

**MEMORANDUM  
DEPARTMENT OF FACILITY SERVICES  
COUNTY OF PLACER**

To: **BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**

Date: **MARCH 20, 2007**

From: **JAMES DURFEE / MARY DIETRICH**

Subject: **AUTHORIZATION TO PARTICIPATE IN FUNDING THE TAYLOR RANCH AND FREIHEIT BIG HILL PRESERVE ACQUISITIONS**

**ACTION REQUESTED / RECOMMENDATION:** Authorize financial participation in the acquisition of the Taylor Ranch and Freiheit Big Hill Preserve located in the Auburn Valley area of Placer County as follows:

- 1) Taylor Ranch – Approve a Resolution authorizing a funding contribution in the amount of \$285,000 towards the Placer Land Trust's fee title acquisition of the Taylor Ranch and delegate authority to the Director of Facility Services to execute and record a Funding and Easement Agreement as described herein and to take all other actions necessary to facilitate this transaction and implement the provisions of the Funding and Easement Agreement.
- 2) Freiheit Big Hill Preserve - Approve a Resolution authorizing a funding contribution in the amount of \$315,000 towards the Placer Land Trust's acquisition of the Freiheit Big Hill Preserve conservation easement and delegate authority to the Director of Facility Services to execute and record a Funding and Easement Agreement as described herein and to take all other actions necessary to facilitate this transaction and implement the provisions of the Funding and Easement Agreement.
- 3) Approve a Budget Revision cancelling Open Space reserves, transferring Tree Preservation Funds to the Open Space Fund, and appropriating the funds in the Open Space Fund.

**BACKGROUND:** For a number of years the Placer Land Trust (PLT) has been in discussions with various property owners in the Auburn Valley area of Placer County regarding acquisitions to conserve valuable oak woodland habitat. Recently two of these property owners, Susan Taylor, and Robert and Denise Freiheit, have come to terms with PLT for acquisitions. Susan Taylor has agreed to sell to PLT (through a back to back sale from The Trust for Public Land) fee title to her 321 acre property. The Freiheits have agreed to sell to PLT a conservation easement over 313 acres of their property, retaining an 8 acre Homestead for construction of a single family residence. These properties are contiguous to one another and are located approximately one half mile north east of the County's Hidden Falls Regional Park (see Attachment A).

Like the County's Hidden Falls Regional Park property, these parcels contain significant biological resources identified for preservation in the Placer Legacy Program. The Taylor Ranch property contains a stretch of Coon Creek and has a wide range of riparian and foothill habitat. The easement area of the Freiheit property, now referred to as the Freiheit Big Hill Preserve, has two perennial streams and numerous ephemeral drainages that flow northward into the Bear River from the northern side of Big Hill, as well as ephemeral drainages that flow southward into Coon Creek from the remainder of the property. Both properties are undeveloped and blue oaks are the dominant over-story species in one of the largest intact stretches of un-fragmented oaks left in Placer County (see Attachment B). Once acquired, PLT will be responsible for stewardship of these properties including ongoing and perpetual

care and management of the land and enforcement of the terms of the conservation easement. Funding for stewardship will be provided by an endowment from the California Wildlife Foundation. These acquisitions are consistent with Placer Legacy's goals and objectives and would preserve the following conservation values:

- Scenic open space
- Important Bear River and Coon Creek watershed lands
- Sierra Nevada foothill oak woodlands
- Wildlife habitat
- Wildlife and open space corridors running north-south between the Bear River and Coon Creek

PLT also desires to grant to the County Irrevocable Offers of Dedication for trails across these properties (see Attachment C). Because these parcels are only one parcel removed from the County's Hidden Falls Regional Park, the vision is to ultimately connect these trails in order to extend the multi-use, non-motorized public access trail system northward towards the Bear River. The exact alignment and construction of the trail system would be dependent upon securing trail connections between properties and further technical and entitlement review. In the event of acceptance of the easement dedications, the County would become responsible for all construction and maintenance activities associated with the trail system.

These acquisitions also provide a number of benefits to the Placer County Conservation Plan, (PCCP) work program. They represent an early contribution to the conservation of blue oak woodlands by both Placer County and the State. The State, who is the largest contributor to these acquisitions, is following through on their commitment to assist the County with the implementation of the PCCP's oak woodland objectives. This is consistent with the 2005 Board direction to seek funding for early acquisitions in the oak woodlands, rice and riparian areas of the County. Lastly, this acquisition reduces the potential for additional fragmentation of these woodlands thus reducing future obligations to provide compensatory mitigation.

The County proposes to secure its interest in these conservation transactions by executing Funding and Easement Agreements with PLT. These Agreements would acknowledge PLT as the property owner and owner of the conservation easement and would confirm their commitment to maintain the conservation values of these properties in perpetuity. These Agreements would also set forth the terms for planning trail alignments and conveyance of trail easements.

**ACQUISITION COST:** The purchase price for the fee title acquisition of the Taylor Ranch is \$2.24 million. PLT has requested a County contribution of \$285,000 to fully fund this acquisition. PLT has secured other funding commitments from the following sources:

- Sierra Nevada Cascade Conservation Grant Program (\$825,000)
- Wildlife Conservation Board (\$760,000)
- CALTRANS Environmental Enhancement and Mitigation Program (\$250,000)
- California Wildlife Foundation (\$120,000)

The purchase price of the Freiheit Big Hill Preserve conservation easement is \$1.3 million. PLT has requested a County contribution of \$315,000 to fully fund this acquisition. Other funding commitments for this acquisition include:

- Sierra Nevada Cascade Conservation Grant Program (\$600,000)
- Wildlife Conservation Board (\$235,000)
- California Wildlife Foundation (\$150,000)

**ENVIRONMENTAL CLEARANCE:** Financial participation in these acquisitions is categorically exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15317 and 15325. These sections provide for the transfer of ownership of land to accept easements or fee title interests in order to maintain the open space character of an area and to preserve existing natural conditions and other resources. It can also be seen with certainty that the requested actions of the Board will have no significant impact under Guidelines Section 15061(b)(3). Each of these facts is a separate and independent basis for the Board's determination that the Board actions are exempt from CEQA and does not require further CEQA review. Any future trail development will require further review in compliance with CEQA.

**FISCAL IMPACT:** Funding for these acquisitions is available from two sources: the Tree Preservation Fund and Open Space Reserves. The balances in these funds are \$1,044,651 and \$4,424,071, respectively. It is recommended that the contribution to Taylor Ranch acquisition (\$285,000) be funded from the Tree Preservation Fund and the Freiheit Big Hill Preserve contribution (\$315,000) be funded from Open Space Reserves. Your Board's approval of the attached Budget Revision is necessary to appropriate funding for these contributions.

JD:MD:js

ATTACHMENTS:        ATTACHMENT A – PROPERTY MAP  
                          ATTACHMENT B – AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHS  
                          ATTACHMENT C – POTENTIAL TRAIL CORRIDORS  
                          TAYLOR RESOLUTION  
                          FREIHEIT RESOLUTION  
                          BUDGET REVISION

cc:            COUNTY EXECUTIVE OFFICE

T:\F\BSMEMO2007TAYLOR-FREIHEITPURCHASE AGMT.DOC

# Before the Board of Supervisors County of Placer, State of California

**In the matter of:** A Resolution authorizing the contribution of funds for the acquisition of the Taylor Ranch to the Placer Land Trust and delegating authority to the Director of Facility Services to execute and record a Funding and Easement Agreement with the Placer Land Trust, and to take all other actions necessary to facilitate this transaction and implement the provisions of the Funding and Easement Agreement.

**Resol. No.:**.....

The following RESOLUTION was duly passed by the Board of Supervisors of the County of Placer at a regular meeting held \_\_\_\_\_, by the following vote on roll call:

Ayes:

Noes:

Absent:

Signed and approved by me after its passage.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Bruce Kranz, Chairman  
Board of Supervisors

Attest:  
Clerk of said Board

\_\_\_\_\_  
  
WHEREAS, the Placer Land Trust is, or soon will be, the owner in fee title of that certain real property in Placer County commonly known as the Taylor Ranch, consisting of approximately 321 acres of land; and

WHEREAS, said land possesses significant conservation, habitat, and public recreation values consistent with the objectives of the Placer Legacy Open Space and Agricultural Program; and

WHEREAS, the County wishes to contribute funds in the amount of \$285,000.00 to Placer Land Trust's purchase of this property in consideration of Placer Land Trust's commitment to maintain the preservation and conservation values of this property; and

WHEREAS, Placer Land Trust has agreed to enter into a Funding and Easement Agreement for this property memorializing its commitment.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Supervisors does hereby authorize the funding in the amount of \$285,000.00 to the Placer Land Trust for the acquisition of the Taylor Ranch in the Auburn Valley area of Placer County and does hereby delegate authority to the Director of Facility Services to execute and record a Funding and Easement Agreement with the Placer Land Trust, and to take all other actions necessary to facilitate this transaction and implement the provisions of the Funding and Easement Agreement.

# Before the Board of Supervisors County of Placer, State of California

**In the matter of:** A Resolution authorizing the contribution of funds for the acquisition of a conservation easement over the Freiheit Property to the Placer Land Trust and delegating authority to the Director of Facility Services to execute and record a Funding and Easement Agreement with the Placer Land Trust, and to take all other actions necessary to facilitate this transaction and implement the provisions of the Funding and Easement Agreement.

**Resol. No.:**.....

The following RESOLUTION was duly passed by the Board of Supervisors of the County of Placer at a regular meeting held \_\_\_\_\_, by the following vote on roll call:

Ayes:

Noes:

Absent:

Signed and approved by me after its passage.

Attest:  
Clerk of said Board

\_\_\_\_\_  
Bruce Kranz, Chairman  
Board of Supervisors

---

WHEREAS, the Placer Land Trust is, or soon will be, the owner of a 313 acre conservation easement commonly known as the Freiheit Big Hill Preserve over certain real property in Placer County, consisting of approximately acres of land; and

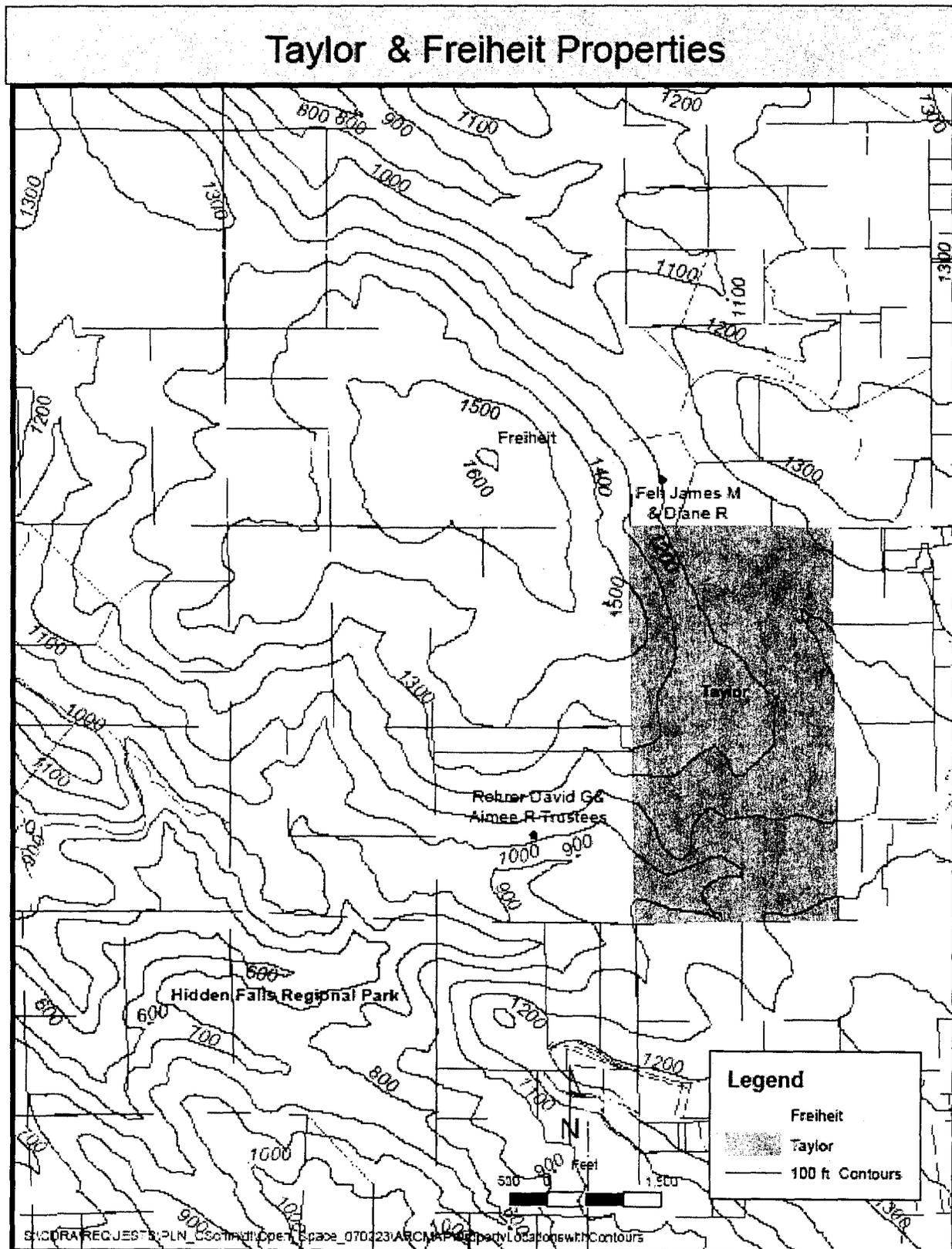
WHEREAS, said land subject to the easement possesses significant conservation, habitat, and public recreation values consistent with the objectives of the Placer Legacy Open Space and Agricultural Program; and

WHEREAS, the County wishes to contribute funds in the amount of \$315,000.00 to Placer Land Trust's purchase of this easement in consideration of Placer Land Trust's commitment to maintain the preservation and conservation values of this property; and

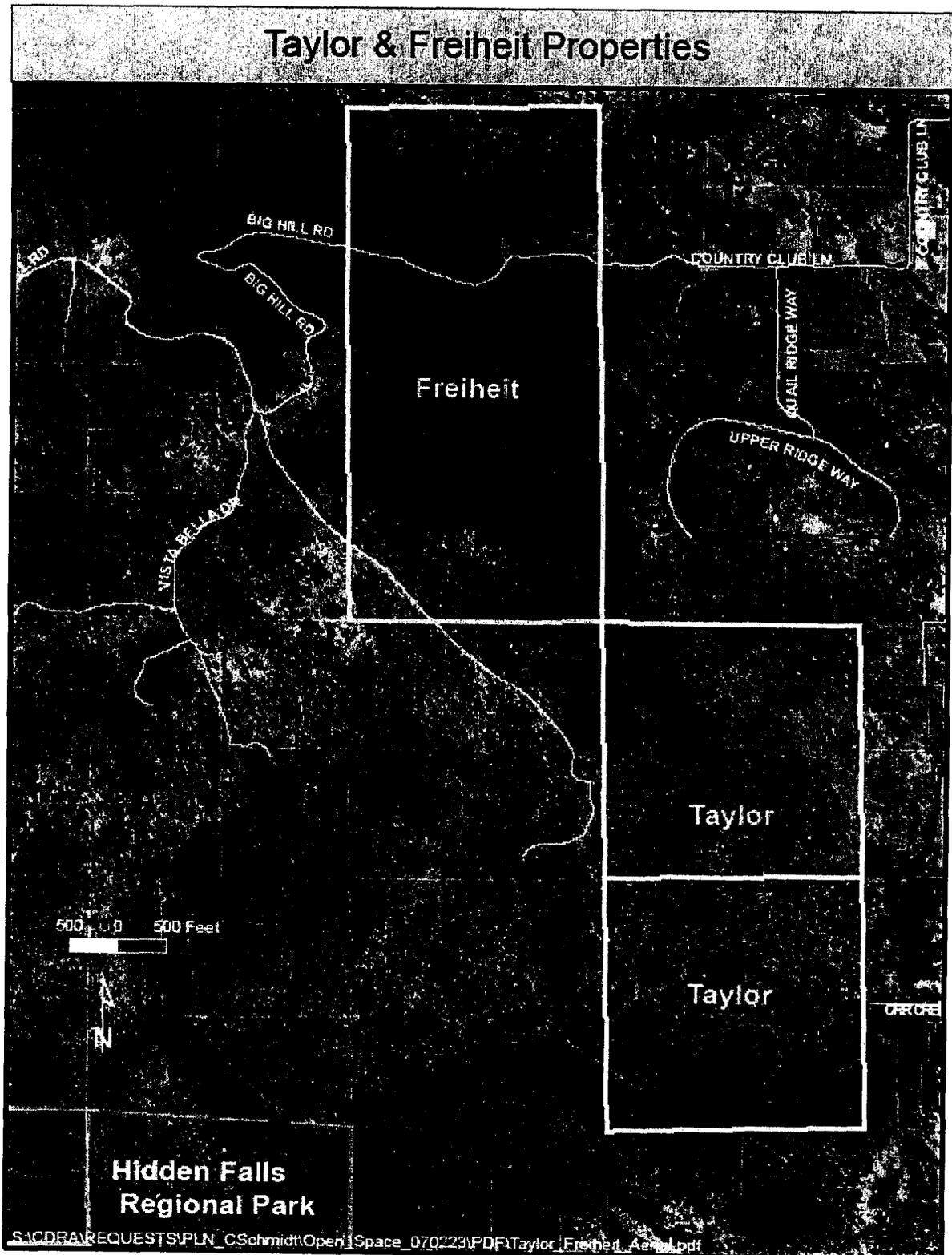
WHEREAS, Placer Land Trust has agreed to enter into a Funding and Easement Agreement for this property memorializing its commitment.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Supervisors does hereby authorize funding in the amount of \$315,000.00 to the Placer Land Trust for the acquisition of the Freiheit Big Hill Preserve conservation easement over property in the Auburn Valley area of Placer County and does hereby delegate authority to the Director of Facility Services to execute and record a Funding and Easement Agreement with the Placer Land Trust, and to take all other actions necessary to facilitate this transaction and implement the provisions of the Funding and Easement Agreement.

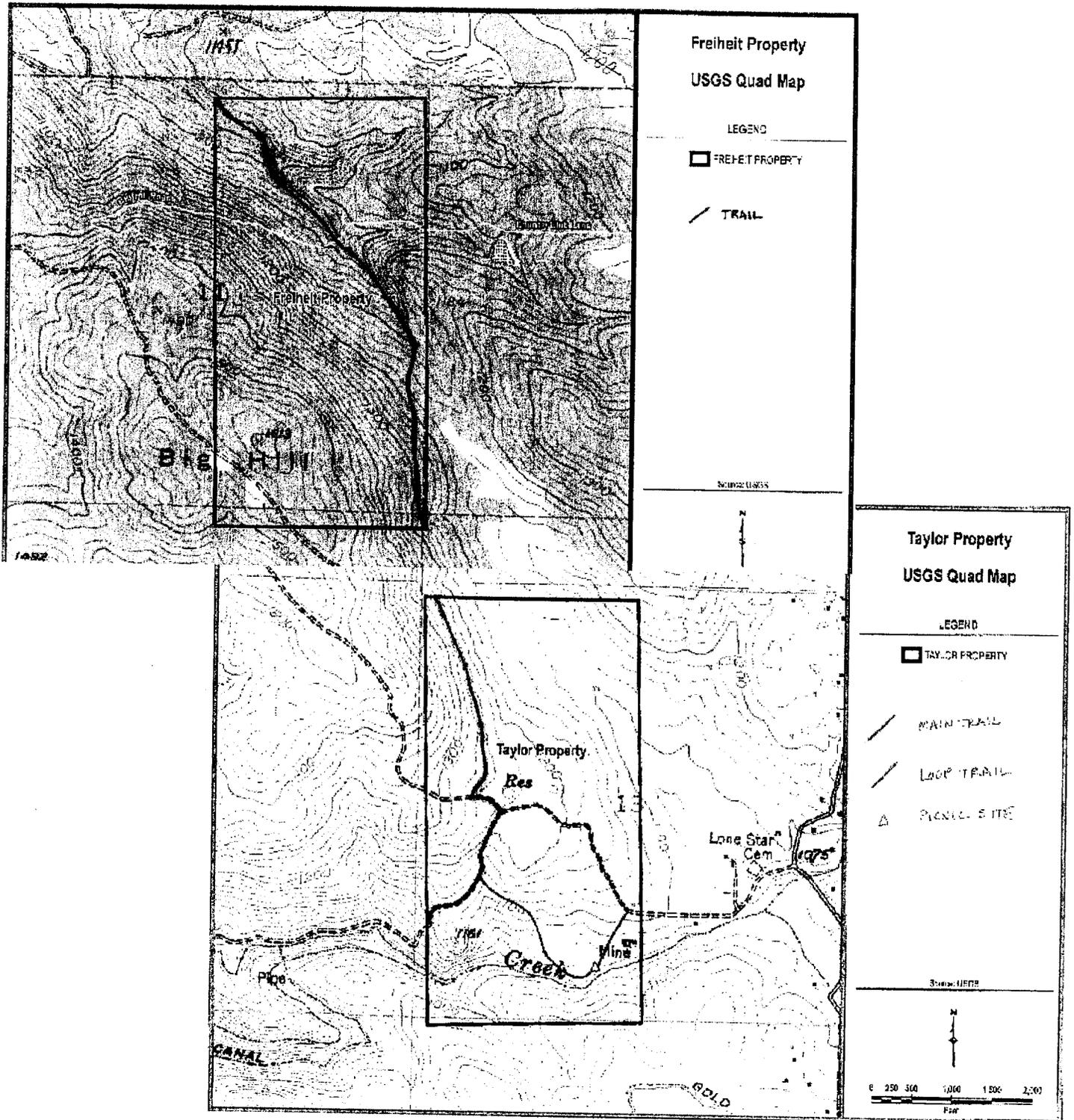
PROPERTY MAP



AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHS



# TAYLOR & FREIHEIT PROPERTIES POTENTIAL TRAIL CORRIDORS



**BUDGET REVISION**

**POST DATE:**

DEPT NO.	DOC TYPE	Total \$ Amount	TOTAL LINES
10 BR		885,000.00	3

Cash Transfer Required

Auditor-Controller

Reserve Cancellation Required  
G/L/Sub G/L

Fund 150  
2420/558000

County Executive

Establish Reserve Required

\$ 315,000

Board of Supervisors

ESTIMATED REVENUE ADJUSTMENT										APPROPRIATION ADJUSTMENT											
DEPT NO.	T/C	Rev	Fund	Sub Fund	OCA	FCA	OBJ 3	PROJ.	PROJ. DTL	AMOUNT	DEPT NO.	T/C	Rev	Fund	Sub Fund	OCA	FCA	OBJ 3	PROJ.	PROJ. DTL	AMOUNT
10	006		150		224000	22400	8780			285,000.00	10	014		150		224000	22400	3395			315,000.00
											10	014		150		224000	22400	3395			285,000.00
										<b>TOTAL</b>											<b>600,000.00</b>

REASON FOR REVISION: To increase appropriations to purchase Freitheit Big Hill Preserve using Open Space reserves. To increase appropriations and revenues for contribution for Taylor acquisition using tree mitigation funds.

Prepared by Linda Oakman Ext 4681

Date: 3/14/07

Page: \_\_\_\_\_

Budget Revision # \_\_\_\_\_ FOR INDIVIDUAL DEPT USE

Department Head \_\_\_\_\_  
Board of Supervisors \_\_\_\_\_

159

