
Chapter 10. Conservation and Open Space Elements

10.1 Combined Element Organization

This chapter combines the Plan's required Conservation Element and Open Space Elements. The Conservation Element guides the conservation, development, and utilization of natural resources (water, forests, soils, rivers, mineral deposits, and others), while the Open Space Element guides the comprehensive and long-range preservation and conservation of open-space lands. Together, these elements present a framework of goals and policies for use and protection of all the natural resource and open space assets of the county.

Because these two elements naturally overlap, they have been combined into this single chapter, which has been organized into six related sections: Open Spaces, Biological Resources, Mineral Resources, Waste Management, Cultural Resources, and Scenic Resources. The relationship of these sections to the two elements of this chapter and other elements in this Plan is set forth in Table 10-A.

10.1.1 Relationship to Other Elements

State planning law provides a detailed description of open space lands and the topics that must be addressed in the Conservation and Open Space Elements. These topics include:

- **Open Space for the Preservation of Natural Resources**—areas required for the preservation of plant and animal life, such as habitat for fish and wildlife and areas required for ecological and other scientific study (for example: rivers, streams, bays and estuaries, coastal beaches, lakeshores, riverbanks, and watersheds).
- **Open Space for the Managed Production of Resources**—including forest lands, rangelands, agricultural lands, and areas of economic importance for the production of food or fiber; areas required for recharge of ground water basins; areas that are important for the management of commercial fisheries; and areas containing major mineral deposits.
- **Open Space for Outdoor Recreation**—areas of outstanding scenic, historical, and cultural values; areas suited for park and recreational purposes (for example: access to lake shores, beaches, rivers, and streams); and areas that serve as links between major recreation and open-space reservations such as highway corridors, trails, and utility easements.
- **Open Space for Public Health and Safety**—areas that require special management or regulation because of hazardous conditions such as earthquake fault zones, floodplains, high fire hazard areas, and areas required for the protection of air and water resources; areas designed for fuel breaks, fire access,

and fuel reduction zones; and historical natural hazard boundaries (for example: inundation areas, landslide paths, debris flows, and earthquake faults).

These open space areas and topics are covered throughout the General Plan as detailed below and in Table 10-A:

Open Space for the Preservation of Natural Resources

- Maintenance of natural resources and public lands managed for resource protection are addressed in the Land Use Element.
- Preservation of fish, plants, and wildlife, including protection of rivers and streams is a main topic of the Biological Resources section of this element.
- Protection of watersheds and their water resources is covered in the Water Resources Element.
- Bay, estuary, and coastal beach protections can be found in the coastal plans.

Open Space for the Managed Production of Resources:

- Timber and agricultural production topics are contained in the Forest and Agricultural Resources section of the Land Use Element.
- Production of mineral resources, including rock, sand, and gravel, are addressed in the Mineral Resources section of this element.

Open Space for Outdoor Recreation:

- Public lands managed for public recreation and open space are addressed in the Land Use Element and the Community Infrastructure and Services Element.
- Demands for trails and trails oriented recreational uses and bikeways are primarily covered in the Circulation Element.
- Protection of scenic, historic, and cultural assets, including Native American cultural heritage resources, is the primary topic of the Cultural and Scenic Resources section of this Element.
- Coastal access and recreational is a major topic of the Coastal Plans.

Open Space for Public Health and Safety:

- Policies to minimize risks and manage development in hazardous areas are included in the Land Use Element and the Safety Element.
- Community design and circulation for public health is a topic of the Circulation Element and the Land Use Element.
- Policies to retain publicly owned corridors for future trail use are found in the Circulation Element.

- Policies to integrate city and county trail routes with state trail systems are included in the Circulation Element. The Water Resources Element addresses water supply and water quality. The Air Quality Element addresses the protection and enhancement of air quality.

Table 10-A Conservation and Open Space Policy Summary	
Policy Summary	General Plan Elements/Sections
<p>Open Space for the Preservation of Natural Resources</p> <p>Maximize the long-term public and economic benefits from the biological resources within the county by maintaining and restoring fish and wildlife habitats.</p>	<p>Conservation and Open Space Element, Biological Resources Section</p> <p>Water Resources Element</p>
<p>Sustainable Development of Natural Resources / Open Space for Managed Production of Resources</p> <p><u>Forest Resources</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Actively protect and conserve timberlands for long-term economic utilization and to actively enhance and increase county timber production capabilities. <p><u>Agricultural Resources</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Promote and increase Humboldt County’s agricultural production and the economic viability of its agricultural operations. ▪ Conserve agricultural land for continued agricultural use. ▪ Protect working landscapes. <p><u>Mariculture</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Support mariculture expansion with permit coordination and streamlining, improved dock and processing facilities, and public education. <p><u>Water Resources</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Maintain or enhance the quality of the county’s water resources and the fish and wildlife habitat utilizing those resources. ▪ Maintain a dependable water supply, sufficient to meet existing and future domestic, agricultural, industrial needs and to assure that new development is consistent with the limitations of the local water supply. <p><u>Mineral Resources</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Assure the long-term availability of adequate supplies of mineral resources and construction materials, to protect mineral resource areas from incompatible land uses, and to minimize adverse environmental impacts. <p><u>Energy Resources</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop and implement countywide strategic energy planning. ▪ Increase energy efficiency and conservation. ▪ Increase the supply of energy from renewable sources, distributed generation, and cogeneration. ▪ Pursue opportunities for local management of energy supply. ▪ Move toward self-sufficiency in energy use, with maximum reliance on local renewable resources for local energy needs. 	<p>Land Use Element, Forest and Agricultural Resources and Land Use Maps</p> <p>Conservation and Open Space Element</p> <p>Economic Development Element</p> <p>Water Resources Element</p> <p>Conservation and Open Space Element, Mineral Resources</p> <p>Energy Element</p>

Table 10-A. Conservation and Open Space Policy Summary	
Policy Summary	General Plan Elements/Sections
<p>Sustainable Development of Natural Resources / Open Space for Managed Production of Resources <u>(continued)</u></p> <p><u>Fish and Wildlife</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Maximize, where feasible, the long-term public and economic benefits from the biological resources within the county by maintaining and restoring fish and wildlife habitats. <p>Open Space for Outdoor Recreation & Cultural and Scenic Values</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide for compatible recreation opportunities on forestland. ▪ Encourage a safe, efficient, and enjoyable county transportation and trails system for the transportation and recreation needs of bicyclists, equestrians, hikers, and joggers. ▪ Increase participation in active recreational opportunities. ▪ Maximize public access to and along the coast. ▪ Provide for recreation needs of residents with public parks in the urban study areas. ▪ Provide for the protection and enhancement of cultural resources including Native American cultural heritage resources. ▪ Provide park and recreation opportunities in the county. ▪ Develop a program to coordinate acquisition of important open space property through conservation easements and other mechanisms. ▪ Promote the individual identities of communities by maintaining scenic open space areas between cities and communities. 	<p>Conservation and Open Space Element, Biological Resources, Water Resources Element</p> <p>Land Use Element – Forest Resources Circulation Element</p> <p>Community Infrastructure and Services Element</p> <p>Conservation and Open Space Element: Cultural and Scenic Resources</p> <p>Conservation and Open Space Element</p>
<p>Open Space for Public Health and Safety</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Minimize the potential for loss of life and property resulting from natural and manmade hazards. 	<p>Safety Element</p>

Section 10.2 Open Space

10.2.1 Purpose

This subsection of the Conservation and Open Space elements addresses the conservation of open space lands, including issues related to working lands and park lands, the orderly development of residential land, and coordination with other agency programs related to conserving open space lands. Open spaces distinguish and showcase the county's natural environment and rural lands and provide attraction and enjoyment to residents and visitors.

10.2.2 Background

Conservation and Open Space Action Program

Humboldt County has vast and beautiful natural resources, areas of incomparable ecological value and a wealth of outdoor recreational opportunities. These are the defining characteristics of Humboldt County and represent its most significant environmental, social and economic assets. Approximately 1.4 million of the county's 2.3 million acres are used for agricultural and timber production. More than 550,000 acres are protected open space, forests, and recreation areas. Within county boundaries, there are 4 federal parks and beaches; 10 state parks; and 16 county parks and beaches, recreational areas, and reserves. There is also considerable National Forest land, as well as a number of city parks and open space areas owned by non-profit conservation groups.

Conserving and protecting these assets to benefit multiple generations is a key goal of the General Plan. Table 10-A outlines the policies of the County's Open Space Action Program. The County's strategy involves identifying and mapping significant natural resources and open spaces and implementing conservation and protection policies through zoning, project review, and proactive programs. Zoning designations will apply natural resource and open space development standards to individual properties. Discretionary projects will be evaluated for conformance with conservation and open space policies and standards of this Plan and the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Standards for the issuance of building permits and subdivision approvals are required by state law (Government Code Section 65567) to be consistent with Open Space Element policies.

The County will continue to implement state programs such as the Williamson Act and the Timberland Productivity Act, and work with the Coastal Commission for consistent implementation of the Coastal Act and other relevant state and federal resource agencies for implementation of other resource protection laws and programs.

Several regulatory agencies manage parks, recreation, and open space resources in the county, including the U. S. Forest Service (USFS), Bureau of Land Management (BLM), California State Parks Department, California Department of Fish and Game, Native American tribes, local city governments, and the County itself. The County will coordinate with federal and state agencies involved with managing resource land, as

well as cities and tribes.

The County will seek to expand its ability to implement and sustain voluntary natural resource and open space protection programs such as the County's existing Conservation and Recreation Easement Program. The County will also participate in regional conservation efforts such as the Five County Salmon Conservation Plan and the Integrated Regional Water Management Plan.

The County will work to protect and develop outdoor recreation areas and opportunities necessary to maintain competitiveness as a tourist destination and as a desirable place to work and conduct business.

To maintain working landscapes, the County will refrain from measures that reduce the economic viability of continued timber and agricultural operations and lobby for more efficient application of state and federal regulatory standards. The County will also work to improve the infrastructure and workforce necessary for the forest products and agriculture industries and help promote innovative forest and agriculture products.

Conservation and Recreation Easement Program

Program Description

In July 2004, the Board of Supervisors initiated a county-level program to preserve Humboldt County working lands and improve access to public lands. This Conservation and Recreation Easement Program (the "Program") will be further developed to implement a full range of General Plan conservation and open space goals. Currently the Program provides support for conservation easements, including new Williamson Act contract fees and public access easements. The Program provides small grants to facilitate conservation and open space easements and pays processing fees for owners enrolling new lands in the Williamson Act program. The Program also helps secure non-motorized access to public lands to support hunting, fishing, and recreational use.

The goals of the Program are as follows:

- 1) Position the County as an active participant in local conservation and preservation activities.
- 2) Implement General Plan conservation and open space policies, including the conservation of working lands and access to public lands.
- 3) Create cooperative working relationships with local land trust and conservancy organizations.
- 4) Provide incentives for voluntary participation by producers and landowners in the conservation of working lands.
- 5) Provide non-motorized access to public lands for hunting, fishing, and recreational uses.

Program strategies will focus on incentive-based, voluntary, and cooperative approaches to implementing access and conservation easements in the county. The County GIS will be used to identify, inventory, and prioritize working lands that may be eligible and appropriate for the Program. With the input of Program partners, potential benefits of placing conservation easements on particular parcels can be examined in

light of specific threats or development pressures. Partners will include local land trusts, the Humboldt Farm Bureau, agricultural and timber interest groups, and agencies that fund easements or manage public lands. Access easement support will be explored with groups concerned with non-motorized access to public lands for hunting, fishing, and other recreational purposes, as well as with public lands agencies affected.

Legal Lots and Open Space Provisions

Parcels have legal status if at the time they were created applicable laws were followed.

For older lots the Subdivision Map Act sets out a process that a property owner can use to determine if a parcel was created legally and can be considered a separate legal parcel under the law. This "Determination of Status" process results in the issuance of a Certificate of Compliance or Conditional Certificate of Compliance depending upon the legal status of the property.

Patent Parcels

A land patent is the right of ownership to a parcel of land usually granted by the federal or state government to an individual or private company. Over 18,000 patent parcels have been issued in Humboldt County. Based on historical records, the County has been able to map over 17,000 of these parcels. A number of these have been altered by subdivision, lot line adjustments, and mergers and do not retain their original status. The mapped parcels range from a fraction of an acre to over 11,000 acres, with an average size of 153 acres. Within Timber Production Zones TPZ, 7,304 original patents were mapped, with sizes ranging from 5 to 2,227 acres, with an average size of 136.5 acres.

Owning a legal lot does not necessarily guarantee the right of development. Modern lots created through the subdivision process were required to undergo review for consistency with a General Plan and development standards such as access, sewage disposal, water supply, and resource protection. This process guaranteed their suitability for development. Lots that were created legally but without these considerations may not be suitable for development; for example, the entire parcel may be located in a floodway or wetland. Because Open Space Element protection policies must be considered before issuing a building permit (Government Code Section 65567) development potential on legal lots can be restricted.

10.2.3 Goals and Policies

Goals

- CO-G1. Open Spaces.** Open spaces that distinguish and showcase the county's natural environment and rural lands and provide attraction and enjoyment to residents and visitors.
- CO-G2. Conservation of Working Lands.** Working resource lands that provide livelihoods and profitable economic returns while maintaining open space and ecological values.
- CO-G3. Conservation and Open Space Program.** An Open Space and Conservation Program that implements this Element's policies and is complimentary to the conservation and open space lands and programs of cities, tribes, and state and federal agencies.

- CO-G4. Parks.** Well maintained and accessible parks offering a range of popular recreation opportunities.
- CO-G5. Open Space and Residential Development.** Orderly residential development of open space lands that protects natural resources, sustains resource production, minimizes exposure to public safety hazards, and recovers the costs of providing public services.

Policies

- CO-P1. Conservation and Open Space Program.** The County shall inventory and appropriately zone conservation and open space lands and work to protect these lands through development review; Williamson Act programs; TPZ zoning designations; conservation easement and recreation programs; and support for continued resource production.
- CO-P2. Support for Working Lands.** The County shall support policies that maintain profitable resource production on timber and agricultural lands as a means to secure long-term protection and sustainability of open space lands.
- CO-P3. Conservation Easements.** Support conservation easement programs that protect natural resource and open space assets. Promote and develop voluntary easement programs that generate economic returns to the landowners and continued resource production, in exchange for permanent protection of natural resource and open space values.
- CO-P4. Greenbelts.** Maintain separation of urbanized communities through appropriate land use designations and zoning density. Avoid merging urban development boundaries of adjacent communities.
- CO-P5. Planning for Recreational Needs within Communities.** Policies addressing community recreational needs shall be prepared as part of planning efforts within each community. Implement park in-lieu fee programs in major communities.
- CO-P6. Develop and Maintain County Parks.** Secure, develop, and maintain county parks and recreation areas that are highly accessible to the public in order to serve the present and future needs of county residents. Plans for the development of additional county recreational facilities and opportunities shall consider the county's long-term capabilities for the maintenance of all facilities and opportunities.
- CO-P7. Encourage Private Outdoor Recreation.** Encourage private acquisition, development, and management of outdoor recreational services and facilities as a means to generate economic returns from conservation and open space lands.
- CO-P8. Development Review.** Development proposed on conservation and open space lands shall be reviewed for consistency with Conservation and Open Space Element policies.

10.2.4 Standards

CO-S1. Conservation and Open Space Element Consistency Determination. New development requiring a building permit or discretionary review for the areas noted in subsections A and B below shall not be approved unless consistent with Conservation and Open Space policies and standards:

- A. located in the following zoning designations:
 - 1) Agriculture Exclusive (AE)
 - 2) Timber Production Zone (TPZ)
 - 3) Commercial Timber (TC)
 - 4) Natural Resources (NR)
 - 5) Public Recreation (PR)
 - 6) Archaeological Resource Combining Zone (A)
 - 7) Alquist-Priolo Combining Zone (G)
 - 8) Streams and Riparian Corridors Protection Combining Zone (R)
- B. located in the following areas:
 - 1) FEMA mapped flood hazard zones
 - 2) An identified cultural resource site
 - 3) Areas mapped as special biological areas
 - 4) Streamside Management Areas and Other Wet Areas
 - 5) Areas mapped of geologic instability
 - 6) Areas mapped as Very High Fire Severity hazard
 - 7) Critical Water Supply
 - 8) Areas mapped as Critical Watersheds

10.2.5 Implementation Measures

CO-IM1. Conservation and Recreation Easement Program. Provide staffing and secure continued funding to support the Williamson Act Program and expand the County's Conservation and Recreation Easement Program as a means to protect working landscapes, priority open space lands, and outdoor recreational opportunities.

CO-IM2. Working Landscapes. Advocate for state and federal regulatory policy that sustains profitable resource production as a means to sustain the conservation and open space values of forest and agricultural land. Support market development efforts that maximize financial returns to the landowner for agriculture and timber products, recreation, and ecological services.

- CO-IM3. Review of New Development for Impacts on Recreational Resources.** Seek input from Parks and Recreation Division staff regarding land use planning decisions related to recreational opportunities in the county.
- CO-IM4. Pursuit of Funding.** The County shall maintain its Parks and Recreation Program within Public Works and shall pursue state and federal grant funding for the acquisition and maintenance of recreational facilities, trails, and other programs consistent with this Plan.
- CO-IM5. Zoning Ordinance Revision for Open Space Consistency Determinations.** Revise the Zoning Regulations governing development in open space lands to guide development consistency determinations pursuant to Government Code Section 65567.

Section 10.3 Biological Resources

10.3.1 Purpose

This section addresses biological resources including wildlife, fisheries, special status species and their habitats; it is a subsection of the Conservation and Open Space Element. Biological resource considerations are also reflected in the policies and development standards of the Land Use Element. For example, the list of primary and compatible uses in a given zone can be reflective of wildlife and fisheries considerations. Policies within the Growth Planning section of the Land Use Element (Chapter 4) have been developed to balance the need for growth with the need to protect biological resources. Finally, there are additional biological resource considerations reflected in the County's Local Coastal Program to achieve consistency with the California Coastal Act.

10.3.2 Background

Humboldt County is part of California's Klamath/North Coast bioregion. The major terrestrial habitat types in the county are coniferous forests (61%), oak woodlands (21%), and grasslands (10%). They represent a vast store of plant species and are home to numerous animals including deer, fox, elk, bears, and mountain lions. Nearly 400,000 acres of the county's mountains and coastline are within state and national park systems, leaving large tracts of existing terrestrial habitat in a natural condition.

A signature asset of the county is its aquatic habitats, including rivers, estuaries, and wetlands. Humboldt Bay, one of California's largest coastal estuaries, is second only to San Francisco Bay in size. The bay is home to many invertebrates, fish, birds, and mammals. Humboldt's rivers and the ocean off the coast have tremendous productive potential. In the seventies, over half of the fish produced and consumed in California were landed in the Humboldt Bay Area. Restoring this biological productivity to the region, especially the recovery of threatened Coho salmon and steelhead, is a high priority of this Plan.

In total, there are more than 20 species of plants and animals listed as Endangered or Threatened under federal and state classification systems in Humboldt County. Making land use decisions consistent with the special protections afforded these species is also a high priority of this Plan.

The County's biological resource conservation strategy relies on an understanding and mapping of the locations and extent of sensitive and critical biological habitat. Known habitats can then be protected for future generations by applying conservation policies and standards to development that has the potential for significant adverse effects. For example, new development in proximity to wetlands will trigger protective measures. Riparian corridors will be protected from encroachment with development restrictions. The protective measures will serve to minimize habitat loss and degradation with an emphasis on the protection and restoration of endangered or threatened species.

Sensitive, Critical, and Essential Habitats

When habitat requirements for a specific species of plant or wildlife are in short supply because either the habitat is limited to a small geographical area or is threatened by rapidly changing conditions, then the habitat is designated in this Plan as *sensitive*. A *critical* or *essential* habitat is a type of sensitive habitat that is presently threatened, and reduction or loss would cause the extinction of a federal or state listed threatened, rare, or endangered species.

Sensitive Habitats

The protection of sensitive habitats is an important part of planning and environmental assessment for land use development. Impacts to sensitive habitats must be assessed under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), and the Open Space and Conservation elements of the General Plan (Government Code, Sections 65302(d) and (e) and 65560-65567).

10.3.3 Goals and Policies

Goals

- BR-G1. Threatened and Endangered Species.** Sufficient recovery of threatened and endangered species to support de-listing.
- BR-G2. Sensitive, Critical, and Essential Habitat.** A mapped inventory of sensitive, critical, and essential habitat where biological resource protection policies apply.
- BR-G3. Benefits of Biological Resources.** Fish and wildlife habitats protected on a sustainable basis to generate long-term public, economic, and environmental benefits.

Policies

- BR-P1. Compatible Land Uses.** Land containing sensitive and critical habitats shall be planned and zoned for uses compatible with the long-term sustainability of the habitat. Discretionary land uses and building activity in proximity to sensitive and critical habitats shall be conditioned to prevent significant habitat degradation or harm to rare, threatened, or endangered species.
- BR-P2. Critical Habitat.** Discretionary projects that have the potential to impact critical habitat designated under the federal Endangered Species Act shall be conditioned to avoid significant habitat modification or destruction consistent with federally adopted Habitat Recovery Plans or interim recovery strategies.
- BR-P3. Essential Habitat.** Discretionary projects that have the potential to impact essential habitat designated under the California Endangered Species Act shall be conditioned to avoid significant habitat modification or destruction consistent with Department of Fish and Game guidelines or recovery strategies.
- BR-P4. Development within Stream Channels.** Development within stream channels shall be permitted when there is no lesser environmentally damaging feasible alternative, and where the best feasible mitigation measures have been provided to minimize adverse environmental effects. Development shall be

limited to essential, non-disruptive projects as listed in Standard BR-S6 - Development within Stream Channels.

- BR-P5. Streamside Management Areas.** To protect sensitive fish and wildlife habitats and to minimize erosion, runoff, and interference with surface water flows, the County shall maintain Streamside Management Areas, along its blue line streams (as identified on the most recently published largest scale USGS topographic maps—1:24,000). Streamside Management Areas shall also apply to intermittent streams that exhibit in-channel wetland characteristics and off-channel riparian vegetation.
- BR-P6. Development within Streamside Management Areas.** Development within Streamside Management Areas shall only be permitted where mitigation measures (Standards BR-S8 - Required Mitigation Measures, S9 - Erosion Control, and S10 - Development Standards) have been provided to minimize any adverse environmental effects, and shall be limited to uses as described in Standard BR-S7 - Development within Streamside Management Areas.
- BR-P7. Wetland Identification.** The presence of wetlands in the vicinity of a proposed project shall be determined during the review process for discretionary projects and for ministerial building and grading permit applications, when the proposed building development activity involves new construction or expansion of existing structures or grading activities. Wetland delineation by a qualified biologist using criteria acceptable to the Department of Fish and Game may be necessary and shall be required when wetland characterization and limits cannot be easily inventoried and identified by informal site inspection.
- BR-P8. Oak Woodlands.** The voluntary protection of oak woodlands should be encouraged.
- BR-P9. Invasive Plant Species.** The County shall cooperate with public and private efforts to control noxious and exotic invasive plant species.
- BR-P10. Biological Resource Maps.** Biological resource maps shall be consulted during the ministerial and discretionary permit review process in order to identify habitat concerns and guide mitigations that will reduce biological resource impacts to below levels of significance.
- BR-P11. Agency Review.** The County shall request the California Department of Fish and Game, as well as other appropriate agencies and organizations, to review plans for development within sensitive habitat areas and Streamside Management Areas. The County shall request National Marine Fisheries or Fish and Wildlife Service review, as well as other appropriate agencies and organizations, to review plans for development within critical habitat areas. Recommended mitigation measures to reduce impacts below levels of significance shall be incorporated into project approval.

10.3.4 Standards

Sensitive Critical and Essential Habitats

- BR-S1. Development Excluded from Policies.** Proposed development occurring within areas containing sensitive habitats shall be subject to the conditions and requirements of this chapter except for these exclusions (which do not preempt other County regulations or those of other agencies):
- A. Timber management and harvest activities under a timber harvesting plan or non-industrial timber management plan, or activities exempt from local regulation as per California Public Resources Code 4516.5(f). These standards shall not be used to reduce buffers specified under the State Forest Practice Act.
 - B. Any area proposed for development, which upon examination of the biological resource maps and field inspection is not actually within or does not contain the indicated habitat.
 - C. Forest management activities that are needed to improve timber productivity regulated by other agencies, which are otherwise consistent with this chapter.
 - D. Agricultural operations that are needed to improve agricultural productivity, which are otherwise consistent with this chapter.
- BR-S2. Agency Consultation.** The County will seek specific recommendations from the California Department of Fish and Game and other agencies and organizations for discretionary projects with potential to impact sensitive and essential habitats.
- BR-S3. Critical and Essential Habitat Defined.** Critical habitats are federally designated habitats necessary for the protection of threatened or endangered species listed under the Endangered Species Act. Essential habitats are state designated habitats necessary for the protection of threatened or endangered species listed under the California Endangered Species Act.
- BR-S4. Sensitive Habitat Defined.** Sensitive habitats are defined as a unique, limited, or an especially valuable habitat type for a species whose habitat requirements, if significantly changed, would cause a threatening change to the species population and may include the following:
- A. Critical habitat
 - B. Migratory deer winter range
 - C. Roosevelt elk range
 - D. Sensitive species rookery and nest sites
 - E. Streams and streamside areas
 - F. Natural ponds, springs, vernal pools, marshes, and wet meadows exhibiting standing water all year long or riparian vegetation.

- G. Other sensitive habitat and communities listed in the Department of Fish and Game's California Natural Diversity Data Base, as amended periodically.

BR-S5. Streamside Management Areas Defined. Streamside Management Areas (SMA) are identified and modified as follows:

- A. Areas specifically mapped as SMA and Wetland (WR) Combining Zones, subject to verification and adjustment pursuant to site-specific biological reporting and review procedures.
- B. For areas not specifically mapped as SMA and Wetland (WR) Combining Zones and outside of Urban Development and Expansion Areas, the outer boundaries of the SMA shall be defined as:
 - 1) Consistent with the Forest Practice Rule stream buffer widths.
 - 2) 100 feet, measured as the horizontal distance from the stream transition line on either side of perennial streams.
 - 3) 50 feet, measured as the horizontal distance from the stream transition line on either side of intermittent streams.
- C. For areas not specifically mapped as SMA and Wetland (WR) Combining Zones and inside of Urban Development and Expansion Areas, the outer boundaries of the SMA shall be defined as:
 - 1) 50 feet, measured as the horizontal distance from the stream transition line on either side of perennial streams.
 - 2) 25 feet, measured as the horizontal distance from the, stream transition line on either side of intermittent streams.
- D. Where not specifically mapped as a SMA and Wetland (WR) Combining Zone, the width of Streamside Management Areas shall be expanded as necessary to include significant areas of riparian vegetation adjacent to the buffer area, slides, and areas with visible evidence of slope instability, not to exceed 200 feet measured as a horizontal distance. Where Forest Practice Rules designate wider stream buffer areas, the width of the SMA shall be expanded to be consistent with those regulations when they are applicable.
- E. The Streamside Management Area may be reduced or eliminated where the County determines, based on specific factual findings, that:
 - 1) The USGS mapping of the stream as perennial or intermittent is not accurate, and typical stream flow can be shown to be less than that required to be classified as either perennial or intermittent; and
 - 2) It will not result in cumulatively or individually significant adverse impacts to fish, wildlife, riparian habitat, or soil stability.
- F. SMAs do not include watercourses consisting entirely of a drainage ditch, or other man-made drainage device, construction, or system.

Stream Channels

- BR-S6. Development within Stream Channels.** Development within stream channels may be approved where consistent with Policy BR-P4 - Development within Stream Channels, and is limited to the following projects.
- A. Fishery, wildlife, and aquaculture enhancement and restoration projects.
 - B. Road crossings consistent with Standard BR-S9 - Erosion Control of this section.
 - C. Flood control and drainage channels, levees, dikes, and floodgates.
 - D. Mineral extraction consistent with other County regulations.
 - E. Small-scale hydroelectric power plants in compliance with applicable County regulations and those of other agencies.
 - F. Wells and spring boxes, and agricultural diversions.
 - G. New fencing, so long as it would not impede the natural drainage or would not adversely effect the stream environment or wildlife.
 - H. Bank protection, provided it is the least environmentally damaging alternative.
 - I. Other essential projects, including municipal groundwater pumping stations, provided they are the least environmentally damaging alternative, or necessary for the protection of the public's health and safety.

Streamside Management Areas

- BR-S7. Development within Streamside Management Areas.** Development within Streamside Management Areas may be approved where consistent with Policy BR-P6 - Development within Streamside Management Areas, and shall be limited to the following uses:
- A. Development permitted within stream channels per BR-S6 - Development within Stream Channels.
 - B. Timber management and harvests not otherwise excluded by provisions of Standard BR-S1 - Development Excluded from Policies, as well as noncommercial cutting of firewood and clearing for pasturage, provided:
 - 1) Cottonwoods are retained.
 - 2) Remaining willows and alders, as well as other unmerchantable hardwoods and shrubs are to be protected from unreasonable damage.
 - 3) Integrity of tree canopy to be maintained within temperature impaired water bodies consistent with applicable TMDL's.
 - C. Road, bridge, and trail replacement or construction, when it can be demonstrated that it would not degrade fish and wildlife resources or water quality, and that vegetative clearing is kept to a minimum.
 - D. Removal of vegetation for disease control or public safety purposes.

- BR-S8. Required Mitigation Measures.** Mitigation measures for development within Streamside Management Areas shall, at a minimum, include:
- A. Retaining snags unless felling is required by CAL-OSHA, by the California Department of Forestry forest and fire protection regulations, or for public health and safety reasons. The felling must be approved by the appropriate County department. Felled snags shall be left on the ground if consistent with fire protection regulations as long as they have no economic value.
 - B. Retain live trees with visible evidence of use as nesting sites by hawks, owls, eagles, osprey, herons, or egrets.
 - C. Replanting of disturbed areas with riparian vegetation (including such species as alders, cottonwoods, willows, sitka spruce, etc.) shall be required prior to the completion of the development project.
 - D. Erosion control measures (as per Standard BR-S9- Erosion Control).
- BR-S9. Erosion Control.** Erosion control measures for development within Streamside Management Areas shall include the following:
- A. During construction, land clearing and vegetation removal will be minimized, following the provisions of the Water Resources Element and the standards listed here.
 - B. Construction sites will be planted with native or naturalized vegetation and mulched with natural or chemical stabilizers to aid in erosion control and ensure revegetation.
 - C. Long slopes will be minimized to increase infiltration and reduce water velocities down cut slopes by such techniques as soil roughing, serrated cuts, selective grading, shaping, benching, and berm construction.
 - D. Concentrated runoff will be controlled by the construction and continued maintenance of culverts, conduits, non-erodible channels, diversion dikes, interceptor ditches, slope drains, or appropriate mechanisms. Concentrated runoff will be carried to the nearest drainage course. Energy dissipaters may be installed to prevent erosion at the point of discharge, where discharge is to natural ground or channels.
 - E. Runoff shall be controlled to prevent erosion by on-site or off- site methods. On-site methods include, but are not limited to, the use of infiltration basins, percolation pits, or trenches. On-site methods are not suitable where high groundwater or slope stability problems would inhibit or be aggravated by on-site retention or where retention will provide no benefits for groundwater recharge or erosion control. Off-site methods include detention or dispersal of runoff over non-erodible vegetated surfaces where it would not contribute to downstream erosion or flooding.
 - F. Disposal of silt, organic, and earthen material from sediment basins and excess material from construction will be disposed of out of the Streamside Management Area to comply with Department of Fish and Game and the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board requirements.

Winter operations (generally October 15 thru April 15) shall employ the following special considerations:

- G. Slopes will be temporarily stabilized by stage seeding and/or planting of fast germinating seeds, such as barley or rye grass, and mulched with protective coverings such as natural or chemical stabilizations.
- H. Runoff from the site will be temporarily detained or filtered by berms, vegetated filter strips, and/or catch basins to prevent the escape of sediment from the site. Drainage controls are to be maintained as long as necessary to prevent erosion throughout construction.

Wetlands and Other Wet Areas

BR-S10. Development Standards. Development shall be consistent with the standards for streamside management areas, as applicable, including recommended buffer setbacks where appropriate for natural ponds, springs, vernal pools, marshes, wet meadows (exhibiting standing water all year long or riparian vegetation), and wetlands as defined in the California Fish and Game Code Section 2785(g).

BR-S11. Wetlands Defined. The County shall follow the identification and classification policies of the Department of Fish and Game which considers wetlands as lands transitional between terrestrial and aquatic systems where the water table is usually at or near the surface or the land is covered by shallow water. Wetlands must have one or more of the following three attributes: (1) at least periodically, the land supports hydrophytes, (2) the substrate is predominantly undrained hydric soil, and (3) the substrate is non-soil and is saturated with water or covered by shallow water at some time during the growing season of each year.

Other Sensitive and Critical Habitats

BR-S12. Sensitive and Critical Habitats. In addition to the preceding policies for streams, adjacent streamside areas, wetlands, and buffer areas adjacent to wetlands, several other sensitive and critical habitat areas exist within community planning areas. These include:

- B. Habitat for listed and candidate rare, unique, threatened, and endangered species in the federal and state endangered species acts.
- C. Sensitive avian species rookery and nest sites (e.g., osprey, great blue heron, and egret).
- D. Rare and endangered vascular plant communities as compiled by the California Native Plant Society or the Department of Fish and Game.
- E. Other sensitive habitats and communities as listed in the Department of Fish and Game's California Natural Diversity Data Base, as amended periodically.
- F. As part of the review of all discretionary development project applications, the County will consult with the Department of Fish and Game, the U.S. Fish

and Wildlife Service, the National Marine Fisheries Service, and other regional, state, and federal resource and trustee agencies, as applicable to the specific project location, class of development, or natural resource involved.

Oak Woodlands

BR-S13. Discretionary Review. Staff should encourage applicants for discretionary projects in oak woodlands (defined as lands on which the majority of the trees are of the genus *Quercus*) to design the project to reduce ecological and aesthetic impacts. Ideally, the placement of proposed roads and structures should avoid oak trees and their drip lines and site layout and design should minimize the destruction of trees.

Invasive Plant Species

BR-S14. Principally Permitted Accessory Use. Non-commercial invasive plant species control measures shall be considered a principally permitted accessory use in all zones.

10.3.5 Implementation Measures

BR-IM1. Biological Resource Maps. The County shall maintain best available data in the form of GIS maps for the location and extent of wetlands, critical habitats, streamside management areas, rookeries, and ranges of species identified in the California Natural Diversity Database.

BR-IM2. State and Federal Agency Permitting Coordination. The County shall maintain efficient and timely procedures for project referral to state and federal agencies for biological review and consultation.

BR-IM3. Staff Training. Building and Planning Division staff shall receive periodic training related to the field identification of biological resources and mitigation of impacts. The County shall maintain efficient and timely procedures for project referral to state and federal agencies for biological review and consultation.

Section 10.4 Mineral Resources

10.4.1 Purpose

This chapter is a subsection of the Conservation and Open Space Element. The purpose of this chapter is to identify the county's known mineral resources and support the conservation, development, and utilization of these resources. Energy production and conservation are discussed in the Energy Element.

10.4.2 Background

Humboldt County has a wealth of mineral resources. Over ninety extraction sites produce sand and gravel, hard rock, and metals essential for the economic well being of the county (see Figure 10.1).

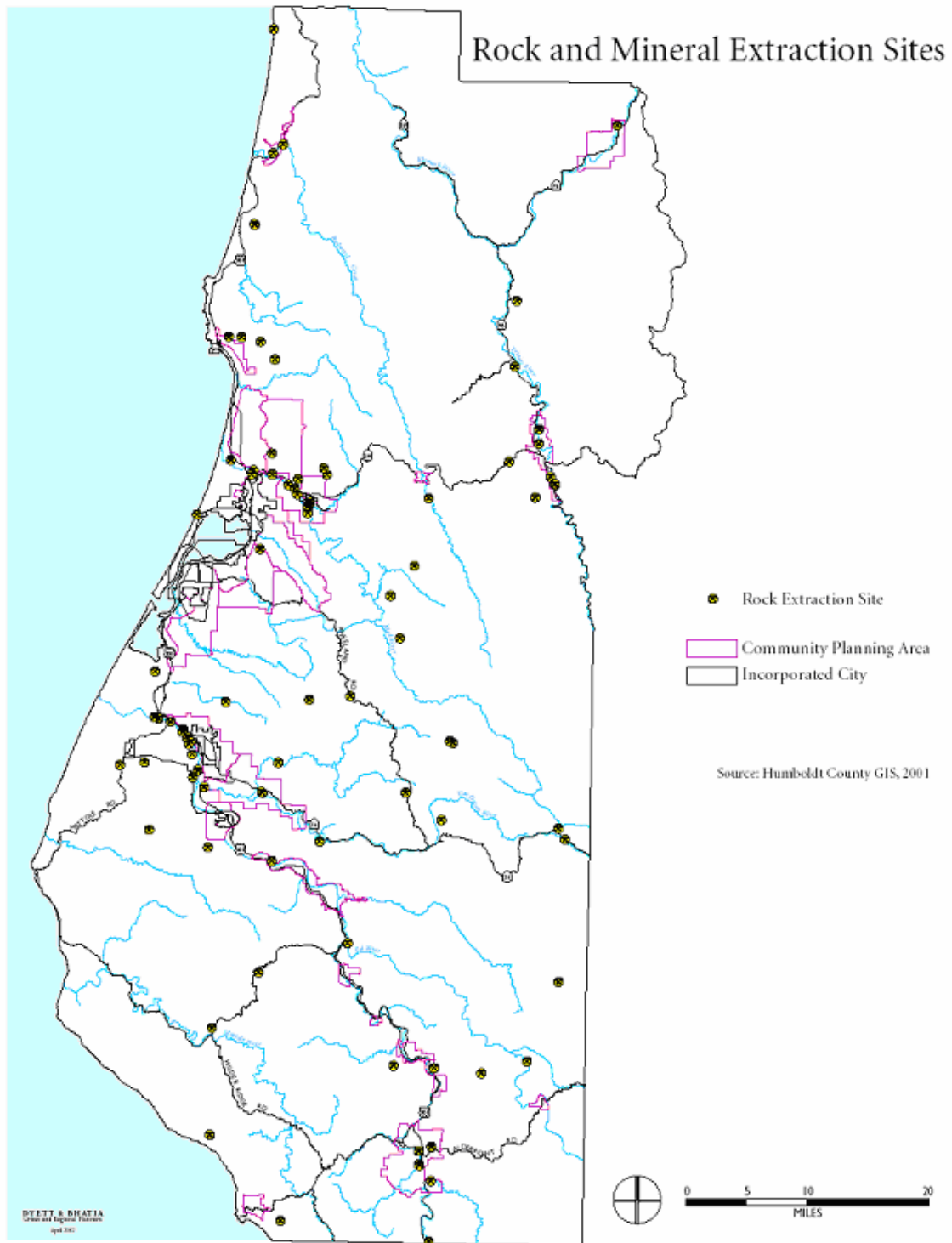
Mineral Resource Production

While gold was the first local mineral of interest, current mineral resource production is primarily limited to sand, gravel, and rock. In-stream mining of gravel bars above low flow water levels (but within the active riverbed) supplies most of the area's sand and gravel needs. Gravel and sand extraction in 2007 was 612,000 cubic yards from mining along the Eel and Van Duzen Rivers (70 percent), Mad River (25 percent), and Trinity River (5 percent).

Mines and quarries in Humboldt County primarily produce shale and quarry stone used for base rock and other structural applications. There are over 30 active rock quarries permitted in the county, with a permitted annual potential yield of approximately 660,000 cubic yards per year. Actual extraction amounts are significantly less than this and vary depending on local demand. Rock quarries are an important augmentation of the in-stream sand and gravel mining operations. These quarries provide rock products of various sizes that are not obtainable from in-stream operations or are closer to the demand. Of particular importance are the rock quarries that mine blue schist, a hard rock used in construction and the rock quarries that provide road base for rural roads and timber operations.

Sand, gravel, and rock mining are essential to road construction, road maintenance, concrete, streambank protection, erosion control, and engineered fill and drainage systems. Mine closures raise costs and negatively impact development and maintenance projects within the county.

Figure 10.1 Rock and Mineral Extraction Sites



In-Stream Gravel Mining Regulatory Coordination

To address state, federal, and County permitting requirements in a coordinated way and to implement mitigation required in program environmental impact reports for in-stream gravel mining, the County established the County of Humboldt Extraction Review Team (CHERT).

CHERT serves as a vehicle for interagency cooperation and annually reviews in-stream mining operations for compliance with CEQA mitigations and the California Surface Mining and Reclamation Act of 1975 (SMARA). The CHERT review process involves extensive interagency coordination and on-site annual inspections. Through this process, the following agencies have input and can annually establish extraction quantities and permit restrictions for in-stream gravel mining operations:

- California Department of Fish and Game, through their Streambed Alteration Agreements.
- National Oceanographic Atmospheric Administration, National Marine Fisheries Service, through the Endangered Species Act, Section 7 consultation.
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, through the Endangered Species Act, Section 7 consultation.
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, through Section 404 of the Clean Water Act authorization for gravel mining.
- California Coastal Commission, for operations requiring coastal development permits within Coastal Commission jurisdiction
- County of Humboldt, for oversight of conditional use permits, coastal development permits, reclamation plans, financial assurances, and monitoring of required CEQA mitigations.

Additionally, the California Department of Conservation is involved in the review and approval of reclamation plans and financial assurances.

Environmental Protection and Reclamation of Mined Lands

SMARA established state standards for mining activities and the reclamation of mined lands. These standards require that local governments obtain reclamation plans and set operational standards in granting permits for surface mining. Humboldt County is the local SMARA lead agency and administers the County's Surface Mining and Reclamation Act Ordinance (#1373 as amended) to comply with this state requirement.

It is a high priority of this Plan to protect fisheries habitat, riparian vegetation, and snowy plovers from in-stream mining impacts in order to maintain watershed health and the viability of in-stream mining. This goal will be accomplished primarily through the CHERT review process, interagency cooperation, and continued CEQA environmental review. The alternative to in-stream mining is mining off-river terrace deposits, which can be expensive and negatively impact agricultural lands or importation of sand and gravel, which is prohibitively expensive.

When naturally occurring asbestos is present at hard rock quarries, precautions are necessary to prevent exposure to employees and neighboring residents. This Plan relies on the site registration, sampling, and operational protocols of The North Coast Unified Air Quality Management District Airborne Toxic Control Measures (ATCM) to mitigate the affects of naturally occurring asbestos.

The surface mining standards adopted within the County's Surface Mining Ordinance set environmental protection standards and prevent new mining operations from becoming nuisances

to nearby communities or from creating problems of traffic, noise, water quality, or visual degradation.

Land Use Compatibility

In the 1980s and early 1990s, numerous surface mining conditional use permits were issued with a permit term of 15 years, subject to renewal. Furthermore, many vested mining operations in Humboldt County qualified and still qualify as legal non-conforming uses. A number of these permits have recently come up for renewal, and through the renewal notification and hearing process it has become apparent that there are currently a greater number of concerned neighboring property owners than there were when the permits were first being issued. In one instance, it was found that over 70% of parcels adjacent to an active extraction operation or haul route had changed ownership since the initial permit issuance. In order to ensure the continued production of essential mineral resources, all mining operations and haul routes need to be identified and recognized in land use decision making and disclosed during real estate transactions to promote land use compatibility.

10.4.3 Goals and Policies

Goals

- MR-G1. Long-Term Supply of Mineral Resources.** A geographically distributed inventory of mining sites protected from incompatible land uses, permitted and operated to prevent significant environmental impacts and to satisfy long-term demand for mineral resources and construction materials.
- MR-G2. In-stream Sand and Gravel Extraction.** Continued supplies of in-stream sand and gravel using extraction methods and rates that support threatened or endangered species recovery, protect riparian corridors, and preserve existing river bed elevations.

Policies

- MR-P1. Production and Conservation.** Encourage the production and conservation of minerals, while preserving to the maximum extent feasible the values relating to recreation, watershed, wildlife, range and forage, science, and aesthetic enjoyment.
- MR-P2. Right to Mine.** Discretionary projects in the vicinity of vested and permitted surface mining extraction sites or along existing haul routes shall be required to record a notice of the right to mine against the property for which a discretionary permit is sought. The notice shall advise owners and subsequent interests in ownership that the existing mining operation has a permitted right to continued mining operations.
- MR-P3. Identify Mineral Deposits.** The County shall maintain an inventory of the county's mineral deposits and mining sites.
- MR-P4. Sand and Gravel Extraction and Mean Annual Recruitment.** Annual in-stream gravel extraction prescriptions shall be based on maintaining long-term extraction rates

below the best available scientific estimate of Mean Annual Recruitment for the affected river segment.

- MR-P5. Over-subscribed River Segments and New Permit Applications.** New permit applications for in-stream mining shall not be approved on over-subscribed river segments where the total existing entitled permit extraction volumes, as stated in Conditional Use Permits or Reclamation Plans, exceeds the best available scientific estimate of Mean Annual Recruitment, unless it can be conclusively shown that the current estimate of Mean Annual Recruitment is inaccurate and the river segment is not over-subscribed.
- MR-P6. Water Diversion Projects.** Evaluate significant water diversion projects that reduce the replenishment rate of in-stream gravel, taking into account the impact the projects would have on local mineral supplies in Humboldt County.
- MR-P7. Reclamation for Alternative Uses.** Ensure adverse environmental effects are prevented or mitigated to the fullest extent feasible and that mined lands are reclaimed to a usable condition, which is readily adaptable for alternative land uses under the General Plan.
- MR-P8. Future Development Planning.** Plan future development such that it will not interfere with the utilization of identified mineral deposits.
- MR-P9. Location of Mineral Haul Routes.** Require new mineral haul routes to avoid incompatible areas such as landslides, highly erodible soils, residential areas, and schools, when feasible.
- MR-P10. Maintenance of Mineral Haul Routes.** Haul routes involving the county public road system shall be maintained in satisfactory condition. Mining operations shall pay for their proportional share of maintenance costs as determined by the Department of Public Works.
- MR-P11. Permit Conditions to Reduce Impacts.** Permit conditions for mineral extraction operations shall address allowable dust and noise levels, hours of operation, fencing, traffic, access, setbacks, and other performance standards necessary to minimize significant environmental impacts and reduce conflicts with adjacent development.

10.4.4 Standards

- MR-S1. Surface Mining Standards.** Surface mining operations shall conform to standards contained in Surface Mining and Reclamation Act Ordinance, Title III, Division 9, County Ordinance #1373 as amended.
- MR-S2. Timberland Conversion.** Timberland conversion as a consequence of surface mining activities shall meet the requirements of the California Forest Practices Act.
- MR-S3. Permitted Land Use Designations.** SMARA mining operations shall be conditionally permitted in all land use and zoning designations.

- MR-S4. Reclamation Permit Requirements.** Reclamation of conditionally permitted mining operations may be ministerially approved if consistent with the Conditional Use Permit, CEQA evaluation, and approved Reclamation Plan.
- MR-S5. Forest and Agricultural Borrow Pits.** Borrow pits to support farming activities and timber road construction and maintenance operations shall be considered a principally permitted use when operated within SMARA exemption parameters, a grading permit is secured and the activity is otherwise consistent with this Chapter.
- MR-S6. Subdivision for Mineral Production.** Subdivisions shall be allowed to create parcels dedicated exclusively to the production of mineral resources.
- MR-S7. Hearing Notification.** For discretionary decisions associated with SMARA mining operations, public notice shall be provided to landowners within 600 feet of the mining operation or 1,500 feet from any associated processing plant, and along proposed local and collector street haul routes. Similarly, for discretionary projects within 600 feet of mining operations, notice shall be provided to the mine owners.

10.4.5 Implementation Measures

- MR-IM1. Scientific Review of In-stream Mining.** The County shall maintain and support the County of Humboldt Extraction Review Team (CHERT) to advise the County on instream mining methods, extraction volumes, and environmental impacts.
- MR-IM2. Mapping of Mineral Deposits and Mine Sites.** The County shall maintain GIS maps of the county's known mineral deposits and mining sites.
- MR-IM3. Development Consultant.** The County shall hire a consulting firm of its choosing qualified in surface mining and reclamation practices to advise the County when surface mineral deposits of five acres or more are proposed for development and when an environmental impact report (EIR) is required. This should include, but is not limited to, EIR preparation, mitigation measures, and reclamation plans. The consultant's fees should be paid via reimbursements from the mine developers. Hiring of the consultant shall be conditioned upon entry into an agreement with the applicant. The applicant shall be provided with a list of potential consultants.
- MR-IM4. Combining Zone.** Establish a mineral resources (MR) combining zone to facilitate implementation of the County's regulations for surface mining, conservation, and reclamation. The purpose of the MR combining zone is to ensure compatibility of adjacent uses. The MR combining zone shall be applied to parcels with permitted surface mining operations and to parcels within 600 feet of permitted surface mining extraction sites and existing haul routes on local and collector streets.
- MR-IM5. Coordination with the Air Quality Management District.** The County shall coordinate with the North Coast Unified Air Quality Management District during discretionary review of proposed mining operations in ultramafic rock areas with naturally occurring asbestos to develop asbestos control plans for the duration of quarrying activities.

Section 10.5. Waste Management

10.5.1 Purpose

This section describes the County's approach to solid waste management. The policies are designed to help implement the County's Integrated Waste Management Plan currently administered on a multi-jurisdictional basis by the Humboldt Waste Management Authority (HWMA).

10.5.2 Background

Integrated Waste Management

The County's Integrated Waste Management Plan (IWMP), which is jointly adopted by the cities, provides for an integrated approach to waste management and includes the following elements:

- o Source Reduction and Recycling. Includes County and city program plans for source reduction, recycling, composting, special wastes management, education, funding, and organization.
- o Household Hazardous Waste. Includes County and city program plans for the safe reduction, recycling, and disposal of household hazardous wastes.
- o Countywide Siting. Quantifies landfill capacity needs, identifying general areas of the county potentially suited for landfill development or landfill expansion, and demonstrating a strategy for long-term disposal capacity.
- o Non-Disposal Facility. Identifies long-term recycling, composting, transfer, and other facility needs for the County and cities.
- o Integration Summary Plan. Summarizes countywide goals and objectives for integrated waste management, administration of the plan, current waste management practices, future diversion and disposal strategies, education needs, and programs financing.

The County's IWMP includes a process and schedule for future review and revision of each element. This approval and revision process may trigger amendments to the General Plan to ensure consistency between the documents. Revisions to the IWMP require approval from the California Integrated Waste Management Board.

Waste Diversion Goals

In 2004, the county as a whole disposed of 110,000 tons of solid waste in landfills but successfully diverted more than 170,000 tons. Of the eight reporting jurisdictions within Humboldt County, Blue Lake, Arcata and the unincorporated area of the county have exceeded the waste diversion mandate of 50% set by the Integrated Waste

Management Act of 1989. The County is continuing to work toward achieving the objectives set in the IWMP, including a near-term goal of 58% landfill diversion rate for the unincorporated area. The California Integrated Waste Management Board has set an overall statewide diversion rate target of 75% by 2020.

Solid Waste Facility Siting

California general plan law requires that the Land Use Element designate areas for solid and liquid waste disposal facilities. The location of these facilities must also be reflected in a Countywide Siting Element which is required to be consistent with the General Plan.

The County conducted an extensive municipal landfill siting study in the mid 1990's to locate a replacement site for the Cummings Road landfill, which was reaching initial design capacity. While the County identified some potentially feasible sites for further study and potential expansion opportunities at the Cummings Road site, it determined that it was more cost effective to export to a proven site. The County, through HWMA, has been trucking its solid waste to a site near Medford, Oregon under a long-term contract. It has a subsequent contract to utilize a landfill located in Anderson, California. Together, these two contracts will allow the County to meet its landfill disposal needs over the next 20 years. Consequently, no additional local municipal landfill capacity is expected to be required during the 20-year planning horizon of this General Plan.

Additional waste handling facilities that may be required over the life of this Plan include specialized waste handling facilities, such as green waste and composting sites, household hazardous waste transfer, and recycling. Such facilities can be accommodated in various general plan land use designations, depending on the nature, scale, and duration of the facility. While not expected, it may also be necessary to consider siting non-municipal solid waste facilities such as construction demolition debris disposal sites. Land use clearance standards are included to address that potential need.

Litter and Illegal Waste Disposal

Litter and illegal waste disposal remains a countywide problem, particularly in remote areas. To combat this problem, the Plan promotes public education, maintaining easily accessed affordable disposal and recycling opportunities and code enforcement.

10.5.3 Goals and Policies

Goals

WM-G1. Comprehensive System. A flexible system for the management of solid wastes and waste resources on a countywide basis, which encompasses storage, collection, separation, processing, reduction, reuse and repair, recycling, recovery, marketing, and, when necessary, landfill disposal.

WM-G2. Environment, Health, and Safety. A solid waste management system that protects and improves the county's environment, public health, safety, and economy.

- WM-G3. Reduce Waste Toxicity.** A low toxicity waste stream that reduces risk of exposure to residents, solid waste and recycling industry workers, and the environment.
- WM-G4. Management Strategy Hierarchy.** An integrated waste management hierarchy that first emphasizes source reduction, followed by reuse and repair, recycling, composting, materials recovery, environmentally safe energy recovery, environmentally safe transformation, and, as a last resort, landfill disposal.
- WM-G5. Maximize Achievement of Objectives.** Successful achievement of integrated waste management objectives through education, economic incentives, and voluntary participation in waste reduction programs.
- WM-G6. Participation.** Widespread participation by individuals and groups in the planning and the implementation of waste reduction programs.
- WM-G7. Recovered Materials for Local Industry.** Growth in local businesses using previously discarded materials as a resource for value added manufacturing.
- WM-G8. Coordination.** An integrated waste management strategy emphasizing cooperation and coordination among local jurisdictions, waste haulers, and recyclers consistent with state and federal regulations and programs.

Policies

- WM-P1. Implementation of Waste Reduction Programs.** Waste reduction, re-use and recycling programs should be implemented countywide on a continuous basis to achieve waste diversion goals using the following criteria for program prioritization and selection:
- A. Achieves the maximum feasible reduction in volume and/or weight of waste requiring landfill disposal;
 - B. Maximizes the economic value of materials heretofore discarded;
 - C. Benefits the environment and health and safety of county citizens;
 - D. Is able to be implemented on a timely, practical, and cooperative basis;
 - E. Lowers impacts to existing or planned waste diversion programs;
 - F. Is supported by and is sustainable over the long-term by residents, businesses, and jurisdictions;
 - G. Allows cost-effective achievement of the above criteria.
- WM-P2. Support Successful Programs.** Support successful existing programs and diversion activities through increased promotion and technical assistance. Identify, develop, and fund new programs using selection and prioritization criteria identified in WM-P1.

- WM-P3. Joint Facility Planning.** Facilities that are intended to serve all county residents should be jointly planned and implemented by all affected stakeholders. Priority facilities recommended for joint planning are:
- A. County disposal facility: local new landfill, expansion, or export;
 - B. Centralized composting facility: materials to be processed, size, location, design, and cost; and,
 - C. Household hazardous waste transfer facility: ownership, operation, funding, and liability issues.
- WM-P4. Information Sharing.** The County shall support ongoing dialogue between city and County integrated waste management staff to reduce duplication of efforts and increase cooperative implementation of integrated waste management strategies.
- WM-P5. Administrative Structure.** The County supports unified administration and funding of countywide integrated waste management strategies and programs cooperatively sustained by the County and cities.
- WM-P6. Illegal Waste Disposal.** The County shall work to reduce litter and other illegal waste disposal items such as automobiles, e-wastes, and toxics through public education, maintaining affordable and geographically distributed opportunities for waste disposal and recycling, proactive prevention programs, site cleanup, and code enforcement.
- WM-P7. Participate in Revisions.** The County shall participate in revisions to the IWMP lead by the HWMA and consider the need to amend this General Plan to maintain consistency.

10.5.4 Standards

- WM-S1. Solid Waste Facility Permit.** When seeking approval for the construction or expansion of a solid waste facility in Humboldt County, project applicants must obtain a Solid Waste Facility Permit from the Humboldt County Health Department with concurrence by the California Integrated Waste Management Board pursuant to the requirements of the California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Division 7, or successor regulations.

Prior to submitting application for a Solid Waste Facility Permit, a project applicant must obtain the clearances, approvals, or permits listed below:

- A. Certification of compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to the requirements of the California Code of Regulations Division 6.3.
- B. Land use approval from the appropriate city or County land use authority.

- C. Approval from the North Coast Unified Air Quality Management District.
- D. Approval from the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board.
Note: that NCRWQCB approval may require permits for stormwater discharges (NPDES) and/or waste discharge permits.
- E. Other approvals and clearances such as streambed alteration agreements, Williamson Act cancellation, timberland conversion approval from the Board of Forestry, a Section 404 permit from the Army Corps of Engineer—if wetlands are involved—and any others which are required as a result of site design or facility location.

WM-S2. Solid Waste Disposal Facility Conformance with Integrated Waste Management Plan (IWMP). Any proposed new or expanded solid waste facility must be in conformance with the IWMP and included in the adopted Countywide Siting Element or the Non-Disposal Facility Element prior to issuance of a Solid Waste Facility Permit.

WM-S3. Solid Waste Facility Consistency with State and Federal Laws. Proposed solid waste facilities shall meet any applicable requirements of the Resources Conservation and Recovery Act's Subtitle D, the California Integrated Waste Management Board regulations (Title 14, Division 7), and requirements of the State Water Resources Control Board regulations (Title 23, Division 3), or successor regulations.

WM-S4. Land Use Permits for Solid Waste Facilities. Solid waste facilities are allowed by Conditional Use Permit in most non-residential land use and zoning designations and where otherwise consistent with this Chapter. To ensure consistency with the IWMP at the time of issuance of applicable land use permits for solid waste management facilities, the applicant shall submit the following supplemental information with the land use permit application:

- A. Assessment of conformance with the adopted Countywide Solid Waste Facility Element or Non-Disposal Facility Siting Element.
- B. Projections of the quantity of waste to be managed in weight and volumetric measures and the area required for disposal or processing on an annual basis for the life of the facility.
- C. Operational plans in compliance Solid Waste Facility Permit requirements.
- D. Analysis of a minimum of three alternative sites with a summary description of the operational characteristics and environmental impacts associated with each alternative.
- E. Relationship of the solid waste facility to existing solid waste facilities in terms of waste streams, end products, operational capacity, and compatibility.
- F. A site post closure plan consistent with applicable state and federal regulations and a description of any land use limitations after project completion.
- G. Assessment of conformance with the policies and provisions of the IWMP.

10.5.5 Implementation

WM-IM1. Local Enforcement Agency. The County Division of Environmental Health shall continue to function as the designated local enforcement agency.

WM-IM2. Solid Waste Management Authority. The County shall continue to participate in the Humboldt Waste Management Authority.

WM-IM3. Code Compliance. The County shall maintain a code compliance program to respond to complaints of illegal waste disposal.

WM-IM4. Support for Waste Diversion and Recycling Operations. The County shall provide technical and permitting assistance to waste diversion activities, particularly those that reduce illegal disposal activities; for example, junk yards and car recycling operations.

Section 10.6 Cultural Resources

10.6.1 Purpose

This is the Cultural Resources subsection of the Conservation and Open Space Element. It includes policies to protect cultural heritage, including historic, prehistoric, and architectural resources.

10.6.2 Background

Cultural resources are elements of cultural heritage. From a land use perspective, important cultural resources include archaeological sites, historic architecture, industrial relics, artifacts, cultural landscapes, spiritual places, and historic districts. These elements provide traces of Humboldt County's rich history and add to the unique character and identity of the county.

The importance of history to local residents can be seen in the activities of the 3,700 member Humboldt County Historical Society, the architectural preservation efforts of numerous local homeowners, and the many celebrations and expressions of Native American cultural heritage. The educational, social, and economic benefits of historic preservation to the county are tremendous; protecting outstanding cultural resources and the legacy they represent is a priority of this Plan.

Resource Inventories

Over one thousand sites of cultural significance have been surveyed and officially designated as cultural resources in Humboldt County. The participation of state and federal historic registration programs include 13 sites as California Historical Landmarks, 16 sites included on the National Register of Historic Places, 58 sites as California Historical Resources, and nearly 700 sites as historical and prehistoric archeological sites. Many of these sites, as well as numerous unlisted sites, are of cultural and religious significance for Native American populations. Any scientific archeological interest in such sites must be respectful of the cultural and religious significance they may hold.

Site Preservation

Protection of cultural resources has become recognized as a vital part of planning and environmental assessment. The passage of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the California Public Resources Code (commencing with Section 5097.5), and the establishment of the Scenic Highways Element in 1971 (California Government Code Section 65302(h)) all speak to the importance of protecting and preserving these essential resources.

Both NEPA and CEQA provide environmental policy guidance to preserve important aspects of our cultural legacy. Section 101(b)(4) of NEPA stresses the preservation of important historic, cultural, and natural aspects of our national heritage. Similarly,

Section 21001(b) of CEQA states that it is a California policy to "take all action necessary to provide the people of this state with... enjoyment of aesthetic, natural, scenic, and historic environmental qualities."

The protection of the cultural environment in general and heritage resources in particular is also given priority in the California Public Resources Code. Sections 5097.9 et seq. provide protection from damage to Native American historic, cultural, or sacred sites and features, artifacts, and objects. Moreover, California Government Code Sections 65351 et seq. provide for public involvement and required consultation with Native American tribes during the preparation of a general plan for purpose of preserving or mitigating impacts to California Native American cultural places.

The County's Board of Supervisors established a policy in 1971 to evaluate archeological sites not only for their scientific value, but also for their importance to the Native American community (Resolution No. 71-14.1). The County currently maintains an agreement with the North Coastal Information Center (a Yurok tribal facility in Klamath, California) to review development proposals to assess any potential impact to culturally sensitive areas. The County also refers development proposals to local tribes within their defined area of interest for review and recommendation.

In addition to the need to preserve important archeological finds, there is a need to protect paleontological resources from loss or destruction. Whereas archeological resources provide a link with the people of the past, paleontological resources tell us about prehistoric life from past geologic time periods. Protection of these resources is required by law and can lead to valuable scientific information.

In addition to numerous sites of archeological or paleontological significance in the county, there are many other sites of historic worth. For example, sites may be significant for their architectural, engineering, scientific, economic, agricultural, educational, social, political, military, or cultural value. Judgment of significance and the need for protection is straightforward if a site is eligible for, or listed in, state or federal historic registration programs. Determining significance and the need for protection of uncataloged sites must be assessed on a case-by-case basis to avoid adverse change in the significance of a historical resource. Determination can require cultural resource studies prepared by historians with professional qualifications to inform the judgment of decision makers.

10.6.3 Goals and Policies

Goal

CU-G1. Protection and Enhancement of Cultural Resources. Protected cultural resources providing significant historic, scientific, educational, social, and economic contributions to present and future generations.

Policies

CU-P1. Identification and Protection. Cultural resources shall be identified during ministerial and discretionary permit review, assessed as to significance, and if found to be significant, protected from deterioration, loss, or destruction.

CU-P2. Consultation. Tribal organizations, historical organizations, and applicable agencies shall be consulted during discretionary project review, zone

reclassifications, and Plan amendments for the identification and protection of cultural resources. Consultation on ministerial permits shall be initiated if it has been determined the project may create a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource.

- CU-P3. Avoid Loss or Degradation.** Projects located in areas found to have cultural resources shall be conditioned and designed to avoid loss or substantial degradation of these resources.
- CU-P4. Findings.** Cultural resources shall not be knowingly destroyed or lost through a ministerial or discretionary action unless:
- A. The site or resource has been found to be of insignificant value by representatives of the cultural resources community and relevant experts; or
 - B. There is an overriding public benefit from the project, and compensating mitigation to offset the loss is made part of the project.
- CU-P5. Mitigation.** Mitigation measures shall be required where new development would adversely impact cultural resources.

10.6.4 Standards

- CU-S1. Cultural Resources.** Cultural resources include, but are not limited to, any object, building, structure, site, area, or place that is culturally, historically, or archeologically significant, or is significant in the architectural, engineering, scientific, economic, agricultural, educational, social, political, military, or cultural annals of Humboldt County. Sites, resources, or structures placed in federal, state, or local historic registration programs shall also be recognized as historical resources. Cultural resources also include cultural places, as defined by California Public Resources Code Sections 5097.9 and 5097.993, including any Native American sanctified cemetery, place of worship, religious or ceremonial site, or sacred shrine or any Native American historic, cultural, or sacred site that is listed or may be eligible for listing in the California Register of Historic Resources, including any historic or prehistoric ruins, any burial ground, and any archeological or historic site.
- CU-S2. Confidentiality.** The exact location of archeological, paleontological, and grave sites shall not be publicly identified in order to prevent the possibility of theft or vandalism.
- CU-S3. Tribal Organizations, Historical Organizations, and Applicable Agencies.** Tribal organizations, historical organizations, and applicable agencies, include, but are not be limited to, tribal governments, the Humboldt County Historical Society, North Coastal Information Center, California Archeological Site Survey at Sonoma State University, Humboldt County Public Works and the Planning Division, the California State Office of Historic Preservation, and other Native American groups and affected citizens.
- CU-S4. Conditioning, Designing, or Mitigating Projects to Avoid Loss.** Conditioning, designing, or mitigating projects to avoid loss of cultural resources in general,

but archeological or paleontological resources in particular, shall include, where applicable:

- A. Change building and construction sites and/or road locations to avoid sensitive areas; or
- B. Provide protective cover for sites that cannot be avoided; or
- C. Provide for removal or transfer of culturally significant material by a cultural heritage specialist, professional archeologist, or geologist where appropriate and with the approval of all parties concerned.

CU-S5. Assessment of Impacts. A cultural resources study prepared by a professional who meets the U.S. Secretary of the Interior's professional qualification guidelines (36 Code of Federal Regulations Part 61 as amended) may be required during environmental assessment to determine the presence, extent, and condition of cultural resources and the likely impact upon such resources.

10.6.5 Implementation Measures

CU-IM1. Review Existing Protections. Review existing ordinances and guidelines and make necessary amendments to assure the protection of cultural resources.

CU-IM2. Implementation Guidelines. Adopt implementation guidelines for cultural heritage, archeological, or paleontological resources and for historic resources.

CU-IM3. Historical Registration. Encourage and actively support federal, state, and local historical registration programs.

CU-IM4. Historic Building Code. Promote the use of the Historic Building Code of the State of California for historical sites.

CU-IM5. Historic Building Identification. Establish and maintain a system for identifying historic properties.

Section 10.7 Scenic Resources

10.7.1 Purpose

This is the Scenic Resources Section of the Conservation and Open Space Element. It includes policies to protect outstanding scenic resources that may be adversely affected by land use and development. Signs and billboards are addressed in this chapter as well as in the Land Use Element. Protection programs and the identification of high-value visual resources are also addressed in this section.

10.7.2 Background

Scenic beauty is perhaps the most notable characteristic of Humboldt County for visitors and one of the most appreciated attributes among residents. Forested hillsides, working agricultural land, river corridors, and the coast provide a range of stunning scenic areas. Certain of these are exemplary and warrant protections to maintain the county's characteristic scenic beauty and unique sense of place.

Forests

Forestland is a prominent component of the visual landscape of Humboldt County, covering more than 80% of the total land area. Redwood National Park, Six Rivers National Forest, Redwoods State Park, and King Range National Conservation Area are all significant, protected forests. However, these and other public forested lands total only 26% of the 1.9 million acres of forested land in the county. Forestland in private ownership constitutes the remainder. The scenic value of these natural resources is important to residents, and there is strong public support for protecting working forests and other productive resource lands from conversion to other uses.

Policies in this Plan for protecting scenic qualities of forestlands are limited to supporting the continued timber production uses of these lands, and discouraging their conversion to residential, commercial, or industrial use. State laws governing timber harvest regulations significantly narrow the scope of scenic protection measures the County may apply to forest lands. The Forest Resources Section of this Plan provides more comprehensive discussion of this and other forestry-related issues.

Open Space and Agricultural Lands

Agricultural land vistas are to many a quintessential characteristic of Humboldt County; agriculture and grazing land uses comprise 15% of unincorporated lands. Scenic protection of agricultural lands is, for the most part, accomplished by policies in the Land Use Element, by encouraging continued agricultural production and discouraging conversion to residential, commercial, or industrial uses. The State Coastal Act and Williamson Act also protect agricultural lands. This Plan provides recognition of "heritage landscapes," which are lands with combined historical, cultural, and scenic values, such as the Arcata and Ferndale Bottoms areas.

Scenic Roads

The following Scenic Highway Element goals outlined in the County's 1984 Framework Plan remain relevant for local scenic roadways:

- o To establish a system of scenic routes.
- o To conserve scenic views observable from the routes.
- o To provide multiple recreational uses on publicly owned lands adjacent to the routes.
- o To recognize the dual scenic and economic value of lands planned for the growing and harvesting of timber, and agricultural products.

Several highways in the county have unique scenic qualities owing to their natural setting. A scenic highway is defined as a highway that, in addition to its transportation function, provides opportunities for the enjoyment of natural and scenic resources. Scenic highways direct views to areas of exceptional beauty, natural resources or landmarks, or historic and cultural interest.

Although no highways in the county are "officially designated" as California State Scenic Highways, several state highways could be eligible for official designation:

- o Route 36 from Route 101 near Fortuna to the Trinity County line
- o Route 96 from Route 299 at Willow Creek north to Siskiyou County
- o Route 101 for its entire length in Humboldt County
- o Route 254 in the Avenue of the Giants Community Plan Area
- o Route 299 from Arcata to Willow Creek

Wild and Scenic Rivers

Portions of several rivers in the county are designated as part of the National and/or California Wild and Scenic River Systems. Sections of the Eel, Klamath, Trinity, and Van Duzen rivers are designated "wild," "scenic," or "recreational." Policies relating to protection of water resources are found in the Water Resources Element.

Other Scenic Areas

Coastal Scenic and Coastal View Areas

Humboldt County's varied and extensive coastline allows for a wide range of scenic vistas from roads and highways, and from beaches, state parks, and coastal access points. Considerable work has been done to assess scenic resources in developing the County's Local Coastal Program (LCP). This program relies on a technical study and a detailed inventory of visual resources along the coastline. The scenic qualities of these areas are protected by land use designations that encourage open space, permit review under the LCP, and design review requirements that minimize visual impacts of new development.

Inland Scenic Areas

Many scenic natural features outside of the coastal zone are protected by virtue of being within public lands, provisions of various county timber production, agricultural land use designations, and California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) review. There are also areas in Shelter Cove and along the Avenue of the Giants that have design review requirements intended to protect natural features.

The policies and standards presented in this Plan (both in this section and elsewhere) will continue many scenic resource protections already in place, including timber production and agricultural land use designations, design review, and CEQA review.

Community Separators

Maintaining a visible separation between communities enhances a sense of community identity. Open space areas can serve as community separators, helping to avoid the look of continuous corridor-style urbanization. These areas are frequently subject to pressure for development because they are close to developed areas and major roads. A set of goals, policies, and programs to retain community separators is presented in this section.

Off Premise Billboards

Billboards along scenic roadways and other scenic areas impact the scenic quality by blocking views and introducing a source of outdoor lighting. Policies and standards in the Land Use Element minimize these impacts by limiting placement of new billboards to commercial and industrial areas. This section includes a standard which establishes a 15-year limit to the lifespan of new billboards.

There are numerous existing billboards in areas not zoned for commercial or industrial use. These billboards are considered “non-conforming.” State law prohibits local jurisdictions from requiring removal of existing non-conforming billboards without compensation. New policies support efforts of the North Coast Railroad Authority to remove billboards from the railroad right-of-way, and to prioritize enforcement of Humboldt County’s existing regulations requiring removal of illegal billboards.

10.7.3 Goals and Policies

Goals

- SR-G1. Scenic Resource Protection.** Protected high-value forest, agriculture, river, and coastal scenic areas that contribute to the enjoyment of Humboldt County’s beauty and abundant natural resources.
- SR-G2. Community Separators.** Visible and aesthetic open space areas between urban development areas that separate and preserve unique identities of the county’s cities and communities.

Policies

- SR-P1. Development in Identified Scenic Viewsheds.** In identified scenic areas, new development shall be consistent with and subordinate to natural contours

including slopes, visible hilltops and treelines, and bluffs and rock outcroppings. Visible disturbance shall be minimized to the extent feasible.

- SR-P2. Heritage Landscapes.** Protect the scenic quality of mapped heritage landscape areas with appropriate land use designations and design review standards to ensure that new development preserves or enhances the heritage landscape values of the site.
- SR-P3. Scenic Roadway Protection.** Protect the scenic quality of designated scenic roadways for the enjoyment of natural and scenic resources, landmarks, or points of historic and cultural interest.
- SR-P4. Community Separators.** Protect the scenic quality of “community separators” from degradation by maintaining adequate open space between communities and cities.
- SP-P5. Development within Community Separators.** Retain a rural character and promote low intensities of development in community separators. Avoid annexation or inclusion in spheres of influence for sewer and water services. Provide opportunities for consideration of additional development in community separators in exchange for permanent open space preservation.
- SR-P6. Limit the Term of Off-Premise Billboards.** Limit the term of new off-premise billboards with use agreements to provide for removal.
- SR-P7. Reduce Scenic Impacts of Billboards in Sensitive Habitat Areas.** Limit the location of billboards in industrial zones with mapped sensitive habitat areas.
- SR-P8. Removal or Relocation of Billboards in the Northwestern Pacific Railroad Right-of-Way.** Support efforts of the North Coast Railroad Authority to remove or relocate billboards from their right-of-way between Fields Landing and Arcata.
- SR-P9. Removal of Illegal Billboards.** Petition Caltrans’ Outdoor Advertising Office to remove illegal billboards along highways.
- SR-P10. Wayfarers Signage.** Establish a local scenic byways network designed to direct travelers to areas of scenic, cultural, and historic interest.

10.7.4 Standards

- SR-S1. Natural Landform Protection.** Natural contours, including slopes, visible hilltops and treelines, and bluffs and rock outcroppings, shall not suffer beyond the minimum feasible disturbance compatible with development of any permitted use, and the following standards shall, at a minimum, secure these objectives:
 - A. Under any permitted alteration of natural landforms during construction, mineral extraction, or other approved development, the topography shall be restored to as close to natural contours as possible, and the area planted with attractive vegetation common to the area.
 - B. In permitted development, land form alteration for access roads and public utilities shall be minimized by running hillside roads and utility corridors along

natural contours where feasible, and the optional waiving of minimum street width requirements, where proposed development densities or use of one-way circulation patterns make this consistent with public safety, in order that necessary hillside roads may be as narrow as possible.

- SR-S2. Scenic and Visual Quality Protection.** Consider and protect the scenic and visual qualities of scenic areas as a resource of public importance. Permitted development shall be sited and designed to protect views to and along scenic areas, to minimize the alteration of natural land forms, to be visually compatible with the character of surrounding areas, and, where feasible, to restore and enhance visual quality in visually degraded areas.
- SR-S3. Scenic Roadway Plan Standards.** The Plan for scenic roadway protection includes the following standards:
- A. **Visual Buffer Width.** The width of the visual buffer along the road shall not exceed 200 feet from the edge of the traveled roadway.
 - B. **Permitted Uses.** Permitted uses shall be allowed except that within the visual buffer area measures may be required to protect scenic qualities of the site.
 - C. **Site Development.** Buildings and landscaping within the visual buffer shall be designed and located on the site to create a harmonious visual relationship with surrounding development and the natural terrain and vegetation.
 - 1) Existing topography, vegetation, and scenic features of the site shall be retained to the maximum extent possible and incorporated into the proposed development.
 - 2) Structures and signs shall be limited in height, bulk, and siting to be visually compatible with, and subordinate to, the character of surrounding areas.
 - D. **Consideration of Views.** Structures, signs, and plant materials within the visual buffer shall be constructed, installed, and planted to complement, enhance, and retain scenic views. Vegetative screening shall be used where needed to prevent significant intrusion or degradation of public views.
 - E. **Location and Screening of Unsightly Features.** Potentially unsightly features within the visual buffer area, such as parking lots etc., shall be located in areas not visible from the scenic highway. Where it is not possible to locate such features out of view, features shall be screened from view by planting and/or fences, walls, or berms. Screening shall utilize primarily natural materials rather than solid fencing, preferably vegetation, in conjunction with low-earth berms.
 - F. **Site Grading.** Grading or earth-moving operations within the visual buffer area shall be planned and executed in such a manner that final contours appear to be consistent with the existing terrain both on, and adjacent to, the site.

- 1) Vegetative cover shall be provided within a reasonable time after grading is completed to prevent visible scars remaining on the land from such operations.
 - 2) Contours altered by grading shall be restored by means of land sculpturing and a cover of topsoil in such a manner as to minimize runoff and erosion and prevent ponding of water.
 - 3) Finished contours shall be planted with native vegetation, so as to require minimum care and to be visually compatible with the existing ground cover.
- G. **Access Roads.** The location and design of access roads within the visual buffer area shall not detract from the scenic quality of the road.
- H. **Utilities.** New, relocated, or existing utility distribution lines within the visual buffer area shall be placed underground whenever feasible. When it is not feasible to place lines underground, they shall be located so as to be inconspicuous from the scenic route wherever feasible. Combined or adjacent rights-of-way and common poles shall be used wherever feasible.
- I. **Railroads and Public Facilities.** Visual buffers shall exclude railroad rights-of-way and public facilities.

SR-S4. Development within Community Separators. Unless there are existing design standards adopted for community separators, new structures within these areas shall:

- A. Site and design structures to take maximum advantage of existing topography and vegetation in order to substantially screen structures from view along scenic corridors.
- B. Minimize cuts and fills on hills and ridges.
- C. Minimize the removal of trees and other mature vegetation.
- D. Install landscaping consisting of native vegetation in natural groupings that fits with the character of the area in order to screen structures from view where existing topography and vegetation would not screen structures from view from scenic corridors.
- E. Design structures to use building materials and color schemes that blend with the natural landscape.
- F. Cluster structures on each parcel within existing built areas and near existing natural features, to the extent feasible.

SR-S5. Subdivisions in Community Separators. Subdivisions in community separators shall:

- A. Ensure developments are subordinate to the viewscape, from the point of view of public roadways.

- B. Reduce visual impact where consistent with the Land Use Element by clustering.
- C. Preserve natural features and native vegetation by locating building sites and roadways.
- D. Require dedication of permanent open space easement at the time of subdivision to the extent possible.

SR-S6. New Off-Premise Billboards. New off-premise billboards shall be restricted to a maximum term of 15 years and limited to areas designated as Commercial Services or Industrial General as described in the Land Use Element.

10.7.5 Implementation Measures

SR-IM1. Identification and Protection of Scenic Landscapes. Map heritage landscape areas in the Ferndale and Arcata Bottoms and the forested hillslopes between Eureka and Arcata and develop protection measures that protect the scenic quality of these areas with appropriate land use designations and design review standards.

SR-IM2. Community Separators. Identify, map, and designate an overlay zone for community separators with specific standard for open space protections and design review.

SR-IM3. Scenic Road Protection Program. Community Development Services and Department of Public Works staff shall develop a program for coordinated protection of scenic roads in concert with the involved public and private agencies.

SR-IM4. Off-Premise Billboards. Amend the sign ordinance to limit the term of new billboards to 15 years, and to disallow new billboards in the Resource Dependant land use designation within the industrial land use category.

SR-IM5. Removal of Illegal Billboards. Identify billboards that may have been placed without permits—and with the help of Caltrans' Outdoor Advertising Office—pursue removal of billboards found to be illegally placed.

SR-IM6. Wayfarers Signage. Establish a local scenic byways network designed to direct travelers to areas of scenic, cultural, and historic interest.