## Chapter 2

# **Land Use and Covered Activities**

## 2.1 Introduction

This chapter describes existing land use conditions and land use plans in the Plan area, and describes activities covered under the Plan. The land use component of this chapter provides an overview of the major land use agencies operating within the Plan area that are participating in the PCCP (Placer County, City of Lincoln). A description of the service providers participating in the PCCP are also described (South Placer Regional Transportation Authority and the Placer County Water Agency). The description of land use provides the necessary context for the covered activities upon which the impact analysis (Chapter 4) is based. This chapter provides history and context for future development in the Plan area; reviews existing land-use conditions and relevant land-use plans; discusses significant existing open spaces in the Plan area; and describes the projects and activities within the Plan area that are proposed for coverage under the incidental take and aquatic resource permits.

# 2.2 Land Use and Jurisdictions

# 2.2.1 Existing Conditions

## Geography

Placer County as a whole stretches 90 miles from Sacramento County to the California-Nevada state line and comprises nearly a million acres (just over 1,500 square miles<sup>1</sup>). Most of the population in Placer County is on the valley floor and lower foothills in the western quarter of the County. The PCCP Plan area generally conforms to the area of the County where

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> This document uses acres as the primary land area measure: 640 acres = 1 square mile; 2.47 acres = 1 hectare.

much of the current development is concentrated and future growth is likely to occur. In this document, Western Placer County refers to roughly 261,000 acres ranging from the City of Auburn westward to the Sutter and Sacramento County lines. The PCCP Plan Area is 212,000 acres of Western Placer County that includes the City of Lincoln and unincorporated Placer County (jurisdictions participating in the PCCP). Non-Participating Cities (NPC) include Auburn, Loomis, Rocklin and Roseville. The Plan area is subject to the PCCP requirements and the participating agency permits.

The western Placer landscape and associated land uses are greatly influenced by topography. Elevation ranges from approximately 40 feet above mean sea level on the Sacramento Valley floor up to 2200 feet in the Sierra Foothills north of Auburn. The valley floor has extensive areas of agricultural uses as well as the urban and suburban development along Interstate 80 (I-80) and State Route 65 (SR 65). Natural vegetation that still exists generally consists of grasslands, vernal pools within a grassland matrix and riparian woodlands. Foothills in the northeastern and eastern parts of the Plan area (Loomis, Newcastle, and Auburn), are dominated by rural residential land use, woodlands, orchards and grazing land.

The transition from Sacramento Valley to Sierra Foothills is reflected in land use, ecology, and distribution of natural communities and covered species. For this reason, the Plan area is divided into sub areas to guide analysis:

- The <u>Valley</u> (approximately 103,000 acres) consists of the urban and suburban areas in Lincoln and unincorporated area surrounded by agricultural uses and natural grassland and vernal pool communities.
- The <u>Foothills</u> (approximately 109,000 acres) are characterized by lower-density suburban and rural residential development along the Interstate 80 corridor (approximately 41,000 acres) and by lower density rural residential development, grazing land and natural woodland communities in the North Foothills (approximately 68,000 acres).

The stream system in western Placer traverses both the foothills and valley sub-areas and includes their floodplains. Major streams have extensive natural floodplains on the valley floor. Flood hazard in turn affects land uses. As described in Chapter 3, the streams of western Placer are important natural resources. Consequently, the PCCP has an entire program, the County Aquatic Resources Program, or CARP, that will protect streams, wetlands and other water resources and fulfill the requirements of the federal Clean Water Act and analogous state laws.

This Plan refers to a Stream System that encompasses stream zones and adjacent areas; the lands beyond the stream zone are termed uplands.

The stream system has regulatory status under the PCCP and is an important overlay on the jurisdictions and general plans.

## **Land Use**

Over the last 150 years, many of the County's once vast grasslands, woodlands, and riparian areas have been converted to urban, rural, suburban and agricultural use. Since 1940, Placer County has almost doubled in population every 20 years. The pace of growth and change in land use accelerated in the 1970s with economic growth stimulating more residential growth. In 1970, the entire population of the County was 78,000 people; in 2000, Roseville alone had that many people. In four of the eight years between 2000 and 2008, Placer County ranked as the fastest growing county in California. Although this growth rate has recently slowed, the County's high quality of life is expected to continue to attract an increasing share of regional residential and economic activity.

In 1967, Placer County's first General Plan outlined a vision that has been the foundation for most County development patterns ever since. The unincorporated areas were to be dominated by agricultural land uses to the west, timberlands to the east, and rural residential land uses throughout the foothills. Urban land uses would be located in cities and existing unincorporated communities. A series of Community Plans further define land use and development potential in unincorporated areas.

The cities in western Placer responded to the growth pressures of the 1970s and 1980s by expanding their designated "Spheres of Influence" (generally considered to be future city limit or service area boundaries) into unincorporated County land. While the County's 1994 General Plan generally reaffirmed the vision to concentrate growth in cities and existing unincorporated communities, it also established specific plan development standards and a future community planning area for unincorporated agricultural land west of the City of Roseville. Much of the new entitled development of the last decade occurred in this area either as lands annexed to the City of Roseville or within specific plans approved by Placer County (Sunset Industrial Specific Plan, Placer Vineyards Specific Plan and Regional University Specific Plan).

Today, within western Placer County, about 58,000 acres of land (20 percent of the total land area) lie within the boundaries of incorporated cities—Auburn, Lincoln, Loomis, Rocklin, and Roseville. The unincorporated balance of the land is currently under the land use jurisdiction of Placer County. Auburn, Lincoln, Rocklin, and Roseville have adopted city Spheres of Influence (SOI) that collectively cover about 26,400 acres—12 percent of the unincorporated area. Figure 2-1 depicts the jurisdictions located within western Placer County and Plan area.

# 2.2.2 Participating Agencies

Participating Agencies include the City of Lincoln, Placer County, Placer County Water Agency and South Placer Regional Transportation Authority.

#### Lincoln

The City of Lincoln is located on the eastern edge of the Sacramento Valley floor at the base of the Sierra Nevada foothills. Lincoln was incorporated in 1890 and is one of six cities in Placer County. As of 2009, the incorporated city limits encompassed 19.8 square miles of land, roughly bounded by Wise Road to the north, Sierra College Boulevard to the east, Athens Road to the south, and Airport Road to the west.

The Lincoln General Plan identifies areas where the City of Lincoln has planned urban growth that will be covered by the PCCP. The City of Lincoln's General Plan identifies goals and policies that address protection of natural resources within the City that will be implemented along with the PCCP permit requirements. Adopted in March 2008, the Lincoln General Plan identifies a larger planning area covering a total of 55 square miles (inclusive of the city limits), 25 percent of which is the City's current Sphere Of Influence. The 2008 planning area boundaries extend north to Coon Creek and Doty Ravine, east generally along McCourtney Road and Sierra College Boulevard, south to the City of Rocklin and to Athens Avenue west of SR 65, and about two miles west of Dowd Road.

## Population, Housing, and Employment

In 2007, there were about 38,000 people and 17,000 housing units in the City of Lincoln—about 12 percent of County totals (California Department of Finance, 2008). Estimates prepared during analysis for the 2008 General Plan indicate about 6,600 jobs in the City in 2007—only four percent of total jobs in the County (Economic & Planning Systems 2008). Lincoln was a growth center of national repute for a period after 2000; the population more than tripled over a seven year period. More recently, growth has moderated substantially.

The vision guiding Lincoln's General Plan is to build an urban fabric that strengthens the City's assets and establishes coherence and identity to accommodate substantial growth. Economic development is the key to this vision. The City's goal is to become a self-sustaining community of 130,000 people—a population large enough to support the economic development required for fiscal sustainability. The General Plan expands

the city's sphere of influence to the west and north (as previously noted) in order to accommodate future growth. As a participant in the regional Blueprint effort led by the Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SACOG), Lincoln has incorporated as many smart growth principles as feasible into the General Plan.

Projections prepared for economic analysis of the PCCP show Lincoln (including the expanded Sphere Of Influence) capturing a substantial amount of the future growth in western Placer County. An increase of about 38,000 housing units in the City of Lincoln would accommodate about 94,000 people, bringing total population to about 130,000 over the next 50 years. During this period, growth in economic activity in the expanded City could support an additional 67,000 jobs.

## **Conservation and Open Space Policies**

The City of Lincoln's General Plan identifies three goals and nine policies that support efforts consistent with the PCCP. These policies advocate protection and management of natural resources, wetlands, and wildlife habitat and encourage coordination on conservation planning with other local jurisdictions.

## **Placer County**

Placer County governs areas that are currently unincorporated. Approximately 204,000 acres of unincorporated lands in western Placer County are proposed for coverage under the PCCP. The unincorporated acreage does not include land that lies within the City of Lincoln's Sphere of Influence, nor does it include portions of the NPC sphere-of-influence areas. The decision to exclude these areas was made in large part to consider land that is either currently being developed, or will be annexed, by local jurisdictions. These areas include the unincorporated communities of Granite Bay, Sheridan, Newcastle, Penryn and North Auburn as well as Sunset Industrial, Placer Vineyards and Regional University specific plan areas.

Most of the County's agricultural land is in unincorporated western Placer County. Agricultural land-uses in 2008 in unincorporated western Placer County include fruit and nut crops (mostly walnut orchards), irrigated field crops (mostly irrigated pasture and rice), and "other" pasture (e.g., non-irrigated). Placer County ranchland (in the northwestern parts of the Plan area and west of SR 65) supports 15,500 head of cattle and 4,000 sheep. Apiaries and nursery products are other elements of agricultural activity in western Placer. Overall, livestock and poultry production was valued at over \$18 million in 2008, while considered singly, rice production ranks

first in value in the County, with a gross value of over \$14 million (Placer County Agricultural Crop Report, 2008).

The Placer County General Plan consists of two type of documents: the countywide General Plan (1994) and a set of more detailed community plans covering specific areas of the unincorporated county. The countywide General Plan provides an overall framework for development of the County and protection of its natural and cultural resources. The goals and policies contained in the countywide General Plan are applicable throughout the County, except to the extent that County authority is preempted by cities within their individual corporate limits. Community plans, adopted in the same manner as the countywide General Plan, provide a more detailed focus on specific geographic areas within the unincorporated county. The goals and policies contained in the community plans supplement and elaborate upon, but do not supersede, the goals and policies of the countywide General Plan. The following community plans apply within the western Placer area: Auburn/Bowman, Dry Creek/West Placer, Newcastle/Ophir, Granite Bay, Horseshoe Bar/Penryn, Sheridan, and Sunset Industrial.

## Population, Housing, and Employment

In 2007, there were about 78,000 people, 20 to 25 percent of the County's total population, and 28,000 housing units in unincorporated western Placer County (California Department of Finance, 2008). Most of these people live in Granite Bay and North Auburn and in rural residential development in the foothills beyond Lincoln and Newcastle. Estimates prepared by SACOG for the Blueprint project show about 30,000 jobs in this part of the unincorporated area—20 percent of County totals. These jobs are concentrated along State Route 49 (North Auburn) and in the Sunset Industrial Area. While the cities in western Placer County have grown significantly over the last several years—adding more than 75,000 residents and 34,000 housing units since the 2000 Census, there has been little net growth in the unincorporated areas. There has only been a total increase of about 8,000 people and 6,000 housing units throughout the entire unincorporated area, including those parts of the County east of Auburn outside of the PCCP Plan area.

Planned and proposed new development would accommodate substantial housing and job growth in unincorporated western Placer County over the next 50 years. The projections prepared for the PCCP economic analysis show an increase of about 74,000 residential units housing 185,000 people (43 percent of the residential growth forecast for this area, including the growth projected for Roseville, Rocklin, and Auburn). The Sunset Industrial Area and other areas planned or proposed for development would attract more jobs to the unincorporated area. The PCCP projection indicates an increase of 93,000 jobs in unincorporated

western Placer over the 50-year permit term (about one-third of the total job growth projected).

## **Conservation, Restoration, and Open Space Policies**

Placer County's 1994 General Plan includes a number of goals and policies addressing open space, habitat, and wildlife resources. There are currently six goals and 32 policies addressing land use and protection of natural resources. These goals and policies cover such subjects as maintaining interconnected greenbelts and open spaces, stream, creek and groundwater protection and enhancements, and wetland and riparian protection. It is anticipated that within the permit term a new General Plan will be adopted that will have additional goals and policies that would support the PCCP.

Placer Legacy is a countywide, open space and habitat protection program. Placer Legacy implements conservation actions throughout unincorporated Placer County to help achieve the General Plan's goals and policies that address open space, habitat, and wildlife resources (see Section 1.5.2, Coordinated Resource Management Plans and Placer Legacy). To achieve these goals and policies of the County's General Plan, Placer Legacy will create a comprehensive open space plan for Placer County that preserves the diversity of plant and animal communities in the County and addresses a variety of other open space needs, from agriculture and recreation to urban edges and public safety. See Section 2.2.4 for discussion of Placer Legacy properties.

Coordinated Resource Management Plans (CRMP; see below) have been developed for the Auburn Ravine/Coon Creek and Dry Creek Watersheds to help implement Placer Legacy's conservation actions. The conservation policies and actions of Placer Legacy and the CRMPs are generally consistent with the goals and objectives of the PCCP and will help to further conservation of natural and semi natural communities and biodiversity in Placer County. Implementation of Placer Legacy programs and the CRMPs activities are covered by the PCCP (see Section 2.3.7, Conservation Strategy Implementation and other Placer County Conservation Programs, for description of these covered activities). Because actions implemented by Placer Legacy (including those guided by the CRMPS) are separate from the PCCP, they are not part of the PCCP's conservation strategy and do not provide mitigation for activities covered by the PCCP.

#### **Coordinated Resource Management Plans**

The PCCP targets stream systems and their associated riparian habitats as a natural community covered under the Plan. Existing Coordinated Resource Management Plans (CRMP) on Dry Creek and Auburn Ravine/Coon Creek can provide valuable resources to assist the Placer Conservation Authority (PCA) in implementing the PCCP by directing

preservation, restoration, and enhancement actions within the covered watersheds.

#### Dry Creek CRMP

The Dry Creek watershed covers approximately 101 square miles, ranging from just west of Auburn, west to Steelhead Creek, and south to Folsom. Major tributaries to Dry Creek include Antelope Creek, Secret Ravine, Miners Ravine, Strap Ravine Creek, Linda Creek, and Cirby Creek. Natural resources within the Dry Creek watershed are overseen and regulated by a variety of state and federal agencies with public trust interests in public safety, resource management, and environmental protection.

Development of the Dry Creek CRMP began in 1995 with the establishment of the Dry Creek Coordinated Management Group, now referred to as the Dry Creek Watershed Council. The Dry Creek CRMP compiles available watershed resource data and the opinions/objectives of a wide variety of stakeholders. It is intended to identify management goals and implementation strategies and, through the use of adaptive management, will remain applicable to future planning and implementation efforts. The Dry Creek CRMP contains a list of policy recommendations intended to facilitate implementation of the watershed management plan as well as a list of priority assignments to guide program implementation. The Plan stresses involvement of local agencies in assisting with meeting the goals of the CRMP.

#### Auburn Ravine/Coon Creek CRMP

Placer County, on behalf of the Auburn Ravine/Coon Creek CRMP, received a grant from the CALFED Ecosystem Restoration Program to prepare an Ecosystem Restoration Program (ERP) for watersheds located within northwestern Placer and southeastern Sutter counties. An ERP is a document that identifies potential restoration opportunities for an identified area using an ecosystem-based approach. The ERP identifies the goals and objectives of the restoration effort, provides background information and baseline data on the watersheds, and discusses the specific ecosystem restoration goals, opportunities, and requirements to implement the ERP.

Three major watersheds, Auburn Ravine, Markham Ravine, and Coon Creek, are located within the Auburn Ravine/Coon Creek ERP planning area, but the ERP focuses mainly on Auburn Ravine and Coon Creek. The ERP focuses on restoration and management of stream channel dynamics and riparian corridors

Implementation of the ERP will help improve habitat for anadromous fish, including steelhead, spring-run Chinook salmon, fall/late fall-run Chinook salmon, and other native fish species. In addition to improving fish habitat, the restoration of these watersheds will improve habitat conditions for numerous wildlife species that utilize the streams and

adjacent riparian and upland habitats. These restoration activities will result in improvements in water quality benefiting downstream water users.

#### **Placer County Tree Ordinance**

The Placer County Tree Ordinance, adopted in 1991, acknowledges that the preservation of trees enhances the natural scenic beauty, improves air quality and water quality, reduces soil erosion, preserves significant natural heritage values, preserves wildlife habitat, and helps to reduce energy consumption for air cooling by providing shade.

The Tree Ordinance establishes County polices to preserve trees wherever feasible, through the review of all proposed development activities where trees are present on either public or private property, while at the same time recognizing individual rights to develop private property in a reasonable manner.

## **Placer County Water Agency**

The Placer County Water Agency (PCWA) is a separate and distinct agency from the county that provides water to the residents and businesses of Placer County. PCWA was created under state legislation entitled the "Placer County Water Agency Act," adopted in 1957 by the California State Legislature and is not a part of Placer County government. PCWA has a broad range of responsibilities, including water resource planning and management, retail and wholesale supply of irrigation water and drinking water, and production of hydroelectric energy. Most surface water supplied by PCWA originates in the Sierra snow pack, primarily the Yuba-Bear and American River watersheds.

PCWA operates an extensive water distribution system that includes 165 miles of canals, ditches, flumes and several small reservoirs that carry about 65,000 acre-feet annually. Approximately 51 miles of the entire canal system are lined with gunite, concrete, and/or are contained in pipelines. The remaining canal sections are unlined. A significant amount of PCWA water irrigates agricultural land. The canals also convey water to eight treatment plants within PCWA service areas. PCWA provides treated domestic water to more than 150,000 people.

PCWA has designated five service retail zones. Two of those zones lie within the Plan area. Zone 1 includes territory under the land-use authorities of the Cities of Auburn, Rocklin, and Lincoln, a portion of the City of Roseville, the Town of Loomis, and unincorporated Placer County. Zone 1 is further broken up into Upper Zone 1 and Lower Zone 1 to delineate the higher elevation service areas of Auburn and Bowman from the remaining lower elevation areas.

The other zone that lies within the Plan area is Zone 5. Zone 5 was created in 1999 to reduce reliance on groundwater supplies by providing

surface water for commercial agriculture in the westernmost section of Placer County. Zone 5 is within the PCCP Plan area and is served entirely by raw surface water supplies.

PCWA's water distribution system is physically tied to PG&E's Drum-Spaulding Project, through multiple power generation facilities, reservoirs, and water purchase points (buy points).

PG&E's Drum-Spaulding Project supply originates from the upper Yuba River Basin, augmented by Bowman Lake and Lake Spaulding on the South Yuba River and Rollins Reservoir on the Bear River. The water supply is conveyed primarily via the Drum, Bear River, and Upper Boardman canals. PG&E operates the Drum-Spaulding Project mainly for hydropower purposes. The majority of water deliveries to PCWA depend wholly on PG&E operations. PCWA has standing contracts with PG&E for over 125,000 acre-feet of water/year delivered at specific designated points for subsequent conveyance by PCWA to defined service areas.

The Middle Fork Project (MFP) is a multipurpose project designed to conserve and control waters of the Middle Fork American River, the Rubicon River, and certain tributaries for irrigation, domestic, commercial, and recreational purposes, and for the generation of electricity. Principal MFP features include two storage reservoirs (French Meadows and Hell Hole), five diversion dams, five hydroelectric power plants, diversion and water transmission facilities, five tunnels, and related facilities.

The authorized diversion points for the PCWA MFP supply are at the Auburn Dam site on the North Fork American River and Folsom Lake. The permanent American River Pump Station (ARPS) is used to pump water from the North Fork of the American River into the Auburn Ravine Tunnel. The Auburn Ravine Tunnel discharges into the Auburn Ravine, a natural water course, to deliver water to downstream agricultural customers and water treatment plants.

#### **PCWA Water Sources and Distribution Zones**

In addition to serving its agricultural and domestic water customers, PCWA wholesales treated water to the City of Lincoln and other small special districts. Untreated water is sold to the City of Roseville, San Juan Water District, Sacramento Suburban Water District and through other contracts.

Raw water customers throughout the Zone 1 area are predominantly serviced through the Boardman, Caperton, Antelope, and Dutch Ravine canals, and numerous other canals fed from the Boardman Canal, including the Fiddler-Green, Greeley, Banvard, Sugarloaf, Red Ravine, Barton, Perry, and several other canals. The Dutch Ravine Canal, which

receives flows from PG&E's South Canal, may either convey raw water to customers below in Zone 1, or during rare instances, supplement flows in Auburn Ravine for deliveries to raw water customers in the Zone 5 service area.

PCWA operates two regulating reservoirs within Zone 1 to manage deliveries to raw water customers. The Clover Valley Reservoir, which receives water flows from the Antelope Canal, releases water to the lower Antelope Canal, as well as the Antelope Stub Canal. Mammoth Reservoir receives water flows from the Boardman Canal, and releases to the Boardman Canal downstream. Several canals receive water flows from the Boardman Canal downstream from Mammoth Reservoir and make deliveries to raw water customers, including the Turner, Yankee Hill, Ferguson, Stallman, and Baughman canals. The terminus of PCWA's raw water canal system in Zone 1 is the end of the Boardman Canal, located in northeastern Roseville.

The Zone 5 service area receives water deliveries from PG&E conveyed through Auburn Ravine, and delivered to customers along Auburn Ravine and canals used by the PCWA downstream. PCWA water supplies originating from either the South Fork Yuba and/or Bear River watersheds are purchased from PG&E and diverted to Auburn Ravine at a few locations downstream from PG&E Wise Penstock to meet raw water delivery demands in Zone 5. These diversions include the Dutch Ravine Canal, which receives flows from PG&E's South Canal and YB 136. PCWA may also deliver water to Zone 5 customers pumped from the North Fork of the American River through the ARPS and conveyed through the Auburn Ravine. The Nevada Irrigation District (NID) purchases water from PG&E below the Wise Powerhouse for release into Auburn Ravine. NID also releases water to Auburn Ravine from their North Canal, especially during the yearly PG&E outage.

Auburn Ravine is seasonally dammed at Moore Dam, where flows are diverted to Moore Canal for deliveries to PCWA Zone 5 customers. Further downstream, flows are diverted from Auburn Ravine for deliveries to PCWA Zone 5 customers at the Pleasant Grove Dam to the Pleasant Grove Canal. Several NID canals divert flows from Auburn Ravine with temporary and permanent control structures for deliveries to NID customers.

The principal activities for which PCWA seeks permitting for in the PCCP operations and maintenance of its water distribution system and a few larger construction projects (see discussion of Covered Activities, below). Projects involving its water supplies, hydropower facilities and most major capital projects will be subject to additional permitting requirements including but not limited to licensing by the Federal Agency Regulatory Commission.

## **South Placer Regional Transportation Authority**

The South Placer Regional Transportation Authority (SPRTA) is a Joint Powers Authority comprised of the Cities of Lincoln, Rocklin, Roseville and the County of Placer. The Authority was formed for the purpose of implementing a Regional Transportation and Air Quality Mitigation Fee program to fund specified regional transportation projects.

In 2002, the Placer County Transportation Planning Agency (PCTPA) began work on the Placer Parkway project on behalf of SPRTA. The Placer Parkway is to be an approximate 15-mile long, high-speed transportation facility, which will connect SR 65 in western Placer County to SR 70/99 in south Sutter County. Placer Parkway will link existing and planned development near some of the region's fastest growing communities, while improving access to the I-5 corridor, downtown Sacramento, and the Sacramento International Airport.

# 2.2.3 Existing Land Use and Future Land Conversion

Conversion of natural and agricultural land to accommodate population and economic growth will cause the majority of the impacts to natural communities and covered species over the life of the PCCP permit. Understanding land use and land conversion in the Plan area is an important step in developing the impact analysis for covered activities in Chapter 4. The adopted general plans for the City of Lincoln and Placer County were used to identify the future extent and location of urban and rural development that could be covered by the Plan. Analysis of general plans and proposals for development in the NPC (Auburn, Loomis, Rocklin, and Roseville) show that some of the future growth in western Placer County would occur in the NPC and would not be covered by the PCCP. Western Placer is the portion of the County most affected by man's use of the land. Agriculture and urban development have substantially altered the natural landscape. Western Placer contains significant areas of urbanization along the I-80 corridor in Roseville and Rocklin, and also along the SR 65 corridor in Lincoln.

Outside of these major urban areas, in the PCCP area, three-quarters of the land is in some form of agricultural or natural land use (cropland, rangeland, and forestland). Figure 2-2 depicts the land uses in western Placer County. Table 2-1(below) divides existing land use in the 212,000-acre PCCP area into six broad categories:

<u>Urban and suburban</u> land includes existing residential development at densities of more than one unit to the acre, as well as commercial, industrial, and public facility uses, urban parks, golf courses, landfill or other open land industrial uses.

<u>Rural Residential</u> development is at a lower density than suburban, ranging from one unit per 10 acres up to one unit per acre. Existing rural residential development is a major component of the PCCP plan area, nearly double the extent of urban/suburban use.

<u>Agriculture – Cropland</u> includes orchards, vineyards, irrigated pasture, row crops, rice (including fallow land), and idle but plowed land. These types of agricultural uses occupy about 12 percent of the total area.

<u>Agriculture – Rangeland</u> includes grasslands and non-irrigated pasture with associated vernal pools and seasonal wetlands, stock ponds, springs and seeps. Over one-third of present land cover is in rangeland.

<u>Forested and other Natural Lands</u> includes blue oak woodland, mixed oak woodland, rivers, creeks and riparian corridors, and small rock outcrops. Some of this area, including low density oak woodland savanna, is used as rangeland. Forested and other Natural Lands are one-quarter of the total area.

<u>Open Water</u> includes lakes and reservoirs greater than one acre in size. About 5,000 acres fall into this category, mainly in reservoirs on the Bear and American rivers along the County boundary.

Table 2-1. Existing Land Use in the Plan Area		
Land Use Type	Area (ac)	% of Total
Urban and Suburban	17,639	8%
Rural Residential	30,526	14%
Agriculture - Cropland	25,840	12%
Agriculture - Rangeland	79,349	37%
Forest/Natural Land	53,504	25%
Open Water	5,075	2%
	211,933	100%

Note: Plan area Includes land in the City of Lincoln, the city's Sphere-Of-Influence, and the rest of the unincorporated Lincoln Planning Area and in the rest of unincorporated western Placer County. It does not include the land in the Non-Participating Cities and some parts of their spheres-of-influence.

Source: TRA based on Land Cover interpretation by Jones & Stokes (2002) for foothills and by Northfork Associates (2009) based on 2007 and 2008 aerial photography for valley.

# 2.2.4 Protection of Open Space Lands

Within the 212,000-acre Plan area, 16,123 acres (seven percent of Plan area) are currently protected as open space. Figure 2-3 depicts the

location of these properties within the Plan area and Table 2-2 identifies the properties and lists their area. These open space areas include large regional parks, private non-profit conservation lands, and private for-profit mitigation banks. The majority of the open space reserves (including both large and smaller open space areas) fall in the valley (10,192 acres), with over half of that in Lincoln and the Lincoln planning area. Existing reserves in the north foothills total 6,030 acres. These existing reserves can serve as a foundation for conservation planning in the Plan area. Most have significant biological values, some already provide habitat for species covered under the PCCP and some are located where they could provide an anchor for the establishment of large, interconnected habitats.

Most of these existing conservation lands will not be enrolled within the ultimate PCCP Reserve System. However, they will help achieve the biological goals and objectives of the PCCP because they provide habitat linkages, are a source of covered species for PCCP reserves and can be the nuclei for future PCCP acquisitions. This is further described in Chapter 5, Section 5.2.5.

In addition to open space reserves, there is open space located within urban parks and in developments such as Sun City in Lincoln. Some of this land may provide value as wildlife habitat. Also, lands currently under Williamson Act contracts (both agricultural fields and range lands) also serve as open space and habitat. Although these areas have not been included in the acreage count for existing reserves lands, they do provide open space value to the overall Reserve System.

The following section describes some of the larger existing open space lands within the Plan area and the entities that manage them.

## **Placer County Placer Legacy Properties**

The Placer Legacy Open Space and Agricultural Conservation Program was created to protect and conserve open space and agricultural lands and to implement the goals, policies, and programs of the 1994 Placer County General Plan.

The Placer Legacy program is not intended to represent the open space and conservation elements of the County's General Plan, which are already contained in the 1994 General Plan Policy Document. Instead, the program implements the policies within those elements by seeking to protect open space resources. In addition to implementing the General Plan, this program also supplements existing open space and conservation programs. County and city park departments continue to develop park and recreation facilities for County residents, responding to changes occurring in the County. Within the western Placer Plan area, roughly 6,700 acres have already been placed into open space/agricultural conservation under Placer Legacy program of which a

portion is being considered as the initial reserve requirements under the PCCP. The larger parcels, listed below, contain grassland, blue oak woodland, and foothill riparian habitats.

#### **Bruin Ranch**

The Bruin Ranch is a 1,773 acre property located along the Bear River in the Garden Bar/Big Hill Area in the foothills northwest of Auburn. The property is owned in fee by the Placer Land Trust and has a conservation easement on the property held by Placer County. The site is dominated by blue oak woodlands and represents the largest intact oak woodland under single ownership within the PCCP coverage area. The site also contains a significant amount of riverine habitat associated with a 3-mile reach of the Bear River along the property's northern boundary. A number of intermittent streams are on the property predominately within the Bear River watershed. The County's conservation easement includes rights for trail construction for passive trail use as well as a staging area for a parking lot and restroom. No active recreation will be allowed. Ranching activities will continue as well as the establishment of one homesite for an onsite caretaker.

#### Blue Oak Ranch

Through a gift from the long-time property owner, the County secured a conservation easement over 21 residential lots totaling 500 acres. Adjacent to Hidden Falls Regional Park in the northeast portion of the Plan area, this easement removed approximately 140 units of potential holding capacity from sensitive habitat and limits each remaining parcel to a three-acre use area. The easement preserves the rural residential landscape and open space character of this property, which is dominated by blue oak woodlands and riparian areas. The easement does not permit public access.

#### Hidden Falls Regional Park - Phase 1

Hidden Falls Regional Park - Phase I (Didion Ranch) is located in the Coon Creek watershed between Auburn and Lincoln. The 220-acre open space park features seven miles of trails suitable for hiking, running, biking and horseback riding. In addition, visitors can enjoy fishing, picnicking, wildlife viewing, photography and other passive recreational pursuits. A paved, American's with Disabilities-accessible trail, parking lot, equestrian staging area, and restrooms are available.

#### Hidden Falls Regional Park - Phase 2

Phase 2 (Spears Ranch) consists of 979 acres of grassland, live, blue and black oak woodland, foothill riparian woodland and freshwater marsh. Over two miles of Coon Creek and its tributaries traverse the site. When combined with the adjacent Phase I, over 1,100 acres will be available for passive recreational activities.

#### Kirk Ranch

This 281-acre property in western Placer County near Camp Far West Reservoir is protected through the purchase of a conservation easement, thus preserving the property's long-standing history of agricultural activities and a large tract of rangeland. Property assets include dense stands of blue oak woodland, grassland/dry pasture, perennial and seasonal creeks, and scenic views.

#### **Lakeview Farms - Sundance**

The 137-acre property, located at the western edge of the Plan area, is protected through the purchase of conservation values that include floodwater conveyance and storage, flood management and wildlife habitat and agricultural purposes. The project was completely funded by a grant from the Department of Water Resources and includes opportunities for riparian restoration. No public access is permitted.

## **Placer Land Trust Properties**

Placer Land Trust (PLT) was founded in 1991 as a community-based private nonprofit organization dedicated to preserving lands that hold valuable natural, historic, and agricultural resources in Placer County. Their mission is to work with willing landowners and conservation partners (e.g., Placer Legacy, Trust for Public Land, etc.) to permanently preserve natural and agricultural lands in Placer County for future generations.

Concurrent with the PCCP process, PLT is developing a Strategic Conservation Plan which focuses PLT's long term acquisition strategy on landscape-scale conservation and sustainable management. The Strategic Conservation Plan identifies geographic and programmatic focus areas for PLT, several of which fall within the PCCP boundary.

PLT works with willing landowners to permanently protect land mainly through either acquisition of fee title or by working with the landowner to place a conservation or agricultural easement on the land.

Fee title ownership allows PLT to have direct control over the land. As such, PLT actively manages these lands and may decide to restore portions of the land in keeping with their mission, allow public access, construct public recreation trails, or otherwise enhance the land and its public benefits. Fee title ownership is not ideal for all lands, especially lands that require involved management or in cases where the landowner desires to continue to live on the land.

PLT currently holds over a dozen conservation easements and agricultural easements. Conservation and agricultural easements are legal agreements between a landowner (including successors) and a land trust that permanently limits a property's uses in order to preserve its "conservation values". Conservation easements are commonly used to

restrict future subdivision and land development. An "agricultural conservation easement" is very similar to a "conservation easement" except that an agricultural easement includes as part of its purpose the perpetuation of agricultural uses. Conservation and agricultural easements keep land in private ownership. Landowners can negotiate to retain certain rights to farm, graze, harvest timber, and build structures that are needed to manage the land, etc.

The following properties located within western Placer County have been preserved through PLT's partnerships outside of the County's Placer Legacy Program. Many of these properties may provide additional biological benefits to the PCCP and provide an opportunity for connectivity to the PCCP reserve area.

#### **Liberty Ranch Big Hill Preserve**

Although secured by Placer Land Trust, the County also contributed funds towards this 313-acre conservation and public access trail easement. Placer Land Trust holds the conservation easement. Previously known as the Freiheit property, the preserve is located in the Big Hill-Garden Bar area spanning the Coon Creek and Bear River watersheds in the northeast portion of the Plan area. The property contains significant oak woodlands, granite rock outcroppings, seasonal streams and habitat for numerous wildlife species. The property supports cattle grazing. Liberty Ranch offers panoramic views of the Central Valley, Sutter Buttes, Coast Range and Sierra Nevada. The property adjoins two Land Trust properties (the 160-acre Kotomyan Big Hill Preserve and the 321-acre Taylor Ranch Preserve), creating an 800-acre open space preserve that is very near to Hidden Falls Regional Park. The purchase includes a public access trail easement to be improved once additional trail connections are obtained.

#### **Taylor Ranch**

The Placer Legacy program was a funding partner in this acquisition effort led by Placer Land Trust and the Trust for Public Land. Placer Land Trust owns this property in fee title. The ranch property consists of 321 acres of oak woodlands situated less than a mile from Hidden Falls Regional Park. The site features a wide range of riparian and foothill habitat and is traversed by Coon Creek. The property supports cattle grazing. The purchase includes a public access trail easement to be improved once additional trail connections are obtained.

#### **Doty Ravine Preserve**

Doty Ravine Preserve is a 427-acre native grassland property owned by PLT in fee title. The preserve includes native grasslands, vernal pools and a stretch of Doty Ravine, which supports salmonids. The Preserve also supports grazing opportunities for local grass-fed lamb and cattle, and local honey production. PLT makes use of the Preserve for various restoration and enhancement projects (stream and floodplain restoration, riparian and upland habitat restoration, wildlife breeding, wetland creation,

etc.) as well as scientific research and limited public access (community tours, educational opportunities and related activities).

#### **Garden Bar Preserve**

Garden Bar Preserve is a 912-acre blue oak woodland property along the Bear River that is permanently protected by a conservation easement held by PLT as part of its Bear River Protection Program. The goal of this program is to protect the Bear River watershed from Lake Combie to Camp Far West Reservoir. This area contains some of the last roadless areas in western Placer County, as well as significant oak woodland, rangelands, and wilderness areas. The Preserve contains the historic Garden Bar crossing. The property supports cattle and bison grazing. There is no public access to the Preserve.

#### **Kotomyan Big Hill Preserve**

Kotomyan Big Hill Preserve is a 160-acre preserve adjacent to both Liberty Ranch Big Hill Preserve and Taylor Ranch Preserve. The Preserve is owned by PLT in fee title. The site contains oak woodlands, including blue oak, and provides habitat for wildlife species such as mountain lion, bobcat, several species of hawk, rodents, snakes, owls, and songbirds, as well as scenic panoramic vistas of the Sierra. The property supports cattle grazing. There is currently no public access to the Preserve, although PLT plans to allow public access in conjunction with new trail development in the area.

#### **Reason Farms Environmental Preserve**

Reason Farms Environmental Preserve is a 2,000-acre public-private partnership for conservation and restoration that is owned and managed by the City of Roseville. As part of its West Placer Habitat Protection Program, PLT holds a conservation easement on a portion of this property, 221 acres. along Pleasant Grove Creek. Pleasant Grove Creek forms a riparian corridor through Reason Farms that is used by great blue heron, egret, and trout as well as provides nesting habitat for Swainson's hawk. The City of Roseville is re-creating vernal pools, historically present on this property, which will provide habitat for the endangered vernal pool fairy shrimp. The property also contains oak woodlands and grassland habitat. The property may support livestock grazing and limited public access in the future.

#### **Swainsons Grassland Preserve**

Swainsons Grassland Preserve is a 469-acre native grassland property owned by PLT in fee title as part of PLT's West Placer Habitat Protection Program. The Preserve includes native grasslands and various wetlands which provides essential habitat for a wide variety of birds, notably Swainson's hawk and western burrowing owl. In addition, the Preserve contains 19 acres of vernal pools, two acres of seasonal wetlands, three acres of seasonal wetland swales, and six acres of fresh emergent wetlands providing critical habitat for a host of waterfowl as well as the endangered vernal pool fairy shrimp and tri-colored blackbird. The

property supports cattle grazing. PLT makes use of the Preserve for scientific research and limited public access (community tours, educational opportunities and related activities).

#### **Toad Hill Ranch Preserve**

Toad Hill Ranch Preserve is 1,000 acres north of Roseville, on which PLT holds conservation easements as part of PLT's West Placer Habitat Protection Program. The Preserve includes native grasslands, vernal pools and other wetlands, and provides essential habitat for a variety of wildlife. The landowners are creating and enhancing vernal pools and other wetlands on the property as a mitigation bank. The property supports cattle grazing. Currently there is no public access, although limited public access could be allowed in the future. It is adjacent to PLT's 221-acre conservation easement on the Reason Farms Environmental Preserve and over 2,000 contiguous acres of permanently protected habitat currently maintained as open space by the City of Roseville. A portion of this property is also managed as a mitigation bank (see the discussion below regarding the Toadhill Ranch Mitigation Bank).

#### **Shutamul Bear River Preserve**

The 40-acre Shutamul Bear River Preserve was acquired by PLT in fee title as part of PLT's Bear River Protection Program. The Bear River flows along two sides of the Preserve, which also contains valuable oak woodland and riparian habitat. The Preserve is one of the few foothill locations that host a large population of the rare California dogface butterfly, the California state insect, and its equally rare host plant, false indigo. There is currently no public access on the Preserve.

## **City of Lincoln Open Space Preservation**

The City of Lincoln has several areas set aside as open space within the Plan area. Some were established to mitigate impacts of development projects. These preserved areas include biological resources that will remain protected in perpetuity.

#### **Foskett Ranch**

There are three separate preserve areas that are owned by the City of Lincoln and all carry deed restrictions (perpetual conservation easements). They are zoned Open-Space and were all required to be set aside for project mitigation. The northerly preserve is 55.1-acrers in size and has Fairy Shrimp habitat within Hardpan Merhten vernal pools. There are also seasonal wetlands and a drainage swale with freshwater marsh habitat. Located in the mid-eastern portion is a 48.5-acre preserve, which has hardpan Merhten vernal pool Fairy Shrimp habitat, seasonal wetlands; and the riparian area of the Markham Ravine which is also a 100-year flood plain. At the south end is 16.4-acres in size and is primarily a seasonal wetland and the riparian area of the Markham Ravine which is also a 100-year flood plain.

#### Markham Ravine

This open space was required to be set aside as for the mitigation for several project areas. These consist of the Brookview I, II & III projects, Foskett Ranch, many subdivisions in the Aircenter project, and the closed (now in the decommissioning process) Nicolaus Road Wastewater Treatment Plant. More specifically:

- Brookview I, II & III projects: The approximate 13.5-acres are owned by the City of Lincoln in fee. They carry deed restrictions (perpetual conservation easements) a maintenance annuity was filed with the City to help offset maintenance costs of the Lighting and Landscape District.
- Fosket Ranch Project: Discussed above, the Markham Ravine Riparian area.
- Aircenter Project: Approximate 81.0-acres of Open-Space are owned by the City of Lincoln in fee. They carry deed restrictions (perpetual conservation easements) a maintenance annuity was filed with the City to help offset maintenance costs of the Lighting and Landscape District.
- Nicolaus Road WWTP: When fully decommissioned, the former wastewater treatment plant will have approximately 99.5-acres of Bulrush, Open Water, Valley Oak, California Annual Grassland, Riverine Seasonal Wetlands, Depressional Seasonal Wetlands, and the Ravine's 100-year flood plain. The area is owned in fee by the City of Lincoln.

## Ingram Slough (Lincoln Crossing) main, north and south

This is a part of the Lincoln Crossing Project Area required to be set aside for mitigation. The open space located within Lincoln Crossing is owned by the City and has deed restrictions on what activities can be conducted in the preserve areas. The areas are maintained through the city's Lighting and Landscaping District.

#### Ingram Slough East (Del Web)

Includes seasonal wetlands, vernal pools, saline wetlands, ponds, elderberry bushes. All Open-Space areas within the Sun City Lincoln Hills are owned and maintained by the Sun City Lincoln Hills Community Association.

#### **Auburn Ravine**

The 60.7-acre Auburn Ravine Natural Preserve Area located west of highway 65 was required to be set aside for mitigation for the Lincoln Crossing Project and the 3D-North projects. The area also contains a 10.3 acre-park site within it. The preserve comprises of riparian woodland and Blue Oak woodland. The Auburn Ravine supports a high diversity of aquatic plant and animal species including anadromous populations of steelhead trout and Chinook salmon. The area was dedicated in fee to

the City of Lincoln and is subject to a perpetual conservation easement and is maintained by the City's Lighting and Landscaping District.

#### McBean Park Expansion (Auburn Ravine)

The 66-acre preserve area is located east of Highway 65 and west of Highway 193. It carries seasonal wetlands and is a heavily wooded riparian habitat within a 100-year flood plain. The area has 4,700 linear feet of riverine habitat for endangered native Steelhead Trout and Salmon, waterfowl and other numerous species of indigenous wildlife. It was dedicated to the City by Del Webb in fee for mitigation of the Sun City project. It carries a perpetual conservation easement and is managed by the Wildlife Heritage Foundation.

#### **Northeast Preserve area**

This area was required to be set aside for mitigation - includes intermittent stream, seasonal ponds, oak groves, rock outcroppings, and wetland areas. Owned and maintained by the Sun City Lincoln Hills Community Association.

## Sterling Pointe (formerly known as Eastpark)

Includes 9.5-acres of land that was required to be set aside as wetland mitigation for the 76.8-acre Sterling Pointe project area. As shown in the attached exhibits, the 9.5-acres is made up of two (2) separate preserve areas. Within the 1.8± acre preserve along the northeast boundary, a total of 1.11 acres of jurisdictional waters will be preserved including 0.03 acre of seasonal wetland, 1.01 acres of freshwater marsh, and 0.07 acre of perennial stream. Within the 7.7-acre preserve that lies along the southeast boundary, a total of 1.34-cares of jurisdictional waters will be preserved. These consist of 1.03 acres of vernal pools, 0.21 acre of seasonal wetland, 0.06 acre of spring, and 0.04 acre of seep. Overall 2.45 acres of waters of the United States are preserved. The area has been dedicated to the City of Lincoln as a perpetual conservation easement with an endowment to manage and monitor the site in perpetuity. Maintenance of the site is also augmented through the Lighting and Landscaping District.

#### 150 acre Preserve

Required to be set aside for mitigation of the Del Web project. The area includes the Orchard Creek and associated wetlands, wetland preserve area, vernal pools, elderberry bushes. The area is owned by the City of Lincoln in fee, caries a perpetual conservation easement and is managed by the Wildlife Heritage Foundation.

#### **Orchard Creek Preserve**

Required to be set aside for mitigation of the Del Webb project. The area includes various wetlands, a small year-around lake on the north branch, and another year-around lake on the south branch. Owned and maintained by the Sun City Lincoln Hills Community Association.

#### **Twelve Bridges**

Required to be set aside for mitigation. Includes habitat preserve and enhancement areas, stream corridors, vernal pools, wetlands, blue oak woodlands, blue oak-digger pine woodland, includes riverine environs, sensitive biotic habitat, annual grasslands. Owned by the City of Lincoln, Placer Holdings, B&Z TB LLC, & JTS Communities.

#### **Seep Preserve**

This open space was required to be set aside for mitigation of the Del Webb project. The area includes natural wetlands and environs. Owned and maintained by the Sun City Lincoln Hills Community Association.

#### **Environmental Learning area**

This 150.3-acre parcel of land was set aside as mitigation for the Twelve Bridges project area as Open-Space Reserve. It was donated via a conservation easement to the Western Placer Education Foundation in 1999 to establish an interpretative center near the site of an ancient Native American encampment known as CA-PLA-606H; and to allow for exploration and study of this culturally and biologically significant area. The archeological site also contains terraced hillsides developed by J. Parker Whitney to cultivate citrus. The site also has elderberry bush resources, oak woodlands, jurisdictional wetlands and riparian wetlands (a portion of Pleasant Grove Creek).

#### "D" Preserve

The 9.738-acre preserve was required to be set aside to mitigate for the 3D Project. The preserve has 6.52-acres of vernal pools and drainage swales considered habitat for vernal pool crustaceans. The wetland includes 6.255-acres of vernal pools and 0.268-acres of wetland swale. A conservation easement was granted to the City of Lincoln in March of 2005, together with sufficient funds to manage and monitor the site in perpetuity. Maintenance of the site is also augmented through the Lighting and Landscaping District.

## Other Open Space within the Plan Area

There are other areas that are protected within the Plan area that include conservation easements, private or public land holdings or mitigation lands. Although these lands have been protected for various reasons, they contribute to connectivity and help build upon the PCCP reserve area. They are as follows:

#### **Aitken Ranch**

Aitken Ranch is a 320-acre property located along Auburn Ravine that is protected by a habitat conservation easement. It contains a relatively large area of valley foothill riparian habitat, one mile of Auburn Ravine, valley grasslands and preserved and created vernal pools. The property is managed for its habitat conservation values and includes grazing

activities for habitat management purposes. No public access is presently permitted on this property however there is a right for Placer County to establish a public trail along Auburn Ravine.

#### **Bureau of Land Management**

Approximately 143 acres located adjacent to the Bear River. This area has similar habitat types as those found on the Garden Bar Preserve and includes blue oak woodlands and other hardwoods along the Bear River. The northern boundary of the property is the Bear River that separates Placer and Nevada Counties.

#### **Hanley Ranch**

The 186-acre Hanley Ranch is located in the Coon Creek watershed along main stem Coon Creek approximately 5 miles north of the City of Lincoln. The property was acquired by Caltrans for mitigation for state highway construction impacts outside of Placer County. The site contains blue oak woodland, grassland, valley foothill riparian and riverine habitats. The site will be maintained in perpetuity as habitat. No public recreation or uses are proposed.

#### **Cummings**

This is a habitat conservation easement that encumbers approximately 62 acres in size and located in the southwest portion of the Plan area along Lower Curry Creek. The site is encumbered in order to protect a vernal pool compensatory mitigation area and existing habitat values.

#### **Dry Creek Greenway**

A 133-acre public land holding along Dry Creek west and north of the City of Roseville. This is a portion of the larger Dry Creek Greenway open space area envisioned to provide a continuous system of preserved lands and habitat while providing areas for passive recreation. This open space greenway contains natural waterways, riparian corridors and other aquatic habitat.

#### **Lincoln School Preserve**

This preserve contains approximately 270+ acres outside of the City of Lincoln within the Markham Ravine area. This area is predominately grasslands and vernal pool areas. Vernal pool conservation credits have been sold from the property by Wildlands through the Western Placer Schools Conservation Bank.

#### **Locust Road Mitigation Bank**

The Locust Road Mitigation Bank is a 75-acre site owned and managed by Wildlands, Inc. as a mitigation bank for seasonal wetlands, compensatory vernal pool replacement and Swainsons hawk foraging habitat. The site is located near the Sutter County line between Locust Road and Brewer Road.

#### **Mariner Vernal Pool Conservation Bank**

This bank is approximately a 160-site located adjacent to the conserved Rockwell Ranch property outside of Lincoln. It is managed by Westervelt Ecological Services. The Center for Natural Lands Management holds a conservation easement on the property. The land is comprised of vernal pools, wetlands, and uplands, and provides high quality habitat for vernal pool tadpole shrimp and vernal pool fairy shrimp. Monitoring on the site also resulted in the positive identification of a conservancy fairy shrimp; the first occurrence in Placer County.

#### **Moore Ranch Conservancy**

This property is located along the southern bank of Orchard Creek within the Lincoln area. It's approximately 145 acres and includes created vernal pools, wetlands, riparian, and grassland habitats as well as floodplain areas.

#### **Nicolaus Road Preserve**

This 80 acre preserve is located along Markham within the floodplains of Markham Ravine and contains floodplains, riparian areas and aquatic habitat.

#### **Orchard Creek Conservation Bank**

Orchard Creek (approximately 716 acres) was established under a banking agreement between Wildlands, the USFWS, and the CDFG. The Wildlife Heritage Foundation holds the conservation easement. Orchard Creek is composed of annual grassland, seasonal wetlands, seasonal marsh, vernal pools and swales, and seasonal streams. There are currently no credits available left at this time.

#### **Rockwell Ranch**

This 500+ acre property was acquired by Caltrans to preserve existing vernal pool resources as part of the mitigation requirements for the construction of the Highway 65 Bypass. The property contains grassland and vernal pools and is adjacent to the Lakeview Farms conservation area.

#### Sheridan East

The Wildlands Sheridan East Mitigation Bank preserve encompasses 342 acres and provides compensatory mitigation for the following habitats which have been created and restored by Wildlands: vernal pools and swales; seasonal and perennial marsh; seasonal wetland; perennial stream channel; oak woodland; open water marsh; elderberry scrub and savanna; riparian scrub and woodland.

#### Silvergate

The Silvergate Mitigation Bank (SMB), which is owned by the Sheridan Mitigation Corp and maintained by Restoration Resources, Inc., is a mitigation bank established in 1993 providing wetland mitigation credits. The 641 acre SMB contains constructed vernal pools, seasonal wetlands,

riparian wetlands and emergent marsh. In addition valley oak /elderberry savannah habitat was constructed at this site to provide mitigation for the valley elderberry longhorn beetle (VELB) and future valley oak impacts. The bank has additional oak, VELB, and vernal pool creation credits available.

#### **Toad Hill Ranch Mitigation Bank**

The Toad Hill Ranch Mitigation Bank is 1,646 acres of land located northwest of Roseville on which Wildlands, Inc.owns and manages a mitigation bank for vernal pool creation/restoration credits, seasonal wetland credits and Swainsons hawk foraging area credits. The site includes native grasslands, created/restored vernal pools and other wetlands, and provides essential habitat for a variety of wildlife. The property supports cattle grazing as part of the reserve management plan for the property. There is no public access. It is adjacent to PLT's 221-acre conservation easement on the Reason Farms Environmental Preserve and over 2,000 contiguous acres of permanently protected habitat currently maintained as open space by the City of Roseville.

#### **Triangle Properties**

Located in the Upper Yankee Slough watershed, this 242 acre parcel off Riosa Road is listed as being owned by Triangle Properties. PCCP community types potentially found on site are grassland/vernal pool complexes, valley oak savanna, riparian, seasonal wetlands and grassland. The site includes created vernal pools that are associated with COE permit requirements.

#### **Lincoln Global Communications Site (United States Air Force)**

This 216 acre property, as the named indicates, is a USAF facility off Moore Road. According to Placer County parcel data, the property is split into two parcels and is still owned by the Federal government under the jurisdiction of the Beale Air Force Base and is functionally part of the 2049<sup>th</sup> Communication Group. PCCP community types potentially found on site are grasslands, vernal pools and seasonal wetlands.

#### Yankee Slough

Located on 747 acres of rolling foothills in Placer County, the Environmental Stewardship Foundation manages Yankee Slough Conservation Bank. Yankee Slough contains oak savannah, riparian, and grassland habitat. In addition, vernal pools and seasonal wetlands have been created and preserved at the site. Species that may occur onsite include vernal pool fairy shrimp, VELB and Swainson's hawk.

## Other Open Space and Conservation Programs

#### Spenceville Conceptual Area Protection Plan (CAPP)

The Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) acquires real property or rights in real property on behalf of the Department of Fish and Game (DFG) and

can also grant funds to other governmental entities or nonprofit organizations to acquire real property or rights in real property. A significant amount of the recent bond money for habitat protection has been administered through the WCB. A CAPP is a planning document that is used to support acquisitions. Each DFG region develops plans relevant to their area. DFG Region 2, which includes Placer County, developed the Spenceville CAPP for the foothill blue oak woodland ecosystem of Placer, Nevada, Yuba, and Butte Counties. It includes about 25,000 acres of blue oak woodland habitat in the Plan area north of Coon Creek. When the PCCP is adopted, the PCCP managing entity will be able to access WCB funds available only to acquire areas designated as CAPP priorities by DFG.

#### **Central Valley Joint Venture**

The Central Valley Joint Venture (CVJV) is a partnership dedicated to the conservation of wetlands and other habitats within the California Central Valley for the benefit of waterfowl, shorebirds, and riparian-dependent songbirds. The CVJV has been in existence for over 20 years and was created in response to widespread concern over declining populations of migratory and resident bird species. In 2006, the CVJV published an implementation plan that establishes objectives for habitat protection, restoration, and management. The implementation plan explicitly acknowledges the important role that agriculture plays in sustaining populations of migratory and resident birds. Neither the CVJV nor its implementation plan has regulatory authority. The CVJV depends on voluntary partnerships to achieve its objectives.

The American and Sutter Basins Working Group (ASBWG) is a consortium of public agencies and non-governmental organizations that emerged as a sub-group of the CVJV. The mission of the ASBWG is to further the goals of the CVJV through wetland and riparian habitat conservation and preservation of agricultural uses in the American and Sutter Basins. The American Basin covers the entire Plan area from the Bear River watershed south to the American River watershed. The primary conservation focus of ASBWG in Placer County is the area between the Bear River and Pleasant Grove watersheds west of SR 65.

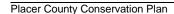
Key partners in the ASBWG include Ducks Unlimited, Placer County Resource Conservation District, Sutter County Resource Conservation District, California Wildlife Conservation Board, Placer County, Sutter County, California Waterfowl Association, California Department of Fish and Game, US Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Trust for Public Land.

The ASBWG is developing a Working Landscape Strategy for the American and Sutter Basins. The basis for the Strategy is the concept of a "working landscape" within which agricultural uses support the protection and enhancement of biodiversity. Agricultural uses in turn, are supported by policies and actions aimed at reducing pressures to convert agricultural lands to urban development. The Strategy is entirely

voluntary and represents a blueprint for conserving and improving wildlife habitat, recognizing the key role that agriculture plays in sustaining wildlife populations.

Some of the projects that have resulted from these efforts include the following:

Fickworth/Janson Contiguous Properties – Riparian Restoration This riparian restoration project to improve aquatic habitat will involve two contiguous landowners along Coon Creek. The project will enhance a major stream crossing with a large culvert across the stream channel that will keep farm vehicles out of the stream bed and provide erosion control. The stream crossing will be safe for fish and will provide up-stream fish passage. Revegetation at the project site will include creation of approximately 18 acres that include valley oak woodland with a native grass understory and a functioning riparian wetland. In addition, 180 lineal feet of actively eroding stream bank will be stabilized using accepted brush revetment techniques and earth work. Riparian enhancements will include large valley oaks and in-stream willows, cattails, rushes and sedges that will significantly contribute to providing important fish habitat in Coon Creek. Other in-stream fish-habitat enhancement structures such as in-stream logs and boulders will be installed. Plantings will be wildlife friendly and will not affect agricultural production.



Restoration work on the Jansen property will create mixed valley oak woodland and riparian woodland. Riparian woodland will be planted along approximately 600 linear feet of Coon Creek, incorporating a diverse mix of woody riparian species.

Scilacci Property – Irrigation Management/Riparian Restoration
This project will remove an in-stream irrigation pump and eliminate the need for a water delivery canal that poses a threat to anadromous fish in Coon Creek. The pump will be relocated to an on-farm location that will reduce sediment accumulation and increase water conservation through improved water delivery. In addition, the riparian area surrounding the old in-stream pump location will be revegetated with valley oaks to produce shaded riverine habitat.

Habitat restoration on this site will be intermittent over approximately 3,000 linear feet of the stream corridor. The existing riparian woodland will be enhanced and extended from the creek bank. Valley oaks will be planted along approximately 1,200 feet of the stream corridor. The remainder of the stream corridor will be planted with a mix of riparian woodland woody species. In addition, approximately 8.7 acres of the upper riparian terrace on this property will be planted with valley oaks.

Gallagher-Majors Property – Wetland and Riparian Restoration
The project will create 20 acres of wetland along Coon Creek in two
managed wetland areas of approximately 10 acres each. Wetland areas
will create buffers between agricultural areas and the creek. The creek
levee will be relocated to the adjacent agricultural field creating two
managed wetlands. These wetlands will support a diverse wetland
ecosystem and will enhance the property owner's hunting leases on the
site. This will further develop the working landscape where landowners
have incentive to support wildlife habitat. Water is available both spring
and fall, making the wetlands usable by both winter and spring migrating
and or nesting birds. The property will also be improved by replacing a
creek crossing with a new fish-friendly crossing that will keep vehicles out
of the streambed and facilitate travel to and from fields.

# 2.3 Covered Activities

This section describes the activities and projects within the Plan area that will be covered by the state and federal incidental take permits. Covered activities include actions that occur repeatedly in one location or throughout the Plan area, such as road maintenance, and discrete projects that occur once on a specific site, such as a bridge construction or a residential development project. The Plan provides the basis for incidental take authorization and aquatic resource permits (404, 401, 1600 et seq.) from the Resource Agencies for these covered activities.

Covered activities include projects and activities implemented by the permittee, projects and activities that are under the jurisdiction of the County or the City, and projects by public and private entities that are not under the jurisdiction of the County or the City, but which meet the criteria for Participating Special Entities (*chapter reference*). All covered activities must meet all applicable Plan conditions (see Chapter 6, *Conditions on Covered Activities*).

All projects and activities that fall within the descriptions or categories provided in this chapter are eligible to be covered activities. The descriptions and categories include projects that are not yet proposed or do not yet have fully developed project descriptions or plans. The Plan analyzes anticipated impacts on covered species from all projects and activities within the descriptions and categories based on the scope and extent of ground disturbance, and on the types of impacts, that are associated with such projects; the analysis is not based on specific project proposals or designs, except where specifically indicated. All eligible projects that fulfill the requirements of the Plan can be covered projects.

Conversely, projects and activities that are not described in this chapter and do not fall within a category identified in this chapter are not eligible to be covered activities and will not receive take authorization under state or federal incidental take permits.

If it is unclear whether a proposed project or activity is eligible to be a covered activity, the PCA, after conferring with the applicable Resource Agencies, will determine whether the project or activity is eligible. Any Permittee, and any proponent of a private project or activity, may request the PCA to determine whether a project or activity is eligible. Any such request must include a detailed project description sufficient to allow the PCA to make an informed decision based on the factors below. The PCA will make a determination regarding project eligibility within 60 days after receiving the request.

In all such cases, the PCA's determination will be based on the following factors:

- The extent to which the project or activity, together with Plan conditions, would help to achieve or impede the achievement of the biological goals and objectives of the Plan (See Chapter 5, Conservation Strategy);
- Whether the project or activity will be implemented by a permittee or is subject to the jurisdiction of the County or the City; (see Chapter 8, Plan Implementation for a mechanism for a Nonpermittee to receive coverage under the Plan);
- Whether the likely impacts of the project or activity are the types of impacts analyzed in Chapter 4 of the Plan; and

■ Whether there is sufficient take coverage remaining under the state and federal incidental take permits<sup>[1]</sup>.

If it is unclear whether a project or activity is eligible for coverage, and the project or activity will impact more than 500 acres, the PCA and the wildlife agencies must both agree that the project or activity is eligible in order for it to receive coverage, and the PCA must provide an opportunity for public comment regarding the project or activity's eligibility at at least one PCA meeting before making its determination. All covered activities described in this chapter will be covered under both state and federal permits (CDFG, USFWS, and NMFS), with one exception. The use of pesticides, including herbicides and rodenticides, is not covered by the two federal permits because USFWS and NMFS have not authorized the EPA to certify their use. Covered activities that impact "Waters of the County" will also be covered by the CARP. Covered activities that occur in improved and unimproved natural channels will be covered by the long term streambed alteration agreement issued by CDFG.

The permittees will be responsible for ensuring that their projects and activities comply with the PCCP. The County and the City will each have the ability to extend coverage to eligible third party projects. The County and City will make compliance with relevant PCCP terms and conditions a condition of their approval of these projects. Upon the County or City's approval, and subject to those terms and conditions, the third party projects will be covered. The PCA will make compliance with relevant PCCP terms and condition a requirement of any agreement with a participating special entity. The participating special entity's project will be covered when the agreement is executed.

Most projects will comply with and be covered by the PCCP and related permits by complying with the conditions of approval described in Chapter 6 and other relevant PCCP requirements. However, there will likely be subsequent or supplemental environmental review under CEQA for many, if not most, covered activities in order to address potential project-specific environmental impacts other than impacts to covered species or waters of the County. It is expected that any such project-specific environmental review process will tier from the PCCP EIS/EIR.

In addition to the description of covered activities below, Appendix A contains a list of projects currently planned that are covered by the PCCP. However, this is not a complete list of all covered activities. It is expected that the Permittees will develop additional activities and projects over the course of the permit term of this Plan. Figure 2-4 depicts the location of Major Projects within the Plan area. To the extent that these additional activities are described below (and meet the criteria above), these future activities and projects will also be covered by this Plan.

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<sup>[1]</sup> Take coverage is defined in this Plan in terms of land-cover types lost as a result of covered activities. See Chapter 3 for the definition of land-cover types; see Chapter 4 for an estimate of loss of land-cover types

# 2.3.1 Covered Activity Categories

For the purposes of this Plan, covered activities fall into six general categories.

- Urban Development
- In-stream Projects
- Capital Projects
- Operation and Maintenance
- Rural Development
- Conservation Strategy Implementation and other Placer County Conservation Programs

These six categories were created to help organize covered activities into groups that are likely to have similar impacts to similar ecosystems (e.g., wetland, riverine) and covered species. For example, in-stream projects may have impacts on aquatic species and also on species that rely on adjacent riparian areas.

Covered activities are broadly defined and are identified below for each of these six categories. The activities described are those activities for which authorization of incidental take authorization and impacts to aquatic resources will be requested by the Permittees. In some cases, examples are presented to illustrate the general category. However, if a given project meets the guidelines for covered activities as described in the first part of this section, then that project is a covered activity.

# 2.3.2 Urban Development

This category includes projects and activities that may occur in areas designated for urban development in the Plan area. This category is intended to be as inclusive as possible to accommodate urban growth and all ground-disturbing activities. It includes the construction and maintenance of typical urban facilities, public and private, consistent with local general plans and local, state, and federal laws. This category of covered activities includes, but is not limited to, the construction, maintenance, and use of the following urban facilities.

 Residential, commercial, industrial, and other types of urban development within the city of Lincoln in areas designated for urban development, including Sphere-Of-Influence areas in the City's

- General Plan update planning area that are currently in the unincorporated County.
- Residential, commercial, industrial, and other types of urban development in unincorporated Placer County in the PCCP area.
- Transportation facilities including new capital facility construction, roads, road widening, sidewalks, shoulder improvements, bike lane construction, bridge replacement/widening, transit facilities, and park and ride facilities.
- Public service and cultural facilities including new fire stations, police stations, community policing centers, communications facilities, public administration centers, convention centers, theatres, community centers, community gardens, libraries and concession buildings.
- Recreational facilities such as neighborhood parks, dog parks, soccer fields, golf courses, indoor and outdoor sports centers, recreational centers, trails, golf courses, racetracks, campgrounds, and associated infrastructure including roads, bridges, parking areas, and restrooms.
- Public and private utilities including transmission lines, telecommunications lines, and gas lines.
- Future construction of PCWA and City of Lincoln water supply facilities to meet the needs of residential, commercial, public facility, and industrial consumers.
- Stormwater management facilities such as storm sewer systems, nonpoint source reduction, outfalls, and drainage improvements.
- Waste-management facilities including sewage-treatment plants, sanitary sewer systems and rehabilitation, force main and effluent line construction and maintenance, discharge and reclamation line installation and maintenance, pump station construction, landfill or transfer stations, effluent discharge, water recycling, and recycling centers.
- Funeral/interment services including mortuaries, crematorium, columbaria, mausoleums, and similar services when in conjunction with cemeteries.
- Vegetation management including fuel reduction, tree removal and pruning, grazing, exotic vegetation control/removal, hazardous tree work, weed abatement, algae control in ponds.

The City of Lincoln and Placer County have developed several planning documents that outline strategies and projects consistent with current general plans. Additional plans will be developed over the course of the

permit term of the PCCP. To the extent that these plans are consistent with the goals of this Plan, implementation of these plans will be covered by the PCCP.

# 2.3.3 In-Stream Projects

These are activities or projects that occur in or immediately adjacent to watercourses and the adjacent riparian corridor that may result in impacts on a stream, reservoir, on-stream pond or canal. This category includes operations and maintenance activities in the stream channel, along the stream bank, and on adjacent lands at top-of-bank within the riparian corridor, including maintenance of access roads and installation of pedestrian/biking trails. These covered activities occur in both urban and rural areas.

In-stream capital and operations and maintenance activities that are proposed for coverage under this Plan include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Bridge construction, replacement, and major repair including vehicular, train, and pedestrian bridges (see discussion in following section).
- Flood control and stormwater management including channelization, maintenance activities, water retention/detention facilities construction, streambed and channel debris and vegetative control and removal, channel lining, culvert replacement, stormwater conveyance facilities and outfall structures, erosion/sediment control, bank stabilization and floodplain enhancement (see discussion in following section). Operation and maintenance of flood protection and stormwater facilities such as drainage improvements, dams, armored creeks, bypass channels, and detention ponds.
- Facility maintenance including: trail repair, trash removal, installation of fences, accumulated sediment removal, trail, road, culvert, and minor bridge repair.
- Natural resource protection such as small bank stabilization projects, restoration to reduce erosion, fish passage enhancements, and removal of debris deposited during flooding.
- Small-scale erosion control projects or storm damage prevention projects that do not create new permanent structures or hardscape on the creek bank or channel. This category includes temporary floodfighting activities to prevent storm damage (e.g., sandbagging).

- Mitigation and/or monitoring activities in creeks or adjacent riparian corridors that are not conducted as part of Plan implementation.
- Vegetation management for exotic species removal, such as removal of giant reed, and native vegetation plantings.
- Reservoir drawdown and filling for maintenance or operational purposes (i.e., not associated with a capital project).
- Gage station maintenance upstream of reservoirs.
- PCWA stream maintenance (see discussion in the following section).
- Water utility/water supply operations and maintenance activities associated with habitat enhancement and restoration that will be conducted inside and outside the Reserve System are identified in Section 2.3.7, Conservation Strategy Implementation and other Placer County Conservation Programs.

As may be noted from this list, some instream projects are intended to mitigate, enhance or restore stream and riparian functions. A number of restoration activities are already underway in the Plan area and more would be expected in the future. Consequently, activities that are primarily aimed at improving stream conditions will be covered under the Plan.

Capital projects that are proposed for coverage under this Plan are discussed in more detail in Section 2.3.4, *Capital Projects*.

# **Flood Protection Projects**

The Placer County Flood Control and Water Conservation District (the District) was established in 1984 by the State Legislature as a Special District, separate from County government, to address flood control issues arising with growth. The district boundaries are the same as Placer County boundaries.

Placer County has several capital projects planned to address flood protection. These projects have been identified through various programs that provide different funding mechanisms and guiding principles of how projects will be planned and designed. Please see Appendix A for a complete list of known projects, including flood protection capital projects, anticipated to occur within the permit term of the Plan. Those projects for which project descriptions are currently available are described below. For those projects for which no project description has been developed, a brief description of project location is provided. It is assumed that these projects will contain the same types of design elements as those for which a project description has been developed because of Placer

County Flood Control District's commitment to flood protection and stream stewardship.

The primary watersheds within Placer County include Bear River, Coon Creek, Markham Ravine, Auburn Ravine, Pleasant Grove/Curry Creek, Dry Creek and the American River. Three of these watersheds have watershed management plans: Dry Creek, Auburn Ravine/Coon Creek and Pleasant Grove/Curry Creek. These plans include a number of projects within their respective watersheds that guides efforts to control pollution, manage stormwater, and protect and improve local streams and the uplands that surround them.

Many of the flood protection capital improvement projects incorporate design elements that provide onsite impact avoidance, minimization, and mitigation for both in-stream and riparian habitat. Enhancement and creation of riparian habitat is coupled with removal of invasive species and planting of native species. In-stream design elements could include fish passage improvement through the removal of fish barriers, placement of fish ladders, and other in-stream habitat enhancements. Additional design elements may be incorporated to protect in-stream water quality by reducing erosion, sedimentation, and turbidity, as well as removing unauthorized storm drain outfalls. The plans described below have been prepared to prioritize projects within the watersheds.

Flood control operations and maintenance activities that occur throughout the Plan area streams include, but are not limited to, installation, monitoring and maintenance of remote stream data sensors, stream channel clearing, vegetation and debris removal and conveyance maintenance activities.

## **Dry Creek Watershed Flood Control Plan**

The purpose of the Dry Creek Watershed Flood Control Plan is to provide the District and other governmental agencies in both Placer and Sacramento Counties with the information and policies necessary to manage flood waters within the Dry Creek Watershed, which includes Miners Ravine, Linda Creek, Secret Ravine, Antelope Creek, Cirby Creek, and Dry Creek. The Plan evaluates existing flooding problems and identifies flood management options as well as a funding mechanism to achieve Plan recommendations. The plan was first drafted in 1992 but is currently being updated for re-publication estimated to occur in 2010.

Capital project elements within this plan include on- and off-channel stormwater detention projects located throughout the watershed, floodplain restoration and re-connections, bridge and culvert improvement projects, improvements to underground conduits, artificial and natural channels.

#### **Cross Canal Watershed Flood Control Plan**

The purpose of the Cross Canal Watershed Flood Control Plan (1994) is to provide the District and other governmental agencies in both Placer and Sacramento Counties with the information and policies necessary to manage flood waters within the Cross Canal Watershed, which includes Pleasant Grove, Auburn Ravine, Markham Ravine, and Coon Creek. The Plan evaluates existing flooding problems and identifies flood management options as well as a funding mechanism to achieve Plan recommendations. There are numerous stormwater retention projects combined with wetland and agricultural conservation easements within the floodplain areas.

State and Federal grant funding will support the District and its cosponsors efforts to acquire flood and conservation easements to improve the floodplain and wetland habitat resources within this watershed. The District's pursuit of flood and conservation easements on rice production lands will complement efforts on nearby agricultural lands, including a Department of Water Resources protected site that also provides improved floodplain and riparian protection. These nearby properties include the 138-acre Lakeview Farms Conservation project which was awarded a grant through the same Flood Corridor Protection Program several years earlier, as well as the Lakeview Farms NCRS easements that are part of a larger restoration effort. Wetland habitat will be reconstructed to the primary benefit of the numerous waterfowl and migratory birds that are found in the area. Acquisition of flood and conservation easements in these areas will:

- Conserve agricultural lands adjacent to Auburn Ravine and Coon Creek in an area of increasing development pressure;
- Quickly and efficiently provide increased volumetric storage (retention) within the existing floodplain during a 100-year flood event;
- Preserve and maintain surrogate wetlands;
- Preserve open space, providing linkages with surrounding preserve areas;
- Benefit migratory birds and wildlife;
- Maintain habitat and connectivity for state and federal species of concern; and
- Provide flood control benefits quickly and at relatively low cost per acre-foot of storage.

## Bridge Construction and Replacement/Rehabilitation

The City of Lincoln and Placer County operate and maintain bridges within the Plan area. The lifespan of a typical bridge is approximately 50 years. Most of the bridges within the Plan area will be replaced or rehabilitated during the PCCP permit time frame (see Appendix G for a list of bridges identified for expansion and/or replacement to date). Similarly, as development within rural and urban areas progresses, new bridges will need to be constructed. New and rehabilitated bridges will be designed to federal and state guidelines that will be implemented during construction. In most cases, new bridges will be wider than the bridges they replace in compliance with changing regulations. Some roads may be widened to accommodate growth in vehicular traffic, bicycles, and pedestrians. Road widening will require adding imported borrow and new asphalt, concrete, and aggregate base for pavement.

Where free-span bridges are not feasible, bridges will be built on pile foundation, cast-in-drilled-hole pile, or spread footing foundations. Excavation for foundations may be required. Slope paving will be included in the scope of work to protect/improve channel slopes at the bridge. Major bridge repair and rehabilitation may be similar to bridge replacement in scope, often requiring roadway widening, new deck support structures, and seismic retrofitting. The construction of new bridges, as well as repair and replacement of all existing bridges, both within and outside urban areas, will be covered activities.

## Placer County Water Agency Raw Water Distribution System Operations

The majority of PCWA's raw water distribution is facilitated by gravity flow through the canal system. Reservoirs provide flexibility in operations, allowing capture and storage of flow from portions of the upper system for release, as needed, to portions of the lower system. PCWA monitors regulating gates and staff gages throughout the system, and uses information collected to make decisions on purchasing water from PG&E and adjusts deliveries in accordance with water demands and meteorological conditions.

The following operational activities for raw water distribution are proposed for coverage under the Plan:

- Adjusting or replacing orifices at delivery points;
- Yearly water delivery outages;

- Delivery schedule changes and routine flow adjustments throughout the canal system through use of check boards, temporary weirs, valve controls and debris removal;
- Seasonal release of excess water at designated outlet locations for flood management during storm events; and
- Routine operations (Determination of PCWA's routine operations to be covered by the PCCP is in process, however Appendix N, Natural Resources Management Plan for Raw Water Distribution System Operations and Maintenance Activities, provides BMPs to be implemented).

## Placer County Water Agency Raw Water Distribution System Maintenance Activities

PCWA performs scheduled maintenance in the canal system as needed and cleans canals on an annual basis. Maintenance activities include clearing debris and sediment, lining leaky canal sections, repairing damaged pipes and/or flumes, and controlling vegetative growth in the canals and on the canal berms through physical removal or use of algaecide and herbicide. Cleaning is performed during the winter months and is scheduled a month or more in advance. Canal lining is conducted throughout the year. Algaecide and herbicide applications are scheduled in advance and are performed on a monthly or as-needed basis during the irrigation season.

Other maintenance projects performed on an infrequent basis by PCWA include sediment removal from reservoirs and dam, reservoir and canal berm maintenance due to damage by muskrats, beavers, and otters.

## Placer County Water Agency Non-Routine Operations and Maintenance Projects

PCWA conducts non-routine stream maintenance as necessary. The non-routine maintenance activities described below would be covered by the Plan. Water supplies to the Plan area come from Yuba, Bear and American rivers. Additionally, Clover Valley, Ben Franklin, Caperton, Whitney, McCrary, and Mammoth reservoirs lie within the Plan area. These reservoirs contribute to the stream flows in Clover Valley Creek, Antelope Creek, Secret Ravine, and Miners Ravine. From time to time, activities are necessary to ensure that water supplies are maintained and to prevent future problems from occurring. Non-routine projects that are covered under the Plan include the following:

Periodic outages for canal cleaning, repair or sediment removal;

- Repair and replacement of treated and raw water distribution facilities, including pipeline flushing and meter replacement. These facilities include pipelines, flumes, culverts, siphons, outlet structures, flow control structures, customer delivery points, pressure reducing stations and appurtenances; and
- Emergency repairs.

#### 2.3.4 Capital Projects

Several capital projects will need to be constructed within the permit period. These projects are typically funded through a variety of sources and are usually listed in adopted plans or programs as important projects that will serve the increasing population within Placer County (e.g., capital improvement programs).

These projects have been grouped together as they will likely have a greater impact on natural communities and covered species and usually have greater indirect and cumulative impacts. The following projects are capital projects that are proposed for coverage under the PCCP.

Transportation projects within urban areas to support existing development are included in Section 4.3.1 *Urban Development*. Similar projects within rural areas will likely have more intense impacts because the land is less developed and retains more natural habitat. Transportation projects within rural areas may include new or expanded roadways, highways or bypasses. All of these projects are anticipated to have permanent direct impacts on natural land cover types, and therefore on covered species.

Transportation projects and activities proposed for coverage under this Plan include the following.

- New facilities and expansion of existing facilities including addition of new lanes to roads for motorized and non-motorized transportation;
- County and regional modifications and road improvements including road widening, bridges, intersection level-of-service improvements, grade separations, and soundwall installation;
- Channel modifications incidental to stream bank stabilization as a result of road restoration; and
- Implementation projects identified in the Metropolitan Transportation Plan 2035 that are located in the Plan area and not identified in Section 2.4, Projects and Activities Not Covered by this Plan.

## Placer Parkway – South Placer Regional Transportation Authority

It is anticipated that the Placer Parkway would be covered under this Plan. The project would be a new east-west roadway linking State Route (SR) 70/99 in Sutter County east to SR 65 in Placer County. The proposed project being considered by SPRTA is to select a 500- to 1,000-footwide corridor in the project Plan area, within which the future four- or six-lane Placer Parkway will be constructed. Five build alternatives and a No-Build Alternative were analyzed in the Draft Tier 1 EIS/EIR. Depending upon the alternative, the corridor's length ranges from a minimum of 14.2 miles to a maximum of 16.2 miles. The selected corridor would contain the roadway, including the median, travel lanes, shoulder, associated access ramps, and a no development buffer zone.

Five or six interchanges are proposed, depending on the corridor alignment alternative. The Parkway would be designed and construction-level impacts analyzed during Tier 2 environmental analysis. Further development and refinement, and specific decisions about design of the roadway would be made during the Tier 2 process. For example, the number, location, and design of over-crossings would be determined at the time of final Parkway design, in consultation with local jurisdictions.

As envisioned, Placer Parkway would include a corridor that is wider than what is needed for the proposed roadway. Land adjacent to the facility would be precluded from development to create a "parkway" design. The undeveloped corridor could be linked to other open spaces and agricultural uses, enhancing visual quality and perhaps providing biological benefits as well.

Through the modified NEPA/404 process, it was determined that Alternative 5 is likely to contain the Least Environmentally Damaging Practicable Alternative or LEDPA (United States Environmental Protection Agency letter dated October 2, 2009).

## I-80/SR 65 Interchange Improvements – South Placer Regional Transportation Authority

SPRTA plans improvements to the I-80/SR 65 interchange. Interstate 80 (I-80) is the principal east-west route in northern and central California. It is the only freeway crossing for the Sierra Nevada range. State Route (SR) 65 is an important regional route that serves both local and regional traffic. The I-80/SR 65 interchange is a freeway-to-freeway interchange, which was constructed in 1985 and requires improvements. This

transportation improvement project is proposed for coverage under this Plan.

The purpose of the modifications to I-80, SR 65, and the interchange at their junction are to reduce congestion, improve traffic operations, and enhance safety. The interchange is experiencing operational problems caused by high peak period traffic volumes. Vehicle hours of delay, average speeds, travel times, and other traffic performance measures will continue to degenerate as growth increases in the surrounding area.

A number of proposed revisions have been identified, including the construction of a bi-directional, high-occupancy vehicle direct connector between I-80 and SR 65, replacement of the eastbound I-80 to northbound SR 65 loop-connector with a flyover connector, structure widening of the East Roseville Viaduct and replacement of the Taylor Road overcrossing, widening of the southbound SR 65 to westbound I-80 and westbound I-80 to northbound SR 65 connectors with associated auxiliary lanes and ramp realignments.

#### **Waste Management Projects**

The County operates and maintains the County's five wastewater treatment facilities, 42 lift stations, and 278 miles of collection pipelines. Areas served include unincorporated portions of: North Auburn, Granite Bay, Horseshoe Bar/Folsom Lake, Loomis, western Placer County (Dry Creek), Livoti, Sunset Industrial area, Sheridan, Applegate, and Blue Canyon.

Waste management capital projects includes treatment plant construction or expansion, effluent discharge, force main and effluent line construction, discharge and reclamation line installation, pump station construction, and landfill or transfer station construction.

The City of Lincoln's current permit for its Wastewater Treatment and Reclamation Facility allows a dry weather flow discharge of 4.2 million gallons per day (Mgd), with current dry weather flows running at 2.8 mgd. The City's permit allows for expansions up to 12 mgd. The actual level of discharge will vary and may be less then the permit limits depending upon the City's level of beneficial use of reclaimed water during the course of the year.

The projects listed below are expected to occur within the time frame of the PCCP. Specific impacts are not known at this time and will need to be determined on a project level basis when they go through the entitlement process. Some of the known major projects in this category include (please refer to Appendix A for listing of projects):

- Loomis Landfill gas system upgrades and construction of passive recreational facilities:
- Construction of a Northwest County Transfer Station in Sheridan area and upgrading the existing waste water treatment plant;
- Construction of a new Western Regional Sanitary Landfill (location to be determined);
- Phased expansion of the City of Lincoln's Wastewater Treatment and Reclamation Facility:
- Wastewater treatment plant upgrade and expansion in Sewer Maintenance Districts 1 and 3 (Auburn and Loomis area); and
- Construction of a new pump station in Loomis.

#### **Water Supply Projects**

#### **Placer County**

PWCA will undertake a number of capital projects over the term of the Plan. These will include repairs on existing outlets within Auburn Ravine, groundwater wells, pipeline and metering installations, water treatment and storage facilitates, pipeline installations, and pump stations.

By far the largest planned capital project is the Sacramento River Diversion that will develop the regional Sacramento River water supply for PCWA, Sacramento Suburban Water District, and the Cities of Roseville and Sacramento (other smaller projects are included in Appendix A). That project is being conducted in partnership with the Bureau of Reclamation. The diversion on the Sacramento River is consistent with the Water Forum Agreement objectives towards preserving ecosystems on the lower American River. This would include construction of water supply infrastructure components, including new or expanded diversions from the Sacramento, Feather, or American rivers, as well as new or expanded water treatment and pumping facilities, storage tanks, and major transmission and distribution pipelines.

The Sacramento River Diversion project is not a covered activity (and therefore, direct impacts are not assessed in the PCCP), the projects within the Plan area that will use this new water supply are covered by the PCCP. Only the indirect impacts in the Plan area associated with the Sacramento River Diversion project are covered by the PCCP. These indirect impacts are evaluated under the category of urban development (Section 2.3.2). Other infrastructure improvements, are constructed as a

result of additional population growth are a result of urban development in the PCCP (See Section 2.3.2 *Urban Development*).

Direct and indirect impacts associated with the future construction of other PCWA water supply facilities (i.e., those not part of the Sacramento River Diversion project) required to meet the needs of residential, commercial, public facility, and industrial construction within the Placer County and the City of Lincoln are proposed for coverage under this Plan (e.g., new water supply, treatment and delivery infrastructure, operation and maintenance of new water supply, treatment, and delivery infrastructure).

Additional capital projects that are in process and are proposed to be covered under the PCCP include the Auburn Tunnel Outlet Modification and Foothill Raw Water Supply Pipeline.

As part of the American River Pump Station EIS/EIR (PCWA and Reclamation 2002), PCWA committed to limit deliveries of North Fork American River water through the Auburn Tunnel to Auburn Ravine to historical levels, and to monitor the volume and temperature of water discharged into Auburn Ravine. To implement this requirement, PCWA will alleviate identified deficiencies associated with operating and maintaining the Auburn Tunnel outlet.

The Auburn Tunnel Outlet Modification project would repair the existing outlet of PCWA's Auburn Tunnel prior to its discharge into Auburn Ravine. Repairs would entail constructing a concrete access vault at the existing face of the Auburn Tunnel outlet to provide access and to seal off the end of the Auburn Tunnel. The vault would permit the tunnel to be dewatered and equipment to be lowered down into the tunnel to allow removal of accumulated sediment. Following access vault construction, a 48-inch diameter pressure pipe with control valve and flow meter would be installed and backfilled. The outfall outlet would include a cast-in-place concrete headwall with concrete wing-walls similar to standard storm drain outfalls. A flap gate would be installed on the headwall, which would allow tunnel discharges to flow into the Auburn Ravine while preventing water from high streamflow events from flowing into the outfall pipe. Other improvements would include fencing around the north side of the site and a new gate and access driveway from Sunset Lane.

The Foothill Raw Water Supply Pipeline project includes a 14,700-footlong 48/36-inch raw water supply pipeline; a new 11,800-foot-long 18-inch treated water supply pipeline; a new 100,000-gallon hydraulic control standpipe and 500-foot-long, 36-inch overflow pipe; and a new outlet pipeline that could discharge up to 17 cfs of water from the raw water pipeline to Dutch Ravine (also referred to as the Dutch Ravine turnout).

#### City of Lincoln

A potential large water supply project within the City's General Plan boundaries could be constructed within the permit term. In anticipation of the City's adopted 2008 General Plan, the City negotiated a supply of treated surface water to be provided by the Nevada Irrigation District (NID) within its service boundaries. In October of 2004, the NID and PCWA entered into a temporary water sales agreement to provide raw water to PCWA for treatment and delivery of surface water to the NID service area within the current city limits of Lincoln until NID has other means available to serve Lincoln's treated water needs within NID's service area boundary. The City negotiated a Water Facilities/Planning agreement with NID in 2007 to establish a conceptual framework for the design and construction of a new water treatment facility. The proposed treatment facility would allow NID to serve treated water within the NID service area to customers within Lincoln's planning boundaries. The source of water for the proposed project is Lake Combie, with a pipeline proposed to connect at the Combie-Ophir turnout and carry raw water west to a reservoir and treatment plant to be located in the western portion of the NID service district. The proposed project would involve approximately16.3 miles of pipeline, raw water storage and construction of a water treatment plant.

#### **Flood Control Projects**

As the City of Lincoln and Placer County grow, the need to ensure protection of life and property from flooding will increase. One of the bigger capital flood control projects within the unincorporated portion of Placer County is the Lakeview Farms volumetric mitigation facility that will be constructed by the City of Lincoln.

The City of Lincoln has purchased 456 acres of north of Waltz Road in the unincorporated portion of Placer County to construct an off channel (off of Coon Creek) retention facility for flood control purposes. The project is being constructed in phases to passively capture flood water during a 100-year event. Phase one of the project would be developed on 160 acres of rice fields to impound 1,030 acre feet of storm-water, with phase two being developed on 160 acres retaining an additional 1,570 acre feet of water. The site would function as a retention basin only in extreme storm events during the rainy season of December through April and would remain in rice production from approximately March through September.

#### **Park Facilities and Trail Construction**

These projects include new parks, trails, golf courses and sports facilities. Such facilities, (e.g., golf courses), are usually situated within, or close to, urban areas. However, parks and trails may be built within an urban setting or within reserve areas. Many residents who live in Placer County enjoy mountain biking and horseback riding within areas that are not developed and that provide solitude. Additionally, some parks may provide passive recreational opportunities that combine natural trails, habitat protection and active resource management.

The City of Lincoln proposes to construct approximately 60 miles of bikeways within their general plan area (City of Lincoln, Bikeways Master Plan, 2001). The system would connect residential areas with major activity centers in the City of Lincoln, and also provide some regional connections to communities east and south of the City. Additionally, Placer County has a Placer County Regional Bikeway Plan (PCTPA, 2002), that inventories existing bikeways and identifies over 100 miles of upgrades and new paths, including connections to communities within the County.

Hidden Falls Regional Park, a 1,200-acre park located between north Auburn and the City of Lincoln, is partially constructed and currently features natural surface trails suitable for hiking, running, biking and horseback riding. In addition to the more vigorous activities on the natural surface trails, park visitors are able to enjoy fishing, picnicking, wildlife viewing, photography and other passive recreational pursuits. Other park amenities include a paved access road, 50-space paved parking lot, equestrian staging area, utilities, restrooms and a 60-foot emergency-access bridge over Deadman Creek.

A Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) was prepared and has been circulated for public review (June 2009). The Final EIR will be approved sometime in fall of 2009. The ultimate build-out of Hidden Falls Regional Park will be phased. Future trails and other improvements are covered under this plan as the specific locations of the amenities have not been determined. Ultimately, the park will have 14 miles of new multiple-use, natural-surface trails in addition to more than 10 miles of existing ranch roads for hikers, mountain bikers, and equestrians. Additional trail and bridge connections to other trails near the park property as well as American's with Disabilities accessible trails will be constructed. Other features include bridge crossings over Coon Creek and other streams on the property, fire suppression facilities, equestrian facilities, picnic areas, and access to fishing locations, managed hunting, interpretive programs and a potential group camping area.

#### 2.3.5 Operations and Maintenance

This category addresses the operations and maintenance activities to be covered under this Plan, excluding maintenance within streams, which is discussed in Section 2.3.3.

Placer County and the City of Lincoln maintain and provide facility improvements, technical maintenance, general maintenance and custodial services for all owned facilities. These include roadways, utility infrastructure, and properties. Operations and maintenance activities conducted by the County, City, and PCWA outside streams that may receive coverage under this Plan include the following:

- Utility line or facility operations and maintenance inside the Reserve System (except for the Pacific Gas and Electric Company facilities);
- Operational and maintenance activities associated with water and sewer pipelines;
- Improvement and maintenance of roads (this does not include widening projects, which are described in Section 2.3.4, Capital Projects);
- Road repair and rehabilitation. Activities may include construction of retaining walls to stabilize adjacent embankments;
- Operation, maintenance, and management of County parks including trail and road maintenance, installation of fencing, facility maintenance, prescribed burns (prescribed burns within the Reserve System are discussed in Section 2.3.7 Conservation Strategy Implementation and other Placer County Conservation Programs), pond maintenance (including draining and dredging), and invasive vegetation management;
- Vegetation management activities, including the removal of exotic species, planting of native vegetation, and livestock grazing;
- Trail maintenance including grading, clearing, brushing, erosion control, paving, re-paving, abandonment, and restoration;
- Rodent and pest abatement including removal of dead and dying wood, trees, and vegetation on abandoned fields and in orchards;
- Activities associated with the maintenance of large facilities including golf courses, large event facilities, and sports complexes;
- Maintenance of flood control infrastructure;

- Equestrian facilities and uses including equestrian centers, trails, manure management, and horse grazing activities; and
- Minor remediation projects (less than 1.0 acre) for spills, illegal dumping, fuel/chemical storage, and firing ranges.

#### **Facility and Utility Maintenance**

Placer County and the City of Lincoln maintain and provide facility improvements, technical maintenance, general maintenance and custodial services for all owned facilities. Public and private utility infrastructure such as electric transmission lines, gas pipelines, petroleum pipelines, telecommunications lines, and cellular telephone stations may cross Plan reserves. Routine and emergency maintenance and repair of existing utilities within Plan reserves is covered by the Plan. Maintenance activities will generally require trenching around existing buried utility lines or pipelines. Coverage for these projects will be decided on a case-bycase basis and the PCA may consult with the Resource Agencies as needed. This will allow alternative maintenance approaches, if possible, to avoid or minimize impacts on covered species and natural communities.

Other maintenance activities will be necessary for roads, utility infrastructure, and City and County properties. These activities will not occur within streams and may receive coverage under the Plan.

#### **Sewage Pipeline Operation and Maintenance**

Pipeline operations and maintenance are important activities within the Plan area as they prevent deterioration of infrastructure necessary for raw and treated water conveyance. The Placer County Environmental Engineering Division operates and maintains five wastewater treatment facilities, 278 miles of pipe and 42 lift stations in Placer County. Areas served include unincorporated portions of: North Auburn, Granite Bay, Loomis, western Placer County (Dry Creek), Livoti, Sunset Industrial area, Sheridan, Applegate, and Blue Canyon. Additionally, the County and City have to maintain miles of storm water pipes and systems throughout the Plan area. The City of Lincoln maintains its own sewage and water pipes.

Maintenance activities will generally require trenching around existing pipelines and conducting repairs or replacing segments of pipeline. The pipelines are located in both urban and rural areas with the majority lying within the unincorporated portion of Placer County. The maintenance activities that are proposed for coverage under the plan include:

Mechanical and chemical root removal:

- Leak repair (may require dewatering of pipes to local uplands or streams);
- Internal inspection (may require dewatering of pipes to local uplands or streams);
- Rehabilitation and/or replacement of pipelines and components including but not limited to air release valves, piping connections, joints, and appurtenances. Activities may include excavation to access pipelines;
- Sewer pipe slip lining;
- Replacement of deteriorated pipelines (new construction covered under Section 2.3.4 Capital Projects);
- Replacement/repair of buried service valves (including valves within creek embankments that may require excavation and minor bank stabilization activities);
- Maintenance of pipeline turnouts, including access to pipelines;
- Replacement/repair of appurtenances, fittings, manholes, and meters;
- Vault maintenance;
- Meter Inspections and repairs;
- Maintenance of pump stations, operation yards, utility yards, and corporation yards; and
- Access road repairs.

#### 2.3.6 Rural Development

Rural development will occur in accordance with existing general plans. Coverage under the PCCP is limited to activities that are subject to discretionary permits (e.g., grading permits). The majority of this type of development is rural residential development in the unincorporated County, in areas designated for rural residential and low density residential development in the Placer County General Plan and zoning ordinance. A small amount of rural development is also anticipated in areas designated for agriculture land use, as is currently allowed in the Placer County General Plan.

Rural development activities covered by the Plan are listed below.

- Rural residential development (e.g., single-family homes, subdivisions) consistent with the County General Plan (Placer County 1994). This may include privately owned bridges, driveways, access roads, clearing land for a range of rural residential land use activities, and other features commonly associated with rural dwelling units.
- New intensive agriculture that requires a special use permit consistent with local general plans, such as commercial stables, equestrian event facilities, and wineries.
- Non-residential development in rural areas that requires approval from the County, such as telecom facilities and small utility outposts.

# 2.3.7 Conservation Strategy Implementation and other Placer County Conservation Programs

In addition to the projects described above, the Plan will provide coverage for projects and activities associated with implementation of the Plan's conservation strategy. Most of these activities will take place within the Reserve System assembled by the Plan. Some conservation activities may also occur outside of the Reserve System on public or private lands (see Chapter 5 for a description of all conservation actions). Placer County also administers ongoing conservation programs that are separate from the PCCP. The actions conducted by Placer County to implement the Placer Legacy Plan and the Auburn Ravine/Coon Creek management plans are similar to many of those that will be conducted by the PCA to implement the PCCP conservation strategy. These actions will occur primarily outside the Reserve System.

#### **PCCP Management Activities**

This category includes all management actions required by the Plan or other actions that might be necessary to achieve Plan biological goals and objectives. These actions may include the construction and maintenance of recreational facilities such as trails, parking lots, restrooms, wildlife observation platforms, and educational kiosks that are built and/or used in accordance with the guidelines in this Plan. This category also includes construction, maintenance, and use of facilities needed to manage the Reserves, including but not limited to reserve field offices, maintenance sheds, carports, roads, bridges, fences, gates, wells, stock tanks, and stock ponds. All Reserve management structures will be constructed to minimize impacts on covered species and vegetation communities and in compliance with the conditions on covered activities described in Chapter 6. Facilities existing at the time of land acquisition will be used whenever feasible.

Management actions that will be used within the Reserve System are described in detail in Chapter 5, *Conservation Strategy*. Actions not already described earlier in the chapter may include but are not limited to the activities listed below. Many of these activities overlap.

- Vegetation management using livestock grazing, manual labor, and/or prescribed burning. Pesticide use is permitted under the Plan only to achieve biological goals and objectives (e.g., exotic plant or exotic animal control), in accordance with label instructions, and in compliance with state and local laws. Pesticide use is proposed for coverage only under the NCCP Act, not the ESA. Any pesticide use must comply with the October 2006 stipulated injunction disallowing use of certain pesticides within habitats and buffer zones established around certain habitats for California red-legged frog.
- Collection of seeds from covered plant species for depositing in a seed bank.
- Collection of cysts from covered branchiopods (i.e., Conservancy fairy shrimp, vernal pool fairy shrimp, and vernal pool tadpole shrimp) for depositing in a cyst bank.
- Development of new trails and related park facilities such as staging areas, restrooms, and parking lots
- Development of field facilities for workshop space and tool and machinery storage.
- Development of a native plant nursery to support restoration and enhancement projects.
- Relocation of covered species from impact sites and within Reserves where impacts are unavoidable and relocation has a high likelihood of success. This is expected to occur in very limited circumstances, except for collection of seeds and cysts of covered vernal pool plants and branchiopods, respectively (see above bullet points). See Chapter 6 for details.
- Demolition or removal of structures, roads, or man-made livestock ponds to increase public safety or to restore habitat.
- Control of introduced predators (e.g., feral cats and dogs, pigs, nonnative fish, bullfrogs).
- Stream maintenance for habitat purposes.
- Installation of wells, the water from which will be used to fill stock ponds.

- Surveys and monitoring for mitigation and restoration/habitat enhancement projects.
- Travel through the Reserve on foot, horseback, mountain bicycle, allterrain vehicle, truck, or other off-road vehicle to inspect or maintain facilities, move or manage livestock, and patrol trails and boundaries. Off-trail travel will be kept to the minimum amount necessary to perform maintenance, management, or patrol activities.
- Fire management including prescribed burning, mowing, and fuelbreak establishment and maintenance (see Fuel Management Activities, below).
- Hazardous materials remediation, such as appropriate closure of underground storage tanks, soil remediation, cleanup of illegal dumping, etc.
- Repair of existing facilities damaged by floods or fire.
- Operations related to water delivery for ponds and other aquatic habitat.
- Water delivery for use in operations facilities (e.g., field facilities and the native plant nursery).
- Joint venture projects with other resource agencies.

#### **Fuel Management**

Preservation of reserve lands in perpetuity will require that they be managed to reduce their susceptibility to wildfire. In the event that a fire occurs within a conservation reserve, there is also a concern to reduce the potential impacts of suppression activities to natural and semi-natural communities and covered species.

Placer County retained Richard R. Harris, a registered professional forester, to prepare fuel management guidelines for the PCCP. This document (Appendix E) outlines several policies, procedures and prescriptions for managing wildfire risk in conservation reserves through treatment of fuels. Specifically, it recommends that each reserve area have a fire management component included within the required management plans. This component would describe site-specific conditions and actions required to: 1) reduce existing fuel loads; 2) reintroduce fire as a natural process of the ecosystem (if relevant); 3) minimize environmental impacts and protect sensitive resources; and 4) enhance and/or restore natural community characteristics.

In addition to the wildfire management recommendations, Placer County has established a Wildfire Protection and Biomass Utilization Program to

promote projects that will diminish the threat of catastrophic wildfires, improve public health and safety, reduce pollution and enhance the environment.

Reduction of fuels has three main purposes: 1) reduce fire severity within reserves; 2) reduce the ability for a fire to spread from a reserve to adjacent lands; and 3) reduce the ability for a fire to spread from adjacent lands to a reserve. Wildfire presents a significant threat to the sustainability of current and future conservation reserves. Wildfires that may start on conservation reserves pose a threat to adjacent properties.

Fuels treatments are aimed at preventing or at least impairing the spread of a fire and reducing fire severity. Fuels treatment zones include property boundaries, public roads, and the interior of reserve parcels. In oak woodlands, shaded fuel breaks may be used along roads, at property boundaries, and within parcels to impair fire spread. Fuel breaks can be used at the periphery of vernal pool grasslands. Fuels treatments in riparian woodlands should focus on the interface between the upland and riparian vegetation.

Within the Reserve System, oak woodlands have the highest inherent wildfire risk. Overly dense riparian woodlands are second in degree of risk. Vernal pool grasslands have a relatively lower risk because only one fuel type is present (generally no shrubs or trees), terrain is generally shallow sloped, and the vegetation is adapted to fire.

Several approaches are used to reduce fuels. The choice of approach is affected by environmental constraints, costs, and other social and ecological considerations. The highest priority in the Reserve System is to protect natural and semi-natural communities, covered species and their habitats. Any fuels treatment must meet this requirement. Best management practices will be included in fuels treatments to prevent or minimize impacts on streams, cultural resources, wetlands, soils, wildlife and PCCP-covered or other special status species (see Chapter 6). The strategy should emphasize avoidance of impacts.

#### Recreation

Limited recreational use of Plan reserves is permitted under the guidelines of this Plan (see Chapter 6 for details). To the extent possible, recreational facilities will utilize existing infrastructure such as existing trails and fire or ranch roads. Covered activities also include the construction and maintenance of recreational facilities such as trails, parking lots, restrooms, wildlife observation platforms, and educational kiosks that are built and/or used in accordance with the guidelines in this Plan. Any incidental take of covered species resulting from public use of trails and parking lots within the Plan area, inside or outside of the

designated Reserve System, is covered under the permits provided that usage is consistent with the guidelines in this Plan.

#### Habitat Enhancement, Restoration, and Creation

The Plan conservation strategy (see Chapter 5) sets forth requirements for habitat enhancement, restoration, and creation. Enhancement activities generally fall under the reserve management category. Habitat restoration and creation will generally be disruptive only in the short term because these activities may involve soil disturbance, removal of undesirable plants, and limited grading. All habitat restoration and creation is expected to result in a net long-term benefit for covered species and natural communities. However, these activities may have temporary or short-term adverse effects and may result in limited take of covered species (see Chapter 4, Impact Analysis). All habitat enhancement, restoration, and creation activities conducted within Plan reserves that are consistent with the requirements of this Plan are covered by the permits. Habitat enhancement, restoration, and creation activities may also be conducted outside Plan reserves. If such activities occur and are consistent with this Plan, they are covered by the permits. Examples of such activities include restoration projects conducted as mitigation that require additional coverage beyond the self-mitigating aspects inherent to most mitigation projects or restoration of unauthorized trails outside of the Reserve System. Examples of habitat enhancement, restoration, and creation activities include, but are not limited to:

- Restoration projects in vernal pool grasslands, streams, riparian areas, wetlands, and uplands;
- Fish passage enhancements including removal of fish barriers, such as low flow crossings, and development of fish screens;
- Gravel augmentation conducted to enhance or restore spawning sites for covered species; and
- Native vegetation planting.

#### **Species Surveys, Monitoring, and Research**

Biologists will need to conduct surveys for covered species, natural communities, and other resources within the Plan reserves on a regular basis for monitoring, research, and adaptive management purposes. These surveys may require physical capture and inspection of specimens to determine identify, and mark individuals, or measure physical features, all of which may be considered take under ESA or CESA. Surveys for covered species will also be conducted on private land being considered for acquisition for the Plan. Although these surveys are not expected to

require as much handling of individuals, take may still occur. Surveys for all covered species will be conducted by qualified biologists. All such survey activity consistent with this Plan is covered by the ESA and NCCP permits.

Research conducted by biologists on Plan reserves in support of the Plan is covered by the permits as long as the research projects have negligible effects on populations of covered species. Research on Plan reserves unrelated to the Plan is not covered by the permits because the nature and impacts of these future research projects cannot be predicted at this time and these researchers will not be bound by the terms of the permits. Such researchers would be granted access on a case-by-case basis and such access will be conditioned on compliance with stated restrictions.

#### **Emergency Activities**

Emergency activities within Plan reserves that have negligible impacts on populations of covered species are covered under this Plan. However, emergency activities that have substantial effects on covered species (e.g., firefighting for a large wildfire, repair after a major flood, or major hazardous remediation projects) are considered changed circumstances and are described in Chapter 10.

Foreseeable emergency activities that may have negligible impacts include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Firefighting of small wildfires or structure fires;
- Evacuation of injured persons or livestock;
- Minor hazardous materials remediation (including remediation and cleanup of spills or illegal dumping prior to acquisition);
- Repair of existing facilities damaged by floods or fire; and
- Use of motorized vehicles for conducting emergency activities. Placer County Conservation Programs.

#### Placer Legacy

The Placer Legacy Open Space and Agricultural Conservation Program, or Placer Legacy Plan (Placer County 2000), is a strategic plan to preserve, protect, and enhance the cultural and natural integrity of Placer County for the benefit of its citizens. The program was developed to implement the goals, policies, and programs of the 1994 Placer County General Plan. Placer County, in coordination with its public and private

partners, will implement the goals and objectives of the Placer Legacy Plan throughout the 50-year term of the PCCP permit.

The primary goal of the Placer Legacy Plan is to protect a diversity of natural habitats while fostering the economic stability and growth of the County. The main objectives are to maintain a viable agricultural community, conserve natural open spaces for recreation and plant and animal community preservation, and protect endangered and threatened species.

The Placer Legacy Plan uses three main vehicles to obtain its goals: land preservation, stewardship promotion, and restoration and enhancement. Preservation of agricultural lands is primarily accomplished through fee title acquisition, conservation easements, and Williamson Act agreements. Stewardship programs focus on agricultural product marketing, tax/estate planning assistance, sustainable practices education, and financial incentives. In addition, the County promotes stewardship by providing a long-term planning framework that is scientifically and geographically based as well as by assisting public and private land owners with federal and state agency permit applications and consultations.

The act of acquiring land or promoting stewardship does not have direct, on-the-ground consequences that require coverage by the PCCP. However, restoration and enhancement actions will have environmental impacts that are covered by this Plan.

Implementation of the Placer Legacy Plan will generally have temporary impacts caused by construction or restoration activities. Overall, these activities will provide positive impacts by enhancing habitat quality and connectivity for native biota. Projects likely to be implemented as part of, or as a consequence of, the Placer Legacy Plan generally fall under the following categories:

- Management of vernal pools and vernal pool complexes;
- Introduction of recreation such as hiking, bicycling, and horseback riding to previously inaccessible natural areas that support grassland, oak woodland, riparian, and vernal pool habitats;
- Creation of urban trails and trail connections as well as the building of interpretive nature and cultural appreciation centers;
- Restoration of riparian and in-stream habitats to benefit salmonid spawning, rearing, and migration life stages in the Coon Creek, Auburn Ravine, and Dry Creek watersheds;
- Enhancement of floodplains to maximize water and sediment detention and restore natural stream morphology;

- Establishment of buffers and management of fuel loads to reduce wildfire potential;
- Restoration and enhancement of degraded forests in oak woodland and riparian habitats;
- Development of on-site water management storage features such as ponds and swales to promote water conservation and improve water quality;
- Coordination of water delivery agencies to ensure the adequacy of future water deliveries for agriculture and native species habitat; and
- Encouragement of the use of rice decomposition water to improve waterfowl habitat.

#### **Resource Management Plans**

The Auburn Ravine and Coon Creek Ecosystem Restoration Plan (ARCCERP) and the Dry Creek Coordinated Resource Management Plan (DCCRMP) are comprehensive, ecosystem-based plans for the restoration and enhancement of riparian and in-stream habitats in two of the major western Placer County watersheds. These plans were created in coordination with public and private stakeholders, including Placer County. These plans provide guidance for riparian and stream restoration and enhancement actions outlined in the Placer Legacy Plan (Placer County 2001). The PCA will use these restoration and resource management plans to help guide stream and riparian acquisition, enhancement, and restoration actions. Placer Legacy Plan restoration and enhancement activities implemented by Placer County will occur on lands within and outside of the Reserve System. These Plans have informed the development of the PCCP conservation strategy (Chapter 5) and monitoring and adaptive management program (Chapter 7) and will be used by the PCA to help guide PCCP acquisition, enhancement, and restoration actions for riverine and riparian systems.

The primary goal of these resource management plans is to improve riparian and aquatic habitat quality and connectivity for native biota. The main objectives of these plans are to protect, restore, and enhance riparian habitat, improve salmonid spawning and rearing habitat, restore the natural hydrograph and morphology when and where possible, remove and/or modify in-stream barriers to salmonid migration, and improve water quality.

Those projects that are implemented as a result of the ARCCERP or the DCCRMP planning process will be covered the PCCP. Implementation of these plans will generally have temporary impacts caused by construction or restoration activities. Overall, these projects will provide a net benefit to natural and semi-natural communities and covered species by

improving ecosystem integrity, resiliency, and connectivity. The general types of projects that are expected to be implemented include:

- Control and/or removal of non-native, invasive riparian plant species;
   Himalayan blackberry, in particular;
- Creation, expansion, and enhancement of riparian forest and willow scrub habitat to maximize ecosystem functions such as shade and bank stabilization;
- Management of riparian habitat adjacent to grazing areas to reduce sedimentation and fecal contamination;
- Enhancement of floodplain structure to reflect natural stream morphology and improve flood control;
- Control populations of invasive animal species such as bullfrogs, beavers, and bass to minimize impacts to threatened and endangered species;
- Enhancement and restoration of Swainson's hawk nesting and foraging habitat;
- Enhancement and restoration of valley elderberry longhorn beetle habitat;
- Removal or modification of barriers to salmonid immigration and emigration between spawning habitat and the Sacramento River;
- Modification of water diversion structures to minimize juvenile salmonid entrapment;
- Improvement of salmonid spawning and rearing habitat by increasing or encouraging the formation of runs, riffles, and pools and reducing the concentration of finely sized sediment;
- Provide public education programs and partnerships with wastewater treatment plants to help reduce pollutant loads to streams and to increase the use of biofiltering techniques such as vegetated buffers and off-channel storage ponds in existing and future streamside development and agriculture;
- Management of upland activities to reduce peak runoff flows and sediment and contamination loads; and
- Utilization and enforcement of Best Management Practices and Smart Growth principles to improve water quality and minimize surface runoff discharge.

# 2.4 Projects and Activities Not Covered by this Plan

Although project-level detail may not be available for many covered activities, the Plan has tried to incorporate most projects and activities that are the result of development and associated infrastructure. However, there are certain projects and activities that may occur within the Plan area that will not be covered. These activities or projects are typically larger in magnitude, are speculative in nature, are covered under other programs, or are within non-participating jurisdictions. Projects and activities not covered by the Plan are presented in the list below. This list is not intended to be all inclusive, but it provides a general description of known activities and projects at the time this Plan was prepared. These activities are still subject to all applicable Federal and State laws, including the Federal and Endangered Species Acts and the Clean Water Act.

- Non-Participating Jurisdictions. Any ground disturbing activities within the jurisdictions of Auburn, Loomis, Rocklin and Roseville are not covered.
- Pesticide/rodenticide application for the federal permits. The USFWS and NMFS do not issue incidental take permits for pesticide and rodenticide use, and pesticide and rodenticide use is therefore not covered under this Plan for the federal permits. This activity is covered under the state permit. PCWA applies algaecides and herbicides in their canal system. PCWA is in compliance with FIFRA regulations, has an active General Permit for discharges of Aquatic Pesticides, and has an extensive Aquatic Weed Management Program. The PCA conducts its use of herbicides on Reserve System lands in accordance with the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA, 7 U.S.C. §136 et seq.) which regulates the registration, sale and use of pesticides. FIFRA's purpose is to protect against any unreasonable risks to man or the environment by taking into account the economic, social and environmental costs and benefits of the use of any pesticide. All active ingredients proposed for use and diflufenzopyr as a mixture with dicamba are registered with EPA. Labeling instructions which specify proper uses of herbicides to protect the environment will be followed in accord with FIFRA. Also, PCA follows all requirements for the proper storage, transport and disposal of the herbicides used.
- Routine and ongoing agricultural activities. Routine agricultural activities are defined broadly as activities that occur in the normal course of existing farming or ranching operations, including crop planting, crop harvesting, livestock management, and pesticide application. These activities are not covered by the Plan. These are

- activities that do not typically require take coverage, and the Wildlife Agencies currently do not issue permits for these types of activities.
- New intensive agricultural activities. Activities such as cut flower nurseries, Christmas tree farms, ornamental plant nurseries, dairies, and feedlots are not covered by this Plan, unless they require a discretionary permit such as a grading permit. The conversion of agricultural lands to non-agricultural uses by certain projects and activities is covered by this Plan as described above in this chapter.
- Expansion of cultivated agriculture into natural lands. The expansion of cultivated agriculture into natural lands (as defined by the natural land-cover types described in Chapter 3) is not covered by this Plan unless it is associated with an approved rural development project that is covered by this Plan. This category typically applies to new large-scale agricultural operations such as row crops, vineyards, orchards or pastures. If these land conversions do not require grading, they would typically not require local approvals by the Permittees and therefore cannot be covered by the Plan.
- **Timber harvest operations.** Most timber harvesting occurs within the Sierra outside of the Plan Area. As this is rare in western Placer County and Timber Harvest Plans are regulated through State and Federal agencies, they are not included as a covered activity.
- Quarries and other Mining. Quarries and other mining were considered for inclusion in this Plan. At the time of Plan development, no specific projects were proposed for inclusion. Due to the potentially extensive impacts associated with quarries and mining and the lack of understanding about what future projects might be proposed, the mining of sand or other aggregate material, or the mining of precious metals or other minerals is not covered by this Plan.
- Pacific Gas & Electric, Northern California Power Agency, and Sacramento Municipal Utility District activities for power generation and transmission.
- Separate and independent projects. Several projects have been permitted or are in the permit process. These projects will be bound by the terms of their separate permits and not by the PCCP and will obtain incidental take coverage from those permits and not from the PCCP. Similarly, in the future, a landowner may elect to obtain his own state and federal permits in lieu of participating in the PCCP.