

NR35 POLICY: The County supports the efforts of the timber industry and local citizens to forge cooperative plans and agreements to achieve diverse objectives for protecting and managing forest resources while providing for the long-term economic stability of timber-reliant industries.

NR36 POLICY: In areas having significant forest and timber resources, the County supports the formulation of resource management goals and objectives which address the long-term health and diversity of resources in these areas as well as the sustained productivity of timber products.

NR37 POLICY: The County supports management of endangered species and critical wildlife habitats in balance with other resource management needs, including the need for economic stability related to timber industries.

NR38 POLICY: The County supports successful reforestation of harvested and fire-damaged areas on private and publicly-owned timberlands.

**FOREST RESOURCES**  
**BACKGROUND:**

Lassen County's forests and private timberlands have been a source of tax revenue and employment for the men and women of the area for over 100 years. When Roop, McNaull & Company constructed their sawmill on the Susan River in 1857, it stimulated permanent settlement of the region by supplying lumber for construction of homes and other structures. By the early 1880's, there were 13 sawmills operating in the county, providing an estimated 18 million board feet annually (Purdy, 1994).

At one time, Lassen County was the most important lumber producing county in the northeastern part of California. The County's total lumber output in 1948 was 261 million board feet, or nearly one-tenth of the amount produced in California in that year. By the mid-1960's it was less than 3 percent of the State total.

It was a recognized assumption in Lassen County's 1968 General Plan that the lumber industry would continue in a limited form based on sustained yield from public timberlands, although declining from its current [1968] level. Although the Plan identified that a major goal of the program of industrial development in the County was to diversify the industrial base and lessen the reliance on lumber and livestock, it was recognized that lumber related industries would continue to play a strong role in the County's economic future.

One of the predominant land use designations on the Land Use Map contained in the 1968 General

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Plan was the "General Forest Environment". This area comprised most of the west half of the County and was recognized as the area best suited to lumber production and watershed. It was also recognized in the Plan that lumber production on large private holdings and public lands such as the Lassen National Forest would continue as a major activity.

The 1968 General Plan contained a Natural Resource Conservation Element, the principal objectives of which were: 1) to prevent the waste of the physical environment, including timber, soil, wildlife, water and mineral resources; and 2) to reclaim unproductive land or to enhance the production of marginal land by drainage, irrigation or reforestation. The following conservation polices were included in the Natural Resource Conservation Element regarding the General Forest Environment:

1. Continue sustained yield forestry programs. This will include measures to assure regeneration of cutover land and the improvement of the quality of the future crop. Long-range nationwide goals for the National Forest System call for an annual harvest on a sustained yield basis of double the 1960 cut by the year 2000.
2. Bring marginal and presently unproductive forest land into production. This will involve replanting burned areas and scientific cutting to release growth in stagnant areas.

Since the adoption of the General Plan in 1968, Lassen County has been called upon to take a number of actions to define its timber resource policies and affirm its support for the local timber industry. These actions and the policy positions they represent are usually conveyed in resolutions adopted by the County Board of Supervisors.

In 1993, the Board of Supervisors adopted the following "Lassen County Statement of Timber Resource Policy" to emphasize its concern for the economic stability of the County in respect to the timber industry and the welfare of the residents of this County who have traditionally depended upon this industry for their livelihood. This statement was adopted to compliment and implement the Lassen County General Plan in respect to timber resources on Federal lands:

LASSEN COUNTY  
STATEMENT OF TIMBER POLICIES [1993]

The following statement is hereby made by the Lassen County Board of Supervisors to affirm its policy positions on Federal timber management issues in Lassen County, and to express its concern for the significance of these issues on the economic and social well-being of Lassen County:

1. Lassen County shall continue to recognize that its economy is substantially dependent on Federal timber resources, and that significant reductions in the timber sale program threatens the economic and social stability of the County.
  2. The timber industry has historically been and continues to be a major economic and social component to the development of the County, and therefore represents a vital factor in the culture and customs of the community.
  3. Lassen County understands and appreciates the concern that Federal forest land and resource management plans must give to non-commodity multi-uses; however, the social and economic impacts of reversing the traditional scope of the timber sale program to accommodate such uses must be a primary and overriding consideration.
  4. This County insists that the Federal government increase its concern for protecting and preserving the social and economic habitat of members of the human species, and mitigate the harm and displacement which drastically revised forest management policies will cause those people who rely on the production of timber resources.
  5. Lassen County supports continuation of the annual timber sale program average of 171 MMBF and the adjustment of related multi-use planning objectives to that goal. Any reduction of that volume must fully and compassionately consider and mitigate the impacts it would incur on the economic stability of the County, including the aggravation of current unemployment rates and resulting social impacts.
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Timber Production Zones

One of the most significant timber resource measures to involve and affect Lassen County was brought about by the State's adoption of the Timber Yield Tax Law (AB 1258, Forest Taxation Reform Act of 1976). This bill, adopted in May, 1976, changed the system of property taxation for timber and timberland in California. Generally, the law exempted timber from taxation until it is cut, and restricted the use of timberlands to the growing and harvesting of timber, along with certain compatible uses. To implement the law, the law directed that counties establish a Timberland Preserve Zoning District (TPZ), now regarded as "Timber Production Zones", and adopt a list of compatible uses to be incorporated into a final TPZ ordinance.

In 1998, Lassen County Assessor's Office reported to the California Board of Equalization that the County had 306,984 acres within TPZ.

## **6. Rangeland**

### **GOALS, POLICIES AND IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES**

GOAL N-12: To manage the resources of rangeland areas within Lassen County by maintaining healthy, diverse ecosystems while encouraging and providing for multiple use of resources which contribute to the economic stability of the County's citizens.

NR39 POLICY: To protect the extensive resource values of rangeland areas, the County will support the maintenance of relatively large parcel sizes by discouraging small, isolated land divisions without appropriate justification.

NR40 POLICY: The County supports the management of wildlife resources in rangeland areas in ways that enhance the health and abundance of wildlife populations and the diversity of species and their habitats and which, at the same time, balance management policies and program objectives with the range of social and economic needs for which the County is also responsible.

NR41 POLICY: The County supports grazing practices on private lands and lands managed by state and Federal agencies which support the long-term health and sustainability of rangeland resources.

NR42 POLICY: The County advocates grazing policies on Federal and state lands which support the economic viability of related private livestock operations while maintaining the long-term productivity of rangeland ecosystems. Proposed changes to resource management policies regarding rangeland use need to consider and mitigate potential economic, social and cultural impacts to Lassen County citizens and communities, and impacts to related private lands in Lassen County.

NR43 POLICY: The County typically recognizes and designates rangeland areas as "Extensive Agriculture".

#### Implementation Measures:

NR-O Lands which are designated "Extensive Agriculture" in the County General Plan or in an applicable area plan should be zoned "U-C-2, Upland Conservation/Resource Management District", or a similar conservation or agricultural district.

NR-P The County will continue to review and, when warranted, adopt development standards which mitigate the impacts of development on agricultural land uses in rangeland areas and to place the responsibility for mitigation on new development. Such standards and mitigation measures shall include, but not be limited to, fencing standards and the use of setbacks and buffer areas.

NR44 POLICY: In order to address environmental concerns regarding rangelands while continuing to provide for economic and social needs related to resource use and management of private and public lands, the County supports the development and implementation of cooperative resource management programs, based on sound biological science, which include goals and objectives that address and provide for the sustained health of rangeland resources.

NR45 POLICY: The County encourages strategy plans and strong measures to manage feral horses and burros on public and private rangelands and to minimize related damage to livestock and wildlife forage and water resources.

NOTE: Refer also to other sections of the Natural Resources Element, as well as to the Land Use, Agriculture, and Wildlife Elements, for related goals, policies and implementation measures pertaining to rangeland.

## **RANGELAND RESOURCES**

### **BACKGROUND:**

This section addresses unique natural resource issues relating to Lassen County's rangeland areas. "Rangeland", in the context of this general plan element, describes an extensive area of Lassen County largely corresponding to what the 1968 General Plan regarded as "Grazing and Sagebrush Environment". This semi-arid, sparsely vegetated land encompasses most of the east half of Lassen County, and includes most of those portions of the county which are in the Basin and Range as well as the Modoc Plateau geophysical provinces. It includes private lands as well as extensive areas of land managed by the Bureau of Land Management, the Forest Service and the State Lands Commission.

Rangeland are addressed as a specific concern in this context because there are resource issues unique to these areas which may not be adequately addressed otherwise. Rangeland denotes, in popular usage, lands which are used for livestock grazing. However, because of other natural resource values in these areas, it is misleading to consider these areas as strictly "agricultural" lands. Many rangeland areas offer important habitat resources for wildlife including critical winter habitat for deer. Some areas offer special open space values because of recreational and scenic resources. Some areas have been proposed by developers for real estate and housing development. Some areas

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have significant mineral resources. Therefore, many natural resource and land use issues are interwoven with what are addressed in this section as rangeland issues, and the goals and policies of the related sections of the General Plan are applicable to these corresponding issues.

From a livestock management perspective, rangeland is typified as land on which natural vegetation is suitable for grazing or browsing use. It is not usually cultivated due to limited precipitation, soil features, topography, drainage or extreme temperature. However, it may include lands revegetated naturally or artificially to provide forage cover that is managed like native vegetation.

Like many rural communities in the West, Lassen County has an historic and strong cultural background, socially and economically, related to the livestock industry and other rangeland uses. Many customs in this area are tied to these land uses. Because of the large extent of land in the County which is managed by the Federal government, a considerable amount of active rangeland uses takes place on public lands.

The Susanville District of the Bureau of Land Management, alone, administers approximately 998,500 acres of land in Lassen County. BLM manages these lands for a wide variety of uses, under the provisions of the Federal Land and Policy Act of 1976 (FLPMA). This act recognizes that public lands should be managed for their contributions in meeting the nation's need for food and fiber. It also directs BLM to manage and protect the natural and cultural resource values on public lands and sets forth a multiple use mandate for the agency.

Livestock grazing is permitted by BLM throughout the district under terms and conditions set forth in grazing permits and the provisions of the Taylor Grazing Act and other policies. There are more than 200 grazing permittees in BLM's Susanville District. In 1997, Eagle Lake Resource Area, which administers most of BLM's area in Lassen County, reported that it had 47 permittees, 25 of whom resided in Lassen County on a full-time basis. A total number of 57 allotments were reported, 44 of which were located, all or in part, in Lassen County.

In California, grazing privileges on government lands are taxable as a possessory interest. In 1993, it was calculated that grazing permits represented an assessed value of \$4,202,668 on the County property tax roll.

The County also recognizes that agricultural lands and home ranch operations contribute to the provision of wildlife habitat resources. Stock ponds and irrigation systems offer water sources and wildlife habitat in areas otherwise lacking surface water. Furthermore, the continuance of agriculture as an extensive land use, especially in the case of rangeland, forestalls the loss of wildlife resources which may result from more intensive, alternative land uses.

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A number of ranching operations in Lassen County rely upon grazing allotments on public lands. The economic viability of these "home ranch" livestock operations is significantly dependent upon the continued and economical use of public rangeland resources. There is a direct relationship between Federal grazing privileges on dependent ranches and the economic viability and market value of the private real estate of those operations. If grazing allotments are no longer available, or are rendered economically impractical (due to increased grazing fees, extensive management requirements, etc.), the home ranches which depend upon them may, in turn, be rendered economically inviable. This may cause or contribute to the financial failure of operations. The failure of ranching operations is tragic at the personal level to the families involved. It also contributes to pressures for the conversion of land which was once in agricultural production to other, more profitable land uses (e.g., rural residential).

In August 1993, the Federal government announced its intent to make major reforms in policies for grazing on public lands. According to the Department of Interior's news releases, the purpose of the proposed reforms were to "bring Federal grazing fees closer to market value" and to take measures aimed at "improving the long-term health of America's rangelands" (Dept. of Interior, 1993). The announcement came in the form of draft proposals published concurrently by the Bureau of Land Management and the U.S. Forest Service.

Lassen County joined many rural western counties in expressing concerns over the impacts of the proposed changes in Federal rangeland management practices. In response to a notice that an Environmental Impact Statement would be prepared to address the impacts of the proposed reforms, the following issues of concern were expressed by Lassen County:

Effects on the economic viability of the local cattle industry and consequent impacts to private lands, including base ranches, which may no longer be able to survive as productive livestock operations.

The lack of consideration to the impacts on the economy of local communities, as well as impacts to their general social framework and customs.

The lack of Federal coordination with counties pursuant to the Federal Land Policy and Management Act.

The lack of environmental impact assessments at the County level to more accurately determine and mitigate local impacts.

Concern over the proposal that local rangeland management in the form of advisory boards would be replaced by regional councils without adequate local expertise and representation.

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The cumulative impacts of rangeland reform and all major changes in Federal resource management policies, including timber harvesting practices, in contributing to the economic recession of rural communities.

Other important rangeland issues, some of which have been touched upon in other sections of this element, include:

The loss of critical deer winter habitat through sprawling development and the natural loss and demise of the quality of bitterbrush stands.

Concern over the invasion and spread of certain plant species and noxious weeds, including: cheatgrass, perennial pepperweed (whitetop); Western juniper, medusahead; and yellow starthistle.

The use of fire as a rangeland management technique.

From a general land use perspective, rangelands, like agricultural lands in general, are subject to conversion to development. This is especially true in the vicinity of unincorporated rural communities and is exemplified by development east of Janesville. The relative lack of intensity in agricultural productivity and value per acre suggests to some interests, from an economic standpoint alone, that rangeland is generally undeveloped, vacant land which can be readily developed.

When considered with systematic land use planning and resource evaluation, some rangeland areas may offer opportunities for conversion to other land uses, including residential development and, in special cases, industrial development. Caution should be exercised, however, that less apparent resource values such as critical wildlife habitat and water resources, as well as the need to protect the long-term value of economically viable livestock uses, are not overlooked in a premature conclusion that parcels of rangeland have no significant value other than their potential for "development".

One form of frequent conflict between development in rangeland areas and livestock operations is the fact that residents in new residential areas often complain of "open range" cattle drifting onto their property and causing damage. Lassen County is recognized by law as an open range county (California Code Sec. 17123(c)). Provisions in the State Code, among other things, state that, 1) Lassen County, for the purposes of these statutes, is a "county chiefly devoted to livestock grazing", and 2) because Lassen is a "county chiefly devoted to livestock grazing", county residents do not have a right to take up and place a lien on an estray animal found on their premises unless the

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premises are entirely enclosed with a good and substantial fence.

Lassen County has supported livestock operations by reaffirming the position that the burden is on the homeowners to fence the cattle out. County Ordinance No. 492, adopted in 1989, established fencing and cattle guard requirements for subdivisions and rezoning of lands adjacent to specified agricultural zones. The ordinance requires that the applicant of a residential project shall be required to construct perimeter fencing and cattle guards of specified standards in the event a proposed subdivision of any lands adjacent to an agricultural zone would result in parcels less than twenty acres in size.

As stated above, the 1968 Lassen County General Plan addressed rangeland areas as "Grazing and Sagebrush Environment". The General Plan warned that:

In order for grazing to continue as an economic use, land must remain in relatively large units. County zoning and subdivision regulations should protect the grazing lands by not allowing small lot splits and isolated and unproductive subdivisions to occur. Scenic beauty is one of the County's most valuable assets. Because of the way in which the extensive grazing lands are interwoven with other land uses, the type and quality of uses permitted will affect the appearance, the character and the economy of the entire County.

One of the most extensive challenges which will continue to confront Lassen County and other agencies in the years to come in terms of planning and resource management will be the need to encourage constructive interagency cooperation to effect resource management policies and practices to support and provide for the beneficial coexistence of a variety of land uses and resource values including livestock usage, wildlife habitat, mining, scenic resources, and recreation, in the spacious "rangeland" areas of the county.

## **7. Mineral Resources**

### **GOALS, POLICIES AND IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES**

GOAL N-13: To improve and diversify the County's industrial base by encouraging development of mineral resources in ways which avoid or minimize unacceptable levels of land use conflict and significant environmental damage.

NR46 POLICY: Projects for the extraction or use of mineral resources shall comply with the California Environmental Quality Act and the County's environmental review guidelines.

NR47 POLICY: In the consideration of proposed mining activities, the County shall balance goals of protecting and managing wildlife, vegetation, and other resources with the economic and social need to diversify the County's industrial base.

NR48 POLICY: Surface and subsurface mining operations shall obtain a Use Permit as required by the Lassen County Code.

GOAL N-14: To encourage exploration for developable mineral resources in ways which minimize environmental and land use impacts.

NR49 POLICY: The County may require submittal of exploration plans describing all activities to be performed, including a schedule of activities.

NR50 POLICY: Applications for mineral resource exploration activity subject to the California Surface Mining and Reclamation Act (SMARA) shall include the submittal of a reclamation plan to, and approval by, the agency of jurisdiction as required by SMARA and the California Code of Regulations.

NR51 POLICY: Mineral resource exploration activity that exceeds the SMARA threshold limits or is determined to be located adjacent to an incompatible land use should be required to obtain a Use Permit.

NR52 POLICY: The County will develop grading criteria which will apply to earth moving activities related to mineral resource exploration.

GOAL N-15: To encourage the development and management of mineral resources by coordinating efficient internal and interagency project review.

- NR53 POLICY: The County encourages memorandums of understanding with Federal and state agencies to coordinate efforts in complying with applicable Federal, state and County requirements where a proposed project involves both public and private lands.
- NR54 POLICY: When County, state and Federal environmental regulations apply, the County encourages and shall facilitate preparation of a joint CEQA/NEPA document to streamline the environmental review process and reduce duplication of effort.
- NR55 POLICY: The County encourages and may require the preparation of Resource Plans to provide area-specific guidance for the consideration of major mineral extraction projects. The Board of Supervisors may, as in the case of the *Hayden Hill Resource Plan*, adopt Resource Plans as an amendment to, or otherwise as part of, the General Plan.
- NR56 POLICY: In the event that California designates an area of statewide or regional mineral resource significance within the County, the County will, contingent upon available funds, establish mineral resource management policies to be incorporated into its general plan which will: recognize the pertinent mineral information; assist in the management of land uses which may affect the designated areas; and emphasize the development of identified mineral deposits. Related policies and land use designations, including consideration of alternative land uses, shall consider the importance of the market regions of the minerals as well as their importance to the state and nation as a whole.
- GOAL N-16: To prevent significant long-term environmental damage and damage of other natural resource values in areas which have been or which may be disturbed by mineral extraction.
- NR57 POLICY: All mineral resource extraction projects, unless exempt from the provisions of the California Surface Mining and Reclamation Act, shall include and carry-out a reclamation plan which has been approved by the County.
- NR58 POLICY: Reclamation plans shall include a monitoring program to ensure successful compliance with reclamation criteria. Reclamation plans that include revegetation shall be monitored to ensure that planted vegetation successfully satisfies the objectives of the reclamation plan.
- NR59 POLICY: An adequate performance guarantee shall be required of a type and in an amount acceptable to the County to cover the costs of reclamation should the permittee fail to complete successful reclamation of a mined site. Performance

guarantees shall be determined based on reclamation cost estimates prepared by a qualified professional.

NR60 POLICY: Reclamation activities shall be in compliance with the approved reclamation plan and shall be completed to the satisfaction of the County and/or the California Department of Conservation before complete or partial release of required performance guarantees.

## **MINERAL RESOURCES**

### **BACKGROUND:**

The discovery of gold along the base of Diamond Mountain in 1856 attracted most of the first settlers to Lassen County. When the mining excitement declined in the 1860's, many of the miners remained in the county to take up other occupations. In 1870, gold was discovered at Hayden Hill. This discovery fostered the settlement of the northern sectors of Lassen County. Mining in both the Diamond Mountain range and at Hayden Hill continued sporadically until World War II when a Presidential Executive Order halted gold production in favor of military industrial production (Purdy, 1993).

From around 1980 to 1989, the Hayden Hill area experienced a resurgence of interest and speculation in precious metals mining. It was intensively explored by a number of companies, including the Hayden Hill Gold Venture, formed by subsidiary companies of Amax Gold, Inc. and U.S. Gold Corporation. Exploration drilling delineated economically viable reserves of sufficient quantity and quality to warrant detailed engineering feasibility studies and initiation of permitting activities.

In 1989, Lassen Gold Mining, Inc. (LGMI, originally a subsidiary of Amax Gold, Inc.) made applications to the County of Lassen and the Bureau of Land Management for a new open pit mine with heap leach and mill processing facilities. The proposed rate of mining was 20,000 tons of ore per day and the project area encompassed over 2800 acres. Following preparation and approval of a reclamation plan and related environmental review documents, the project was approved for development in September 1991. The Hayden Hill mining operation was constructed in the spring of 1992 and poured its first bar of Dore (gold and silver) on June 15, 1992.

The project involved the development of two open pits, the Lookout and Providence Pits. LGMI controlled unpatented lode, placer and mill-site claims and nine patented mining and mill site claims on in and around the project area. The project facilities included the two open pits, waste rock dumps, milling and processing facilities, a tailing impoundment, a heap leach pad, waste management units containing acid rock drainage material, storm water ponds and other ancillary infrastructure. Mineralized rock was crushed and processed using both a conventional milling

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carbon-in-pulp process and a cyanide heap leaching process. In 1993, a decision was made to conclude milling but to continue processing ore using the heap leach system.

At the end of 1997, active mining at Hayden Hill was terminated. Between the years of 1992 and 1997, approximately 30 million tons of ore and 27 million tons of waste rock have been removed from the pits. As of November, 1998, LGMI owned the Hayden Hill Mine as a subsidiary of Kinam Gold Inc. Reclamation and closure activities were underway and LGMI was in the process of contouring and revegetating the site in addition to salvage and removal of buildings and equipment.

Although the Diamond Mountain and Hayden Hill areas have been the predominate precious metal producers in Lassen County, there have been more modest discoveries and mining of gold and silver in other locations in Lassen County, including Round Valley and Skedaddle Mountain.

Reports of high grade deposits of iron ore and copper have been made in the Mountain Meadows area, but these reports have never been verified or the resource developed. In the late 1950's, there was interest in uranium in the Long Valley area.

Various areas have been developed for the extraction of building and construction materials. In 1860, a rhyolite tuff quarry was developed at the west end of Susanville. This quarry stone was used extensively in Susanville's business district. Another quarry in the Wendel area which had good access to the railroad exported blocks for a number of buildings in Alturas.

Clay deposits in the Honey Lake Valley were first discovered in 1876 and brick kiln operations operated on an occasional basis for the next forty years. Deposits of gravel and cinders were located in the early 1870's, but the claims were not developed to any great extent until after the turn of the century when base was needed for railroads and road construction. Lime deposits near Amedee were developed around 1910 for usage in cement, but the project was abandoned apparently because of the lime's poor quality (Purdy, 1992).

Significant deposits of commercial grade pozzolan, known locally as lassenite, occur in Long Valley as lacustrine sediments and diatomaceous shale of Mio-Pliocene age. Pozzolan is a light, porous ash-sized siltstone composed of partially hydrated rhyolitic glass ash with some pumiceous and diatomaceous material. Tests have confirmed that material of satisfactory grade is plentiful, with the thickness of the pozzolanic horizon commonly exceeding 350 feet (University of California, 1974). In two square miles alone, there was projected to be approximately 50,000,000 cubic yards of pozzolan.

Pozzolan material is used as an additive to (or blended with) cement, contributing strength and water tightness to produce superior concretes. The major use of pozzolan is in concrete for

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hydraulic structures such as dams and tunnels. It has also been used as an absorbent and has been proposed for use in oil spill clean-up.

A Lassen County Use Permit was issued to Lassenite Industries, Inc. in October 1966 for extraction and processing of pozzolan at a quarry and plant located approximately six miles north of Hallelujah Junction. This project operated until the mid-1980's. Interest has recently been renewed regarding new mining projects and development of pozzolan-related industries in the southern part of the county.

Rock collectors have found a variety of stones in the County, including petrified wood in the Willard Creek area, crystal and rose quartz from Diamond Mountain, and opals from Antelope Mountain.

Mining Administration

In California, the Surface Mining and Reclamation Act of 1975 (SMARA), enacted as Chapter 9, Division 2 of the Public Resources Code and since revised, requires the State Mining and Geology Board to adopt State policies for the approval of surface mining permits and reclamation of mined lands. Public Resources Code Section 2770 (a) states:

Except as provided in this section, no person shall conduct surface mining operations unless a permit is obtained from, a reclamation plan has been submitted to and approved by, and financial assurances for reclamation have been approved by, the lead agency for the operation pursuant to this article.

The Lassen County Board of Supervisors adopted a revised Surface Mining and Reclamation Ordinance in 1992 (Ordinance No. 509) incorporating the provisions of SMARA and establishing the position of Surface Mining Compliance Coordinator within the County Department of Community Development. The Board of Supervisors expressed the County's purpose and intent of Ordinance No. 509 as follows:

The County of Lassen recognizes that the extraction of minerals is essential to the continued economic well-being of the County and to the needs of society and that the reclamation of mined lands is necessary to prevent or minimize adverse effects on the environment and to protect the public health and safety.

The fundamental task of the County's SMARA program is to help bring and keep all mining operations in Lassen County in compliance with state and local surface mining and reclamation regulations and to assist local operators in meeting requirements for monitoring and annual reporting.

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Resource Plans

In consideration of the unique land use and General Plan issues related to the scope of the Hayden Hill project, Lassen County adopted the *Hayden Hill Resource Plan* to update guidelines and performance standards for development of mineral resources. The *Hayden Hill Resource Plan* was adopted in September 1991 as an amendment to the County General Plan prior to approval of the mining project. The resource plan has two purposes:

- 1) To compile an inventory of information on land use, circulation, housing, conservation, open space, noise, and public safety at Hayden Hill and in the vicinity; and
- 2) To provide the policy framework, including goals, objectives, and policies, for development of mineral resources at Hayden Hill in concert with the management of other area resources (CH2M Hill, 1991).

It should be noted that the "resource plan", as used in this context, is similar to but different than an "area plan". Whereas an area plan provides General Plan policies for general planning issues in a community or recognized planning area, a resource plan is primarily concerned with planning issues related to development of a particular resource within a specific planning area.

The *Hayden Hill Resource Plan* contains sections conforming to the six general plan elements required to be addressed pursuant to the California Planning and Zoning Law and General Plan Guidelines, as developed by the State Office of Planning and Research (i.e., land use; circulation; housing; conservation/open space; noise; and safety). It also includes a mineral resources element. Each element opens with an overview of the issues facing Lassen County in planning for development of mineral resources at Hayden Hill. This is followed by the goals, objectives, and policies which will guide mineral extraction in the future.

All mineral resource development projects in the Hayden Hill area must be consistent with the goals, policies, and objectives of the *Hayden Hill Resource Plan*.

"Resource plans" may be useful in other areas of Lassen County where the scale of proposed mineral extraction projects, or the extent or value of a particular resource, may warrant special planning considerations.

## **8. Energy Resources**

### **GOALS, POLICIES AND IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES**

GOAL N-17: Conservative management of Lassen County's energy resources so that those resources can be developed and utilized for the benefit of County residents with a high degree of efficiency and productivity.

NR61 POLICY: The County advocates, and encourages Federal and state agencies to conduct or help fund resource assessments and other studies to evaluate the availability of energy resources, and to facilitate efficient and well-designed projects which can capitalize on those resources with acceptable levels of environmental impact and compatibility with other land uses and resource values.

NR62 POLICY: In the course of adopting policies pertaining to energy resources in other County planning elements and area plans, the County may consider additional and more specific policies and measures to manage those resources.

NR63 POLICY: The Energy Element of the Lassen County General Plan shall provide specific policies and measures pertaining to the conservation and management of energy resources, as well as the siting and development standards of projects proposing to utilize those resources.

### **ENERGY RESOURCES**

#### **BACKGROUND:**

In May, 1993, the Lassen County Board of Supervisors adopted an Energy Element as part of its General Plan. Preparation of the Energy Element was funded by a grant from the California Energy Commission.

This section is included to demonstrate the relationship of the Energy Element to those natural resources in the county which are used, or which have the potential for use, to produce energy. These natural resources include: biomass (including cogeneration use); geothermal; water as a hydroelectric resource; solar; and wind. There are no known oil or natural gas resources in Lassen County of enough quantity to warrant inclusion at this time.

The Energy Element is an integral part of the series of Elements which comprise Lassen County's General Plan. The primary intent of the Element is to present specific policies and procedures that

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will not only ensure a balance between energy development, environmental protection, and preservation of other natural resources, but will also facilitate the siting and permitting of energy facilities within the County, thereby enhancing and diversifying the County's economic base.

As of 1993, total electrical production in Lassen County was approximately 100 MW. A major part of this power was generated by two power plants: HL (Honey Lake) power plant, a hybrid facility using biomass and geothermal resources to produce 35.5 MW; and Muck Valley, a hydroelectric facility on the Pit River designed to generate 30 MW. Three cogeneration units fueled with wood waste from lumber mills were responsible for production of 22.5 MW. Two lumber companies in Susanville, Sierra Pacific Industries and Jeld-Wen, Inc., operated cogeneration units. The third company was Big Valley Lumber in Bieber. Another facility using wood chips to generate power was Mount Lassen Power Plant in Westwood, a biomass facility with generation capacity of approximately 11 MW. Geothermal power production in the County included two power plants, Wineagle and Amedee. Both plants are located on the northern shore of Honey Lake, near Wendel. Total geothermal production in 1994 was 2.2 MW.

The Energy Element should be consulted for a more detailed evaluation of the County's energy resources and related issues.

## **9. Recreation Resources**

### **GOALS, POLICIES AND IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES**

GOAL N-18: An expanded range of outdoor recreation resources, facilities and opportunities.

NR64 POLICY: The County encourages the development of commercial recreation facilities for the public's use, subject to the determination of the appropriateness and adequacy of specific sites and the mitigation of major land use conflicts and/or significant environmental impacts.

NR65 POLICY: The County encourages the development of public recreation facilities, subject to the determination of the appropriateness and adequacy of specific sites and the mitigation of major land use conflicts and/or significant environmental impacts.

GOAL N-19: Improved access to recreation opportunities on public lands.

NR66 POLICY: The County supports cooperative efforts between private landowners and the public to maintain historic access to public lands and, where new subdivisions are proposed adjacent to public lands, the County supports dedication of easements for public access to the public lands.

NR67 POLICY: The County supports utilization trails within public right-of-ways where those right-of-ways can serve as part of interconnected trail systems (e.g., public highway corridors and abandoned railroad grades).

NR68 POLICY: The County supports promoting the discovery of resource diversity on public lands within Lassen County through the use of roads and trails on public lands for discovery experiences that introduce visitors to the County's rich diversity of natural, historic and cultural resources.

NR69 POLICY: The County supports interpretation of natural, historic and cultural resources as part of promoting visitor use of public lands.

GOAL N-20: Enhanced recreation and economic opportunities and benefits related to the County's wildlife resources.

NR70 POLICY: The County supports the management of wildlife game species for continued recreational and consumptive use as a matter of economic importance and as an expression of the cultural heritage of the activity.

NR71 POLICY: The County supports protection and maintenance of, and improvements for, local public access to wildlife resources on public lands for hunting and fishing as well as for recreational and scientific wildlife observation opportunities.

GOAL N-21: Continued use and enhancement of the county's fishery resources.

NR72 POLICY: The County supports the continued availability of the Eagle Lake trout for sport and recreational fishing, supports improvement of Eagle Lake trout habitat, and opposes proposals for the listing of the species as a threatened or endangered species.

NR73 POLICY: The County supports provisions to reintroduce and improve natural spawning of the Eagle Lake trout in Pine Creek as a component of the population produced under natural selection.

(NOTE: Refer to other elements, especially the Wildlife and Open Space Elements, for related policies.)

## **RECREATION RESOURCES**

### **BACKGROUND:**

Recreation may generally be divided and addressed in two general categories: developed recreation and dispersed recreation. Developed recreation includes facilities such as parks, campgrounds, downhill ski parks, boat ramps and public swimming areas. Many natural resource areas offer unique resources which support the potential for development of recreation facilities. This is true in the case of the County's Susanville Ranch park property northwest of Susanville. It may also be true for areas having potential for downhill ski areas, golf courses, RV parks, or other recreation-related development projects.

For example, Lassen County used economic development grant funds in 1991 to retain the resort planning firm of Sno.engineering, Inc. to conduct feasibility studies to evaluate the potential for development of a ski area and related development on Dyer Mountain south of Westwood. This site was recognized as a potential winter sports area in the 1968 General Plan. The potential for development must take into consideration the natural resource features of the area which support the feasibility of development such as topography and average annual snowfall. However, development of an intensive recreation area such as a ski park is also very much a land use issue

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involving consideration of access needs, infrastructure, compatible land uses, etc. Furthermore, development must take into consideration impacts on other natural resources, including wildlife habitat, water resources, and scenic values.

The findings of the site evaluation of Dyer Mountain indicated that the physical prospects of developing the area as an alpine ski facility are exceptional. A market demand analysis further projected that, assuming a competent resort management team and an effective marketing campaign, a ski facility on Dyer Mountain would compete with considerable effectiveness in the regional market place and would be economically feasible within the existing constraints of the northern California market. Concurrently, the studies found that the many natural attributes of Dyer Mountain and the Westwood area also afford many opportunities for the development of complementary year-round recreational amenities.

The term "dispersed recreation" includes recreational activities which do not entail the need for and intensive use of special man-made facilities. This typically includes such activities as fishing, hunting, hiking, horseback riding, cross-country skiing, snowmobiling, off-road vehicles, etc. Limited developed facilities, however, are sometimes needed to support dispersed recreation, such as roads, campgrounds and boat launching sites. Some resources and issues which relate to the County's capacity for dispersed recreation have been discussed in other chapters of this element and are also discussed in the Open Space Element. For example, Eagle Lake and the fishing and other opportunities it offers is a major recreation resource. It is also an excellent example of a recreation resource which serves as a major economic resource to the County as thousands of people visit the area each year.

The same may be said for deer hunting and other activities which are centered on the County's wildlife and outdoor resources. The recreational value of wildlife and open space resources is closely related to economic and other social values.

In a 1998 California Wildlife Conservation Bulletin produced by the California Department of Fish and Game (*Economic Contribution of Deer, Pronghorn Antelope, and Sage Grouse Hunting to Northeastern California and Implications to the Overall "Value" of Wildlife, Bulletin No. 11, 1998*), DFG reported findings related to hunting, wildlife counts and local economic benefits. A survey was conducted with hunters who hunted mule deer, pronghorn antelope and sage grouse in Lassen, Modoc, Plumas, Shasta and Siskiyou Counties in 1997. The objective of the survey was to determine local expenditures for goods and services, and to expand the understanding of hunter demographics in the study area. Among the results and conclusions of this survey, DFG reported that, in addition to the value of all other species that are either hunted, viewed or otherwise enjoyed by the public, hunting of mule deer, pronghorn antelope, and sage grouse resulted in an estimated \$2.26 million in expenditures in northeastern California in 1997 with \$0.8 million being spent in

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Lassen County. These expenses were in several categories with vehicle-related expenses, especially fuel, comprising the most expenditures followed by groceries, dining at restaurants, supplies related to hunting and camping, expenses for lodging, and other costs such as taxidermy, meat processing, private land access fees, etc. The report also noted that expenditures have dropped significantly in Lassen County from estimated expenditures of \$5.4 million in 1987 to \$0.83 million in 1997. (This issue is discussed in more detail in the *Wildlife Element*.)

The "Recreational and Tourism" section of the 1968 General Plan stated, "A fundamental proposal of the Plan is that recreation and tourism offer the best opportunity for sustained benefit and income from the natural resources of the County."

Federal lands contribute significantly to the county's open space and dispersed recreational resources. Recreational opportunities on Forest Service lands and lands managed by the Bureau of Land Management include camping, hunting, fishing, hiking, horseback riding, pleasure driving, picnicking, snowmobiling, skiing, and off-highway vehicle use. The Lassen National Forest, for example, estimated that its recreational usage totaled 1,242,600 "recreation visitor days" (RVD) in 1990. (One RVD equals 12 hours of recreation use by one person or any combination thereof that equals 12 hours.) Of that usage, 38 percent was estimated to involve dispersed recreation, including one percent wilderness area use (Lassen National Forest, 1992). Not all of this usage was in Lassen County, but the figure is indicative of the level of open space recreation taking place on public lands in the County.

The City of Susanville addressed open space needs in Chapter 7 of its 1990 General Plan. Many of the policies and action programs of the City's plan relate to open space and recreation issues outside the city. The Bizz Johnson Trail and the County's Susanville Ranch are both identified as open space resources around the city, as is Lassen Community College. Goal 1 of Chapter 7 states: "Preserve scenic areas, natural habitats, and open spaces for the use and enjoyment of residents and visitors". Policy "a" states: "The City shall involve itself in preserving and planning for scenic and open space facilities within the city and in areas peripheral to the city as well". As Action Program [1], the plan states: "Work with the County to create a Regional Parks and Recreation District that serves the Susanville area including Janesville, Susan Hills, Lake Forest Estates, and Golf Course". The plan further speculates that the boundaries of the new district might correspond to those of the Lassen Union High School District.

Action Program [7] of the City's General Plan states: "Develop joint powers agreements with the school districts, public utilities, the County, and the College to develop, administer, and use parks, other open space, and recreation facilities and programs on properties including but not limited to 'Susanville Ranch' and schools."

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Regarding trails, the City's plan contains Action Program [3] which states: "The [city's] Park and Recreation Commission, with the guidance of its staff and a City/County citizens' trail committee, will plan the location of a network of interconnected parks, trails, and visitor amenities."

The City's General Plan Figure 7-3 indicates existing and proposed parks and recreation facilities in and around Susanville. Regarding new parks to serve growing residential development, Action Program [15] states: "The City will ask the County to adopt an equivalent park dedication program (and/or to promote annexations to Susanville and the development of housing within the City Limits) so that all those developing housing in the community will be equally obligated to provide parks." Goal 13 of the City's General Plan is devoted to the issue of a comprehensive and city-wide trails and paths system. A major concept of the system plan is that it would be prepared in cooperation with the County and result in a trails dedication ordinance adopted by both the City and County. The Plan contains a Figure 7-4: Trails and Paths Plan. This figure identifies existing and proposed trails and bikeways in the Susanville vicinity.

In August, 1993, the Lassen National Forest proposed partnerships with Lassen County, the City of Susanville, and the Bureau of Land Management to prepare a Lassen County Trails Master Plan (Lassen National Forest, *Lassen County Trails Master Plan, A Partnership Proposal for Economic Diversification*, 1993). This plan was proposed to, "guide the planning, development and management of an interconnected trails network throughout Lassen County". These trails would serve county residents and the rapidly expanding markets of mountain bicycle and recreational equestrian enthusiasts.

Studies by the National Park Service's Rivers and Trails Assistance Program referred to in the proposal indicate that the economic value of recreational trails can be significant, particularly for small rural communities. The studies indicated that visitors to the rural trails spent from \$9.00 to \$11.00 per person per day.

Potential trail development funds may be available through the Transportation Efficiency Act, private foundations such as the Greenway Foundation and corporate partnerships such as Recreation Equipment Incorporated, Schimano, and other sporting goods manufacturers. The prospects of receiving trail development funds are increased if a master plan is prepared that demonstrates a sound and community-supported trails program.

Additional discussion of recreation resources and related policies are provided in the Open Space Element.

## **10. Air Quality**

### **GOALS, POLICIES AND IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES**

GOAL N-22: Air quality of high standards to safeguard public health, visual quality, and the reputation of Lassen County as an area of exceptional air quality.

NR74 POLICY: The Board of Supervisors will continue to consider, adopt and enforce feasible air quality standards which protect the quality of the County's air resources.

Implementation Measures:

NR-Q The County will continue to regulate the emission of pollutants within its jurisdiction through the regulations and procedures adopted for the Lassen County Air Pollution Control District (APCB).

NR-R In review of proposed projects pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act, the County shall consider potential air quality impacts and shall, through the APCB, support appropriate measures for mitigation of significant environmental impacts upon air quality.

NR-S The County shall review and consider the establishment of requirements that new wood-burning stoves and fireplace inserts be certified as meeting EPA emission standards before installation.

NR75 POLICY: The County shall consider the appropriateness and feasibility of air pollution control requirements for individual projects and may grant variances to specific requirements pursuant to established procedural guidelines.

NR76 POLICY: Federal and state agencies shall be encouraged to assist the County in protecting the quality of its air resources.

Implementation Measure:

NR-T The County will encourage Federal and state agencies to continue to consider air quality impacts in adoption of their management policies and in performance of their field operations, including prescribed burning.

NR77 POLICY: In the course of adopting policies pertaining to air resources in other

County planning elements and area plans, the County may consider additional and more particular policies and measures to protect the quality of air resources.

**AIR QUALITY**  
**BACKGROUND:**

The airshed of Lassen County, along with Modoc and Siskiyou Counties, is located within California Air Basin No. 7. This basin is known as the Northeast Plateau Air Basin.

In general, air emission sources in Lassen County are associated with motor vehicles, lumber mills, wood burning stoves, wildfires, prescribed fires, and fugitive dust from unimproved roads and sparsely vegetated or unvegetated lands, including dry lakebeds. Periodic emissions occur from agricultural activities, such as discing and agricultural waste burning.

The Federal Clean Air Act of 1970, and subsequent amendments, established air quality standards for several pollutants. These Federal standards are set by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA). The State of California has adopted its own standards through the California Air Resources Board (ARB). The ARB is responsible for coordinating both state and Federal air pollution programs in California. In addition, the State Legislature passed the California Clean Air Act in 1988, which implements a planning process parallel to the Federal Clean Air Act in structure, but more stringent for some criteria pollutants. It also outlines a more rigorous planning process than Federal guidelines.

The California Air Resources Board has retained authority over mobile sources, but has delegated much of the control over stationary sources to local agencies, including state air quality management districts and air pollution control districts. The ARB coordinates and oversees these districts.

The Lassen County Air Pollution Control District (APCD) has regulatory jurisdiction over the County's air quality permitting process. The district's air pollution regulations comply with the standards established by USEPA Guidelines.

The APCD, through the Air Pollution Control Officer, and with technical assistance from the California Air Resources Control Board, reviews proposals and plans to insure that air quality standards are met. Projects which may emit pollutants from a stationary source are required to obtain an Authority to Construct Permit from the APCD prior to construction. After construction of the facility is completed and the project can demonstrate that it can operate in compliance with emission requirements set forth in the Authority to Construct, a Permit to Operate must be obtained.

Air quality is defined by the USEPA and the State of California in terms of concentration limits for

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several specific pollutants. The criteria pollutants for state and Federal air quality standards are: ozone, carbon monoxide, particulate matter of 10 microns or less (PM-10), nitrogen dioxide, lead, and sulfur dioxide. California also regulates hydrogen sulfide, vinyl chloride, and sulfate particle concentrations. PM-10 is the only size of particulate matter regulated because larger sized particulates are not considered to be a significant health concern.

National standards are divided into primary standards, designed to protect public health, and secondary standards, which are intended to protect the public from any known or anticipated adverse effects. Hundreds of toxic and hazardous pollutants may present particular concerns, but no ambient standards exist for these contaminants.

The overall air quality of Lassen County is considered good by the APCD. The air basin has not been designated as a "non-attainment basin" under the Federal Clean Air Act. (A non-attainment area is one which does not meet Federal and/or state air quality standards for specific criteria pollutants. The designation is made on a pollutant-specific basis. Therefore, an area may be designated "non-attainment" for one pollutant but in "attainment" for others.) Under the state air quality standards, the basin is in attainment for nitrogen dioxide, sulfur dioxide, and lead. It is unclassified for carbon monoxide, ozone and PM-10. An air basin is unclassified for a criteria pollutant when the available data is insufficient to determine attainment status. Unclassified areas are treated as attainment areas until proven otherwise.

No ambient air monitoring of toxic contaminants is currently being performed in Lassen County. Therefore, background concentrations of toxic contaminants in ambient air are not available. The closest monitoring stations gathering data on a range of criteria pollutants are at Quincy in Plumas County. (Sulfur dioxide data came from Stockton, California.) Consideration of data from "regional sites" impacted by similar natural and man-made sources is an accepted practice by the Environmental Protection Agency. Data from 1987 indicate that all Federal criteria pollutant standards except PM-10 were in attainment (Radian, 1993).

Incidents of air pollution may be aggravated in populated valleys and local basins during the colder months (November through March) when wood-burning stoves are heavily used. This problem is particularly accentuated when a temperature inversion occurs, trapping emissions in a layer of relatively stagnant cold air near ground level. This may lead to elevated background levels of carbon monoxide, sulfur dioxide, nitrogen dioxide and suspended particulate matter. A ground-based inversion will last until the ground-level air temperature rises and atmospheric turbulence and dispersion occurs. Such an episode may last several days or persist for as long as several weeks.

The Lassen County APCD has a nuisance rule which implicitly regulates pollutants other than those for which criteria standards have been adopted. Air Pollution Regulations Rule 4:2 states:

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A person shall not discharge from any source whatsoever such quantities of air contaminants or other materials which cause injury, detriment, nuisance or annoyance to any considerable number of persons or to the public or which endanger the comfort, repose, health or safety of any such persons or the public or which cause or have a natural tendency to cause injury or damage to business and property.

This rule may be interpreted to restrict ambient concentrations of pollutants, such as toxic and hazardous pollutants, until other standards are in place.

State law requires an assessment of potential health risks posed by toxic air contaminants that might be emitted from a proposed source. Such "health risk assessments" assess public health impacts, specifically cancer risk and non-carcinogenic chronic effects, of anticipated toxic air contaminants. Projected cancer risk is the estimated probability that an individual would develop cancer during his or her lifetime because of exposure to carcinogenic emissions.

A study in South Lake Tahoe, as referenced in the General Plan for the City of Susanville, estimated that residential wood burning releases approximately 57 percent of the total particulate matter emitted into the basin on a typical winter day and accounted for up to 50 percent of the visibility impact. Air pollutants from residential wood-burning include particulate matter, carbon monoxide, polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons, nitrogen oxides, sulfur oxides, and volatile organic compounds. The major components are carbon monoxide and particulate matter.

The EPA has established performance standards for residential wood heaters. The new standards consist of emission limits for wood-burning devices and a program to certify new wood heaters manufactured after July 1, 1990. Emission control strategies for residential wood-burning appliances have been implemented by a number of states, including Oregon, Colorado, and Washington. Washoe County, Nevada, has adopted a regulation that curtails residential wood-burning during periods of high pollution and restricts wood stove sales to those which meet either Oregon or Colorado emission certification requirements.

In an effort to prevent diminishing air quality in the Susanville area, the City has adopted several policies and "action programs" addressing the issue in its General Plan. These include:

Action Program [10]: By ordinance, require that new wood-burning stoves and fireplace inserts meet specific EPA emission standards before installation.

Action Program [13]: Establish by ordinance that the transfer of ownership of property will require City inspection of fireplaces, above the allowed limit of one open fireplace per dwelling unit, and all wood-burning stoves; the retro-fitting of fireplaces with fireplace

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inserts meeting EPA standards; and the replacement of any older, non-certified stoves with new stoves meeting EPA standards.

Action Program [18]: Once an air quality benchmark is established, non-burn days may be established by ordinance when atmospheric and environmental conditions warrant.

Lassen County Area Plans (e.g., Richmond/Gold Run) have included policies to, "Protect the planning area's existing good quality air resources." Proposed implementation measures have been limited to recommendations to reduce dust on unpaved roads and encourage solar designs and other "clean energy" alternatives.

## **11. Scenic Resources**

### **GOALS, POLICIES AND IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES**

GOAL N-23: Scenic resources of high quality which will continue to be enjoyed by residents and visitors and which will continue to be an asset to the reputation and economic resources of Lassen County.

NR78 POLICY: The County has identified areas of scenic importance and sensitivity along state highways and major County roads and has designated those areas as "Scenic Corridors". (Refer to the General Plan land use map and related designations in various area plans, which may also be regarded as "scenic highway corridors".) The County will develop and enforce policies and regulations to protect areas designated as scenic corridors from unjustified levels of visual deterioration.

Implementation Measures:

NR-U The County shall adopt policies to minimize adverse impacts which will significantly deteriorate the scenic qualities of visually sensitive areas.

NR-V Areas designated and zoned for development in scenic corridors shall be zoned as "Design Review Combining Districts" or otherwise regulated to require review and management by the County of the visual impacts of proposed development.

NR79 POLICY: The County shall continue to use "Design Review Combining Districts" to review the visual impacts of development in designated areas to minimize significant adverse impacts.

Implementation Measure:

NR-W The County shall adopt design and development standards for use in "Design Review" areas and scenic corridors to guide the consideration and management of potential significant impacts to scenic resources.

NR80 POLICY: In the course of adopting policies pertaining to scenic resources in other general plan elements and area plans, the County may consider additional and more particular policies and measures to protect scenic resources and prevent or reduce

the adverse visual impacts of development in visually sensitive areas.

GOAL N-24: Protection of the scenic qualities of the county's night sky.

NR81 POLICY: The County shall maintain and enforce policies, development standards and mitigation measures to control lighting generated by development and to minimize the unnecessary adverse impacts of such lighting in the vicinity of the development and on the general scenic qualities of the night sky in the area.

NR82 POLICY: The County will encourage projects within Lassen County but outside the County's jurisdictional authority to include provisions to minimize the adverse intrusion of lighting on the surrounding area and the night sky in general.

## **SCENIC RESOURCES**

### **BACKGROUND:**

There are no "State Scenic Highways" designated by the State of California in Lassen County. There are also no official "County Scenic Highways", as recognized by the state.

In 1993, the Lassen Scenic Byway was recognized as part of the National Scenic Byway System. This route encompasses a series of highways which form a loop through the central portion of the Lassen National Forest. It includes portions of Highway 36, Highway 44, Highway 89 (including the segment of the highway through Lassen Volcanic National Park), and Highway 147. In Lassen County, the Lassen Scenic Byway includes the section of Highway 44 between the Shasta County line and Highway 36, Highway 36 between its intersection with 44 and the Plumas County line near Westwood, and, as part of an alternate loop around Lake Almanor, a short portion of Highway 147 from Highway 36 through Clear Creek to the Plumas County line.

Although the County has not participated in the State's scenic highway program, it has adopted a number of policies related to recognizing scenic highway corridors and implementing protective measures. Lassen County's 1968 General Plan land use map identified broad "Scenic Highway Corridors" along all state highways, several county roads, and even along some roads that were in the planning stages and which have never been constructed or improved. In the text of the General Plan, the following observations and recommendations were included: (Pages 31, 32)

The basic resource of the recreation industry in Lassen County is its natural scenic quality. The quality must be protected, enhanced and appropriately exploited.

The scenic highway includes the road itself and its right-of-way and the scenic areas traversed as visible from the highway. Thus the scenic corridor in which control should be

exerted will vary in width in relation to sight distance from the road.

The concept of Scenic Highways does not preclude development from occurring within the corridor covered by protective regulations. Appropriate uses along Scenic Highways can include grazing and other agriculture, homes for permanent and seasonal residents and, in planned locations, motels, restaurants and certain other commercial services. However, these basic principles should guide all development within the areas visible from the Scenic Highways:

The intensity and location of development should not impair natural scenic qualities.

The design of all development should be in character with the natural surroundings.

Where some attribute, physical or historic, indicates that an area should be left in its existing or natural state, public ownership or other rights should be acquired to insure preservation.

The County should adopt an official County Scenic Highway designation for the routes specified. All uses along these routes or visible from them should be subject to special standards and controls which will achieve the broad goals of preserving the scenic qualities of Lassen County. (Page 32)

In the process of preparing area plans since 1982, the County has utilized an evaluation system to classify scenic resources. The class designations combine several evaluation elements including: judgement of inherent scenic quality, character and diversification; sensitivity in regards to the amount and type of public exposure to the particular landscape; the distance at which the landscape is perceived (foreground, middleground, or background); and the existing extent to which an area's scenic quality has already been impacted. Although the classification system is admittedly subjective, it provides the County with a vocabulary to describe scenic resource values and to determine if and when disturbance of the landscape will result in deterioration of those values.

The first three classifications, Classes I through III, are relative to each other and are employed to highlight landscapes having the most significant scenic resource values. The fourth classification, Class IV, is used to indicate areas in which visual elements are related more to urban-type development than to essentially natural landscape oriented scenic elements. The following discussion addresses the scenic elements within each classification:

Class I: This classification is given to areas having the greatest scenic resource value because of one or more of the following features:

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1. Contains distinctive landscape feature(s).
2. Is subject to significant amounts of public exposure, especially in foreground and middleground zones (i.e., along State or U.S. highways).
3. Large percentage of observers have high expectations and sensitivity for scenic quality (e.g., recreational tourists).

Class II: These areas have one or both of the following scenic resource characteristics:

1. Scenic value relatively common to the region.
2. Average sensitivity due to location near local travel routes and residential areas.

The scenic values of Class II areas are more-or-less common or characteristic of the region. Public exposure may be considerable, but the areas fall into a far middleground or background distance zone.

Class III: These areas have one or both of the following scenic resource:

1. Landscapes have relatively minimal scenic distinction from average scenery characteristics of the region.
2. Have low visual sensitivity because of very low levels of public exposure due to isolation of the area.

Because of topography and the lack of roads in these areas, the Class III areas have relatively minor amounts of public exposure. Landforms and vegetation are also generally common to the immediate region and generally lack distinctive scenic features.

Class IV: Class IV areas are generally "urbanized" to the extent that qualities of the natural landscape are largely secondary, visually, to the urban landscape. Visual elements are related largely to structural improvements or other man-made elements including such features as subdivisions, shopping centers, and industrial areas (unless the man-made element is of significant scenic value, e.g., a golf course or reservoir).

Design Review Districts

Chapter 18.86 of the Lassen County Code contains regulations for the "D, Design Combining

District".

The intent of the design combining district is to ensure that buildings, structures, fences and other substantial external improvements in designated areas shall be designed and constructed so as not to be of unsightly, undesirable, or obnoxious appearance to the extent that they will hinder the orderly and harmonious development of the neighborhood or of the county in general, or otherwise affect the general prosperity and welfare.

In any district with which is combined a "D" combining district, new structures require design review approval pursuant to the requirements contained in Chapter 18.118 of the County Code. Design approval is also required in a variety of commercial and industrial zones, and may be required as a condition of a use permit or planned development permit.

Design review districts typically pertain more to urban types of development than to natural resource areas. However, such districts may be used to minimize the impacts of development on scenic areas.

The night sky of Lassen County is felt by many people to be an important and sensitive scenic resource of the area. With the introduction and expansion of development projects in rural areas (e.g., the Correctional Center, power plants, car dealerships, etc.), there is increasing concern over the visual impacts and the adverse effects that extensive lighting has on the county's scenic night sky. The glare of lighting from large developments can sometimes be seen for miles around and fades the brilliance of the moon and stars. Concerns have also been expressed that lighting which extends beyond the development site is an intrusion on the peace and privacy of affected people in the vicinity and sometimes of people miles away. The County recognizes that well-lighted areas are often important for safety and security. The County has frequently imposed conditions of approval on projects to require shielding of lights and other measures to provide that lighting is, as much as possible, directed to the areas where it is needed and the adverse effects on the surrounding area is reduced.