

# Memo

**To:** Suzanne Allen de Sanchez, Clerk of the Board of Supervisors  
**From:** Supervisor John R. Knight  
Supervisor James R. Sweeney  
**Date:** 2/27/2009  
**Re:** BOS Agenda March 3, 2009, Item #25 08-0832

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Attached is a document we prepared as an alternative to staff's version for the INRMP Request for Proposals.

Please add this to the documentation for this item to be considered by the Board.

Thank you.

2009 FEB 27 AM 9:42

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS  
EL DORADO COUNTY

## INTEGRATED NATURAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT PLAN AND ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENT PREPARATION

- I. **Purpose:** The El Dorado County Development Services Department is seeking proposals from qualified consultants to conduct the development of the El Dorado County Integrated Natural Resources Management Plan (INRMP) for the west slope of the County at 4000' elevation and lower.

The County adopted a General Plan in 2004. Several of the Policies (7.4.2.8, 7.4.2.9, and 7.4.1.6) and Implementation Measures (CO-M and CO-U) are General Plan EIR mitigation measures that are intended to protect natural resources (Policy 7.4.2.8), corridors for wildlife movement, particularly large terrestrial mammals (Policy 7.4.2.9), and state or federally listed rare, threatened or endangered species and their habitats (Policy 7.4.1.6) and are the focus of this RFP. These policies and measures direct the County to identify important habitat and to establish a program for habitat preservation, effective management, monitoring, and mitigation. This will include developing land conservation strategies that conserve and restore contiguous blocks of important habitat to offset the effects of increased habitat loss and fragmentation elsewhere in the county. Habitat preservation areas, with preference given to large contiguous blocks of habitat in areas not subject to future fragmentation and where feasible, corridors to facilitate species movement among these blocks, are to be identified. Together, these areas will form a network of priority preservation lands in El Dorado County. The hope is that establishing such a network will provide proactive preservation planning at a landscape level that will reduce future endangered species listings, human-wildlife conflicts, and make El Dorado County more resilient to expected land-use and global climate change. El Dorado County's population is projected to reach 243,000 by 2025, an increase of over 80,000 new residents. This plan will compliment existing efforts by planners and developers to avoid or compensate for environmental impacts covered under CEQA by identifying receiving areas for investment in offsite mitigation. A preservation plan can also galvanize efforts to pursue state and federal funding to implement local land and water conservation projects. The County considered and rejected the option to pursue a Habitat Conservation Plan and Natural Communities Conservation Plan, and has elected to utilize the methodology established in the General Plan.

II. **Background:**

A. **Regional Location**

El Dorado County is located in northern California and is bordered by Sacramento, Placer, Amador and Alpine counties in California, and Douglas County, Nevada. The County is located in the central Sierra Nevada, east of the Central Valley. The western border is flanked by the City of Folsom. The eastern-most border runs through Lake Tahoe, in the Sierra Nevada.

B. **Physical Features**

El Dorado County covers approximately 1,789 square miles (1,145,385 acres) ranging from the residential foothills of El Dorado Hills to the high Sierra Nevada mountain range. The Sierra Nevada, Middle Fork and South Fork American River, and Lake Tahoe are among the county's primary natural features. El Dorado County is traversed by several major roadways including US Highway 50 and State Routes 49, 88, and 89. Elevations range from 200 feet above sea level at the western most boundary of the county to 10,081 feet at the highest point of Freel Peak on the western

edge of the Lake Tahoe Basin. The County has considerable topographic variation, with more than half of the land area having slopes in excess of 25%.

**[Insert discussion that half of the land in El Dorado County is in public ownership...state, federal or local agencies. The INRMP should evaluate the extent to which resources are or can be protected on public lands as a first priority.]**

Agricultural land (AL), as designated on the 2004 General Plan Land Use Diagram, comprises approximately 60,000 acres. Approximately 50,000 acres of land in the county are designated as Agricultural Districts (GP DEIR 2003). These acreage amounts do not necessarily include all grazing land, or land in current agricultural production. The 2007 El Dorado County Crop Report calculates that approximately 4,600 acres are in agricultural production supporting fruit and nut crops, hay, irrigated pasture, and nursery products. Rangeland (dryland) comprises approximately 233,000 acres. The county is also a mining region, capable of producing a wide variety of mineral resources. Approximately 864,000 acres of El Dorado County are forestland; however, most forestland is at elevations higher than 4,000' and not within the scope of this study.

The county has a rich diversity of lakes and rivers, natural plant communities, and wildlife at or below the 4,000' elevation, within the study area. A unique soil type (gabbro soils) supports an array of plant species that are rare, endangered, or declining throughout their range. A substantial number of these plant populations are protected in the Pine Hill Ecological Preserve, located in five areas totaling approximately 3,550 acres in the pine Hill area between Cameron Park and Salmon Falls.

### **C. Growth Patterns & Projections**

The physical features and the environment of El Dorado County are an important influence on its land use and development patterns. The most important physical features affecting development are the Sierra Nevada range, US Highway 50, large areas of the county dominated by forestland, and Lake Tahoe.

The Sierra Nevada divides El Dorado County into two distinct topographic areas – the west slope and Lake Tahoe Basin. The west slope extends from the Sacramento County line on the west to the summit of the Sierra Nevada on the east and contains most of the developed land in the county. The 2004 General Plan directed development on the west slope to concentrate growth in areas with existing infrastructure, such as near the county line and along US Highway 50, with large scale residential and commercial developments in the process of building, including many approved plans for future additional development. The density of residential and commercial development gradually decreases and the amount of open space (agricultural fields and forestland) increases moving easterly from the foothills to the Sierra Nevada. Placerville, located approximately 20 miles from the western county line, is the only incorporated city on the west slope.

US Highway 50 bisects El Dorado County, traveling east-west from Sacramento County through Placerville and into the Lake Tahoe Basin just south of the lake. Historically, development in the county has closely followed this route, with the densest development in the west. Major cities, towns and developments along this corridor include El Dorado Hills, Cameron Park, Shingle Springs, Placerville, Pollock Pines, and South Lake Tahoe. In addition to being a development pathway, US Highway 50 is a major transportation corridor for residents living in El Dorado County who work in Sacramento County, and for recreational-related traffic generated from areas outside of the county.

Outside the US Highway 50 corridor, west-slope development follows the other main highways in the County: State Routes 40 and 193. SR 49 crosses the county from north to south and connects many of the original boom towns founded during the Gold Rush of 1848. This route is a prime tourist designation, and the towns of Cool, Pilot Hill, Coloma, Lotus, Placerville, Diamond Springs, and El Dorado promote the mining heritage of the region with museums, historic districts, and commercial areas. SR 193 crosses the northern part of the County from SR 49 to Greenwood and Georgetown, then turns south through Kelsey, and into Placerville.

El Dorado County has experienced rapid growth over the past 20 years. The countywide population increased from 85,212 in 1980 to approximately 163,585 in 2002. The county had approximately 73,791 dwelling units and 45,300 jobs in 2002. The majority of this development is focused in the area nearest to the Sacramento County line and along US Highway 50. The average annual growth rate for 1980-2002 was 3 percent.

#### **D. Biological and Natural Resources**

El Dorado County possesses a diversity of native flora and fauna. This diversity can be attributed to a combination of unique physical characteristics that have resulted in a wide range of habitats. These unique physical features include a wide range of elevations and varied terrain, diverse substrate material, large tracts of contiguous natural habitat, and a broad range of climatic conditions. Coniferous forest is dominant at higher elevations in the eastern half (primarily located above 4,000' elevation and not generally within the scope of this study); oak and hardwood habitats are found mostly in the central region, and annual grassland, chaparral, agriculture, and urban development is found primarily in the western third of the county.

A total of 29 special-status plant species have been documented in the county. Of these, six are state or federally listed as Threatened, Endangered, or Rare. The remaining 24 special-status plants are on CNPS (California Native Plant Society) List 1B or List 2. See Table 5.12-2 of the General Plan DEIR for a complete list ([http://www.co.el-dorado.ca.us/Planning/Volume2/V2\\_512.pdf](http://www.co.el-dorado.ca.us/Planning/Volume2/V2_512.pdf)). Not all species occur in the study plan area (below 4,000' elevation).

Several special-status plants are restricted to the Pine Hill soil formation in western El Dorado County. These plants are of particular concern to state and federal agencies responsible for protection of natural resources because of the rarity of the plants and their limited range, and because of the high development pressure in the area.

The Pine Hill formation gabbroic soils support seven special-status plant species: Stebbins' morning-glory, Pine Hill ceanothus, Pine Hill flannelbush, El Dorado bedstraw, Layne's butterweed, El Dorado mule-ears, and Red Hills soaproot. An eighth plant, the Bisbee Peak rush-rose, is listed by CNPS as rare. Of these, three of these plants are endemic to the Pine Hill region. Another two species are nearly endemic, with only a few small colonies of the plants found elsewhere. A total of 740 plant species (10% of California's total) have been recorded in a 25,700-acre area within the pine Hill formation. **[Need to explain that work is separately underway on an MOU with Agencies...that document will be incorporated into the INRMP. Extensive work on this issue is not required of the INRMP consultant.]**

A total of 51 special-status wildlife species are known to occur in El Dorado County. Of these, ten species are state or federally listed as Threatened or Endangered: vernal pool fairy shrimp, valley

elderberry longhorn beetle, Lahontan cutthroat trout, California red-legged frog, willow flycatcher, American peregrine falcon, bald eagle, bank swallow, California wolverine, and Sierra Nevada red fox. The remaining 41 species are considered as California Species of Special Concern by CDFG and/or federal Species of Concern by USFWS. See Table 5.12-3 of the General Plan DEIR for a complete list ([http://www.co.el-dorado.ca.us/Planning/Volume2/V2\\_512.pdf](http://www.co.el-dorado.ca.us/Planning/Volume2/V2_512.pdf)). Not all species occur in the study plan area (below 4,000' elevation).

El Dorado County's Weber Creek watershed supports one of only six known populations of California red-legged frogs (CRLF) in the Sierra Nevada. The confirmed population was discovered in an impoundment along the North Fork of Weber Creek. The Spivey Pond impoundment and surrounding uplands were purchased as part of a cooperative effort between state and federal agencies and are currently managed by BLM to protect the frog and its habitat. The Spivey Pond site is the only area in El Dorado County designated or proposed to be designated as Critical Habitat for the CRLF.

The effects of existing development and growth projected by the General Plan on the western slope are threats to biological diversity and sensitive biological resources. The impacts on biological resources are primarily the result of urbanization of the area, habitat fragmentation, water pollution, and conversions of natural habitats to agricultural uses. As a result of these existing and projected impacts, El Dorado County approved Mitigation Measure 5.12-1(d) in the 2004 General Plan DEIR: Develop and Implement an Integrated Natural Resources Management Plan, which further called for the adoption of General Plan Policy 7.4.2.8 that mandates the county to identify important habitat and to establish a program for effective management and habitat preservation.

Further information on El Dorado County's biological and natural resources is available from the General Plan DEIR at: [http://www.co.el-dorado.ca.us/Planning/Volume2/V2\\_512.pdf](http://www.co.el-dorado.ca.us/Planning/Volume2/V2_512.pdf).

**III. Scope of Services:** The successful Proposer will be consulting throughout the process of the INRMP with the Board of Supervisors, the Planning Commission, the Agricultural Commission, County Planning staff, PAWTAC, and ISAC. The Plant and Wildlife Technical Advisory Committee (PAWTAC) and the INRMP Stakeholders Advisory Committee (ISAC) were appointed and established by the Board of Supervisors for their specialized knowledge of El Dorado County. PAWTAC members were chosen for their technical and biological expertise relating to plant and wildlife issues. ISAC members were chosen for their specialized community experience representing various fields. PAWTAC and ISAC will provide the consultant input for review, critiques, and recommendations for habitat mapping, habitat protections strategy, mitigation assistance, habitat acquisition, habitat management, habitat monitoring, and Important Biological Corridor overlay, utilizing their specialized knowledge of El Dorado County.

The successful Proposer will be required to enter into an agreement for services with the county substantially similar in form to that attached hereto as Exhibit "A", marked "Sample Agreement for Services." Any reference in this Request for Proposal to specific terms of the agreement are for illustrative purposes only and shall not limit the scope of the obligations to be assumed by the successful Proposer under the agreement. In the event of any conflict between a provision of this Request for Proposal and the provisions of the agreement attached as Exhibit "A", the terms of the agreement shall govern. The Services to be provided shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

***Initial Tasks:***

**1. Map Important Habitat and Connectivity:**

- i. Facilitate discussions with PAWTAC, ISAC and the Board of Supervisors to define “Important Habitat,” “Large Expanses,” and “Native Vegetation,” as used in General Plan Policy 7.4.2.8.
- ii. Utilize (and update, where appropriate) INRMP Initial Inventory mapping layers ([http://www.co.el-dorado.ca.us/Planning/genplan/Final\\_Initial\\_Composite\\_0400408.pdf](http://www.co.el-dorado.ca.us/Planning/genplan/Final_Initial_Composite_0400408.pdf)). Include Oak Woodland Management Plan (OWMP) Priority Conservation Areas (PCAs), all lands in the Ecological Preserve (EP), publicly-owned lands, lands subject to conservation easements, and lands designated Open Space or Natural Resource in the 2004 General Plan. Utilize existing data (i.e., the EIP Rare Plant Study, the OWMP, County GIS data) to update, if necessary, the INRMP Initial Inventory Map.
- iii. Develop a recommended list of Indicator Species to be utilized in identification of potential core habitat areas, corridors and linkages. For each Indicator Species, identify habitat relationships and discuss relevant characteristics such as, distribution, status, dispersal and home range requirements.
- iv. Evaluate the need for north-south wildlife movement corridors and linkages, including identification of species with north-south migration patterns. Analyze the barrier effect of Highway 50 and other major roadways. Identify existing locations along Highway 50 that allow safe passage for terrestrial mammals. Examine and discuss issues involved with retrofitting existing drainage structures and undercrossings to provide for discrete wildlife crossings, including an approximation of the cost, to allow the County to assess the feasibility of such an approach. Analyze prior research studies, such as the county-specific study “The Potential Impacts of Development on Wildlands in El Dorado County, California” authored by S.C. Saving and G.B. Greenwood (USDA Forest Service Gen.Tech. Rep. PSW-GTR-184.2002.) Identify alternative locations for wildlife movement across Highway 50 (such as Weber Creek and areas east of Placerville), and examine the relative feasibility of those locations.
- v. Deliverables: Compile information and prepare admin draft, public review draft, and final Important Habitat Inventory Report and Map. Compile information and prepare admin draft, public review draft, and final Indicator Species Report. Compile information and prepare admin draft, public review draft, and final Analysis of North-South Wildlife Movement Corridors.

**2. Assist the county in identifying alternative approaches for preparation of the INRMP:**

- i. Identify a range of alternative approaches available to the County to complete the remaining tasks; discuss the advantages and disadvantages of each. Include a discussion of the methodology employed in other jurisdictions for similar conservation plans. By way of example, some of the methods to be discussed might include GIS-based computer-modeling, a criteria-based program, and a Conceptual Conservation Plan approach.

- ii. Assist the County in preparation of a revised Scope of Work in compliance with General Plan Policies 7.4.2.8.
- iii. Deliverables: Compile information and prepare admin draft, public review draft, and final INRMP Implementation Alternatives Report.