



**BUTTE COUNTY**  
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**NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY OF A DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT FOR  
BUTTE COUNTY – USDA ANIMAL AND PLANT HEALTH INSPECTION SERVICE -  
WILDLIFE SERVICES COOPERATIVE SERVICE AGREEMENT**

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that BUTTE COUNTY as Lead Agency pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) has prepared a Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the following project: Butte County – USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service - Wildlife Services Integrated Wildlife Damage Management Program Cooperative Service Agreement (proposed project).

**Project Background:**

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service - Wildlife Services (APHIS-WS) has an existing integrated wildlife damage management (IWDM) program that it implements throughout California and the rest of the United States to selectively remove individual animals that are non-native or cause damage to property, infrastructure, agricultural or livestock commodities, and public health and safety. For most wildlife damage management, once a damage situation is resolved, APHIS-WS personnel do not continue to remove additional animals unless a problem reoccurs, there are historical problems, and/or an additional request for assistance is made. Removal of animals by lethal methods is only used when other methods of control are not practical or have not been successful. Nonlethal methods are used or may be recommended to a resource owner or manager to help disperse wildlife, as appropriate.

The IWDM program in Butte County is implemented through a cooperative service agreement (CSA) with USDA APHIS-WS, and is subject to the Butte County Board of Supervisors' approval. The overall goal of the proposed project is to ensure that wildlife damage management in Butte County for purposes of protecting agricultural resources, public health and safety, and property is performed in a biologically sound, environmentally safe, and accountable manner and in accordance with applicable federal and state laws and regulations.

Butte County has continuously maintained the IWDM program in its current form with APHIS-WS since at least 1939, with sporadic records for earlier years going back to 1924. It is implemented throughout Butte County, including incorporated cities. The latest annual Board-approved CSA is for fiscal year 2020-21.

**Project Location and Description:**

The proposed project is the ongoing implementation of the IWDM program in Butte County for fiscal year 2021-22 (as operated by APHIS-WS and approved by signature of the CSA) to assist property owners, ranchers, farmers, businesses, private citizens, and local agencies in resolving wildlife damage problems. The project area encompasses all of the physical boundaries of the County, including the incorporated and unincorporated areas.

Activities performed under the IWDM program would be implemented by APHIS-WS personnel in accordance with the regulations, standards, and guidelines of the IWDM program, including its Wildlife Services (WS) Policy Manual, Directives, and standard operating procedures. Neither APHIS-WS nor Butte County is proposing any changes to the program as it has operated in the County. As with previous and existing CSAs, Butte County would not decide whether a resource owner or manager should receive assistance, nor would the County be materially involved in conducting any of the IWDM technical assistance efforts or measures to control wildlife damage other than to cost share the financial portion of the program.

IWDM services would be provided solely by an APHIS-WS wildlife specialist and only at the request of the resource owner or manager. The services would include providing technical advice/assistance to resource owners on prevention and/or control techniques; informing and educating interested individuals on how to prevent and reduce wildlife damage on their own; investigating wildlife damage situations to determine the responsible species and evaluate the incident for applicability of prevention and/or control methods; and responding to incidents where wildlife is threatening public health and safety. The project would not involve ground disturbance, alteration or removal of built environment structures, or alteration or removal of natural habitat.

The APHIS-WS IWDM program analyzed in the Draft EIR is not limited by the time frame of the 2021-22 CSA. Potential future renewal of the IWDM program for subsequent CSAs with annual financial and work plans would be considered a later activity of the proposed project and is considered within the scope of analysis in the Draft EIR.

#### **Environmental Impacts:**

The Draft EIR includes a comprehensive analysis of potential impacts on wildlife species populations and habitat. No significant impacts requiring mitigation were identified. The County did not receive any comments indicating that other environmental resource topics other than biological resources that should be evaluated in the Draft EIR. The Draft EIR includes an analysis of a No Project alternative in which the County would not continue the CSA as well as alternatives that would not involve the removal of species by lethal methods.

#### **Availability of the Draft EIR:**

The Draft EIR (State Clearinghouse No. 2021030129) is available at the Butte County Department of Agriculture/Weights & Measures (316 Nelson Avenue, Oroville) and online at: <http://www.buttecounty.net/agriculturalcommissioner/Documents>; and at the following locations: Butte County Department of Development Services, Planning Division (7 County Center Drive, Oroville); Butte County Administration Department (25 County Center Drive, Suite 200, Oroville) and Butte County Library branches in Biggs, Chico, Gridley, Durham, Oroville, and Paradise. The Draft EIR is also available online on the Governor's Office of Planning and Research State Clearinghouse website (<https://ceqanet.opr.ca.gov/2021030129>).

#### **Draft EIR Comment Period:**

The comment period for the Draft EIR is **April 14, 2021 to May 28, 2021**. Comments on the Draft EIR may be sent in writing or delivered in person and should be addressed to Louie B. Mendoza, Agricultural Commissioner, Butte County Department of Agriculture/Weights & Measures, 316 Nelson Avenue, Oroville, CA 95965. Comments may also be submitted by email to [butteag@buttecounty.net](mailto:butteag@buttecounty.net). Comments must be received by the County no later than 5:00 p.m. on May 28, 2021.

A public hearing to receive comments on the Draft EIR during the review period will be held at 9:50 a.m. on May 11, 2021 at a regular meeting of the Butte County Board of Supervisors. Certification of the EIR and project approval will be considered at a regular meeting of the Board of Supervisors on June 22, 2021.

**For More Information:**

For questions or additional information, please contact Mr. Mendoza at (530) 552-4100 or by email at [butteag@buttecounty.net](mailto:butteag@buttecounty.net).