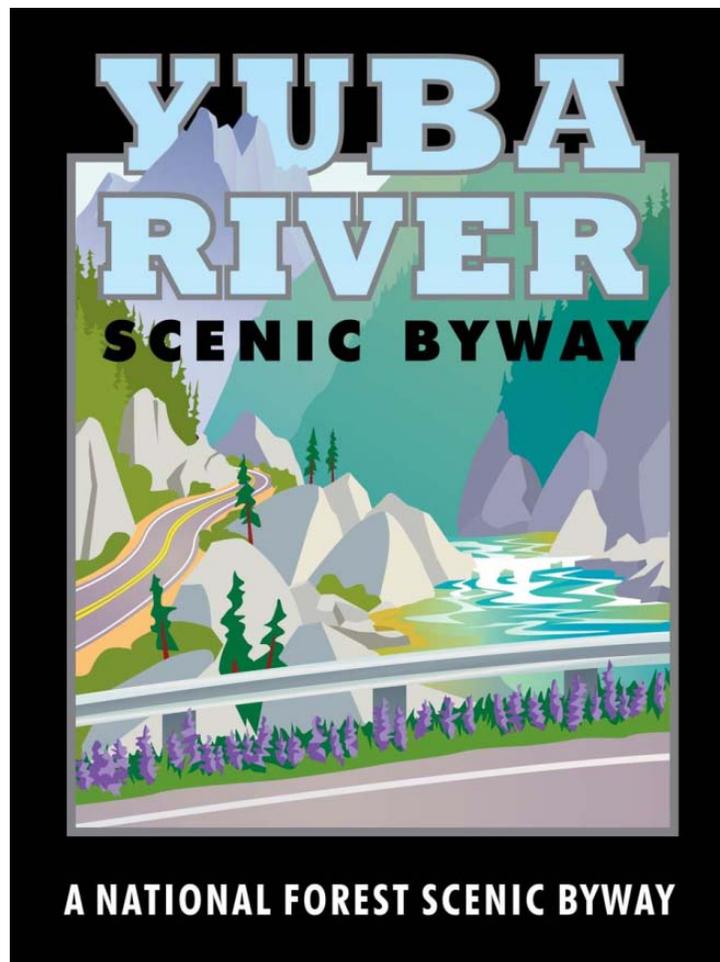


Yuba River Scenic Byway Corridor Management Plan

STATE SCENIC HIGHWAY
CALIFORNIA STATE ROUTE 49





**Recreation
Solutions**



This document was produced by USDA Forest Service Recreation Solutions Enterprise Team with support from the Federal Highway Administration in partnership with the USDA Forest Service Pacific Southwest Region, the California Department of Transportation, California State University, Chico Research Foundation and many local partners. The USDA, FHWA and State of California are equal opportunity providers and employers.

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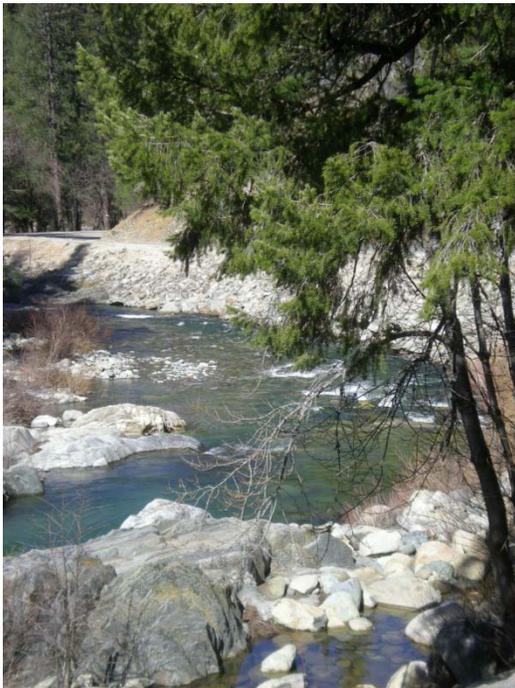
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CHAPTER 1 – THE YUBA RIVER SCENIC BYWAY

Introduction

The Yuba River Scenic Byway was designated a California State Scenic Highway on July 14, 1971 and part of the 175-mile Yuba Donner National Forest Scenic Byway in 1992. This 41.2-mile section of California Highway 49 travels through Sierra County and the Tahoe National Forest. The western end of the route starts at the Yuba/Sierra County line east of Camptonville and climbs east and north to Yuba Pass. Elevations range from 1,500 feet on the Middle Yuba River to 6,700 feet at Yuba Pass.



The Yuba River Scenic Byway provides a spectacular scenic driving experience while following the North Fork of the Yuba River canyon. Situated among rugged mountains and gentle valleys, the landscape offers astonishing views of woodlands full of pines, firs, junipers, oaks and wildlife. As part of the 175-mile Yuba Donner National Forest Scenic Byway loop, the route has recreational opportunities, scenic vistas and history soaked in Gold Rush and pioneering heritage. The entire area is a popular visitor destination whether driving or taking advantage of the wide variety of recreation opportunities including hiking, mountain biking and water or snow sports.

This segment of Highway 49 is unique among major gold country highways. Instead of following a route on the slope or ridge, distant from the river, the Yuba River Scenic Byway travels at river level along lengthy stretches of the North Yuba River. The highway provides views of placer mining tailings and direct access to Gold Rush era placer mining camps and towns. Many nationally significant gold-mining, Native American, emigrant and transportation heritage sites are located along the route. The Yuba River Scenic Byway's proximity to historic towns such as Nevada City, Downieville and Sierra City provides the byway traveler access to outstanding cultural and historic areas.

History of the Yuba River Scenic Byway

Also known as the Golden Chain Highway and named after the "49ers", Highway 49 is rich in history. Original indigenous cultures include the Maidu and Washoe Indians. After the 1849 discovery of gold in the North Fork of the Yuba River, miners began to populate the area. This quest for gold drove the development of Sierra County.

In 1858, a group of prominent citizens from Downieville and Goodyears Bar organized the Sierra Turnpike Company to plan the construction of a road to connect the two towns with points in Nevada and Sierra Counties. Completed in 1859, the highway connected Camptonville and Downieville, likely along the route of today's Old Toll Road on the south side of the river where it then turned south and ran up Woodruff Creek to Mountain House. From there it followed the ridge west to Camptonville. It was celebrated by a great ball the evening the road officially opened.

The road construction and subsequent improvements brought visitors in search of scenic beauty and recreation. Resorts sprouted in the early 1900s and provided lodging and recreation opportunities. Bassetts Station, located at the intersection of Hwy 49 and Gold Lake Road, opened in 1871 and continues to provide a rest stop and amenities to travelers. In 1921, the California Bureau of Public Roads completed the current Highway 49.

Views from the byway let road travelers feel the vast, ruggedness of the area while the more adventurous can explore within the spectacular backcountry of the Tahoe National Forest. Recreationists can mountain bike world-famous trails and hike historic trails from the Yuba River Scenic Byway. The 2,650-mile Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail, a continuous trail from Mexico to Canada, crosses the byway east of Sierra City.

Designations

Communities may seek national and state designations for their highways. On July 14, 1971, this 41.2-mile section of highway 49 was designated a California State Scenic Highway. In 1992, a 175-mile loop, including state highways 89, 49 and 20 and Interstate 80, was designated the Yuba Donner National Forest Scenic Byway (See Appendix A for a map of the byway and corridor).



Although the entire 175-mile Yuba Donner National Forest Scenic Byway loop is eligible for State Scenic Highway designation, only this 41.2-mile portion of Highway 49 and a 6-mile portion of Highway 20 are currently in the State Scenic Highway system.

California State Scenic Highway Program

An early leader in the scenic highway program, California has more than 50 designated state routes, including the Yuba River Scenic Byway. The California State Scenic Highway Program was established in 1963 to “preserve and protect scenic highway corridors from change which would diminish the aesthetic value of lands adjacent to highways.” California State Scenic Byways are marked with highway signs depicting the state flower, an orange poppy.

National Forest Scenic Byway Program

The National Forest Scenic Byway Program was established in 1989 to enhance scenic driving, a popular activity on National Forest System lands.

National Scenic Byway Program

In 1991, the National Scenic Byway Program was initiated and funded through the Intermodal Surface Transportation and Efficiency Act (ISTEA) and reauthorized in 1998 under the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21). In 2005, President Bush signed the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act – A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) authorizing additional grant funds.

Routes are selected for National Scenic Byway designation based on their archeological, cultural, historic, natural, recreational and scenic qualities. Another federal designation, the All-American Road designation, highlights National Scenic Byways with multiple intrinsic values that are considered a destination unto themselves. At the time of printing this document, the Yuba River Scenic Highway had not been nominated nor designated by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) as a National Scenic Byway. In 2007, the FHWA funded a grant to prepare this Corridor Management Plan, which is a prerequisite for submission of national designation. The nomination for National Scenic Byway designation is outside the scope of this grant. This process needs to be initiated by local community and land management agencies.

Benefits of National Scenic Byway Designation

Scenic byways provide an opportunity for travelers to enjoy the unique features of an area, while providing local communities an opportunity to increase tourist revenue. Designating and protecting scenic byways is a way to preserve America's beauty and heritage for everyone to enjoy. To receive the official designation as a National Scenic Byway, a route must be a State-designated Scenic Route, possess multiple intrinsic qualities that are nationally significant and have a completed Corridor Management Plan. A nomination packet must be submitted to Federal Highways for consideration. Additional information can be found at <http://www.bywaysonline.org/nominations/>.

Although this portion of state highway 49 is already recognized as a California Scenic Highway, formal recognition as a National Scenic Byway would provide additional benefits to area visitors, nearby residents and businesses and bring opportunities to surrounding communities. Some of these benefits include:

National Recognition

National Scenic Byway recognition identifies the premier scenic routes in the U.S. and brings recognition to the agencies, organizations and communities that sought designation. Identification of the Yuba River Scenic Byway on state and federal maps and on auto club brochures can lead to more tourism opportunities for the area.

Increased Pride

National Scenic Byways reflect local pride and provide citizens an opportunity to showcase the beauty of their region. The Corridor Management Plan gives stakeholders a forum to discuss what they value and want to feature in their communities. It also identifies how to preserve these qualities while encouraging thoughtful economic growth (<http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/livability/>).

Increased Funding Opportunities

If the Yuba River Scenic Byway were designated a National Scenic Byway, the route will be eligible for federal funding through the National Scenic Byways Program. These funds could be used to develop interpretive facilities, information kiosks, restrooms and other needed byway improvements. In addition, implementation of the corridor management plan could result in increased business, tax revenue and jobs from tourist dollars.

Corridor Management Planning

Corridor Management Plans (CMP) highlight the extraordinary values the public places upon a scenic route. A CMP articulates the community's vision for a scenic byway and represents a commitment to maintain and enhance its intrinsic qualities. It specifies the actions, procedures, operational and administrative practices and strategies that will maintain the natural, scenic, recreational, historic and cultural qualities of a byway corridor while recognizing the primary transportation role of the highway. A CMP is a working document and intended to be continually reviewed and revised as new information becomes available. Importantly, the CMP process is guided by community participation.

Contents of Corridor Management Plans

This document will serve to formulate relationships and valuable partnerships and identify ways we can work together to provide a world class National Scenic driving experience in this unique natural setting. It provides a vision for maintaining and enhancing the Yuba River Scenic Byway and prescribes management strategies including:

- Protection of the highway's intrinsic qualities,
- Development of interpretive features to enhance the visitor experience,
- Recommendations for existing and future marketing needs,
- Implementation strategy and
- Continued participation from local communities, the public, land management agencies and highway agencies.

This plan has been cooperatively funded by a Federal Highway Administration Grant and the Forest Service, Pacific Southwest Region.

Public Involvement

On October 24, 2008, the Tahoe National Forest sent an introduction letter to 70 local businesses, members of the public interested in tourism and scenic byway projects and the Sierra Board of Supervisors and Chamber of Commerce members (both submitted letters of support during the grant application process). The letter announced and invited anyone interested to participate in the Corridor Management Plan public workshops.

Public Workshops

Dr. Emilyn Sheffield, California State University Research Foundation, Chico led a series of four 2-hour workshops between November 2008 and May 2009 and a close-out meeting April 2010 in Downieville. The workshops were well attended by a core group of community members, local business owners and employees of the Forest Service, Caltrans and local government from Downieville, Sierra City, Sierraville and Nevada City.



Additionally, each workshop was advertised via posters, the Mountain Messenger, the Tahoe NF Website (http://www.fs.fed.us/r5/tahoe/projects_plans/yd-byway/) and emails. Postcards were mailed prior to workshops 3 and 4. Throughout the process, the email and mailing list grew, reflecting the growing interest in the planning process.

Workshop 1, held on November 19, 2008 included an introduction and background of the project, timeframe, a discussion on National Scenic Byway designation and a conversation about what the community envisions for this highway corridor.

During **Workshop 2**, held on January 14, 2009 members of the community identified important features (intrinsic values) along the route and discussed the vision, transportation and signage of the route.

On March 25, 2009, **Workshop 3** participants continued to discuss intrinsic values and the vision of the byway. The group identified potential interpretive themes and discussed how intrinsic features and themes work together.

Workshop 4, held on May 6, 2009, focused on interpretive themes, marketing, Corridor Management Plan implementation and artwork (icons) of the byway. Strong support for seeking National Scenic Byway nomination was expressed by workshop participants.

The **Closeout Meeting**, held on April 7, 2010, included an introduction of the draft document, two draft visual identities and discussions on National Scenic Byway nomination and the National Geographic Geotourism project.

Workshops were held to determine the interest of the local public and administering land entities in the management of the Yuba River Scenic Byway. Participants identified concerns and opportunities, developed a vision statement and goals and discussed seeking National Scenic Byway designation for the byway. Opportunities and concerns common to meeting participants included:

- Community members strongly support nominating the byway for National Scenic Byway designation.
- The official name of the state scenic highway – the Yuba Donner Scenic Highway – does not accurately reflect the 41 miles of state highway 49. The group decided to rename it the Yuba River Scenic Byway. This name will be included in the National Scenic Byway nomination packet and future grant application.
- Signage of intrinsic values along the route is hard to read (the small brown “49 Miles along Highway 49” signs marking historic and cultural highlights along the route, for example). The hope is to use icons/identity and signage developed in this plan to better showcase the highlights of the route.
- Concern that the corridor management plan (CMP) could serve as a regulatory document and impose additional restrictions, therefore impacting “working roads.” It was explained that the CMP is not regulatory, and that if National Scenic Designation occurred, it would not impose more regulations than what is currently in place under State Scenic Highway designation. Additionally, the scenic byway program recognizes and strives to maintain the importance of our Nation’s working roads.
- There are year-round recreational opportunities along the byway, but they are not well publicized. Signing, Web presence and interpretive materials such as brochures could improve visibility.

Public Review of the CMP

The draft document was posted on the Tahoe National Forest Website on April 2, 2010. An email announcing the posting was sent to the mailing list on April 2, 2010.

Niche, Vision and Goals of the Yuba River Scenic Byway

Niche

Some elements considered include:

- easy access to river opportunities from the roadway; roadway close to the water
- backcountry recreation opportunities, challenging mountain biking and hiking with good food and soft beds in Downieville, Goodyears Bar and Sierra City
- great sampler destination: history, outdoor recreation, snow play, fine dining, cozy inns
- four season recreation for folks in the Reno, Sacramento, Redding "triangle"
- more intimate, natural winter recreation experience than heavily traveled, ski-intensive Lake Tahoe Basin

Vision Statement

The vision statement for the Corridor Management Plan was developed during public meetings. It describes the value, purpose and potential future of the Yuba River Scenic Byway. It also provides a foundation for establishing goals and management strategies that will protect the intrinsic qualities of the byway. The vision statement reflects a diverse set of interests.

The Yuba River Scenic Byway winds along the scenic Yuba River corridor. It offers an impressive variety of seasonal recreation, historic landmarks, warm hospitality and fascinating stories. Welcoming communities along the way are excited to share the gifts of the area. Local residents are proud of living in rural America while preserving the heritage and resources of the corridor.

Goals

Goals are developed to translate the vision into reality. Goals address specific steps that can be implemented through policy and management. Management goals for the Yuba River Scenic Byway identified at public workshops include:

- Enhance tourism and local businesses by improving and advertising the byway as a destination rather than a corridor
- Preserve the scenic beauty and history of the area
- Enhance residents and visitor experiences as they drive the scenic byway and enjoy the outdoor recreation and heritage opportunities along the route through enhanced signage, interpretation, environmental education

- Increase cooperation between all interested parties and maintain high levels of local input and decision-making in the management of the Yuba River Scenic Byway
- Protect, conserve and enhance the resources found along the scenic byway corridor for present and future generations

The niche, vision and goal statements for the Yuba River Scenic Byway echo key elements of *Connecting People with America's Great Outdoors: A Framework for Sustainable Recreation* (USDA Forest Service, 2010) by connecting visitors to the natural and cultural heritage of California. The byway links rural Sierra County communities with the more urban populations in the central Valley, the Bay Area and Reno.



Kentucky Mine Stamp Mill

CHAPTER 2 – LAND MANAGEMENT AND PROTECTION STRATEGIES

Land Management

The Yuba River Scenic Byway corridor weaves through National Forest System and private lands. The scenic, natural, historical, cultural, archaeological and recreational resources linked to the Yuba River Scenic Byway corridor are a vital component of the visitor experience and quality of life for nearby residents. One of the goals of this Corridor Management Plan is to protect, conserve and enhance the resources found along the corridor for present and future generations.

Federal Land – Tahoe National Forest

The management of the National Forest System land surrounding the Yuba River Scenic Byway is the responsibility of the Forest Service (Tahoe National Forest). The Forest Service's mission is "to sustain the health, diversity and productivity of the nation's forests and grasslands to meet the needs of present and future generations."

Management of the Tahoe National Forest (NF) is guided by the 1990 Land and Resource Management Plan (LRMP), as amended, which includes established goals, objectives, standards and guidelines for managing resources (social, physical and biological). The Tahoe NF is divided into 106 geographic divisions, known as management areas. The byway is located primarily in management area 13, or Forty-niner, and is managed by the Yuba River Ranger District of the Tahoe NF, located in Camptonville.

This management area includes the land along Highway 49 from North San Juan to Sattley that is visible or directly influenced by the traveling public and Forest visitor. The lateral boundaries extend from a short sight distance to approximately 1/2 mile along each side of the traveled route (USDA-FS 1990, pg V – 128).

Resource management emphasis for management area 13 is to emphasize scenic and visual qualities while providing a broad spectrum of recreational opportunities, maintaining high water quality in the North and Middle Yuba River and coordination of all resource uses and activities in the area.

State of California

This 41.2-mile section of state highway 49 was designated a California State Scenic Highway in 1971. This portion and 6 miles of Highway 20 are the only State-designated section of the 175-mile loop known as the Yuba Donner National Forest Scenic Byway. Although the other sections of the loop are eligible for State Scenic Highway designation, they are not official State Scenic Highways.

The intent of the California Scenic Highway Program is to “protect and enhance California’s natural scenic beauty and to protect social and economic values provided by the State’s scenic resources.”

California Department of Transportation (CalTrans) is responsible for managing and maintaining the byway as part of the state highway system. The route is located within the 2nd and 4th U.S. Congressional Districts.

Sierra County

The byway is located entirely within Sierra County, which was founded in 1852 and named for the Sierra Buttes. The county is responsible for land use regulations on private inholdings within the Tahoe National Forest and managing all county land surrounding the forest. Sierra County is guided by the Sierra County General Plan (1996).



Sierra County, population 3,263, is “959 square miles of unparalleled beauty, heavily forested canyons, the largest alpine valley in North America, wild rivers, unspoiled mountain lakes and streams, charming gold rush towns and century-old ranching and logging communities (www.sierracounty.ws).”

The County collaborates with the State of California and Forest to maintain sections of

the forest road system. The General Plan Visual Element lists the official State Scenic Corridor Highway 49 as a County Scenic Road. The General Plan background and future needs of Sierra County Scenic Roads and Highways follows:

“Views from the County’s more heavily travelled routes as well as those which pass through recreational areas or visually unique or highly scenic areas are of particular importance to protect. These areas are both an economic resource for the tourism sector of the economy and a resource to existing residents as one of the key components of the County’s rural quality of life (General Plan, 16-2).”

Scenic Resource Strategies

Tahoe National Forest

The Tahoe National Forest manages National Forest System land and scenic resources within the byway corridor. Scenery within the area is outstanding and characterized by heavily forested uplands near Camptonville, to steep river canyons with forested mountain backdrops along the North Yuba River (USDA-FS 1990, pg V – 128).

Visual quality along Highway 49 is a resource management concern in management area 13. State Scenic Highway designation requires special consideration to preserve the character of its scenic backdrop. Private lands and communities within the view area fall under separate Sierra County zoning and use regulations.

LRMP standards and guidelines for visual resource inventory, improvement, planning and monitoring include:

- Visual quality inventory: Determine the inherent visual quality (variety classes) and sensitivity levels of an area to provide basic data and interpretations needed for land and resource management planning. Also includes the development of those interpretations termed inventory Visual Quality Objectives (VQO).
- The VQO for the byway is defined as retention, however, partial retention will be allowed for developed recreation sites. Under retention, management activities will not be visually evident. Maintain the appearance of large tree character (typical tree size diameter 36') in travel corridors or foreground zones around reservoirs. Coordinate visual objectives with silvicultural concerns to develop specific management direction for the foreground zone that will maintain visual quality and provide visual variety over time.
- Visual absorption inventory: Determine the visual absorption capability of an area to provide basic data on interpretations needed for land and resource management plans.
- Existing visual condition inventory: Determine the existing visual condition of the landscape to provide a base from which to measure change. This data and interpretation is needed for land and resource management plans.
- Visual resource planning: Develop and administer plans for visual resource projects. Includes plans prepared for resource improvement, special studies, demonstration areas and other activities that display developed techniques or methodologies for advanced visual resource management. This includes contracted programs and memos of understanding with agencies or universities.

- Visual resource improvement: Rehabilitate and restore facilities, lands and resources to the visual quality objectives adopted in approved management plans.
- Visual resource monitoring: Monitor the effects of land use on the visual resource. Includes activities initiated for the purposes of management decision, benchmark or compliance monitoring.

Sierra County

Sierra County's General Plan value for scenic quality is "defined by its natural scenery as well as its historic communities and the activities of rural economy." The Visual Element goals of the General Plan include:

1. Protect and preserve important scenic resources in the County
2. Protect visually sensitive areas by promoting and providing for aesthetic design in new development, which reflects the customs and culture of the County.

As demonstrated above, the background and future needs of the County Plan provide for the protection of scenic resources along the byway.

The County Plan also outlines County scenic features deserving protection. Features identified within the byway corridor include lakes, living historic communities, Sierra Valley and Sierra Valley barns, Sierra Buttes, the North Fork of the Yuba River and the Downie River.

- Lakes – "County lakes are each visually unique and of particular economic value in their unspoiled state because of their high visitor use. Of particular concern are protection of lakeshores and visual access to the lakes and protection of the viewsheds and ridgelines surrounding each lake to ensure an unspoiled mountain lake setting."
- Living historic communities – "The County's historic communities are discussed in the Cultural Resources Element but are also a key visual asset."
- Sierra Valley and Sierra Valley barns – "Protection of the open nature and traditional activities in the Sierra Valley is important visually as well as to the County's agricultural economy."
- Sierra Buttes – "The Sierra Buttes are the County's most recognizable calling card. Their visual value is in part related to their unspoiled slopes and foreground. Any visually apparent man made feature would disturb their value."
- North Fork of the Yuba River and the Downie River – "The County's rivers and streams are key visual assets. Protection of visual access and streamside vegetation are critical."

Natural Resource Strategies

Tahoe National Forest

The LRMP provides management direction for wildlife and fish, vegetation management, water, soil, air, minerals and geology and lands. Management direction outlined in the LRMP follows.

Fish, Wildlife and Sensitive Species

The National Forest Management Act (NFMA, Pub Law 94-588, 1976) directs that National Forest lands will provide for diversity of plant and animal communities based on the suitability and capability of the specific land area in order to meet overall multiple use objectives. The rules promulgated to implement the NFMA further direct that National Forests will maintain viable populations of existing native and desired non-native vertebrate species on the planning area (36 CFR 219.19). Section 219.19 defines a viable population as “one which has the estimated numbers and distribution of reproductive individuals to insure its continued existence.” The Section also directs that Forest Plans and alternatives will identify Management Indicator Species (MIS) and fish and wildlife resource planning.



- MIS will be used to evaluate the effects of management on fish and wildlife resources.
- Population trends of the MIS will be monitored and relationships to habitat changes determined. The monitoring will be done in cooperation with State fish and wildlife agencies to the extent practical.
- Critical habitats for threatened and endangered species shall be identified and protected.

Selected emphasis species for this management area include pileated woodpecker, deer, bald eagle, spotted owl and the riparian group. This management area contains key winter deer range and portions of six spotted owl habitats.

Riparian Areas

The following are LRMP riparian area management objectives on the Tahoe National Forest (USDA-FS 1990, p. III-21):

- Manage riparian areas to retain or enhance their productivity for riparian area dependent resources. Riparian area dependent resources include fish, wildlife, water, riparian vegetation, riparian related aesthetics and water-oriented recreation.

- Riparian area dependent resources are to take precedence over non-dependent resources within riparian areas. Non-dependent resources include timber, livestock, minerals, non-water recreation and transportation. Where there is a conflict it is to be resolved in favor of the riparian area dependent resource; the most limiting riparian area dependent resource is to dictate the amount of activity allowed in riparian areas. Standard and guidelines 46 and 47 provide the management direction for protection of riparian areas. The basic direction is to protect the existing riparian areas (including a minimum 100-foot horizontal strip along either side of all perennial streams) and to improve riparian areas where possible.

Vegetation Management – Timber

This management area contains 6,369 acres of unsuitable production forest land.

Natural resource strategies specific to management area 13 are as follows:

- Permit special harvest cutting on suitable timber lands throughout the area
- Propose withdrawal from mineral entry and leasing those areas not already withdrawn
- Resolution of stability problems associated with alignment along Highway 49 will be coordinated with Caltrans when reconstruction projects are submitted for review.

Water

LRMP management direction (USDA-FS 1990, p. III-27):

- The water program mission is to afford optimum protection to the water resources compatible with other program practices, including timber, wildlife and fisheries, range, recreation, engineering and mining. Where opportunities arise, watershed improvement measures will be implemented and water quantities and timing of flow will be improved. The water program on the Tahoe NF has primarily served as a support function for other resource activities. The various types of support include planning, inventories, analyzing project proposals, monitoring and administration. All existing land management practices use the water quality protection measures that are specified as Best Management Practices (BMPs) in the R-5 document 'Water Quality Management for National Forest System Lands in California.' The water management program emphasizes meeting legal obligations for water quality protection.

Soils

LRMP management direction (USDA-FS 1990, p. III-33):

- Forest Service direction is to design and implement management practices that maintain or improve the long-term inherent productive capacity of the soil resource; to plan and conduct soil quality monitoring to

determine whether soil management objectives, standards and guidelines are being achieved; and to use the results of monitoring to evaluate resource management actions and recommend mitigation measures or changes in practices to prevent significant impairment of long-term soil productivity.

Air

LRMP management direction (USDA-FS 1990, p. III-39):

- The TNF manages all prescribed fire operations to prevent or minimize the penetration of smoke into urban or smoke-sensitive areas. Various forms of dust abatement are used on heavily traveled roads near residential and recreation areas.

Sierra County

One of the fundamental goals of the County's General Plan is to defend Sierra County's "important natural features and functions; these have included and always will include, scenic beauty, pristine lakes and rivers, tall mountain peaks and rugged forested canyons, abundant and diverse plants and animals, clean air, water and watershed values". The General Plan visual element (as discussed above) includes protection of natural resources, including streamside vegetation and preserving the Sierra Buttes. Other goals and guidelines for additional natural resource elements are included as follows.

Fish, Wildlife and Sensitive Species

Sierra County General Plan Element 13: Plants and Wildlife Element Goal includes:

- It is the County's goal to protect and defend its abundant and diverse plant and animal species.

Additional policy includes direction to:

- Encourage the protection of natural populations, which are unique and representative of the habitats of Sierra County and which could provide for educational and research purposes. Identify and preserve heritage and landmark trees and groves where appropriate.
- Cooperate with State and federal agencies in managing recreation and prohibit new recreational developments, which may significantly impact biotic resources.

Vegetation Management – Timber

Sierra County General Plan Element 9: Timber Resource Element is intended to meet the required features relating to the conservation, development and utilization of forest resources (General Plan Guidelines, pages 1115 and 129).

The Timber Resource Element Goals include:

- It is the goal of the County to support the prudent management of timber and to maintain the timber industry as a viable part of the County economy.
- It is the goal of the county to bring back and maintain the forest, lake and stream environment in Sierra County to a healthy, fire resistant and productive system that will be a strong asset to the quality of life and citizens of Sierra County.
- It is the goal of the County to promote reforestation on public and private lands.

However, policy in regards to visual impacts of timber harvest includes:

- Continue to support concept of selective harvest or other methods of low visual impact in State and locally designated Scenic Corridor overlay areas and Special Treatment areas.
- Encourage timber harvest practices, which do not result in significant visual impacts.

Policy for watershed values of timber harvest state:

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

Water

Based in part on the assumption that “natural waterways have an important role in maintaining the County’s character and contribute to the tourism and recreational economy,” the Sierra County General Plan Element 8: Water Resources Element Goal includes:

- It is the County’s goal to protect and maintain its water resources for the benefit of County residents and natural habitats and to assure the protection of its watersheds as a primary land use constraint.

Historical, Cultural, Archaeological Resource Strategies

Tahoe National Forest

Cultural resource management protects historical districts, sites, buildings, structures, objects or areas that may have historical, cultural or archaeological value. LRMP standards and guidelines include (USDA-FS 1990, p V-18):

- Cultural resource inventories: Preliminary examination to identify the presence or absence of archaeological, historical or other cultural resource properties. Includes preparation and approval of reports.
- Cultural resource evaluation: A set of properties will be evaluated by a qualified cultural resource specialist to determine the significance of

cultural and historical values. This includes determination of eligibility of properties for the National Register of Historic Places.

- Cultural resource protection: Activities and costs related to protection of cultural resource properties include physical protection, public contact, signing or other activities associated with protection of properties. Where specific management plans are absent, Class I properties and frequently vandalized properties will be considered for inclusion within patrol routes. Includes review, processing and administration of cultural resource use permits. Treat all properties as significant until evaluated.
- Cultural resource enhancement: Includes analysis and intensive research of cultural resource properties to provide qualitative and quantitative background data in order to prepare them for public interpretation or scientific or ethnic use. Improvement of the properties with interpretative services and facilities for public use should be reported under developed recreation sites.

Sierra County

Based in part on the assumption that “the protection of cultural resources will continue to be of importance to the people of Sierra County because of their aesthetic, community identity, historic, economic and recreational value,” Sierra County General Plan Element 12: Cultural Resources Element Goal includes:

- Identify and protect the cultural, historical and archaeological resources of Sierra County recognizing that the historic structures, archaeological sites and cultural resources centered upon the County’s agricultural, mineral and forest setting is the link to the County’s past and should continue to define the future.

Recreation Resource Strategies

Framework for Sustainable Recreation

In 2010 the Forest Service released a new framework for sustainable recreation. This framework is designed to connect people to the great outdoors by “renewing body and spirit” with a goal of “inspiring passion for the land” (USDA Forest Service, 2010). Scenic byways are identified as part of the Forest Service’s history of innovation and growth. Four goals and ten areas of focus are described in the framework. The Yuba River Scenic Byway Corridor Management Plan (CMP) supports the four goals of the framework:

- Provide a diverse range of quality natural and cultural resource based recreation opportunities in partnership with people and communities.
- Protect the natural, cultural and scenic environment for present and future generations to enjoy.

- Partner with public and private recreation benefit providers that together we meet public needs and expectations.
- Perform and plan by implementing systems and processes to ensure: effective decisions, sound investments, and accountability; collaborative approaches to integrated solutions across the landscape; and enhanced professionalism of our workforce.

The Yuba River Scenic Byway CMP also well aligned with the framework's focus areas:

- Restore and Adapt Recreation Settings
- Implement "Green" Operations
- Enhance Communities
- Invest in Special Places
- Forge Strategic Partnerships
- Promote Citizen Stewardship
- Know...Visitors, Community Stakeholders, and Other Recreation Providers
- Provide the Right Information
- Develop a Sustainable Financial Foundation
- Develop Our Workforce

Tahoe National Forest

The Tahoe NF LRMP identifies the values the byway corridor for recreation. The LRMP states, "The river canyon provides opportunities for contemporary outdoor recreation use including gold panning and sluicing¹. Commercial white-water rafting occurs on the North Yuba River under special-use permit. Dredging and mining operations blanket mining claims from Indian Valley to Sierra City. The river provides an important sport fishery, with brown and rainbow trout being key emphasis species for this area. Five separate summer home tracts representing 100 separate homeowners, an organization camp and an education center are located along the byway. The Pacific Crest Trailhead is located directly east of Sierra City. The Yuba Pass area serves as a trailhead for dispersed winter recreation. The state has developed a Sno-Park area which is plowed by Caltrans."

Forestwide LRMP recreation resource strategies include (USDA-FS 1990, pp. V-18-19):

- Manage for dispersed recreation use in areas that are not classified as wilderness or developed sites. Standard management means that

¹ At the time of printing this CMP, sluicing is not permitted in the river canyon due to a court order.

signing, clean up and other activities are accomplished according to standards and objectives established in approved management plans.

- Manage for dispersed recreation use in areas that are not classified as wilderness or developed sites in system. Will occur throughout the Forest except in wilderness or developed recreation sites. Will always be used in conjunction with a recreation opportunity spectrum (ROS) practice that will define the areas of occurrence (see below for ROS practice).
- OHV Use: At the time of printing, the Tahoe NF is currently developing a Travel Management Plan for motorized use on the forest.
- Trail Rehabilitation: When a resource is significantly damaged or likely to be damaged by trail use, maintenance, relocation or construction will be given priority over trail closure.

LRMP recreation resource strategies specific to management area 13 include:

- In the Indian Valley, Ramshorn and other river areas near developed campgrounds and proposed developments where recreational and mining demand conflicts are greatest emphasize Yuba Pass for winter sports activities.
- The ROS for the byway is roaded natural except for a small portion of semi-primitive motorized in the Sierra Buttes area.

LRMP management objectives for ROS roaded natural include (USDA-FS 1990, pp. V-21):

- Area is characterized by a predominantly natural-appearing environment with moderate evidences of the sights and sounds of humans. Such evidences usually harmonize with the natural environment. Interaction among users may be low to moderate, but evidence of other users is prevalent. Resource modification and utilization practices are evident, but harmonize with the natural environment. Conventional motorized use is provided for in construction standards and design of facilities.
- Users should have about equal probability to either experience affiliation with other user groups or be isolated from sights and sounds of people.
- Opportunity to have a high degree of interaction with the natural environment. Challenge and risk opportunities associated with more primitive types of recreation are not very important. Practice and testing of outdoor skills might be important. Opportunities for both motorized and non-motorized forms of recreation are possible.
- Activity opportunities: Viewing outstanding scenery, enjoying unique and/or unusual environments, hiking, cross-country ski touring and snowshoeing, horseback riding, canoeing, sailing, other non-motorized watercraft use, swimming, diving (skin or scuba), fishing, photography,

camping, snowplay, hunting (big, small game, upland birds and waterfowl), nature study, acquiring general knowledge and understanding, unguided hiking, general information, motor-driven ice and snowcraft, OHV touring, power boating, picnicking, gathering forest products, auto touring, water skiing and other water sports, automobile camping, trailer camping, viewing interpretive signs, organization camping, lodges, resort-commercial public services and resort-lodging.

LRMP management objectives for ROS semi-primitive motorized include (USDA-FS 1990, pp. V-21):

- Area is characterized by a predominantly natural or natural-appearing environment of moderate to large size. Concentration of users is low, but there is often evidence of other users. The area is managed in such a way that minimum on-site controls and restrictions may be present, but is subtle. Public motorized use is permitted. Roads constructed and projects planned for resource. Utilization will strive to maintain the character of the ROS class. Following resource utilization, roads will be closed to public use or put-to-bed unless the road meets a specific recreation use in keeping with the ROS class.
- Users should have a moderate probability of experiencing the area as it is described above, except that there is a high degree of interaction with the natural environment. Opportunity is available to use motorized equipment while in the area.
- Activity opportunities: Viewing outstanding scenery, enjoying unique and/or unusual environments, hiking, cross-country ski touring and snowshoeing, horseback riding, canoeing, sailing, other non-motorized watercraft use, swimming, diving (skin or scuba), fishing, photography, camping, snowplay, hunting (big, small game, upland birds and waterfowl), nature study, acquiring general knowledge and understanding, unguided hiking, general information, motor-driven ice and snowcraft, OHV touring and power boating.

Sierra County

The General Plan visual element (as discussed above) stresses the importance of recreational opportunity for both the community and tourism (economy).

