



# PLUMAS COUNTY 2035 GENERAL AGRICULTURE & FORESTRY ELEMENT

Photo Credit: Tracey Ferguson

# GOAL 8.1 Protect Agriculture as a Productive Use of Resource Land

Protect and Support agriculture as a productive use of resource lands, for the continuation of a diversified economy, for the maintenance of the County's rural character, for the protection of scenic, natural, and recreational resources, and as a defining characteristic of the County's quality of life.

## ***8.1.1 Broad Range of Agricultural Uses***

Support and promote a healthy and competitive agriculture industry by allowing for a broad range of agricultural uses, agricultural support services and agricultural products.

## ***8.1.2 Maintain Land in Agricultural Use***

Support private and public owners of lands that have traditionally been used for agriculture to keep land in agricultural production by continuing existing agricultural use, developing compatible uses, and/or leasing lands to agricultural users.

## ***8.1.3 Local Food Supply***

Encourage the development of new small scale agricultural production on non-agricultural lands where uses are compatible, in order to provide for a fresh, local supply of food.



# GOAL 8.1 Protect Agriculture as a Productive Use of Resource Land Cont.

## ***8.1.4 Right to Farm***

The County shall maintain and support a right to farm ordinance.

## ***8.1.5 Public and Private***

The agricultural policies identified in this document shall reflect the County's vision for the management of public land as well as private land.



# GOAL 8.2 Prevent Conversion to Non-Agricultural Uses

The County will strive to protect Agricultural lands, strongly discourage conversion to non-agricultural uses, and prohibit uses that are incompatible with long-term agricultural production.

## ***8.2.1 Maintain Agricultural Production***

Maintain agricultural production as the primary use on agricultural lands by limiting non-agricultural use development to that which is compatible with agriculture.

## ***8.2.2 Agricultural Preserve and Agriculture and Grazing Areas***

Maintain parcel sizes outside of the planning area boundaries large enough to sustain viable agriculture and avoid conversion to non-agricultural uses.

## ***8.2.3 Clustering of Farm Dwellings***

Locate farm dwellings in a manner that protects both on-site and off-site agricultural practices. All dwellings in agriculturally zoned areas shall be encouraged to be clustered where the parcel is less suitable for agricultural use.



# GOAL 8.2 Prevent Conversion to Non-Agricultural Uses Cont.

## ***8.2.4    Maintain Large Lot Zoning***

Maintain large lot zoning in agricultural areas to support large scale agricultural production, such as grazing and timber harvest.

## ***8.2.5    Conversions***

Allow the conversion of agricultural lands to other use designations such that there is no net loss of same type agricultural lands. Clustering of homesites or parcels in Agricultural Preserve or Agriculture and Grazing lands is not defined as conversion.

Allow the conversion of Timber Resource lands to other land use designations such that there is no net loss of same type of Timber Resource lands. Conversions of Timber Resource lands within Planning Area Boundaries is not defined as conversion.

## ***8.2.6    Non-Agriculture Uses***

Limit non-agricultural development in agricultural areas to residential and accessory uses compatible or complimentary with agricultural production.



# GOAL 8.2 Prevent Conversion to Non-Agricultural Uses Cont.

## ***8.2.7 Limit Extension of Services and Infrastructure***

Protect agriculture lands from non-compatible encroachment by limiting the extension of services facilities and infrastructure.

## ***8.2.8 Historic Ranches and Farms***

Encourage the maintenance, rehabilitation, and, where practical, the restoration of historic era ranches and farms in order to maintain historical character while continuing to engage in productive agricultural activities.



# GOAL 8.3 Healthy and Competitive Farm, Ranch and Forestry Economy

Promote the enhancement of a healthy and competitive farm and ranch economy to expand the base and viability of agriculture in the County.

## ***8.3.1 Agriculture District Overlay***

Establish an Agricultural District Overlay designation to enhance and aggressively promote the distinctive agricultural and recreational character of the unique regions within the County, such as organic farming, specialty crops, agritourism, historic farming, ranching and logging resources.

## ***8.3.2 Uses that Support Agriculture and Timber Resources***

Allow compatible uses that support agriculture and timber, such as but not limited to agricultural commercial uses, agricultural industrial uses, direct product sales, processing, farm-based tourism, overnight hut system back-country ski touring and snowshoeing, destination hunting, fishing, and wildlife viewing, agricultural research and farm worker housing on agricultural land, subject to appropriate design review and development standards.

## ***8.3.3 Protect Agriculture and Timber Resources Infrastructure***

Recognize and maintain appropriate agricultural infrastructure, such as farm-to-market routes, water diversion and conveyance structures, fertilizer and chemical sales, airfields, processing facilities, research and development and farm worker housing.



# GOAL 8.4 Sustainable Food Systems

Promote sustainable food systems within the County.

## ***8.4.1 Healthy Local Food Supply***

Encourage and protect local, organic, grass-fed and/or ecologically sound agricultural practices to increase on-farm income and provide for a healthy local supply of food.

## ***8.4.2 Promote Use of Local Foods and Products***

Promote the use of foods and products from Plumas County to strengthen the local economy, improve health, reduce source to market shipping distances and connect residents with the agricultural community. Ensure the County Zoning Ordinance allows licensed farmers' markets in unincorporated locations and farm stands in agricultural areas.



# GOAL 8.5 Preserve, Protect and Conserve Water Supply and Quality

Protect the supply and quality of the County's water resources, by maintaining the proper ecological function of watersheds, including sediment transport groundwater recharge and filtration, biological processes, flood mitigations, and maintaining enough water for local and agricultural needs and uses.

## ***8.5.1 Water for Agricultural Uses***

Protect sustainable supplies of water for agricultural uses.



# GOAL 8.6 Protection of Resources to Ensure Agriculture's Sustainability

Protect the natural resources needed to ensure that agriculture remains an essential part of Plumas County's future.

## ***8.6.1 Groundwater Recharge Areas***

Protect areas identified as significantly contributing to groundwater recharge from uses that would reduce the ability to recharge or would threaten the quality of the underlying aquifers.

## ***8.6.2 Preserve Water Resources***

Ensure that adequate water resources for agriculture are secure, both in quantity and quality, before water allocations are dedicated to developments, mitigation banks, and/or interests from outside of the County.

## ***8.6.3 Conservation of Productive Agricultural Lands***

Support high value and intensive farming practices on appropriate agricultural soils and historically viable areas. Prime agricultural lands and other productive agricultural land outside of planning areas shall be preserved wherever feasible.



# GOAL 8.6 Protection of Resources to Ensure Agriculture's Sustainability Cont.

## ***8.6.4 Soil Conservation***

Promote participation in programs that reduce soil erosion and increase soil productivity. Work with appropriate local, State and Federal agencies to conserve, study, and improve soils.

## ***8.6.5 Habitat Protection***

Encourage habitat protection and management that does not preclude or unreasonably restrict on-site agricultural production.

## ***8.6.6 Habitat Enhancement***

Support the use of effective mechanisms to protect farmers and ranchers potentially impacted by adjoining habitat enhancement programs, such as "safe harbor" programs by providing buffers within the habitat area.



# GOAL 8.6 Protection of Resources to Ensure Agriculture's Sustainability Cont.

## *8.6.7 Agriculture's Role in Mitigating Climate Change*

Recognize the valuable role that agriculture plays in mitigating the effects of climate change, including permanent crops that sequester carbon for long periods of time and the use of farming methods that reduce the use of fossil fuels and pesticides.

## *8.6.8 Renewable Energy from Agricultural Byproducts*

Support legislation to allow growers to use non-food agricultural byproducts, including wood waste products, for renewable energy.



# GOAL 8.7 Education and Awareness

Support education to ensure continued public recognition of the important role that agriculture plays in Plumas County.

## ***8.7.1 Value of Working Landscapes***

Promote educational programs aimed at informing the general public about agriculture and forestry and the value of working landscapes in Plumas County.

## ***8.7.2 Creating Partnerships***

Work with Natural Resources Conservation Service, Resource Conservation Districts, University of California Cooperative Extension, Farm Bureau and similar organizations to increase awareness of actions that may affect farming, ranching and forestry including the involvement of agricultural and forestry issues in K-12 and Feather River College curriculum.

## ***8.7.3 Creating Partnerships***

Encourage and support ongoing public education programs by such organizations as the Agricultural Commissioner's Office, University of California Cooperative Extension, Farm Bureau, 4-H clubs, Future Farmers of America and other related organizations.



# GOAL 8.8 Maintain Healthy Productive Forest

Maintain a healthy and sustainable forest that provides the raw materials necessary for continued timber production while limiting intrusion of incompatible uses and activities.

## ***8.8.1 Commercial Timber Production Lands***

Identify existing and potential Timber Resource lands for commercial timber production.

## ***8.8.2 Avoiding Adverse Effects on Timber Production***

Where feasible avoid locating federal, state, or local public improvements and utilities in Timber Production Zones where the project or land acquisition will have a significant adverse effect on the production of timber.

## ***8.8.3 Protect Timberlands from Incompatible Uses***

Protect Timberlands from incompatible adjacent land uses which adversely impact forest management activities.



# GOAL 8.8 Maintain Healthy Productive Forest Cont.

## *8.8.4 Support Innovative Forest and Rangeland Programs*

Support development of innovative forest and rangeland programs that facilitate production and conservation goals. Support timber management and wood product certification and foster development of markets for new timber products and services; including using bio-mass for energy and carbon storage.

## *8.8.5 Support Innovative Forest and Rangeland Programs*

Setbacks, if necessary for the preservation of timber production and forest and rangeland maintenance activities, will be identified in the Zoning Ordinance and shall be delineated on all newly recorded parcel or subdivision maps. Projects located within a designated rural community shall maintain the minimum setbacks designated in that community.

## *8.8.6 Inclusion of New Lands into Timber Resource Lands*

Provide for the inclusion of new lands into Timber Resource lands.



# GOAL 8.9 Protection of Timber Resource Land for Commercial and Resource Values

Protect and conserve timber resource lands identified as suitable for commercial timber production that are important to local forest product industries, and potential future industries, and forest lands that serve other values such as recreation, hydropower, grazing, mineral resources, watershed values, wildlife habitat and carbon sequestration.

## ***8.9.1 Minimum Parcel Size for Timber Resource Lands***

The minimum parcel size for Timber Resource lands shall be 40 acres. Timber Resource Lands include those lands identified as General Forest (Zoning District) and as Timberland Production Zone (Zoning District). Limitations provided by the zoning include a restriction of the allowable density of dwelling units in the Timberland Production Zone. Only parcels 160 acres in size or greater are allowed a residence or structure.

## ***8.9.2 Compatible Uses for Timber Resource Lands***

Timber Resource lands shall only be used for purposes that are compatible with timber production such as the production of other wood products, bio-mass, mineral resource extraction, grazing, recreation, carbon sequestration and wildlife habitat/migratory corridors.

## ***8.9.3 Utilization of Wood Waste***

The County shall encourage and promote the utilization of wood waste produced in the County.



# GOAL 8.9 Protection of Timber Resource Land for Commercial and Resource Values Cont.

## *8.9.4 Forest Thinning and Fuels Management*

The County shall encourage and promote forest thinning programs on both public and private lands, along strategic fuel break locations, in high fire risk areas, urban wild land interface areas, and areas with extensive rural residential development for purposes of maintaining the health of the forest, reducing catastrophic carbon emissions, and reducing the risk of fire, while improving wildlife habitat and protecting watershed functions.

## *8.9.5 Community Stability*

The County shall encourage and promote the full implementation of the Herger-Feinstein Quincy Library Group Forest Recovery Act (HFQLG) that promotes ecologic and economic health for Federal lands and communities in the Sierra Nevada. The HFQLG statute requires that strategic systems of defensible fuel profile zones be created. The goal of these projects includes: stabilizing the economy; preserving jobs; protecting the environment; reducing the threat of fire; and generating forest receipts to support county schools and roads. Regardless of whether the pilot project authorized by HFQLG continues or sunsets, the objectives and strategies of HFQLG must continue to be pursued, particularly efforts to develop economically self-sustaining forest management projects that are not subject to financial support from ongoing federal appropriations.



# GOAL 8.10 Efficient and Sustainable Forest Product Production

Promote sustainable and efficient forest production while minimizing constraints inhibiting efficient forest production and maintaining forest health.

## ***8.10.1 Forestland Management Policies and Coordination***

Support fewer, more effective and lower-cost forest management regulations as a strategy to maintain timber and other wood product production as the primary use of forestlands.



# GOAL 8.11 Forest Management and GHG Emissions

Promote the utilization of forested lands to address GHG emissions.

## ***8.11.1 Forestlands as Locations for Carbon Sequestration***

The County shall work through the CEQA process to comply with GHG reductions as set forth in AB 32 to create policies that encourage utilization of forestlands to serve as locations for carbon sequestration.

## ***8.11.2 GHG Emissions Mitigation***

The County shall determine impacts of development projects on GHG emissions and require enforceable mitigation measures. If, after analyzing and requiring all reasonable and feasible on-site mitigation measures for avoiding or reducing GHG-related impacts, the lead agency determines that additional mitigation is required, the agency shall consider additional off-site mitigation. Priority for off-site mitigation shall be given to agricultural and forested lands serving as locations for carbon sequestration.



# GOAL 8.12 Timber Resource Lands and Development Entitlements

Provide for the efficient consideration of development entitlements on Timber Resource lands.

## ***8.12.1 Development Application Findings for Timber Resource lands***

The County shall evaluate discretionary development applications involving identified Timber Resource lands and parcels adjoining those lands. Prior to granting an approval, the approving authority shall make all of the following findings:

- a. The proposed use will not significantly detract from the use of the property for, or inhibit, growing and harvesting timber on that parcel or to adjoining parcels for long-term timber resource production value or conflict with timber resource production in that general area,
- b. The proposed use will not intensify existing conflicts or add new conflicts between adjoining proposed uses and timber production and harvesting activities,
- c. The proposed use will not create an island effect wherein timber production lands located between the project site and other non-timber production lands are negatively affected,
- d. The proposed use will not hinder timber production and harvesting access to water and public roads, or otherwise conflict with the continuation or development of timber production harvesting, and
- e. The proposed use will not significantly reduce or destroy the buffering effect of existing large parcel sizes adjoining timber production lands.



# GOAL 8.13 Infrastructure to Support Forest Industries

Protect the public infrastructure needed to support forest industries within the County.

## ***8.13.1 Resource Transportation Routes***

Resource Transportation Routes are those roads which provide primary access to timber and mining resource areas. Protect resource transportation routes by requiring development to provide alternate access routes, limited access or otherwise ensure continued access to resources.

## ***8.13.2 Land Available for Forest Products Manufacturing***

Maintain a sufficient inventory of industrial property to support forest products manufacturing.

## ***8.13.3 Fire Protection Programs***

Support both State and Federal wildland fire protection programs and local Fire Safe programs that reduce the risk of wildland fires and the loss of timber on private and public property.

