

U.N. agenda for sustainable growth riles El Dorado County residents

By Carlos Alcalá, Sacramento Bee

The United Nations is haunting El Dorado County.

Critics of a 20-year-old U.N. document called Agenda 21 are becoming more vocal, blaming it for any number of ills in the county.

Agenda 21 came out of a United Nations conference in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. It recommends a framework for nations to develop and grow sustainably – that is, with minimum damage to the environment.

Although it was accepted by presidents George H.W. Bush, Bill Clinton and Barack Obama, it carries no force of law here.

According to local critics, however, Agenda 21 is environmental extremism responsible for U.S. Forest Service road closures, onerous regulations on family farms, high-density low-income housing projects, a ban on dredge mining, a Highway 50 wildlife crossing, unemployment and maybe even traffic roundabouts.

Those issues resonate with many of El Dorado County's 180,000 residents. The county has growing suburbs near its border with Sacramento County, but is largely rural, and largely federal forestland, as it climbs the Sierra to Lake Tahoe.

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