

MINUTES
EI DORADO COUNTY
INTEGRATED NATURAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT PLAN
STAKEHOLDERS ADVISORY COMMITTEE (ISAC)
January 7, 2010

Members in Attendance:

Chris Alarcon
Kimberly Beal
Bill Center
Francesca Loftis
Kathye Russell
John Zentner
Art Marinaccio

Rick Lind, SEA
Ethan Koenigs, SEA
Fraser Shilling, Ph.D., SEA
Robert Smart, SEA
Peter Maurer, EDC
Beverly Savage, EDC
Richard Boyland, Ph.D.

Others in Attendance:

Jordan Postlewait, SEA
Kris Kiehne, SEA

Members Absent:

Jamie Beutler
David Bolster
Cynthia Shaffer

The January 7, 2010 meeting was called to order by staff Peter Maurer at 9:07 a.m.

A. Approval of Minutes

Minutes of the Joint ISAC/PAWTAC meeting of December 17, 2009, were approved.

B. Public Comment

Committee Chair John Zentner presented for discussion an issue that was raised at the December 17, 2009, joint meeting: Should public comment be heard during the Committee business portion of meetings or should such discussion be restricted to the Public Comment portion of the agenda?

Bill Center expressed that public comment should not be permitted during discussion of a motion. Francesca Loftis agreed and added that such comment is not permitted according to Roberts Rules of Order. Kathye Russell added that she does not object to public participation in Committee proceedings. Her only concern is that public comment does not divert discussion from the agenda. Ms. Russell suggested that ISAC adopt the procedures of the Board of Supervisors (BOS), where the Chair invites public comment at the conclusion of discussion on a topic. Mr. Center cautioned the Committee to guard against unintentional inclusion of an unofficial 11th Committee member. The structure of ISAC, with much discussion and few action items, could lend to such a scenario. Chair Zentner agreed and added that an invitation for public comment should be extended and the time for such comment closed. Mr. Center suggested that ISAC might, on occasion, invite a member of the public to comment, in the same manner as the BOS.

C. INRMP

1. Updated Timeline for work product review

Jordan Postlewait, SEA, referred to a handout, "Focus Points for Upcoming ISAC/PAWTAC Meetings" which included updates to the project schedule. Mr. Postlewait explained that each topic requiring direction/participation from the Committees will be addressed in three phases: introduction at the first meeting, detailed workshop/discussion at the second meeting, finalization at the third meeting. Chair Zentner asked if changes to the schedule could be highlighted in future updates. SEA will accommodate this request.

2. Information item on mapping for the INRMP

Ethan Koenigs, SEA, presented the item on behalf of the team. According to General Plan Policy 7.4.2.8 (A), this initial phase of the INRMP includes updating the inventory maps created as part of the 2004 General Plan. The updated maps will focus on areas of the county below 4,000-feet in elevation. The following five habitats will be inventoried and mapped: 1) Habitats that support special-status species; 2) Aquatic environments including streams, rivers and lakes; 3) Wetland and riparian habitats; 4) Important habitats for migratory deer herds; and 5) Large expanses of native vegetation. "Large Expanses" and "Native Vegetation" must be defined before identification and mapping can proceed.

In preparing updates, SEA will modify the maps to display the data in the most effective way to convey the extent of habitats in the study area. For example, the current maps use point data from the California Natural Diverse Database (CNDDDB) to display the location of special-status species. However, the CNDDDB data also includes polygon data, which SEA believes better approximates location of special-status species occurrences. SEA will also use the most current data available from a variety of available sources. Mr. Koenigs referred the Committee to a handout, "El Dorado County INRMP Initial Inventory Mapping Data Sources, Listed by Data Type." The Committee was asked to review the listing and suggest additional data sources at the February meeting or prior to the meeting via e-mail to Mr. Maurer.

A discussion by the Committee followed. Art Marinaccio expressed that Valley Oak is discussed as a species in the General Plan. When SEA applies the term Habitat to Valley Oak, confusion ensues. Mr. Center cautioned that the term Large Expanses of Native Vegetation should not be interchanged with Protected Species. However, Mr. Center wondered if a scenario was discovered where a sensitive species was identified within a Valley Oak Habitat, would this be classified as a Critical Habitat? Mr. Marinaccio added that Valley Oak is considered a Protected Species in the General Plan, rather than a Habitat. Mr. Center asked the SEA team how the scope and boundaries of Riparian Habitats are defined. It appears to Mr. Center that the maps draw broad boundaries at Riparian Habitats. Mr. Center also asked if 100-year flood plains are included in the mapping. Rick Lind, SEA, noted that the team looks to ISAC and PAWTAC for their insights into other sources for data that should be included in the mapping, such as 100-year flood plains and other sources of private data that may be available.

3. Discussion of definitions of key terms to be used in the INRMP

Kris Kiehne presented on behalf of the SEA team. Ms. Kiehne referred to a handout, "INRMP Phase 1, Key Term Definitions." Definitions distributed at the December joint PAWTAC/ISAC meeting are included in the handout. Additional discussion points and reference data are also included. The goal for today's discussion, Ms. Kiehne explained, is to gather input on the definitions. Input gathered from this meeting and from next week's PAWTAC meeting will be consolidated. Revised draft definitions will be distributed at the February meetings. The goal for February will be to approve definitions for the INRMP Phase I Key Terms of: Native Vegetation, Indicator Species, Connectivity, Important Habitat, and Large Expanses. Ms. Kiehne asked the Committee members to provide input on the draft definition of the first term, "Native Vegetation."

The draft definition of Native Vegetation presented by SEA contained the term "native plants." There was discussion by the Committee regarding the definition of the later term. Mr. Marinaccio felt that the INRMP definition should reference the term as used in the General Plan. Ms. Loftis disagreed adding that doing so would make the assumption that the General Plan definition is correct when the Committee cannot make this assumption. Chris Alarcon disagreed with Ms. Loftis and agreed with Mr. Marinaccio that reference to the General Plan should be made. Ms. Russell suggested that the definition of native plants might include a range, i.e. the term could be as narrow as this and as wide as this, leaving it up to interpretation by the BOS and the public. There was discussion by the Committee regarding whether native plants should be defined scientifically or politically (i.e. intent of the General Plan).

Mr. Alarcon asked the SEA team to explain the difference between native plants and alien plants, asking if the definition must contain a reference to time. Fraser Shilling, Ph.D., SEA, answered that a complete definition of native and alien plant types would include a reference to time. Mr. Alarcon recalled a photo taken over 100 years ago of the Placerville Courthouse flanked by palm trees. He asked if this proved that palm trees are native to the area? Dr. Shilling replied that the term "native" generally applies to pre-gold rush or pre-European settlement species. It is also a value judgment. Mr. Center added that, in his opinion, large expanses of grasslands should be deemed "native," even though they are not original, continuing that we should acknowledge the few remaining small patches of genuinely native grasslands which exist at locations inaccessible to cattle.

The Committee engaged in a general discussion: Can "Native Vegetation" include invasion of some non-native vegetation species? Mr. Center suggested the following addition to the definition of "Native Vegetation," "an assemblage containing significant native plants." Mr. Marinaccio disagreed, adding that such inclusion would mandate protection and/or connection of too many areas in the county, leaving not enough areas for development.

Mr. Maurer will search the General Plan EIR and provide to the Committee all references to the terms Native Vegetation, Large Expanses, Indicator Species, Connectivity, and Important Habitat. The Committee will then have a better understanding of the General Plan context for these definitions. Ms. Kiehne concluded discussion of "Native Vegetation," asking Committee members to send any additional suggestions to Mr. Maurer via e-mail.

Ms. Kiehne directed the Committee's discussion to the draft definition of "Indicator Species."

Chair Zentner suggested that examples of species identified as Indicator Species, not necessarily from this County, might help in developing a definition. Mr. Marinaccio questioned the purpose of the term "wide ranging" in the definition. Ms. Kiehne replied that "wide ranging" did not have to be included in the definition. She also reiterated that the mission is to define the term, not to select the species. Mr. Marinaccio commented that a species should be selected for which there is already existing data. Ms. Kiehne agreed and added that the species should be readily and cost-effectively monitored. Ms. Loftis feels that the definition should not ignore Special Status Species. Mr. Marinaccio disagreed with Ms. Loftis' point. He feels that regulatory concern is not an appropriate part of the definition, continuing that regulated species will be covered in the INRMP.

There was discussion of the bulleted definitions in the handout. Mr. Center felt the second bullet was not useful. He considered the fourth bullet to be significantly overlapping with other bullets. Mr. Marinaccio felt that bullet three would not work, continuing that the term "Focal Species" might be more useful. Dr. Shilling replied that "Indicator Species" is generally accepted as more broad than "Focal Species." Ms. Loftis asked the SEA team if bullet number five encompasses climate changes? Dr. Shilling replied in the affirmative. Ms. Loftis continued that an Indicator Species must be one that is impacted by temperature changes in Lake Tahoe.

Chair Zentner reminded the Committee that members may submit suggestions to Mr. Maurer via e-mail. Mr. Maurer will forward the suggestions to the SEA team. Mr. Marinaccio interjected that any information sent to Mr. Maurer must be disseminated to the public, according to Brown Act procedures. Paula Frantz, Deputy County Counsel, should be consulted, Mr. Marinaccio advised. Mr. Maurer will consult with Ms. Frantz on this issue, but stated that he did not believe every piece of correspondence had to be disseminated.

Ms. Kiehne directed the Committee's discussion to "Large Expanses." Mr. Marinaccio suggested replacing the word "connected" with "contiguous."

Chair Zentner asked if an Important Habitat must contain Native Vegetation. As an example, he explained that his five acres of grapes comprise an important habitat to many species. Apple Hill orchards present another example of non-native vegetation providing an Important Habitat. Dr. Shilling replied that agricultural areas would be defined differently than Important Habitats. Mr. Marinaccio suggested that under the General Plan Mr. Zentner might be required to replace his five acres of grapes if he developed the land. Mr. Center noted that EID ponds and canals support a number of species. Must these Riparian Habitats be inventoried, mapped and protected?

Chair Zentner concluded the discussion of Key Term Definitions reminding members that their comments will be incorporated with PAWTAC comments. Updated definitions will be distributed prior to the February meetings. The goal for the February meetings will be to approve Key Term Definitions.

D. Committee member comments; next meeting agenda items.

The next meeting will be February 4 at 1:00 p.m. in Conference Room A. The consultants were thanked for their presentations and discussions. The meeting was adjourned at 11:33 a.m.