

# **ELEMENT VII**

## **Conservation of Resources**

Natural resources an open spaces .....	VII-1
Cultural resources .....	VII-7

## VII. Conservation of Resources

The residents of Loomis enjoy an attractive natural setting of gently rolling hills, oak woodlands, and other tree and meadow areas. This setting provides most of the Town's open space resources, as well as a wide variety of other natural resources, including stream corridors, other wetlands, and wildlife habitat. The Town core also contains a number of historical buildings. These resources are described in detail in Sections 3 (Natural Resources) and 4 (Open Space, Recreation, and Cultural Resources) of the General Plan Background Report.

The Town's open space resources include a limited number of park sites (see the Parks and Recreation Element, page 50), but mostly manifest themselves as the expansive, low density areas in the Residential Agricultural, Residential Estate and, to a lesser extent, the Rural Residential land use designations. Within these areas, residential land uses are visually subordinate to the open feeling and character of the semi-rural countryside. The goals and policies of this General Plan related to open space appear in the following section, in the Land Use Element (beginning on page 33), and Parks and Recreation Element (page 50).

### Natural Resources and Open Space

#### Issues

- *Identifying ways to preserve open space areas and views is important in retaining the community's rural atmosphere.*
- *Loomis needs to strengthen Town requirements for protecting stream corridors and riparian habitat for wildlife and plant species, groundwater supplies, visual qualities, and recreational opportunities.*
- *Development pressures suggest that Loomis consider rezoning some of its agricultural/residential land to increase land and infrastructure efficiency. However, residents have expressed their preference for the retention of large lot, rural residential parcels.*

#### Goals

1. To protect areas rich in wildlife of a fragile ecological nature, including areas of rare or endangered species and riparian areas, from land development impacts.
2. To preserve, maintain, and enhance creeks and riparian areas for their aesthetic, wildlife habitat, and recreational values.
3. To help protect groundwater and air quality within the Sacramento region.
4. To protect major open space areas and natural features within the Town, including significant topography and rock outcroppings, oak woodlands and significant specimens of native trees.

## Policies

1. **Air quality.** Loomis will contribute toward the attainment of State and Federal air quality standards in the Sacramento Valley Air Basin through the following, and other feasible measures.
  - a. Site preparation and development activities shall incorporate effective measures to minimize dust emissions and the emissions of pollutants by motorized construction equipment and vehicles.
  - b. During the review of development plans, the Town should require that project proponents conduct their own air quality analysis to determine air quality impacts and potential mitigation measures.
  - c. Local employers should be encouraged to consider flextime as a means of reducing peak morning and afternoon trips.
  - d. Recognizing that trees and other vegetation can provide a biological means of reducing air contaminants, existing trees should be retained and incorporated into project design wherever feasible. The additional planting of a large number of trees along roadways and in parking areas shall be encouraged.
  - e. The Town shall require carbon monoxide modeling for development projects that, in combination with regionally cumulative traffic increases, would result in a total of 800 or more trips at an affected intersection or cause the level of service to drop to D or lower at the intersection.
  - f. The Town shall support the Placer County Air Pollution Control District in its efforts to develop a feasible program to meet emission reduction requirements during the environmental review of all development proposals whose emissions exceed applicable significance thresholds.
  - g. The Town shall encourage that large residential projects be phased or timed to be coordinated with development that provides primary wage-earner jobs.
  - h. If an initial air quality screening indicates that emissions of any pollutant could exceed 10 pounds per day, the Town shall require such development projects to submit an air quality analysis to Placer County APCD for review. Based on the analysis, the Town may require appropriate mitigation measures consistent with the latest version of the AQAP or other regional thresholds of significance adopted for the air basin.
  - i. New development shall pay its fair share of the cost to provide alternative transportation systems, including bikeways, pedestrian paths, and bus stop facilities.
  - j. The Town shall require that new developments dedicate land sufficient for park-and-ride lots, when the location is appropriate for such facilities.
2. **Biotic resources evaluation.** Prior to approval of discretionary development permits involving parcels near significant ecological resource areas, the Town shall require, as part of the environmental review process, a biotic resources evaluation by a qualified biologist. The

biologist shall follow accepted protocols for surveys (if needed) and subsequent procedures that may be necessary to complete the evaluation. "Significant Ecological Areas" shall include, but not be limited to:

- Wetland areas;
  - Stream environment zones;
  - Suitable habitat for rare, threatened or endangered species, and species of concern;
  - Large areas of non-fragmented habitat, including oak woodlands and riparian habitat;
  - Potential wildlife movement corridors; and
  - Important spawning areas for anadromous fish.
3. **Grading.** The Town shall discourage grading activities during the rainy season, unless adequately mitigated, to avoid sedimentation of creeks and damage to riparian areas:
- a. Prior to approval of discretionary development permits involving parcels near significant ecological resource areas, project applicants shall demonstrate that upland grading activities will not contribute to the direct cumulative degradation of stream quality.
  - b. The Town will limit development on slopes with a gradient in excess of 30 percent or in areas of sensitive or highly utilized habitat, through appropriate zoning standards and individual development project review.
4. **Hazardous materials.** The Town shall require that industrial and commercial uses that store or use hazardous materials provide a buffer zone sufficient to protect public safety, including the safety of nearby wildlife.
5. **Native tree protection.** Individual heritage trees and significant stands of heritage trees shall be preserved. Healthy heritage trees shall be removed or significantly trimmed only when necessary because of safety concerns, conflicts with utility lines and other infrastructure, the need for thinning to maintain a healthy stand of trees, or where there is no feasible alternative to removal. Proposed development shall be designed, constructed, and maintained to preserve individual heritage trees and significant stands of heritage trees, and provide for the protection of root zones and the continuing health of the trees. When trees are removed, they shall be replaced in sufficient numbers to maintain the volume of the Town's overall tree canopy over a 20-year period. Tree removal within stream corridors is also subject to the above policy on stream corridor protection.
6. **Stream corridor protection.** The streams of Loomis are among the most significant and valuable of the Town's natural resources. Development adjacent to streams shall be designed, constructed, and maintained to avoid adverse impacts on riparian vegetation, stream bank stability, and stream water quality to the maximum extent feasible. These policies shall apply to all watercourses shown as blue lines on the most recent United States Geological Survey (USGS) 7.5-minute topographic quadrangle maps applicable to the Town. See also the policies for wetland protection below.
- a. Proposed structures and grading shall be set back the greater of: 100 feet from the outermost extent of riparian vegetation as defined in the Zoning Ordinance, or outside of the 100-year flood plain. Lesser setbacks may be approved where site-specific studies of biology and hydrology, prepared by qualified professionals approved by the Town, demonstrate that a lesser setback will provide equal protection for stream resources.

Development shall be set back from ephemeral or intermittent streams a minimum of 50 feet, to the extent of riparian vegetation, or to the 100-year floodplain, whichever is greatest.

- b. Land uses and development within the setback areas required by this policy shall be limited to: the grazing of livestock at half or less of the animal densities allowed by the Zoning Ordinance; open wire fencing to confine livestock; bridges; public utilities and infrastructure; and other uses allowed by the applicable zoning district as permitted or conditional uses, with conditional use permit approval.
- c. The following activities are prohibited within stream corridor setbacks: filling or dumping; the disposal of agricultural wastes; channelization or dams; the use of pesticides that may be carried into stream waters; grading, or the removal of natural vegetation within the required setback area, except with grading permit approval. This is not intended to prevent the reasonable maintenance of natural vegetation to improve plant health and habitat value.
- d. The Town shall require that development projects proposing to encroach into a creek corridor or creek/wetland setback to do one or more of the following, in descending order of desirability:
  - Avoid the disturbance of riparian vegetation;
  - Replace riparian vegetation (on-site, in-kind);
  - Restore another section of creek (in-kind); and/or
  - Pay a mitigation fee for restoration elsewhere (e.g., wetland mitigation banking program).
- e. The Town shall require that newly-created parcels include adequate space outside of wetland and riparian setback areas to ensure that property owners will not place improvements within areas that require protection.
- f. Proposed development shall include surface water drainage facilities that are designed, constructed, and maintained to ensure that the increased runoff caused by development does not contribute to the erosion of stream banks, or introduce pollutants into watercourses.
- g. The Town shall encourage the use of natural stormwater drainage systems to preserve and enhance existing natural features. The Town shall promote flood control efforts that maintain natural conditions within riparian areas.
- h. Where creek or wetland protection is required or proposed, the Town shall require public and private development to:
  - Preserve creek corridors and setbacks through easements or dedications. Parcel lines or easements shall be located to optimize resource protection;
  - Designate easement or dedication areas as open space;
  - Protect creek corridors and their habitat value by: 1) providing adequate setbacks; 2) maintaining creek corridors in their natural state; 3) employing restoration techniques, where necessary and appropriate; 4) using riparian vegetation within

creek corridors; 5) prohibit the planting of invasive, non-native plants within creek setbacks; and 6) avoiding tree removal within creek corridors.

- Use techniques that ensure development will not cause or worsen natural hazards near creeks, and will include erosion and sediment control practices such as: 1) turbidity screens (to minimize erosion and siltation); and 2) temporary vegetation sufficient to stabilize disturbed areas.

**7. Water quality.** The Town will contribute toward the maintenance of high quality in the local surface and groundwater resources through the following, and other feasible measures.

- a. Proposed development shall incorporate measures to minimize soil erosion, and stream and drainage way sedimentation during construction, and over the life of each project.
- b. The Town will periodically review its ordinances requiring erosion and sediment control, and will update them when necessary to ensure their continuing effectiveness.
- c. Proposed development shall be designed, constructed, and maintained to prevent the discharge of untreated effluent into local streams to the maximum extent feasible, including the introduction of contaminants such as pesticides, fertilizers, and petroleum products and other contaminants carried by urban runoff.

**8. Wetlands.** The following policies apply to properties with wetland areas. Additional applicable policies may be found under "stream corridor protection," above.

- a. The environmental review of development on sites with wetlands shall include a wetlands delineation, and the formulation of appropriate mitigation measures. The Town shall support the "no net loss" policy for wetland areas regulated by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the California Department of Fish and Game. Coordination with these agencies at all levels of project review shall continue to ensure that appropriate mitigation measures and the concerns of these agencies are adequately addressed.
- b. The Town shall require new development to mitigate wetland loss in both regulated and non-regulated wetlands to achieve "no net loss" through any combination of the following, in descending order of desirability:
  - (1) Avoidance of riparian habitat;
  - (2) Where avoidance is not feasible, minimization of impacts on the resource;
  - (3) Compensation, including use of a mitigation banking program that provides the opportunity to mitigate impacts to rare, threatened, and endangered species and/or the habitat which supports these species in wetland and riparian areas, that are encouraged to be located within the Town; or
  - (4) Replacement of a degraded or destroyed wetland at a ratio of from 1:1 to 4:1, based on the biotic value of the wetland, as determined by the required environmental analysis. The review authority may reduce the replacement ratio as an incentive, where replacement wetlands are proposed to be located within or in close proximity to the Town.

The Town shall cooperate with regulating agencies to ensure that concerns are adequately addressed.

- c. The Town will require project-by-project review of sites where vernal pools exist, to assess threatened and endangered pool plant species and identify appropriate mitigation measures.
- d. The Town will require the preservation of native riparian and wetland areas as open space to the maximum extent feasible, using fee title or conservation easement acquisition, land conservancy participation, and/or other measures as appropriate.

9. **Interagency coordination.** Loomis will work cooperatively with state, regional, and local agencies in protecting natural resources.

### **Implementation Measures**

1. Amend the Zoning Ordinance to provide development standards that will implement the above policies.
2. The Town shall prepare and adopt a Tree Protection Ordinance that expands the current Heritage Tree Ordinance. The new ordinance should identify specific species of trees to be protected and preserved, criteria and permit requirements for tree removal, requirements for the replacement of removed trees and maintenance of the Town's overall tree canopy, and requirements for the protection of retained trees during development project construction, and their long-term maintenance.

**Responsibility:** Planning Department

**Timing:** 2001-2002 fiscal year.

## Cultural Resources

### Issues

- *A number of historical structures, primarily in the downtown area, have potential for adaptive reuse and enhancing the Town's rural, small town image.*

### Goals

1. To preserve and where appropriate replicate historic areas, such as the Downtown district and fruit sheds, that contribute to Loomis' distinct character.
2. To encourage cultural facilities and events in Town, such as live theater and music programs.

### Policies

1. Loomis shall encourage the reuse and revitalization of historic buildings. Whenever possible, flexibility in development standards allowed by the Historic Building Code shall be offered to developers working with historic properties.
2. The demolition of buildings deemed by the Town to be historically or aesthetically valuable shall be prohibited in cases where alternatives for reuse are found to be feasible.
3. Loomis shall support the expansion and development of cultural facilities and programs, as a draw for visitors and residents to the downtown core.
4. When feasible, and on public property, Loomis shall prohibit recreational activities that could damage or destroy archaeological sites in areas where archaeological sites have been identified.
5. As part of the environmental review process, the Town shall review all development proposals for their potential to disturb cultural resources. In areas where cultural resources are known to occur, give special consideration to development of facilities that enhance the operation, enjoyment, and maintenance of these areas.