

DEVELOPMENT SERVICES DEPARTMENT

COUNTY OF EL DORADO

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TO: Board of Supervisors

FROM: Peter N. Maurer, Principal Planner
William J. Stephans, Agricultural Commissioner/Sealer

DATE: April 29, 2009

RE: General Plan Implementation Workshop
Agricultural and Forestry Element

Background:

This is the third of a series of workshops scheduled for the Board to discuss the implementation of the General Plan. These workshops are the result of the ad hoc committee recommendations and Development Services response to those. The focus of this workshop is the Agriculture and Forestry Element which was originally scheduled for March 23, 2009. This memo summarizes the Power Point presentation to be provided at the May 4, 2009 workshop, which is intended to identify the agricultural and forestry related policies and measures set forth in the plan and to establish an action plan for implementation.

Discussion:

There are six primary components of the implementation program of the General Plan relating to agriculture. These are:

- Maintaining the long-term economic stability and viability of the County's agriculture industry;
- Establishing special buffers and setbacks to protect productive agricultural land from non-compatible land uses and development;
- Promoting ranch marketing;
- Enhancing and refining the Agricultural Districts;
- Identifying and protecting productive grazing land; and
- Establishing a threshold and evaluation system for mitigating the loss of agricultural land.

The presentation will cover the importance of the agricultural industry to the overall economic well-being of the County, the historical background of the existing measures and policies from

the Land Use, Agriculture and Forestry, and Economic Development Elements of the General Plan, and suggests an action plan to implement the measures identified in the General Plan.

Staff recommends that the most efficient means to address the majority of the agriculturally-related implementation measures is to focus our efforts on completion of the zoning ordinance update. This will address setbacks and buffers, agriculture employee housing, updates to the agricultural zones and creation of grazing zones, procedures for addressing agricultural support services, and other measures contained in the Agriculture and Forestry Element. Other programs would follow, or begin concurrently, but the primary focus would be on including these measures in the ordinance, as provided by Implementation Measure AF-A.

Recommendation:

The Development Services and Agriculture Departments recommend that the Board of Supervisors adopt an action plan to implement the Agriculture and Forestry Element (summarized below). Specifics on the action plan will be described in the presentation to the Board on May 4, 2009.

1. Include the provisions of Implementation Measure AF-A in the Zoning Ordinance update with the exception of identifying and zoning grazing land.
2. Complete the amendment or interpretation to policies 8.1.3.1 and/or 8.1.3.2 to provide greater flexibility, clarity and consistency. This is scheduled for the Board on May 12, 2009.
3. Modify interim interpretive guidelines to clarify application of setbacks and buffers consistent with the Board interpretations and any policy amendments.
4. Inventory grazing lands and work with the livestock industry to identify lands appropriate for grazing land zoning; work with industry to consider establishing grazing districts, provisions for ranch marketing, and other incentives to enhance grazing operations (part of AF-A).
5. Review and update Agricultural Districts (Measure AF-J). An initial analysis has already been started.
6. Revise ranch marketing provisions in the zoning ordinance (after adoption of comprehensive update).
7. Develop a threshold and evaluation system to assess the loss of agricultural land through development (Measure AF-F). This would be deferred until the items above are completed.