

Trinity board delays action on trying to preserve forest land

By Jim Schultz

Record Searchlight
01/2000

WEAVERVILLE — To swap or not to swap?

That question was left unanswered Tuesday by the Trinity County Board of Supervisors.

The five-member board delayed until March possible action on a request to urge the U.S. Bureau of Land Management to reserve for three years about 1,000 acres of forest land being eyed for a swap near Weaverville.

The BLM is proposing to exchange about 2,680 acres of public property for 2,395 acres of land owned by Sierra Pacific Industries. About half of those public lands are located in the Weaverville Basin.

But a county Natural Resource Advisory subcommittee wants the Board of Super-

visors to ask the BLM to reserve that approximate 1,000 acres for three years with the hope that the county — or a similar group — can purchase the land so it can be protected from being harvested.

Jim French, Trinity County's superintendent of schools and natural resource committee chairman, said Tuesday that the board put off its decision because it said it needs more time to review the subcommittee's recommendation.

"There's an awful lot to digest," he said.

Still, he said, a 50-minute discussion of the sensitive and complicated issue, which drew an audience of about 18 people, revealed a broad range of opinions about the pending land exchange.

"There was a real diversity of opinion on what should happen," he said, noting that

Weaverville's environmental community opposes the swap.

Nevertheless, he said, there are also several citizens, including some who live next to the property targeted for exchange, who support it because they believe SPI will be a good caretaker of the land.

"It was (a) pretty mixed" reaction, said French.

BLM officials have said they won't go forward with the land swap until supervisors have had time to review and comment on it.

The possible land swap has some Trinity County residents worried that their scenic views will be ruined if the land is sold to SPI and its

trees are harvested.

They also fear extensive harvesting might trigger mudslides, cause flooding and de-

crease property values.
Reporter Jim Schultz can be reached at 225-8223 or at jschultz@redding.com.