

# ALPINE COUNTY GENERAL PLAN



## I. CONSERVATION ELEMENT

REVISIONS TO THIS SECTION:

SECTION K, AESTHETICS  
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS RESOLUTION NO. 2003-38, JULY 17, 2003

## **I. CONSERVATION ELEMENT**

The Conservation Element meets State requirements for Open Space, Conservation, and Scenic Highways Elements. The element specifically addresses County and region-wide issues in the following categories:

- A. Earth (soils and minerals)
- B. Air
- C. Water
- D. Wetlands
- E. Plant Life
- F. Agriculture
- G. Forests
- H. Animal Life
- I. Energy
- J. Culture
- K. Aesthetics

### **A. EARTH**

#### **Soils**

Available reports that describe soils characteristics such as general composition, percolation rate, permeability, depth to bed-rock, drainage, and erosion potential were used to plan for the appropriate location, type, density, and intensity of development shown on the Land Use Map. (See Data Base Sections 1.3 and 3.43.). Soils characteristics can vary significantly from site-to-site or within one project site. The reports used for the General Plan and the Land Use Map itself should not preclude the requirement for site specific soils investigations when considering future projects.

The County presently utilizes Chapter 70 of the Uniform Building Code (UBC) to regulate grading and thus control erosion and other effects related to soils and development. Under the UBC, excavations less than two feet deep or fills less than three feet deep generally do not require a grading permit from the County. The UBC does not control the amount of area that one may clear of vegetation or grade within the limits just defined. In some counties the lack of stricter controls have led hopeful developers to clear large areas to bare soil before obtaining any other approval for development. Such actions can generate both on-site and off-site effects upon water quality, view sheds, wildlife and other resources.

### **ELEMENT I - SECTION A**

#### **G. P. GOAL NO. 1**

#### **CONSERVE SOIL AND RELATED RESOURCES**

**POLICY NO. 1** Require soils and geologic reports for all land development projects.

**OBJECTIVE NO. 1** Adopt a comprehensive erosion control and grading ordinance.

**IMPLEMENTATION MEASURE:** Such an ordinance should require County approval for significant grading or vegetation removal operations. It should contain standards for on and off-site erosion control including re-seeding.

## **Minerals**

Mineral deposits of economically significant size represent less than 1 percent of the earth's crust.

These deposits should be protected in land use decisions and, in return, mine operators should conduct operations that minimize negative effects on surroundings and reclaim lands when operations are completed so that they may serve beneficial uses. (See Data Base Section 7.41.)

Existing mines and quarry sites in Alpine County are identified on the Land Use Map. Known or suspected mineral deposits, primarily sand and gravel, have been identified by the California Division of Mines and Geology and are shown in Appendix J of the Data Base for the Alpine County General Plan. The deposits have been protected by appropriate land use designations and buffers on the Land Use Map.

The California Surface Mining Reclamation Act of 1975 (SMARA) requires the State Geologist to classify mineral areas in the State and the State Board of Mining and Geology to designate mineral deposits of regional or Statewide significance. The mineral deposits thus far identified by the California Division of Mines and Geology do not represent completion of the State's responsibilities under the Act. Additional deposits which have not yet been identified may therefore exist. For this reason, broad areas within the historic Monitor, Mogul, and Webster mining districts are given a land use designation which provides the areas protection from incompatible land uses yet allows mineral extraction and associated development. Large portions of the Silver King, Silver Mountain and Raymond Mining Districts are now located in wilderness areas. Pursuant to the Wilderness Act of 1984, any mining claims located in wilderness areas which were made prior to December 31, 1983, are allowed to be "utilized, explored, drilled, leased, etc. (See Land Use Map.)

## **ELEMENT I - SECTION A**

**G. P. GOAL NO. 2**                      **PROTECT THE MINERAL RESOURCES OF ALPINE COUNTY AND PROMOTE THEIR WISE USE**

**POLICY NO. 2a** Existing mines and mineral deposits shall be protected from encroachment by incompatible land uses in accordance with California Public Resources Code 2710 et seq. (Surface Mining

and Reclamation Act).

**POLICY NO. 2b** Maintain open space buffer zones around existing or possible future mining sites to prevent encroachment and help mitigate noise, dust, vibration, and visual impacts and protect public safety.

**POLICY NO. 2c** All costs and responsibilities for controlling off-site effects generated by mining and associated operations should be attenuated by mine operators and developers to the satisfaction of the County.

**POLICY NO. 2d** All surface mined lands should be reclaimed following completion of surface mining operations to a usable condition which is readily adaptable to alternative land uses.

**B. AIR**

The potential exists in areas of Alpine County for air pollution that could be hazardous to the natural environment and human health. Pollution potential is especially high where large concentrations of wood-burning stoves and conditions of temperature inversion may exist.

The County, in cooperation with the Great Basin Unified Air Pollution Control District, controls pollution. The State Air Resources Board has measured the County's attainment of the State ambient air quality standards for most air pollutants. The entire Great Basin Unified Air Pollution Control District was classified as non-attainment of State standard for suspended particle matter. None of the test sites used to determine this classification were located in Alpine County. Alpine County is considered in attainment of Federal Standards for this pollutant. (See Data Base Section 2.2)

**ELEMENT I - SECTION B**

**G. P. GOAL NO. 3** **MEET OR EXCEED FEDERAL AND STATE AIR QUALITY REGULATIONS**

**POLICY NO. 3** The County should continue to consult with the Great Basin Unified Air Pollution Control District regarding any proposed project which has the potential to adversely affect ambient air quality.

**C. WATER**

**Surface Water**

Surface waters in the eastern slope of Alpine County have been adjudicated. Rights to quantities of water are established and a rotation schedule is practiced by water users during late summer and fall months. Users with low priority water rights have difficulty meeting needs during this period in drought years.

A decree by the U.S. District Court for the District of Nevada binds existing water rights and practices on the Eastern Slope. The Truckee-Carson Pyramid Lake Water Settlement Act of 1990 provided federal confirmation of water rights declared in the decree. The adjudication specifies that segments of the Carson River East Fork in California and the Carson River West Fork above Woodfords are governed by California riparian law. Supervision upon these segments by the region's Water Master is limited. Under California riparian law, land owners adjacent to either of the stream segments are entitled to use water that is available. The potential, therefore, exists for future land developments to draw surface water from supplies which are already inadequate for established down stream uses. (See Data Base Section 3.2)

### **ELEMENT I - SECTION C**

#### **G. P. GOAL NO. 4                      MAINTAIN ADEQUATE SUPPLIES OF SURFACE WATER IN ALPINE COUNTY FOR ALL CURRENT AND FORESEEABLE NEEDS**

**POLICY NO. 4a**                      Alpine County should remain opposed to any reduction in quantities of surface water presently administered to users in the County for in county uses under the final decree issued by the District Court for the District of Nevada involving the United States of America versus Alpine Land and Reservoir Company (1980) unless or until reasonable alternatives for supply of water for County's agricultural needs are secured.

**POLICY NO. 4b**                      Development on lands draining to the Carson River should not significantly diminish the present supply of surface water to any tributary or channel of said river segments.

**POLICY NO. 4c**                      Analysis of run-off from new land developments should consider individual or cumulative increase flows of existing stream or river channels and down stream users.

**POLICY NO. 4d**                      Acquire and maintain water rights to protect the County's interest and future needs.

### **Groundwater Quantity**

Based upon an analysis of the data researched and presented in Data Base Section 3.3 and Appendix A, it is estimated that the most reliable supplies of groundwater in Alpine County may

be found in recent alluvial deposits (stream and river deposits indicated by map unit symbol Qal in Appendix A. Lake deposits, glacial deposits, volcanic bedrock, and granite bedrock generally represent areas with increasingly unreliable quantities of groundwater. (See chart, Appendix A-1)

The Carson River West Fork alluvial fan which underlies the vicinity of Woodfords, Paynesville, and Fredericksburg is estimated to contain approximately 100,000 acre feet of groundwater. Water available to recharge this groundwater supply is estimated to be less than 16,000 acre feet per year. Assuming withdrawal rates equal to 230 gallons per day per permanent residence and 58 gallons per day per seasonal residence (Data Base Section 3.26) approximately 12 million gallons or 38 acre feet of groundwater are taken from the alluvial fan each year. The ratio of withdrawn by Alpine County water users to available recharge may be as high as 1:400 (excluding consideration of the fact that some withdrawn water is replaced).

Water supplies in the entire Carson Valley are estimated by the State of Nevada to be 32,000 acre feet per year. Appropriations are 37,000 acre feet per year. It is reported that not all appropriations are used in a given year and therefore appropriations are nearly equal to supply. (See Data Base 3.31)

Areas important to groundwater recharge include coarse sand near stream deposits along mountain fronts and stream and river channels (Data Base Section 3.3). Groundwater supplies serving Bear Valley and Kirkwood developments are discussed in the Specific Plans for those areas.

### **ELEMENT I - SECTION C**

#### **G. P. GOAL NO. 5**

#### **MAINTAIN ADEQUATE SUPPLIES OF GROUNDWATER IN ALPINE COUNTY FOR ALL CURRENT AND FORESEEABLE NEEDS**

- |                      |  |
|----------------------|--|
| <b>POLICY NO. 5a</b> | Groundwater withdrawals should not exceed or significantly draw-down groundwater supplies.   |
| <b>POLICY NO. 5b</b> | Alpine County should oppose any significant reduction in quantities in groundwater in the County due to extractions by wells that serve areas outside of the County.   |
| <b>POLICY NO. 5c</b> | Coverage of land that would reduce infiltration from run-off or surface water should be minimized in areas important for groundwater recharge including coarse (gravelly) deposits along mountain fronts and stream or river channels. |
| <b>POLICY NO. 5d</b> | No parcel should be created or development approved that may involve structures intended for human occupancy unless an   |

acceptable means of water supply has been established.

## **Surface Water Quality**

Under State Law the primary responsibility for insuring maintenance of water quality lies with Regional Water Quality Control Boards. By waiver, Alpine County is allowed to approve developments involving less than 6 dwelling units without higher approval from the appropriate Regional Water Quality Control Board. Existing County Ordinances set certain standards and requirements for maintaining surface and groundwater quality in addition to those requirements set forth by the Water Quality Control Boards. (See Data Base Section 3.41). Regional Water Quality Control Board objectives and available historic water quality records are reproduced in Appendix F. (See Data Base Sections 3.42, 3.44, and 3.45). Siltation and sedimentation are the result of erosion. Any development involved in earth disturbance, particularly some forestry practices, can result in erosion and degrade surface water quality by siltation. A certain amount of erosion occurs as a result of natural processes. Erosion is further addressed in the Soils Section of this element.

Surface or hard rock mining operation can degrade surface water quality through increased siltation or the release of natural or induced adverse chemical substances. Each has been historically documented in Alpine County. (See Data Base Section 3.42)

Agricultural waste can also affect the quality of surface waters especially where high concentrations of livestock are tended near surface or ground water supplies. (See Data Base Section 3.45)

## **ELEMENT I - SECTION C**

### **G. P. GOAL NO. 6**

**IMPROVE AND MAINTAIN THE QUALITY OF ALPINE COUNTY'S SURFACE WATER RESOURCES IN COOPERATION WITH THE LAHONTAN AND CENTRAL VALLEY REGIONAL WATER QUALITY CONTROL BOARDS**

## **Ground Water Quality**

Groundwater contamination can be a primary consideration when planning residential developments that are intended to utilize individual sewage disposal systems. Data Base Section 3.14 describes the possibilities for contamination of groundwater supplies by individual sewage disposal systems. Primary concerns include:

1. Soils that do not adequately percolate or that are too close to groundwater supplies;
2. Too many septic systems too close together;
3. Improper septic system maintenance.

In Alpine County additional septic tank filtration limitations may exist in areas underlain by fractured granite bedrock or containing perched water tables. (See Data Base Section 3.43)

The Soil Conservation Service has described all of Alpine County as containing severe septic system filtration limitations. More detail regarding soil capabilities is provided in soils reports which have been incorporated into the Data Base by reference and which are available for review at the Alpine County Planning Department. Soils capability data was a determinant in establishing appropriate land uses, parcel sizes, and densities indicated on the Land Use Map.

County Ordinance 365-77 controls the construction of sewage disposal systems in Alpine County. County Ordinance 364-76 regulates the construction modification repair, and abandonment of wells in the County. Both Ordinances are intended to prevent groundwater contamination and protect the health, safety, and welfare of the County's population. County Ordinance 365-77 does not preclude the establishment of alternatives to conventional individual sewage disposal systems "in selected areas if they are individually designed and received by the Health Department".

### **ELEMENT I - SECTION C**

#### **G. P. GOAL NO. 7**

#### **MAINTAIN SAFE, CLEAN GROUNDWATER SUPPLIES THAT ARE ADEQUATE FOR ALL CURRENT AND FORESEEABLE BENEFICIAL USES**

##### **POLICY NO. 7a**

The County should notify, inform, and provide adequate time for response to the appropriate Regional Water Quality Control Board regarding all projects for which County approval is necessary except those for which waiver provisions have been granted.

##### **POLICY NO. 7b**

No parcel should be created or development approved that may involve structures intended for human occupancy unless an acceptable means of sewage disposal has been proven available.

##### **POLICY NO. 7c**

Residential development utilizing individual sewage disposal systems should not be allowed to accumulate in a given area such concentrations that they collectively pose a threat to groundwater quality.

#### **D. WETLANDS**

Wetlands in Alpine County include rivers, streams, lakes, ponds, wet meadows, and other areas with riparian and aquatic habitat. Due to their sensitive nature and ecological significance wetlands are protected by Federal Law.

Federal Law regulates and State and Federal Agencies provide policies for development in wetlands. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency define wetlands as “those areas that are inundated or saturated by surface or ground water at a frequency and that under normal circumstances do support, a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions. Wetlands generally include “swamps, marshes, bogs and similar areas”. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) defines 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” and have “one or more of the following attributes”:

1. At least periodically, the land supports predominately 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 sometime the growing season of each year.

Section 404 of the Clean Water Act requires that prior to depositing dredged or fill materials into “waters of the United States including wetlands” a permit must be obtained from the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers. When reviewing permit applications the Corp follows EPA guidelines, also provided under Section 404.

Projects requiring permits are submitted to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and California Department of Fish and Game for advisory review. All projects which could potentially impact wetlands are also reviewed by the Department of Fish and Game through the CEQA process. Fish and Game Commission policies for wetlands, which are used by the Department when reviewing projects, are shown in Appendix P.

#### **ELEMENT I - SECTION D**

#### **G. P. GOAL NO. 8**

#### **PRESERVE AND PROTECT WETLAND AREAS**

#### **POLICY NO. 8**

Minimize development in or conversion of wetlands.

**IMPLEMENTATION MEASURE:** Require the submittal of a detailed wetland delineation, performed by a qualified biologist, for development projects proposed in or near suspected wetland areas.

**IMPLEMENTATION MEASURE:** Require proponents of development projects in wetland areas to mitigate impacts on wetlands such that, at minimum, there will be no net loss of either wetland habitat values or acreage.

**IMPLEMENTATION MEASURE:** Require U.S Army Corps review prior to County approval of projects impacting wetlands.

**IMPLEMENTATION MEASURE:** No use that would involve significant vegetation removal or earth disturbance should be allowed in stream environment designated areas. Due to the generalized standard used to delineate stream environments, variances in the above standards should be allowed where it can be proven projects will not generate unmitigable significant adverse effects upon the following features: groundwater recharge, surface water quality, aquatic or riparian habitat, wet lands, archaeological sites, aesthetics, and cliff or stream bank erosion. The County may approve projects that would impact designated stream environment areas where it is found that negative effects upon any of the listed parameters are outweighed by public need or concern.

However, variance provisions should not apply to streams presently serving or intended to serve as habitat for threatened trout species. The County may require developers to dedicate land or easements to and along streams that support fisheries for the protection of stream environments or their public use.

## **E. PLANT LIFE**

### **Threatened Rare or Endangered Plants**

No Federal or State listed rare or endangered plants have yet been identified within Alpine County. The approximate location of species that have been classified as endangered or rare by the California native Plant Society, are shown on the Land Use Map. These species, illustrated on the land use map, are to be evaluated in the future for possible inclusion to the State's List of Rare and Endangered Plants. State Law requires that rare or endangered plants are not to be disturbed without giving the California Department of Fish and Game a reasonable period of time within which to remove or otherwise protect them.

## **ELEMENT I - SECTION E**

### **G. P. GOAL NO. 9**

### **PROTECT AND INCREASE THE POPULATIONS OF THREATENED, RARE, OR ENDANGERED PLANT SPECIES**

#### **POLICY NO. 9**

Areas containing or suspected of containing rare, endangered, or threatened plants should not be disturbed without providing the California Department of Fish and game a reasonable period of time within which to investigate, remove, or otherwise protect them.

**F. AGRICULTURE**

Due to climate and other factors, agriculture in Alpine County is limited primarily to cattle production and some sheep production. While agriculture in the County is not considered a significant income producer in terms of employment or County revenues, it has been a steady component of the local economy for over 100 years. Under U.S. Forest Service Multiple Use Practices much additional range is provided. (See Data Base Sections 7.3 and 11.12). The County's best agricultural soils are rated Capability Class III (when irrigated) on a scale in which the best agricultural lands would be Class I and the worst Class VIII. The value of the County's agricultural lands should not be underestimated because, through time, urban development may continue to remove from production more valuable agricultural lands in other areas potentially increasing the use and value of more marginal agricultural lands. The County's agricultural lands are also aesthetically important to the County.

Cattle ranching practice in Alpine County involves the seasonal transportation of livestock between summer range at high elevations and winter pasture at lower elevations, mountain meadows, and lower elevation irrigated agricultural lands. Open space zoning has been applied to these areas on the Land Use Map.

**ELEMENT I - SECTION F**

**G. P. GOAL NO. 10**                      **PRESERVE AND PROTECT AGRICULTURAL PRACTICES IN ALPINE COUNTY**

**OBJECTIVE NO. 10**    Establish tax incentives or other means of preservation of Agriculture in Alpine County.

**IMPLEMENTATION MEASURE:** Implement state enabling legislation, "The Williamson Act", to provide prime agricultural land owners with the option of reduced taxes to preserve agricultural uses through ten-year contracts with the County. The eligible area to be identified in an implementing ordinance should include all areas of 15% or less slope which are designated Open Space (OS) and zoned Agricultural (AG)>

**ELEMENT I - SECTION F**

**G. P. GOAL NO. 11**                      Encourage clustering of development proposed for agricultural lands to minimize loss of productive lands to agriculturally uneconomical parcel sizes.

**G. FORESTS**

The location of commercial timber resources are identified in Data Base Section 7.2 and

Appendix J. Most known or suspected commercial timber lands are given open space designation on the Land Use Map. They are thereby afforded general protection from incompatible land uses.

In 1976 the State Legislature enacted the Forest Taxation Reform Act to provide tax incentives in an effort to promote forest resource management. Local governments were given the responsibility of putting the Act into effect by placing existing or potential commercial timber land into timber preserve zones (TPZ's). The County's Zoning Ordinance contains provisions for TPZ. IN accordance with County Ordinance and State Law, land owners can apply to have forested lands zoned TPZ if the lands meet certain specified requirements. Significant tax savings can be realized by land owners who apply and qualify for TPZ zoning.

Between 1985 and 1989 approximately \$1,490,000 worth of timber was cut in Alpine County. In addition to benefits associated with increased business, the County received direct benefits from timber production in the form of yield taxes and Forest Receipt Act payments. (See Data Base Section 11.11)

#### **ELEMENT I - SECTION G**

##### **G. P. GOAL NO. 12**

##### **PROMOTE WISE FOREST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES AND FIRE PROTECTION ON ALL EXISTING OR POTENTIAL COMMERCIAL TIMBER LANDS**

##### **POLICY NO. 12**

Property owners should be encouraged to apply for timber preserve zoning and thereby granted an opportunity for property taxation base upon timber yield.

##### **OBJECTIVE NO. 12**

Work with the California Department of Forestry toward the adoption and implementation of special timber harvest management practices for east slope timber resources.

**IMPLEMENTATION MEASURE:** It is the policy of the State Board of Forestry that counties try to improve existing State rules covering timber harvest practices rather than adopt their own. Alpine County is part of the Southern Forest for forest practice purposes as specified in Section 909 of the California Administrative Code, Section 952 et seq. specifies forest practice rules which apply to the entire Southern Forest District. Special rules could be added which address conditions that are unique to the Sierra Nevada east slope including fire danger (refer to Safety Element – Fire).

#### **H. ANIMAL LIFE**

### **Sensitive, Threatened, Rare, or Endangered**

Sensitive, threatened, rare, and endangered wildlife species found in Alpine County are listed in Data Base Section 5.1. Federal and State Law prohibit the importation, taking, possession, or sale of any listed rare or endangered Wildlife species. The Federal Bald Eagle Protection Act extends additional protection to bald eagles and golden eagles which are known to inhabit or migrate through the County.

Key to protecting rare or endangered wildlife species is in preserving the habitats in which they exist. All available recorded sightings of rare or endangered species are noted in Data Base Section 5 and Appendix H. Each location is given open space or wilderness designation on the General Plan Land Use Map.

### **ELEMENT I - SECTION H**

#### **G. P. GOAL NO. 13**

#### **PROTECT THE CRITICAL HABITAT OF ALL FEDERAL OR STATE LISTED SENSITIVE, THREATENED, RARE, OR ENDANGERED WILDLIFE**

#### **POLICY NO. 13**

The County should provide the California Department of Fish and Game notice of all development that may encroach upon the critical habitat of sensitive, threatened, rare or endangered species with reasonable time for the Department to respond with recommendations for project alternatives and mitigation measures.

### **Deer**

Critical and important deer summer and winter ranges are discussed in Data Base Section 5.21 and shown in Appendix H. Deer herds use highlands in Alpine County for summer range and fawning. Wet meadows, shrub communities, and riparian habitat are important aspects for deer summer range. In fall and spring the herds use habitual corridors to move between summer ranges and important winter habitats found in lower elevations. Bitterbrush (*Purshia*), which is found within the sagebrush and pinion/juniper environments of the County's east slope, provides a nutritious winter food source. The Carson River Interstate herd and Walker herd utilize both summer and winter range on the County's eastern slope. The Salt Springs and Railroad Flat herds utilize areas of the west slope for summer range.

Deer populations are important to the County's recreation industry. The California Department of Fish and game estimated that each year 5000 deer hunters visit Alpine County. Urbanization within critical winter range is responsible for part of the decline of deer populations within the Carson River herd. Reports indicate that populations within the Railroad Flat and Salt Springs herds may have declined somewhat with establishment of the Bear Valley and Kirkwood developments. California Department of Fish and Game recommendations for minimum parcel size and cluster development in critical and important deer habitats have been incorporated into

the Land Use Map.

**ELEMENT I - SECTION H**

**G. P. GOAL NO. 14**

**PROTECT IMPORTANT DEER HABITATS AND MIGRATION ROUTES TO THE GREATEST EXTENT FEASIBLE**

**POLICY NO. 14a**

The County should provide the California Department of Fish and Game with notice of all development projects located within known or suspected critical summer or winter range or deer migration corridors with reasonable time for the Department to respond with recommendations for project alternatives and mitigation measures.

**POLICY NO. 14b**

The County should encourage cluster development to protect wildlife habitats and migration routes by placing them in permanent open space in conjunction with approved cluster development.

**Fisheries**

Two species of trout found in Alpine County, the Lahontan Cutthroat Trout, and the Paiute Cutthroat trout are included on the Federal List of Threatened Species. Their status and current extent are presented in Data Base Section 5.4 and Appendix H. The California Department of Fish and Game intends to stock a number of new stream segments in Alpine County with these trout species. Streams which are either presently serving or intended to serve as fisheries for the threatened trout are offered protection by stream environment designation on the General Plan Land Use Map.

**ELEMENT I - SECTION H**

**G. P. GOAL NO. 15**

**PROTECT AND ENHANCE FISHERIES INCLUDING THE EXISTING AND PROPOSED HABITATS FOR THREATENED PAIUTE AND LAHONTAN CUTTHROAT TROUT**

**POLICY NO. 15a**

Protect the aquatic habitat along the East Fork of the Carson River to maintain the fishery in the designated Wild Trout Management Area upstream from Wolf Creek.

**POLICY NO. 15b**

Cooperate with the Department of Fish and Game in implementing their East Fork of the Carson River Wild Trout Management Plan.

**POLICY NO. 15c**

The County should acquire easements to and along rivers, streams,

and lakes which provide viable fish habitat wherever feasible and appropriate to maintain fishing access.

**POLICY NO. 15d** Cooperate with other agencies in the development of an overall drainage management plan for the East and West Forks of the Carson River and their tributaries.

**POLICY NO. 15e** Support acquisition of water rights at Heenan Lake, Red Lake, Caples Lake, Twin Lake, and Meadow Lake Hydro System. Oppose the transfer of water rights or diversion of water within Alpine County that would adversely impact fisheries and recreational uses.

## **I. ENERGY**

### **Conservation**

Energy costs and supplies are an important nation-wide issue. Utility companies utilize fossil fuels to generate most power which is sold to Alpine County citizens.

Much of the fuel used in this County is imported from foreign countries who have organized themselves to control the price and availability of oil exports. Accomplishing energy conservation among existing or potential users is the first logical step in reversing the energy problem.

### **ELEMENT I - SECTION I**

#### **G. P. GOAL NO. 16                   ACHIEVE MAXIMUM LEVELS OF ENERGY CONSERVATION THROUGH PROPER CONSTRUCTION, DESIGN, AND PLACEMENT OF ALL NEW DEVELOPMENTS**

**POLICY NO. 16a** All new public, private facilities and residences should be designed to meet requirements of Title 24 of the State Energy Code.

**POLICY NO. 16b** In approving development permits the County should set requirements and/or make recommendations wherever possible that would improve energy conservation and save long-term costs.

**POLICY NO. 16c** New residential development should be located in close proximity to services, facilities and commerce. New residential development which creates significant demand for public facilities and services should be located adjacent to areas where the necessary services and facilities are available; or in locations where such services can

easily be extended and where necessary facilities are easily accessed. An exception to this policy shall be allowed for residential development not exceeding 1 unit per 20 acres gross density that is located within the OS Open Space designation of this plan.

## **Energy Resources**

Energy resources identified in Alpine County include hydro (falling water), solar, geothermal, bio-mass (forest, agriculture and municipal water conversion), wood, and wind resources. Alpine County's steep slopes and rushing water provide an opportunity for the development of hydro power resources. Several existing reservoirs on the County's west slope comprise part of hydro electric power generation systems established up and down the west slope rivers. (See Data Base Section 3.24) Before electricity became a relatively inexpensive commodity, a number of County residents used falling water to generate power for private use. Federal Law currently provides that power which is generated by small private or commercial facilities may be sold back to utility companies at a fair rate. (Public Utilities Regulatory Policies Act) State Policy currently supports small hydro projects where facilities such as dams and canals already exist. Small hydro development also provides possibilities for funding locally owned public facilities and services.

Data Base Section 10.44-b documents that Alpine County contains a solar resource adequate for use by individual residences and establishments despite the County's often cold and cloudy climate. Information presented in Data Base Section 10/44-c suggests that the Corridor Planning Area may be underlain by geothermal resources similar to those being developed in Lassen and other counties for direct heating purposes. Wind resources are identified in Data Base Appendix J.

### **ELEMENT I - SECTION I**

#### **G. P. GOAL NO. 17**

**DEVELOP ENERGY RESOURCES INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO SOLAR, WIND, GEOTHERMAL, AND SMALL HYDRO WITHOUT SACRIFICE TO AESTHETICS OR THE EXISTING NATURAL OR SOCIOECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT.**

##### **POLICY NO. 17a**

Small scale hydro electric power generation facilities should be developed where dams, canals, or pipelines exist or are constructed providing any losses of water to present beneficial uses can be determined insignificant.

##### **POLICY NO. 17b**

Existing and proposed special service districts should consider power generation using locally available hydro, wind, or other resources among the services and facilities they would intend to

provide.

- POLICY NO. 17c** All new lots or parcels intended to contain structures for human occupancy should be designed to allow for and protect maximum utilization of available solar and wind resources.
- POLICY NO. 17d** The investigation and development of geothermal resources on Alpine County's eastern slope should be encouraged.
- POLICY NO. 17e** Opportunities for generating electricity using wasted heat from future industrial, commercial, or manufacturing processes (co-generation) should be considered where feasible and appropriate.
- POLICY NO. 17f** Trans-Sierra utility corridors including power lines, pipelines and other utility transmission facilities that do not provide direct benefits to Alpine County and its residents should not be allowed in Alpine County. In no event shall new overhead transmission and utility lines be permitted. Where the County does not have jurisdiction to prohibit such facilities, they should be discouraged to the greatest degree possible.

## **J. CULTURE**

The term *culture* can mean many things. The term is used here to mean both physical and manifestations of human activity and (following present Federal law) areas having special cultural-geographic values. Physical manifestations of human actions are things such as archaeological sites, trail routes, and historic buildings. Cultural-geographic values may not be as easy to define, but as used here, means areas or places which have special meaning to some group(s). Traditional cultural properties (as defined in Federal doctrine), Native American religious locations (as discussed in the American Indian Religious Freedom Act), and burial grounds (Native American and others) are examples of areas having special cultural-geographic values.

Alpine County, California, has a uniquely rich historic and prehistoric heritage. The County lies within the traditional Washoe aboriginal lands: the mountains and valleys of Alpine County have provided subsistence and spiritual sustenance to the Washoe millennia. Euro-American travel through the County and its later settlement are equally of interest and importance to the people of Alpine County, for the County's identity is closely related to these historic events.

By July 1992, 292 archaeological sites had been located and recorded within Alpine County. Most of the known sited are reportedly located along riparian corridors where the native population was known to be concentrated. Data Base Section 6.1 contains the name and address

of the appointed regional officer in charge of official archaeological records. Most archaeological sites in the County are afforded protection under provisions of the General Plan's stream environment land use designation.

Data Base Section 6.2 summarizes the history of early settlement in Alpine County. Historic roads, towns, and mining districts are shown in Appendix I-2. Few historic settlements or structures are standing today. Several historic buildings have been moved from early sites to Markleeville. One of these is the Alpine Hotel which stands as a landmark in the center of town. Official County and State Historical Landmarks are listed in Appendix I-1. Most of the County's historic town sites and trails are provided protection by open space land use designation on the General Plan's Land Use Map.

Prehistoric and historic resources are valuable to the people of Alpine County in many different ways: recreation opportunities, community identity, aesthetic beauty, spiritual importance, and historic interest. Prehistoric, historic, and contemporary cultural resources (e.g., areas of spiritual importance to the Washoe) could be located anywhere within the County. No comprehensive inventory of cultural resource sites within Alpine County exists.

A wide variety of land uses occur within the County, many of which have the potential to harm cultural resources. So, there may always exist the possibility of unwittingly destroying a cultural resource of value to the people of Alpine County because it was undiscovered prior to its destruction. Regulatory oversight of cultural resources is in part provided by Federal laws that apply to Federal permits and Federal Agency actions such as those of the U.S. Forest Service. The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) regulates cultural resource effects for some other land use projects within the County. Since it is impractical for the County to create a complete, professional, cultural resource inventory, cooperating and coordinating with Federal agencies, especially the U.S. Forest Service, State agencies, such as the California Division of Forestry, tribal organizations, such as the Washoe tribe, as well as other local groups, such as historical societies, is clearly beneficial to preservation of the County's cultural heritage.

This section of the General Plan is intended to promote preservation and enhancement of cultural resources within Alpine County in two general ways. First, development of guidelines for identification and protection of cultural resources associated with specific land use actions. Second, promotion of proactive cultural resource management by stating the County's commitment to assisting its citizens in applying standards, codes, and incentives to restore, maintain, or conserve cultural resource properties.

#### **ELEMENT I - SECTION J**

##### **G. P. GOAL NO. 18**

##### **PRESERVE AND PROMOTE THE ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORY OF ALPINE COUNTY**

##### **POLICY NO. 18a**

The County should cooperate with the Washoe and the MiWok

Tribes to develop policies for the identification and protection of significant archeological sites.

**POLICY NO. 18b** The County should provide notice and necessary information to the Regional Officer governing archaeological sites of any development project that may have the potential to affect an archaeological site. The officer should be allowed reasonable time to determine whether the project involves an archaeological site and respond with project alternatives and/or mitigation measures which would lessen or mitigate any identified negative effects.

**POLICY NO. 18c** The proponents or applicants for development projects in areas known or suspect of containing historic artifacts should be required to protect any historic sites and/or artifacts that may be found.

**POLICY NO. 18d** The County should assist the public in locating and obtaining grants for low interest loans for the preservation and enhancement of historic buildings.

**POLICY NO. 18e** The County should promote proactive planning to avoid cultural resource impacts and promote historic preservation through appropriate standards, incentives and easements.

**K. AESTHETICS**

**(AS AMENDED ON JULY 17, 2003 PER BOARD OF SUPERVISORS RESOLUTION NO. 2003-38)**

Alpine County's Scenic Resources can without dispute be considered among the most beautiful in the world. Due to this resource, the County has a need and responsibility to consider aesthetics when planning. Because development in the past has been limited, the County has a better opportunity to plan for aesthetics than many other jurisdictions in the State. The County's main industries, recreation and tourism, are tied directly to the county's scenic resources. Protecting those resources is a strong economic incentive.

Existing County Ordinances such as the Underground Utility Ordinance and the Scenic Highways Zoning Ordinance already represent an effort by the County to conserve visual resources. The County's existing Scenic Highways Ordinance regulates land uses adjacent to established scenic highways. The General Plan encourages additional standards to insure protection of scenic highways and extend efforts to prevent or mitigate visual impacts to other areas in the County.

In 1985 a planning agreement was established between Amador, Alpine and El Dorado Counties, the Federal Highway Administration, Caltrans, and El Dorado National Forest in an effort to

maintain and enhance scenic qualities and safety along Highway 88. In order to preserve and enhance various characteristics, including scenic qualities, Highway 88 has been designated as a Federal Scenic Byway.

Data Base Section 12.2 summarizes the inherent abilities of various plant communities in the County to provide or maintain natural beauty in the landscape. It is found that aquatic, riparian, meadow, and Alpine environments are among the most sensitive to visual impacts. Most visual impacts can be mitigated in riparian, mountain shrub, sagebrush and Pinion/Juniper environments. They are most easily mitigated in forest environments.

The East Fork of the Carson River, from Hangman's Bridge crossing of Highway 89 to the Nevada border, was designated as a Scenic River in 1989 by the State of California.

Some of Alpine County's developed areas contain unique and interesting historic structures. In some instances the architecture styles of new developments have conformed with and complimented the rural and historic flavor of the County. The County has implemented the Design Review/Historic Combined Zone to protect and enhance the historic mining period architecture of Markleeville. Other elements of the General Plan point out the importance of improving and maintaining this attribute for the purpose of improving commerce as well as local pride and pleasure.

#### **ELEMENT I - SECTION K**

#### **G. P. GOAL NO. 19                      MAINTAIN AND IMPROVE EXISTING AESTHETIC RESOURCES IN ALPINE COUNTY**

**POLICY NO. 19a**                      Maintain scenic highway designation for Highways 4, 88 and 89.

**IMPLEMENTATION MEASURE:** Highways 4, 88 and 89 are designated scenic routes on the Land Use map. The County's scenic highway ordinance should be applied to these routes.

**POLICY NO. 19b**                      Protect steep slopes from grading, vegetation removal, road construction or other developments or activities that may impact the viewshed from any designated scenic route.

**IMPLEMENTATION MEASURE:** The County's scenic highway ordinance should be revised to clearly define what is meant by protection including a definition of steep slopes and clear guidelines for protection.

**POLICY NO. 19c**                      Protect open areas, ridges, peaks and other skyline features from structures that may impact the viewshed from any designated

County or State scenic route.

**IMPLEMENTATION MEASURE:** The County's scenic highway ordinance should be revised to clearly define what is meant by protection including definitions of open areas, ridges, peaks and other skyline features, and clear guidelines for protection.

- POLICY NO. 19d** Regulations and guidelines for protection of any designated scenic highway routes shall not, by themselves, result in the prohibition of construction of a single family home on any parcel within the County, or the prohibition of any use which is listed as permitted within the various zoning districts that are defined in the County's zoning ordinance.
- POLICY NO. 19e** Continue to maintain a design review committee to review and make recommendations upon building permits and development plans in the town of Markleeville.
- POLICY NO. 19f** Protect nighttime views by minimizing outside lighting.
- POLICY NO. 19g** Encourage voluntary application of the scenic highway corridor design requirements contained in the County Zoning Ordinance throughout all areas in the County.