

PREFACE

OVERVIEW AND PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT

The final environmental impact report (FEIR) for the Amador County General Plan includes the draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) with revisions, comment letters on the DEIR, and written responses to comments on the Amador County General Plan DEIR. The Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP) is included as Appendix G.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

The DEIR (State Clearinghouse Number 2009072089) was received on October 31, 2014 by the State Clearinghouse. The County provided for a review period that lasted until Friday, January 30, 2015. The original 45 day public comment period ending on December 15, 2014, was extended through January 20, 2015, by the Amador County Board of Supervisors on November 10, 2014. The County provided opportunities to offer verbal comments during duly noticed joint public meetings of the Amador County Board of Supervisors and Planning Commission on December 2, 2014 and January 20, 2015. Comment letters on the DEIR are included in their entirety in Chapter 10, “Comments and Responses” of this document. Verbal comments from the December 2, 2014 and the January 20, 2015 joint public meetings of the Board of Supervisors and Planning Commission are also summarized in Chapter 10 of this document.

RESPONSES TO COMMENTS

In accordance with Section 15088 of the CEQA Guidelines, Amador County, as the lead agency, has reviewed the comments received on the DEIR for the Amador County General Plan and has prepared written responses to the comments received.

Chapter 10 of this FEIR includes the written and oral comments received on the DEIR and presents responses to significant environmental issues raised in these comments (as required by CEQA Guidelines Section 15132). The focus of the responses to comments is on the disposition of significant environmental issues that are raised in the comments, as specified by Section 15088(c) CEQA Guidelines. Detailed responses are not provided to comments on the merits of the General Plan.

REVISIONS TO THE DEIR AND DRAFT GENERAL PLAN

In certain instances, responses to comments may warrant modification of the text of the DEIR and/or Draft General Plan. In those cases, changes are shown within the specific response to comment in Chapter 10 of the FEIR and are shown in the corresponding chapter of the FEIR and/or General Plan (July 2016). The County also made some revisions to the DEIR and Draft General Plan to clarify or amplify the information, or correct minor errors. These revisions are also shown within the FEIR and General Plan chapters. The text deletions are shown in ~~strikeout~~ and additions are shown in underline. Changes to the General Plan project description and the DEIR impact conclusions are discussed in detail below.

CHANGES TO THE GENERAL PLAN PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Draft General Plan Figure LU-1 and DEIR Exhibit 3-2, “Land Use Diagram” have been revised as shown below:

- ▶ An area at the eastern end of Camanche Reservoir was incorrectly labeled as “water” and is now correctly labeled as “Agricultural General” and “Open Recreation.” General Plan Table LU-1 and DEIR Exhibit 3-2 has been revised to show a decrease of 598 acres of water, and increase of 580 acres of Agricultural General, and 18 acres of Open Recreation.

- ▶ The color representing “Mineral Resource Zone” has been changed to a different shade of brown to provide more contrast between the colors representing “Mineral Resource Zone” and “General Forest.”

These changes to Figure LU-1 and DEIR Exhibit 3-2, “Land Use Diagram” do not trigger DEIR recirculation per Guidelines Section 15088.5, because these revisions merely clarify information and are insignificant modifications. These revisions are not considered “significant new information” that require DEIR recirculation because these revisions do not result in a new significant environmental impact or a substantial increase in the severity of an environmental impact.

- ▶ The boundaries of the proposed expanded Industrial land use designation located near the western border of Amador County along State Route 104 have been more definitively defined and slightly adjusted resulting in a reduction of approximately 118 acres in overall area from approximately 1,566 acres to approximately 1,449 acres. This revision has resulted in an increase of 136 acres of the Mineral Resource Zone designation, and a decrease of 18 acres of the Agricultural General and 118 acres of the Industrial land use designation. See General Plan Table LU-1 for a detailed description of these land use designations.

These revisions to the Land Use Diagram more closely follow existing lot line boundaries. These revisions also change the land use designation from Industrial back to the current designation of Mineral Resource Zone in 189 acres of Vernal Pool Ecosystem Critical Habitat (see FEIR Exhibit 4.4-1, “Critical Habitat”). As shown in FEIR Exhibit 4.4-4a, “Special-Status Species Occurrences North Detail Map,” a documented location of the California tiger salamander, a special-status wildlife species, will remain as Mineral Resource Zone instead of changing to Industrial.

Table LU-2, “Draft General Plan Development Capacity” in the Land Use Element of the General Plan and Table 3-1, “Expected Development under the Draft General Plan” in the DEIR Project Description were revised slightly to match the land use acres and 2030 non-residential square feet of EIR Exhibit 3-2, “Land Use Diagram.” These revisions do not change the total acres of 387,874, or the total 2030 non-residential square feet of 6,185,000.

These changes to Figure LU-1 and DEIR Exhibit 3-2, “Land Use Diagram” do not trigger DEIR recirculation per Guidelines Section 15088.5. These revisions are not considered “significant new information” that require DEIR recirculation because these revisions do not result in a new significant environmental impact or a substantial increase in the severity of an environmental impact.

CHANGES TO DEIR IMPACT ANALYSES

To clarify the reasons that impacts on wildlife movement would be less than significant, Impact 4.4-6, “Potential interference with wildlife movement” has been added to the impact analysis of FEIR Section 4.4, “Biological Resources” as shown below:

IMPACT 4.4-6 *Potential interference with wildlife movement. Implementation of the Draft General Plan would include new development in the planning area, including buildings, structures, paved areas, roadways, utilities, and other improvements. Proposed new uses could interfere with the movement of native resident or migratory wildlife species or with native resident or migratory wildlife corridors. However, proposed new uses would not interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory wildlife species because it would not eliminate important connections between any areas of natural habitat that would otherwise be isolated. This impact would be less than significant.*

Wildlife corridors are features that provide connections between two or more areas of habitat that would otherwise be isolated and unusable. Often drainages, creeks, or riparian areas are used by wildlife as movement corridors as these features can provide cover and access across a landscape. Implementation of the Draft General Plan would not interfere substantially with the movement of any

native resident or migratory wildlife species because it would not eliminate important connections between any areas of natural habitat that would otherwise be isolated. The Mokelumne River corridor provides a link between the Salt Springs deer herd summer and winter range in Amador County and would continue to link these critical ranges following General Plan implementation. Overall, riparian habitat losses resulting from implementation of the Draft General Plan would be relatively small because major land use changes and development are not proposed in river and stream corridors and regionally common wildlife species such as coyote, fox, raccoon, skunk, and deer, would continue to use these corridors after project implementation. There are no established migratory routes through the County that are vital for the movement of any resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or population and no migratory routes would be eliminated by Draft General Plan implementation. In addition, deer may move through any suitable open space habitat areas between their summer and winter ranges. Most of the developed land uses under the Draft General Plan are located around existing population centers and industrial areas and would occur on a relative small fraction of the existing land within the County. Most of the County would continue to be designated for agricultural uses, providing ample open space for wildlife movement. Therefore, the impact on wildlife movement would be **less than significant**.

Mitigation Measure: No mitigation measures are required.

This revision to DEIR Section 4.4, “Biological Resources,” does not trigger DEIR recirculation per Guidelines Section 15088.5. This revision is not considered “significant new information” that requires recirculation because the revision does not result in a new significant environmental impact or a substantial increase in the severity of an environmental impact.

This page intentionally left blank.