that do not interfere with nearby residents.

It can be visited for a peaceful half hour stroll or a rigorous half day hike.

The attraction is six miles of “social” trails through an area containing grassland, open oak forest, chaparral, riparian, wetlands, aquatic shore and freshwater ecological systems.

More than 700 plant species (approximately 10 percent of the native species in California) grow in the gabbro soils formation which contains Rasmussen Pond. This region has been described as having the highest concentration of rare and endangered plants in EDC.

Species included in the chaparral areas are chamise, white leaf Manzanita, toyon, California redbud, poison oak, ceanothus, and California buckthorn.

The woodland vegetation type is represented by grey pine, ponderosa pine, interior live oak, blue oak, and California black oak.

Grassland areas are mostly non-native grasses such as brome and little quaking grass, with some native species, such as purple needlegrass, bluegrass, and blue wild rye.

Wildlife observed include coyote, black-tailed jackrabbit, black-tailed deer, mountain lion, California ground squirrel, black bear, western rattlesnake, California whipsnake, and California horned lizard.

More than 60 bird species have been identified in the area (see www.ebird.org) plus significant Native American artifacts.

The land parcel is sandwiched between two other parcels which are or are soon to be, part of the Pine Hill Preserve. These publicly owned parcels have been purchased for \$1,817,00 with government agency funds. Unfortunately, these parcels are in dense woodlands and have steep rugged terrain. Although they contain the rare and endangered plant species, they do not have the variety of nature, view sheds and peacefulness Rasmussen Pond that is attractive to the general public.

Once this area is paved over it will be lost forever to the present and future generations.



The objective of the Rescue Rasmussen Pond group is to preserve this area AS IS and as it has been used and maintained by the public for at least 40 years. NO facilities such as graded paths, NO playgrounds, NO park benches, NO picnic tables, NO toilets. NO trash cans etc. etc. Some improvements, maintenance and trash clearing has been carried out by volunteer residents over the years.

There are some “natural” parks in Cameron Park but they are a only few acres in extent. They are little more than storm water drains and sewer and utility easements that run within a few feet of the backyards of houses and do not offer anything like the “nature” experience of visiting Rasmussen Pond.

The largest park in Cameron Park is Cameron Park Lake with an area of 56 acres of which 45 acres is covered in water. More than 50% of the remaining 11 acres is devoted to active sports such as tennis, pickle ball and disc golf plus a car parking lot. It only has one entry point that it is only safely accessible by car. There is a high probability that a visit during peak times on a weekend will find the parking lot full.

Cameron Park Lake's only passive recreation area is a one mile path around the lake that for the most part borders the back yards of houses.

In short, Rasmussen Pond and its Meadows would make a great "Nature Park" for the community of Cameron Park and surrounding regions.

To view photos that show its great natural beauty visit the website:
www.RescueRasmussenPond.com