

Butte County Federal/State Land Use Coordinating Committee

April 5, 2021 11:00 – 12:00 AM

Join Zoom Meeting: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88120826803?pwd=ZTUwOG1GUzIVYWcyQmw1MlBwL0w3UT09>

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Meeting Agenda

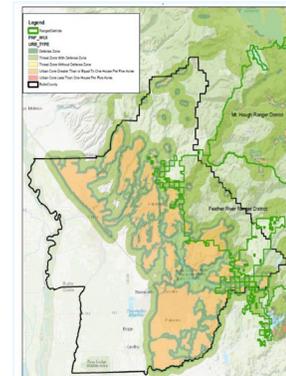
- 1) **Self-Introductions:** Josh Pack, Paula Daneluk, Paul Gosselin, Peggy Moak (committee members)
- 2) **Invited guests:** Calli-Jane DeAnda and Taylor Nilsson (Butte County Fire Safe Council); Wolfy Rougle (BCRCD); Holly Jorgensen (Sacramento River Watershed); John Messina (Butte County Fire); Brian Ring (BC Administration); Cindi Dunsmoor (BC Emergency Services Officer); Jennifer Macarthy (BC DCAO Economic Development); Danielle Nuzum (Deputy Chief Administrative Officer); David Brillenz (PNF District Ranger); Amy Osti (34 North); Bill Miller (LNF Fire Officer); Kelly Peterson (BC Water & Resource Conservation)
- 3) Review and approval of Minutes for March 22, 2021
- 4) \$200,000 SNC Grant Concept Proposal from Chico State Enterprises to develop a fire resiliency projects curriculum and certificate program at Shasta and Feather River Community Colleges to build local capacity for employment in this field in rural areas. The grant will also include development of a fire resiliency plan for a shovel-ready project. Timing for the grant project is October 2021 with curriculum rollout Spring/Summer of 2022. **INFORMATION ONLY**
- 5) Bureau of Land Management Northern CA Integrated Resource Management Plan:
 - a. Update of status of the MOU between the BLM and Butte County, Cooperating Agency (Josh Pack)
 - b. Discuss re-sending the Coordinating Committee's 2017 letter to the BLM during the April comment period.
- 6) **PUBLIC COMMENT:** (THE COMMITTEE IS PROHIBITED BY STATE LAW FROM TAKING ACTION ON ANY ITEM PRESENTED IF IT IS NOT LISTED ON THE AGENDA.)

7) Butte County TASK FORCE Agenda:

- 7.01 Consider a name change to more accurately reflect the mission of the Task Force
 - BC Fire Mitigation Task Force
 - BC Fire Safety Task Force
 - BC Fire Safe Strategies Task Force
 - Other?
- 7.02 Wolfy Rougle: Introduction to the BCRCD "Butte Forested Watersheds Plan" (a deliverable of the Watershed Coordinator grant and a complement to the WUI Program of Work discussed at the last meeting)
 - 7.03 Standing Agenda Items: see agenda below, submitted by the Butte County Fire Safe Council

Butte County Task Force

Standing Agenda Topics



Role of the Task Force

To guide, provide input and assist in creating wildfire safety at a County wide scale with a variety of tactics.

Discussion Topics

1. WUI Pre and Post Program of Work (Action Plan)
*Featured Community: Forest Ranch
2. Butte County Collaborative Group – Roles and Partners
3. Community Wildfire Protection Plan - Project Updates and Timelines
4. Shovel Ready Projects - CEQA and Governor's Budget
5. Paradise Forest Management Plan
6. Cohasset Forest Management Plan
7. Forest Health Handbook

Funding Opportunities

- Landscape Scale Restoration Grant Funding (LSR)
- California Fire Safe Council – Defensible Space Grant
- Stewardship Contract
- Cal Fire CCI Grant

Wildland Urban Interface Areas	
1. Recovery	2. Protection
Paradise	Cohasset
Magalia	Clipper Mills
Concow	Forest Ranch
Yankee Hill	Butte Meadows/Jonesville
Berry Creek	Forbestown
Feather Falls	Kelly Ridge
Bangor	
Butte Creek Canyon	

Northwest California Integrated Resource Management Plan



Virtual Public Outreach Meetings

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Arcata and Redding Field Offices, invites you to attend a series of live virtual public outreach meetings to learn about, discuss, and provide input on the Northwest California Integrated Resource Management Plan (NCIP).

The virtual public outreach meetings will include a presentation, question and answer session, and an opportunity to provide public input. Please note that attendees must register for the meetings in advance at the BLM's project website, below.

April 13, 2021 – 11:00 AM to 1:00 PM Pacific

April 15, 2021 – 4:00 PM to 6:00 PM Pacific

April 19, 2021 – 9:00 AM to 11:00 AM Pacific

April 21, 2021 – 5:00 PM to 7:00 PM Pacific

You can also provide input through the virtual open house website between **March 29 and April 30, 2021**. Website visitors can view information about the planning process, interactive maps, and submit comments. Available at:

<https://www.virtualpublicmeeting.com/ncip-pre-scoping-home>

For project updates, to register for the meetings, or to submit comments, please visit the project website at:

<https://eplanning.blm.gov/eplanning-ui/project/2012803/510>



BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

Administration Center
25 COUNTY CENTER DRIVE, SUITE 200 - OROVILLE, CALIFORNIA 95965
Telephone: (530) 538-7631

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Fourth District

DOUG TEETER
Fifth District

May 24, 2016

Director (630), Bureau of Land Management
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, N.W., Room 2134LM
Washington, DC 20240, Attention: 1004-AE39

RE: BLM Proposed Planning Rule 2.0

Thank you for providing an opportunity to comment on the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) proposal to shape a new future for our public lands through the implementation of Planning Rule 2.0. The Butte County Board of Supervisors (Board) anticipates BLM will continue conducting outreach sessions to involve knowledgeable and thoughtful stakeholder groups who can meet with BLM representatives in local venues. We appreciate the outreach efforts to the larger community.

Access to and responsible enjoyment of public lands is important to the health, social, and economic welfare of our communities in and around Butte County. **We ask that the socio-economic impacts of any proposed plan be considered as a major factor in the assessment and analysis of the plan.** Additionally, the Board believes it is absolutely critical for BLM to coordinate with local government agencies in the very early stages of planning for the future of BLM lands and amenities, and have enacted coordinating status, accordingly (see attached resolution 10-002, dated 1-12-2010). It is the intention of the Board to be actively involved in BLM land and travel management planning on a local level, and decision making as a cooperating agency, as well. **Therefore, the Board requests that the Planning Rule specify that the regional BLM must keep communication channels open with local governments to ensure that projects planned or travel management changes are first discussed and coordinated with those local governments in a cooperative and collaborative manner.** Additionally, as part of NEPA planning, the BLM must take into account and consider the County's proposed management for lands within its jurisdiction. We believe these projects will be more successful with increased transparency and local involvement in the process.

The Board, in conjunction with its Federal/State Land Use Coordinating Committee and Forest Advisory Committee, is looking forward to sharing the diversity of our interests and concerns while combining efforts and perspectives to promote sustainable usages that preserve our native species and encourage responsible recreation on our public lands.

Again thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Respectfully,

Bill Connelly
Chair, Butte County Board of Supervisors



BUTTE COUNTY FEDERAL/STATE LAND USE COORDINATING COMMITTEE

**7 COUNTY CENTER DRIVE
OROVILLE, CA 95965**

February 21, 2018

David Fuller
Jennifer Mata
Molly Brown
Bureau of Land Management
Northern California District
6640 Lockheed Drive
Redding, CA 96002

RE: Cooperating Agency Comment-Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Northwest California Integrated Resource Management Plan (NCIP)

Dear David and Jennifer, and the NCIP Team:

Thank you for the opportunity to meet with you and the other Cooperating Agencies in Redding on February 8, 2018, to review progress to date on the development of alternatives in the early planning stages of the NCIP. Peggy Moak, Claudia Stuart and Radley Ott represented Butte County's Federal/State Land Use Coordinating Committee ("Committee") at the meeting and provided a debrief of the day's events.

We understand that two preliminary alternative concepts (still in development), designed to help guide and shape discussions around management actions, were provided as a basis for discussion, as follows:

Community Access and Development

- Pursue opportunities for cooperative land management that highlight community interests.
- Provide for mechanized, motorized, and pedestrian access and travel between public and other lands; urban/wildland travel network.
- Provide for development opportunities in appropriate locations (gravel, wood products, infrastructure)

- Emphasize recreational development to enhance recreational access and opportunities for local communities while addressing trespass issues (squatting, dumping, poaching, illegal MJ grows)
- Designated OHV open areas to provide for economic growth and tourism
- Retain/acquire lands to eliminate isolated parcels/consolidate parcels for open space management. Dispose of isolated parcels (*those difficult to access/manage*)
- Manage visual resources in consideration of local conditions and needs (*electrical power, cell towers, roads vs. scenic enjoyment*)

Connectivity and Resilience

- Explore opportunities for landscape-scale natural resource management.
- Maintain and enhance connectivity between undisturbed lands and riparian systems.
- Maintain land resiliency to respond to growing population and changing climatic conditions.
- Maintain public lands as open space and as scenic and recreational resources for surrounding communities.
- Prioritize recreational access over consumptive uses (limitations on mineral development, grazing, etc.- preservation vs. use)
- Prioritize acquisition of undisturbed lands that create connectivity with other undisturbed lands.
- Manage for visual resources as a priority in scenic areas.
- ACECs encompass larger areas; more ACECs proposed (including all externally nominated)
- Emphasize Lands with Wilderness Characteristics (over 5000 acres) for opportunities for solitude and primitive recreational experience.

No Action Alternative

Existing Management – currently two different plans, one for Arcata and one for Redding; challenging to merge the two plans into one.

It was explained that the NCIP development process requires two extremes of planning to evaluate the potential consequences of each during the NEPA process. **The group commented, and Butte County concurs, that a balanced approach that takes into consideration specific local scenarios seems most appropriate.**

Role of a Cooperating Agency

Butte County's representatives and other Cooperators present expressed a desire to see the actual alternatives that are developed so that we might comment more substantively, and were disappointed to hear that this is evidently not going to happen. Instead, we understand that the draft alternatives will be developed and sent directly to the state level for review and then on to Washington DC for further review before they come back and are available for public comment. With that in mind, we want to revisit the following provisions in the MOU between your office and the County, which states:

“Butte County is eligible to become a Cooperating Agency for the duration of the RMP/EIS process. Cooperating Agency status provides an opportunity for the BLM, Butte County and other Cooperating Agencies to work together to enhance the BLM's planning efforts. By CEQ and DOI regulation, a

Cooperating Agency may assist in identifying issues to be addressed (43 CFR 1610.4-1), arranging for the collection and/or assembly of necessary resource, environmental, social, economic, and institutional data (43 CFR 1610.4-3), analyzing data (43 CFR 1610.4-4), **developing alternatives (43 CFR 1610.4-5), evaluation [of] alternatives** and estimating the effects of implementing each alternative (43 CFR 1610.4-6, and 4-7), and carrying out any other tasks necessary for the development of the environmental analysis and documentation within the Cooperating Agency's special expertise or jurisdiction."

We anticipated that the above paragraph meant the Cooperating Agencies would be more involved in commenting and contributing to the development of the draft alternatives, or at least be in a position to provide comment prior to the draft alternatives being sent to the state for review, as opposed to commenting during the usual public open comment period. If there is a means of involving the Cooperators at more meaningful level, we would be committed to comment timely, thus allowing an opportunity for modifications if appropriate prior to submission to the state.

During the meeting, Cooperators were encouraged to bring forward information about current conditions and specific locations within the NCIP area. Accordingly, the Committee wishes to emphasize the following Board of Supervisors' comments in their letter of January 24, 2017, regarding information specific to Butte County in the Draft NCIP:

Of critical importance, the Board endorses the stated intent for cooperation and integration with the local area Community Wildland Protection Plan (CWPP), critical to the protection of the WUI zones within Butte County. **The Board strongly supports the establishment of shaded fuel breaks and the use of prescribed burns where appropriate to curtail catastrophic fires.** To this end, we will inform the Butte County Fire Safe Council and CalFire of your contact information and interest in participating in this process.

The Board is heartened by the Remarks and listed Opportunities for Change in the forest management aspects of Land Use Planning, which indicate a more realistic approach to managing forestry practices with an eye to maintaining long term forest health as opposed to thinking of forestry as something that works against the forest environment. This is particularly true when considering the overgrown state of most of our forested lands, the abundance of ladder fuels and the consequences of climate change to the resiliency of the forest, including concerns about the current bug kill epidemic. Residents living near unmanaged BLM parcels have expressed strong concerns about the fire danger posed by overgrowth and bug kill trees on the BLM parcels; this situation is one that needs to be addressed with urgency.

There are Remarks on page 4-58 pertaining to removal of forest products from the Butte Creek Canyon Area (Butte Thin) and continuing to allow some, but not from the scenic area. We believe that even the scenic area should be evaluated for protection by conscientious removal of some understory to provide for a healthier forested area and a reduction to fire danger.

The Board is supportive of site specific, responsible grazing as a reasonable use of grasslands and mixed woodlands. Sustainable grazing is another tool for the preservation of open spaces, grasslands and meadows in forested areas, and in reducing fuel to decrease the consequences of wildfire.

Forks of Butte Creek

One of the jewels of the BLM lands in Butte County is the Forks of Butte Creek. It is designated as both an Outstanding Natural Area (ONA) and an Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) by the BLM. The NCIP Chapter 2, section 2.4.1.1.5 indicates these designations were part of the 1993 Redding RMP to protect the area's scenic values and significant recreational value. The section further states that *"this area's proximity to the large population center of Chico, California, means that this ACEC faces many WUI issues. Current threats to the ACEC values include trash dumping, homeless encampments and wildland fire."* We are most concerned about the impact to cultural, recreational, historical and environmental values due to the hazards mentioned in the NCIP. That being said, **the Board believes that current access and standards should be maintained for ACEC designated BLM lands and restrictions should be necessary and appropriate based on actual threats.**

In the Forks of Butte Creek, there have been ongoing complaints of bonfires, gunfire too close in proximity to private landowners and staging areas, extended camping and general misuse, and a decided lack of BLM law enforcement to help combat this misuse. Any planned or corrective action should not reduce recreational opportunities such as trail use, biking, hiking, bird watching, fishing, and hunting. The Board recognizes that the logistics of scattered and geographically diverse lands throughout Northern California makes law enforcement particularly challenging; however, the protection of these critical areas is an imperative.

The Board recommends that for this critical area in particular, and for BLM lands within the County in general, that the BLM considers an MOU with local area available law enforcement, which could include the Butte County Sheriff's Office, Fish & Wildlife, State Parks or United States Forest Service law enforcement personnel, to provide for regular patrols of these areas. Another possible solution is to provide for campground hosts in a manner compatible with semi-primitive camping parameters.

The Board agrees with the remarks contained in the document that indicate enhanced facility investment, such as toilets, trails, and increased law enforcement. In the Opportunities for Change section pertaining to this comment, the document says "Do not carry this designation (ACEC/ONC) forward or identify additional relevant and important values for this area." Why is that? **Please state the benefit to this direction.** The Board understands there exists a 1990 Forks of the Butte Resource Management Plan specific to this area; however, we have been unable to locate this document timely. **We would like to receive a copy of this plan, and an analysis of the goals achieved and the current status of the plan.**

Some specific recommendations for trails within the Forks of Butte Creek include:

- Extend Butte Creek Trail to South (approximately 1.5 miles) to connect with Indian Springs Trail via a suspension bridge across Butte Creek
- Expand trails on west side of Butte Creek –create loop trail off Doe Mill
- Explore land swap opportunities with Sierra Pacific Industries and other private landholders to allow for larger parcel units in the Forks of Butte Creek ACEC.
- Create interpretative trail elements along Butte Creek Trail to highlight mining history/operations in Butte County
- Complete restoration projects to protect historical sites

The table referencing the Redding RMP 1993 Ishi Management Area states on page 3-89 that the BLM is seeking to develop suitability reports for the final classification and potential inclusion of Big Chico, Butte and Deer Creeks into the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System – **what is the status on that, and what segments of these creeks are being targeted for inclusion?** Additionally the management objectives of page 4-15 state that preservation of the historical values of Forks of the Butte will be improved by land acquisition in this area – **what has been done since 1993 to accomplish this goal?**

One important consideration that the NCIP appears to lack is an inventory and assessment of the road systems and infrastructure in and around the BLM lands, including bridges, easements and any other infrastructure that requires maintenance and oversight. We understand this information will not be included in the NCIP, therefore, the Committee would like your office to work directly with Butte County's Public Works Department to **provide an inventory of roads, bridges and other pertinent infrastructure with an indication as to which parts of the infrastructure the BLM is responsible for maintaining, and their current condition/any plans for improvement.** We would appreciate receiving mapping information in the form of GIS shapefiles if those are available.

Rock hounds in the area have expressed an interest in being able to access tailing piles of mining sites, including abandoned claims.

The Board is currently working on a collaborative basis with stakeholders interested in developing and mapping coordinated recreational trails in and around Butte County. In general, we would also like to see increased emphasis on developing additional semi-primitive motorized areas, using existing roads and trails, and keeping any trails designated for OHV, single-track, equestrian, hiking or mountain bike use open and available to the public, ensuring trails are maintained to a width suitable for multi-use safe passing, with well-maintained trailheads and parking areas.

Some other projects for trails and increased recreational opportunities include:

- Highway 32/ Chico Creek Nature Preserve: Coordinate with City of Chico and CSU Chico Creek Nature Preserve to connect BLM properties to Bidwell Park via natural surface trails –potential land swap easement with CSU Chico Creek Nature Preserve.
- There are large tracts of BLM land around the Lake Oroville area that could be enhanced for recreational use, whether through cooperative arrangements with or a transfer of ownership to the State Parks.
- Highway 162/ Stringtown Mountain:
 - Develop a natural surface trail system off Hwy 162
 - Provide a loop trail around Stringtown Mountain
 - Creates connectivity to Lake Oroville SRA/ Loafer Creek trail system
 - Explore land swap opportunity with Sierra Pacific Industries and private landowners to increase area and recreational opportunity

As stated earlier, many of the BLM lands within Butte County are scattered and isolated, and some are checker-boarded with private property. In order to facilitate increased opportunities for continuous trails

and other recreational opportunities, **the Board would like to see the BLM partner with other agencies to create connectivity and viable recreation opportunities, i.e. Lake Oroville SRA, Plumas National Forest and Lassen National Forest, as well as continued emphasis on property swaps or acquisition of adjacent lands to provide for continuous trail loops and better access to these lands, with an eye to having larger contiguous parcels as opposed to the scattered parcels.** Additionally, we would like to know how these lands are utilized, and how this use and means of access is made obvious to the interested hunter/fisherman/ hiker/horseman/rancher? For those parcels with no road access or recorded easements, and no particular historic, cultural, environmental or recreational value, finding a way to dispose of those properties seems to be a reasonable and prudent alternative. What is the process for advertising the availability of such parcels to eligible entities?

As a general comment, the organizational structure of the NCIP makes it very challenging to locate information pertaining to specific areas as the information is spread throughout the document. We strongly recommend re-thinking the format or, as an alternative, develop an appendix similar to the structure of the Envisioning Report, where **all** information pertinent to specific regions or points of interest are consolidated. In this manner, the reader will gain the desired comprehensive insight in a user friendly manner.

As a Cooperating Agency, Butte County requests advance notice of any planning activities for lands within the County, both to be involved in the planning process and to ensure the public is notified and has opportunities to provide feedback.

In response to comments regarding BLM's consideration of local agency general plans in the development of alternatives for the NCIP, and for your ease of reference, we have included with this letter excerpts of **Butte County's General Plan 2030** that are pertinent to public land management. The excerpts include both existing language and some proposed modifications that are still going through the final Board approval process.

To recap on action items, the Committee would like to receive:

- 1) a copy (electronic is preferred) of the 1990 Forks of Butte Creek Integrated Resource Management Plan, and a brief report of the goals achieved and the current status of the plan, as well as an update to the Wild and Scenic River designation project for Big Chico, Butte and Deer Creeks, including which segments of the river are being targeted for inclusion.
- 2) an inventory of BLM roads and bridges in Butte County, including mapping information in the form of GIS shapefiles if those are available. We also believe discussion of an MOU to allow Butte County Public Works to attend to minor items such as downed trees across roads could save the BLM time and money, and better serve the interests of our residents and visitors. Our Public Works Director will be in contact with your office to further discuss these matters.
- 3) communication regarding the possibility of developing an MOU for regular patrols of BLM areas that have experienced misuse including the potential for wildfire and pollution of streams.
- 4) BLM's involvement, cooperation and integration with the Butte County CWPP, with a focus on forest management and fuels reduction projects.

Once again, we thank you for providing an opportunity to be involved as a Cooperating Agency in the NCIP development process. We enjoyed meeting you and exchanging ideas, as well as developing a feel for the perspectives of the other Cooperating agencies' representatives in the room. We hope you find the information provided in this letter pertinent and meaningful as you take a look at development of the NCIP alternatives. If you have any questions, or would like clarification on any of the points raised, please feel free to contact Dennis Schmidt, Director of Public Works (dschmidt@buttecounty.net). In addition to contributing to the NCIP process as a Cooperating Agency, we look forward to strengthening our relationship with the BLM, and the potential for partnering with the BLM on law enforcement issues, road and infrastructure management and fuels reduction projects.

Sincerely,



Peggy Moak
Butte County Federal/State Land Use Coordinating Committee

enc: General Plan 2030 Excerpts: Public Lands Management

cc: Dennis Schmidt, Director of Public Works
Tim Snellings, Director of Development Services
Paul Gosselin, Director of Water and Resource Conservation
Claudia Stuart, Principal Planner
Radley Ott, Assistant Director of Public Works
Butte County Board of Supervisors
Darren Read, Butte County Fire Chief
Kory Honea, Butte County Sheriff
Calli-Jane De Anda, Butte County Fire Safe Council
John Lange, BLM Cooperating Agency Facilitator
Alan Bittner, BLM, Northern California District Manager



BUTTE COUNTY FEDERAL/STATE LAND USE COORDINATING COMMITTEE

**7 COUNTY CENTER DRIVE
OROVILLE, CA 95965**

GENERAL PLAN 2030 EXCERPTS: PUBLIC LANDS MANAGEMENT

Public Facilities and Services Element

Butte County is committed to providing a high quality of life for its residents. This commitment includes providing needed public services, infrastructure and facilities that are accessible to and benefit all county residents, including the use and enjoyment of public lands in and near Butte County. This Public Facilities and Services Element addresses the public services, infrastructure and facilities provided by Butte County, and coordination with public land managers. This Element also presents information and policy guidance to ensure adequate provision and maintenance of Butte County facilities and services. Although the Public Facilities section is not explicitly required by State law, the topics addressed here are an integral part of the County's overall planning strategy and a basic consideration in setting a growth and development policy.

Goal PUB-2 Provide adequate fire protection and emergency medical response services to serve existing and new development.

Policies

PUB-P2.1 The County supports the expansion of fire volunteer services, especially in remote areas, as warranted by Standards of Cover criteria.

PUB-P2.2 The adopted Standards of Cover for fire protection shall be maintained and implemented.

PUB-P2.3 New fire stations shall be located on sites that are easily accessible, close to existing or future development and/or close to fire hazard areas.

PUB-P2.4 The County supports coordinated efforts between state, federal and local agencies, non-profit organizations and BCFD to plan, obtain funding, and implement fuels reduction projects to protect residents in and around fire hazard areas.

PARKS AND RECREATION

A. Background Information

A wide range of recreational facilities and recreational programs are found in Butte County, offering numerous recreational opportunities to local residents and visitors. Federal, State and local recreation lands are displayed in Figure PUB-2.

The five municipalities and five large special independent districts maintain many of the parks and recreational facilities in Butte County. Butte County does not provide a park and recreation program. The five recreation and park districts, which encompass most of the County's land area, operate as "independent" districts, meaning that each district is governed by a board of directors elected by the voters in that district. The districts in Butte County are also non-enterprise districts, meaning that they depend mainly on property taxes for operating revenue, rather than user fees. Butte County's five recreation and park districts are shown in Figure PUB-3 and include the following:

- Chico Area Recreation and Park District (CARD)
- Durham Recreation and Park District (DRPD)
- Feather River Recreation and Park District (FRRPD)
- Paradise Recreation and Park District (PRPD)
- Richvale Recreation and Park District (RRPD)

As shown in Figure PUB -3, no special recreation and park district serves the Gridley and Biggs area. The Cities of Gridley and Biggs provide recreation facilities and programs and two small County Service Areas fund swimming pools that serve these communities. The pools are owned by Butte County and managed by Biggs Unified School District in Biggs and the Fairgrounds in Gridley.

The recreation and park districts manage a number of parks in unincorporated Butte County. There are 618 acres of parkland in unincorporated Butte County, serving a population of about 83,900 people. Countywide, this amount of parkland seems adequate to serve the needs of the residents of unincorporated Butte County, as it provides a service ratio of over 7 acres of parkland for every 1,000 residents. However, a major portion of this land is open space and not accessible. Many unincorporated communities and residential areas in Butte County do not contain parks and are not located near park facilities. Table PUB- 1 shows the acreages of developed and undeveloped parks within all of unincorporated Butte County.

In addition to the municipal and special district facilities, there are a number of Federal and State parks, campgrounds, lakes and streams for boating and fishing, recreation areas, reserves and trails that offer important recreation opportunities within the county, including Plumas National Forest, Lassen National Forest, various Bureau of Land Management holdings and the Lake Oroville State Recreation Area. Many rural county roads provide trailhead access to National Forests and other State and Federal lands for off-highway vehicles, hiking and equestrian trails, and other recreational pursuits. These opportunities serve both local residents and visitors to Butte County.

Although Butte County's unincorporated area does not have any formal or organized system of trails, Federal and State agencies and park and recreation districts maintain a number of developed recreational trails in Butte County, including the following:

- Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail. Approximately 6 miles of the federally designated Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail is located in Lassen National Forest on the eastern Butte-Plumas County border. The Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail provides continuous recreational access from Canada to Mexico and is a very popular route.
- The Feather Falls National Recreation Trail. This 3.5-mile trail is located within Plumas National Forest, and provides hiking access to the Feather Falls National Scenic Area and to the Feather Falls, noted as the sixth highest waterfall in the continental United States and third highest waterfall in California. The Feather Falls trail and scenic area is a very popular spring and summer attraction.
- Loafer Creek, Brad Freeman and Dan Beebe Trails A 17.5-mile loop trail at Loafer Creek and portions of the Brad Freeman and Dan Beebe trails are accessible for hiking, equestrian and bicycle riding at Lake Oroville State Recreation Area.
- A Class 1 bike trail runs from Chico along the Midway to Jones Avenue in Durham.
- Chico Recreation and Park District. This District manages a system of trails that serves the Chico area.
- City of Chico/Bidwell Park has numerous non-motorized trails and is a popular destination point.
- Bureau of Land Management (BLM). The Forks of Butte Creek and other BLM landholdings provide hunting, fishing, trails, camping and other recreational opportunities.
- Trails maintained by PG&E offer hiking opportunities in the foothill areas.
- Butte County is a gateway to the Plumas and Lassen National Forests, where off-highway motorized roads and trails and non-motorized (hiking/equestrian/biking) trails are located.

The Butte County Federal/State Land Use Coordinating Committee (“Coordinating Committee”) was formed at the direction of the Board of Supervisors in 2010 through County Resolution 10-002. Butte County desires to ensure that federal and state agencies inform the Board of Supervisors of all pending or proposed actions involving management of public lands affecting local communities, residents, and members of the public within the County, and coordinate with the Board of Supervisors and the Coordinating Committee in the planning and implementation of those actions. The purpose of the Coordinating Committee is to represent the County of Butte in coordinating the management plans and actions of federal and state agencies to ensure consistency with local land use plans. The County must consider land outside its boundaries and jurisdiction that bear relation to county planning, including, but not limited to matters related to fire prevention, watersheds, land use, recreation, forest management and protection and utilization of natural resources.

The Board of Supervisors established the Forest Advisory Committee (FAC) to facilitate public involvement in decisions on the use of public lands, and assist the County in its quest to meet the guiding principles of the Butte County General Plan 2030 as it pertains to the management of public lands. The Committee serves to gather information and opinions from interested parties, to present pertinent recommendations to the Butte County Board of Supervisors through the Coordinating Committee, and to serve as a resource in Coordination efforts. The FAC is comprised of a Coordinating Committee Liaison and five public members and alternates representing the following areas of expertise and interest:

- Agriculture/Timber Management

- Recreation-Motorized
- Recreation-Non-motorized
- Environmental and Watershed Management
- Economic/Tourism.

B. Goals, Policies and Actions

Goal PUB-6 Support a comprehensive and high-quality system of recreational open space and facilities.

Policies

PUB-6.1 Review of proposed actions on public lands shall be conducted utilizing public input and such plans shall be coordinated between Butte County and the respective public agencies.

PUB-P6.2 Review of development proposals shall be coordinated with public agencies in order to designate sites for new parks and recreation facilities.

PUB-P6.3 Recreational events, such as marathons, triathlons, bicycle races, bird-watching events, rodeos or fishing tournaments, etc. shall be encouraged in Butte County, provided that the event pays for all necessary public services.

PUB-P6.4 New residential development shall be assessed for Quimby Act fees to support park development in coordination with parks and recreation districts.

PUB-P6.5 Allowed densities shall be increased when parks are incorporated into development projects. Parks must meet standards set in district master plans.

PUB-P6.6 Where appropriate, new residential developments should include permanently-protected and maintained open space using mechanisms such as, but not limited to, conservation easements and development agreements.

PUB-P6.7 Utilize Community Facilities Districts, Mello-Roos and/or landscaping and lighting districts to provide funding for on-going maintenance and operation of parks and recreation facilities in medium density (six dwelling units per acre) and higher density residential developments when warranted.

Actions

PUB-A1.1 Coordinate with park and recreation districts to allow the development of park and recreation facilities on publicly-owned land.

Goal PUB-7 Encourage local, regional State and Federal parks providers to engage in coordinated and cooperative planning efforts, and seek regular public comment and involvement in the planning process.

Policies

PUB-P7.1 The County shall coordinate with municipalities, park and recreation districts, and school districts to plan and develop additional regional and community parks, support and coordinate park master plans, coordinate financing for recreation and park facilities, and plan for the distribution of Federal and State funds for recreation and park programs and facilities.

PUB-P7.2 Implementation and development of recreation and park facilities within park and recreation district boundaries shall be consistent with the applicable district's master plans.

PUB-P7.3 The County recognizes the importance of regional planning and coordination with Federal, State and local agencies, to include neighboring counties and jurisdictions, and shall maintain a Coordinating Committee whose function is to facilitate coordination efforts with State and Federal public land managers. The County shall establish additional mechanisms to solicit public participation and comment involving the utilization, management, enjoyment and sustainability of public lands.

Actions

PUB-A7.1 Assist special districts with strategies for funding, planning and support for recreation and park facility development.

PUB-A7.2 Establish a plan for the distribution of available Federal and State funds for development and maintenance of programs, facilities and recreational access to local, regional, State and Federal public lands, which shall include utilization of available grants. Involvement of organized volunteer organizations shall be encouraged to promote user engagement in development and maintenance of public lands recreation.

PUB- A7.3 The County shall coordinate with the Bureau of Land Management, State and Federal Fish and Wildlife, United States Forest Service and State Parks to develop regional plans, including coordination with neighboring counties and jurisdictions. The County shall additionally guide plans and projects affecting the socio economic health and well-being of county residents and visitors. This will include issues related, but not limited to the following:

- The health and sustainability of the forest ecosystem and water resources
- The ability of residents and visitors to enjoy outdoor recreation including motorized (including boating, single-track and OHV) and non-motorized (hiking/biking/equestrian/boating) access to public lands and waterways
- The appropriate utilization of public lands for grazing, timber production, hunting and fishing

Public input on these issues is facilitated through the Forest Advisory Committee's public meetings. Local, State and Federal land managers will be notified to attend all public meetings, where all reports, discussions, and oral testimony will be available for review as public information.

PUB-A7.4 The County shall coordinate with municipalities, park and recreation districts, and school districts to plan and develop additional regional and community parks, support and coordinate park master plans, coordinate financing for recreation and park facilities, and plan for the distribution of Federal and State funds for recreation and park programs and facilities. The County shall support satisfactory and timely completion of State/Federal approved projects, such as:

- The Clay Pit Vehicular Recreation Area Final General Plan
- Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) Recreation Plans as delineated in agreements between local agencies, districts and municipalities.

Goal PUB-8 Coordinate an interconnected, multi-use trail system.

Policies

PUB-P8.1 The County shall coordinate with the municipalities, park and recreation districts, Federal or State agencies and private landholders to connect trails between incorporated and unincorporated regions of Butte County.

PUB-P8.2 The County shall coordinate with local jurisdictions, Lassen and Plumas National Forests, the Department of Water Resources, the Bureau of Land Management and the Department of Fish and Wildlife to designate additional shared use (motorized and non-motorized) trails within the boundaries of all public lands and along unpaved County roads, access roads and fire roads.

PUB-P8.3 The development of abandoned railroad rights-of-way, levee tops, utility easements and waterways for new multi-use trails shall be pursued where appropriate.

PUB-P8.4 The County supports restoration and development of historic and “legacy” trails, and development of additional equestrian, hiking and biking trails, including safe routes along roads.

PUB-P8.5 The County supports both existing use and the development of additional off-road vehicle trails through private and public lands.

PUB-P8.6 The County supports acquisition by public and private entities of appropriate and adequate funding for the creation and improvement of trails. Grant funding in collaboration with non-profit and volunteer organizations is encouraged,

PUB-P8. 7 New development projects should incorporate multi-use trails and connections to existing trail networks.

Actions

PUB-A8.1 Coordinate with State, Federal and recreation districts to seek funding to publish Butte County trail maps for the public. Consider the use of mobile web-based applications and websites.

PUB-A8.2 Cooperate with appropriate agencies to conduct a countywide trails planning study to identify new needed routes and connections to the trails network, as well as to address funding and management of trail facilities.

Conservation and Open Space Element

State law requires that a General Plan include both a Conservation Element and an Open Space Element. The Butte County General Plan 2030 combines these two elements into a single Conservation and Open Space Element that addresses their similar and overlapping concerns.

As required by State law, this Element addresses the conservation, development and utilization of natural resources, including forests, soils, rivers and other waters, fisheries, wildlife, minerals, water and hydrology. This Element also addresses the protection of cultural resources, including archaeological resources, historic resources and Native American cultural resources. The Government Code also identifies a series of six types of open space which must be addressed in the General Plan. Most of these types of open space are covered in this Conservation and Open Space Element, while a few are covered elsewhere in this General Plan. Table COS-1 lists all six types and tells where they are addressed in this General Plan.

This Conservation and Open Space Element also prevents incompatible development and encroachment upon the Military Operations Areas (MOA's). Open space areas can simultaneously support agriculture, protect critical habitat and endangered species, and function as a buffer between active MOAs and neighboring residential land uses.

This Element also addresses air quality since clean air is an important natural resource and a vital component of a healthy environment.

To best serve the needs of Butte County residents and visitors, public input on issues related to Conservation and Open Space as it relates to the management of public lands is facilitated through the Coordinating Committee for consideration by the Board of Supervisors at scheduled public meetings.

This Element is divided into the following sections:

- Greenhouse Gases
- Energy
- Air Quality
- Biological Resources
- Timber Resources
- Mineral and Soil Resources
- Military Installations
- Cultural Resources
- Scenic Resources

Each of these components is divided into the following sections:

- Background Information: Provides background information about the various resources within Butte County. Expanded discussions about Butte County’s resources are available in Chapters 8 (Recreation), 9 (Cultural Resources), 10 (Scenic Resources), 11 (Mineral Resources), 13 (Biological Resources), 14 (Energy) and 15 (Air Quality) of the Butte County General Plan 2030 Setting and Trends Report.

TABLE COS-1 GOVERNMENT CODE OPEN SPACE CLASSIFICATIONS

Category	Addressed In:
Open Space for the Preservation of Natural Resources	
+ Plant and animal habitat areas	• COS Section IV (page 232)
+ Rivers, streams, lakes and their banks	• Water Resources Element (page 151) • Water Resources Element (page 151)
+ Watershed lands	• COS Section IV (page 232)
+ Areas required for ecological and other scientific study purposes	
Open Space Used for the Managed Production of Resources	
• Agricultural lands and rangelands	• Agriculture Element (page 135)
• Forest and timber lands	• COS Section V (page 247)
• Mineral resource production areas	• COS Section VI (page 249)
Open Space for Outdoor Recreation and Scenic Resources	
• Areas of outstanding historic or cultural value	• COS Section VIII (page 257)
• Parks and other areas used for recreation	• PUB Section VI (page 343)
• Areas of outstanding scenic value	• COS Section IX (page 266)
• Scenic corridors, trails and links between different open space areas	• COS Section IX (page 266) PUB Section VI (page 343)
Open Space for Public Health and Safety	
• Areas requiring special management or regulation because of risks presented by natural hazards such as steep slopes or flooding	• Health and Safety Element (page 275)
Open Space in Support of the Mission of Military Installations	
• Areas associated with military bases	• COS Section VII (page 257)
Open Space for the Protection of Native American Sacred Sites	

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- Local tribal lands
 - Any Native American cultural sites
 - COS Section VII I (page 257)
 - COS Section VII I (page 257)

Notes: COS = Conservation and Open Space Element. PUB = Public Facilities and Services Element.

- Goals, Policies and Actions: Provides guidance to the County related to decisions affecting the resources addressed in this Element.

IV. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

A. Background Information

This section provides background information about Butte County’s biological communities, special-status species, important wildlife areas and migratory deer herds.

The County is currently participating in a comprehensive conservation planning effort, the Butte Regional Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) and Natural Community Conservation Plan (NCCP). Coordinated by BCAG, the Butte Regional HCP/NCCP is an assessment of the county’s natural resources and a strategy for protecting those resources while allowing for future growth and development in Butte County. The focus of the Butte Regional HCP/NCCP is on the western half of the county, where there is the greatest conflict between urban development and federal and State protected species. The goals of the Butte Regional HCP/NCCP include mapping the range of federal- and State-protected species, important habitats and ecosystems; providing for or contributing to the recovery of endangered species; contributing to the conservation of natural communities and their associated native species; and allowing for a streamlined process of environmental permitting. Since the summer of 2007, two of the five phases of the Butte Regional HCP/NCCP have been completed, with a final project completion date expected in mid-2011.

1. Biological Communities

Ten general types of biological communities occur in Butte County. The distribution of these communities is closely associated with the varying topography and hydrology of the geographic sub regions. These ten communities are displayed in Figure COS-2 and include:

- Conifer Forest. Several types of conifer forest occur in Butte County, including montane hardwood-conifer, ponderosa pine, Sierran mixed conifer, red fir and subalpine conifer. The forest types vary in the dominant species and elevations at which they occur. Conifer forests provide habitat for a large number of wildlife species.
- Oak Woodland. Oak woodland community types include valley oak woodland, blue oak woodland and blue oak-foothill pine. Oak woodlands are scattered throughout the county, but are concentrated in the transition area between the lower valley and higher elevations of the county. Oak woodlands provide wildlife with nesting sites, cover and food. Oak woodlands are common locally and regionally; however,

native oak trees and woodland habitats are declining statewide because of development and land management practices.

- Riparian Woodland. Riparian areas occur where land meets fresh water, such as a wetland or a streambank. Riparian woodlands occur along portions of the Sacramento River, Feather River, Thermalito Afterbay and Forebay, Thermalito Diversion Pool and along numerous smaller perennial and ephemeral drainages. Riparian woodlands are typically dominated by a mixture of trees and shrubs, and provide food, water and migration and dispersal corridors, as well as nesting and thermal cover for many wildlife species. Riparian habitats are considered sensitive natural communities and should be given special consideration because they provide several important ecological functions, including streambank stabilization, water quality maintenance, and essential habitat for wildlife and fisheries resources.

- Chaparral. Chaparral occurs on foothill slopes, within the understory of woodlands, and at higher elevations of Butte County. This community provides habitat for a variety of birds and mammals.

- Annual Grasslands. Large, open areas of annual grasslands occur primarily in the central portion of the county and are typically grazing pastures for livestock. Annual grasslands encompass vernal pool terrains and form the understory for oak woodland and occur as vacant parcels in developed areas. Annual grasslands provide foraging and breeding habitat for many wildlife species.

- Open Water. Open water communities in Butte County include several large reservoirs, numerous small ponds throughout agricultural areas, and perennial and ephemeral drainages. These communities provide habitat for fish, resident and migratory birds, amphibians, aquatic reptiles and some mammals.

- Wetlands. Wetland communities in Butte County include freshwater marshes along the margins of drainages and open water habitats, wet meadows at higher elevations in the eastern portion of the county and vernal pools in the central portion of the county. Wetlands are considered sensitive natural communities by several resource agencies and should be given special consideration because they provide a variety of important ecological functions and essential habitat for wildlife resources, including several special status species. Natural wetland habitats are steadily declining compared to their historical distribution, as a result of land management practices and development activities. The US Army Corps of Engineers, US Fish and Wildlife Service and DFG have policies and regulations that protect wetland habitats.

- Agricultural Land. Much of the western half of the county is used for agriculture. Row crops and rice fields can provide relatively high-value habitat for wildlife, particularly as foraging habitat.

- Barren Land. Unvegetated land may include areas of vertical riverbanks and exposed rock, as well as unvegetated lands in urban areas. Although barren ground has limited use for most wildlife, some species prefer areas with limited or very low-growing vegetation.

- Urban Areas. Biological communities in urbanized areas are relatively limited and generally provide low value for wildlife.

2. Special-Status Species

Special-status species are plants and animals that are legally protected under the State and/or federal Endangered Species Act or other regulations, and species that are considered by the scientific

community to be sufficiently rare to qualify for such listing. As of 2006, 77 special-status plant species, 47 special status wildlife species and five special-status fish species have been documented or have the potential to occur in Butte County. Locations of special-status species occurrences documented in the California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDDB) are presented in Figure COS-3.

3. Important Wildlife Areas

Important wildlife areas in Butte County are public lands that have been conserved for the benefit of wildlife, including the Big Chico Creek Ecological Preserve, the Butte Creek Ecological Preserve, Bidwell Park, Table Mountain, the Gray Lodge Wildlife Area, the Oroville Wildlife Area, the Sacramento River Wildlife Area and the Sacramento River National Wildlife Refuge. These important wildlife areas are shown in Figure COS-2.

4. Migratory Deer Herds

Protection of Butte County's resident and migratory deer herds has long been an issue of concern for the County. In the early 1980s, the California Department of Fish and Game (DFG) developed management plans for migratory deer herds in California, which included migratory deer ranges in Butte County. Butte County relied upon DFG's deer range maps to establish zones where development is restricted in order to protect the deer herds. As part of the General Plan 2030 effort, wildlife biologists updated the map of winter and critical winter range migratory deer herd areas. The revised map is displayed in Figure COS-4.

Migratory deer herds migrate from higher elevations in Plumas and Lassen Counties to lower elevation winter range areas in Butte County. As shown in Figure COS-4, there are some portions of this winter range in Butte County that are considered to be critical winter range areas, which include habitat that is critical to the survival of the migratory deer herds during severe winter conditions. The non-critical areas, also mapped in Figure COS-4, provide habitat that is suitable for winter conditions, but not critical during severe winter conditions.

The updated deer herd winter range mapping developed for General Plan 2030 was based on a number of factors that affect habitat value, including vegetation, elevation and terrain preferences, as well as the extent of fire suppression activities, since fire suppression can change the ecological conditions and lead to habitat deterioration. In addition, data showing actual existence of the deer herds was considered in the mapping process. These updated maps were used to establish the Deer Herd Migration Area Overlay, which is described in the Land Use Element.

5. Fish Species

Butte County was historically one of the centers of wild salmon and steelhead, and the multitude of species dependent upon them, in the State of California. Oroville Dam ended the massive salmonid runs on the Feather River. Butte Creek and Big Chico Creek are the only undammed tributaries left in Butte County that support wild strains of endangered spring-run Chinook salmon and steelhead. Little Butte Creek and Dry Creek also support runs of critically designated steelhead. Although recovery efforts have boosted the population over the last 15 years, recent runs have declined significantly. Most measures show an average count of wild Butte Creek spring-run Chinook salmon of nearly 10,000 fish per year from 1998 to 2008. However, in 2009 only 2,561 fish returned to Butte Creek and a handful to Big Chico

Creek. Nevertheless, Butte Creek supports the largest run of wild, naturally spawned, spring-run Chinook salmon in California. Protecting these last strongholds for these species is critical to our society.

B. Goals, Policies and Actions

Goal COS-6 Engage in cooperative planning efforts to protect biological resources.

Policies

COS-P6.1 The County shall coordinate with applicable federal, State, regional and local agencies on natural resources and habitat planning.

Actions

COS-A6.1 Continue to work with the Butte County Association of Governments and the five municipalities to develop and implement the Butte Regional Habitat Conservation Plan and Natural Community Conservation Plan, and subsequently update it as necessary.

COS-A6.2 Work with Butte Creek Canyon residents and local groups toward adopting a planning strategy for a Butte Creek Canyon overlay. The purpose of the planning strategy is to facilitate the protection and preservation of the historical and ecological foundation of Butte Creek Canyon, including the survival of salmon, steelhead and other sensitive plants and animals such as the East Tehama Deer Herd, preservation of historical sites and ecological preserves, and the optimum balance of recreation and residential use.

Goal COS-7 Conserve and enhance habitat for protected species and sensitive biological communities.

Policies

COS-P7.1 Conservation easements that protect habitat areas, habitat corridors and sensitive biological resources shall be promoted.

COS-P7.2 Clustered development patterns shall be encouraged in order to conserve habitat for protected species and biological resources.

COS-P7.3 Creeks shall be maintained in their natural state whenever possible, and creeks and floodways shall be allowed to function as natural flood protection features during storms.*

COS-P7.4 New development projects shall mitigate their impacts in habitat areas for protected species through on- or off-site habitat restoration, clustering of development, and/or project design and through the provisions of the Butte Regional Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) and Natural Community Conservation Plan (NCCP) within the HCP/NCCP Planning Area, upon the future adoption of the HCP/NCCP.*

COS-P7.5 No new development projects shall occur in wetlands or within significant riparian habitats, except within the Butte Regional Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) and Natural Community Conservation Plan (NCCP) Planning Area where such development is consistent with the conditions of the HCP/NCCP, upon the future adoption of the HCP/NCCP.*

COS-P7.6 New development projects shall include setbacks and buffers along riparian corridors and adjacent to habitat for protected species, except where permitted in the Butte Regional Habitat

Conservation Plan (HCP) and Natural Community Conservation Plan (NCCP) Planning Area and where such development is consistent with the conditions of the HCP/NCCP, upon the future adoption of the HCP/NCCP.*

COS-P7.7 Construction barrier fencing shall be installed around sensitive resources on or adjacent to construction sites. Fencing shall be installed prior to construction activities and maintained throughout the construction period.*

COS-P7.8 Where sensitive on-site biological resources have been identified, construction employees operating equipment or engaged in any development-associated activities involving vegetation removal or ground disturbing activities in sensitive resource areas shall be trained by a qualified biologist and/or botanist who will provide information on the on-site biological resources (sensitive natural communities, special status plant and wildlife habitats, nests of special-status birds, etc.), avoidance of invasive plant introduction and spread, and the penalties for not complying with biological mitigation requirements and other State and federal regulations.*

COS-P7.9 A biologist shall be retained to conduct construction monitoring in and adjacent to all habitats for protected species when construction is taking place near such habitat areas.*

COS-P7.10 Long-term recovery plans for areas affected by wildfire shall incorporate native species and enhance wildlife habitat.

COS-P7.11 The County shall work with the military to ensure that land uses under the Military Operations Areas (MOAs) encourage the fulfillment of the County's biological resource protection goals.

Actions

COS-A7.1 Develop and provide incentives to developers to conserve and maintain important habitat areas and sensitive biological resources.

COS-A7.2 Develop a set of guidelines for evaluating development project impacts to habitat in locations outside of the approved Butte Regional Habitat Conservation Plan and Natural Community Conservation Plan Planning Area, as well as for requiring specific mitigations for impacts that are identified.

COS-A7.3 Establish a mitigation bank program for impacts to habitats for protected species, such as oak woodlands, riparian woodlands and wetlands, in locations outside of the approved Butte Regional Habitat Conservation Plan and Natural Community Conservation Plan Planning Area, using mitigation fees on new development projects as a funding mechanism.

COS-A7.4 Seek funding to conduct a study to develop an approach to protecting significant specimen trees and tree groves.

Goal COS-8 Maintain and promote native vegetation.

Policies

COS-P8.1 Native plant species shall be protected and planting and regeneration of native plant species shall be encouraged, wherever possible, in undisturbed portions of development sites.

COS-P8.2 New landscaping shall promote the use of xeriscape and native tree and plant species, including those valued for traditional Native American cultural uses.

COS-P8.3 Native plants shall be used wherever possible on County owned and -controlled property.

COS-P8.4 Introduction or spread of invasive plant species during construction of development projects shall be avoided by minimizing surface disturbance; seeding and mulching disturbed areas with certified weed-free native mixes; and using native, noninvasive species in erosion control plantings.*

Goal COS-9 Protect identified special-status plant and animal species.

Policies

COS-P9.1 A biological resources assessment shall be required for any proposed development project where special-status species or critical habitat may be present. Assessments shall be carried out under the direction of Butte County. Additional focused surveys shall be conducted during the appropriate season if necessary. Upon adoption of the Butte Regional Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) and Natural Community Conservation Plan (NCCP), assessment requirements of the HCP/NCCP shall be implemented for development projects within the HCP/NCCP area.*

COS-P9.2 If special-status plant or animal species are found to be located within a development site, proponents of the project shall engage in consultation with the appropriate federal, State and regional agencies and mitigate project impacts in accordance with State and federal law. Upon adoption of the Butte Regional Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) and Natural Community Conservation Plan (NCCP), mitigation requirements of the HCP/NCCP shall be implemented for development projects within the HCP/NCCP area.

Examples of mitigation may include:

- a. Design the proposed project to avoid and minimize impacts.
- b. Restrict construction to specific seasons based on project specific special-status species issues (e.g. minimizing impacts to special-status nesting birds by constructing outside of the nesting season).
- c. Confine construction disturbance to the minimum area necessary to complete the work.
- d. Mitigate for the loss of special-status species by purchasing credits at an approved conservation bank (if a bank exists for the species in question), funding restoration or habitat improvement projects at existing preserves in Butte County, or purchasing or donating mitigation lands of substantially similar habitat.
- e. Maintain a minimum 100-foot buffer on each side of all riparian corridors, creeks and streams for special-status and common wildlife.
- f. Establish setbacks from the outer edge of special-status species habitat areas.
- g. Construct barriers to prevent compaction damage by foot or vehicular traffic.

Goal COS-10 Facilitate the survival of deer herds in winter and critical winter migratory deer herd ranges.

Policies

COS-P10.1 Clustered development projects that are designed to accommodate herd migration patterns shall be allowed and encouraged, with remaining areas protected under conservation easements, within the Winter and Critical Winter Deer Herd Migration Area Overlays in order to protect migratory deer herd ranges.

Actions

COS-A10.1 Coordinate with the California Department of Fish and Game to monitor the effects of development on migratory deer herds.

COS-A10.2 Seek funding for and conduct more detailed studies about deer herd migration, and use those studies to update the Deer Herd Migration Area Overlay if needed.

V. TIMBER RESOURCES

A. Background Information

The combination of ample rainfall, a long growing season and deep soils result in good growing conditions for mixed conifer forest in Butte County. These timber resources are primarily located in the northeastern portions of the county at elevations between approximately 2,200 and 6,200 feet. The major vegetation community associated with timberlands in Butte County is westside mixed conifer (Sierra mixed conifer), which is dominated by sugar pine, ponderosa pine, Douglas fir, white fir and incense cedar. In 2007, almost 66 million board feet of timber was produced in Butte County, with a value of over \$16 million.

Timberlands occur on both public and private lands. Some logging occurs in the areas managed by the US Forest Service within the Lassen and Plumas National Forests. Sierra Pacific Industries, a timber company, is the largest private landowner in Butte County, with land holdings located primarily in the northern part of the county, near the Lassen National Forest. Timber harvests on private lands are primarily regulated by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection through the timber harvesting plan review process.

Policies affecting timber resources are also provided in the fire hazards section of the Health and Safety Element.

B. Goals, Policies and Actions

Goal COS-11 Protect timber resources and promote sustainable timber production.

Policies

COS-P11.1 The County supports and promotes sustainable timber production.

COS-P11.2 The County shall support and cooperate with CAL FIRE in its responsibilities related to timber and forest practice laws.

COS-P11.3 Urban development shall not limit the financial sustainability of timber operations.

COS-P11.4 Residential uses on or adjacent to parcels zoned Timber Production shall not be allowed to negatively impact continued timber harvesting operations.

COS-P11.5 Lot line adjustments shall be allowed on substandard Timber Production Zone parcels in order to consolidate logical timberland management units or to accommodate a valid public interest as determined by Butte County.

COS-P11.6 Public facilities shall generally not be located in the Timber Production Zone if the facility would have a significant adverse effect on the production of timber, unless alternative sites for an essential public use cannot be located elsewhere.

Actions

COS-A11.1 Provide education materials from State agencies such as CALFIRE promoting sustainable forest practices in the county.

COS-A11.2 Coordinate with public land managers on timber management practices to promote healthy, sustainable forests and local economic benefit.

COS-A11.3 Coordinate with private landholders, non-profit organizations, and local, State and Federal agencies, to promote the safety and well-being of residents and visitors in the Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI) zones by advancing appropriate forest management and fuels reduction projects near infrastructure.