

Chapter 15: Forest

Introduction and Setting

Nevada County supports an extensive timber resource, the majority of which is under the jurisdiction of the Tahoe National Forest (TNF). According to the Soil Conservation Service, "forests are one of the important resources of the Nevada County area. They supply raw material for one of the major industries, provide recreation and aesthetic enjoyment for many people, provide food and cover for many forms of wildlife, and protect watersheds."

Forested lands within the county consist of timberlands and woodlands. Timberlands are those lands capable, available and suitable for commercial timber production. Woodlands are defined as forested areas not suitable for timber production. While not considered suitable for commercial timber production, woodlands provide firewood resources and offer opportunities for other forest-related uses such as recreation. The forest and woodland areas of the county also are important in providing wildlife habitat, vegetation diversity, watershed protection and recreation.

Commercial timberlands are located primarily in the mid and eastern areas of the county, in elevations ranging from 1,200 feet above sea level in the west to over 9,000 feet in the east. The most extensive timberlands are located in the Tahoe National Forest, where nearly 200,000 acres are considered suitable for timber production. Woodlands are located throughout the county, including many scattered parcels of less than 100 acres in size, as well as larger tracts located primarily north of Highway 20.

Further discussion of the forests and forest resources of the county is contained in Section 4: Open Space/Conservation Inventory, of Volume 2 of the Nevada County General Plan; and in Section 5 of the Nevada County Master Environmental Inventory, which is part of Volume 3 of the Nevada County General Plan. Timberland Production Zones within the county are identified and discussed in Section 4: Open Space/Conservation Inventory of Volume 2 of the Nevada County General Plan.

Goals, Objectives, and Policies

Protection and management of the forest resources in Nevada County are important considerations in the General Plan, contributing to the economic vitality and scenic quality of the County.

Additional goals, policies and objectives generally related to forest lands and resources are located in Chapter 1: Land Use, Chapter 2: Economic Development, Chapter 10: Safety and Chapter 13: Wildlife and Vegetation.

Goal 15.1

Identify and maintain sustainable timber lands and resources.

Objective 15.1

Identify and protect significant timber lands from conversion to unrelated residential and other non-timber-related uses.

Directive Policies

- Policy 15.1** Maintain a low density of allowable development in the Forest land use designation as shown on the General Plan Land Use maps, in order to protect the major areas of potential timber resources in the County from conversion to other more intensive uses.
- Policy 15.2** Limit the provision of public facilities and services in important timber areas, except where necessary to address public health or safety problems.
- Policy 15.3** Encourage the clustering of development in timberland areas within the Rural and Forest land use designation as shown on the General Plan Land Use Maps, to preserve timber resources for productive use.

Also see: Chapter 1: Land Use

Policy 1.18

Chapter 13: Wildlife and Vegetation

Policy 13.1

Objective 15.2

Promote and provide for the continued diversity and sustainability of the forest resources including timber, watersheds, wildlife habitat, aesthetics and recreation.

Directive Policies

Policy 15.4 The Forest and Open Space land use designations are the major timber producing land use designations; however, other land uses also provide opportunities for timber management and production.

*Also See: Chapter 1: Land Use
Policy 1.5; Policy 1.19*

Policy 15.5 Encourage and provide for use of the Timberland Production Zone (“TPZ”) provisions of the County zoning regulations in the Estate, Rural and Forest land use designations, for those lands which have significant commercial timber value.

Action Policy

Policy 15.6 Recognize the need and importance in the Forest land use designation of managing forest products, and of managing natural resources to enhance outdoor recreation. Recognize the importance for providing for an efficient and cost effective means of harvesting and using forest lands.

Recognize that the forested areas have a need for certain commercial support uses which should be allowed in a manner which is consistent with the forest use and outdoor recreation areas.

Uses which are consistent in the Forest land use designation may include:

- a. the processing of forest products and natural resources;
- b. campgrounds; and
- c. outdoor recreation activities.

Comprehensive Site Development Standards shall be implemented to ensure that such development is consistent with the character of the area, will not adversely impact resource management, and is sensitive to environmental constraints.

*Also see: Chapter 1: Land Use
Policy 1.17*

Objective 15.3

Provide for both on-site and off-site forest-related industries while minimizing conflicts with adjacent uses.

Chapter 15: Forest Element

See: Policy 15.1; Policy 15.6
Also see: Chapter 1: Land Use
Policy 1.17