

**MINUTES of the
EI DORADO COUNTY
INTEGRATED NATURAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT PLAN
STAKEHOLDERS ADVISORY COMMITTEE (ISAC)
July 1, 2010**

Members in Attendance:

Jamie Beutler*
Bill Center
Francesca Loftis
Kathye Russell
Cindy Shaffer
John Zentner

Fraser Shilling, Ph.D., SEA
Robert Smart, SEA
Peter Maurer, EDC
Beverly Savage, EDC
Sue Taylor, Public

Others in Attendance:

Jordan Postlewait, SEA
Rick Lind, SEA

Members Absent:

Chris Alarcon
Kimberly Beal
David Bolster
Art Marinaccio

*arrived late

Chair John Zentner called the July 1, 2010, meeting to order at 1:15 p.m.

A. Approval of Minutes

There was no quorum to conduct Committee business. Approval of Minutes will be continued to later in the agenda if an additional member arrives.

B. Public Comment

There was no comment from the public.

C. INRMP

C.1. Review and follow-up to Board of Supervisors direction of June 22, 2010

Peter Maurer presented. The Board of Supervisors approved the Habitat Inventory and Mapping Report as a working document that will most likely change during the INRMP process. Supervisor Sweeney submitted a list of questions/comments, "Technical Issues Outline." Staff is preparing a response.

[Jamie Beutler arrived at 1:37 p.m.]

Bill Center asked if, based on feedback from the Board of Supervisors and the technical issues submitted by Supervisor Sweeney, will staff go back and review the mapping issues that were raised at Committee meetings and make revisions. Jordan Postlewait responded that the maps will not be revised at this time. Rather, notes of Committee input will be included along with recommendations for INRMP Phase 2. Bill Center had a long conversation with Bill Haig, BLM, who expressed a strong willingness for BLM to be involved in the INRMP process and curiosity about why they have not been included. Mr. Center felt that a BLM representative would more appropriately serve on PAWTAC, rather than on ISAC.

A. Approval of Minutes

With a quorum now present, Chair Zentner returned to item A on the Agenda. The Minutes of the May 6, 2010, meeting were moved for approval by Mr. Center, seconded by Francesca Loftis and unanimously approved.

C. INRMP (continued)

Jordan Postlewait, SEA, referred to the updated "Focus Points for Upcoming ISAC/PAWTAC Meetings." The current task, Wildlife Movement Corridors, is behind schedule due to lack of quorum at recent meetings.

C.3. Introduction to Wildlife Movement Corridors

Frasier Shilling presented. Introductory presentation of the topic was provided. General Plan Policy 7.4.2 provides direction. Habitat loss and habitat fragmentation are identified in the Wildlife Action Plan for the State of California as the greatest threats to species. All of the indicator species need to move in order to survive. This is also true of the plant species that rely on movement or dispersal for survival. Movement requirements vary greatly by species. A PowerPoint presentation was reviewed and will be sent to Committee members. Dr. Schilling asked Committee members for their input regarding fundamentals to consider when addressing connectivity. Specifically, Committee recommendations were sought regarding rationale for including fish and aquatic organisms in the study.

Mr. Center raised the topic of natural barriers, suggesting the American River presents a significant barrier, like Highway 50. Dr. Schilling agreed that natural barriers exist, such as dry areas to aquatic species and bodies of water to land species. He added that natural barriers tend not to be included in studies since they have existed for as long as the species and the species have adapted.

Chair Zentner asked which species are at the most risk in relation to connectivity and Highway 50. Dr. Schilling replied that, in general, the larger the species, the greater the impact of fragmentation caused by Highway 50. Chair Zentner asked about the gray squirrel. As a species, they are small, they live everywhere and appear to be unaffected by barriers. Chair Zentner asked if one can accurately predict that the gray squirrel will never become extinct due to man-made fragmentation. Dr. Schilling felt that man-made fragmentation will not threaten the gray squirrel. However, fragmentation can cause other species to move in and displace the gray squirrel.

Chair Zentner asked if small species should be excluded from the INRMP study since they are not directly impacted by fragmentation. Dr. Schilling replied that a cross section of species needs to be considered since they are all impacted, in different ways. Francesca Loftis noted that small species form the food chain of larger species. Dr. Schilling stated that at the present time one could say that Highway 50 is not impacting the survival of the gray squirrel. However, Highway 50 could have a significant impact on the species over the long term.

Mr. Center spoke about a private golf course that was being developed along the American River. After the land had been cleared, several species were sighted. The developer pointed to these sightings as indication that the clearing of the land for the golf course did not disrupt the species. The reality was that the species had nowhere to hide. Mr. Center noted that the discussion was focusing on roads and other barriers not on clearing of land for landscape purposes. He also raised the issue of powerline corridors presenting barriers.

(Kathye Russell left the meeting at 2:14 p.m.)

Jamie Beutler suggested that DOT be contacted regarding vegetated underpasses and other connectivity protection measures in relation to the major road modification projects currently underway. For instance, at Missouri Flat Road all of the forest at Weber Creek has been removed. Rick Lind suggested that ISAC and/or PAWTAC could make recommendations to CalTrans and DOT for interchange and underpass designs.

Ms. Beutler also mentioned the Diamond Dorado Parkway, a large project that is currently in the CEQA review stage. Ms. Beutler encouraged citizen input on the project. Ms. Loftis agreed that this project can have a huge impact to species and presents a major barrier parallel to Highway 50 in the Weber Creek area. Mr. Center interjected his understanding that separated four-lane roads, with significant islands in the median, are easier for species to cross. He expressed frustration with the vegetation plan for Lotus Road. Redbuds were planted, rather than plants that could naturalize. Cindy Shaffer noted that policies in the General Plan dictate that the design of larger roads must include wildlife preservation and movement. Weber Creek is a very good example. In Ms. Shaffer's opinion, if Highway 50 were being designed today, the drainages and culverts would be planned very differently to encourage wildlife movement. Chair Zentner

suggested that DOT be contacted regarding current and future projects. Ms. Beutler suggested that DOT be invited to a future meeting to make a presentation on the topic. Dr. Schilling agreed it would be useful to include a DOT representative since transportation issues will be addressed in connectivity discussions. Mr. Maurer will make the inquiry.

C.2. Recommendation on Draft Indicator Species Report

Due to members needing to leave, Dr. Schilling turned discussion to Draft Indicator Species Report. He asked members to send ideas, comments and suggestions to Peter via e-mail. Mr. Lind requested that all comments be sent by July 8. The full document was distributed prior to the May meeting and is available on the Planning web site. The final Indicator Species Report will be presented at the August meeting.

(Francesca Loftis left the meeting at 2:40 p.m.)

C.3. Introduction to Wildlife Movement Corridors (continued)

Discussion returned to Wildlife Movement Corridors. Ms. Beutler suggested that the Committee should decide if there is a need for connectivity and why. Chair Zentner asked if a connectivity report exists for the entire State and, if so, if it is detailed enough for our use. Dr. Schilling replied that a State-wide report was issued in April. The study is fairly coarse and cannot be used to make decisions regarding individual roads. It can be useful, however, in looking at the County as a whole. Mr. Center noted that discussion has focused on indicator animal species and connectivity. He suggested that connectivity and vegetation need to be considered. Vegetation connectivity in the area of Lotus Road, Green Valley Road and Folsom Reservoir is important. In the north-south direction, vegetation in the Lotus Road/Weber Creek area is significant. An important task is protecting current connectivity and preventing permeability in the existing landscape, in addition to creating new crossings, Mr. Center continued.

(Jamie Beutler left the meeting at 3:00 p.m.)

F. Committee member comments; next meeting agenda items.

Meeting adjourned at 3:04 p.m. The next meeting will be August 5, 1:00 p.m.