

## Rural Sustainability and the Divide

### El Dorado County

We seek to sustain our rural lifestyle by first focusing on the follow issues:

Community Identity

Land use

Economic Development/Jobs

Tourism

Representation

### 1. Community Identity

We are interested in establishing a Community Identity which reflects the needs of today's residents, including economic sustainability. We want to keep our community rural and we also want to allow for reasonable, planned growth which serves the long term viability of our community.

We support Goal 2.4 of the General Plan:

**Existing Community Identity:** maintain and enhance the character of existing rural communities, emphasizing both the natural setting and built design elements which contribute to the quality of life, economic health, and community pride of County residents.

We seek to be involved with Objective 2.4.1:

**Community Identity:** Identification, maintenance, and enhancement of the unique identity of each community.

We may have a variety of different communities on the Divide. We need to consider there may be distinctions in how each community on the Divide wants to be identified. Just as one size does not fit all in El Dorado County as a whole, one size may not fit all even on the Divide.

### 2. Land Use

We find many of the Principles of the Economic Development Element of the General Plan especially relevant to the Divide, including:

- opportunities for positive economic growth
- a full range of local employment opportunities
- land use guidelines which create opportunities to further economic self-sufficiency

## Rural Sustainability and the Divide Draft 11/16/2011

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- a more diversified local economy
- a greater capture of tourism
- land use guidelines which foster a sound economic base
- an opportunity to strategically plan for El Dorado county's role in a growing regional economy
- economic competitiveness
- encourage retention of El Dorado County's quality of life

When we think about the use of land on the Divide, we think about economic development, we consider both residential as well as needs for commerce. We think about our population. We ask who they are and what they need. We think about the future. Who might we attract to the Divide, either to live or to work. We think about our youth and where they can go when they are not in school. We are concerned about a declining school enrollment and ask what that means for the future. We have a good elementary school, Northside Elementary, with a good reputation and we want to continue to have a sufficient student body size to retain the school.

We are concerned about our property values. We see some people moving off the Divide, sometimes due to the increasing cost of fuel and lack of jobs on the Divide. We are interested in attracting new families to the Divide. We see some retirees moving in and families with young children wanting to move in.

We ask: what are the residential and commerce land use requirements, today and in the future for the Divide. We want to ensure the General Plan Land Use Elements and zoning codes fit our needs for today and the future. We want land use designations and zoning ordinances which allow us to retain and reasonably expand our means of economic sustainability. We seek land use guidelines which support our desire for rural sustainability. We want to eliminate archaic zoning which no longer fits and instead establish zoning criteria which meets our needs today and tomorrow.

We need to better understand our economic and demographic profiles. We want to know what will attract people to the Divide. What incentives are there to bring and retain residential and commerce use, at the same time retaining our rural life style.

We want affordable building requirements and fees.

We seek more tourist and recreational land use opportunities. We want to encourage visitors who can appreciate our natural and cultural resources, significant history, and agriculture.

We want to better understand the County's Land Use Element, designations, and zoning districts. We would like a Planning Department representative who can spend more time with us over on the Divide. We are geographically at the far side of the County and it is a 40 minute drive over to Placerville. All of the meetings, such as EDAC and Board of Supervisors meetings, take place at times and locations which prevent many of our residents and business owners from attending.

# Rural Sustainability and the Divide Draft 11/16/2011

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Our land is in a Rural Region, which provides a land use pattern that maintains the open character of the County (Objective 2.1.3 of the General Plan Land Use Element). We seek to maintain that objective.

A study conducted by Wade Associates out of Sacramento for the Sierra Economic Development District in 2001 for the Divide stated the following:

- There is an increase in the retired population, a work force that has more leisure time and affluence to enjoy attractive communities, and technological advances that enable certain types of employment to locate in relatively isolated locations. (This was written in 2001.)
- An increase in retired population brings a higher demand for recreation
- The new residents and businesses that will be attracted to this community have choices to locate virtually anywhere they please. Retirees, small business entrepreneurs and those who choose the mountain setting, small community lifestyle and recreation opportunities have the choice of many communities.
- This community will prosper in the future only to the extent that it:
  - Protects and sustains the natural amenities it currently offers
  - Manages the effects of growth

We seek modifications to Rural Residential Zones to permit multiple uses in Rural Regions.

## **3. Economic Development/Jobs**

The Divide is a unique and wonderful place to live. We enjoy many benefits of a rural lifestyle. We want to protect and preserve this rural lifestyle. Yet, we find in real life we also need to be able to economically sustain our rural lifestyle: that is, generate an income and pay our bills. We seek to keep our residents employed within El Dorado County and on the Divide. We seek economic survival and planning, and development. To be able to develop a strong economy, we need to have zoning ordinances which allow us to support job creation and revenue generation on the Divide.

### **General Plan Economic Development Element**

Fortunately, Elements of the Principles of the El Dorado County General Plan Economic Development Element are highly important to the economic sustainability of the Divide. For example, the General Plan calls for:

- opportunities for positive economic growth
- a more diversified local economy,
- greater capture of tourism

# Rural Sustainability and the Divide Draft 11/16/2011

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- increased retail sales
- opportunities to further economic self-sufficiency
- land use guidelines which foster a sound economic base
- employment opportunities commensurate with local housing costs
- generation of a positive sustained revenue flow into the County
- maximize economic multiplier effects
- minimize reliance upon County services and expenditures
- provide a positive sustaining economic base for the county
- maximize the economic potential of the County's natural resources
- retention of El Dorado County's quality of life
- reduce out-of-County retail purchase and employment travel.

## **Wade Associates Study of the Divide**

The study by Wade Associates of the Divide states in 2001 the following:

- The significant decrease in timber had greatly impacted the local economic base.
- With the decline of locally based extraction industries, more residents are working outside the community; there is an increasing percentage of out-commuting residents.
- The decline in local basic employment raises issues that affect sustainability and quality of life in the community.
- Quality of life and the preservation of the existing natural environment are essential to accommodate and derive the benefits of economic development without diminishing the natural amenities and small town environment that the current residents enjoy.
- This community will prosper in the future only to the extent that it:
  - Provides opportunities for quality economic development.

The Economic Development Element of the Wade study establishes the following objectives:

Objective 3-1: Take advantage of opportunities for ecological and cultural tourism, building on the cultural and historical base of the area

Objective 3-2: Develop and strengthen entrepreneurial/self-employment opportunities

Objective 3-3: Identify opportunities for the expansion of business into the community.

## **Divide Business Walk: 2011**

A Business Walk was conducted in March and April of 2011 by Saylor and Associates in conjunction with the Divide Chamber of Commerce. Findings of the Divide Business Walk include:

Getting the population to shop locally is a problem (business leakage)

# Rural Sustainability and the Divide Draft 11/16/2011

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One of the biggest opportunities for Divide businesses was cited as recreation in the area

What can be done to improve business on the Divide:

- Bring the community together through events
- Many businesses said the AMGEN tour event increased their business significantly
- Have a 'shop local' campaign to let folks know what is available on the Divide
- Develop a brochure that would let tourists know what is available on the Divide; place the brochure and other marketing materials at the Visitor's Center
- If people knew what the Divide had to offer, they would come
- Issues for the County government to address included signage, development fees, business fees, and taxes

## California Trends

Many of the trends now impacting California are especially relevant to the Divide. The 2010 California Regional Progress Report, December 2010, One State, Many Regions, Our Future Tracking Progress toward Sustainability states:

- The impacts of the global economic recession are far-reaching and profound and will fundamentally transform the way we live, work, use technology, plan our communities, invest in infrastructure, and manage our natural resources, while opening the opportunities to restructure these things in more sustainable ways. (from, Page 14)
- California has been hard hit by the global recession, with some of the highest job losses and unemployment rates in the nation. (Page 9).
- An emerging trend of loss of population for some of California's counties within rural regions that are geographically beyond urban "commute sheds".
- Many rural areas are experiencing aging populations and workers, fewer new workers and young families, and the loss of or inability to grow or attract jobs.
- While most evident in rural California, the aging of the population is rapidly changing the future of the entire state by retiring.
- As huge numbers of existing homes change hands, some properties, especially foreclosures, are purchased by real estate investors and speculators. With homebuyer tax credits expired, investors are re-entering the market in a major way. There will continue to be impacts on

# Rural Sustainability and the Divide Draft 11/16/2011

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housing and land use for years to come in ways that are presently not well-understood. (Page 11)

- Reducing growth in the rates of vehicle miles traveled in the long term would indicate progress towards land use and transportation efficiency and help achieve AB 32 goals, including improved air quality. (Page 25).
- California's rural regions account for over a third of its land area. These sparsely populated areas, with few or no incorporated cities, have some of the most famous, varied, and visited natural landscapes in the world. (Page 7)
- These trends have serious implications for the economic viability of California's rural regions.

## **The State and the Economic Sustainability of Rural Lands**

AB 857 (Chapter 1016, Statutes of 2002) established state planning priorities for California which are codified in Section 65041.1 of the Government Code. These state planning priorities include strengthening the economy and protecting the environment, including rural communities. These planning priorities suggest specific ways in which California government can prioritize activities related to infrastructure spending and land use in order to promote more sustainable development in California. These intentions are consistent with the principles of sustainable development of the Divide.

## **Recommendations:**

Based upon the above referenced trends in California, the Wade study of the Divide, and our own observations, we would like to see more home based opportunities, as well as more commercial agriculture business sites, retail, and tourist serving opportunities on the Divide. We would like to see recreational tourism, agritourism, and promotion of our natural resources on the Divide. We would like to be able to provide educational and interpretive seminars, clinics, and walks, by right on our beautiful lands.

It is important to recognize that the Divide is unique from certain other more urban/developed areas of El Dorado County, especially near Highway 50. We have reviewed the current zoning requirements for El Dorado County. Some of these zoning ordinances are too restrictive for the Divide and should be modified to help sustain the economic development of the Divide.

## **Home Based Occupations**

Home occupations must be facilitated and encouraged on the Divide.

Policy 10.1.7.4: Home occupations shall be encouraged and permitted to the extent that they are compatible with adjacent or surrounding properties.

# Rural Sustainability and the Divide Draft 11/16/2011

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Program 10.1.7.4.1: Establish standards in the Zoning Ordinance that provide compatible home businesses that complement residential uses in the Community Regions, Rural Centers, and Rural Regions.

The Wade study is probably the best we have of the local communities from Georgetown and Cool/Pilot Hill. When asked 'if you work in your community, what kind of work do you do? The majority responded 'home-based occupation'.

Perhaps it might be appropriate to limited home occupations and retail sales in higher density residential areas in other parts of El Dorado County, say near Highway 50. However, in the Divide Rural Region, retail sales and home occupations are exceptionally important and must be allowed by RIGHT. County decision-makers and planners need to appreciate that the requirements of the rural lands/Rural Region of Divide are different and are distinct perhaps from the needs of more urbanized residential areas with small parcels, no agriculture, and no natural resources or opportunities for recreational tourism nearby.

The allowable home occupations should not be so restrictive on the Divide. The allowable standard for a home occupation must be broader in scope, at least on the Divide. There are many home occupations, such as accountant, counselor, architect, photographer, lawyer, etc, which must be allowed, especially in Rural Regions where local jobs are more scarce, and travel is costly, time consuming, and air polluting. We need to create zoning ordinances which help us sustain our economic viability in order to promote rural sustainability and which do not require us to drive so far away to go to work. Home occupations are an excellent means of economic self-sufficiency in rural areas such as the Divide. Home occupations must be allowed by right in Divide Rural Region.

Limited on-site retail sales from home by appointment should be allowed on the Divide by right. For example, an artist should be allowed to sell their artwork from home. They should not be required to take their artwork to a costly gallery. A jewelry maker should be allowed to sell their piece from home.

Rural lands in the Rural Regions must have distinct opportunities to promote economic self-sufficiency, to encourage retention of the rural quality of life, and to provide increased retail and business opportunities in El Dorado County. It is important to keep need to keep in mind that the Divide is geographically further out from many other parts of El Dorado County, including Community Centers and County Offices near Highway 50. We need to not force our rural residents to travel so far to get to work and their means of economic support. We are at least 40 minutes away from many services and businesses which folks in more urbanized areas take for granted.

## **Agricultural Homestays**

Agricultural Homestays, as governed by the State of California, must be allowed by right on the Divide to protect our agricultural lands and rural life style. The Divide is perfect for Agricultural Homestays on agricultural properties which meet the criteria.

# Rural Sustainability and the Divide Draft 11/16/2011

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Objective 9.3.9 Tourist Lodging/ Policy 9.3.9.1: The County will encourage the development of private lodging facilities by modifying the Zoning Ordinance sections dealing with tourist related facilities.

## **Ranch Marketing**

Policy 8.2.4.5 The County shall support visitor-serving ranch marketing activities on agricultural land, provided such uses do not detract from or diminish the agricultural use of said land.

Policy 8.2.4.4 Ranch marketing, winery, and visitor-serving uses (agricultural promotional uses) are permitted on agricultural parcels, subject to a compatibility review to ensure that the establishment of the use is secondary and subordinate to the agricultural use and will have no significant adverse effect on agricultural production on surrounding properties. Such ranch marketing uses must be on parcels of 10 acres or more; the parcel must have a minimum of 5 acres of permanent agricultural crop in production or 10 acres of annual crop in production that are properly maintained. The uses cannot occupy more than 5 acres or 50 percent of the parcel, whichever is less.

The Purpose of Ranch Marketing (Specific Use 17.40.260) is to provide for the ranch marketing activities and accessory uses within agricultural zones and to encourage economic development of the County agricultural and tourism industries. Yet this ordinance currently excludes grazing lands, including grazing lands no longer in the Williamson Act. The ranch marketing ordinance as written today only includes crop production on agricultural lands and excludes grazing commodities.

If El Dorado County seeks to keep grazing lands as productive working landscapes, then livestock grazing should be included in ranch marketing by right. Or, a separate grazing ordinance could be written. After all, it is called by the State of California "RANCH Marketing".

## **Tourism**

The General Plan and zoning ordinances should facilitate more recreational and historical tourism opportunities, including the promotion of our fantastic natural resources. We have many beautiful natural resource areas such as Cronan Ranch and the Auburn State Recreational Area on the Divide to share with visitors, both from nearby as well as internationally.

## **4. Tourism**

### **Benefits of Tourism**

According to the White Paper on California Tourism (a white paper produced by multiple professional travel organizations in June, 2011), we find many relevant points:

- Tourism is a commodity, no less so than agriculture.

# Rural Sustainability and the Divide Draft 11/16/2011

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- Tourism fills a critical role in diversifying and stabilizing rural economies.
- California is the number one travel destination in the United States
- Tourism annually generates more than \$95.1 billion in direct travel spending into the economy
- Tourism directly supports jobs for 873,000 Californians
- Tourism generates \$6.1 billion in direct state and local tax revenues.
- International visitor spending alone in California in 2010 was more than the combined value of the state's top four product exports
- In March 2010, President Obama created the country's first national tourism marketing program with the signing of the Travel Promotion Act (TPA). The act authorized the formation of the Corporation for Travel Promotion (CTP), whose mission is to market the U.S. as a tourism destination abroad. Modeled after California's successful public-private partnership, CTP will direct a \$200 million marketing plan with intentions of restoring some of the nation's lost share of global travel. Furthermore, CTTC President and CEO Caroline Beteta was appointed to the Corporation's Board of Directors by the U.S. Commerce Department to help steer the new national program, and was elected Vice Chair by her peers in September.
- California, already host to over 18% of overseas travelers to the U.S., is well suited to benefit from these new national marketing and communications efforts at both statewide and local levels.
- As of 2007, tourism was California's fifth largest export industry employer – following business, health services, manufacturing and finance – and employs more persons than agriculture, transportation, information and educational services.
- Notably, tourism was one of only four state industries to show positive growth in employment between September 2009 and September 2010, with the leisure and hospitality sector growing by 4,800 jobs.
- Tourism is remarkably resilient, weathering down economies better than most other industries. This provides much needed tax revenues at both local and state levels, and reduces unemployment levels around the state.

## **El Dorado County General Plan**

Fortunately, the General Plan wisely established Goals and Objectives which encourage and support tourism:

Goal 9.3: Recreation and Tourism: Greater opportunities to capitalize on the recreational resources of the County through tourism and recreational based businesses and industries.

Objective 9.3.1 Recreational and Tourism Uses: Protect and maintain existing recreational and tourist based assets ... and encourage the development of additional recreation/tourism businesses and industries.

# Rural Sustainability and the Divide Draft 11/16/2011

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Objective 9.3.3 Major Recreational Events: Actively encourage major recreational events (e.g., professional bicycle races, running events, whitewater kayaking, equestrian shows, rodeos, and athletic events) to showcase El Dorado County and increase tourism.

Objective 9.3.4 Historical Resources: Recognize the values of the historical resources in preserving the County's cultural heritage and for contributing to tourism, recreation, and the economy of the County.

Objective 9.3.9 Tourist Lodging/ Policy 9.3.9.1: The County will encourage the development of private lodging facilities by modifying the Zoning Ordinance sections dealing with tourist related facilities.

Objective 10.1.6: Capture of Retail and Tourism Dollars. Capture a greater share of retail and tourist dollars within the County by providing opportunities to establish new tourist-related commercial operations while promoting and maintaining existing tourist commercial operations.

Policy 10.1.6.1 The County shall encourage expansion of the types of local industries that promote tourism including but not limited to Christmas tree farms, wineries, outdoor sports facilities, Apple Hill and other agricultural-related activities, the County Fairground, bed and breakfast inns, and ranch marketing activities.

## **The State and Tourism**

A healthy natural environment which provides recreational opportunities is a goal of AB 857. The Governor's Office of Planning and Research (OPR) includes the preservation of historic resources as well as the protection, preservation, and enhancement of the State's most valuable natural resources.

## **The Divide and Tourism**

The Divide is ideally positioned to meet the county's objective for a greater capture of tourism in El Dorado County. We have many natural resources, historical, and agricultural sites which would be of great interest to visitors, including international tourists.

The Divide is the Gateway to El Dorado from Highway 80. Anyone traveling on scenic State Highway 49 from Auburn to Placerville will travel through Cool and other parts of the Divide. Just as Auburn is the Endurance Capital, the Divide is the Outdoor Recreation Capital of Northern California.

# Rural Sustainability and the Divide Draft 11/16/2011

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The Divide is ideally positioned to become a tourist destination with its scenery, climate, history, natural resources, wildlife, and beautiful landscape. We have tremendous assets to share with visitors. Not only is the Divide a great place to live, it is also a great place to visit and to enjoy outdoors recreation.

We have hiking, biking, jogging, fishing, horse backriding, and river rafting. We have something for all those who enjoy outdoors recreation and natural and cultural resources. The Divide has tremendous historical sites from the days of the Native American Indians and the Gold Rush. After all, it was right on the Divide that the Gold Rush was born and 49'er travelers came from all over the world to strike it rich.

The Divide is a tremendous asset to the County of El Dorado's goal of capturing tourists. We even have a local airport. The Divide is a favorite place for motorists of all sorts to enjoy a drive through the beautiful countryside. Every weekend motorcyclists tour State Highways 193 and 49 for a scenic drive. Many of these are expensive motorcycles. These folks out for a country drive could be encouraged to stop and spend on the Divide.

The Divide community is ideally suited to fulfill many of the Goals and Objectives of the General Plan, but this requires proper visioning and planning to help meet these goals.

For a list of some of the Natural Resources, Historical and Agricultural Sites of interests to tourists, see Appendix A. See Appendix C to see what other counties are doing to sustain the viability and vitality of their rural lands.

## 5. Representation

We see the Divide area ripe for leadership to promote economic development and tourism on the Divide and to retain our rural identity. We have a special community with unique assets. With proper planning in conjunction with the General Plan and proper zoning ordinances, El Dorado County has a jewel. Without proper planning, we all lose. We either sit at the table to eat or we become the meal.

The Divide area is geographically remote from Placerville which is the seat of most major decision-making meetings. This geographic distance makes it more difficult for us to attend meetings than for those living close to Placerville and Highway 50. And, the view might be taken that some parts of the Divide want to be left alone. We need to consider one size does not fit all.

We need representation at all levels of the County. We need land use designations and zoning ordinances which fit our needs, for today and tomorrow. We are ready, willing, and able to aid and assist in the leadership, planning and governance of our community, the Divide

The first task is to establish leadership as El Dorado County moves forward with the targeted amendments to the General Plan 5-year review. The study conducted by Wade Associates for the Sierra Economic Development District called for identification of leaders to help guide the community in setting priorities and implementation of a community plan.

## Rural Sustainability and the Divide Draft 11/16/2011

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What possible scenarios exist for the Divide without planning and representation?

1. No change. This does not facilitate forward planning and instead encourages potential decay. We are seeing empty homes and a declining school enrollment. We have a new shopping facility with empty store fronts. While doing nothing may work for the retired folks who live on secure pension plans, this does not work for everyone. Doing nothing is not an option. No change does nothing to improve the quality of life for the Divide residents and does not promote rural lands nor grow the local economy. The General Plan and Zoning Ordinances are under revision now and must suit the needs of the Divide, including promoting economic viability, while at the same time retaining our rural community.
2. Allow substantial subdivision and parcel splits, for example, allow new homes on one acre parcels. We do not have the infrastructure, such as public water and sewage facilities. Nor do we have adequate roadways or public transportation. Nor would this scenario retain our rural environment.
3. Retain rural quality, maintain planned growth, and support economic viability through multi uses (at least on larger parcels the size of which must could be defined). Economic viability on the Divide can be promoted by right through home based occupations, ranch marketing including on grazing lands, promoting public and private natural resources, and allowing recreational opportunities on private lands. Economic viability closer to home allows our residents to remain closer to home and their families, reduces the cost of fuel, and enhances air quality. Working closer to home is less stressful on the individual and promotes healthier families.

# Rural Sustainability and the Divide Draft 11/16/2011

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## AppendixA

### NATURAL RESOURCES, HISTORICAL SITES, AND TOURISM OPPORTUNITIES

#### PRESENTLY FOUND ON THE DIVIDE

##### **CRONAN RANCH REGIONAL TRAILS PARK**

The Park contains 12 miles of trails for hiking, biking, horseback riding, fishing, bird watching and other passive recreation. The borders of the Park follow the South Fork American River, Highway 49, Pedro Hill Road and private lands. The Park is open daily from sunrise to sunset year round.

##### **DAVE MOORE NATURE AREA**

The Nature Area is located approximately 2 miles west of the Marshall Gold Discovery State Park at Coloma on Highway 49 in El Dorado County, California, along the scenic and popular South Fork American River. One of the main features of the Dave Moore Nature Area is a loop trail about a mile long which goes from the parking lot trail head to the South Fork American River and back again passing through several habitat types. Nestled in the heart of Gold Rush Country, the trail is lined with remnants from nearly 150 years ago when Chinese laborers channeled creek water by hand with pick and shovel for gold mining. Tailing piles from the Gold Rush period blanket the area which lend to the characteristic landscape that makes this area so unique. About half of the trail is constructed to be fully accessible to people with wheelchairs, walkers and strollers.

##### **SIERRA NEVADA HOUSE**

This is a great place for lunch or outdoor dining and free outdoor entertainment on weekends in the summer. In 1839, when the foothills of the Sierras were open wilderness and the unchallenged domain of the Miwok and Maidu Indians, an adventurous Swiss pioneer wandered into the Central Valley and built a modest fort at the confluence of the Sacramento and American Rivers. His name was John Sutter. His arrival would soon change the shape of American history, ushering in an era of economic boom from which the Sierra Nevada House, and much of the history of the West, would eventually find its roots.

##### **COLOMA and the Marshall Gold Historical Park**

Today's travelers can visit the site of the gold and the beginning of the California Gold Rush by visiting historic Coloma, where it all began. About seventy percent of Coloma is included in Marshall Gold Discovery State Historic Park. The old mining town of Coloma, once filled with thousands of gold seekers, is now a quaint, peaceful town of about 200 year round residents. Visitors today can meander through time on the tree lined streets of the park and enjoy the many historic buildings that represent Coloma today. Throughout the park, you will relive the Gold Rush era from the many artifacts and

## Rural Sustainability and the Divide Draft 11/16/2011

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exhibits you will see, which include: an incredible full-sized replica of Sutter's Mill that is still operated regularly for park visitors, the cabin where James Marshall lived after his discovery of gold, the remains of a substantial Chinese colony; the Wah Hop and the Man Lee stores, renovated and open for viewing, exhibits of mining methods, household articles, tools and a way of life gone by.

### **COLOMA-LOTUS VALLEY**

The beautiful Coloma-Lotus Valley is considered by many to be the recreational epicenter of the Sierra Nevada foothills. This area is famous for the California Gold Rush and renowned as the most commercially rafted river west of the Rockies. This quaint valley provides recreation and relaxation opportunities of the South Fork of the American River and offers white-water rafting, kayaking, camping, hiking, cycling, festivals, wine tasting, dancing, dining, and lodging.

### **JOHNTOWN CEMETERY**

The Johntown Cemetery, where the mortal remains of pioneer John Cody are buried, and within which his marble tombstone and iron railing remained for over 100 years, is a public county cemetery. This cemetery was used from at least 1849 to 1883, at last report. Information regarding the 1883 burial of the man known as "Old Pasquale," came to our attention through a copy of a 1947 letter from Garden Valley native, Warren T. Russell, who was born there in 1875. He specifically states that "Old Pasquale" was buried in the "Alabama Flat Cemetery" in 1883. Russell's letter also informed us that there were at least one hundred other graves in the cemetery.

In 1854, the State of California enacted its first cemetery statute. It was an attempt to protect the cemeteries and graveyards that had been established at nearly every mining camp and town that grew up out of the thrust of the Gold Rush. By 1854, it had become apparent to the State that mining companies had little regard or respect for the dead and had already impacted a number of the early burial grounds.

As the community (first as Johntown, then as Garden Valley) continued to use the Johntown Cemetery to bury their friends and loved ones, in 1872, the State provided that the title to these places would vest in the public since their use was by the public at large.

### **BUFFALO HILL CENTER**

A few miles from "down town" Georgetown you will see the **BUFFALO HILL CENTER**. There is interesting historic mining and farming equipment on display, along with historical buildings now housing businesses.

### **PENOBSCOT RANCH**

Penobscot Ranch is a living legacy to the rich heritage of California. Step back in time and take a walk through early California history when you visit Penobscot Ranch, a landmark in the Sierra Nevada foothills since the days of the California Gold Rush. The history of Penobscot parallels the cultural, economic, and architectural development of the American West, from the days of the Native American

# Rural Sustainability and the Divide Draft 11/16/2011

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Indians, though the arrival of the first Mormon settlers and pioneers of the Gold Rush, and then the evolution of California's agriculture. Penobscot served as a way station, livery stable, and stage coach stop for weary travelers coming from all over the world to find gold. Visitors can still see the original Penobscot Public House built in 1850 where 49'ers stayed during the Gold Rush, the large pole barn built in the early 1920s, and even the original chicken coop - all with roots dating back throughout California's rich history. Penobscot Ranch served as a visitor serving facility for many years with tours, a camp ground, and overnight stays. Penobscot is listed in the National Geographic Geotourism website.

## **BAYLEY HOUSE**

Construction on the handsome Bayley House began in 1861, after [A.J. Bayley's](#) first hotel in Pilot Hill, the Oak Valley House, burned to the ground earlier that year. Prompted by this loss and rumors that the Central Pacific Railroad would soon be built through Pilot Hill, Bayley started construction on his biggest project. He had every reason to believe that the railroad would be routed through the trail that John C. Fremont surveyed, which ran past his property, because it had already been established as a freight haulers route. He knew that the "Big Four" railroad barons were seriously considering this Fremont Trail as the route for the railroad to take on its journey over the Sierras to become part of the first trans-continental railroad. Although the Bayley House didn't serve its original purpose as a bustling hotel and stage stop, the Bayleys lived there periodically throughout the years. The Bayley House was designated a historic place by the County, and in 1978 was placed on the National Register of Historic Places. In 1989, it was purchased by the [Georgetown Divide Recreation District](#), which is currently seeking funding for its restoration. The Bayley House is today a well-known landmark to the many travelers on Hwy. 49 and a stately tribute to the man who built it.

## **PILOT HILL**

Today the "Down Town" portion of Pilot Hill consists of a post office (*humorously there is a sign on the building stating "Pilot Hill Main Post Office"*) and a restaurant/bar. It also boasts one of the last operating public phone booths which alone might be worth the trip for nostalgia sake.

## **GEORGETOWN**

Visiting the Georgetown main street is like walking back in time. By 1854, Georgetown had become the center of commerce for the Divide area, between the Middle and North Forks of the American River in El Dorado County, boasting some 3,000 residents. Several large, abandoned hard-rock mines once thrived in the area. Today Georgetown is a graceful town with many historic buildings, including antique shops, several bed and breakfast inns, and the I.O.O.F. Hall, used for concerts and local gatherings. Once called Growlersburg, fire destroyed the central area in 1852. To reduce the chances of fire destroying the whole town again, residents rebuilt the main street to be 100 feet wider, which is quite interesting itself.

## **AUBURN STATE RECREATIONAL AREA**

A main entrance to the Auburn State Recreational Area is found in Cool and provides a staging area and public parking. This beautiful area is open to the public and is used frequently for horseback riding, hiking, international bike races, jogging, and much more. Once teeming with thousands of gold miners,

## Rural Sustainability and the Divide Draft 11/16/2011

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the area is now a natural area offering a wide variety of recreation opportunities to over 900,000 visitors a year. Many large competitive bike races and foot races start in Cool and draw many visitors to Cool throughout the summer.

### **COOL**

Downtown Cool is Cool! Just the name alone brings tourists to the town to have their picture taken next to the town's name. Cool is El Dorado County's Gateway to El Dorado County and the first town one visits when entering El Dorado County travelling south from Highway 80. Cool has one of the most heavily traveled highways/intersections in El Dorado County (State Highway 49). When one travels between Auburn and Placerville they will pass through Cool.

Mix the old with the new in Cool. Visit the old market with wood plank floors or shop in the new Holiday Market and Wells Fargo Bank. Visit the old time deli on the boardwalk or the new Subway sandwich shop. Many large competitive bike races and foot races start in Cool and draw many visitors to Cool throughout the summer. The world-class AMGEN bike race which was televised came through Cool last year.

### **VENEZIO VINEYARD & WINERY**

The focus at Venezia is producing wines of the highest quality at reasonable prices. Most of each step in the wine making process they do at the winery. They start by growing the majority of the grapes on their family vineyards. After they pick and crush the grapes, they are fermented in French and American Oak barrels in a temperature-controlled environment, right behind their tasting room. They complete the process by bottling and labeling Venezia's award-winning, premium varietal wines and may be tasted at the winery.

### **DRU BARNER EQUESTRIAN CAMPGROUND**

The campground is ideal for equestrian use, with watering troughs, pull through spaces, and access to trails. There are 47 campsites and a staging area. The campground is located East of Georgetown. One can ride the Enchanted Forest for 5 miles, or the 12-mile loop. Or, the rider and horse can be challenged by heading out on a new and improved 25-mile loop on the well-marked Rock Creek Trails.