CHAPTER SIX





OPEN SPACE





6. Open Space

Open space means many things to many people and has many scales and forms. It can be a wooded mountainside, rolling grasslands, oak studded hills, streamside areas, a local park, a scenic road, or the intimate open s pace in one's "own backyard." Even smaller open s pace areas surrounding individual residences in rural areas when considered in the aggregate constitute a sizable area of visually open landscape.

Open space, then, is a three-dimensional concept and most simply may be defined as all of the space above the surface of the earth which is not occupied by structures.



Figure 6.0.1: Agricultural lands are an open space resource.

Open space land is any parcel or area of land or water essentially unimproved and designated for any of the open space uses defined in Section 65560 of the Government Code of the State of California. These open space uses include open space for health and safety, natural resources preservation, outdoor recreation, and managed production of natural resources.

The scenic resources of Granite Bay can be characterized by the pastoral setting of a rural residential landscape intermixed with open pasture, small farms, riparian areas, and oak woodlands. Another scenic area is the Folsom Lake State Recreation Area. There are also many ridgelines and hills interspersed throughout the area that contribute to the visual quality of the area. Although most of these hills and ridges have some level of development, an open character continues to dominate the landscape.

There are various categories of open space lands to be considered in the Granite Bay area. These open space areas are a valuable aesthetic resource to the community that should be preserved.

6.1 GOALS

- 1. Preserve and enhance open space lands to maintain the natural resources and rural character of the Community Plan area.
- 2. Protect and preserve those areas necessary to the integrity of the natural processes with special emphasis on, but not limited to, the water regimen.
- 3. Protect and preserve open spaces vital for wildlife habitat and other areas of major or unique ecological significance.
- 4. Protect the natural beauty and minimize disturbance of the natural terrain and vegetation.
- 5. Permit existing agricultural uses to continue and conserve lands most suitable for agricultural uses while allowing residential occupancies.
- 6. Provide open space for recreational needs and for the preservation of buildings and sites of archaeological, historical and cultural significance.

- 7. Conserve the visual resources of the community including important vistas.
- 8. Provide open space to shape and guide development and to enhance community identity.

6.2 POLICIES

- 1. Encourage both private and public ownership and maintenance of open space.
- Protect natural areas along creeks and canals.
- Encourage scenic or greenbelt corridors along major transportation routes. Roads and other public works shall incorporate beauty as well as utility, safety, and economy.
- 4. Preserve productive agricultural lands.
- 5. Areas hazardous to the public safety and welfare shall be open or predominantly open. This category includes:
- Grantice Bay Library
 Nature Trail

 Plants To Enjoy Along The Nature Trail

 No. Plant No. Plant

 1. Evergreen Peer 8. Howard McMinn Manzantia

 1. Evergreen Peer 9. Line Gak

 2. Valley Cak 9. Line Gak

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 7. Carachton. & Sylary

 All Tinley Wild

 Buck Feed & Grain
 Sea Nata Water Datrict

 Search All Water Datrict

 Grogology Creeded by Brian Flahvery of Troop 921 in Dec. 2005

 Renovated by Adin Millier of Troop 48 in August 2009

Figure 6.2.1: A nature trail is located behind the Granite Bay Library.

- a. Areas subject to landslide or with severe slope instability problems;
- b. Streams and other areas subject to flooding by the 100-year storm; and,
- c. Areas of high noise exposure.
- 6. Open spaces should be linked visually and physically to form a system of open spaces. Where appropriate, trails shall connect open space areas. Dedication of easements shall be encouraged or required as lands are developed and built.
- 7. Development on private lands should be planned and designed to provide for preservation of open space.
- 8. The scale of building, the siting of structures, and the design and materials of construction shall be harmonious with the natural setting.
- 9. In the design and development of new subdivisions, the following types of areas and features shall be preserved as open spaces to the maximum extent feasible: high hazard areas, scenic and trail corridors, streams, streamside vegetation, other significant stands of beneficial native vegetation, and any areas of special ecological significance.
- 10. The County will use its implementing ordinances, such as subdivision and zoning, to assure that valuable open space resources on both public and private properties will be preserved.
- 11. Native trees and woodlands shall be protected and enhanced by:
 - a. Ensuring development and site alteration minimize impact to native trees;
 - Increasing tree canopy coverage and diversity by planting trees appropriate to the location;
 - c. Regulating the injury and destruction of trees on public and private property;
 - d. Providing public education and stewardship; and,
 - e. Enforcing the County's Tree Preservation Ordinance.

6.3 NATURAL RESOURCE AREAS

These areas include lands for preservation of plants and animals including habitat for fish and wildlife species. Lands within open space areas perform an essential ecological function. They sustain biodiversity by providing habitat for plants and animals and they clean the air and water. The connectivity of natural open space areas is important for maintaining native vegetation communities and providing corridors for wildlife. Preserving enhancing these lands in their natural state is essential to the overall health and functioning of the natural environment.

Greyhawk
Wetland Preserve Area
This area consists of environmentally somistive
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Figure 6.3.1: Wetlands along Strap Ravine have been preserved in an open space lot.

The County has 80.7 acres of public parkland in Granite Bay (refer to Map S ix in rear of

document). Many of these parks are in neighborhoods and were acquired as residential areas were developed. The Granite Bay Community Park opened in 2004. Granite Bay also serves as a gateway to the Folsom Lake State Recreational Area. Further discussion of parks is located in Chapter 10.

Open space includes such uses as golf courses, private open space and lands associated with homeowners associations, public schools and utility corridors. These open space lands, the "Green System," have a variety of functions. Some such as golf courses and private open space provide a recreational function, while others provide social, educational or utility services.

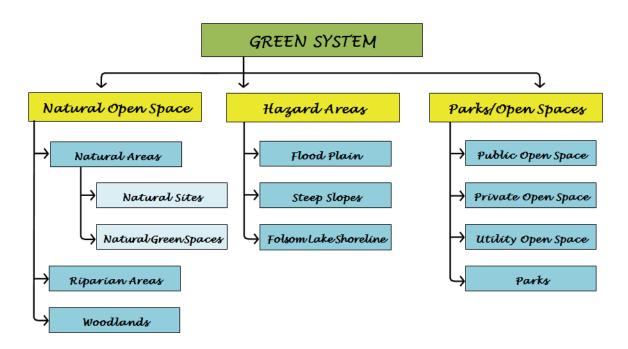


Figure 6.3.2: The "Green System" contains many components.

Natural areas include features such as wetlands, remnant parcels of vegetation or areas that have been restored to a natural state through naturalization. These sites may be set aside on open space lots in subdivisions.

Hazard Areas are generally associated with stream and creek corridors, steep slope areas, and the Folsom Lake shoreline. These areas are generally unsafe for development due to naturally occurring processes such as flooding and erosion.

Public open space includes parks and trails, school recreational facilities, storm water management facilities, conservation areas, and other recreational areas. Private open space includes private parks, private golf courses, and agricultural areas. Utility open space includes utility and service corridors and other open space lands such as water reservoirs.

6.4 OAK WOODLANDS/RIPARIAN ZONES

The rural settlement pattern and subdivision of land in Granite Bay has led to a patchwork of semi-natural oak woodlands interspersed with rural residential and agricultural (primarily pasture) land uses. The oak woodlands vary widely in their habitat value and connectivity.

In a developing community like Granite Bay, the protection of natural woodlands is important because of their environmental features, functions and linkages as well as the aesthetic qualities and visual relief this vegetation provides. In evaluating the significance of vegetation within the "forest,"



Figure 6.4.1: Oak woodlands are an open space resource and provide a variety of benefits.

trees individual values as well as their contributions to the ecosystem as a whole must be considered. In the context of Granite Bay, the forest refers to the mix of the remnants of native woodlands and planted trees and vegetation on all private and public lands in and around the built-up areas. Trees are valued for their ecological, social and economic benefits.

Trees are a fundamental component of a healthy community. As such, trees are a valuable asset to the county and contribute to community pride and cultural heritage. Trees in a developed area setting provide environmental, social and economic benefits such as:

- Reducing air pollution by removing carbon, dust and airborne particles;
- Reducing urban heat island effect;
- Reducing energy needs for cooling and heating;
- Intercepting rainfall to reduce run-off; increase groundwater recharge and prevent soil erosion;
- Reducing noise pollution;
- Creating wildlife habitat and flora and fauna diversity; and,
- Contributing to the quality and character of the community.

Tree Preservation. In 1991 the Placer County Board of Supervisors adopted the Placer County Tree Preservation Ordinance (Chapter 12, Article 12.16 Placer County Code). The ordinance applies to all native, landmark trees, and riparian zone trees in Granite Bay and to all projects where discretionary permit approvals are required by the County. Protected trees include all oaks and native trees greater than 6" in circumference (measured 4.5' above ground) and trees of any species with a landmark tree designation.

New development should preserve as much native vegetation on a parcel as possible. Great care must be exercised when work is conducted upon or around trees to be preserved. Preventing disturbance within a tree's Critical Root Zone (CRZ) is not difficult or expensive. The Critical Root Zone is the area around a tree in which the roots necessary for the tree's survival are located. It includes large woody roots that transport nutrients and support the tree as well as the smaller roots of varying sizes that absorb nutrients. These roots play an important role in the tree's health and survival. See Placer County's Landscape Design Guidelines for more information.

Riparian Zones. For the most part, creeks in Granite Bay have retained a multi-layer riparian zone, with gaps in connectivity more prevalent in the southern part of the community near the Sacramento County border. Valley oak dominates riparian areas along with some cottonwood and black willow. Understory is typically sandbar willow and Himalayan blackberry. Residential and agricultural land uses have reduced the width of the riparian zone and increased surface runoff through urbanization of the Granite Bay watersheds.

In the Dry Creek Greenway Regional Vision (2008) plan, a protective corridor is recommended along major creeks in the riparian vegetation areas as a means to eliminate the encroachment of development in these environmentally sensitive areas. The goal of the 'habitat only' corridors is to provide high quality, contiguous riparian and aquatic habitat from the more recreationally focused corridors in the lower reaches of the Greenway to the upper parts of the Dry Creek watershed. The plan for these corridors is that they will be managed for quality habitat if in public ownership. If privately held, property owners will be encouraged to maintain existing riparian areas and enhance degraded locations.

6.5 AGRICULTURAL AREAS

Included in this category would be a ny agricultural lands of economic importance used in the production of food or fiber. Also included would be any major mineral deposit areas, including those in short supply.

Agricultural lands in Granite Bay, primarily citrus crops, deciduous orchards and pasture, have been greatly reduced from their original extent, primarily due to market forces, disease, and urban encroachment. Rural residential growth largely occurred after the decline of orchard production as farms were subdivided into smaller and smaller units of land.



Figure 6.5.1: The wine industry in Placer County is undergoing a resurgence.

According to the Placer Legacy Agricultural and Open Space Conservation Program Implementation Report (2000), additional conflicts are expected to be generated as the area continues to grow. A mix of rural

residential and small farming uses such as hobby farms and vineyards are interwoven throughout Granite Bay. Different expectations about rural lifestyles and the perceived nuisance of farming operations will continue to cause conflicts in the area for agricultural producers and horse and livestock owners.

6.6 OUTDOOR RECREATION AREAS

Public parkland is a vital component in the life of residents and c ontributes to the environmental, social and economic health of Granite Bay. Parks and o pen space contribute to environmental sustainability and strengthen communities by making them more attractive.

Access to parks allows for regular physical activity, which improves health, reduces the risk of a wide range of diseases and is important to social and mental health. In addition to the benefits of exercise, contact with the natural environment and opportunities for social interaction improves psychological growth.

Interest in trail development for cycling, hiking and equestrian use has been evident for many years. The demand for trails and other types of recreation will increase as Granite Bay's population increases but also as the regional population increases as well. It is assumed that urban residents will seek opportunities in more rural areas to recreate. The proximity of Granite Bay to highly urbanized areas makes it popular for residents of those areas if recreational opportunities are provided.

The Dry Creek Greenway plan recognizes that demand. It is envisioned as a continuous system of trails and habitat areas following the major creeks of the Dry Creek



Figure 6.6.1: Passive recreation is available at the Minters Ravine Nature Reserve.



Figure 6.6.2: Folsom State Lake Recreation Area is a regional attraction.

watershed from the Placer County/Sacramento County boundary west of Roseville to the headwaters of the Dry Creek Watershed in Granite Bay/Penryn/Rocklin. Creation of an off-street trail system along the southern streams within the Greenway will form the final link in a sixty to seventy mile recreational trail loop uniting the Folsom Lake State Recreation Area, the American River Parkway, the Ueda Parkway, the Dry Creek Parkway, and the Dry Creek Greenway.

In addition to the physical positive stream corridor attributes, other social factors support recreation in open space areas such as:

- Encouraging use of alternative forms of transportation;
- Protecting streams in a natural, unchannelized form;
- Experiencing natural settings and wildlife;
- Preserving settings for environmental education;
- Creating a regional amenity that will attract visitors;
- Preserving sufficient flood capacity to minimize damage from storms; and,
- Protecting water quality in the streams.

Besides the recently completed Granite Bay Community Park, new recreational development in the area is limited to that which is provided as mitigation for new development. The single largest existing recreational opportunity is the Folsom Lake State Recreation Area with vehicular access at Granite Bay and Beal's Point. In addition, Miners Ravine Nature Reserve provides walking trails and public access to mature riparian woodland and Native American cultural resources.

Specific recreational policies and goals are addressed within the Parks and Recreation section.

6.7 CONSERVATION/OPEN SPACE IMPLEMENTATION

The Placer Legacy Implementation Report found that opportunities for large-scale acquisitions and c onservation easements in the Granite Bay/Loomis Basin area are limited due to the high level of subdivision activity that has already occurred. However, if willing sellers are present, key easement acquisitions or easements could help preserve the remaining oak woodland matrix and/or preserve high quality riparian habitat. Easements and some homeowner's association common areas are presently used along the riparian corridors. Such easements are typically required as a p art of the discretionary approval for a land development project.

Riparian protection and enhancement has wildlife benefits. Controlling high temperatures, erosion and sedimentation of the tributaries of Dry Creek will be important to aquatic species including sensitive salmonids. Working with partner organizations and the results of the Dry Creek Watershed Coordinated Resource Management Plan (CRMP), Placer Legacy is proposing to undertake creek restoration projects throughout the county to enhance habitat for anadromous fish and improve water quality.



Figure 6.7.1: Streambank stabilization work was completed along Miners Ravine near Auburn Folsom Road in 2002.

High quality riparian and wetland habitats exist along many of the creeks in Granite Bay, especially in the upper watershed. Riparian stands, often dominated by valley oak, blue oak and interior live oak, form mostly contiguous corridors from the lowlands near the Placer-Sacramento County line to the uplands closer to the City of Auburn.

One of the goals of the Dry Creek Greenway plan is to preserve and enhance riparian and aquatic habitat located within the Greenway boundaries and e nhance value of habitat areas adjacent to the Greenway by providing connecting corridors and habitat diversity. The Greenway plan recognizes the need to preserve and enhance the riparian corridors to permit migration of animal and fish species, particularly spawning salmonids that have been identified in Miners Ravine and Secret Ravine. The majority of the Greenway's recommended "habitat only" corridors are located in Granite Bay.



Figure 6.7.2: Preservation and enhancement of wildlife habitat is a Community Plan priority.

In addition to supporting these restrictions, the Greenway plan makes the following additional recommendations within the "habitat only" corridors:

- Removing non-native plants and replanting with native species;
- · Limiting removal of standing snags (dead trees) except where necessary for public safety;
- Limiting of removal of native vegetation from stream channels, except where such removal, if not done, presents a safety issue with respect to floodwater conveyance, fire control or public safety;
- Limiting of removal of large woody debris (LWD) from stream channels, except where such removal, if not done, presents a safety issue with respect to floodwater conveyance. Where LWD presents a potential safety issue, orienting the downed snags parallel to stream-flow may reduce the risk;
- Revegetation of poor quality habitat areas with native species;
- Restoration of excessively eroding stream banks using bioengineering techniques that benefit aquatic species and wildlife; and,
- Restoration of degraded salmonid habitat through reduction of siltation sources, growth of a
 healthy riparian canopy that shades the stream and provides root masses for cover. While
 these activities are recommended in all of the Greenway corridors, they are especially
 applicable to the habitat only management areas.

Several restoration projects are underway or planned. Using CALFED funding, a restoration project at the Miners Ravine Preserve was completed in 2002. The work included recontouring of banks, floodplain creation, not-native vegetation removal and revegetation with native species.