

**2004 El Dorado County
GENERAL PLAN**

**POLICIES 7.4.1.6, 7.4.2.7, 7.4.2.8, & 7.4.2.9
IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES CO-M, CO-N, & CO-U**

CONSERVATION OF BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

GOAL 7.4: WILDLIFE AND VEGETATION RESOURCES

Identify, conserve, and manage wildlife, wildlife habitat, fisheries, and vegetation resources of significant biological, ecological, and recreational value.

OBJECTIVE 7.4.1: RARE, THREATENED, AND ENDANGERED SPECIES

The County shall protect State and Federally recognized rare, threatened, or endangered species and their habitats consistent with Federal and State laws.

Policy 7.4.1.6 All development projects involving discretionary review shall be designed to avoid disturbance or fragmentation of important habitats to the extent reasonably feasible. Where avoidance is not possible, the development shall be required to fully mitigate the effects of important habitat loss and fragmentation. Mitigation shall be defined in the Integrated Natural Resources Management Plan (INRMP) (see Policy 7.4.2.8 and Implementation Measure CO-M).

The County Agricultural Commission, Plant and Wildlife Technical Advisory Committee, representatives of the agricultural community, academia, and other stakeholders shall be involved and consulted in defining the important habitats of the County and in the creation and implementation of the INRMP.

OBJECTIVE 7.4.2: IDENTIFY AND PROTECT RESOURCES

Identification and protection, where feasible, of critical fish and wildlife habitat including deer winter, summer, and fawning ranges; deer migration routes; stream and river riparian habitat; lake shore habitat; fish spawning areas; wetlands; wildlife corridors; and diverse wildlife habitat.

Policy 7.4.2.7 The County shall form a Plant and Wildlife Technical Advisory Committee to advise the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors on plant and wildlife issues, and the committee should be formed of local experts, including agricultural, fire protection, and forestry representatives, who will consult with other experts with special expertise on various plant and wildlife issues, including representatives of regulatory agencies. The Committee shall formulate objectives which will be reviewed by the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors.

Policy 7.4.2.8 Develop within five years and implement an Integrated Natural Resources Management Plan (INRMP) that identifies important habitat in the County and establishes a program for effective habitat

preservation and management. The INRMP shall include the following components:

- A. Habitat Inventory. This part of the INRMP shall inventory and map the following important habitats in El Dorado County:
 - 1. Habitats that support special status species;
 - 2. Aquatic environments including streams, rivers, and lakes;
 - 3. Wetland and riparian habitat;
 - 4. Important habitat for migratory deer herds; and
 - 5. Large expanses of native vegetation.

The County should update the inventory every three years to identify the amount of important habitat protected, by habitat type, through County programs and the amount of important habitat removed because of new development during that period. The inventory and mapping effort shall be developed with the assistance of the Plant and Wildlife Technical Advisory Committee, CDFG, and USFWS. The inventory shall be maintained and updated by the County Planning Department and shall be publicly accessible.

- B. Habitat Protection Strategy. This component shall describe a strategy for protecting important habitats based on coordinated land acquisitions (see item D below) and management of acquired land. The goal of the strategy shall be to conserve and restore contiguous blocks of important habitat to offset the effects of increased habitat loss and fragmentation elsewhere in the county. The Habitat Protection Strategy should be updated at least once every five years based on the results of the habitat monitoring program (item F below). Consideration of wildlife movement will be given by the County on all future 4- and 6-lane roadway construction projects. When feasible, natural undercrossings along proposed roadway alignments that could be utilized by terrestrial wildlife for movement will be preserved and enhanced.
- C. Mitigation Assistance. This part of the INRMP shall establish a program to facilitate mitigation of impacts to biological resources resulting from projects approved by the County that are unable to avoid impacts on important habitats. The program may include development of mitigation banks, maintenance of lists of potential mitigation options, and incentives for developers and landowner participation in the habitat acquisition and management components of the INRMP.

D. Habitat Acquisition. Based on the Habitat Protection Strategy and in coordination with the Mitigation Assistance program, the INRMP shall include a program for identifying habitat acquisition opportunities involving willing sellers. Acquisition may be by state or federal land management agencies, private land trusts or mitigation banks, the County, or other public or private organizations. Lands may be acquired in fee or protected through acquisition of a conservation easement designed to protect the core habitat values of the land while allowing other uses by the fee owner. The program should identify opportunities for partnerships between the County and other organizations for habitat acquisition and management. In evaluating proposed acquisitions, consideration will be given to site specific features (e.g., condition and threats to habitat, presence of special status species), transaction related features (e.g., level of protection gained, time frame for purchase completion, relative costs), and regional considerations (e.g., connectivity with adjacent protected lands and important habitat, achieves multiple agency and community benefits). Parcels that include important habitat and are located generally to the west of the Eldorado National Forest should be given priority for acquisition. Priority will also be given to parcels that would preserve natural wildlife movement corridors such as crossing under major roadways (e.g., U.S. Highway 50 and across canyons). All land acquired shall be added to the Ecological Preserve overlay area.

E. Habitat Management. Each property or easement acquired through the INRMP should be evaluated to determine whether the biological resources would benefit from restoration or management actions.

Examples of the many types of restoration or management actions that could be undertaken to improve current habitat conditions include: removal of non native plant species, planting native species, repair and rehabilitation of severely grazed riparian and upland habitats, removal of culverts and other structures that impede movement by native fishes, construction of roadway under and overcrossing that would facilitate movement by terrestrial wildlife, and installation of erosion control measures on land adjacent to sensitive wetland and riparian habitat.

F. Monitoring. The INRMP shall include a habitat monitoring program that covers all areas under the Ecological Preserve overlay together with all lands acquired as part of the INRMP. Monitoring results shall be incorporated into future County planning efforts so as to more effectively conserve and restore important habitats. The results of all special status species monitoring shall be reported to the CNDDDB. Monitoring results

shall be compiled into an annual report to be presented to the Board of Supervisors.

- G. Public Participation. The INRMP shall be developed with and include provisions for public participation and informal consultation with local, state, and federal agencies having jurisdiction over natural resources within the county.
- H. Funding. The County shall develop a conservation fund to ensure adequate funding of the INRMP, including habitat maintenance and restoration. Funding may be provided from grants, mitigation fees, and the County general fund. The INRMP annual report described under item F above shall include information on current funding levels and shall project anticipated funding needs and anticipated and potential funding sources for the following five years.

Policy 7.4.2.9

The Important Biological Corridor (-IBC) overlay shall apply to lands identified as having high wildlife habitat values because of extent, habitat function, connectivity, and other factors. Lands located within the overlay district shall be subject to the following provisions except that where the overlay is applied to lands that are also subject to the Agricultural District (-A) overlay or that are within the Agricultural Lands (AL) designation, the land use restrictions associated with the -IBC policies will not apply to the extent that the agricultural practices do not interfere with the purposes of the -IBC overlay.

- Increased minimum parcel size;
- Higher canopy-retention standards and/or different mitigation standards/thresholds for oak woodlands;
- Lower thresholds for grading permits;
- Higher wetlands/riparian retention standards and/or more stringent mitigation requirements for wetland/riparian habitat loss;
- Increased riparian corridor and wetland setbacks;
- Greater protection for rare plants (e.g., no disturbance at all or disturbance only as recommended by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service/California Department of Fish and Game);
- Standards for retention of contiguous areas/large expanses of other (non-oak or non-sensitive) plant communities;
- Building permits discretionary or some other type of “site review” to ensure that canopy is retained;
- More stringent standards for lot coverage, floor area ratio (FAR), and building height; and

- No hindrances to wildlife movement (e.g., no fences that would restrict wildlife movement).

The standards listed above shall be included in the Zoning Ordinance.

Wildland Fire Safe measures are exempt from this policy, except that Fire Safe measures will be designed insofar as possible to be consistent with the objectives of the Important Biological Corridor

MEASURE CO-M

Develop and implement an Integrated Natural Resources Management Plan consistent with Policy 7.4.2.8.

Responsibility:	Planning Department
Time Frame:	Develop initial habitat protection strategy; develop and implement mitigation assistance program; and develop and implement conservation fund within two years of General Plan adoption. Develop framework for acquisition strategy and monitoring program within three years of General Plan adoption. Begin actual acquisition after completion of the initial inventory and mapping; develop management strategies as properties are acquired. Adaptive management of the entire program will be ongoing.

MEASURE CO-N

Review and update an Important Biological Corridor (-IBC) Overlay land use designation consistent with Policy 7.4.2.9.

Responsibility:	Planning Department
Time Frame:	Within two years of General Plan adoption.

MEASURE CO-U

Mitigation under Policy 7.4.1.6 shall include providing sufficient funding to the County’s conservation fund to acquire and protect important habitat at a minimum 2:1 ratio. The cost associated with acquisition, restoration, and management of the habitat protected shall be included in the mitigation fee. For larger development projects (i.e., those that exceed a total of 10 acres), in addition to contributing to the conservation fund at a minimum 2:1 ratio, onsite preservation and/or restoration of important habitat shall be required at a 1:1 ratio. Impacts on important habitat and mitigation requirements shall be addressed in a Biological Resources Study and an Important Habitat Mitigation Program (described below).

- A. Biological Resources Study. The County shall adopt biological resource assessment standards that apply to all discretionary projects that would result in

disturbance of soil and native vegetation in areas that include important habitat as defined in the INRMP. The assessment of the project site must be in the form of an independent Biological Resources Study, and must be completed by a qualified biologist. The evaluation shall quantify the amount of important habitat, by habitat type, as defined in the General Plan and delineated on maps included in the INRMP. The Biological Resources Study shall also address the potential for the project to adversely affect important habitat through conversion or fragmentation. This requirement shall not apply to projects that are on lands that either (1) have already been the subject of a study and for which all mitigation requirements are being implemented or (2) have been evaluated by the County and found to not possess any important habitat resources.

- B. Important Habitat Mitigation Program. The Biological Resource Study shall include an Important Habitat Mitigation Program that identifies options that would avoid, minimize, or compensate for impacts on important habitats in compliance with the standards of the INRMP and the General Plan. All mitigation programs shall include a monitoring and reporting component requiring reports to the County not less than once each year for a period of not less than 10 years. The report will include a description of the lands included in the mitigation program (including location and size), a summary of the evaluation criteria established at the time the mitigation program was approved, an evaluation of the mitigation program based on those criteria, and recommendations for action during the following year. The County shall adopt standards for evaluating mitigation programs proposed as part of the Biological Resources Study described above. The standards shall ensure that the mitigation reduces direct and cumulative impacts of proposed development on important habitats to less than significant levels in accordance with CEQA thresholds.

Responsibility:	Planning Department
Time Frame:	Refer to Measures CO-L and CO-M as applicable.