

C O U N T Y O F N E V A D A
P L A N N I N G D E P A R T M E N T
Eric Rood Administration Bldg.
950 Maidu Avenue
Nevada City, California 95959-8617

**GUIDELINES FOR PREPARING A MANAGEMENT PLAN
for IMPORTANT AGRICULTURAL LANDS**

These Guidelines are intended to accompany a Management Plan application for development within Important Agricultural Lands (as defined by County ordinance), to facilitate your preparation of a Management Plan that satisfies County Zoning Regulations. These guidelines identify both the purpose and limitations of a management plan, providing the specific criteria and format required, identifying methods to evaluate agricultural resources.

While development should always first be designed to avoid important agricultural resources, an effective, well-written Management Plan can allow encroachment into important ag lands (rather than avoiding them altogether) by accurately evaluating the resource, identifying potential development impacts, and developing methods to minimize the impacts.

A pre-consultation with the County Agricultural Commissioner is highly recommended for any landowner or consultant proposing a project within or adjacent to Important Agricultural Lands. The first step in designing a development project on or adjacent to a site identified as Important Ag Lands should be an evaluation of the ag lands by an agricultural professional (as defined by County ordinance). A preliminary land evaluation and site assessment of the agricultural resource will determine the scope and level of detail necessary in your Management Plan.

Attached are a list of applicable Zoning Regulations and an outline identifying the required content and format for a management plan for agricultural resources.

To determine if your project site is mapped as Important Agricultural Land, as defined by Nevada County, you can visit either the State Department of Conservation website or the County GIS website. *Important Agricultural lands* include the following State-mapped lands: “*Prime farmland, Farmland of Statewide importance, Unique farmland, or Farmland of local importance*”.

<http://www.conservation.ca.gov/dlrp/fmmp>

<http://www.mynevadacounty.com/gis>

Questions regarding procedure should be directed to a County Planner. Questions regarding evaluation of the agricultural resource should be directed to the County Agricultural Commissioner.

Nevada County Planning Department: (530) 265-1222

Nevada County Agricultural Commissioner: Chris de Nijs (530) 470-2690

County Regulations:

Section 12.04.201 of County Zoning Regulations establishes Resource Standards for development;

Section 12.04.203 establishes the standards for Management Plans, including format, content and procedural requirements; and

Section 12.04.204 of County Zoning Regulations establishes the following summarized criteria for development on or adjacent to *Important Agricultural Lands*:

A. **Purpose.** To minimize the conversion of important agricultural areas to non-agricultural uses, the adverse impact of potentially incompatible land uses upon important agricultural land and operations, and the impairment of agricultural productivity of important agricultural land.

B. **Definitions.**

1. **Farmland of Local Importance** - Farmland that does not meet the criteria of Prime Farmland, Statewide Importance or Unique Farmland, zoned Residential Agricultural (RA), General Agricultural (AG), Agricultural Exclusive (AE), Forest (FR) or Timberland Production Zone (TPZ) and delineated by the following soil types: Ahwahnee sandy loam, 15 to 30% slopes (AdD); Argonaut gravelly loam, 2 to 15% slopes (ArC); Hoda sandy loam, 9 to 15% slopes (HnC); Sobrante loam, 15 to 30% slopes (SoD); or Trabuco loam, 5 to 15% slopes (TrC).

2. **Important Agricultural Lands** - Prime farmland, farmland of Statewide importance, unique farmland, and farmland of local importance as defined by the State Department of Conservation's Important Farmland Map.

3. **Non-Agricultural Project** - For the purpose of this Section shall be any use of land, except for a single-family residence and garage that does not meet the definition of "Agricultural Operation" in this Chapter.

C. **Standards.**

1. Non-agricultural projects shall be approved only when they are not within or adjacent to Important Agricultural Lands unless a Management Plan is prepared consistent with #2 below.

2. If the above standard effectively precludes development of the project, or adversely affects another environmentally sensitive resource, a Management Plan that avoids or minimizes impacts to the important agricultural lands may be prepared consistent with the provisions of Section 12.04.203.C. of this Article, and the following standards:

a. The Management Plan shall be prepared by one of the following agricultural professionals: a Registered Professional Forester, a certified rangeland manager, or an USDA/NRCS-certified conservation planner.

b. If the entire project site is mapped within or adjacent to important agricultural lands, the Management Plan shall provide for the development of the project on that portion of the site determined to have the least impact on the long-term management of the agricultural resource.

c. Management Plans shall be reviewed by the Nevada County Agricultural Commissioner.

3. Non-agricultural projects adjacent to important agricultural lands shall be designed to minimize impacts and shall be subject to the following standards:

a. Subdivisions within or adjacent to important agricultural lands shall provide a 100-foot building setback from the property line(s) within or adjacent to the important agricultural land, limiting the use of the land to agricultural or open space uses compatible with adjacent agricultural land.

b. Require the recordation of a declaration acknowledging proximity to agricultural resources and the potential for conflict, which may be in the form of the Nevada County Right to Farm Notice provided in Nevada County Code Section 20.01.040. (Ord. 2427, 1/24/17; Ord. 2286).

AGRICULTURAL MANAGEMENT PLAN
CONTENTS & FORMAT

I. Report cover

Provide a cover that identifies the project, the project location, the preparer and the date of plan preparation.

II. Introduction

Briefly explain the need for this management plan.

Example: This management plan is submitted pursuant to Sec. 12.04.203 of Nevada County Zoning Regulations, requiring the submittal of a Management Plan for development projects on or adjacent to Important Agricultural Lands. The proposed project site is mapped as “grazing land”, adjacent to 300 acres of land mapped as Farmlands of Local Importance, which are identified as important agricultural lands.

III. Summary of Management Plan Conclusions & Recommendations

List the Section VI conclusions and recommended mitigation measures.

IV. Property Description

Provide a summarized description of the property, identifying physical site characteristics and improvements (ok to excerpt from Biological and/or Cultural Resources Inventory), acreages, and the agricultural resources on or adjacent to the project. If agricultural operations occur on the site, identify the acreage of varying use area. Include photos.

V. Project Description

- a. Describe the proposed project, identifying any design features such as clustering, building envelopes, or open space, whether there is a preferred alternative design.

Example: this project proposes to subdivide xxx acres into 10 residential lots, in a clustered design, creating lots that vary in size from 5 to 9 acres, reserving xx acres of open space adjacent important agricultural lands.

- b. Include a copy of the project map or site plan. The project evaluated by the Management Plan must reflect the submitted project design.

VI. Analysis of Potential Impacts

- a. Include an evaluation and assessment of the agricultural resource, identifying the methodology used to determine value/potential value of the resource;
- b. Identify potential impacts of the non-agricultural use on ag lands
- c. Identify other environmentally sensitive resources that may preclude avoidance of the ag resource
- d. Explain why/how project design minimizes impacts to the ag resource
- e. Include a map of the Farmlands mapping, depicting the project boundaries

VII. Recommended mitigations and conditions

- a. List the recommended mitigation measures and explain the extent to which each will offset or minimize the impacts to the ag resource. Standards that are otherwise required for the project are not acceptable as mitigation, i.e., 100' setbacks or Right to Farm Notice.
- b. Identify time frames for implementing recommended mitigations or conditions

VIII. Justification to Support Management Plan

- a. Consistent with the provisions of Sec. 12.04.203.B, explain why avoidance is not feasible.
- b. Identify alternative project designs and their feasibility

IX. References

X. Statement of Qualifications



Community Development Agency

Planning Department

Planning@nevadacountyca.gov
www.nevadacountyca.gov/Planning

950 Maidu Avenue, Suite #170

PO BOX #599002

Nevada City, CA 95959

PH: (530) 265-1222 ext. 2

FAX: (530) 265-9854

LEVINE ACT DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

California Government Code Section 84308, commonly referred to as the "Levine Act," prohibits any Commissioner, Board of Supervisors member, or any Other Elected County Officer ("County Officer") from participating in any action related to a proceeding if they receive any political contributions totaling more than \$500 (as of Jan. 1, 2025) within the previous 12 months, while a proceeding is pending, and for 12 months following the date a final decision in a proceeding concerning a license, permit, entitlement, franchise or, contract (collectively "license, permit, or contract") has been made, from the person or company awarded the said license or contract. The Levine Act also requires a County Officer who has received such a contribution to disclose the contribution on the record of the proceeding.

County Elected Officials and Appointed Commissions include, but may not be limited to, the list provided below, and individual officers or commissioners are listed at the following site:

<https://www.nevadacountyca.gov/3140/Committee-Board-and-Commission-Information>

- Board of Supervisors- <https://www.nevadacountyca.gov/731/Board-of-Supervisors>
- Planning Commission
- Agricultural Advisory Commission
- South County Municipal Advisory Council
- Penn Valley Municipal Advisory Council
- Regional Housing Authority
- Nevada County Transportation Commission
- Nevada County Airport Land Use Commission- Grass Valley/Truckee
- Nevada County Airport Commission
- Local Area Formation Commission (LAFCo)
- Historical Landmarks Commission
- Fish and Wildlife Commission
- Nevada County Sanitation District No. 1 Advisory Commission

Proposers are responsible for accessing the link above to review the names prior to answering the following questions:

1. Have you or your company, or any agent on behalf of you or your company, made any political contributions of more than \$500 to any County Officer in the 12 months preceding the date of the submission of your proposals or the anticipated date of any Board or Commission action related to this license, permit, or contract?

YES

NO

If yes, please identify the County Officer(s):

2. Do you or your company, or any agency on behalf of you or your company, anticipate or plan to make any political contribution of more than \$500 to any County Officer in the 12 months following any Board or Commission action related to this license, permit, or contract?

YES

NO

If yes, please identify the County Officer(s):

Answering yes to either of the two questions above does not preclude the County of Nevada from awarding a license, permit, or contract to your firm or any taking any subsequent action related to the said license, permit, or contract. It does, however, preclude the identified County Officers from participating in any actions related to this license, permit, or contract.

Date

Signature of authorized individual

Type or write name of authorized individual

Signature of authorized individual

Type or write name of company