

**Addendum to the El Dorado County General Plan
Environmental Impact Report**

**El Dorado County General Plan Conservation and
Open Space Element Update**

State Clearinghouse Number 2001082030

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December 2025

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Overview

This document constitutes an addendum to the certified Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR) (State Clearinghouse No. 2001082030) for the El Dorado County (County) General Plan. County staff has determined that an addendum is the appropriate document for the 2026 amendments to the County Conservation and Open Space Element because minor revisions and updates are required by Senate Bill 1425 (SB 1425), and none of the revisions or updates trigger any of the conditions for preparation of a subsequent or new document under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). This addendum was prepared pursuant to the CEQA Statutes provided in California Public Resources Code section 21000 et seq. and CEQA Guidelines (California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Section 15000 et seq.).

B. CEQA Authority for Addendum

Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines section 15164(a), the lead or responsible agency must prepare an addendum to a previously certified EIR if some changes or additions are necessary but none of the conditions described in section 15162 calling for preparation of a subsequent EIR have occurred. CEQA Guidelines section 15164(e) provides that the brief explanation of the decision to not prepare a subsequent EIR must be supported by substantial evidence.

Under CEQA Guidelines section 15162, “no subsequent EIR shall be prepared for that project unless the lead agency determines...one or more of the following conditions occur:

- 1) Substantial changes are proposed in the project which will require major revisions of the previous EIR or negative declaration due to the involvement of new significant environmental effects or a substantial increase in the severity of previously identified significant effects;
- 2) Substantial changes occur with respect to the circumstances under which the project is undertaken which will require major revisions of the previous EIR or negative declaration due to the involvement of new significant environmental effects or a substantial increase in the severity of previously identified significant effects;
- 3) New information of substantial importance, which was not known and could not have been known with the exercise of reasonable diligence at the time the previous EIR was certified as complete or the negative declaration was adopted, shows any of the following:
 - a) The project will have one or more significant effects not discussed in the previous EIR or negative declaration;

b) Significant effects previously examined will be substantially more severe than shown in the previous EIR;

c) Mitigation measures or alternatives previously found not to be feasible would in fact be feasible and would substantially reduce one or more significant effects of the project, but the project proponents decline to adopt the mitigation measure or alternative; or

d) Mitigation measures or alternatives that are considerably different from those analyzed in the previous EIR would substantially reduce one or more significant effects on the environment, but the project proponents decline to adopt the mitigation measure or alternative.”

C. Scope of Addendum

This addendum addresses whether any of the above conditions have occurred as described in section 15162 of the CEQA Guidelines that would require preparation of a subsequent EIR to the County General Plan FEIR as the result of the minor revisions and updates to the Conservation and Open Space Element.

Section 3 of this addendum includes a table that summarizes the proposed amendments to the Conservation and Open Space Element and completes the necessary CEQA review of the draft documents as compared to the County General Plan FEIR.

D. Adoption and Availability of Addendum

As noted above, this addendum will be considered for approval by the County Board of Supervisors (Board). Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines section 15164(c), an addendum is not required to be circulated for public review but can be included in or attached to the FEIR. Under CEQA Guidelines section 15164(d), the Board must consider the addendum with the FEIR prior to deciding on the proposed amendments to the Open Space and Conservation Element.

II. PROJECT SUMMARY

CEQA requires the County to evaluate the environmental impacts associated with changes to the environment. With this project, the majority of the goals, policies, and implementation measures from the existing Conservation and Open Space Element remain unchanged. In 2022, the California Legislature passed Senate Bill 1425 (SB 1425) which requires every local jurisdiction to review and update its Conservation and Open Space Element to include the following: 1) access to open space for all residents in a manner that considers social, economic, and racial equity; 2) climate resilience and other benefits of open space, correlated with the safety element; and 3) rewilding opportunities, correlated with the land

use element.

The proposed revisions and updates to the element are targeted and focused on compliance with SB 1425. As a policy document, the proposed amendments to the Conservation and Open Space Element do not result in physical changes to the environment, but identify policies to address the management, preservation, and conservation of natural resources, cultural resources, and open space in the County. None of the policies in the proposed Conservation and Open Space Element would change existing land use patterns, as established by the General Plan, and evaluated in the FEIR.

III. PROPOSED CONSERVATION AND OPEN SPACE ELEMENT AMENDMENTS

A. Overview

The proposed amendments to the Conservation and Open Space Element contain various updates for consistency with state law, and updated reference resources throughout the element. The proposed amendments also contain clarifications to existing regulations, and updates to accepted terminology and practices related to cultural resources.

B. Proposed Ordinance Amendments

There are four categories of proposed amendments to the Conservation and Open Space Element. These categories of proposed amendments include the following: equitable access to open space; climate resilience and co-benefits of open space; rewilding opportunities; and clarification or minor language edits. Within each category listed below is a summary of the minor revisions and updates to the Conservation and Open Space Element.

i. Equitable Access to Open Space for All Residents

Revisions and updates in this category are focused on providing access to open space to for all residents of the County regardless of social, economic, or racial background. Examples include the development and incorporation of educational elements into open space promoting engagement with the public and sharing the rich natural and cultural resources of the County.

ii. Climate Resilience and Other Co-benefits of Open Space

Amendments in this category focus on policies that are intended to protect natural resources and use open spaces to reduce exposure to climate hazards such as wildfire, drought, and extreme heat. In addition, amendments in this category demonstrate the co-benefits of open space such as the use of recreational trails in unincorporated parts of the County as fuel breaks for wildfire resiliency.

iii. Rewilding Opportunities

Amendments in this category focus on policies that are intended to preserve, enhance, and expand networks of open space to support beneficial uses such as habitat, recreation, natural resources, historic and tribal resources, water management, and aesthetics. These proposed amendments encourage opportunities for the County to work collaboratively with local tribes and other interested stakeholders to educate the public about the vast natural and cultural resources located in the County. This category of proposed amendments also encourages best practices management strategies to protect and enhance vulnerable or sensitive natural resources, habitat, and ecosystems.

iv. Clarification and Minor Language Edits

Amendments in this category provide clarification to existing policies and use minor edits to existing text for the purpose of updating targeted sections to current recognized terminology. In addition, amendments in this category update and revise industry practice standards and reference materials. These proposed amendments are administrative in nature and would not cause any new or increased impact beyond those impacts previously analyzed in the FEIR and the existing text of the Conservation and Open Space Element.

IV. CEQA ANALYSIS

County staff has determined that an addendum is the appropriate document because minor revisions and updates to the Conservation and Open Space Element are required for compliance with Senate Bill 1425, but none of the revisions or updates would trigger any of the conditions for preparation of a subsequent or new document under CEQA. The proposed revisions and updates to the element are related to policy and do not result in physical changes to the environment but encourages inclusive and collaborative approaches to preserving and protecting open space and cultural and natural resources. The proposed amendments would not change allowable land uses, nor cause new or intensified impacts to the physical environment beyond those impacts previously analyzed in the FEIR. The environmental analysis is presented in the table below, which lists the relevant element citation(s), the subject matter of the proposed amendment category, and relevant CEQA review.

Relevant Ordinance Citation(s)	Proposed Amendment/Category	CEQA Review
Multiple Sections	Clarifications/minor amendments for readability, ease of use, and updates to current accepted terminology. Examples include language added/or deleted to address outdated terminology or practices. (Policy 7.4.2.8 B-D)	The document includes multiple amendments and clarifications for purposes of readability, ease of use, and updates to current accepted terminology. Therefore, as these amendments are non-substantive in nature, the proposed amendments will have no foreseeable physical impact on the environment. These amendments present no new significant environmental effects nor a substantial increase in the severity of a previously identified significant effect, involves no substantial change in circumstances under which the project is undertaken, and require no new or modified mitigation measures.
Objective 7.3.4 Drainage	Add Policy 7.3.4.3/Climate Resilience	This amendment proposes using future projections of flood-causing storms as a criterion for siting of public facilities. The proposed amendment will have no foreseeable physical impact on the environment. The amendment presents no new significant environmental effects nor a substantial increase in the severity of a previously identified significant effect, involves no substantial change in circumstances under which the project is undertaken, and requires no new or modified mitigation measures.
Objective 7.4.2/Identify and Protect Resources	Add Policies 7.4.2.10 and 7.4.2.11/Rewilding Opportunities	These amendments propose the development of a list of priority open space areas that would be included in a future conservation plan and integrated open space connectivity assessment. The development of a list of qualifying open space lands is administrative in nature and there would be no foreseeable physical impact on the environment. These amendments present no new significant environmental effect nor a substantial increase in the severity of a previously identified significant effect, involves no substantial change in circumstances under which the project is undertaken, and requires no new or modified mitigation measures.
Objective 7.4.4/Forest, Oak Woodland, and Tree Resources	Add Policies 7.4.4.5 through 7.4.4.12/Climate Resilience	These amendments include the development of policies and strategies in cooperation with relevant entities for the management of forest resources and wildfire prevention. These amendments would not cause a new significant environmental effect nor a substantial increase in the severity of a previously identified significant effect, involve no substantial change in circumstances under which the project is undertaken, and require no new or modified mitigation measures.

Relevant Ordinance Citation(s)	Proposed Amendment/Category	CEQA Review
Objective 7.4.5/Equitable Access to Open Space	Add Objective 7.4.5 Equitable Access to Open Space and Policies 7.4.5.1 through 7.4.5.11/Equitable Access	These amendments add a new objective and related policy guidance to the element that encourages the County and relevant stakeholders to preserve and enhance equitable access to natural areas and resource-based recreation such as rivers, trails, and open spaces. As policy guidance, these proposed amendments have no physical effect on the environment. The proposed amendments will have no foreseeable physical impact on the environment, involve no substantial change in circumstances under which the project is undertaken, and will require no new or modified mitigation measures.
Objective 7.5.1/Protection of Cultural Heritage	Change Policy 7.5.1.1 from “Development of a cultural resources sensitivity map of the County” to “Development of a cultural heritage management strategy with input from appropriate entities with relevant expertise”/Rewilding Opportunities	This amendment proposes to change strategy the County would use to document and manage the cultural resources of the county and would give direction for the development of this strategy as a part of a future Cultural Resources Ordinance. This amendment presents no new significant environmental effects nor a substantial increase in the severity of a previously identified significant effect, involves no substantial change in circumstances under which the project is undertaken, and requires no new or modified mitigation measures.
Objective 7.5.1/Protection of Cultural Heritage	Add Policy 7.5.1.7/Rewilding Opportunities	This amendment proposes to add a policy to the objective that would encourage the incorporation of significant archeological and tribal cultural resource sites into open spaces where feasible. As policy guidance, this proposed amendment would have no physical effect on the environment. This amendment presents no new significant environmental effects nor a substantial increase in the severity of a previously identified significant effect, involves no substantial changes in circumstances under which the project is undertaken, and requires no new or modified mitigation measures.
Objective 7.5.3/Recognition of Precontact and Other Historic Resources	Add Policies 7.5.3.1 through 7.5.3.5/Rewilding Opportunities	These amendments propose to direct policy for the recognition of precontact cultural history of public open space sites and historic resources where appropriate through the use of educational programs and signage. These amendments present no new significant environmental effects nor a substantial increase in the severity of a previously identified significant effect, involves no substantial change in circumstances under which the project is undertaken, and requires no new or modified mitigation measures.

Relevant Ordinance Citation(s)	Proposed Amendment/Category	CEQA Review
Objective 7.6.1/Importance of Open Space	Add Policy 7.6.1.5/Rewilding Opportunities	This amendment proposes to add a policy for the County to consider developing a strategy for meadow restoration, stream and creek restoration, and riparian buffer and wetland restoration through the use of process-based restoration techniques and green infrastructure. As policy guidance for the development of a management strategy, this amendment would not have an effect on the physical environment. This amendment presents no new significant environmental effects nor a substantial increase in the severity of a previously identified significant effect, involves no substantial change in circumstances under which the project is undertaken, and requires no new or modified mitigation measures.

V. CONCLUSION

Based on the above findings, the County has concluded that preparation of a subsequent EIR for these minor revisions and updates to the Conservation and Open Space Element is unnecessary, and that preparation of an addendum is consistent with CEQA Guidelines section 15164. The County has determined, based on substantial evidence in light of the whole record, that the proposed amendments described in this addendum are not substantial. None of the conditions described under section 15162 of the CEQA Guidelines requiring preparation of a subsequent document have occurred. The modifications do not involve any new significant environmental effects. In addition, no substantial changes have occurred with respect to the circumstances under which the proposed amendments to the Conservation and Open Space Element will be undertaken. The associated modifications to the Conservation and Open Space Element would not involve new information of substantial importance, which shows that the Project will have one or more significant effects not discussed in the previous environmental document.

The County has independently considered the El Dorado County General Plan FEIR and this addendum, and concludes the following:

1. The consideration of the FEIR and approval of the addendum reflect the independent judgment of the County;
2. The contents of the addendum do not substantially change the County General Plan or its circumstances and does not require major revisions to the General Plan FEIR. The information added through the proposed amendments to the Conservation and Open Space Element does not involve a new significant environmental impact, a substantial increase in the severity of an environmental impact, or a feasible mitigation measure considerably different from others previously analyzed that would lessen the significant environmental impacts as previously analyzed in the General Plan FEIR; and
3. Together, the FEIR and this addendum satisfy the requirements of CEQA. Preparation of an addendum is appropriate in accordance with CEQA Guidelines section 15164; no subsequent EIR is required.