



November 21, 2018

Ms. Tammi Dewitt,
Yavapai County Planning Department
10 South 6th Street
Cottonwood, AZ 86326

Re: El Rojo Grande Ranch

Dear Planning and Zoning Commissioners:

Officers

Michael Yarborough,
President

Joanne Kendrick,
Executive V.P.

Abbie Denton,
Treasurer

Susan Murrill,
Secretary

Trustees

Rob Adams

Georgia Munsell

David Norton

Bill Pumphrey

Craig Swanson

Jo Anne VanDerveer

Mike Ward

Carla Williams

Keep Sedona Beautiful, formed in 1972, is committed to protect and sustain the unique scenic beauty and natural environment of the Greater Sedona Area. We do not oppose development. We simply believe that any development in the Sedona area should take into consideration a harmonious balance with our natural environment.

The value of the Sedona area as well as the Verde Valley in general is the unique beauty of the landscape as well as the open space that interfaces with the national forest.

Common sense would dictate that certain private lands that interface with the open space receive special consideration and thought when requests for development or zoning changes are submitted to governmental agencies.

Such is the case with the El Rojo Grande Ranch. There is a considerable history in the original development of this ranch. With Yavapai County, the original owners took great pains to minimize density, maximize view preservation and be sensitive to the impacts of the natural surroundings. Forest service exchanges were accomplished in order to protect the ranch from the impact of the highway and the highways eventual designation as a scenic byway. If you research the deeds to this property you will be able to trace the efforts to minimize the impacts of development into perpetuity.

The proposed development by the Equity Lifestyles Corporation is the worst-case scenario for this unique and sensitive land.

- * It maximizes density far beyond the current zoning.
- * It has no sensitivity to building in harmony with the natural surroundings.
- * It severely impacts and destroys the riparian areas and the interface with the forest lands that surround it.
- * It creates a danger of runoff pollution of Dry Creek, which flows into Oak Creek, a protected Arizona waterway.
- * It is in direct conflict with the Yavapai County Comprehensive Plan, which calls for “discouraging development in environmentally sensitive locations such as floodplains, view sheds and wildlife corridors.”
- * The presence of Native American artifacts on this property requires further research regarding the disturbance of the historical significance of this property.

In summary, the development plan that is proposed by ELS has no sensitivity regarding those things that we hold dear as a region and as a community. It will essentially obliterate the natural environment in the interest of maximizing density and mass. It sets a precedent for ignoring the goals in the Yavapai County Comprehensive Plan that call for “enhancing open space and recreation opportunities and preserving the open space character of the county.” It has serious consequences regarding sewage disposal, depleting ground water, traffic congestion and visual blight.

On behalf of our nearly 400 members and sponsors, Keep Sedona Beautiful implores the County Planning and Zoning Commission and the Board of Supervisors to use your best judgment and expertise in deciding what is best for the present and future citizens of the Verde Valley. Please vote NO on the ELS request for a zoning change and vote YES on preserving the natural beauty and unique character of our heritage for our future generations.

Respectfully,

Mike Yarbrough

On behalf of the Board of Directors of Keep Sedona Beautiful
Environmental Stewards Since 1972

Keep Sedona Beautiful, Inc., acting through the stewardship of its members and volunteers, is committed to protect and sustain the unique scenic beauty and natural environment of the Greater Sedona Area.