Appendix D

Important Farmland and Choice Soils Mapping Methods - ECO:LOGIC 2007 Update to the 2003 Wood Rogers Analysis.

During the 2007 Draft Water Plan Circulation many comments were received on the agricultural demand projections. On the one hand, there was concern that the potential for agriculture in the County was being understated, and on the other hand, that too much land was being considered in projecting agricultural water demands. In order to address this issue satisfactorily, EDCWA staff felt it prudent to revisit the agricultural water demand projections prepared by Wood Rogers in 2003.

Wood Rogers estimates included all "Important Farmland" on the western slope below 3000 feet without any reduction of land area in urbanized areas or on small parcels. Based on the mapping prepared by Wood Rogers, ECO:LOGIC reduced the area considered in the analysis by eliminating the urbanized areas and parcels considered too small to support commercial agriculture. As a result, land located anywhere within the General Plan Community Regions was eliminated and all parcels smaller than 10 acres (commercial agricultural pursuits on such small acreage are not viable in most cases) were eliminated. There is however, considerable existing agricultural cultivation on parcels as small as 5 acres and elimination of these parcels from consideration may have tended to underestimate the potential for agricultural development in the County.

"Important Farmland" is mapped based on soil characteristics according to the State of California Department of Conservation (Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program – 2000). Information related to the slope criteria was developed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Natural Resource Conservation District (NRCS) (SSURGO – 2001). To narrow down the land resources that are specifically valuable for agriculture in El Dorado County, the General Plan (2004) specifies that all Important Farmland designated through the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program as "prime farmland, unique farmland, farmland of statewide importance or farmland of local importance" is considered County-designated "Choice Farmland" containing "Choice Soils". It is these soils on slopes 0-15 percent and 15 to 50 percent that were analyzed in Chapter 4 of this document.

Using ArcMap GIS 9.2, ECO:LOGIC analyzed the farmland mapping data within and outside purveyor districts and within and outside agricultural districts. The data are summarized in Table 4-7. The total area where choice soils exist was then further reduced by a factor of 10 percent to account for future infrastructure (roads and buildings) in the agricultural areas.