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October 1, 2007

Board of Supervisors
330 Fair Lane
Placerville, CA 95667

Dear Board Members:

Oak Woodland Management Plan (OWMP) Revision Memo

Recommendation:

Development Services recommends that your Board:

1. Review the presented map;
2. Provide direction to staff on the Option B fee; and
3. Provide direction to staff for next steps.

Background:

On September 25, 2007, your Board directed staff to return with the original map from the June 25, 2007 Board meeting: show only Priority Conservation Areas (PCAs); show public lands; outline Low Density Residential (LDR) areas; and define acreage. In addition, your Board directed staff to bring back the Option B fee schedule, disaggregated, in order to allow the Board to review the components of the fee schedule.

Discussion of the Map:

The map presented to you today illustrates PCAs, identifies public lands, and LDR areas that had previously been shown. There are 40,068 acres identified as PCAs. This amount is less than the total area of oak woodland shown on the map presented in June because when the LDR designated areas were removed, it left remnants that did not meet the minimum acreage criterion for PCAs. This acreage

is less than the sum of the three individual components since a number of acres overlap. This may have lead to the confusion when the coalition tried to duplicate the County's exhibit.

Discussion of the Option B Fee Schedule:

The Option B Fee shown in Table 1 below is the 100% "Rural", Conservation Easement Acquisition, low-range fee. The cost per acre for restoration activities has been removed (restoration consists of tree planting/replanting and non-native species removal). The following information was derived from Appendix B of the Public Review Draft Oak Woodland Management Plan presented to your Board on September 25, 2007, authored by consultants EN2 and PMC.

Table 1 Option B Fee (revised 09/26/2007)	
	Cost Per Acre
Acquisition ¹	\$3,300
Management ²	\$1,400
Monitoring ³	\$2,600
Total Cost/Fee Per Acre	\$7,300

- 1) 100% Rural Land Conservation Easement
- 2) Management includes a biotic survey; and fuels treatment
- 3) Includes site monitoring and reporting; endowment processing

Source of Costs.

Costs were estimated using information from a variety of sources, including research by institutions such as the UC Integrated Hardwood Range Management Program (IHRMP); existing habitat conservation fee programs implemented by other counties; discussions with land trusts that manage conservation easements; case studies compiled by the Center for Natural Lands Management; and research using the Metro Listing Services for recent land prices in El Dorado County. The information contained from each source assisted with building the range of estimated costs for each mitigation component (acquisition, management, and monitoring).

A cost spreadsheet model was developed that incorporates the cost for each program element. The spreadsheet model is an adaptation of the Property Analysis Record (PAR) model developed by the Center for Natural Lands Management, which is an industry accepted tool to derive mitigation costs that are applicable to the mitigation site. The model divides the cost variables into those costs that are considered initial capital costs (one time), and those that are considered on-going (annual costs). The annual

costs are dependent on the frequency or regularity of the on-going activities (e.g., annual monitoring versus less than annual monitoring).

Fee Components.

Acquisition: Acquisition costs consist of the actual cost of the conservation easement; attorney review of the conservation easement; a site inspection; a survey by a land surveyor; an appraisal; and County survey map processing.

A sampling of land acquisition costs within the PCAs was conducted using the MLS during November 2006 through July 2007. Data regarding conservation easements was collected from the American River Conservancy, Amador Land Trust, Sacramento Valley Conservancy, Solano Land Trust, Yolo Land Trust, Wildlife Heritage Foundation and the Peninsula Open Space Trust. Exhibit D of the Public Review Draft OWMP presented to your Board on September 25, 2007, presents this land trust sample data.

It is important to note that while the fees have been disaggregated per acre, it is not reasonable, for example, for an attorney to review a conservation easement for \$63 or a land surveyor to survey for \$38. These fees are based on a 40-acre conservation easement acquisition. Therefore, unit costs and initial costs have been provided. This caveat applies to Management and Monitoring disaggregated per acre fees as well.

Table 2 Acquisition Fee Disaggregation per Acre (based on 40 acres)		Unit Cost/ Initial Cost
Conservation Easement Acquisition	\$2,327	\$2,327
Attorney Review	\$63	\$2,500
Site Inspection	\$43	\$1,700
Survey by Land Surveyor	\$38	\$1,500
Appraisal	\$38	\$1,500
County Survey Map Processing	\$2	\$960
SUBTOTAL	\$2,511	\$10,487
30% contingency/admin	\$754	\$3,146
TOTAL	\$3,265	\$13,633
(rounded to):	\$3,300	

Management: Management costs consist of biotic surveys, weed control (an on-going cost), and fuels management. A biotic survey in drafting conservation easements is necessary in order to establish the natural resource value and to establish a baseline survey. Weed control and fuels management lessen the risk of

catastrophic wildfire, as vegetation removal and management keeps landowners, nearby residents, firefighters, and oak woodlands in a safer condition, which also reduces liability on the land trust and County. County staff met with representatives of CalFire on August 20, 2007, August 29, 2007, and October 1, 2007, and they emphasized the importance of fuels management.

Table 3 Management Fee Disaggregation per Acre (based on 40 acres)		Initial Cost/ Ongoing Cost
Qualified Professional	\$80	\$3,200
Project Management	\$85	\$1,360
Survey Equipment		\$1,000
Weed Control/Spraying		\$224
Weed Control/Herbicide		\$20
Fuels Treatment	\$950	\$950
SUBTOTAL	\$1,115	\$6,754
30% contingency/admin	\$335	\$2,026
TOTAL	\$1,450	\$8,780
(rounded to):	\$1,400	

Monitoring: Monitoring costs consist of site monitoring, reporting, and endowment processing. Monitoring and reporting include database management, aerial photos, and photo documentation. Land trusts monitor their conservation easements to ensure long-term protection of the resource. Land trusts assume the legal obligation to carry out the donor's desires by upholding the terms of the easement in perpetuity. In order to carry out these on-going liabilities, an endowment is necessary for easement upkeep.

Table 4 Monitoring Fee Disaggregation per Acre (based on 40 acres)		Unit Cost/ Initial Cost
Endowment	\$2,235	\$2,235
Database Management/Reporting	\$21	\$840
Aerial Photos	\$25	\$1,000
Photo Documentation	\$18	\$700
Office Equip./Computers	5	\$200
Vehicle	2	\$67
Binoculars	10	\$400
Chemical Sprayer	3	\$107

Endowment Processing	18	\$720
SUBTOTAL	\$2,337	\$6,269
30% contingency/admin	\$234	\$1,881
TOTAL	\$2,571	\$8,150
(rounded to):	\$2,600	

Total Cost/Fee per Acre: The total cost/fee per acre includes 10% contingency and 20% administrative costs (overhead costs of the land trust), which are built into the individual cost components.

Discussion of Additional Board Comments (not part of motions):

1. Mapping acreage differences.

The original PCAs map (prior to the June 25, 2007 Board meeting) contained 77,817 acres of Priority Conservation Areas. After removing LDR and Public Lands, 70,817 acres of Priority Conservation Areas remained. The final Priority Conservation Areas, that still meet the PCA “Large Expanse” criterion of 500 acres or larger, is 40,068 acres.

2. Acreage west of 4,000 foot contour elevation.

There are 538,911 total acres west of the 4,000 foot elevation contour in the county, which constitutes 47% of the county. There are 183,949 acres already developed, with 286,375 vacant acres that could be developed. Table 5 illustrates acreage west of the 4,000 foot elevation. Attachment 2, Oak Woodland Parcel & Land Use Inventory further disaggregates land use types in the study plan area.

Table 5 Acreage West of 4,000 foot Contour Elevation	
<i>USE TYPE</i>	<i>ACRES</i>
Developed Lands	183,949
Vacant Lands	286,375
Total Developable Lands	470,324
Williamson Act Lands	34,678
Timber Preserve Zoning	33,909
Total Non-Developable Lands	68,587
Total Lands West of 4,000'	538,911
Total County Lands	1,144,480

3. Flexible Mitigation Options.

While Policy 7.4.4.4 refers to utilization of either Option A or B, staff recommends that flexibility be provided so that a combination of Options A and B and other off-site mitigation opportunities are provided. Option A requires replacement of removed trees on-site. With greater flexibility, an applicant can meet some or all of this replacement with off-site planting or paying an equivalent fee under the OWMP program. The full range of options and the details of how that would be implemented would be included in the implementing ordinance for the mitigation fee.

Sincerely,

Lawrence W. Appel
Deputy Director, Development Services - Planning

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 – Map, El Dorado County Oak Woodland Priority Conservation Areas
Attachment 2 – Oak Woodland Parcel & Land Use Inventory (West of 4000')