CITY OF DORRIS
OPEN SPACE & CONSERVATION ELEMENT

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CITY OF DORRIS
307 S. MAIN STREET
DORRIS, CA 96023

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5.1 INTRODUCTION

Open space can provide relief from urbanization, improve access to natural areas in and around the community, and present opportunities for habitat preservation and enhancement. The General Plan recognizes that the planning area's open space resources and scenic views also help to define the character of the community, and that Dorris' parks and recreation areas are critical to creating a high quality of life for city residents.

Conservation of natural resources is important to the City and is one of the State's three planning priorities (Gov. Code Sec. 65041.1(b)). The implementation of sustainable conservation practices helps to ensure that future generations will have access to the same resources for a healthy environment and economy. And while sustainability is a global issue that extends beyond the City, local land use planning and resource management affect the natural environment, economic vitality, and societal support that contribute to a sustainable community.

For these reasons, the Open Space & Conservation Element identifies natural resources in the planning area; a plan to protect, retain, enhance, and/or develop these resources; areas of the City that provide value in a natural state; and a plan to preserve such areas. In doing so, the Open Space & Conservation Element implements a vision, in coordination with the Land Use Element, to preserve, enhance, and manage the City's open space and natural resources.

5.2 STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

5.2.1 Open Space Element Requirements

State law requires that general plans include an open space element for the comprehensive and long-range preservation and conservation of open-space land within the jurisdiction. State law defines open space land as any parcel or area of land or water that is devoted to an open-space use and that is designated on a local, regional, or state open-space plan as open space for any of the following purposes:

Preservation of Natural Resources. This category of open space consists of areas necessary for the preservation of natural resources, including areas required for the preservation of plant and animal life, including fish and wildlife habitat; areas required for ecologic and other scientific study purposes; and bays, estuaries, coastal beaches, rivers, streams, banks of rivers and streams, lakeshores, and watershed lands.

Managed Production of Resources. This category consists of open space areas used for the managed production of resources, including forestland, rangeland, agricultural land, and areas of economic importance for food or fiber production; areas required for recharge of groundwater basins; bays, estuaries, marshes, rivers, and streams that are important for the management of commercial fisheries; and areas containing major mineral deposits.

Outdoor Recreation. This category of open space consists of areas used for outdoor recreation, including areas of outstanding scenic, historic, and cultural value; areas particularly suited for park and recreation purposes, including access to lakeshores, beaches, and rivers and streams; and areas that serve as links between major recreation and open-space reservations, including utility easements, banks of rivers and streams, trails, and scenic highway corridors.

Public Health and Safety. This category consists of open space areas established for public health and safety, including areas required for the protection of water quality and water reservoirs, areas required for the protection and enhancement of air quality, and areas that require special

management or regulation because of hazardous or special conditions, such as earthquake fault zones, unstable soil areas, floodplains, watersheds, and areas presenting high fire risks.

Military Installation Mission Support. This category consists of open space areas used to support the mission of military installations, including areas adjacent to military installations, military training routes, and underlying restricted airspace that can provide additional buffer zones to military activities and complement the resource value of the military lands.

Tribal Cultural Resources Protection. This category consists of open space areas established on public property for the protection of Native American historical, cultural, and sacred sites, including sanctified cemeteries, places of worship, religious or ceremonial sites, and sacred shrines.

5.2.2 Conservation Element Requirements

In accordance with state law, general plans are required to include a conservation element that addresses the conservation, development, and utilization of natural resources, including water and its hydraulic force, forests, soils, rivers and other waters, harbors and fisheries, wildlife, and minerals and other natural resources. State law further requires that conservation elements consider the effect of development within the jurisdiction, as described in the land use element, on natural resources located on public lands, including military installations. And conservation elements must identify rivers, creeks, streams, flood corridors, riparian habitats, and land that may accommodate floodwater for purposes of groundwater recharge and stormwater management.

State law provides that conservation elements may also address reclamation of land and waters; prevention and control of water pollution; regulation of land in stream channels and other areas as part of a conservation plan; prevention, control, and correction of erosion; watershed protection; rock, sand, and gravel resources; and flood control.

5.2.3 Other Considerations

In addition to requiring that general plans include open space and conservation elements, state law allows for general plans to be “adopted in any format deemed appropriate or convenient by the legislative body, including the combining of elements” (Gov. Code Sec. 65301(a)). Given the strong interrelationship between open space and conservation issues, the City has chosen to combine discussion of these items into a single Open Space & Conservation Element.

Because not all subject matter addressed by open space and conservation elements will be germane to every city and county, state law provides that general plans address the required subject matter “to the extent that the subject of the element exists in the planning area” (Gov. Code Sec. 65301(c)). Consequently, where a particular subject is not relevant to Dorris, it is not addressed by the City’s Open Space & Conservation Element except perhaps to note its absence from the planning area. For example, because the planning area does not contain areas required for ecologic and other scientific study purposes; areas adjacent to military installations, military training routes, and underlying restricted airspace; areas required for the protection and enhancement of air quality; bays, harbors, estuaries, marshes, rivers, and streams that are important for the management of commercial fisheries; coastal beaches, lakeshores, and riverbanks; unstable soil areas; or areas presenting high fire risks, the Open Space & Conservation Element does not discuss these considerations.

5.3 NATURAL RESOURCES

It is desirable through the General Plan process to identify lands or areas that contain natural resources that are an asset to, or are a product of, open space. Within the Butte Valley, natural resources are abundant and include surface waters, groundwater, floodplains, wetlands, soils, mineral resources, grasslands, and fish and wildlife habitat. Though natural resources within the City are more limited, in part due to the extent of development and community activity, undeveloped areas within and adjacent to Dorris contain wildlife habitat and agriculture that help to define the character of the area. The policies provided in this Open Space & Conservation Element can be an effective means of helping to preserve these resources, especially when paired with the Land Use Element.

5.3.1 Water

5.3.1.1 Streams and Other Surface Waters

The City of Dorris is located within the Butte Valley watershed. The watershed consists of an enclosed 125-square mile basin formed from an ancient lakebed surrounded by older volcanic rocks. Surface water features within the Butte Valley are fairly limited, with the most significant being 4,000-acre Meiss Lake in the west-central part of the valley. The lake is seasonally fed by small creeks to its south and west and is the remnant of an ancient lake that occupied much of the Butte Valley during the Pleistocene when temperatures were much cooler. The lake, creeks, and the underlying groundwater basin are part of the watershed's interconnected surface and groundwater systems that support communities, wildlife, and agriculture in the Butte Valley. Within Dorris, surface water features are limited to three wastewater treatment plant effluent ponds and two stormwater detention ponds. There are no natural surface water features within or adjacent to the City.

5.3.1.2 Floodplains

Floodplains are critically important components of a watershed because of their ability to convey and store stormwater, protect water quality, and recharge groundwater. According to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), which maps flood hazard areas throughout the United States, there are no floodplains within or adjacent to Dorris (FIRM Map 0693C0775D).[1] The nearest FEMA mapped floodplain is located approximately 1.8 miles northeast of the City and is associated with overspill of Indian Tom Lake and flooding of Hot Creek, both of which are located outside of the Butte Valley. Within the Butte Valley, the nearest floodplain to Dorris is associated with a managed wetland and is located approximately 3.2 miles south of city limits.

5.3.1.3 Wetlands

Wetlands store water, reduce flood risks, and support wildlife. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) maintains the National Wetland Inventory, which is a database of wetlands throughout the United States. The Inventory indicates the presence of approximately 10.6 acres of wetlands within the City consisting of "freshwater emergent wetland" and "freshwater pond" habitats. As

[1] The Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (LHMP), which is incorporated into the Safety Element by reference, identifies flooding as a potential hazard to the City. While elevation changes in the Butte Valley are minimal and less-than-permeable soils surrounding Meiss Lake facilitate flooding, Dorris is more than 7.5 miles outside of Meiss Lake's 100-year floodplain. This discrepancy with the LHMP is due to use of broader data in the modelling of flood hazards during development of the LHMP.

shown in **Figure 5-6, Natural Resources Constraints**, these wetland features are limited to the three effluent ponds at the City's wastewater treatment plant.

5.3.1.4 Groundwater Recharge and Water Quality

Dorris' watershed is a vital asset to the community in that supplies the City's drinking water, supports agriculture, and provides fish and wildlife habitat. Protection and conservation of the watershed's resources are essential.

Urbanization can have a substantial impact on groundwater recharge and water quality. This is due in large part to the development of impervious surfaces (e.g., roofs, streets, sidewalks, etc.) that increase the volume and rate of runoff and which limit the ability of stormwater to percolate into and be filtered by the soil. Runoff from urban areas often includes contaminants, such as oil and gas, and increased volumes and rates of runoff increase the potential for erosion and sedimentation of surface waters. When these contaminants and sediments are deposited into a receiving waterbody, it can result in impairment of the water body and the loss of fish and wildlife habitat.

In areas unaffected by the creation of impermeable surfaces, groundwater recharge is largely dependent upon the permeability of the overlying soil, the geology of the underlying basin, and the amount of water received. As discussed in Section 5.3.2 (Soils), there are two predominant soil types in the City. The Poman loamy sand underlying the east/northeast half of the City is classified as having rapid permeability and the Modoc loam underlying the west/southwest half of the City is classified as having moderately slow permeability.

There has long been interest in the geology surrounding the Butte Valley's groundwater system due to considerable growth of agriculture in the valley and the limited availability of surface water to support it. With the passage of the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act in 2014, however, groundwater sustainability agencies were formed throughout California to evaluate groundwater inputs and uses within the State's groundwater basins. As a result, studies to better understand the specifics of groundwater use and recharge in Butte Valley are giving local agencies and the public a better idea of the scope and extent of this vital natural resource underlying the City.

According to the *Butte Valley Groundwater Sustainability Plan* (GSP) adopted by the Siskiyou County Flood Control and Water Conservation District in 2021, the surface geology of the Butte Valley and adjacent regions is primarily volcanic with lake deposits, alluvial fan deposits, and alluvium with some deposits of dune sand and talus. As it relates to groundwater recharge, the City of Dorris is located in an area of lake deposits, and within this area of lake deposits permeability typically decreases in a gradient from east to west. This is due to a cemented hardpan underlying much of the ancient lakebed that ranges from six inches to several feet beneath most soils and is particularly close to the surface around Meiss Lake. The hardpan is reported to impede vertical groundwater recharge into the lake deposits water bearing formation below. The GSP identifies natural recharge of the groundwater basin as occurring primarily from infiltration of precipitation, underflow from volcanic rocks adjacent to the groundwater basin (on the north, west and south margins)[2], and streamflow losses. Most precipitation in the watershed is reported to occur to the south and southwest of the groundwater basin and flow into the basin

[2] Groundwater not used for consumptive use in the groundwater basin is reportedly discharging via the subsurface to the east and northeast of the basin into the adjacent volcanic groundwater system and out of the watershed.

via groundwater, as opposed to surface waters. Because of this, the most important locations for groundwater recharge of the underlying groundwater basin occur beyond city limits. Within the City, groundwater recharge is best facilitated through management of the City's stormwater. As discussed in the Circulation Element, the City largely relies upon two stormwater detention basins and the permeability of underlying soils and has not yet developed a true storm drain system.

According to the California Department of Water Resource (DWR), water quality in the Butte Valley Groundwater Basin is satisfactory for most uses with mixed-cation to magnesium bicarbonate-type water. DWR notes, however, that several deeper wells near Dorris are affected by hydrogen sulfide and shallow wells near the City have been moderately degraded by surface sources of arsenic.

5.3.2 Soils & Mineral Resources

5.3.2.1 Soil Types and Their Characteristics

According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), which classifies soils throughout the United States, the predominant soil types in Dorris are Modoc loam (48.1 percent), Poman loamy sand (51.1 percent), Searles-Rubbleland complex (3.8 percent), and Searles-Orhood complex (less than one percent). The characteristics of these soil types are summarized in **Table 5-1, Soil Types, Locations & Characteristics**.

TABLE 5-1
SOIL TYPES, LOCATIONS & CHARACTERISTICS

Soil Type	Location	Characteristics
#149 - Modoc loam, 0 to 2 percent slopes	Approx. 212 acres in west/southwest area of Dorris	Moderately deep, well drained soils with slight shrink-swell potential, moderately slow permeability, medium runoff, and slight to moderate hazard of wind and water erosion.
#162 - Poman loamy sand, 0 to 2 percent slopes	Approx. 245 acres in east/northeast area of Dorris	Moderately deep, somewhat excessively drained soils with moderate shrink-swell potential, rapid permeability, slow runoff, and slight to moderate hazard of wind and water erosion.
#171 - Searles-Orhood complex, 30 to 50 percent slopes	Approx. 5 acres on the slopes of Dorris Hill	Shallow to moderately deep, well drained soils with moderate shrink-swell potential
#172 - Searles-Rubbleland complex, 50 to 75 percent slopes	Approx. 0.1 acre at the base of Dorris Hill	Composite of soil, cobbles, stones, and boulders at the base of mountains or left on mountainsides by glaciation or periglacial processes.

5.3.2.2 Mineral Resources

The Surface Mining and Reclamation Act (SMARA) of 1975 mandates that the State Mining and Geology Board (SMGB) and California Department of Conservation Division of Mines and Geology (currently the California Geological Survey) prepare a mineral resource report for each

county to help identify and protect mineral resources in areas subject to urban expansion or other land use changes that preclude mineral extraction. If the SMGB classifies an area of statewide significance, the city or county with land use authority is required to establish a mineral resource management policy and designate the area in its general plan as having important minerals to be protected. SMARA further requires that prior to the city or county permitting a use that may threaten the potential to extract minerals in a designated area, the city or county would need to prepare a statement specifying its reasons for permitting the use. The State has not yet prepared a mineral resource report for Siskiyou County or classified any areas within or adjacent to Dorris as being of statewide significance. Further, no commercial mining operations have been established in or adjacent to the City and due to agricultural uses surrounding the City, none are anticipated in the future.

5.3.3 Forests and Vegetation

Vegetative cover in the City includes lawns, open land, dry farmland, and some brushy areas. There are no forests or marketable timber stands within or adjacent to Dorris. According to the California Wildlife Habitat Relationships (CWHR) System maintained by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), habitats in and adjacent to the City are classified as "pasture" with "eastside pine" habitat located along Dorris Hill. Additionally, the National Land Cover Database maintained by the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) classifies ground cover in most of the City as "developed" at varying intensities with areas of "shrub/scrub," "pasture/hay", "emergent herbaceous wetlands," and "cultivated crops". Lands outside the City are predominantly classified by USGS as "shrub/scrub" and "cultivated crops."

5.3.4 Fish and Wildlife

Most notable of the fish and wildlife species in the vicinity of Dorris are the pronghorn antelope (*Antilocapra americana*) commonly observed in the open grasslands, fields, and sagebrush south of the City. While undeveloped areas on the west side of Dorris offer some forage for the species, there is abundant preferred habitat and forage outside city limits, and pronghorn are rarely if ever encountered inside the City.

Pronghorn populations in California were dramatically impacted as a result of unregulated hunting during the gold rush and by the subsequent loss of habitat, and the population remains a fraction of what it once was. Nevertheless, the population in northeastern California is noted by CDFW as being fairly stable and the species is not identified as being at risk or potentially at risk of extinction or extirpation, and no state or federal protection status has been afforded to or proposed for the species.

Figure 5-1, Pronghorn antelope

5.3.4.1 Special-Status Species

Species whose persistence are at risk or potentially at risk in a given area or across their native habitats are designated for protection by governmental agencies such as the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (UFWS). These

species are commonly referred to as special-status species. Risk factors to a special-status species' persistence or population's persistence include habitat loss, increased mortality (take, electrocution, etc.), invasive species, and toxins.

According to the California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDB) maintained by the CDFW, there are a variety of special-status wildlife and plant species with the potential to occur in the vicinity of Dorris, including gray wolf (*Canis lupus*), American badger (*Taxidea taxus*), Swainson's hawk (*Buteo* swainsonii), bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*), ferruginous hawk (*Buteo regalis*), bank swallow (*Riparia riparia*), and Newberrys cinquefoil (*Potentilla newberryi*).

5.3.4.2 Critical Habitats

Critical habitats contain the physical or biological features that are essential to the conservation of endangered and threatened species and species that may need special management or protection. No public lands within or adjacent to Dorris have been identified as containing critical habitat for special-status species, with the nearest USFWS identified critical habitat located approximately 8.1 miles northwest of Dorris in Oregon.

Although not afforded or proposed for protection as a special-status species, the mule deer (*Odocoileus hemionus*) population has been declining in areas of California, including Siskiyou County, over the past several decades. This has made management of the species, as well as those public lands within its summer and winter ranges and migratory corridors, increasingly important. According to the CDFW, there are approximately 3.5 acres in Dorris that are within the critical winter range for the species. As shown in **Figure 5-6, Natural Resource Constraints**, the area is located along the undeveloped slopes of Dorris Hill.

5.3.4.3 Butte Valley National Grassland & Butte Valley Wildlife Area

Despite limited wildlife and other natural resources within city limits, located a short distance southwest of Dorris (< 8 miles) are the 13,400-acre Butte Valley Wildlife Area and the approximately 18,425-acre Butte Valley National Grassland. Together these conservation areas preserve large swaths of shrub-steppe and wetland habitats, including 4,000-acre Meiss Lake. State and federal agencies manage the properties for a variety of purposes, including preservation of habitat for several of the special-status species listed above. Wildlife potentially observed on the properties include those species discussed above, as well as greater sandhill crane (*Antigone canadensis tabida*), coyote (*Canis latrans*), hoary marmot (*Marmota caligata),* long-tailed weasel (*Mustela frenata*), North American porcupine (*Erethizon dorsatum*), bobcat (*Lynx rufus*), and various species of raptors, shorebirds, and waterfowl.

Figure 5-2, Butte Valley National Grasslands
(Source: U.S. Forest Service)

5.4 PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY

5.4.1 Wildfire Hazards

There are no forested areas within or adjacent to Dorris, and no area of the City is within a designated Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone (VHFHSZ). As discussed in the Safety Element, the nearest VHFHSZ is immediately adjacent to and north of the City along Dorris Hill.

5.4.2 Air Quality

The federal Clean Air Act requires the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to establish ambient air quality standards for six criteria air pollutants: ozone, carbon monoxide, nitrogen dioxide, sulfur dioxide, lead, and suspended particulate matter. The California Clean Air Act also sets ambient air quality standards, which are more stringent than the federal standards and which include four additional pollutants. When the air quality in a geographic area meets or is cleaner than federal and/or state standards, the area is considered to be in attainment of the standard. Because air contaminants can result from activity outside the area and are not geographically contained, however, an exceedance of a standard is not necessarily related to a violation of the standard for the area.

Different air quality pollutants have been monitored in Siskiyou County over the years, however, the only pollutants that currently receive continuous monitoring are ozone (O_3) and fine suspended particulate matter ($PM_{2.5}$). Ozone monitoring has been in place in Siskiyou County since 1981 and $PM_{2.5}$ monitoring was added in 2005. The air quality monitoring station is operated by the Siskiyou County Air Pollution Control District in Yreka, approximately 39.9 miles southwest of Dorris.

Ozone occurs naturally in the upper atmosphere; however, it can also be created in the lower atmosphere when exhaust emissions and other pollutants react with sunlight. Exposure to ozone can irritate the respiratory system and result in decreased lung function, aggravated asthma, and possible lung damage with persistent exposure. According to the California Air Resources Board, ozone levels in Siskiyou County consistently meet federal and state air quality standards.

Fine suspended particulate matter, or $PM_{2.5}$, consists of tiny solid or liquid particles (approx. 0.0001 inch or less) that can easily enter and be deposited in the lungs. Although the composition of $PM_{2.5}$ varies, typical sources include power plants, wildfires, industrial facilities, automobiles, and other sources of combustion. Inhalation of fine suspended particulate matter can cause coughing, phlegm, wheezing, and other physical discomfort, as well as increased rates of respiratory and cardiovascular illness with long-term exposure. Recent research has found that long-term exposure to $PM_{2.5}$ can also substantially increase a person's risk of developing Alzheimer's disease and related dementia.

Figure 5-3, Wildfire burning on forest land

According to the California Air Resources Board, Siskiyou County remains classified as being in attainment of state and federal $PM_{2.5}$ standards despite ongoing, seasonal exceedances of $PM_{2.5}$ over the past several years due to wildfires.

5.4.3 Geologic Hazards

The City of Dorris lies within the Modoc Plateau geomorphic province, a high volcanic tableland covered in ancient lava flows and dotted with volcanic cones. There are a number of faults in the region, the nearest of which is an unmanned fault that cuts through the northeast area of the City along the base of Dorris Hill. This fault is identified by the United States Geologic Society as having last been active sometime during the past 1.6 million years. A fault is considered potentially active if there is evidence of surface displacement along one or more of its segments or branches during the past 10,000 to 12,000 years. The nearest potentially active fault is the Mahogany Mountain fault located approximately 1.75 miles southwest of the City. The Mahogany Mountain fault comprises a section of the larger Cedar Mountain fault system, a 27-mile-long complex group of generally north- to north-northwest-striking normal faults along the boundary between the Cascade Ranges and the Modoc Plateau.

The largest earthquake originating along the Cedar Mountain fault system in recent times to affect the City was a double quake with magnitudes of 6.0 and 6.1 that occurred on September 21, 1993, and was centered approximately 29 miles north of Dorris.

5.5 PALEONTOLOGICAL, CULTURAL, AND HISTORIC RESOURCES

5.5.1 Paleontological Resources

Paleontological resources, or fossils, are the evidence of once-living organisms preserved in the geologic record. They include both the fossilized remains of prehistoric plants and animals as well as signs of their existence (e.g., tracks, imprints, burrows, etc.). Fossils are considered to be greater than 5,000 years old and are typically preserved in sedimentary rocks. Although rare, fossils can also be preserved in volcanic rocks and low-grade metamorphic rocks under certain conditions. Intrusive igneous rocks, high-grade metasedimentary, and metavolcanic rocks are incapable of preserving paleontological resources due to the high temperatures and/or pressures required for their formation.

Although several fossils have been found in Siskiyou County, and pre-Cambrian, Paleozoic, Mesozoic, and Pleistocene sedimentary and metasedimentary deposits in the County are classified as having a high potential to yield paleontological resources, no unique geological or paleontological resources have been documented within the City or are known to occur in Dorris.

5.5.2 Tribal Cultural Resources

The Butte Valley is within the ancestral territory of the Shasta and Modoc Tribes. Traditional Modoc land extends from Goose Lake to the east, to the Devils Garden and Medicine Lake Highlands to the south, to Mt. Shasta to the west, and just north of the Oregon state line. Traditional Shasta land extends from just north of the Oregon state line south to the Scott Mountains and east from Mount Shasta to the Salmon and Marble Mountains in the west. The Tribes' territories converged in the Butte Valley, with the Modoc principally occupying the north and east, and the Shasta primarily occupying the south and west.

Consultation with the Modoc and Shasta is essential to accurately identifying open space opportunities and to protecting sensitive cultural resources, including sanctified cemeteries, places of worship, religious or ceremonial sites, and sacred shrines, if any are present. In accordance Government Code Section 65352.3, the City contacted tribal representatives identified by the California Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) to invite formal consultation for the purpose of protecting tribal cultural resources as part of the General Plan update. Individuals contacted included representatives of the Modoc Tribe of Oklahoma, Klamath Tribes, Shasta Nation, Shasta Indian Nation, and Pit River Tribe. No tribal representative requested formal consultation or submitted comments or concerns regarding the City's General Plan update. Additionally, the NAHC completed a Sacred Lands File search of the planning area at the request of the City, the results of which were negative (i.e., no records of tribal cultural resources were located).

Although no responses were received and no tribal cultural resources are known to occur in Dorris, the City recognizes the potential for the inadvertent discovery of tribal cultural resources during future development activities in the City, as provided for in the Land Use Element. This includes the possibility of the unanticipated and accidental discovery of human remains. For this reason, the City complies with and requires compliance with state law, including California Public Resources Code Section 5097.98 and California Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5.

5.5.3 Historic Resources

Following the arrival of the Southern Pacific Railroad at the south end of the Butte Valley in 1907, several buildings from nearby Picard were laboriously moved approximately four miles east to the current Dorris townsite to be close to the railroad's planned path over, and eventually through, Dorris Hill. More homes and businesses followed, and the railroad was completed through the north end of the Butte Valley in 1908. That same year, the Town of Dorris was incorporated – later changing its name to the City of Dorris in 1963.

Figure 5-4, Butte Valley Museum at the former mill site

In 1934, approximately 22 businesses and 50 dwellings in Dorris were destroyed when a fire fed by strong winds swept through the City after beginning at a nearby lumber mill. Though Dorris recovered and rebuilt, relatively few historic structures remain today. The Butte Valley Museum & Historical Society has curated some of the remaining historic structures and displays them on the Museum's property at the south end of town. Most recently in 2021, the Museum acquired another historic building on W. 3rd Street. The building was initially home the Butte Valley State Bank when it was constructed in 1908. No buildings in Dorris have been listed in or proposed for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places or the California Register of Historical Resources.

5.6 AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES

Agricultural land conservation can be a foundation for more permanently preserving lands at the edge of cities for their intrinsic open space values. When agricultural activities produce self-sustaining revenue, agricultural conservation can be amongst the most cost-effective means of

protecting open space, promoting infill development, and preserving the unique rural cultural character of communities. Agricultural lands can also play an important role in maintaining connectivity of conserved lands and preserving wildlife corridors and wetlands.

There is little agriculture in the City when compared to unincorporated lands surrounding Dorris. Whereas agricultural uses in the City primarily consist of 4-H projects and non-commercial agriculture, such as home gardens, vast fields of strawberries, grain, alfalfa, hay, and other crops lie just outside city limits and surround much of the City.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture, which classifies soils based on their ability to support agriculture, does not classify any of the soil types occurring in Dorris as “prime farmland” or “farmland of statewide importance.” The California Department of Conservation Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program (FMMP) classifies most lands in Dorris as “urban and built-up land” due to existing development, with undeveloped areas in the City’s southeast and southwest classified as “farmland of statewide importance.” The latter classification applies to lands supporting farmlands that include dryland or sub-irrigated hay and grain and improved pasture for forage species. Although no agricultural use other than an agricultural support business has established within areas classified as “farmland of statewide importance”, the Butte Valley Museum & Historical Society, High School, and Ore-Cal RC&D are planning to collaboratively develop a community garden on Museum property, which is located within this area.

An important tool for preserving land for agricultural uses is the California Land Conservation Act, better known as the Williamson Act. The Williamson Act program was envisioned as a way for local governments to integrate the protection of open space and agricultural resources into their overall strategies for planning urban growth patterns. To do so, the Williamson Act program enables local governments to enter into contracts with private landowners for the purpose of restricting specific parcels of land to agricultural or related open space use. Private land within locally designated agricultural preserve areas is eligible for enrollment under contract. The minimum acreage for enrollment under the Williamson Act is 100 acres and the term for contracts is ten years. However, since the contract term automatically renews on each anniversary date of the contract, the actual term is essentially indefinite. Landowners receive substantially reduced property tax assessments in return for enrollment under Williamson Act contract. Despite the savings, there is only one agricultural property subject to a Williamson Act contract within or adjacent to the City. The property is located outside and southeast of the City and is used for strawberry production.

5.7 ENERGY

As discussed in the Circulation Element, there are no electrical energy production facilities in Dorris. Pacific Power provides electrical service to the City and surrounding area.

State and local agencies regulate the use and consumption of energy through various methods and programs. As a result of the passage of Assembly Bill 32 (the California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006), which seeks to reduce the effects of Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions, a multitude of state regulations have been enacted to reduce energy use and GHG emissions. Many of these regulations are implemented and enforced at the local level through energy efficiency requirements in the building permit application process.

The City of Weed Building Department, which the City contracts with for plan check and building inspection services, ensures that all new construction complies with the standards in effect on the date a building permit application is made, including the Energy Efficiency Standards and Green

Building Standards in Title 24 of the California Code of Regulations. Although the City does not have any additional energy conservation requirements or standards in place, energy and efficiency incentive programs for residential and commercial customers are regularly offered by Pacific Power and the State of California.

5.8 PARKS AND RECREATION

5.8.1 Existing Parks and Recreation Areas

Public parks and recreation areas in Dorris are currently owned and maintained by the City, with the Butte Valley Unified School District providing additional outdoor recreation areas and facilities for youth-related activities at the Elementary School and High School. Other parks and recreation areas in Dorris include a playground at the Butte Valley Health Center and a small privately-owned park on Main Street that a local family has traditionally made available for public use (previously as a community garden). In addition, the Butte Valley Museum & Historical Society has developed a public access trail system at the Museum's former mill site at the south end of town. Recreational amenities provided by the various entities in Dorris include playgrounds, ballfields, tennis courts, picnic areas, basketball courts, trails, a track, and a splash pad that the City recently added in 2022.

Figure 5-5, Little League Ball Field

Dorris' current open space areas for outdoor recreation are summarized in **Table 5-2** below and are shown on **Figure 5-7, Parks and Recreation**.

TABLE 5-2, INVENTORY OF PARKS AND RECREATION AREAS

Ownership	Facility	Acres
City of Dorris	McKay Park & Little League Ball Fields	4.55
	City Hall Park	0.26
	Tennis Courts	0.49
	Youth Building	0.51
Other Public	Elementary School & High School grounds	10.25
Private	Cleland Park	0.22
	Museum Trail System	1.52
	TOTAL	**17.8**

5.8.2 Future Parks and Recreation Areas

During the General Plan update, residents were surveyed and asked their opinions about the adequacy of the City's parks and recreation facilities. Most respondents indicated the current parks and recreation facilities adequately meet the community's needs. When surveyed about

desired improvements, a senior center was most frequently noted, followed closely by a youth facility (e.g., skate park).

Dorris is fortunate in that the City has sufficient land on which it can develop additional parks and recreation areas in the future; however, funding for maintenance of the City's existing facilities, as well as for other core services, remains limited. For that reason, when evaluating the development of additional parks and recreation areas, or expansion of or improvements to existing areas, operations and maintenance costs must be fully considered, and use of public-private partnerships should be promoted. With willing private partners, land could potentially be enhanced and co-managed for public access and other purposes, and trails through these areas connected with other pedestrian and bike friendly areas in the community to promote recreation and active transportation.

The use of shade structures and shade trees should also be considered when planning future parks and recreation areas. Not only do they offer relief from the sun and enhance community character, but the "Urban Heat Island Effect" can occur in small or large cities, and even in suburban areas. Heat islands form as natural land cover is replaced with dark-colored rooftops, pavement for roads and parking lots, and other hardscapes that collect and retain heat. According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, these dark surfaces can reach temperatures up to 60 degrees Fahrenheit (ºF) warmer than the air, thereby increasing the ambient temperatures in areas 1-7 ºF higher than in natural landscapes during the day and 2-5 ºF higher at night. For these reasons, the City will want to consider the use shade trees, and other passive cooling strategies, when planning future parks and recreation areas.

5.8.3 Quimby Act

Local governments in California provide an important role in the establishment of parkland and open space for recreational purposes. The Quimby Act (California Government Code Section 66477) authorizes cities and counties to pass ordinances requiring developers to set aside land, donate conservation easements, or pay in-lieu fees for park improvements. Revenues generated through the Quimby Act cannot be used for the operation and maintenance of existing park facilities, although they may be used for park rehabilitation.

The intent of the Quimby Act is to assist local municipalities in providing adequate open space for their citizenry by requiring developers to mitigate the impacts of residential development projects. The provisions give authority for passage of land dedication ordinances only to cities and counties. However, if an agency other than a city or county is responsible for providing recreational services, the agency ultimately is the recipient of the land dedication and/or fees.

Local Quimby Act ordinances must include definite standards for determining the proportion of land to be dedicated and the amount of the fee to be paid. Further, in order for the City to be able enforce a Quimby Act ordinance, the ordinance must be in effect for a period of at least thirty days prior to the filing of the tentative subdivision map or parcel map.

In accordance with the Quimby Act, the City of Dorris maintains park and recreation land dedication requirements in Dorris Municipal Code Chapter 16.44 (Dedications and Reservations), which the City implements at the time of subdivision approval.

5.9 CONSERVATION, DEVELOPMENT & UTILIZATION OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Natural resource conservation offers many rewards. The preservation of water-related resources can reduce flooding (where applicable), improve water quality, and increase resiliency to drought. Trees planted in parks and yards and along streets and parking areas are an effective, low technology means of staying cool during summer, reducing energy demand, and achieving other social, environmental, and economic benefits. Conservation of environmental and agricultural resources is also one of the State's three planning priorities and helps to achieve State climate goals.

Understanding the natural resources within Dorris and the methods for conserving them helps ensure community needs are balanced with environmental conservation and climate change considerations. Most natural resource conservation issues are closely related to open space preservation. Protection of open space is a means of protecting the watershed, reducing pollution, and conserving wetlands and other resources.

The goals, policies, and programs in this element, along with the Land Use, Safety, and Circulation Elements, seek to balance new development in the City with the conservation, development, and utilization of natural resources.

5.10 EFFECT OF DEVELOPMENT ON OPEN SPACE AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Planning for new development in Dorris should consider and protect natural resources within the City, and it does so in different ways. The City's municipal code includes building standards that protect public health and safety from development in areas subject to seismic and wildfire hazards, and the subdivision ordinance provides for the protection of biological resources and open space areas. Additionally, **Figure 5-6, Natural Resources Constraints** is included below to identify the locations of natural resources in the City that may require permits or other approvals from state and federal agencies prior to development or disturbance of the underlying land.

The Natural Resources Constraints map does not restrict development of property by the City. Rather, the intent of the map is to help assure a sensitive form of development that protects identified natural resources and preserves biodiversity and important natural habitats. To achieve this, the Natural Resource Constraints map combines current USFWS National Wetlands Inventory data with current CDFW critical wintering habitat data to indicate the presence of potential federal development regulations set forth by USFWS[3] and to encourage the protection of sensitive natural habitats and species. By including this information in the General Plan Open Space & Conservation Element, it indicates to property owners, developers, and city staff the presence of potential limitations to development in these areas and the need for additional review prior to building permit issuance and/or project approval.

The goals, policies, and programs in this element, along with the Land Use, Safety, and Circulation Elements, seek to balance new development with the preservation of the City's natural resources.

[3] It is important to note that in addition to permits or other approvals from USFWS, prior to the disturbance of wetlands or the bed, bank, or channel of any surface waters, additional permits or other approvals may be required from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, CDFW, and California Water Resources Control Board.

5.11 CORRELATION WITH OTHER ELEMENTS

Some of the topics addressed in the Open Space & Conservation Element overlap with and are also addressed by other elements of the General Plan. For example, wildfire and floodplains are also addressed in the Safety Element, and Land Use Element policies that promote efficient use of land and infill development are intended to support growth of the community without unnecessarily converting agriculture or other open space to an urban use. As discussed in the Noise Element, open space can also be used to buffer incompatible land uses from one another, such as noise sensitive uses from noise generating sources. Accordingly, the Open Space & Conservation Element should be used in combination with the other Elements to ensure full implementation of all General Plan resource-related policies.

5.12 OPEN SPACE ACTION PLAN

Government Code Section 65564 requires that every local open space plan contain an action program consisting of specific programs that the legislative body intends to pursue in implementing its open space plan. Thereafter, any action by the city or county by which open space land is acquired or disposed of, or its use restricted or regulated, needs to be consistent with the local open space plan. In the case of Dorris, the open space plan is the Open Space & Conservation Element, and the open space program consists of the goals, policies, and programs in Section 5.13 (Open Space and Conservation Element Goals, Policies & Programs), which follows.

5.13 OPEN SPACE AND CONSERVATION ELEMENT GOALS, POLICIES & PROGRAMS

GOAL OC-1:	**Welcoming, inclusive, and safe parks, recreation facilities, and activities to serve city residents regardless of age, ability, or income.**
GOAL OC-2:	**A comprehensive system of interconnected open space areas that maximizes the potential for habitat preservation, compatible recreation, and scenic views.**
GOAL OC-3:	**Preservation of cultural, historical, and paleontological resources.**
GOAL OC-4:	**Protection of special-status species and other biological resources sensitive to human activities and development.**
GOAL OC-5:	**A sustainable and high-quality water supply.**
GOAL OC-6:	**Industries that support the local and regional economy, minimize adverse impacts to the public and environment, and are compatible with development in the City.**
GOAL OC-7:	**Dorris' rural small town atmosphere conserved and enhanced.**
GOAL OC-8:	**Increased energy efficiency, where possible, to reduce costs and environmental impacts.**

GOAL OC-1: Welcoming, inclusive, and safe parks, recreation facilities, and activities to serve city residents regardless of age, ability, or income.

Policy OC-1.1: The City supports investment in the maintenance, improvement, and development of parks, recreation facilities, and greenspace to promote active lifestyles, active transportation, mental health, lifelong learning and development, and environmental health benefits for individual and community wellbeing.

Program OC-1A: Continue to evaluate and apply for grants and other sources of funding as they become available for the maintenance, improvement, and development of parks, recreation facilities, and greenspaces.

Program OC-1B: Encourage residents, stakeholders, neighborhood groups, businesses, schools, social organizations, and public agencies to volunteer and partner in the maintenance and development of parks and recreation facilities.

Program OC-1C: Provide a variety of recreation facilities and activities that meet the diverse needs of the community.

Program OC-1D: Accommodate those with special needs in the City's parks and recreation facilities and programs, including seniors and people with disabilities, and meet the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Program OC-1E: Coordinate with the Siskiyou County Sheriff's Office in the planning for safe and secure parks and recreation areas.

Program OC-1F: When planning park renovations and development, incorporate green infrastructure, shade, and vegetation where appropriate.

Program OC-1G: Design and develop parks, greenspace, and trail corridors to support community respite, wellness, and the mental health benefits found in connections to nature.

Program OC-1H: When planning new parks, recreation facilities, open space, and greenways, ensure adequate funding is available for the ongoing maintenance and operation of these areas.

GOAL OC-2: A comprehensive system of interconnected open space areas that maximizes the potential for habitat preservation, compatible recreation, and scenic views.

Policy OC-2.1: The City recognizes that open-space land is a limited and valuable resource that should be conserved wherever possible.

Policy OC-2.2: The City, in cooperation with other agencies, organizations, and property owners endeavors to maintain, preserve, and enhance an interconnected system of open space for the community's use, appreciation, and enjoyment and for the preservation and enhancement of natural habitat.

Program OC-2A: Where practical, improve city-owned or managed open space with designated access points, parking, trails, and other amenities.

Program OC-2B: Provide access to public open space areas through a network of pedestrian and bicycle trails that can be adequately managed.

Program OC-2C: Integrate, where feasible, active and passive recreational opportunities with the protection of natural areas.

Program OC-2D: Maintain a ratio of not less than five acres of park and open space land per 1,000 city residents.

Program OC-2E: Continue to require the dedication of land, improvement of parks and open space, and/or the payment of in lieu fees in accordance with the Quimby Act and the City's Subdivision Ordinance.

GOAL OC-3: Preservation of cultural, historical, and paleontological resources.

Policy OC-3.1: The City desires to strengthen Dorris' identify, safeguard the cultural identity of previously displaced tribes, and preserve the fossil record through protection of the cultural, historical, and paleontological resources in the City.

Policy OC-3.2: The City recognizes that although no paleontological resources or tribal cultural resources, places, features, or objects have been identified in the planning area, projects resulting in ground disturbance have the potential to uncover previously unknown resources.

Program OC-3A: Consult with local Native American Tribes that are traditionally and culturally affiliated with resources that could be affected by city plans or projects, identify areas that may be of tribal cultural significance, and determine appropriate treatment for the areas.

Program OC-3B: When items of historical, cultural, or paleontological significance are discovered, contact a qualified archaeologist or historian to evaluate the find and recommend proper action.

Program OC-3C: Where feasible, incorporate significant archaeological and tribal cultural resource sites into open space areas.

Program OC-3D: Coordinate with the appropriate federal, state, local agencies, and Native American Tribes upon discovery of tribal cultural resources and artifacts.

Program OC-3E: Support interested property owners in the preservation, maintenance, and/or renovation of significant historic resources, consistent with applicable Department of the Interior historic preservation standards.

GOAL OC-4: Protection of special-status species and other biological resources sensitive to human activities and development.

Policy OC-4.1: The City, in cooperation with other agencies, organizations, and property owners endeavors to preserve habitats necessary for the persistence of special-status species.

Policy OC-4.2: The City provides for the protection of special-status species during its review of discretionary projects.

Policy OC-4.3: The City supports the restoration and management of natural habitats to improve the resilience of the community and environment to hazards.

Program OC-4A: Support and work with resource agencies, conservation districts, interested property owners, and other appropriate entities to restore and preserve natural habitats in and adjacent to the City and improve the resilience of the landscape to natural hazards.

Program OC-4B: When planning activities involving modifications within or adjacent to wetland areas and critical deer wintering range, seek the advice of appropriate federal, state, or local agencies concerning specified agency regulatory programs and proprietary jurisdictions that may affect such activities.

GOAL OC-5: A sustainable and high-quality water supply.

Policy OC-5.1: The City collaborates with the State, regional water quality control boards, watermasters, water purveyors, and government agencies at all levels to ensure a safe supply of drinking water and a healthy environment.

Policy OC-5.2: The City supports the development, update, and implementation of groundwater and surface water management plans that emphasize sustainable use and/or water quality protection.

Program OC-5A: Work with local, state, and federal agencies, special districts, private landholders, and the Groundwater Sustainability Agency to promote management practices that protect the watershed and the City's municipal water supply.

Program OC-5B: Integrate stormwater management techniques and low impact development best practices to minimize runoff.

Program OC-5C: Work with the Siskiyou Flood Control and Water Conservation District, state and federal agencies, landowners, and other appropriate entities to manage watershed health and promote sustainable agricultural practices that reduce the risk of soil degradation, water contamination, and hazards to the community.

Program OC-5D: Develop a water conservation plan to reduce the impact of drought on the City's water supply.

Program OC-5E: Encourage water conservation efforts by residents, businesses, and industry.

GOAL OC-6: Industries that support the local and regional economy, minimize adverse impacts to the public and environment, and are compatible with development in the City.

Policy OC-6.1: The City supports the conservation of agricultural operations that are sustainable, economically viable, and compatible with development in the City.

Policy OC-6.2: The City supports compatible urban agriculture in private development and public spaces, including home gardens, community gardens, and urban farms.

Policy OC-6.3: The City requires that all mining activity is properly permitted, conducted in accordance with the State Surface Mining and Reclamation Act of 1975 (SMARA), and that mines are effectively reclaimed.

Policy OC-6.4: The City supports state or local property tax incentives that allow property owners to preserve their land as open space.

> **Program OC-6A:** Protect productive agricultural lands through buffers from sensitive uses as a means to prolong the economic use of this open space.
>
> **Program OC-6B:** Permit small-scale, non-water-intensive agriculture where compatible with surrounding uses and the environment.
>
> **Program OC-6C:** Ensure that non-exempt mineral extraction activities comply with SMARA, including requirements for financial assurances and reclamation plans.

GOAL OC-7: Dorris' rural small town atmosphere conserved and enhanced.

Policy OC-7.1: The City supports efforts to improve the appearance of properties in the planning area.

Policy OC-7.2: The City endeavors to safeguard the community from the effects of urban blight.

> **Program OC-7A:** Work with property owners to improve the scenic quality along US 97 as it proceeds through the community.
>
> **Program OC-7B:** Continue to utilize code enforcement as a means to eliminate property deterioration, and the accumulation of trash and junk that negatively impacts adjacent properties and the appearance of the community.

GOAL OC-8: Increased energy efficiency, where possible, to reduce costs and environmental impacts.

Policy OC-8.1: The City supports increased energy efficiency and the use and deployment of sustainable energy sources.

> **Program OC-8A:** Continue to identify energy efficiency improvements that can be implemented by the City to reduce energy demand and cost, and seek grant funding for implementation of the improvements, if necessary.
>
> **Program OC-8B:** Cooperate with federal, state, and local governments and other appropriate entities to accomplish energy conservation objectives throughout the State, and inform city employees, its contractors, staff, and the general public of the need for and methods of energy conservation.

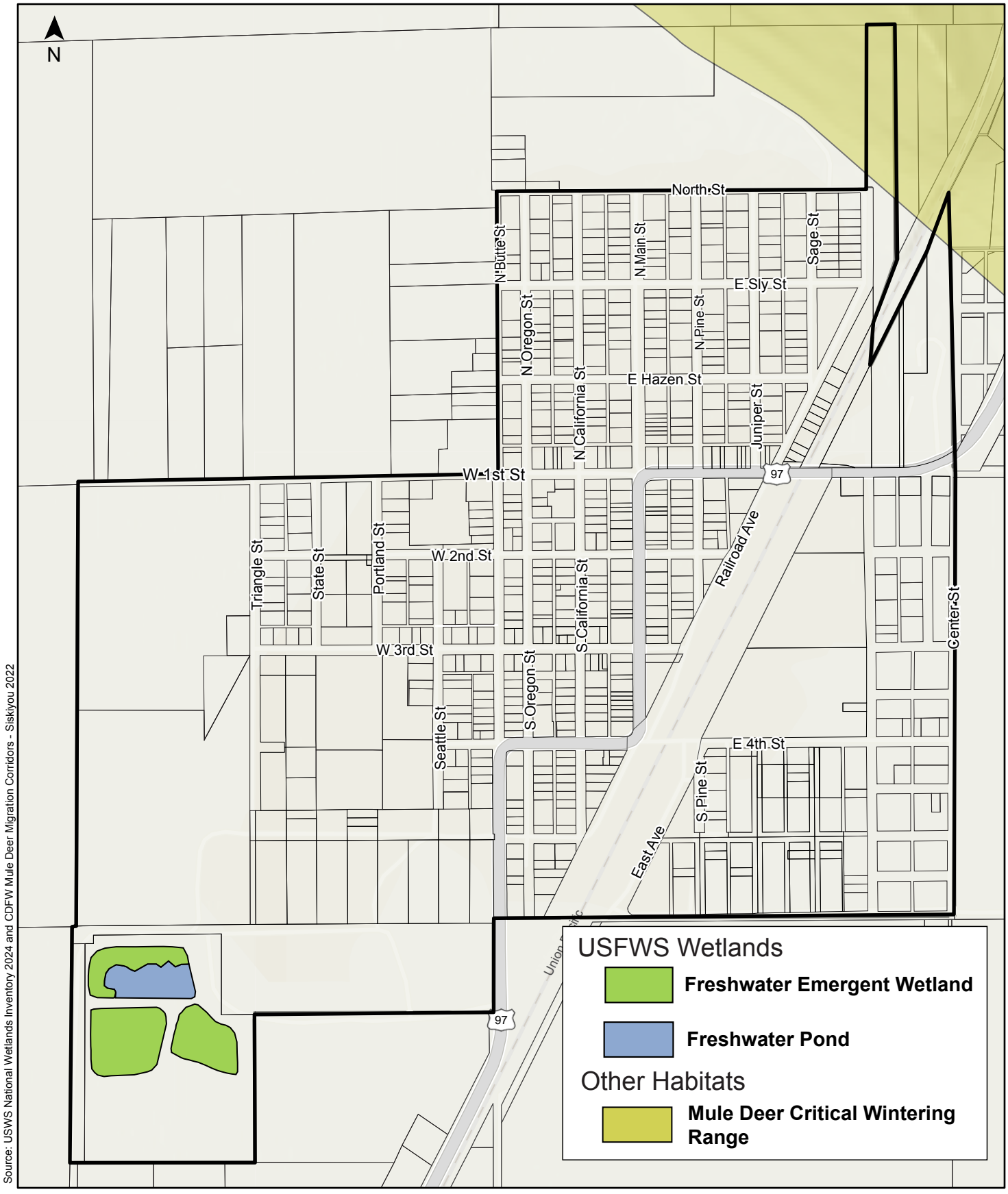

Figure 5-6, Natural Resources Constraints

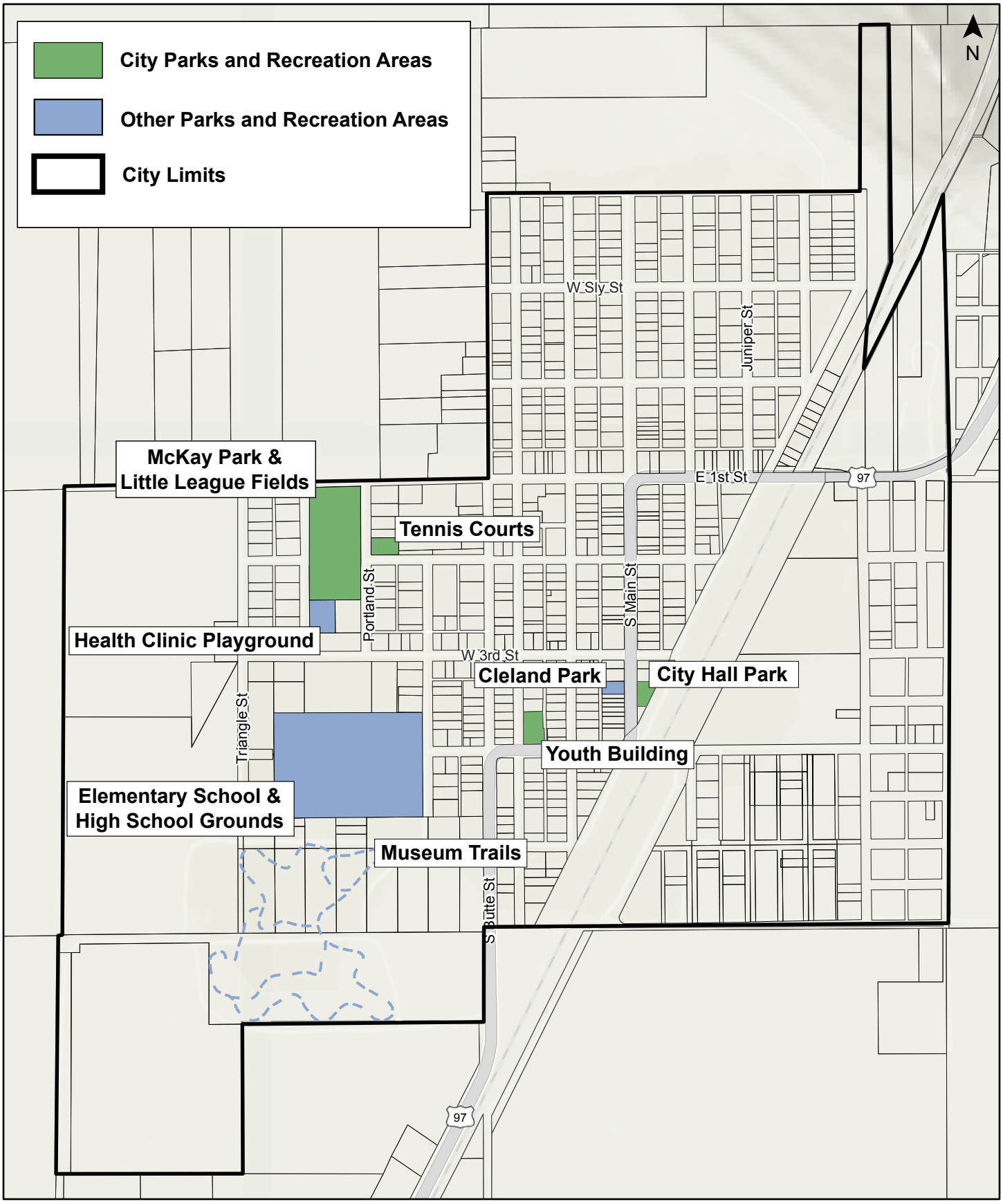

Figure 5-7, Parks and Recreation Areas