AGENDA

Three Rivers Community Plan Update
Community Meeting

Monday October 12, 2015 7:00 P.M.

Arts Building
Three Rivers, CA

... *service with pride.*

Resource Management Agency

1. Welcome and Introduction.
2. Project Status and Schedule.
3. Discussion of Updated Oak Woodland Management Plan Draft Outline.

   (a) Draft Updated Oak Woodland Management Plan Outline.
4. Other Topics as Related.
5. Topics for the Next Meeting.
6. Next Steps.
7. Adjournment: Next Meeting November 9, 2015 at 7:00 P.M.

Three Rivers Community Plan Website address:
http://www.tularecounty.ca.gov/rma/index.cfm/planning/three-rivers-community-plan-update/

DRAFT OAK WOODLAND MANAGEMENT PLAN DETAILED OUTLINE

10-12-15

I. Purpose of the Oak Woodland Management Plan

A. Purpose – Voluntary Plan. Consistency with the California Oak Woodlands Conservation Act of 2001 (AB 242 Chapter 588), (SB 1334) (Public Resources Code (PRC) section 21083.4) and PRC §4793(e), Three Rivers Community Plan and Vision, and to Comply with 2012 County General Plan Requirements.

II. Conservation Goals of the Oak Woodland Management Plan.

A. Advance and encourage the stewardship and conservation of oak woodlands by informing landowners of their value and voluntary incentives to protect them.

B. Advance and encourage sustainable ranching practices that maintain wildlife habitat, clean water and air, and provide a high quality of life.

C. Advance and encourage planning that is consistent with oak woodland conservation.

D. Provide a program or mechanism to provide public education and outreach regarding oak woodlands through the availability of information and published materials.

E. Long Term Viability and Sustainability.

III. Conservation Objectives of the Oak Woodland Management Plan.

A. Objectives

1. Voluntary Plan. To develop a set of voluntary oak protection guidelines for Oak Conservation Planning and the use of oak woodland habitats in the Three Rivers Urban Development Boundary. The plan is also expected to provide information and guidance to landowners, the County, and developers regarding activities that have the potential to adversely impact oaks and oak woodland habitats.

2. Fulfill Requirements of California Oak Woodlands Conservation Act. (Meet Oak Woodlands Management Plan (OWMP) minimum elements as identified in the Wildlife Conservation Board, "The Oak Woodland Conservation Act of 2001. Program Application and Guidelines"), and (SB 1334) (Public Resources Code (PRC) section 21083.4) and PRC §4793(e).

3. Provide Guidance to Landowners, Developers, and County Planners.

4. Qualify for Funding from Wildlife Conservation Board or other grants.

5. Consistency with the County General Plan, and Three Rivers Community Plan Vision, Goals, Objectives, and Policies.

6. Plan Strategy (describe the relationship of the OWMP to the Three Rivers Community Plan and DEIR).

IV. Natural Resource Values of Oak Woodland Habitats.

A. Grazing.

B. Wildlife and Plant Habitat.

C. Special-Status Species.

D. Recreation.

E. Effects on Habitat from Loss of Oak Woodland Habitats (Biological Resources and Physical and Natural Resources).

F. Economic. (Blue Oak Dominant Habitat).

G. Cultural.

H. Scenic, Aesthetic and Unique Values (Three Rivers Community Plan Vision and Values and County General Plan Scenic Landscapes Element).

I. Environmental Values GHG (Sequestration).

J. Soil and Water Retention through green infrastructure and flood protection, and improved Water Quality.

K. Improved Air Quality that benefits public health.

V. Oak Woodland Habitats in the Three Rivers UDB (Inventory)

A. Background

1. Review existing studies and materials, National Park Service, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, Academic Studies, California Native Plant Society, Caltrans, Bureau of Land Management, California Oak Foundation, and Other County OWMP's.

B. Definition of Oak Woodlands. (Oak Woodlands Conservation Act of 2001) and (SB 1334) (Public Resources Code (PRC) section 21083.4) and PRC §4793(e).

1. Oak Woodlands Conservation Act of 2001: Lands that contain 10 percent oak canopy cover are considered oak woodlands, per PRC §4793(e) the Board of Forestry and Fire Protection has communicated to county planning departments that the term significant stand of oak trees means those acres of land with 10 percent oak canopy cover (January 2006).

2. For a project site to be designated oak woodlands under SB 1334, all of the following must occur: (1) no commercial conifers are growing; (2) the majority of living trees are oaks; (3) the project site must average 10 percent oak canopy cover per acre.

3. The 10 percent oak canopy cover standard determines whether oak woodland habitat exists and if SB 1334 mitigation standards apply. The 10 percent standard is unrelated to determining thresholds of significance or any other CEQA application beyond establishing the existence of oak woodlands.

C. Types of Oak Species in the Three Rivers UDB.

1. Oak Woodlands to include all species of Oaks including Valley Oaks, Canyon Live Oaks, Live Oaks and not strictly limited to Blue Oak Woodlands.

2. Inventory to include areas within the Three Rivers UDB.

D. Oak Communities in the Three Rivers UDB.

1. Include California Natural Diversity Data Base Data in the OWMP.

2. Include Riparian and Wetland communities that overlap Oak Woodland communities.

3. Status of natural regeneration and recruitment trends.

4. Current distribution and historical estimates of the distribution of oak woodlands.

5. Current conditions. Determine Baseline/Existing Conditions and Historical Trends and Patterns if possible. Identify Williamson Act Lands and fragmented areas.

6. Threats to Oak Woodland Communities, including, Fire, Disease, Climate Change, Urban Development including infrastructure, and tree harvesting. Identify areas where threats are the most pressing.

7. Inventory should consider average geographical rainfall.

E. Mapping and Inventory Protocol/Strategy.

1. Options Include Rapid Assessment, GIS Data Aerial Photos/Landsat Satellite Imagery/Infrared Mapping (March or April Preference to distinguish the difference between live and dead trees), Fire Resource and Assessment Program (FRAP) Maps, National Park Service Data, California Natural Diversity Data Base Maps, California Native Plant Society Maps, GAP Analysis Maps, or acreages of spatial canopy measurements, and other relevant GIS Data as applicable (fine grain vegetative mapping if available).

2. Consider Tree Canopy Study, use Large Scale Mapping and consider one tenth acre plot sizes (standard forestry plot).

3. Consider Classification and Sub-Sampling, (Consider Ground Truthing Approach/ Spherical Density Mapping). Address Private Property Access Concerns if applicable). Utilize data forms for collection of information.

4. Mapping to include the current distribution of oak woodlands. Identify areas where preservation efforts would serve the greatest public good.

VI. County Participation in Oak Woodland Habitats Conservation Program.

A. Support for Private Landowner Participation in the OWCP.

B. Support for Landowners.

C. Education and Outreach.

1. Include a Public Education information component regarding tree health and safety (checklist oriented component).

2. Technical Assistance References.

VII. Best Management Practices for Oak Woodland Habitats.

A. Include the Best Practices Guidelines for oak tree care and preservation techniques from the City of Visalia, Fresno County, and Yolo County.

VIII. Mitigation for Loss of Oak Woodland Habitats, Program Options for Future Consideration.

A. Voluntary OWMP (Any regulatory policies, procedures or programs that require specified discretionary actions (Implementation and Mitigation Program considerations) would be identified as options for future consideration as part of the OWMP implementation program). Degree of any proposed (Regulations) should be consistent with the Threat of Harm.

B. Thresholds of Significance.

1. Include as applicable, California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) thresholds of significance regarding oak woodlands. (SB 1334 (Public Resources Code (PRC) section 21083).

2. Evaluation of potential impacts of a project should be considered at three scales: (1) landscape, (2) site and (3) individual trees or groves.

a. Mitigation Trigger Level 10% Coverage per acre standard Canopy. 10% Canopy cover per acre is the minimum standard for Oak Woodland definition.

b. Heritage Trees and Individual Trees (where those trees may represent a significant portion of the population of that species, and removal impacts the recruitment and restoration potential for that species (Exceedance of 15" DBH standard).

3. Establishing Site Condition (CEQA guidelines on establishing site condition §15125 and §15126): Site condition should evaluate either the oaks as individual trees, or the condition of the oaks as a component of a larger forest. Ascertain if the site represents an oak woodland whose ecological functions are still relatively "intact," "moderately degraded," or "severely degraded".

a. Intact refers mainly to being free from urban type land use practices that inhibit or limit the oak woodland to naturally sustain itself and its associated flora and fauna.

b. Moderately Degraded woodlands, the canopy or understory may have been reduced or eliminated over all or part of the site; past grazing or soil disturbance may have impaired regeneration in some areas or it may be a situation due to urban type development.

c. Severely Degraded, it should be highly altered, fragmented or in such a state as to make it virtually unrecognizable as ever having been an oak woodland.

4. Determination of Impacts.

a. Low Impact, Minimal disturbance to stand structure and composition and habitat features resulting in no increased edge habitat or fragmentation.

b. Moderate Impact, Detectable change or reduction in canopy, structure or composition; loss of some habitat features, subtle impacts increasing fragmentation, edge creation or loss of connectivity (roads, fences, other introduced artificial barriers or buffers).

c. High Impact, Obvious change or reduction or loss in canopy, structure or composition loss of most of the existing habitat features and services; fragmentation and or parcelization of contiguous ownerships; introduction of roads or stream crossings; creation of edge habitats previously absent; construction of barriers (fences).

C. Development Standards to promote and preserve Oak Woodlands.

1. Development Checklist to determine the potential impacts of proposed development projects or the need for further study.

2. Develop appropriate policies and procedures including consideration to prepare a canopy study and consideration of including a sensitive species list.

3. Planning decisions for oak woodlands should take into account potential effects of fragmentation of oak woodlands.

D. Mitigation should consider the Mitigation Options identified in SB 1334 (Public Resources Code (PRC) section 21083.4 (b) which provides that CEQA requires "feasible" and "proportional" mitigation for significant oak woodland habitat impacts.

1. Conserve oak woodlands, through the use of conservation easements.

2. Plant an appropriate number of trees, including maintaining plantings and replacing dead or diseased trees. (Determine Appropriate Replacement Ratios).

a. The requirement to maintain trees pursuant to this paragraph terminates seven years after the trees are planted.

b. Mitigation pursuant to this paragraph shall not fulfill more than one-half of the mitigation requirement for the project.

c. The requirements imposed pursuant to this paragraph also may be used to restore former oak woodlands.

3. Contribute funds to the Oak Woodlands Conservation Fund, as established under subdivision (a) of Section 1363 of the Fish and Game Code, for the purpose of purchasing oak woodlands conservation easements, as specified under paragraph (1) of subdivision (d) of that section and the guidelines and criteria of the Wildlife Conservation Board. A project applicant that contributes funds under this paragraph shall not receive a grant from the Oak Woodlands Conservation Fund as part of the mitigation for the project.

4. Other mitigation measures developed by the county.

IX. Guidelines for Maintenance, Restoration, and Rehabilitation of Oak Woodlands, Program Options for Future Consideration.

A. Program should be Incentive Based (Compensation/Incentives).

1. Include Incentives to encourage the long term preservation of oak woodland communities.

B. Identify future funding for implementation programs, Consider Grants, Conservation Banks, Conservation Easements, Per Acre Impact Fees, Consolidating of Small Parcels (lot merger), and Transfer of Development Rights.

C. Design Guidelines and Educational Programs.

D. Determine and include an approach regarding adjacent and contiguous Oak Woodland areas outside of the Three Rivers UDB (Utilize Foothill Growth Management Plan).

E. Include Urban Forestry practices.

X. Monitoring and Reporting.

A. Continue to assess and report the status of oak woodland canopy cover.

1. Record changes and effects of changes to evaluate the status of oak woodlands.

XI. Implementation Strategy.

A. County Participation in Oak Woodland Habitats Conservation Program.

B. Best Management Practices for Oak Woodland Habitats.

C. Mitigation for Loss of Oak Woodland Habitats, Program Options for Future Consideration.

D. Guidelines for Maintenance, Restoration, and Rehabilitation of Oak Woodlands, Program Options for Future Consideration.

E. Monitoring and Reporting.