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## CHAPTER 7- COMMUNITY FEATURES

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## 7 GREATER PINE GROVE COMMUNITY FEATURES

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### 7.1. SOCIAL AND POLITICAL SETTING

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The Planning Unit is not a cohesive community but rather a series of subdivisions and ranches. In some areas, significant distances separate individual subdivisions. Routes of travel to the urban areas can define community identity. This separation and individual community identities make it difficult to work collectively to solve common problems. However, there are numerous neighborhood organizations that can help mitigate some of the wildfire issues identified in this plan. The only community group capable of coordinating among the various homeowner association and special districts is the Pine Grove Community Council. However, the Pine Grove Community Council focuses on issues directly relating to the community of Pine Grove, not the greater Pine Grove Area this plan covers.

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#### 7.1.1. CULTURAL RESOURCES

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Much of the reason for living in the Planning Unit is related to the natural beauty of the area. Spectacularly scenery is virtually everywhere. In addition to the landscape, several other assets enrich the area's ambiance. These are:

- Grinding Stone State Park
- Pine Grove School House
- Pine Grove baseball field
- Mount Zion State Demonstration Forest
- George Madeira Astrological Observatory (historical landmark # 715)
- Historical Pine Grove Buildings
- Irishtown historical landmark #37
- Pine Grove Community Park
- Roaring Camp
- Gold Country Resort Campground
- Aqueduct Cemetery

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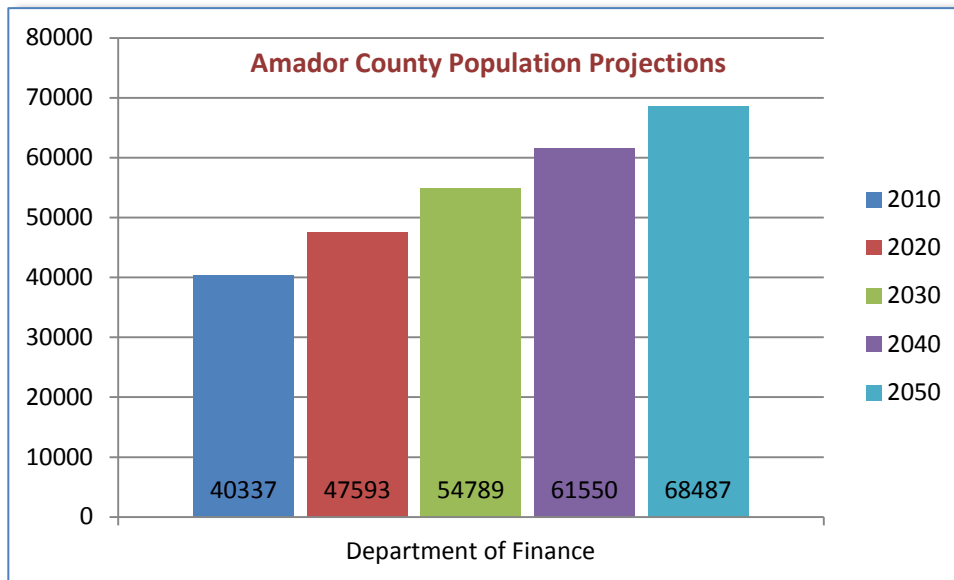
#### 7.1.2. POPULATION AND DEMOGRAPHICS

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The Pine Grove Planning Unit is one of the most populous of all nine Planning Units. There are approximately 3353 homes with an estimated population of 4713. There is an abundant supply of undeveloped parcels that eventual will develop adding additional structures and humans to the area. All alternatives for land use zoning proposed in the County General Plan update include residential zoning for the Highway 88 corridor. This area will likely continue to be one of the most desired living areas in the county.

The California Department of Finance projects an increase of over 25,000 additional residents by 2050 (see chart next page). The average project increase for each decade between 2010 and 2050 is 7032.

FIGURE 1 POPULATION PROJECTIONS



### 7.1.3. COMMUNITY LEGAL STRUCTURE AND JURISDICTIONAL BOUNDARIES

All of Pine Grove Planning Unit is unincorporated. Two local fire departments, Amador Fire Protection District and Lockwood Fire Protection District provide structure fire protection to the area (*see Chapter 6 – Fire Protection Organizations for additional information*). The Amador Water Agency provides domestic water to a portion of the Planning Unit. Police services are the responsibility of the Amador County Sheriff.

### 7.1.4. INFRASTRUCTURE

Transportation infrastructure in the Planning Unit varies greatly. Since many of the subdivisions were developed before the County adopted more stringent subdivision requirements, these early subdivisions lack adequate roads for fire protection. These narrow, at times unpaved roads hinder evacuation and make access for fire apparatus difficult.

Similarly, these early subdivisions lack water for firefighting. Some resident have installed water tanks but this is sporadic at best. Areas served by hydrants have fire flows estimated at 500 GPM or less. Most of the hydrants have not been tested to determine actual fire flow.

Road signage in older subdivisions is poor or completely lacking. Likewise, address signage throughout the planning unit is non-standard and of poor quality. Address signage is also non-standard and of poor quality even in the newer subdivisions.

Telephone infrastructure can be interrupted if one of the twenty-five remotes controlling ring tones is destroyed. These remotes are vital to the Reverse 911<sup>®</sup> notification system.

PG&E distribution lines are located throughout the area and are vulnerable to large-scale damage from wildfire.

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## 7.2. PUBLIC AND INDUSTRIAL FIRE MANAGEMENT

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### 7.2.2. USDI BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT: MOTHER LODE FIELD OFFICE

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The Bureau of Land Management manages 2050 acres of land within the Planning Unit. The entirety of the Pine Grove Planning Unit is within BLM’s Mokelumne Fire Management Unit (FMU). The Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) require BLM manage public lands to:

- protect the quality of scientific, scenic, historical, ecological, environmental, air and atmospheric, water resource, and archeological values;
- preserve and protect certain public lands in their natural condition;
- provide food and habitat for fish and wildlife and domestic animals;
- provide for outdoor recreation and human occupancy and use;
- regulate the use, occupancy, and development of public lands

To meet these requirements, BLM’s management plan includes the following actions:

- Conduct fuel reduction treatments to create fire-safe communities, protect private property, achieve resource management objectives, and restore ecosystem health.
- Use prescribed fire to reduce fuel hazard.
- Reduce heavy fuel loading by treating (prescribed burning, vegetation mastication, or manual treatment) at least 500 acres each year.
- Reduce hazardous fuels in WUI areas and communities at risk. *Prioritize fuel hazard reduction projects specified in community-based plans.* Prioritize fuel reduction projects to benefit both communities at risk and significant natural and cultural resources.

BLM is a major cooperator in the construction of the Cooperative Fire Defense System (*See Plate 3 – Landscape Scale Fire Defenses*). In addition, BLM plans and implements major fuel reduction projects in key areas of the lands BLM manages.

These systems and projects are extremely important to residents of living along the Highway 88 Corridor east of Pioneer, Pine Grove, and upper Shake Ridge Road east of Lockwood junction. These areas are at risk from wind driven wildfire originating on the federal lands and inter-mingled private holdings.

There are 739 acres of BLM lands within and 793 acres immediately adjacent to the planning unit. The location of some of BLM holdings within or adjacent provide opportunities for fuel management designed to reduce wildfire risk to private lands or to construct additional elements of the Cooperative Fire Defense System.

BLM has been one of the major funding sources for many of the Amador Fire Safe Council’s projects since the Council was formed.

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### 7.2.3. INDUSTRIAL LANDS

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There are no large holding of industrial forestlands within the planning unit. However, individual landowners do harvest timber and other forest products from lands managed for other purposes such as livestock.

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## 7.3. COMMUNITY PLANNING CONTEXT

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In 2005, the Amador County Board of Supervisors adopted a countywide Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP). This plan was prepared by the Amador County Fire Safe Council and was funded by a grant from the Bureau of Land Management. The primary thrust of this plan is a fire defense system designed to defend against the historic large wildfire occurrence in mid to upper Amador County.

Following adoption of the 2005 CWPP, the Fire Safe Council prepared an action plan (*Steps to Implementation*) that included a general risk analysis of the nine planning units identified in the CWPP. Amador County's three highest at risk areas are Pioneer/Volcano, Upcountry (now called the High Country Unit), and Pine Grove Planning Units.

Because of the risk analysis and previous public and private priorities, most of the effort constructing these fire defenses has been concentrated in these three areas. For purpose of identification, these are referred to as the "Cooperative Fire Defense System". This system includes projects on public and private lands. These projects are funded from public and private funds. Many of these projects involve more than one agency or organizations.

In 2006, all of the projects identified in the CWPP were incorporated into the Amador County Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan. This additional plan is required by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). This plan has been prepared to meet the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 (DMA 2000) requirements in order to maintain Amador's eligibility for the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Pre-disaster Mitigation (PDM) and Hazard Mitigation Grant Programs (HMGP). More importantly, this plan and planning process lays out the strategy that will enable Amador County to become less vulnerable to future disaster losses.

All projects identified in the 2005 CWPP are incorporated into the Pine Grove Planning Unit Conservation and Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CCWPP). All projects identified in the Volcano Community Wildfire Protection Plan (2005) are also incorporated.

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### 7.3.1 LAND USE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

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Amador County is in the process of updating its General Plan. Five alternative Land Use Maps are being considered. All five include zoning for residential development along the Highway 88 corridor. This area already is zoned for residential and business. As the vacant lots and undeveloped land zoned residential develop, more homes and people will be exposed to the risk of wildfire.

To minimize this risk and consistent with the goals and priorities in the 2005 CWPP, land managers of public and private lands have been developing the elements of the Cooperative Fire Defense System. These agencies and private companies are Sierra Pacific Industries, Pacific Gas and Electric, the Eldorado National Forest, the Bureau of Land Management, CAL FIRE, and the Amador Fire Safe Council. In addition to these

agencies, private foresters have been including fuel reduction recommendations in management plans developed for private landowners.

To improve the coordination of all these efforts the Fire Safe Council sponsors an annual meeting of all agencies and large private land managers. This meeting allows all participants to see what progress has occurred over the past year, what is planned for the next cycle, and what remain to be done.

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### 7.3.2. LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT TRENDS

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The following is from the 2005 CWPP and is still valid today.

*“Current land use and development in Amador County is shaped by customs and cultures, as defined in the Land Use Element of the General Plan and the Forest Reserve Act of 1891. The noted customs and cultures are mining, timber, agriculture, grazing, hunting, fishing, federal leaseholders, transportation, tourism, and watershed management. The Federal Reserve Act of 1891 created our national forests by authorizing the President of the United States to reserve timberlands on the public domain and prevent them from passing out of the possession of the Government. Today, the Eldorado National Forest covers about 22 percent of Amador County. Together, the customs and cultures and the establishment of the national forest land in Amador County provide the mold for today’s land use and development trends.*

GENERAL LAND USE CATEGORIES		
Land Use	Acres	%
Urban & Suburban (Residential, Commercial & Manufacturing)	108,619	29
General Agriculture ( <i>Williamson Act - 1 Residence/40 ac.</i> )	94,028	25
Other Agriculture ( <i>EBMUD, JVID, Non-Williamson Act</i> )	43,582	11
Timber Production ( <i>Non-USFS/BLM</i> )	29,524	8
Federal Lands ( <i>USFS, BLM &amp; Mokelumne Wilderness</i> )	100,328	27
Total County	376,081	100
Source: Amador County Planning Department files, September 2003.		

*“In over 70 percent of the County, residential growth is either prohibited (e.g. federal lands), or limited to large acreages. However, the major development trend is toward greater densities of homes where development is permitted. This is being driven by many factors including Amador County’s desirable climate and rural ambience, proximity to major job markets, and general population growth. The growth of residences is particularly noticeable in, around the incorporated cities, and in the urban/forest intermix zone. The Amador County Development Policy states, “Future residential development will be encouraged to take place in the form of farms, ranches, and estates throughout the county or through expansion of existing towns and villages...” The increasing density of residences in the intermix zone is particularly important due to the extreme wildfire hazard in this area.”<sup>i</sup>*

### 7.4. COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE TO ADDRESS AND IMPLEMENT OBJECTIVES

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Numerous groups and organizations capable of implementing the actions suggested in this plan exist in the Planning Unit. These groups are:

- Homeowners Associations

- Road Associations
- Recreation Associations
- Individual property owners
- The Amador Fire Safe Council
- The Pine Grove Community Council

The Pine Grove Community Council in particular has the potential to assume community leadership for those actions that can be achieved by residents within the immediate Pine Grove area without government funding.

The Fire Safe Council can apply for grants to achieve some of the costly items such as better road and address signage, community water tanks, and fuel reduction on vacant lots.

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<sup>i</sup> Amador County Fire Hazard Reduction Plan (2005), also known as the Amador County Community Wildfire Protection Plan, and the Amador County Generic Community Wildfire Protection Plan