

## **Deer Creek Planning Unit**

### **Preservation of Historic Values**

#### **Potential Measures:**

- *Conduct surveys of the planning unit to identify cultural resources and enable their protection.*
- *Develop a cultural resources management plan for the planning unit in coordination with adjacent USFS lands.*
- *Coordinate with Native American entities when conducting cultural resource measures.*

Under the concept, a primary focus is the preservation of cultural resources. Because this area is historically significant as the homeland of the Yahi Yana people and an area of early European-American settlement, the discovery and preservation of these cultural legacies is essential to preserving California history. Surveys would be conducted to discover any prehistoric, historic, and ethnographic resources that may exist in the planning unit. All subsequent measures would take into account the results of these surveys to ensure that historic sites and artifacts are protected from disruption or damage. The results of these surveys would be the foundation for the development of a cultural resources management plan that would ensure the protection and preservation of these resources. Archaeologists have reported inadvertent damage to cultural resources from recreationists and well as vandalism in the Deer Creek area, indicating a need for the protection of historic and archeological values in the planning unit. Potential measures include the installation of signage explaining the value of historic resources, and installation of barriers such as boulders and rail fences around any sensitive areas that are identified. Documentation of cultural sites and development of the cultural resources management plan should be coordinated with Native American entities.

### **Fish, Plant, and Wildlife Habitat**

#### **Potential Measures:**

- *Conduct an assessment of aquatic habitat and survey for biological resources.*
- *Develop a wildlife and habitat management plan for anadromous fish protection and restoration in coordination with USFS activities, and for protection of other special status species that may be present.*

The habitat component of these recommendations would protect and enhance habitat for special status anadromous fish species in Deer Creek, as well as special status raptors, amphibians, and other wildlife that may be present on the planning unit. An initial assessment of aquatic habitat and a biological survey are recommended to obtain baseline information. A wildlife and habitat management plan would then be developed to ensure consistent management of Deer Creek. Of particular interest for habitat are the protection of spawning beds as well as watershed restoration for the protection and enhancement of water quality. Considering economies of scale and the continuity of long-term ecological management, the Stewardship Council recommends coordination of habitat-related measures with the USFS, who is conducting an anadromous fisheries program on Deer Creek. The habitat measures are intended to be consistent with this program's goals of protection and restoration, and well-designed coordination would be

synergistic. At the watershed level, the USFS has been cooperating with partners such as private landowners, watershed conservancies, and State and Federal agencies; a closer collaboration regarding the lands and creek segment within the planning unit would be a natural extension of the current program.

**Potential Measure:**

- *Assess the need for a noxious weed management plan, and develop a plan as needed.*

Additionally, the Stewardship Council recommends assessing the need for a noxious weed management plan in the planning unit. A survey would be conducted of the planning unit to determine the potential threat or existence of noxious weeds. If determined necessary, a management plan would be developed to eradicate existing infestations of noxious weeds where possible and implement preventative measures to minimize the spread of weeds in the future.

## **Sustainable Forestry**

**Potential Measures:**

- *Evaluate existing timber inventory data and supplement as appropriate.*
- *Develop a forest management plan to promote natural forest development and structural and physical diversity in forests for long-term ecological, economic, social, and cultural benefits.*
- *Develop a fuels management plan to ensure long-term forest health and reduce fuel loading and fire hazard.*

A forest management plan would be developed to promote natural forest development and structural and physical diversity in forests for long-term ecological, economic, social, and cultural benefits. In support of this plan, existing timber inventory data would be evaluated and supplemented as appropriate. Management would be coordinated with the USFS surrounding management prescriptions to the extent possible in order to support forest connectivity and management consistency. In the areas under Salvage management, snags and downed woody debris would be maintained in the planning unit for wildlife habitat and forest regeneration when not deemed a safety, fire, or disease hazard. A fuels management plan would also be developed for this area to promote forest regeneration and prevent fuels build-up. Fire is an historic component of the ecosystem in the area, aiding regeneration of oaks and many chaparral species. Together, both management plans would contribute to healthy ecosystem functioning and the maintenance of wildlife habitat.

## **Outdoor Recreation**

**Potential Measures:**

- *Enhance informal camping area and trailhead with designated suitable camping areas and barriers to exclude vehicles.*
- *Rehabilitate existing signage at Devil's Den trailhead and install signage regarding river stewardship, responsible camping, and interpretation of cultural resources.*
- *Consider installation of toilet facilities if use levels and potential impacts indicate a need.*

Recreation infrastructure and amenities would be minimally enhanced to accommodate the limited amount of recreation currently occurring and likely to occur in the planning unit. Informal camping would be improved through designating suitable camping areas, better exclusion of vehicles from camping areas with barriers, and installation of “leave no trace” signage. Interpretive signage would be added at the trailhead to emphasize responsible river conservation, as well as to convey the cultural significance of these lands. Development of such signage should be coordinated with Native American entities. The existing USFS signage at the Devil’s Den trailhead could also be rehabilitated to meet these same information objectives. Provision of toilet facilities at the trailhead and camping area should be considered if the level of use increases. All of the recommended measures would occur only after surveys of natural and cultural resources are undertaken to ensure compatible land use. Impacts to riparian vegetation, water quality, sensitive plant species, and fisheries from roads and recreation activities are key considerations to the application of any recreation enhancement. As the majority of cultural sites occur near waterways and on flatlands, it is imperative that any recreation enhancement take into account potential impacts on cultural resources.

## **Open Space**

### **Potential Measure:**

- *Apply permanent conservation easements to ensure a higher level of open space protection.*

The Stewardship Council recommends preserving open space values through permanent conservation easements. Conservation easements would describe all prohibited uses to maintain open space values, including the level of uses allowed. Recommendations include only minor additions of recreation facilities and are not expected to decrease the scenic quality of the viewsheds.

## **Agricultural Uses**

None recommended.