

# **El Dorado County General Plan Biological Policies**

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**March 30, 2015**



# Background and Previous BOS Hearings

| Hearing Date           | Discussion   |
|------------------------|--|
| July 28, 2014          | Review History/Background and Policy Options memos   |
| Sept 2, 2014           | Follow-up discussion of oak resources  |
| Oct 7, 2014            | Direction to proceed with Policy Option 3, the Mitigation/Conservation approach                    |
| Nov 21 and Dec 7, 2014 | Additional discussion of Oak Woodland Management Plan (OWMP) and in-lieu fee                       |
| Jan 13, 2015           | Established policy update timeline and key decision points, direction provided on Decision Point 1 |
| Jan 26, 2015           | Discussion and direction provided on Decision Points 2-3   |
| Feb 23, 2015           | Discussion and direction provided on Decision Points 4-7   |



# Purpose of Workshop

## Decision Points and Timeline

- Review key Decision Points 8 through 10
- Following public comment, Board to provide direction on Decision Points 8 through 10



# Policy Update Timeline

| Task                               | 2015 |     |     |     |     |      |      |     |      |     |     |     | 2016 |     |     |     |     |
|------------------------------------|------|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|------|-----|------|-----|-----|-----|------|-----|-----|-----|-----|
|                                    | Jan  | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | June | July | Aug | Sept | Oct | Nov | Dec | Jan  | Feb | Mar | Apr | May |
| <b>Biological Policies/OWMP</b>    |      |     |     |     |     |      |      |     |      |     |     |     |      |     |     |     |     |
| Board meetings                     | █    | █   | █   |     | █   | █    |      |     |      |     |     |     |      |     |     |     |     |
| Draft policy language/OWMP         |      |     | █   | █   |     |      |      |     |      |     |     |     |      |     |     |     |     |
| Final draft policy language/OWMP   |      |     |     | █   | █   |      |      |     |      |     |     |     |      |     |     |     |     |
| Final policy language/OWMP         |      |     |     |     |     |      |      |     |      |     |     |     |      |     | █   | █   | █   |
| <b>Environmental Impact Report</b> |      |     |     |     |     |      |      |     |      |     |     |     |      |     |     |     |     |
| Administrative Draft IS/NOP        |      |     | █   | █   |     |      |      |     |      |     |     |     |      |     |     |     |     |
| Notice of Preparation              |      |     |     |     | █   | █    |      |     |      |     |     |     |      |     |     |     |     |
| Scoping Meeting                    |      |     |     |     |     |      | █    |     |      |     |     |     |      |     |     |     |     |
| Administrative Draft EIR           |      |     |     |     |     |      |      | █   | █    |     |     |     |      |     |     |     |     |
| Draft EIR                          |      |     |     |     |     |      |      |     |      | █   | █   |     |      |     |     |     |     |
| Public meetings on Draft EIR       |      |     |     |     |     |      |      |     |      |     | █   | █   |      |     |     |     |     |
| Administrative Final EIR           |      |     |     |     |     |      |      |     |      |     |     |     | █    | █   | █   |     |     |
| Final EIR                          |      |     |     |     |     |      |      |     |      |     |     |     |      |     |     | █   | █   |

# Decision Point Status

- January 2015 Workshop 1 (Jan. 13)
  - 1: Board approved OWMP In-Lieu Fee Study
- January 2015 Workshop 2 (Jan. 26)
  - 2: Oak Resource Measurement Methodology
  - 3: Roadway Undercrossing Requirements



# Decision Point Status

- February 2015 Workshop (Feb. 23)
  - 4: Two-tiered Mitigation and Threshold
  - 5: Oak Mitigation Exemptions
  - 6: Priority Conservation Area (PCA) Update
  - 7: Special Status Resource Mitigation



# Decision Point Status

- March 2015 Workshop (Mar. 30)
  - 8: Important Biological Corridor (IBC) Standards
  - 9: Whether to Include Important Ecological Areas with PCAs and IBCs in the Conservation Strategy
  - 10: Database of Willing Sellers



# Decision Point 8

## Important Biological Corridor Overlay Standards

### Options:

- To establish development standards based on the provisions within Policy 7.4.2.9 for the IBC overlay
- To establish a performance-based approach for projects within IBC overlay areas





# Decision Point 8

## Important Biological Corridor Overlay Standards

- Depending on the strength of the IBC Overlay standards, the IBC Overlay could (General Plan EIR):
  - Preserve opportunities for wildlife movement through developed areas
  - Link the two largest polygons on the Ecological Preserve overlay
  - Protect a portion of the Weber Creek canyon and other major watercourses
  - Preserve some of the County's most valuable and pristine low-elevation habitat
  - Comprise the first step toward a multicounty regional corridor



# Decision Point 8

## Important Biological Corridor Overlay Standards

- Current General Plan Policy 7.4.2.9
  - IBC overlay shall apply to areas containing wildlife habitat that is high in value, function, and connectivity
  - Lands within IBC overlay subject to certain general provisions, the details of which would be incorporated into the Zoning Ordinance
- Intent is to ensure development standards within the IBC overlay address habitat value, function, and connectivity



# Decision Point 8

## Important Biological Corridor Overlay Standards

- General Plan Policy 7.4.2.9 Provisions:
  - Increased minimum parcel size
  - Higher mitigation/setback standards for woodland, riparian, and wetland habitats
  - Lower thresholds for grading permits
  - Greater protection for rare plants
  - Standards for retention of contiguous vegetation community areas
  - Site review for building permits
  - More stringent lot coverage, floor area ratio, and height standards
  - No hindrance to wildlife movement



# Decision Point 8

## Important Biological Corridor Overlay Standards

- Current County Requirements
  - Interim Interpretive Guidelines for General Plan Policy 7.4.4.4
    - Projects removing oak canopy within IBCs or EPs, shall address the requirements of Policies 7.4.2.9 and 7.4.1.4, and an Important Habitat Mitigation Program, and be reviewed by the Planning Commission.
  - Interim Interpretive Guidelines for General Plan Policy 7.3.3.4
    - Projects within IBCs shall have a minimum setback of 100 feet from all perennial streams, rivers and lakes and 50 feet from intermittent streams and wetlands.



# Decision Point 8

## Important Biological Corridor Overlay Standards

- Habitat Connectivity and Wildlife Movement: Data and Analysis
  - California Essential Habitat Connectivity Project (CEHC), Spencer et al. 2010
  - California Missing Linkages Publication, Penrod et al. 2001
    - These two studies highlight potential regional or landscape-scale habitat connectivity features within the County: conceptual north-south connections, as well as east-west connections along major rivers.



# Decision Point 8

## Important Biological Corridor Overlay Standards

- Habitat Connectivity and Wildlife Movement Requirements
  - Wildlife movement corridors are inclusive of a variety of land covers and topographic features
  - The County should be viewed as a broad mosaic of topographic and vegetation features that provide a range of habitats for the different species and support diffuse movement across the landscape.

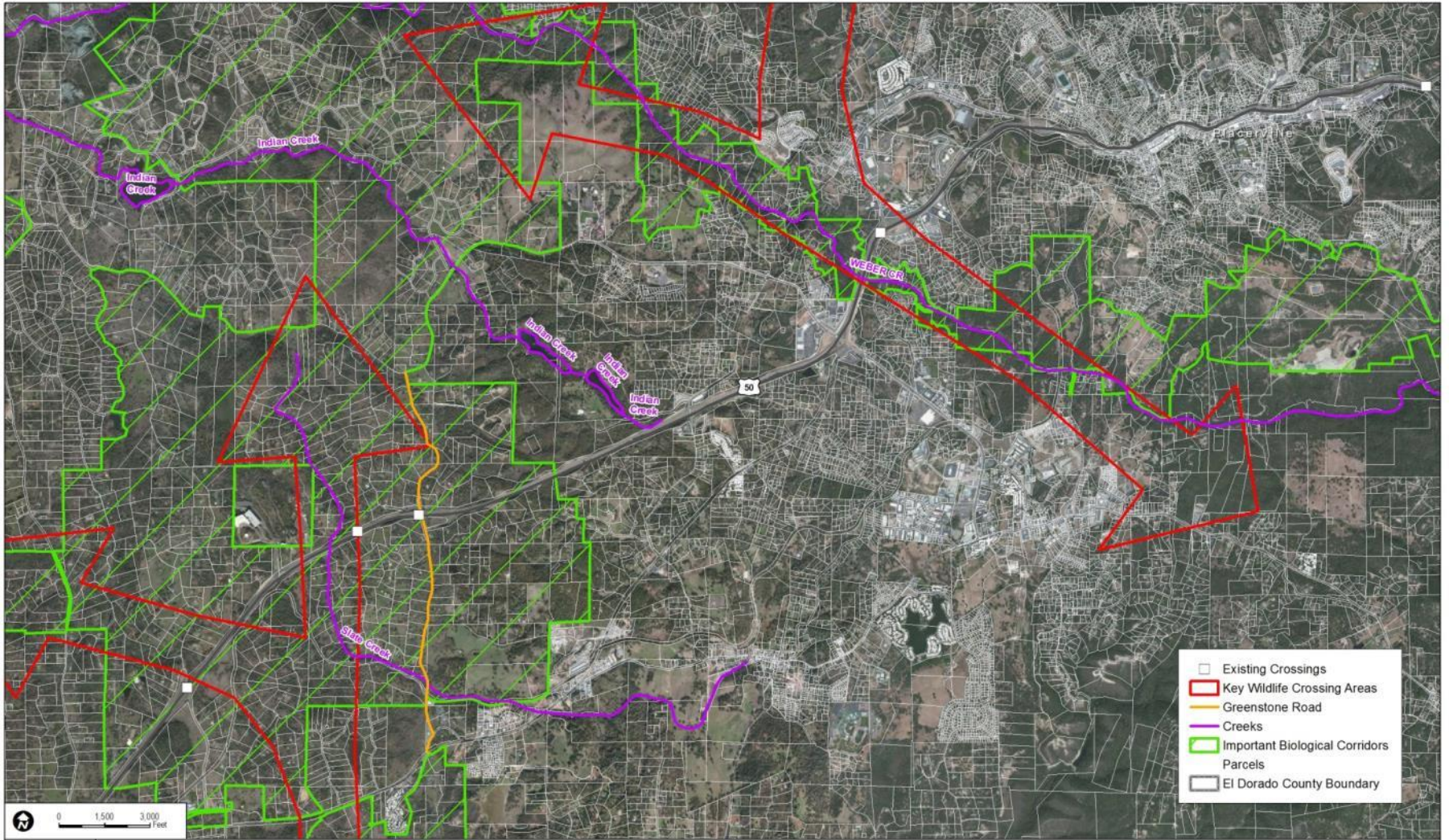


# Decision Point 8

## Important Biological Corridor Overlay Standards

- Habitat Connectivity and Wildlife Movement: Effects of Development
  - Potential Impacts of Development on Wildlands in El Dorado County, California, Saving and Greenwood (2002)
    - Constraining land uses in various combinations (e.g., slope, oak canopy retention, stream setbacks, clustering, etc.) would result in two contiguous patches of wildlife habitat in El Dorado County, located to the north and south, respectively, of US 50.
    - Using development restrictions for oak woodlands between Shingle Springs and Placerville, they were able to model a north-south connection with some parcels still compatible with development.





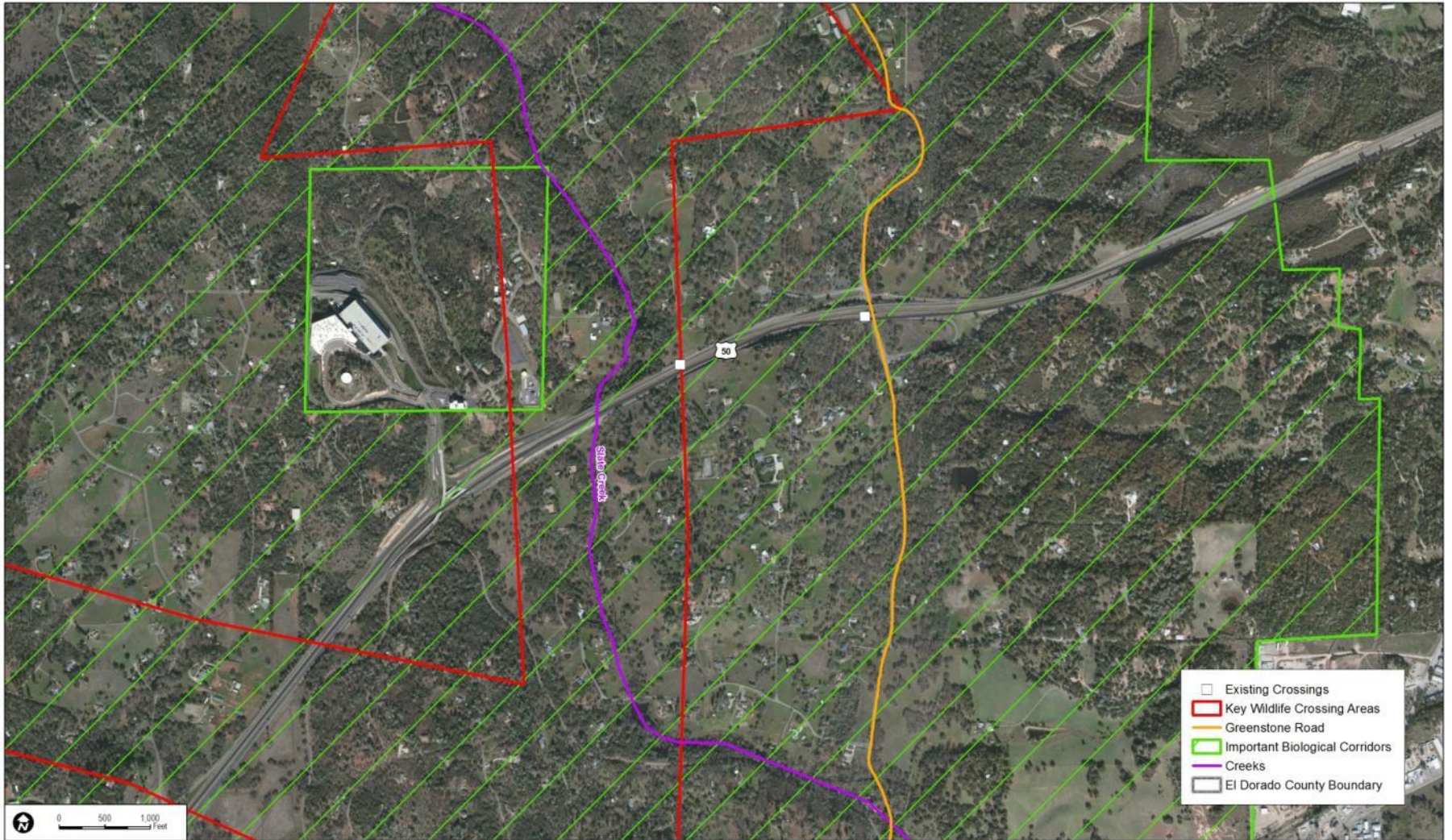
**FIGURE 1**  
**Wildlife Movement**

**DUDEK**

8229-01

Biological Resources Policy Update Decision Points 2 and 3

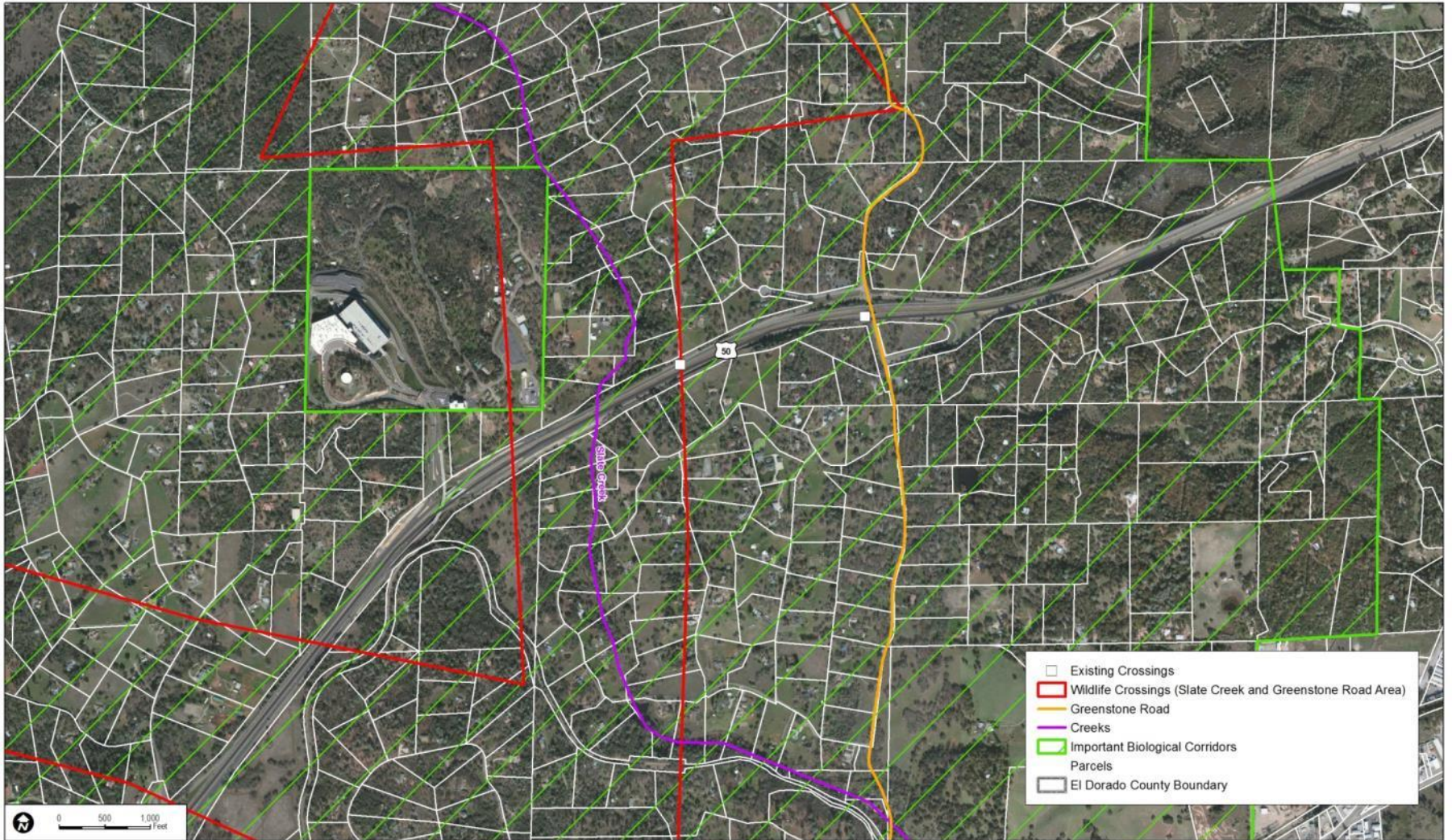




**DUDEK** SOURCE: Bing Maps 2014; CPAD 2014; FRAP 2006; El Dorado County 2014

8229-01 Biological Resources Policy Update Decision Points 2 and 3

**FIGURE 2**  
**Wildlife Movement - Slate Creek and Greenstone Road**



- Existing Crossings
- ▭ Wildlife Crossings (Slate Creek and Greenstone Road Area)
- Greenstone Road
- Creeks
- ▭ Important Biological Corridors
- ▭ Parcels
- ▭ El Dorado County Boundary

0 500 1,000 Feet

**DUDEK**

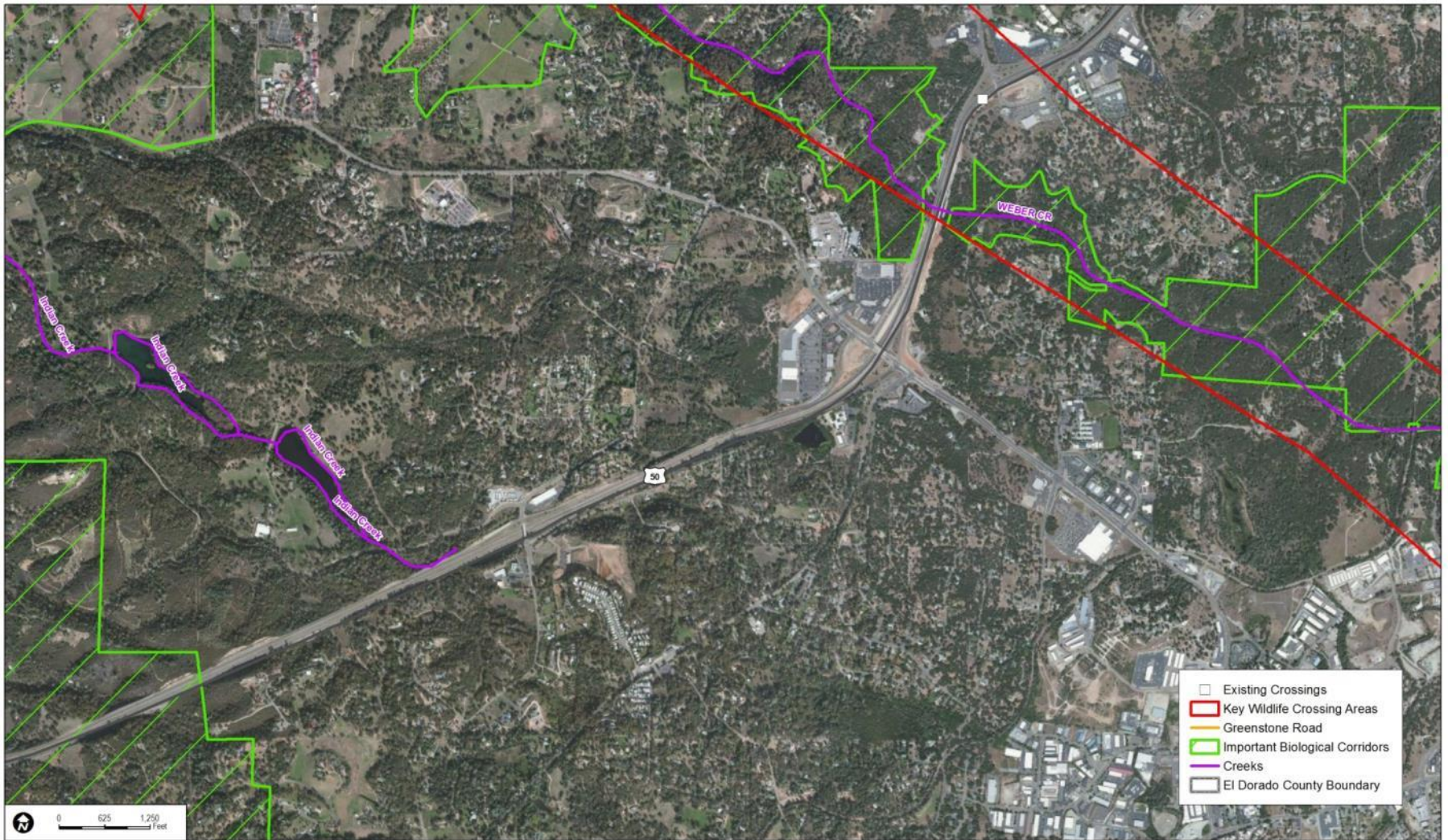
SOURCE: Bing Maps 2014; CPAD 2014; FRAP 2006; El Dorado County 2014

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Biological Resources Policy Update Decision Points 2 and 3

**FIGURE 3**

**Wildlife Movement - Slate Creek and Greenstone Road**



- Existing Crossings
- ▭ Key Wildlife Crossing Areas
- ▬ Greenstone Road
- ▭ Important Biological Corridors
- ▬ Creeks
- ▭ El Dorado County Boundary

0 625 1,250 Feet

**DUDEK**

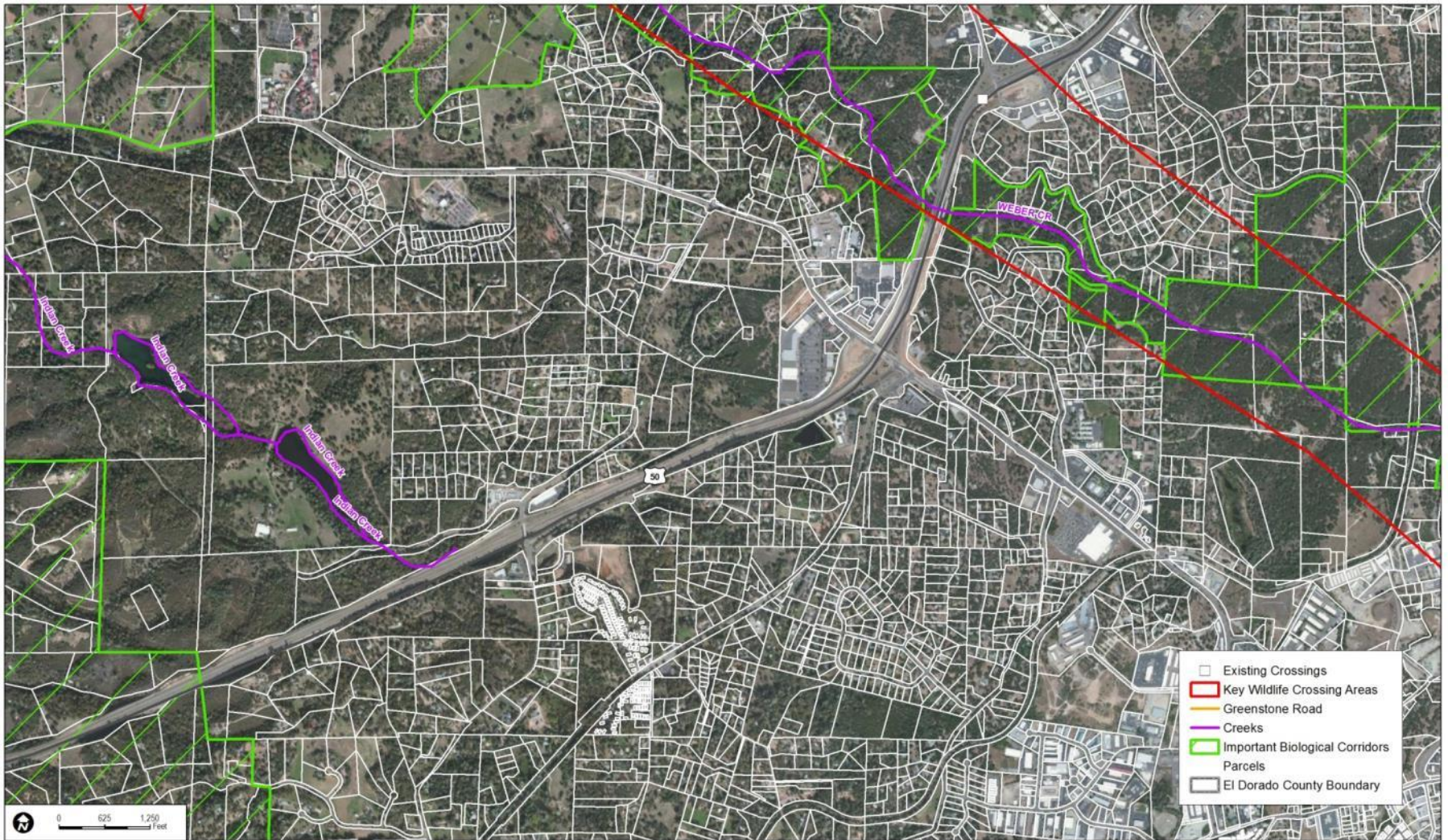
SOURCE: Bing Maps 2014; CPAD 2014; FRAP 2006; El Dorado County 2014

**FIGURE 4**

**Wildlife Movement - Indian Creek and Weber Creek**

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Biological Resources Policy Update Decision Points 2 and 3



**DUDEK**

SOURCE: Bing Maps 2014; CPAD 2014; FRAP 2006; El Dorado County 2014

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Biological Resources Policy Update Decision Points 2 and 3

**FIGURE 5**

**Wildlife Movement - Indian Creek and Weber Creek**

# Decision Point 8

## Important Biological Corridor Overlay Standards

- County Parcel Data Summary

| Summary of Parcel Sizes within IBCs in El Dorado County |                  |                                     |              |              |
|---|------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------|--------------|
| Parcel Size   | Total in County* | Parcels in IBCs (% of County Total) |              |              |
|   |                  | Developed                           | Undeveloped  | Total        |
| <= 1 acre   | 50,999           | 411 (0.5%)                          | 257 (0.3%)   | 668 (0.8%)   |
| > 1 and <= 2 acres                                      | 6,806            | 446 (0.5%)                          | 134 (0.2%)   | 580 (0.7%)   |
| > 2 and <= 5 acres                                      | 10,318           | 1,849 (2.1%)                        | 338 (0.4%)   | 2,187 (2.5%) |
| > 5 and <= 10 acres                                     | 8,798            | 2,219 (2.5%)                        | 558 (0.6%)   | 2,777 (3.2%) |
| > 10 and <= 40 acres                                    | 7,267            | 1,037 (1.2%)                        | 502 (0.6%)   | 1,539 (1.7%) |
| > 40 acres  | 3,970            | 63 (0.1%)                           | 129 (0.1%)   | 192 (0.2%)   |
| <b>Total:</b>   | <b>88,158</b>    | <b>6,025</b>                        | <b>1,918</b> | <b>7,943</b> |

# Decision Point 8

## Important Biological Corridor Overlay Standards

### Recommendation:

- Revise General Plan Policy 7.4.2.9 and define IBC Overlay Standards. Potential standards include:
  - Require site-specific biological resources technical report to determine presence of special-status species or habitat, and wildlife corridors, particularly for large mammals. Implement land use siting and design tools to achieve no net loss of habitat function or values for special-status species and large mammals
  - Potentially establish standards for a north-south corridor between Shingle Springs and Placerville, in the Weber Creek canyon, Indian Creek canyon, Slate Creek canyon, and/or the Greenstone area



# Decision Point 9

## Important Ecological Areas

Options:

- Incorporate important ecological areas with the PCAs and IBCs into conservation strategy
- Rely primarily on the PCAs and IBCs



# Decision Point 9

## Important Ecological Areas

Building Off of Decision Points 4, 6, and 7

- Decision Point 4
  - Establish two-tiered oak mitigation approach
- Decision Point 6
  - Retain PCAs from 2008 OWMP
  - Establish criteria to identify conservation land outside PCAs
- Decision Point 7
  - Establish mitigation ratios for special-status biological resources





# Decision Point 9

## Important Ecological Areas

- Current General Plan Policy 7.4.2.8: Conservation Strategy for Important Habitat
  - Habitats that support special-status species
  - Aquatic environments
  - Wetland and riparian habitat
  - Important habitat for migratory deer herds
  - Large expanses of native vegetation



# Decision Point 9

## Important Ecological Areas

- Current General Plan Policy 7.4.2.8: Conservation Strategy for Important Habitat (cont.)
  - Current goal: conserve and restore contiguous blocks of important habitat to offset effects of habitat loss and fragmentation elsewhere in the County through INRMP
  - INRMP not proposed under conservation/mitigation approach



# Decision Point 9

## Important Ecological Areas

- Background: INRMP
  - 2006: ISAC and PAWTAC formed
  - 2008: Board directed boundary of Study Area for INRMP set at 4,000-foot contour
  - April 2008: Board adopted INRMP Initial Inventory and Mapping
    - Satisfied General Plan Measure CO-M
  - December 2009: SEA retained to prepare INRMP Phase I



# Decision Point 9

## Important Ecological Areas

- Background: INRMP (cont.)
  - 2010: Adopted updated INRMP Initial Inventory and Mapping, accepted Indicator Species Report and Wildlife Movement and Corridor Report
  - September 2012: Decision to move forward with the General Plan biological resources policies update
  - October 7, 2014: Selected mitigation/Conservation option
  - Dudek evaluating other options to meet conservation strategy in lieu of implementing INRMP



# Decision Point 9

## Important Ecological Areas

- Conservation Strategy
  - The PCAs and the IBC overlay may not support sufficient acreages of vegetation communities to achieve the mitigation ratios established through Decision Points 4, 6 and 7.
  - Important ecological areas could be prioritized to supplement the PCAs and IBC overlay towards meeting the County's goals for management of special-status resources.



# Decision Point 9

## Important Ecological Areas

- County could allow conservation opportunities outside of PCAs and IBCs
  - Within or outside of important ecological areas
- County could define specific criteria for additional conservation lands
  - Streamline approval process
  - Eliminate interpretation
  - Ensure consistent implementation



# Decision Point 9

## Important Ecological Areas

### Recommendation:

- Allow developers to identify conservation opportunities outside PCAs and IBCs
  - Within or outside of important ecological areas
- Define specific criteria that must be met by additional conservation lands



# Decision Point 9

## Important Ecological Areas

- Possible criteria for establishing additional conservation lands:
  - Prioritization of important ecological areas
  - Minimum parcel size of 20 acres
  - Woodland, forest, and shrub communities shall be diverse in age and structure
  - Woodland and forest communities shall include large trees and dense canopies
  - Opportunities for active land management to enhance or restore natural ecosystem processes
  - Potential to support special-status species





# Decision Point 10

## Database of Willing Sellers

Options:

- Create and maintain a database of willing sellers within PCAs and IBCs and/or other important biological areas
- Database unnecessary



# Decision Point 10

## Database of Willing Sellers

- Database could identify appropriate mitigation land for acquisition
- Could be used by developers, the County, third-party land conservancy, non-governmental organization



# Decision Point 10

## Database of Willing Sellers

- Generation of database:
  - Passive voluntary program
  - Active solicitation of interested land owners
    - Parcels within PCAs and IBCs
    - And/or parcels within other important biological areas
    - And/or areas meeting selection criteria for additional conservation lands (Decision Points 4 and 9)
  - Parcel owners asked to opt-in or opt-out



# Decision Point 10

## Database of Willing Sellers

- Database contents
  - Property owner name
  - Assessor Parcel Number
  - Parcel acreage
  - General vegetation communities from FRAP database
- Passive: not expected to generate extensive list of willing sellers
- Active: may raise concerns from property owners regarding property rights



# Decision Point 10

## Database of Willing Sellers

### Recommendation:

- Incorporate requirement for establishment of database of willing sellers into General Plan policy
  - Database should include willing sellers within PCAs, IBCs, and other important biological areas
  - County should manage database as voluntary program
    - Landowners must opt-in by contacting the County to be included



# Summary of Recommendation

| Decision Point | Recommendation  |
|----------------|---|
| #8             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Require site-specific biological resources technical report and implement land use siting and design tools to achieve no net loss of habitat function or values for special-status species and large mammals</li><li>• Potentially establish standards specific to a north-south corridor between Shingle Springs and Placerville, in the Weber Creek canyon, Indian Creek canyon, Slate Creek canyon, and/or the Greenstone area</li></ul> |
| #9             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Allow developers to identify conservation opportunities outside PCAs and IBCs</li><li>• Define specific criteria that must be met by additional conservation lands</li></ul>  |
| #10            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Incorporate requirement for establishment of database of willing sellers into General Plan policy</li></ul>   |

# Reference Slide

