



TOOLS FOR
PRESERVING
OPEN SPACE
IN
AMADOR COUNTY,
CALIFORNIA



FOOTHILL CONSERVANCY

FEBRUARY 2002



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Introduction



Amador County has vast open space resources that define its rural character. The importance of these resources to its residents and economy is well recognized. There is concern in the community that open space lands in the county may be reduced drastically over the next 20 years similar to past experience in other areas of California.

The County has already recognized the importance of open space preservation in its General Plan, zoning, and other actions. Approximately 93,000 acres are in Williamson Act agricultural preservation contracts and this acreage remains relatively stable from year to year. Approximately 30,000 acres are in Timberland Preserve Zone (TPZ). Minimum agricultural and TPZ-designated parcel size is 40 acres. The Spheres of Influence around each city are relatively small and the county's zoning in these areas tends to mirror that of the cities. Large developments within the spheres are generally referred to the cities for processing.

No Urban Growth Boundaries have been adopted. The County does not have an Open Space District. There is no Open Space land use designated.

One of the Foothill Conservancy's main goals is to foster preservation of open space. This report is intended to explore tools currently in use in California which Amador County could use to help achieve this goal, including:

- General Plan Tools
- Zoning
- Density Transfers
- Urban Growth Boundaries
- Williamson Act Agricultural Preserves/
Timber Preserve Zones
- Open Space Purchase
- Conservation Easements
- Growth Control Measures
- Sphere of Influence Plans
- Habitat Management Plans/Regulations

General Plan Tools



The most basic way to preserve open space is by using the General Plan land use map and policies.

An Open Space Element with an Open Space Plan is required of each city and county General Plan in California. However, there are no requirements as to what must be held in open space, rather, a plan for what the locality deems important is all that is called for.

A number of open space policies can be enacted through the General Plan and its Open Space Element.

establish low rural development densities

The most basic way to retain open space is through use of low-density residential, agricultural, and resource-related land use designations. What is “low density” is a controversial question in many counties. Is it 5 acres, 10 acres, 20 acres, or more? In general, parcel sizes over 20 acres are recognized as having the greatest value for continued habitat value and wildlife migration corridors. However, in areas that are not critical for habitat, acreages as low as 5 and 10 acres can visually preserve open space, particularly in forests. To ensure land stays agricultural, consideration must be given to the type of agricultural activity. Often, counties use a 40-acre minimum density for agricultural lands to ensure that a variety of agricultural uses are possible. Yet commercially viable farming of crops such as grapes and cut flowers can be supported by much less acreage. In contrast, Sierra ranches often need a much higher minimum parcel size to remain viable — typically 160-acre minimums. Counties that are seeking to retain their working ranches may adopt the higher minimum parcel sizes for grazing land.

use open space designation

One way for the County to increase the preservation of open space would be to place additional lands in the Open Space designation. These could include critical features such as ridgelines, wetlands, visual backdrops of communities, historic features, and so forth. In order to ensure that individual property

owners do not lose potential development rights on these lands, various tools can be used in compensation, including allowing the owner to cluster development density on less-sensitive portions of the site.

direct growth to urban areas and cities

General Plans serve the most important role in preserving open space by directing growth to urban areas and incorporated cities, which promotes compact development. Such policies can be backed by city-county agreements on revenue sharing so that counties do not have a disincentive to refer commercial development to cities. Often, policies ensuring that development proposed in unincorporated areas is referred to cities for review and annexation are also included to ensure implementation of this goal. (Amador County uses a similar policy.)

The Nevada County General Plan is a good example. A series of goals and policies in that Plan create “Community Regions” around each of the cities and more developed areas of the county. The more intense urban uses such as high density residential and industrial uses are only allowed in these areas. “Rural Places” are also established, creating a smaller boundary around small communities that exist in the county. Uses appropriate to these rural communities are allowed, such as neighborhood commercial, office professional, and multi-family residential — but on a much smaller scale than in the Community Regions, recognizing the desire to keep these communities small and retain their historic identity. The highest residential density allowed outside the Community Regions and Rural Centers is 5-acre parcels, allowing for suburbanization of some areas, mainly surrounding the Community Regions. Some counties with a greater agricultural emphasis use a larger parcel size outside the identified urban areas.

Directing growth to cities takes the county out of the urban development business and saves costs on infrastructure and services while protecting open space.



require voter approval of major general plan amendments

Another approach is to require that any General Plan amendments which would result in increased density be voted on by the people. This is essentially the approach being used in Davis (though it applies only to agricultural land). This can be a very effective tool to ensure that desired low-density or agricultural designations are retained. To be effective, the vote requirement should be both for county and city actions. That way, if an increase in density is requested in a city annexation area, a vote would be required and if the applicant wanted to get around this requirement, he or she could not simply apply to the county instead.

The requirement of a vote of the people ensures that these General Plan amendments will not be taken lightly.

reduce ag/urban conflicts

Land use conflicts between agricultural uses such as ranching and housing subdivisions can increase costs to farmers and ranchers and increase pressure to convert to urban uses. Using agricultural buffers in General Plans to separate new development on the fringe of urban areas from agricultural areas can be effective in reducing these conflicts.

In addition, most counties, including Amador County, already have adopted Right to Farm ordinances. These essentially notify nearby urban resi-

dents that agricultural operations have a right to conduct normal operations that include equipment noise, pesticides, and so forth.

use “land evaluation and site assessment”—lesa

The General Plan can reduce the loss of important agricultural land by requiring the use of the LESA system prior to granting conversions from agricultural uses to urban uses (for instance, if a General Plan amendment is being proposed). This system applies a system of ratings to different characteristics of a parcel of land — soil quality, productivity, proximity to urban areas, water availability, location in an agricultural preserve, etc. — to determine its agricultural value. This system, however, does not take into consideration local importance or other open space values.



analysis

pros: Using the General Plan to protect open space is a well accepted practice. It can protect vast areas of open space.

cons: The General Plan can be changed up to 5 times per year by a majority vote of the board of supervisors or city council and can be subject to comprehensive update every 5 to 10 years. Property rights advocates often oppose regulatory methods of open space protection.

Zoning



The Zoning Ordinance can implement the policies of the General Plan calling for protection of resources and open space through a number of methods explained below.

resource protection standards

The County Zoning Ordinance can require retention of specific resource areas such as stream zones, steep slopes, ridge lines, historic areas, wetlands, key view areas, etc. These standards can apply in any zoning district where development is proposed. Mapping of these resources, impact studies, and management plans can be required as part of the project-approval process. A good example of resource protection standards can be found in the Nevada County Zoning Ordinance.

Mitigation fees, which can be used to purchase land off site, can also be assessed of individual projects to mitigate for loss of resources.

setbacks from sensitive areas

Setback requirements are common in Zoning Ordinances. For instance, in urban and suburban areas 50- to 100-foot development setbacks from perennial streams or edges of riparian vegetation and 25- to 50-foot development setbacks from seasonal streams are common. These setbacks should be greater in timber production zones, steep slope areas, or areas of special habitat or other resource value since greater impacts could result from nearby land disturbance.

Amador County's Zoning Ordinance requires no setbacks for streams or riparian areas. However, a standard mitigation measure for riparian areas is applied to all projects subject to California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) review. The measure requires a 50-foot setback from intermittent stream centerlines and 100-foot setback from perennial stream centerlines. Additional site-development standards, including



setbacks similar to those described above for environmental protection, would be effective in preserving open space resources. This would ensure that the setbacks would be applied even in projects not subject to CEQA such as individual, single-family homes.

clustering

Clustering is a term used for grouping homes and other permitted development in close proximity rather than scattered across a piece of property, usually to retain open space. There is no overall density increase. For example, rather than creating four 5-acre lots on a 20-acre parcel, the four homes would be clustered together on the least environmentally sensitive portion of the property. Each home could include a 5-acre lot with building permitted only in the defined cluster area or alternately, a small lot with a remaining commonly owned open space.

Mandatory clustering of development in environmentally sensitive areas is a common tool. Most zoning ordinances allow clustering of farm homes on agricultural lands so that farmers and ranching families are not required to scatter family homes based on the minimum parcel size (often 40- to 160+-acre minimums). However, clustering can also be required of residential, commercial, and recreational developments. Development on certain parcel sizes can be required to cluster or specific areas can be selected and a zoning map, planned development-type overlay used. Examples of good clustering ordinances are numerous.

Amador County does not require clustering in any residential zones, though it would be allowed if requested. It would be appropriate to encourage or require clustering in any locations with sensitive features which are zoned for residential or other suburban or urban uses.

subdivision- or development project-required open space dedications

Each county and city is required to adopt a subdivision ordinance and ordinances guiding other types of development. Open space dedication can be required in any of these ordinances for required open space, landscaping, or recreation area.

Amador County does not require open space dedication within its subdivision ordinance. It would be appropriate to include this requirement for large subdivisions.

holding zones/overlay zones

Holding zones or zoning overlays can require that certain findings are made before density increases are allowed or before the underlying density allowed is permitted to go forward. A holding zone is sometimes referred to as a development reserve and would generally allow very low densities so that future planning options are not precluded. Zoning overlays are usually added to the base zoning to add regulation over special concerns such as design control or historic preservation. However, these overlays can also be used to require that special studies be prepared, or that thresholds such as population, demonstrated need, etc. are met, or that detailed master plans are prepared before development can go forward. Any requirement can be added to these overlay zones.



analysis

pros: Zoning ordinance standards tend to be quantified, objective, and clear.

cons: Adoption can be a hurdle and zoning standards can be changed at any time by a majority vote of the elected body. Variances can be granted. Property rights advocates often oppose regulatory methods of open space protection.

Density Transfers



Density transfers are not commonly used in California, but they have been used in some areas. Under a density-transfer system, density can be transferred from more-sensitive areas (transfer area) to less-sensitive parcels (receiving area). Density credits can actually be purchased from the transfer area or from a “density credits bank” set up by the jurisdiction or a land trust. This can be achieved on a case-by-case basis or the transfer and receiving areas can actually be mapped. For instance, areas ranked as high sensitivity in a Habitat Management Plan (see page 14) could be designated as transfer areas; density could be purchased from these areas by developers desiring more density in unconstrained areas. Another option would be to require successful general plan amendment applicants to purchase density credits from sensitive transfer areas in return for receiving the increased density on their own parcels.



analysis

pros: Density transfer systems can fix past mistakes where inappropriate zoning density was applied to sensitive areas, but where there is not political will to reduce density.

cons: Legal arrangements are required and the system can be complicated. County and city attorneys often prefer to avoid this system because of the complex work involved.

SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY TRANSFER OF DEVELOPMENT CREDIT PROGRAM

San Luis Obispo County has successfully used a Transfer of Development Credit Program for many years. The program is voluntary, incentive-based, and market-driven by willing sellers and buyers. The program is part of the County's Zoning Ordinance. Sending sites must meet certain criteria to receive the designation: they must be agricultural; in valuable natural resource, open space, or viewshed areas; or in antiquated subdivisions. They receive credits through an evaluation process based on their development potential and can receive bonus credits if they are particularly sensitive. Sending site owners then sell their credits to receiving site owners or to a land trust. Receiving sites must receive environmental review to determine that significant environmental impacts will not result from the increased density and they must not be in agricultural preserves, amongst other criteria.

Urban Growth Boundaries (UGBs)



Green line or urban growth boundary (UGB) proposals have been very popular in urbanizing areas in recent years. The intent is generally to create a line around urban areas beyond which only relatively low-intensity land uses will be allowed, such as agriculture, very low-density residential, resource extraction, and so forth. Generally, a time limit is placed on the line after which it will be reconsidered.

UGBs have been created by voter initiative and by the elected body. In some instances the elected body has adopted a UGB and placed it on the ballot for ratification (as in Napa County and Novato). When a UGB is voted on by the people, it cannot be altered without another vote.

Based on the success rate of UGBs which have been voted on by the electorate, it appears that they are less controversial than other open space protection tools, possibly because they involve no expenditures or increased taxes and still permit growth, though not sprawl, into rural areas. Communities that have voted on and passed UGBs include Petaluma, Milpitas, Ventura County (see SOAR discussion next page), Novato, Sebastopol, Windsor, Livermore, Cotati, Marin County, Pleasanton, Healdsburg, and Davis.



Urban Growth Boundaries (UGBs), continued

analysis

pros: Urban Growth Boundaries give very clear direction relative to where urban uses will be allowed. No interpretation is required.

cons: Requires that the land use designations in place are satisfactory in their ability to retain open space, since existing land use designations in the ag/open space area are basically frozen. For instance, if spot zoning has been allowed in the past, creating areas with suburban or high-density residential designations within agricultural areas, the intent of creating an agricultural preserve may not be met. In these areas, a decision must be made to “clean up” these spot zones by reducing densities, or allowing sale or transfer of their development credits, or to allow these previously permitted densities to co-exist with the agricultural or open space zone, knowing that no additional intrusion will be allowed in the future.

SOAR

The most well known UGBs passed in recent years are the SOAR (Save Open Space and Agricultural Resources) initiatives passed in 1999 in Ventura County. The proponents (a group called SOAR) qualified the identical initiatives for the ballot in all six cities and the county area. They established a CURB (City Urban Restriction Boundary) around the cities which generally followed the adopted City Sphere of Influence line. Anything outside that line already designated Agriculture would remain so. No city services could be extended outside the CURB. And no zone changes, subdivision maps, etc. would be allowed inconsistent with the Initiative goals of preserving agriculture outside the CURB. The initiative built on the fact that the rural areas were designated in the County General Plan largely for agricultural uses. Five of the initiatives passed in 1999, the sixth was passed in November 2000.

The program is expanding into finding resources to purchase and accept donations of agricultural conservation easements so that the success of the agricultural zone will extend beyond the 20-year horizon before the CURB is reevaluated.

Williamson Act/Timber Preserve Zones/ Open Space Purchase/Conservation Easements



williamson act

The California Land Conservation Act of 1965 (Williamson Act) was created to protect agricultural and open space land from urban development. Landowners enter into 10-year contracts with participating counties and cities, agreeing to restrict use of their land to agricultural or open space during this period in exchange for lower tax assessments.

Amador County currently has approximately 93,000 acres under Williamson Act contract with few acres up for non-renewal.

timber production zone (tpz)

The California Timberland Productivity Act allows counties to zone lands exclusively for timber production and related uses. Owners are able to apply for lower tax assessments in exchange. Amador County has approximately 30,000 acres zoned TPZ.

conservation easements

Conservation easements can be purchased or donated to perpetually protect open space, agricultural lands, or historic sites, enabled by the Conservation Easement Act. The landowner and accepting agency or non-profit corporation agree on the types of uses that will be permitted and these are incorporated into

the easement. The landowner then may receive tax advantages including lower property tax assessments, charitable contribution income tax deductions, and lower land values for estate tax purposes. Advantages include the fact that the conservation easements are usually perpetual, the landowner retains ownership of the parcel, and the parcel's existing use is often continued.

The State of California offers yearly grants for the purchase of agricultural easements through the California Farmland Conservancy Program, which is administered by the California Department of Conservation.



analysis

pros: These programs have had the greatest impact on preservation of open space in California. They are voluntary and reimburse land owners for preserving open space while keeping land in private ownership.

cons: Williamson Act and TPZ designations are not permanent. Permanent conservation easements require legal and tax expertise to implement. Easement purchases can be costly.



Growth-Control Measures



A number of communities have enacted growth-control measures which ultimately may have the effect of preserving open space.

level of service requirements—
require new development to
pay its own way

Numerous measures have called for requiring that development not be allowed if critical public facility levels of service cannot be met. In Redlands, levels of service specified in the General Plan were turned into specific zoning standards. Numerous measures have also called for infrastructure concurrency. For example, off-site road improvements must be in place before construction occurs, rather than waiting for many years before mitigation fees from numerous projects can be collected to pay for needed road improvements. This is essentially what the successful El Dorado County initiative (Measure Y) required. Verified water supply prior to development approval was sought in El Dorado County, but narrowly failed.

Level of service requirements can be established in general plans, zoning ordinances, or by special ordinance and enacted by vote of the people or elected bodies.

numerical growth caps

A variety of growth caps have been enacted or proposed in various cities and counties. This can be done by the General Plan, special ordinance, or vote of the people. They include:

- Restriction on rate of growth by building permit restrictions (examples: population growth rate of one percent in Half Moon Bay, three percent in Dixon).
- Commercial development cap (examples: passed in Seattle, narrowly failed in San Francisco).

- Maximum buildout number (examples: enacted in Morgan Hill, Pleasanton. Some communities have a buildout maximum in their general plan, passed by the elected body. Winters is an example with a maximum of 23,000).

jobs:housing balance

One idea that may not have been used to date in California is a requirement that building permits be based on the number of jobs created annually or that building permits be based on the goal of achieving an appropriate jobs:housing balance. This could be effective in the foothills where residential development far outpaces job-creating development.



analysis

- pros:** Level of Service requirements are popular with voters, particularly related to traffic congestion. Growth caps are clear and let everyone know what has been agreed to relative to growth.
- cons:** Indirect way to protect open space. Invites conflict with development industry and property rights advocates.

Sphere of Influence Plans



Each city is required to have an adopted Sphere of Influence approved by the Local Agency Formation Commission. LAFCOs also review individual annexation proposals. One of the state-mandated goals of LAFCOs is to preserve open space by ensuring that premature urban development and leap-frog development does not occur. The reality is that LAFCOs are manned by representatives of each local jurisdiction and the lofty state LAFCO goals tend to be ignored in favor of local pressures. However, limitations on the size of the Spheres of Influence and what will be required to annex these areas to incorporated cities (where presumably they will be allowed to develop at urban densities), as well as agricultural protection policies of individual LAFCOs, can be a powerful tool in protecting open space.

Individual cities must each adopt a Sphere of Influence Plan outlining the area they may attempt to annex in the next 20 years. Some LAFCOs require a phasing plan for this area which defines when each area will be considered for annexation (for example, 1-5 years, 6-10 years, 11-15 years from current date). A Plan for Services is also required of each city which shows how it will be able to provide public services to this potential annexation area. Local LAFCOs each have their own adopted policies and may require additional studies. Many cities have outdated Sphere of Influence Plans or Plans for Services. A moratorium on annexations could be imposed if this is the case. Most importantly, the Sphere of Influence Plan process, particularly when phasing plans are involved, can be used to create logical growth boundaries. In addition, some Sphere of Influence Plans absolutely prohibit extension of city services like sewer and water outside of city limits, a very strong growth management tool. Unfortunately, the cities' policies will have little effect unless accompanied by a county policy prohibiting package sewage treatment plants and septic systems on smaller parcels and limiting them in commercial and industrial parcels in unincorporated areas.

analysis

pros: Sphere of Influence Plans can help determine the logical area needed for a city's growth expansion to help avoid sprawl, to ensure that public facilities for new growth areas can be funded, and to protect open space.

cons: They are generally not used in this way. Rather, cities often view them as a procedural requirement and tend to place as much land as possible in their Sphere of Influence to maintain control versus county control. Their content is controlled by the elected bodies who often do not want to adequately fund their preparation. Also, often counties have designated the land within Spheres of Influence for substantial development which can go forward without annexation.



Purchasing, Accepting, and Holding Public Open Space and Easements

(Open Space Districts, Land Trusts, etc.)

A county or a city has numerous options available to purchase or receive open space land or conservation easements. In addition, any land received by a government agency can often be transferred to a private nonprofit land trust or other public agency with management capabilities. Some of the funding options include:

- Bond issues, sales tax, county service area fee, special district fee
- Grants
- Federal (Land and Water Conservation Fund, ISTEPA Program — transportation-related)
- State funds, such as
 - Environmental Enhancement and Mitigation Program
 - Environmental License Plate Fund
 - Prop. 70 funds
 - Prop. 12 funds
 - State Park purchase
- Private donations from individuals or groups. Donations of land or conservation easements to the county, cities, or the Land Trust are all options. Some agencies and land trusts actively seek donations, providing legal assistance for the transferees as well as tax advice. These donations are often provided for in wills of interested donors.
- Quimby Act mitigation fees assessed of new development to cover the need new development generates for parks and open space lands and facilities. This is the largest source of open space acquisition funds available to most counties. These fees are often lower than legally allowed which results in a missed opportunity to accrue funds as new development occurs.
- Mitigation fees from development projects

In order to conduct a vote for funds or to receive grants or donations, a special governmental agency such as an open space district is not required. But often it is a good idea to create an entity which can spend all of its time working on protection of open space, as well as ensuring that its funds will only be used for this purpose. Some of the possible organizational arrangements include:

- Cooperative agreements with nonprofits
- Nonprofit corporation with representatives of all user groups — like a Land Trust
- Joint Powers Authority among the cities and the county. Needs no LAFCO approval. Can



transfer funds to a nonprofit corporation. Can include citizen members. Local governments would need to fund unless grants, bond, sales tax, or other funds received.

- County Service Area. Can't purchase land. Can do operation and maintenance by parcel charge but fee needs to be approved by voters or Board of Supervisors annually per Prop. 218.
- Special District — Open Space or Recreation District

This would function as an Independent Special District with its own Board of Directors. Special districts can cross city-county lines. If so, identical resolutions from the City and County are required. LAFCO must approve their formation. A district can be formed by the city council and/or board of supervisors without voter approval, but fees cannot be charged without voter approval. Sonoma County, Marin County, the East Bay, and Bay Area mid-peninsula counties all have successful Open Space Districts.

There are two options for forming and funding an Open Space District:

1. The District can be formed alone with no parcel charge vote and given seed money by the local government to get going. Then the District could create its own funding base through grants, donations, or voter approval. LAFCO might not approve its formation due to insufficient funding.
2. Formation of the District and authorization of funds can be put before the voters.

Two-thirds vote needed to authorize bond or overall parcel charge

A simple majority vote can be used if only property owners who will directly benefit are assessed and vote (per Prop. 218). As an example, 10,000 parcels with a \$20/year parcel charge could raise \$2-3 million (over 10 years) plus a small operations and maintenance budget, financed over 20 years. There are consulting firms that specialize in conducting this type of election (including an education campaign) with great success.

analysis

pros: An active open space acquisition program or district can start small and build on its success. Interesting coalitions can be formed. Obviously, open space acquisition ensures protection in perpetuity. Can leverage local funds as match for foundation funds and government grants. Can use advantageous government financing mechanisms. Can rely on willing-seller, willing-buyer arrangements for land or easements.

cons: Creating an open space district or other mechanism to purchase and receive open space land or easements can be a difficult task, especially since an election is involved, usually requiring a two-thirds vote, hard to achieve in a fiscally conservative area. A sales tax for open space acquisition, which required only a simple-majority vote, failed dismally in Placer County in November 2000. It takes many years and lots of money to assemble meaningful acreage.

MID-PENINSULA REGIONAL OPEN SPACE DISTRICT

The Mid-Peninsula Regional Open Space District was formed by the voters of San Mateo and Santa Clara counties in 1972. The District is a special district with a publicly elected Board of Directors. In 1976 major funding was agreed to by the voters; a parcel charge of \$1.74 per \$100 of assessed value of land was enacted.

The District now has annual revenues of \$16.9 million, mostly from the parcel charge; approximately three percent of the revenues are from grant sources. Over the years, the District has purchased 46,000 acres of land. (Contact: 650-691-1200)

Habitat Management Plans/Regulations



Critical habitat areas (deer herd migration corridors, critical species habitat, wetlands, oak woodland, etc.) can be addressed by Habitat Management Plans which outline specific development and nondevelopment areas, design criteria, and management techniques. These plans are often adopted by the county and guide development in the Plan area similar to a Specific Plan or even Zoning Ordinance. They are not required by state law and, as a result, can include whatever is appropriate to the area in question. Tuolumne County has had an adopted Habitat Management Plan in force for many years. It has resulted in the permanent zoning (though not public acquisition) of approximately 840 acres of habitat.

A Habitat Management Plan should not be confused with Habitat Conservation Plans, which are allowed under state and federal law and result in binding agreements between the various responsible agencies (such as federal and state resource agencies and the county) and property owners/developers. Many in the environmental community have concerns over this

type of agreement because they may not be based on complete scientific data, require negotiation which may result in loss of habitat, and are difficult to amend if new resources are discovered after the agreement is signed. HCPS tend to take away a degree of local control, but they do provide some certainty to developers.



analysis

pros: Habitat Management Plans can provide excellent protection for certain kinds of open space.

cons: Extensive study is normally needed to prepare a Plan, which can be costly and time consuming. These plans usually do not address the many other goals of open space protection such as recreation, growth management, aesthetics, and quality of life.



For More Information

Amador County open space issues

Foothill Conservancy
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Pine Grove, CA 95665
209.296.5600 (voice mail)
www.outdoingit.com/fhc
(includes links to other organizations and
government agencies)



Conservation easements

Amador Land Trust
211 Court Street
Jackson, CA 95642
209.304.3412 (voice mail)
www.amadorlandtrust.org.



Williamson Act and Timberland Protection Zones in Amador County

Amador County Planning Department
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The Foothill Conservancy is dedicated to protecting and enhancing the rural surroundings and quality of life in Amador and Calaveras counties. We believe that by working together positively and being clear about our values we can bring our communities to prosperity and long-term stability without needless destruction of that which is unique and special about this area.