
General Plan Implementation Workshop

Agriculture and Forestry Element
May 4, 2009

Purpose of Workshop

- Provide background information and status of agricultural implementation measures and policies
- Prioritize policies and adopt action plan-
Recommendations for implementation of the element through:
 - Zoning Ordinance Update
 - General Plan Amendment
 - Other analysis as appropriate

Agriculture & Forestry Element Principle

- The Plan must provide for the conservation and protection of El Dorado County's important natural resources, and recognize that the presence of these resources pose a constraint to development

Major Agricultural Strategies

Protecting the Viability of Agriculture to Achieve Long-term Economic Stability

- Agricultural setbacks and buffers
- Ranch marketing
- Agricultural Districts
- Grazing land identification & protection
- Loss of Ag land threshold and evaluation system

Agriculture is a Business

- Top 5 Crop Values
 - Timber Value - \$18.6 Million
 - Fruit & Nut - \$16.7 Million
 - Livestock - \$8.7 Million
 - Hay & Pasture - \$3.2 Million
 - Christmas Trees - \$2.7 Million

Total Agricultural Crop Value

\$53 Million

Agri-Business = Agri-Tourism

- The 2007 estimated impact of agriculture to the El Dorado County economy was:
 - \$187 million for the wine industry
 - \$98 million for Apple Hill (seasonal)
 - \$440 million TOTAL economic impact (includes other crops and activity related to agri-tourism such as hotel stays, restaurant meals, etc.)

Long-Term Economic Stability

General Plan Policies Support Agriculture Industry and Economic Stability

- Land Use Element
 - Land Use Designations
 - AL, Agricultural lands
 - NR, Natural Resources
 - RR, Rural Residential
 - Agricultural Districts (Policy 2.2.2.2)
 - Agricultural support services (Policy 2.2.5.10)
- Agriculture and Forestry Element
 - Agricultural production programs (Policy 8.2.4.1/Measure AF-I)
 - Tax benefits/Williamson Act
 - Conservation easements
 - Land trusts
 - Transfer of development rights

Long-Term Economic Stability

General Plan Policies Support Agriculture Industry and Economic Stability

- Ag Element Cont.
 - Visitor serving uses (Policy 8.2.4.3)
 - Ranch marketing (Policy 8.2.4.4)
- Economic Development Element
 - Assist industries to remain and expand in county (10.1.5.1/I.M. ED-AA)
 - Promote Ag industry through ranch marketing and support of ag commercial uses (10.1.5.4/I.M. ED-II and ED-JJ)
 - Encourage expansion of ag tourism (10.1.6.1/I.M. ED-LL)

Agricultural Setbacks and Buffers History

- Long Range Plan (1981)
 - Timberland to be buffered by 20-acre minimum parcels (III.B.7)
 - Horticulture and Livestock to be buffered by 10-acre minimum parcels (III.B.8 & 9)
- Area Plans
 - Camino-Fruitridge (1985)
 - 10-acre buffer and/or 200' setback (B.4)
 - Cool-Pilot Hill (1982)
 - Unspecified buffer per Ag Buffer Committee (D.1)

Agricultural Setbacks and Buffers History

■ Area Plans

- Diamond Springs-El Dorado (1979)
 - 10-acre minimum for land surrounding agricultural preserves (A.10)
- Georgetown (1979)
 - 10-acre buffer
- Latrobe (1981)
 - 40-acre buffer and 300' setback (A.1)
- Lotus-Coloma (1981)
 - 10-acre buffer of agricultural preserves or public road (D.1)
- South County (1982)
 - Buffers and setbacks per ag buffer committee recommendation (A.11)

Special Setback for Protection of Agricultural Land

- County Code §17.06.150 – Adopted 1983
 - Established 200' setback to specified agricultural uses (timberland, horticulture, livestock and high-density livestock) as defined in zoning ordinance
 - Initially intended to be split between agricultural use and non-compatible use
 - Exempted some parcels if created prior to Aug. 11, 1983
 - Related to agricultural zoning (AE, PA, SA, TPZ) but other agricultural land could be determined to qualify for the special setback

Special Setback for Protection of Agricultural Land

- 1996 General Plan
 - 10-acre buffer and 200' setback to agriculturally zoned land; administrative relief provisions (8.1.3.1 & 8.1.3.2)
 - Revised ordinance 4458 (1997) to implement GP
 - Different standards for lands in Ag Districts & agricultural uses
 - Administrative relief provisions added with fees
- 2004 General Plan
 - Same policy language as the 1996 General Plan
 - Interim Interpretive Guidelines adopted (2006) by PC for setbacks
 - Revision to administrative relief provisions (2007) for setbacks
 - Board interpretation of buffer parcel requirements to not apply to urban designations (2009)
 - Finalize in zoning ordinance update

Agricultural Setbacks and Buffers

Current Policy and Procedures

- 10-acre buffer applies only to lands use designations - RR, NR, OS and AL per Board interpretation Feb. 3, 2009
- Ag Setback standards applied to lands adjacent to Agricultural zoned land is confusing
 - General Plan Policy 8.1.3.2 – includes larger setbacks if needed
 - §17.06.150 – different standards if inside Ag District
 - Interim interpretive guidelines - includes Residential-Agricultural zones (RA) as an agricultural zone
 - Revised administrative relief for setback reduction provides 3 different avenues for relief (staff, Agricultural Commission, Board of Supervisors)

Agricultural Setbacks and Buffers

Action Plan

- Incorporate current policy interpretations and interim guidelines into zoning code update (Measure AF-A) by December 2009
- In the interim:
 - Complete interpretation or amendment to policies 8.1.3.1 and/or 8.1.3.2 to provide greater flexibility, clarity and consistency (to BOS on 5/12)

Ranch Marketing History

- Initiated in response to Pear Decline in the 1960's to maintain economic viability of small farms & ranches by selling enhanced ag products such as pies, jellies, etc
- Concept grew to include promotional events, craft sales, etc.
- Provisions in Camino-Fruitridge Area Plan supporting ranch marketing
- First ranch marketing provisions were adopted in May, 1988 to regulate accessory uses

Ranch Marketing History

- Revised ordinance adopted 2001 (Ord. 4573)
 - Established minimum standards for marketing activities
 - Agricultural zoning
 - 20-acre parcel size (with exceptions)
 - 5-acres minimum of permanent crops/10 acre minimum annual crops
 - Standards for crafters, food service, special events
 - Adopted winery ordinance at same time
 - Established standards for different zone districts
 - Tasting facilities
 - Special events
 - Minimum acreage and parcel size

Ranch Marketing History

- Conflicts from zone changes to new Agricultural zoning and new Williamson Act Contracts – Too much “commercial” use permitted by right for some areas due to road constraints, etc.
- 2004 General Plan
 - New policy (8.1.4.4) promoting ranch marketing activities
 - Implementation Measure AF-A to require update to ranch marketing provisions

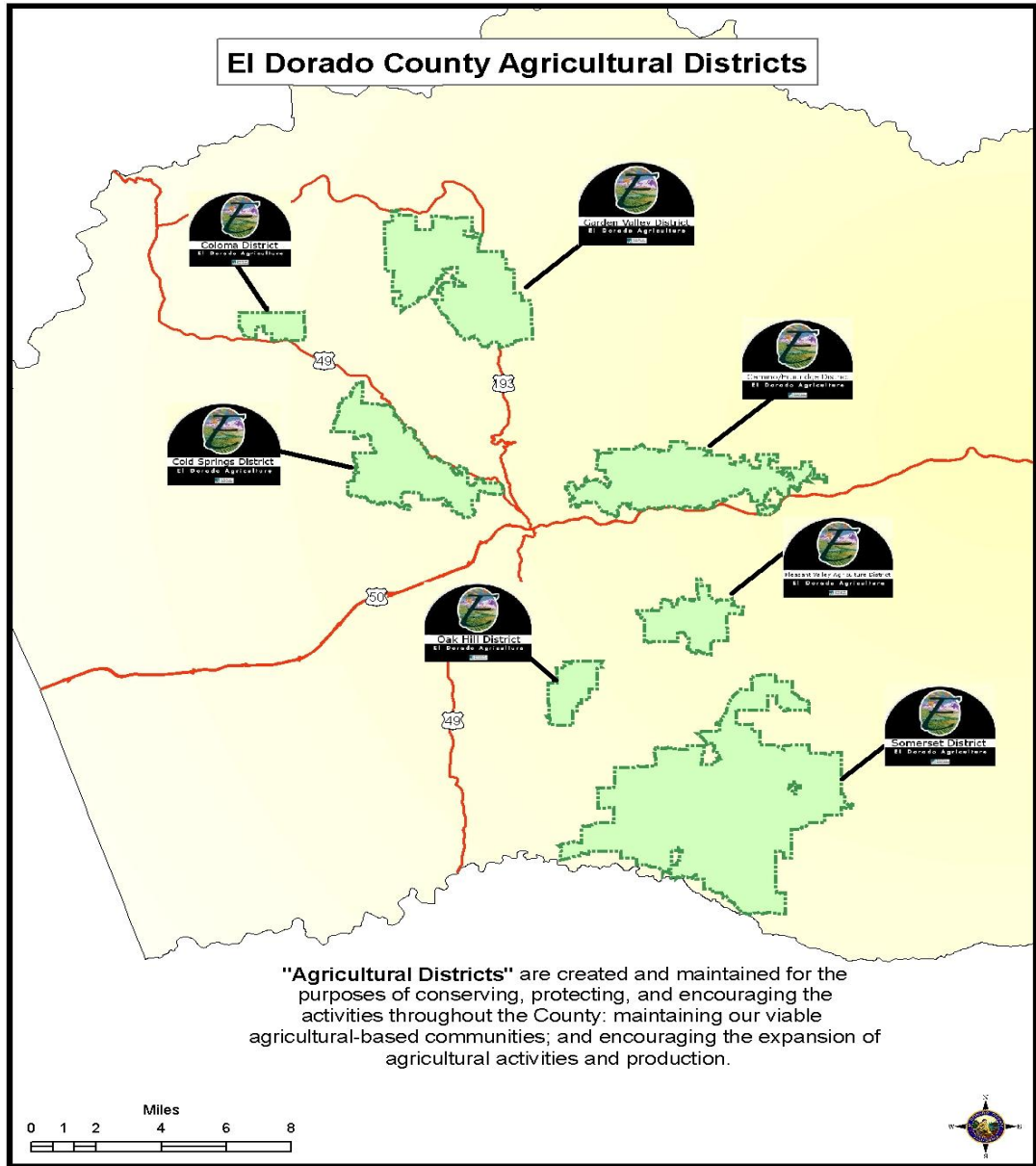
Ranch Marketing Action Plan

- Defer ranch marketing component of Measure AF-A until after adoption of Zoning Ordinance Update
- Develop provisions for limited ranch marketing activities for livestock industry

Agricultural Districts

- Established in Land Use and Agriculture and Forestry Elements of 1996 General Plan
 - Purpose is to “identify the general areas which contain the majority of the County’s...choice agricultural soils and which...should be preserved primarily for agricultural uses.” (Policy 2.2.2.2)
 - “conserving, protecting, and encouraging the agricultural use of important agricultural lands and associated activities...; maintaining viable agricultural-based communities; and encouraging the expansion of agricultural activities and production.” (Policy 8.1.1.1)

El Dorado County Agricultural Districts



"Agricultural Districts" are created and maintained for the purposes of conserving, protecting, and encouraging the activities throughout the County; maintaining our viable agricultural-based communities; and encouraging the expansion of agricultural activities and production.

Agricultural Districts

Current Policy Direction

- Inventory lands in active production or suitable for production and incorporate into an Agricultural District (Policy 8.1.1.7)
- Criteria for Ag Districts (Policy 8.1.1.2):
 - Williamson Act Contract
 - “Choice” soils
 - Under cultivation for commercial crop
 - Possess topographical or other features suitable for ag production
 - Low development densities
 - Determination by BOS that land is best for agriculture rather than other uses
- Amend Ag District boundaries (Measure AF-J)
 - Policy and Measure critical mitigation which reduced level of significance in GP EIR

Agricultural Districts

Action Plan

- Complete inventory of land appropriate to include in the Ag Districts (already begun by Agriculture Dept & UCCE staff)
- Review by Agriculture Commission
- BOS hearing to initiate General Plan Amendment
- Timeframe 12-18 months

Grazing Land History

- Objective in 1996 General Plan to protect range lands for grazing of domestic livestock
 - Identify grazing land and develop incentive based programs to retain such lands (Policy 8.1.2.1; I.M. AF-E)
 - Maintain 40-acre parcel size for lands historically used for commercial grazing (Policy 8.1.2.2)
- Reaffirmed with 2004 General Plan with added policy to utilize Agricultural Land (AL) designation for land capable of sustained grazing of domestic livestock (Policy 8.1.2.3)
- Current economic value = \$11.9M

Grazing Land Action Plan

- Continue working with livestock industry representatives to identify key areas dedicated to grazing
- Include Grazing zone in zoning ordinance update
- Consider creation of grazing districts
 - Similar to Ag Districts where grazing would be predominant use
 - Provide limited ranch marketing opportunities to enhance economic stability, appropriate to and compatible with commercial livestock grazing activities
- Incorporate accessory use provisions in updated ranch marketing ordinance or zoning ordinance

Threshold of Significance

Loss of Agricultural Land

- Established in 1996 General Plan (Policy 8.1.3.4)
- Modified in 2004 General Plan/New I.M. AF-F
 - Used in considering zone change applications converting agricultural land to non-agricultural use
 - Based on California LESA system (Land Evaluation and Site Assessment)
 - Mitigation at 1:1 replacement ratio
 - Monitoring program

Threshold of Significance

Loss of Agricultural Land

- Large-scale projects, particularly conversion of grazing land to residential development in southwest part of county could push County over threshold for ability to maintain certain agriculture industry components
- Develop Agricultural Land Threshold
 - Determine what drives land costs so agriculturalists sell land for development
 - Means to off-set loss of productive land

Threshold of Significance

Action Plan

- Investigate other evaluation systems
 - Work with NRCS – Need to determine what will work for El Dorado County
 - LESA is directed more to individual projects and ranking level of impact rather than county-wide analysis for establishing a threshold
- Establish a threshold for mitigation of loss of Ag land
- Develop mitigation program

Consolidated Action Plan

Listed in Priority Order

- Direct staff to complete Zoning Ordinance update
Focus on including most components of Measure AF-A in Zoning Ordinance Update
 - Dedicate 1.5 FTEs DSD staff for 8 Mo. to complete comprehensive update (General Fund cost already programmed in DSD budget)
 - Include following in update:
 - Buffers and setbacks – incorporate current interpretation into ordinance
 - Agriculture employee housing – ensure provisions for adequate employee housing
 - Agricultural zone districts – properly zone productive agricultural land
 - Agricultural support services – provide opportunities for sufficient commercial support services in Rural Centers and on agricultural land to support industry

Consolidated Action Plan

- Complete interpretation or amendment to policies 8.1.3.1 and 8.1.3.2 to provide greater flexibility, clarity and consistency (Scheduled hearing on May 12)
- Direct Staff to continue work on review and update of Ag Districts
 - Dedicate .25 FTE Ag Dept staff for 12-18 Mo. with assistance for DSD (General Fund already programmed in Ag budget)

Consolidated Action Plan

- Direct staff to develop specific tools to protect livestock industry
 - Work concurrent with Zoning Ordinance update
 - Dedicate .25 FTE in Ag and DSD for 6-8 Mo. (GF cost already programmed in Ag and DSD budget)
 - Inventory grazing land and identify appropriate land for grazing zoning and districts
 - Include a grazing zone in the ordinance
 - Develop provisions for limited ranch marketing activities for livestock industry
 - Consider creation of Grazing Districts, similar to Ag Districts
 - Zoning of land and adoption of marketing provisions to follow comprehensive update

Consolidated Action Plan

- Defer ranch marketing component of Measure AF-A until after adoption of Zoning Ordinance Update
 - Expected to take .25 FTE of DSD and Ag Dept staff 12 Mo. (GF cost currently programmed in DSD and Ag budgets)
 - Evaluate new winery ordinance for successes and challenges
- Develop loss of agricultural land threshold and evaluation system
 - Expected to take 1 FTE Ag Dept staff 12 Mo. (NOT currently programmed in Ag budget)
 - Defer until other implementation tasks are completed
 - Work with NRCS, UCCE - Determine method that is appropriate for EDC unique agricultural needs

Questions and Comments



Requested Board Action

- Adopt consolidated action plan in priority order as presented by staff