



*Friends of the Santa Cruz River*  
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Friends of the Santa Cruz River officially endorses the “Citizens for Responsible Growth” campaign which seeks to reverse the recent Santa Cruz County Supervisors’ allowance of two major amendments to the county’s Comprehensive Land Use Plan, by public referenda.

Both of these amendments allow development that would be destructive to the river’s ecosystem. The Las Mesas development proposal would destroy at least a half-mile of river habitat from bridge construction and building in and near the floodplain. It also may have other significant riparian impacts. The proposed Sopori development’s water use could destroy the shallow-water-table-dependent woodlands that remain along Sopori Wash, and compromise major wildlife migration corridors.

But most of all, FOSCR opposes these amendment approvals because their possible benefits to the county are neither big enough, sure enough, nor relevant enough to the expressed wishes of county residents to completely override the Comprehensive Plan’s primacy in its protection of our county’s resources.

Developers need to know that the county is serious about assuring responsible growth. They will strive to truly meet the Comprehensive Plan’s criteria for sustainable, appropriate growth only if county representatives clearly demonstrate that they, rather than developers, control changes in already-zoned growth patterns.

The Arizona State Legislature passed “Smart Growth” legislation requiring counties to

- create Comprehensive Land Use plans involving a lengthy citizen participation process, and
- actually follow these plans, so county growth would occur in ways and locations best suited to residents’ goals and values.

The County should respect and protect our Character Areas’ unique and irreplaceable attributes. The “Northwest Character Area”, one of six described in the Comprehensive Plan, is where both major Comprehensive Plan amendments will apply. Once lost, the open spaces, rural character, wildlife corridors, sustainable water use, and living river of this “gateway to Santa Cruz County” cannot be re-created. If allowed to stand, these amendments will lead to significant long-term economic as well as community and ecological losses.

Santa Cruz County’s Comprehensive Land Use Plan as updated in 2004 is our county’s best blueprint for sustainable growth. This will preserve the Santa Cruz River and other treasured attributes of our area, and will enhance the long-term economic, ecological, and cultural well-being of our communities. If the majority of our elected officials will not effectively protect our county’s interests, we must take it upon ourselves to do so.

Sherry Sass  
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for the FOSCR Board of Directors