

SECTION 8: CULTURAL RESOURCES

I. PURPOSE

The Meadow Vista Community Plan area, and all of Placer County, derives much of its sense of identity from the rich fabric of its local history. This heritage is retained and made more tangible to the present generation through the existence of the historical properties and prehistoric sites that have survived the passage of time.

It is imperative that strong measures be taken to preserve and protect these material elements of our

heritage from the encroachment of development. If these physical remnants of our history are allowed to deteriorate or be destroyed, we will be losing a significant portion of our identity as a community. Such losses are irreversible and a tragedy for both present and future generations.

The following goals, policies and implementation programs are intended to assure that future generations will have the opportunity to form a sense of community pride and identity from the achievements of the people that lived before them.

III. GOALS, POLICIES, AND IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAMS

GOALS AND POLICIES

Goal 8.A: To identify, protect, and enhance Meadow Vista's important historical, archaeological, and cultural sites and their contributing environment. [Goal 5.D]

Policies

- 8.A.1. The County shall assist the residents of Meadow Vista in becoming active guardians of their community's cultural resources. [5.D.1.]
- 8.A.2. The County shall solicit the cooperation of the owners of cultural resources, encourage those owners to treat these resources as assets rather than liabilities, and encourage the support of the general public for the preservation and enhancement of these resources. [5.D.2.]
- 8.A.3. The County shall solicit the views of the Native American Heritage Commission and/or the local Native American community in cases where development may result in disturbance to sites containing evidence of Native American activity and/or to sites of cultural importance. [5.D.3.]
- 8.A.4. The County shall use, where feasible, incentive programs to assist private property owners in preserving and enhancing cultural resources. [5.D.5.]
- 8.A.5. The County shall require that discretionary development projects identify and protect from damage, destruction, and abuse, important historical, archaeological, and cultural sites and their contributing environment. Such assessments shall be incorporated into a countywide cultural resource data base, to be maintained by the Department of Museums. [5.D.6.]
- 8.A.6. The County shall, within its power, maintain confidentiality regarding the locations of archaeological sites in order to preserve and protect these resources from vandalism and the unauthorized removal of artifacts. [5.D.8.]
- 8.A.7. The County shall use the State *Historic Building Code* to encourage the preservation of historic structures. [5.D.9.]

- 8.A.8. The County shall support the registration of cultural resources in appropriate landmark designations (i.e., National Register of Historic Places, California Historical Landmarks, Points of Historical Interest, or Local Landmark). The County shall assist private citizens seeking these designations for their property. [5.D.11.]
- 8.A.9. The County shall consider acquisition programs as a means of preserving significant cultural resources that are not suitable for private development. Organizations that could provide assistance in this area include, but are not limited to, the Archaeological Conservancy, The Nature Conservancy, and the Placer Land Trust. [5.D.12.]
- 8.A.10. The County, in cooperation with the landowner, shall initiate steps to preserve the indian grinding stones found within the commercial area near the intersection of Placer Hills Road and Meadow Gate Road. [4.5, 1/31]
- 8.A.11. The County shall work with community groups to design and construct a historical marker to be placed inside the intersection of Placer Hills and Combie Road. [4.6, 1/31]
- 8.A.12. The County shall require that the subdivision of property containing existing features of cultural or aesthetic merit be carefully designed to preserve these structures and, where appropriate, utilize them as a focal point of neighborhood design. [4.1]
- 8.A.13. The County shall make the protection of significant cultural resources a priority over recordation and/or destruction. [1.3]
- Goal 8.B:** To encourage the continued provision of a wide variety of cultural activities that contribute to the appeal of the Meadow Vista area.

Policy

- 8.B.1. The County shall encourage the development of multipurpose facilities which can function as recreational sites, open space areas and for historic, cultural, and archaeological preservation. [2.1]
- 8.B.2. The County shall support efforts to establish a community center in Meadow Vista.

IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAMS

1. Review development projects for compliance with the goals, policies, and specific discussions contained in the Cultural Resources Section and throughout the Plan.

Responsible Agency/Department: Land Development Departments/Meadow Vista Municipal Advisory Committee/Planning Commission/Board of Supervisors
Time Frame: Ongoing
Funding: Application fees

2. The County shall prepare, adopt, and implement procedures for review and approval of all County-permitted projects involving ground disturbance and all building and/or demolition permits that will affect buildings, structures, or objects 45 years of age or older.

Responsible Agency/Department: Planning Department/Department of Museums/Board of Supervisors
Time Frame: FY 95-96; ongoing
Funding: Mitigation fees/Permit fees

3. The County shall develop preservation incentive programs for owners of important cultural resources, using such mechanisms as the Mills Act, the Historic Preservation Easement program, the Certified Local Government program, and the Heritage Tourism program.

Responsible Agency/Department: Planning Department/Department of Museums/Assessor.

Time Frame: FY 95-96; ongoing

Funding: Grants/General Fund

4. The County shall establish a formal Placer County Register of Historical Properties to facilitate preservation of the locally-significant historical properties that do not qualify for State or Federal listings.

Responsible Agency/Department: Department of Museums

Time Frame: FY 95-96; ongoing

Funding: General Fund/Grants

5. The County shall consider pursuing the following cultural resource management programs and shall explore possible funding sources to support these programs:

- a. Pursuit of status as a Certified Local Government to facilitate state funding and technical assistance from the State Office of Historic Preservation;
- b. Preparation, adoption, and implementation of a cultural resources ordinance that provides definitions and standards for identification and protection of cultural resources and provides penalties for their disturbance; and
- c. Establishment of the staff position of cultural resources coordinator. The coordinator would provide archaeological and architectural historian expertise to the activities outlined above and would maintain a countywide cultural resource database. The coordinator would also provide assistance to the public in understanding cultural resource concerns and in fulfilling cultural resource legislative requirements.

Responsibility: Department of Museums

Time Frame: FY 95-96 and as funds become available

Funding: Grants/Permit fees/General Fund

6. Because of the moderate to high sensitivity rating for most of the Plan area, it is believed prudent that all future projects which will involve potential ground disturbance be requested to provide a project specific record search as a part of environmental review. Based on the results of the record search, specific recommendations for archeological or historical field survey, archival research, architectural evaluations etc. could be made. In most cases, a field survey may be required.

Responsible Agency/Department: Department of Museums/Planning Department

Time frame: Ongoing

Funding: Permit fees/mitigation fees

7. Require site specific studies for archaeological or historical sites within the federal government's definition of "historical context" in all instances where land development has the potential to have a detrimental impact on these sites. [1.4]

Responsible Agency/Department: Department of Museums/Planning Department

Time frame: Ongoing

Funding: Permit fees/mitigation fees

8. If, as a result of an archeological or historical field survey, sites of significance are discovered, the sites should be made known to the Placer County Department of Museums and Placer County Historical Advisory Board. The Board may support and recommend a listing of the site with the State of California

as a National Register nomination, A State Landmark nomination or a Point of Historical Interest. Furthermore, all known sites should be brought to the attention of the Department of Museums' office whose staff and volunteers are currently conducting a cultural resource inventory throughout Placer County.

Responsible Agency/Department: Department of Museums/Planning Department

Time frame: Ongoing

Funding: Permit fees/mitigation fees

9. In the event that Native American remains and/or associated grave goods are discovered at any time during project review or construction, the project proponent should stop work (if during construction or excavation) and contact the County Coroner and the Department of Museums.

Responsible Agency/Department: Department of Museums/Planning Department

Time frame: Ongoing

Funding: Permit fees/mitigation fees

10. Except for extremely sensitive archaeological sites, all sites not recognized and identified by signs or monuments as part of some State or Federal program should be identified and nominated for appropriate historical designation by the Placer County Historical Advisory Board.

Responsible Agency/Department: Department of Museums/Planning Department

Time frame: Ongoing

Funding: Permit fees/mitigation fees

11. It is important that all historical sites are protected from destruction or demolition. Therefore, avoidance/protection is preferred over recordation and destruction. The few remaining significant structures in the area should be protected by the existing owners or purchased by the appropriate public agencies.

Responsible Agency/Department: Department of Museums/Planning Department

Time frame: Ongoing

Funding: Permit fees/mitigation fees

12. Hire a Cultural Resources Officer.

Responsible Agency/Department: Department of Museums

Time frame: 1995/96

Funding: General Fund

III. DISCUSSION

1. Prehistory

Meadow Vista was first inhabited by the Nisenan Maidu, a Native American people whose migration range included this foothill country as well as portions of the Sacramento Valley and the Sierra Nevada high country. The Nisenan Maidu lifestyle was based upon hunting and gathering from rich natural resources which included abundant game animals, fish, fowl, fruits, berries, and acorns. The Nisenan Maidu established many villages in the foothills, moving among them in seasonal migrations

based upon the weather and the process of gathering food and other necessities.

Several Nisenan Maidu grinding stones are located in the Meadow Vista area and Richard Simpson, a Meadow Vista native from a pioneer family, has written a book called Ooti, which chronicles the process of turning acorns into a food staple. The photographs and text of Simpson's book record Lizzie Enos, a local Nisenan Maidu woman, grinding, leeching and cooking acorns into the porridge and bread that were dietary staples of the Nisenan Maidu.

The Blue Oak and Black Oak trees which were such a prominent feature of the landscape of the foothills during that period, were revered by the Nisenan Maidu both for their majestic appearance and for the life-giving nourishment they provided. Hickey Murray, a Nisenan Maidu elder, recently described the Black Oak as "a sacred tree," in the minds of the Nisenan Maidu.

2. History

In the 1850s pioneer settlers established homesteads in the area, which became known as Applegate after the large land holdings of the Applegate family. These ranches established an economy based on cattle ranching and subsistence farming of hogs, sheep, horses, crops of hay, chickens and vegetables. This economy continued into the 20th century. Harvey White, a native of the area, once described the cattle drives of the 1920s and 30s. "We took the cattle up to high pastures in the late spring and started rounding them up to bring them back down in October. The cattle used to bed down in the middle of Placer Hills Road."

Logging was also active during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Oaks were cut and delivered to Clipper Gap for the manufacture of blasting powder used in mining and of railroad ties used to build and maintain the Union Pacific Railroad.

Resorts such as the Oak Resort, the Walmond Resort and Pinecrest Resorts also flourished during this period, sending teams and horses to meet vacationers from the cities of the Bay Area and allow them to experience the quiet and beauty of the foothills.

In 1919 a lending library was started by the Applegate Wednesday Club and in 1922 a one-room schoolhouse was erected by citizens. Electricity was established for the area's slowly growing population in 1928. Combie Lake, first known as Lake Van Giesen, was created in 1927-30 by the Nevada Irrigation District. The volunteer fire department was organized in 1948.

People came to live in the foothills in increasing numbers during the 1940s and 50s. Real estate subdivision was active and Meadow Vista took its name from one of these ventures. Increasingly, residents supported themselves by commuting into

Auburn to work at large employment centers such as the Dewitt Center. The Grange and area churches and schools were centers of social activity such as potlucks, holiday festivals and square dances. The Lake Van Giesen Resort was also a center for parties and get togethers.

Population grew even more rapidly during the 1960s and 70s, when the now-familiar pattern of commuting to work in the greater Sacramento area became established. By 1974, when community members wrote the Meadow Vista/West Applegate General Plan, the first general plan for the area and the predecessor of this Plan, the population had grown to approximately 2,600 people.

3. Previous Cultural Resource Surveys in the Plan Area

There have been a total of approximately 50 cultural resource sites recorded (with completed site records) or reported (noted only in report texts) within or immediately outside of the Community Plan area.

3.1 Prehistoric Archeological Resources

The prehistoric sites include three former village sites (middens), many with associated surface artifacts and bedrock mortars (grinding rocks). Eighteen other sites consist primarily of bedrock mortars, some with scattered artifacts or debris from stone tool manufacturing (subsurface deposits may be present at some of these sites but testing was not done during the survey phase). Three isolated prehistoric specimens were also noted in the Plan area.

3.2 Historic Resources (Archeological/Architectural)

The historic archeological sites or features include four formally recorded historic archeological sites and 19 recorded buildings⁴. The four archeological features include the Bear River and Bowman Feeder Canals (which were recorded on the same record form), one rock wall alignment and two historic dumps.

A review of the 1948 Auburn Quadrangle Map and 1949 Lake Combie Quadrangle Map indicates that many of the buildings, roads and similar features within the Plan area are at least 45 years old; many

⁴ Volume Two of the Placer County Cultural Resources Inventory includes historic resources inventory forms for 20 properties within the Meadow Vista Community Plan area. Nineteen of these are buildings, primarily houses, while one is a prehistoric archeological site as mentioned above.

are possibly much older. Other features include the Van Giesen Dam, a cemetery and several canals.

No National Register Properties, State Landmarks or California Points of Interest are located within the Meadow Vista Community Plan area.

3.3 Previous Field Surveys

According to North Central Information Center's records there have been a total of seven archeological field surveys within the Plan area. The portion of the Plan area subject to comprehensive survey work performed and reported according to current standards is far less than 1/4 of the area.

4. Recommendations

Based upon the above information concerning known sites, historic resources and previous investigations, as well as the local topography, the Meadow Vista Community Plan area appears to reflect the full range of sensitivity values. The zones along the Bear River and adjacent to the several smaller drainages which cross the project, especially in the valley like flats are of the highest sensitivity, especially for prehistoric resources. Historic sensitivity is also high in these same areas but also includes other zones such as the old roadway margins, canal routes and settlement areas like Meadow Vista and Christian Valley. The ridge tops and moderate slopes are estimated to be moderate sensitivity while the steeper slopes are likely to be the least sensitivity.

For all future projects which will involve potential ground disturbance, a project specific record search should be required. Field surveys would be recommended in most cases because of the widespread sensitivity potential and the fact that very little of the area has been field surveyed to current standards.