

Section 7
Agricultural and Forestry Resources

SECTION 7

AGRICULTURAL AND FORESTRY RESOURCES

AGRICULTURAL LAND USE

Goal 7.A: To provide for the long-term conservation and use of agriculturally-designated lands.

Policies

- 7.A.1. The County shall protect agriculturally-designated areas from conversion to non-agricultural uses.
- 7.A.2. The County shall ensure that unincorporated areas within city spheres of influence that are designated for agricultural uses are maintained in large parcel sizes of 10-acre minimums or larger.
- 7.A.3. The County shall encourage continued and, where possible, increased agricultural activities on lands suited to agricultural uses.
- 7.A.4. The County shall provide protection from flooding for agricultural and related activities from flooding.
- 7.A.5. The County shall regularly monitor and comment on pending state and federal legislation affecting agricultural lands.
- 7.A.6. The County shall encourage land improvement programs to increase soil productivity in those agricultural areas containing lesser quality soils.
- 7.A.7. The County shall maintain agricultural lands in large parcel sizes to retain viable farming units.
- 7.A.8. The County shall encourage infill development in urban areas as an alternative to expanding urban boundaries into agricultural areas.
- 7.A.9. The County shall support merging or reversion to acreage of substandard lots in "antiquated subdivisions" in agriculturally-designated areas under the same ownership, and not being used as separate parcels.
- 7.A.10. The County shall facilitate agricultural production by allowing agricultural service uses (i.e., commercial and industrial uses) to locate in agriculturally-designated areas if they relate to the primary agricultural activity in the area. The County shall use the following guidelines to analyze the suitability of a proposed agricultural service use:
 - a. The use will not adversely affect agricultural production in the area;
 - b. The use supports local agricultural production;
 - c. It is compatible with existing agricultural activities and residential uses in the area;
 - d. The use will not require the extension of sewer or water lines; and,
 - e. It will not result in a concentration of commercial or industrial uses in the immediate area.
- 7.A.11. The County shall support appropriate efforts by public and private conservation organizations to use conservation easements as a tool for agricultural preservation.
- 7.A.12. The County shall actively encourage enrollments of agricultural lands in its Williamson Act program, including the use of Farmland Security Zones.
- 7.A.13. The County shall encourage multi-seasonal use of agricultural lands such as for private recreational development, in order to enhance the economic viability of agricultural operations.

- 7.A.14 The County shall support appropriate legislative changes on the state level to revitalize the Williamson Act program.

[See also policies/programs under Goal 1.G., Agricultural Land Use.]

Implementation Programs

- 7.1. The County should adopt an administrative rule for Williamson Act contracts that prohibits subdivision of the land under contract for the duration of the contract, unless the Board of Supervisors can make the findings that a proposed subdivision enhances the long term agricultural viability of the land.
- Responsibility: Agricultural Commissioner
Board of Supervisors
- Time Frame: Completed FY 97-98
- Funding: N/A
- 7.2. The County shall encourage adoption of sound soil conservation practices for farming operations on highly erodible soils by directing landowners in these areas to the agricultural advisory services of the University of California Cooperative Extension, Farm and Home Advisor; the Natural Resources Conservation Service, the Placer County Resource Conservation District, Placer Legacy, and the County Agricultural Commissioner.
- Responsibility: Agricultural Commissioner
Department of Public Works
- Time Frame: Ongoing
- Funding: General Fund
- 7.3. The County shall develop a program for the purchase of development rights through the use of conservation easements as a means to preserve and protect agricultural land. Such a program should identify the most critical farmland for conservation based on physical and economic considerations. The County should work with public and private agencies, including the Natural Resources Conservation Service, the California Department of Conservation, the California Farm Bureau, the California Rangeland Trust, and the American Farmland Trust, in developing the program (see Program 6.16)
- Responsibility: CDRA Planning Services Division
Agricultural Commissioner
- Time Frame: Complete
- Funding: General Fund
Grants
- 7.4. The County shall provide for Farmland Security Zone contracts with private landowners.
- Responsibility: Agricultural Commission
Board of Supervisors
- Time Frame: Ongoing
- Funding: General Fund

LAND USE CONFLICTS

Goal 7.B: To minimize existing and future conflicts between agricultural and non-agricultural uses in agriculturally-designated areas.

Policies

- 7.B.1. The County shall identify and maintain clear boundaries between urban/suburban and agricultural areas and require land use buffers between such uses where feasible, except as may be determined to be unnecessary or inappropriate within a Specific Plan as part of the Specific Plan approval. These buffers shall occur on the parcel for which the development permit is sought and shall favor protection of the maximum amount of farmland.
- 7.B.2. The County shall weigh the economic benefits of surface mining against the value of preserving agriculture when considering mineral extraction proposals on land designated for agricultural use.
- 7.B.3. The County shall consider fencing subdivided lands adjoining agricultural uses as a potential mitigation measure to reduce conflicts between residential and agricultural uses. Factors to be considered in implementing such a measure include:
 - a. The type of agricultural operation (i.e., livestock, orchard, timber, row crops);
 - b. The size of the lots to be created;
 - c. The presence or lack of fences in the area;
 - d. Existing natural barriers that prevent trespass; and,
 - e. Passage of wildlife.
- 7.B.4. The County shall continue to enforce the provisions of its *Right-to-Farm Ordinance* and of the existing state nuisance law.
- 7.B.5. The County shall encourage educational programs to inform Placer County residents of the importance of protecting farmland.

ECONOMIC VIABILITY OF AGRICULTURE

Goal 7.C: To protect and enhance the economic viability Placer County's agricultural operations.

Policies

- 7.C.1. The County shall attempt to improve the financial viability of the agricultural sector of Placer County's economy through actions that have the potential to reduce costs and increase profits.
- 7.C.2. The County shall promote agricultural operations that provide a competitive edge to Placer County farmers.
- 7.C.3. The County shall support opportunities to promote and market agricultural products grown or processed within Placer County (such as Farmers' Markets) as a part of the economic development activities of local agencies.
- 7.C.4. The County shall permit a wide variety of promotional and marketing activities for County-grown products in all zone districts where agricultural uses are authorized.
- 7.C.5. The County shall permit on-farm product handling and selling. The County shall permit stands for the sale of agricultural products in any agricultural land use designation to promote and market those agricultural products grown or processed in Placer County. Secondary and incidental sales of agricultural products grown elsewhere may be

- permitted subject to appropriate approvals.
- 7.C.6. The County shall ensure that land use regulations do not arbitrarily restrict potential agricultural-related enterprises which could provide supplemental sources of income for farm operators.
 - 7.C.7. The County shall maintain regulations that exempt certain agricultural buildings from the construction requirements of the *California Building Code*, subject to limitations on the size, occupancy, location, and use of such structures.
 - 7.C.8. The County shall ensure that changes in special district assessment and local taxes do not unduly burden owners of agricultural lands.
 - 7.C.9. The County shall urge the State Legislature to provide more funding for the Agricultural Export Program of the California Department of Food and Agriculture, which seeks to expand foreign markets for several commodities produced in Placer County.

Implementation Programs

- 7.5 The County shall assist in the development of a Placer County-grown agricultural product marketing program.
 - Responsibility: Agricultural Commissioner
 - Time Frame: Ongoing
 - Funding: General Fund/Grants

AGRICULTURAL WATER

- Goal 7.D:** To maximize the productivity of Placer County's agriculture uses by ensuring adequate supplies of water.

Policies

- 7.D.1. The County shall support efforts to deliver adequate surface water to agricultural areas with deficient water supplies.
- 7.D.2. The County shall encourage water conservation by farmers. To this end, the County shall, through the Agricultural Commissioner and U.C. Cooperative Extension, continue to provide information on irrigation methods and best management practices. The County shall also support conservation efforts of the California Farm Bureau, resource conservation districts, Natural Resources Conservation Service, and irrigation districts.
- 7.D.3. The County should participate with cities and special districts in establishing programs for the agricultural re-use of treated wastewater in a manner that would be economically beneficial to agriculture.
- 7.D.4. The County shall participate and encourage multi-agency participation in water projects where such coordination can improve the likelihood of providing affordable irrigation water to areas of Placer County with deficient water supplies.
- 7.D.5. The County will work with local irrigation districts to preserve local water rights to ensure that water saved through conservation may be stored and used locally, rather than appropriated and used outside of Placer County.
- 7.D.6. The County shall encourage the use of reclaimed water where appropriate for agricultural production.

[See also policies/programs under Goal 6.A., Water Resources.]

FOREST RESOURCES

Goal 7.E: To conserve Placer County's forest resources, enhance the quality and diversity of forest ecosystems, reduce conflicts between forestry and other uses, and encourage a sustained yield of forest products.

Policies

- 7.E.1. The County shall encourage the sustained productive use of forest land as a means of providing open space and conserving other natural resources.
- 7.E.2. The County shall discourage development that conflicts with timberland management.
- 7.E.3. The County shall work closely and coordinate with agencies involved in the regulation of timber harvest operations to ensure that County conservation goals are achieved.
- 7.E.4. The County shall encourage qualified landowners to enroll in the Timberland Production Zone (TPZ) program.
- 7.E.5. The County shall review all proposed timber harvest plans (THPs) and shall request that the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CDF) amend THPs to address public safety concerns, such as requiring alternate haul routes if use of proposed haul routes would jeopardize public health and safety or result in damage to public or private roads.
- 7.E.6. The County shall encourage and promote the productive use of wood waste generated in the County.

Implementation Programs

- 7.6. The County shall encourage the U.S. Forest Service and the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection to identify the potential impacts on, and the need for preservation of, old growth forest in Placer County.
 Responsibility: CDRA Planning Services Division
 Agricultural Commissioner
 Time Frame: Ongoing
 Funding: N/A
- 7.7. The County shall formally request that the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection include educational materials for residents in its Notice of Intent to Harvest Timber. Such materials should include information concerning the Forest Practice Act, Forest Practice Rules, and Department of Forestry Timber Harvest Plan review process.
 Responsibility: CDRA Planning Services Division
 Agricultural Commissioner
 Time Frame: Ongoing
 Funding: N/A