



**NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY OF A DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT
FOR A COOPERATIVE SERVICE AGREEMENT BETWEEN
YUBA COUNTY AND THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE ANIMAL AND
PLANT HEALTH INSPECTION SERVICES – WILDLIFE SERVICES**

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that Yuba County is the Lead Agency and has prepared a Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) to evaluate ongoing implementation of an Integrated Wildlife Damage Management (IWDM) program in Yuba County under a Cooperative Service Agreement (CSA) between Yuba County and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Services - Wildlife Services (APHIS-WS) (proposed project).

PROJECT LOCATION: Yuba County

BACKGROUND AND PROJECT DESCRIPTION: APHIS-WS has an existing IWDM program that it implements throughout California and the rest of the United States. The Yuba County Agricultural Department has had a cost-share CSA with the USDA APHIS-WS for IWDM program services for over 30 years. The CSA provides for a USDA Wildlife Services Specialist to provide non-domestic animal damage control for County property owners, County Public Works, and other municipalities. The overall goal of the proposed project is to ensure that wildlife damage management for purposes of protecting property, infrastructure, agricultural resources, and public health and safety in the County is performed in a biologically sound, environmentally safe, and accountable manner and in accordance with applicable federal and state laws and regulations. In Yuba County, services include control of beavers, skunks, raccoons, coyotes, mountain lions, bears, and birds, which are the wildlife species primarily responsible for damage. Under the IWDM program, APHIS-WS may selectively remove specific individual animals that cause damage to property, infrastructure, agricultural or livestock commodities, and/or public health and safety or are nonnative. Removal of animals by lethal methods is only used when other methods of control are not practical or have not been successful.

The current five-year CSA between the County and APHIS-WS became effective July 1, 2018, and continues through June 30, 2023. Neither APHIS-WS nor Yuba County is proposing any changes to the IWDM program activities in the County. As with the existing CSA, the County would not be materially involved in any of the IWDM program activities other than to cost share the financial portion of the program. Under the CSA, primary functions provided by APHIS-WS in the County would continue to include: offering 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 species are threatening public health and safety (in coordination with CDFW and local law enforcement) including, when necessary, the use of out-of-county resources and expertise.

Most of the services would likely be provided for the protection of flood protection systems and field crops on agricultural lands because those resources have historically resulted in the most requests for technical assistance in Yuba County. Technical assistance would be provided only at the request of affected resource owners or managers. Before wildlife damage management is conducted on private land in response to a request for assistance from a property or resource owner, a Work Initiation Document (WID) must be signed by APHIS-WS and the landowner or representative. APHIS-WS would not perform any activities funded by the County for the protection of natural resources, such as threatened and endangered species.

The APHIS-WS IWDM program analyzed in the Draft EIR is not limited by the five-year time frame of the current CSA. Potential future renewal of the IWDM program under a CSA with APHIS-WS for subsequent five-year terms is considered a later activity of the proposed project and is analyzed in the 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 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. 2019071039) is available on the County's website at:

https://www.yuba.org/departments/agricultural_commissioner_and_sealer_of_weights_and_measures/index.php

The Draft EIR is also available for review during normal business hours at Yuba County Department of Agriculture, 915 8th Street, Suite 127. Marysville, CA 95901.

DRAFT EIR COMMENT PERIOD: The comment period for the Draft EIR will be from **August 25, 2020 to October 8, 2020**. Comments on the Draft EIR may be sent in writing or delivered in person to the Yuba County Department of Agriculture, 915 8th Street, Suite 127, Marysville, CA 95901, by email to yubaag@co.yuba.ca.us, or faxed to (530) 749-5404. Comments must be received by the County no later than 5:00 p.m. on **October 8, 2020**.

FOR MORE INFORMATION: If you have any questions, you may contact Stephen Scheer, Agricultural Commissioner, at (530) 749-5400 or by email at sscheer@yuba.gov.