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Desert Valley Star
First 2 Report

Palmwood Lost, Nature Wins

By Dean Gray, July 7, 2008

In a Desert Valley News exclusive, a suit between the city of Desert Hot Springs and [the Center For Biological Diversity over the Palmwood development has been settled in the environmental group's favor.](#)

[The ruling means it's over for the developers, said Jonathan Evans, Executive Director of the Center for Biological Diversity.](#)

["It will be foolhardy for developers to push this forward. He has the right to appeal but that would be an economic disaster," Evans said.](#)

Desert Hot Springs plans for a 1,766-acre mixed-use residential development and signature golf course at the western boundary of the city will not go forward. The proposed project is near Highway 62 and Indian Avenue.

[The suit brought by The Center for Biological Diversity](#) and supported by the Sierra Club centered on the contention that the environmental impact report (EIR) prepared on the project was flawed, and hastily concocted.

["This is a precedent setting case. It is no longer business as usual," said Evans.](#)

"This is the problem when you try to short circuit the development process," said, said Councilman Russell Betts. "That's very unfortunate because I'm certain that working with all concerned parties, our city could have had a nice project there. Likely that opportunity is lost."

Desert Hot Spring was dragged into the suit when the city rushed the EIR and approval process in a joint planning commission and city council meeting on December 23, 2006, a meeting that required city staff to work overtime to draft project approvals, working into the scheduled Christmas holiday vacation.

In an agreement with the developer, Palmwood, LLC, the developer agreed to hold the city harmless against any lawsuits and to pay the costs of defending [the suit brought by the Center For Biological Diversity](#). It is not known what the total legal fees, if any, the city will be required to pay as a result of today's ruling.

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