

# DEVELOPMENT SERVICES DEPARTMENT

COUNTY OF EL DORADO

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## MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** January 21, 2009

**TO:** Board of Supervisors

**FROM:** Peter N. Maurer, Principal Planner

**SUBJECT:** Integrated Natural Resources Management Plan (INRMP) Request for Proposals (RFP)

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Development Services Department submitting the INRMP Request For Proposals for Board of Supervisors for review and approval.

**Recommended Action:**

1. Review attached recommendations from the Plant and Wildlife Technical Advisory Committee (PAWTAC) and the INRMP Stakeholders Advisory Committee (ISAC).
2. Approve the Request for Proposals (RFP) and authorize staff to distribute same.

**Background:**

At the Board meeting of November 18, 2008, your Board made the following motion regarding the INRMP RFP:

*A motion was made by Supervisor Sweeney, seconded by Supervisor Dupray, as follows:*

- a) Authorize the Chairman to sign the letter of commendation for Adina Merenlender;*
- b) Refer this matter back to PAWTAC and ISAC to work with staff to create a new RFP or modify the current proposed RFP which is to include a review of the need for connectivity including, consideration of the IBC consistent with General Plan policy 7.4.2.9. The committees need to help staff select identifiers and indicator species that would define the need or lack of need for connectivity; and*
- c) Direct staff to return to the Board with the RFP on or before February 24, 2009.*

Staff met with the INRMP Stakeholders Advisory Committee (ISAC) and the Plant and Wildlife Technical Advisory Committee (PAWTAC) in December to review the Board motion and to obtain their input and recommendations. Members requested a joint January meeting prior to submitting their recommendations to staff to forward to your Board, which was held on January 13, 2009.

**Discussion:**

The draft INRMP RFP before you is one that PAWTAC and ISAC have committed many hours to. The majority of both committees concurred that the November 2008 draft INRMP RFP was authored with their input and was appropriate, with one minor modification (see attachments). Some committee members were uncomfortable that the Board's direction to choose indicator species was not directly followed; however, both committees discussed, and the majorities agreed, for differing reasons, that it was not appropriate for the committees to choose indicator species.

PAWTAC's majority opinion was that although their members have the expertise to choose indicator species, it was not appropriate for their voluntary committee to do so, prior to a scientific study being conducted, and further, PAWTAC asserts that the modeling approach described in the RFP is appropriate for the purpose of developing the habitat connectivity information directed by the general plan, rather than an indicator species approach. With the modeling approach, a consultant can conduct a study and analysis, and PAWTAC will be available to the County and the consultant to review and to provide recommendations on scientific validity and rigor, and to lend their local biological expertise. An agency member of PAWTAC suggested that choosing "indicator species," rather than a habitat connectivity modeling approach as suggested in the INRMP RFP, assumes that the species will be monitored closely to determine population trends which indicate success or failure of a plan. Further, indicator species monitoring is complicated, and there is a high cost for ongoing monitoring. Another agency member stated that a habitat connectivity modeling approach is a reasonable idea and one that his agency could support.

ISAC's majority opinion was that they do not have the biological expertise to choose indicator species. Both committees agreed that Mapping Tasks, Task 1, Map Important Habitat and Connectivity, was a vital first step forward, but ISAC emphasized that there must be significant discussions regarding the results of Task 1 with the Board, ISAC, PAWTAC, and the public before moving forward with Task 2, the IBC Overlay (General Plan Policy 7.4.2.9), which is more regulatory in nature and will require extended political and public input. ISAC will provide their community expertise and input into the mapping attributes, and especially, input into Task 2, the Important Biological Corridor (IBC) Overlay, and implementation of strategic Tasks 3 through 11.

PAWTAC recommends that Tasks 1 and 2 can be kept together, or separated, as the County desires. Both committees agreed that Tasks 3 through 11 are strategic tasks that can be grouped together, if the County desires, into a separate portion of a contract or under separate contract.

A letter from Greg Greenwood, one of the authors of the "Saving & Greenwood" study often referred to, was received by Development Services on January 7, 2009 (Attachment 4). In an effort to summarize the results of his connectivity studies, the results of which are interpreted differently amongst the varied interest groups in the county, Dr. Greenwood offers the following comments in regards to the regional importance of north-south connectivity in the Sierra Nevada foothill range (please see the attachment for the following comments, in full context):

This decrease in connectivity may be regionally important. The oak woodlands in the foothills of the Sierra Nevada consist of a NW-SW trending band extending the entire length of the range, from Lassen to Kern Counties. This habitat is among the richest biologically in the State. Development processes since 1849 have tended to be E-W in orientation, with railroads, highways, reservoirs and finally urbanization cutting across this band of habitat and decreasing the ease of movement of genes and organisms through their ancestral range. Measures of fragmentation give a quantitative assessment of this process and their potential biological ramifications.

In regards specifically to the fragmentation by development along US Highway 50 between Shingle Springs and Placerville he states:

...The connectivity of oak woodlands across the Highway 50 corridor exists today only because owners of vacant parcels have not yet exercised their rights to a building permit while owners of some larger parcels with structures have nonetheless maintained the wildland oak woodlands on their property.

The only action [in the modeling results] that promised to maintain connectivity across the US 50 corridor was a parcel acquisition strategy focused, not on distant woodlands unlikely to be developed in the near future, but rather on exactly those relatively few parcels near Highway 50 that are providing connectivity today.

### **Next Steps:**

Some members of ISAC have suggested that the RFP be distributed more broadly than to those firms that previously responded to the Departments Request for Qualifications, and were subsequently determined to be sufficiently qualified to perform the work necessary to prepare the INRMP. If your Board finds that the RFP is ready to be issued, staff requests that your Board provide direction as to whether you want Development Services to send the RFP to consulting firms from the approved departmental environmental contract firms list or if the Board's preference is to rebroadcast the RFP.

Attachments: Attachment 1 - INRMP RFP (01/05/2009 public draft)  
Attachment 2 - PAWTAC Recommendations on the INRMP RFP (dated January 5, 2009)  
Attachment 3 – ISAC Recommendations on the INRMP RFP (dated January 13, 2009)  
Attachment 4 – Letter from Dr. Greg Greenwood, received by DS 1/7/2009