

El Dorado slow-growth advocates fight development

By Peter Hecht, Sacramento Bee

In the county that brought the Gold Rush, surging with newcomers and rough-hewn mining camps, prospects of another boom are unnerving the modern-day populace.

Amid an improving real estate economy, developers are proposing nearly 7,000 new houses for the Western Slope of El Dorado County.

The new wave of potential major projects is emerging after a 2004 county general plan that promised to preserve the county's rural character while anticipating up to 21,000 additional houses.

In a region renowned for perhaps the most bitter growth battles in the lower Sierra Nevada, current residents are pushing back. Where miners once ravaged land for gold, determined homeowners are digging in for a protracted political fight to protect rustic lifestyles from new people, more houses and increased traffic.

Slow-growth advocates are now threatening a 2014 vote to limit new construction.

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