COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Adopted June 16, 2008
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#### Inventory Maps (Appendix A)
(The following printable Inventory Maps are available on the County’s web site and in the Bannock County Planning Department Office.)
- 1. Location and Context
- 2. Distribution of Population
- 3. Resource-Based Economic Activity
- 4. Ownership
- 5. Zoning
- 6. Existing Land Use
- 7. Water Supply
- 8. Geothermal and Seismic Activity
- 9. School Districts
- 10. Fire Districts
- 11. Important Wildlife Habitat Map
Chapter 1: Introduction

Comprehensive Plan Basics

This Comprehensive Plan is an officially adopted policy document that outlines Bannock County’s vision and goals for the future and provides guidance for elected and appointed officials in making choices regarding the long-range needs of the community. The written goals and guiding principles, policies, and recommended actions, in combination with the Future Land Use Plan, provide guidance for decisions affecting growth, the use and development of land, conservation of open space, and the provision of public facilities and services. The Plan consists of both written policy recommendations and maps, which should be used together when making decisions. It is also recognized that this document should be reviewed periodically and revised as needed to reflect the availability of new implementation tools, changes in State and Federal law, changes in funding sources, the results of monitoring the effectiveness of existing policies and the impacts of past decisions, as well to reflect changes in the community’s vision for the future.

What is a Comprehensive Plan?

A Comprehensive Plan provides guidance on where and how a region or community will grow in the next 10 to 20 years. Comprehensive Plans typically consist of maps, goals, and policy statements addressing a number of issues relating to population and growth, housing, economic development, transportation, environment, parks, recreation, pathways, open space, design character, and property rights. One major emphasis of this plan is to provide long-range guidance to property owners, citizens, and decision makers on land use issues, such as where and how residential, commercial, and industrial development should occur in the future, and at what densities. It also includes policies to protect and conserve resources, such as water quality.

This Comprehensive Plan is also a product of citizen input and reflects what citizens envision as the goals for the future of Bannock County.

Planning Area

Bannock County is an area of approximately 1,147 square miles located in southeastern Idaho. The county is traversed north-south by Interstate 15 and east-west by Interstate 86 west of Interstate-15, and Highway 30 to the east. These highways connect the county, within a two-hour travel time, to numerous regional destinations including: Salt Lake City, Boise, and Twin Falls.
Lake City, Utah; Jackson, Wyoming; Sun Valley Idaho; as well as Yellowstone and Grand Teton National Parks and the Sawtooth National Recreation Area. The county contains seven incorporated cities and towns, listed in Table 1 from north to south. Each community has an Area of City Impact (ACI), which designates the agreed upon area for future annexations and service expansion for each city.

Location and Context

Figure 1-1
### Table 1: Land Area of Incorporated Cities in Bannock County

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>Incorporated Area (acres)</th>
<th>Unincorporated Area within ACI (acres)</th>
<th>Total Community Area (acres)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chubbuck</td>
<td>2,253</td>
<td>8,504</td>
<td>10,757</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pocatello</td>
<td>14,668</td>
<td>30,584</td>
<td>45,252</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inkom</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>9,384</td>
<td>9,784</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McCammon</td>
<td>458</td>
<td>4,394</td>
<td>4,852</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lava Hot Springs</td>
<td>911</td>
<td>3,990</td>
<td>4,901</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arimo</td>
<td>243</td>
<td>2,470</td>
<td>2,713</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Downey</td>
<td>630</td>
<td>6,116</td>
<td>6,746</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


### How Does the County Implement the Goals and Policies of this Plan?

The Plan is a general policy document to guide the physical development of the county. However, the Plan does not have the force of law as a regulation or ordinance for the enforcement of its goals and policies. Bannock County primarily uses the zoning map and ordinances to regulate and enforce many of the land use objectives of this Plan. An Implementation Strategy is included in Chapter 15 of this Plan to provide a “roadmap” as to how the goals and policies should be implemented through regulations and other means, such as funding, programs, and regional coordination. It also uses the Plan as evidence of vision and intent as described herein.

### How Does Zoning Relate to the Comprehensive Plan?

Bannock County’s Zoning Ordinance consists of both a zoning map and a written ordinance that divides the county into zoning districts, including various residential and non-residential zoning districts. The zoning regulations describe what type of land use and specific activities are permitted in each district, and also regulate how buildings, signs, parking, and other construction may be placed on a parcel of land. The zoning regulations also provide procedures for rezoning and other planning applications. The zoning map and zoning regulations provide the property with “entitlements” for development, while the Plan provides a guide for the future development of the property. When changing the zoning of a particular property, it must be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan’s Future Land Use Plan, contained in Chapter 3. That is to say, the Future Land Use Plan should guide future rezoning and development decisions.

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**Much of unincorporated Bannock County is rural, as illustrated here.**

**The Comprehensive Plan reflects the values of Bannock County citizens.**
Compliance with Idaho State Statutes

This Master Plan has been prepared in compliance with Idaho Statutes Section 67, the Local Land Use Planning Act. The stated purpose of which is “… to promote the health, safety, and general welfare of the people of the state of Idaho.” According to these statutes, the planning or planning and zoning commission is required to conduct a comprehensive planning process designed to prepare, implement, and review and update a comprehensive plan. The plan shall include all land within the jurisdiction of the governing board and is to be prepared so that the following elements may be adopted by the governing body, as appropriate:

- Property Rights,
- Population,
- Economic Development,
- Land Use,
- Natural Resources,
- Hazardous Areas
- Public Facilities and Services,
- Transportation,
- Recreation,
- Special Areas or Sites,
- Housing,
- Community Design, and
- Implementation.

This plan addresses all the topics above. In some cases, categories are combined in this plan where they address similar topics, such as Population and Land Use.

Consistency between the Comprehensive Plan and Zoning

Comprehensive plans are advisory in nature, serving to incorporate the thinking of the community at a policy level and to guide future development decisions. In many instances, land use category designations on a land use plan map may not directly correspond to a property’s underlying zoning. Unless a community chooses to pro-actively re-zone properties that are not consistent with the Future Land Use Plan map, the property owner will be required to request re-zoning of the property as part of the development process to bring it into compliance with the comprehensive plan. Underlying zoning was reviewed and considered throughout the development of this Plan to ensure that consistency between planned land uses and zoning could be maintained to the maximum extent feasible.
Plan Organization

This Plan contains the following sections, organized as chapters:

Chapter 1, Introduction includes information on the organization of this Plan, as well as an overview of how it relates to Idaho Statutory requirements.

Chapter 2, Vision and Guiding Principles, provides the overall direction for the Plan.

Chapter 3, Bannock County Future Land Use Plan, contains the Future Land Use Plan map, a description of the land use categories and development/design principles.

Chapter 4, Goals and Policies Overview, provides an introduction to the Goals and Policies contained in this Plan, as well as a description of the various County Geographic Character Areas across the county. Chapters 5-14 contain the Goals and Policies for each of the topics addressed, as follows:

Chapter 5: Population, Growth, and Land Use
Chapter 6: Economic Development
Chapter 7: Housing
Chapter 8: Schools
Chapter 9: Public Services, Facilities, and Utilities
Chapter 10: Natural Resources, Hazardous Areas, and Environment
Chapter 11: Parks, Recreation, Open Lands, and Trails
Chapter 12: Transportation
Chapter 13: Community Design and Special Sites
Chapter 14: Property Rights

Chapter 15, Implementation Strategy, provides a description of the actions required to implement this Plan.

Appendices
Appendix A contains a summary of Existing Conditions and inventory maps.
Appendix B contains a summary of current plans and policies.
Appendix C contains plan amendment procedures.
Appendix D contains definitions for terms used in this plan.
Appendix E summarizes the public participation steps taken to prepare this plan.
Appendix F contains additional educational resources prepared during the planning process.
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Chapter 2: Vision & Guiding Principles

The Bannock County Vision and Guiding Principles represent the broad values and ideals for the county—the “Vision” for the plan. The principles are the organizing element for the plan, around which the goals and policies for each element are structured.

Bannock County will take advantage of new opportunities in the future, including:

♦ Manage Growth and Development Responsibly
  Manage growth and development to maintain livable communities and high quality of life for our citizens and to efficiently sustain public and private resources.

♦ Diversify and Balance the Economic Base
  Foster a vibrant economy in cities and towns built on living-wage jobs, a thriving business community, and clean industries with sustainable agriculture in rural areas.

♦ Promote Housing Choices
  Be a place where people of all ages and incomes can live and have housing choices, and where high-quality neighborhoods in cities and towns are the building blocks of livable communities, where people feel safe and secure.

♦ Support Educational Opportunities
  Be a county with access to high quality schools and opportunities for life-long learning.

♦ Provide Infrastructure and Public Services Efficiently and Effectively
  Provide cost-efficient public services and utilities that address citizens’ health, safety, and welfare needs.

♦ Promote Stewardship of Natural Resources
  Continue to be responsible stewards of the land and resources to sustain and enhance the beauty, health, and economic benefit of our natural environment for current and future generations. Protect citizens of Bannock County by
discouraging building in hazardous areas such as steep slopes and wildfire-prone areas.

♦ **Retain Access to Public Lands and Conserve Open Lands**
Retain access to our public lands and conserve private and public open lands in the county.

♦ **Develop a Safe, Comprehensive Transportation System**
Be connected by a safe and efficient transportation system that improves mobility in towns and to surrounding areas by creating a comprehensive, multi-modal network of roads, pathways and bicycle facilities, and transit.

♦ **Maintain our Distinct Communities**
Recognize and respect the distinct places in the county (including cities; small towns and settlements; rural valleys; mountains and hillsides; and public lands and Fort Hall) and their unique assets. We will honor and showcase our natural and cultural assets and history to convey a positive county image.

♦ **Respect Property Rights**
Give property owners reasonable choices for use of their land, while balancing private rights with community rights and responsibilities and respecting the property rights of others.
Chapter 3: Future Land Use Plan

Introduction

The Future Land Use Plan for Bannock County provides a land use framework to guide future development in the county so it achieves this Plan’s goals, including protection of Bannock County’s environmental, geological, and outdoor recreation opportunities (including hunting, fishing, hiking, climbing, and viewing of natural resources and wildlife, and native plants) and economic development. However, it is not intended to change stable platted or developed areas and it upholds the rights of property owners. The land use categories should allow the county to continue to be a distinctive, diverse place with a mix of compatible development activities and conservation activities and helps to achieve the goals and policies in the following chapters. The categories also provide some flexibility to develop a mix of uses or for a range of density that is appropriate at the edge of cities and towns and its rural areas, described below.

This chapter is presented in three parts:

1. Future Land Use Plan Primary Themes
2. Land Use Categories
3. Principles for Development

Future Land Use Plan Primary Themes

The Future Land Use Plan charts how best to accommodate future growth in the region while protecting its natural assets. The Comprehensive Plan as a whole (goals and policies) also addresses transportation and mobility, open lands, infrastructure, and other future needs of the community through the placement and timing, and policies that will guide that growth. The intent of the Future Land Use Plan is to foster orderly development patterns, protect the natural environment, and ensure low costs to the county and taxpayers for delivering services. This section presents the primary themes of the Future Land Use Plan that tie to the goals and policies of this Plan. These are:

1. Orderly land use and growth, such that most future urban development occurs in cities where services can be provided efficiently.
2. Small towns define and refine where services can be provided efficiently.
3. Appropriate development patterns in rural areas to avoid landscape fragmentation and to minimize demands for services in remote areas.

4. Water resource protection measures to maintain clean water for current and future generations.

5. Higher levels of protection for natural resources and features.

6. Protection of property rights and ability and flexibility of property owners to use land while balancing community needs and rights of other property owners.

1. Orderly Land Use and Growth with Urban Development in Cities

The plan recommends that most future housing development occur in city Urban Service Areas and within Areas of City Impact (ACIs), and for most commercial and employment uses (non-farming related) to continue to be concentrated in cities and their ACIs. This will minimize the need for additional roadways and costly services in rural areas and help protect water resources. Sewer service will be provided more rapidly to development that occurs within the Pocatello and Chubbuck Urban Service Boundaries (USBs), because additional development will contribute to the financing of system extensions, in accordance with city service plans.

The plan promotes continuing agricultural uses and rural economic activities and very low density development in areas outside of cities and their ACIs. Agricultural lands within the ACIs (of Pocatello-Chubbuck) that are within water and sewer service areas will ultimately develop at urban densities.

This plan promotes cooperation with the cities of Chubbock and Pocatello on future land use patterns within their ACIs.

For more detailed information on policies related to development in city ACI areas, see page 31 for urban housing and neighborhood design principles.

2. Coordination with Small Towns to Define Service and Growth Areas

The plan promotes some future housing development in small towns and their ACIs as well as some commercial and employment uses (non-farming related), primarily in areas where services are available. The towns and county will need to continue to work together to refine land uses within these areas and to refine boundaries for services and for town-level growth.

Finally, in the Recreational Area surrounding Lava Hot Springs, the plan promotes continuing to allow a mix of residential and recreation-oriented uses, but development should be designed to minimize its overall footprint on natural features and to minimize the extent of infrastructure required to serve it. More intensive commercial uses
conditionally allowed (e.g., skating rinks or commercial off-road vehicle rental facilities) should only be located in locations with access to paved roads and should mitigate their affects from noise, traffic, odor, and light on neighbors.

For more detailed information on policies related to development in town ACI areas, see page 31 for urban housing and neighborhood design principles.

3. Appropriate Development Patterns in Rural Areas

As noted above, the plan promotes continuing agricultural uses and rural economic activities in areas outside of cities and towns and their ACIs. Where development occurs in rural areas, it should occur only at low densities. If there are natural resources that should be protected, such as wildlife habitat, or large, intact areas of agriculture that could be impacted, alternative development techniques, such as density transfers or open space subdivisions, should be considered.

For more detailed information on policies related to development in rural areas, see page 27 for rural design and development principles and open space subdivision design principles.


Clean water is one of the most important aspects of livability in Bannock County. Accordingly the plan recommends establishing a new Water Resource Protection Overlay District as part of the county’s zoning regulations that limits potential sources of groundwater / aquifer pollution within the overlay district, manages the amount of water filtering into the aquifer, and retains areas that filter and absorb water back into the supply. For more information on policies related to water resource protection, see Chapter 15, pages 87 to 88.

5. Protected Natural Environment

A clean and healthy natural environment is very important to residents and visitors of the area. The plan recommends continuing to limit development on steep slopes and recommends site design guidelines to assist landowners with making choices that are for the economic and scenic benefit of the property and community. For floodplains and wetlands, the plan promotes strengthening and enforcing setbacks. Finally, for wildlife habitat areas, the plan recommends working with relevant federal and state agencies to improve the mapped resources that identify important wildlife winter range habitat and migration corridors and to establish guidelines to assist developers with wildlife-friendly site planning and development. For more information on policies related to natural resource protection, see Chapter 10, page 59.

Ridgeline Debate

Residents of the county have been split on the issue of ridgeline development during the making of this Plan. This Plan does not include specific recommendations in favor of developing ridgelines, nor does it contain policies to prevent such development. The county will continue to explore this issue with its residents and determine if the public is willing to support stronger standards to protect its scenic quality.

Many counties have put ridgeline standards into place because of the economic values associated with protecting scenic quality.
6. Rights of Property Owners to Use Land

This plan includes goals and policies to ensure property owners continue to have ability to develop land, so long as they comply with county ordinances and standards. For more information on policies related to property rights, see Chapter 14: Property Rights.
Land Use Plan Categories

Introduction to Categories

The following sections describe the land use categories shown on the Future Land Use Plan that identifies future land uses for Bannock County. It shows the distribution of agricultural, residential, non-residential and mixed-use, and public land uses around the county. The land use categories are generally consistent with existing zoning districts. The County’s Zoning Ordinance, as it is amended from time to time, should be consistent with the intent of this plan and should provide specificity, guidance, and predictability to landowners or developers and citizens. The county will not approve rezoning and development unless the proposal meets the intent of this Plan.

Agricultural

Uses Allowed

The Agricultural category allows agriculture, agriculture support uses, single family dwellings and accessory structures, recreation, stables, and other commercial uses compatible with a predominantly rural area. Energy development and other commercial and industrial uses that are compatible with the rural character of the area may be allowed. New commercial feedlots or Confined Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs) will not be allowed in areas that are close to existing or planned population centers (because of odors, effluence, and potential water pollution) or in locations identified on the Future Land Use Plan as critical water resource protection areas. In addition, Planned Unit Developments (PUDs) will not be allowed in agricultural areas.

Intent, Character, and Location

The intent of the Agricultural areas on the Future Land Use Plan is to retain commercial agriculture as a viable use. Generally the area consists of agricultural uses for production and grazing as well as very low intensity single family homes. Most built uses rely on well and septic systems and are accessed either by county roads or unpaved drives. Many agricultural areas also abut public lands.

Density and Intensity for Development

Density in the Agricultural category is tiered so that a landowner may develop at the following densities:

- One (1) unit per each quarter-quarter section of land in a single ownership.
**Open Space Subdivisions**
In Open Space subdivisions, lots shall be a minimum of one acre in size. At least 50% of the site must be retained as conservation area, with maximum overall development density of one unit per 40 acres. Bonus units may be available for sites that conserve more open space. This type of subdivision is required if the property includes designated important wildlife habitat (i.e., winter range for mule deer) or other resource features, such as rivers, streams, riparian areas, or wetlands. See page 27 for more information on rural design principles and open space subdivision requirements.

**Density Transfers in Agricultural Areas**
The county will encourage density transfer of development away from the remote areas and public lands and to locations near roads and services. This can be accomplished either through non-contiguous transfers (between one or more properties) or within one large property. The non-contiguous transfer approach provides for the assemblage of development units from two or more nonadjacent parcels of land. The development rights attached to the sending parcel(s) are transferred to one or more receiving parcels.

**Residential**
The following sections describe the two residential land use categories shown on the Future Land Use Plan: (1) Rural Residential, and (2) Suburban Residential.

**Rural Residential**

**Uses Allowed**
The Rural Residential category allows single family residential, attached residential and residential accessory structures. Agricultural structures and stables are allowed (except for feed lots and hog farms). Civic uses and places of worship are appropriate if the scale and appearance of the structure fits the rural character.

**Intent, Character, and Location**
Lands classified as Rural Residential have rural characteristics and provide for low density housing and agricultural uses. Rural Residential will develop at densities higher than Agricultural areas (above) and lower than in the Suburban Residential category (below), providing a transition between these two areas. Rural Residential is generally located outside cities, towns, and their ACIs. It is also located around the edges of Pocatello and Chubbuck. Land owners may develop large-lot single-family housing or they may cluster houses on smaller lots to conserve open space, views, agricultural land, and natural features. Rural Residential is typically sited off local roads rather than collector or arterial roads. (See Rural Design Principles on page 27.)
Density and Intensity
Developments on Rural Residential lands may occur with two tiers of density:

- Maximum density of up to one (1) unit per five (5) acres, depending on suitability of the site to handle safely individual well and septic systems. (Note: Density may be lower if in the Water Resource Protection area).
- In PUDs, maximum density is up to two (2) units per acre, only with municipal water and sewer.

Open Space Subdivisions
In Open Space Subdivisions, lots shall be a minimum of 1 acre with at least 50% of the parcel retained as conservation area with maximum overall development density of one unit per 5 acres. Bonus units may be available if more of the parcel is conserved. This type of subdivision is required if the property includes designated important wildlife habitat (i.e., winter range for mule deer) or other resource features, such as rivers, streams, riparian areas, or wetlands. See page 27 for more information on rural design principles and open space subdivision requirements.

Planned Unit Development (PUD)
PUDs with higher density can be built in Rural Residential areas only if they have municipal water and sewer and if they annex to a town or city. (PUDs may include neighborhood commercial and mixed-use uses subordinate to residential uses in the same development.)

Suburban Residential

Uses Allowed
The Suburban Residential category allows a mix of housing types, including predominantly single family. Duplexes are also allowed. It also allows agricultural livestock for personal domestic use (on parcels that are one acre or larger), parks and recreation, golf courses, accessory buildings, civic uses, and places of worship. Public utilities, day care facilities, cemeteries, institutional housing, and multi-family housing must be compatible if it is to be allowed. Neighborhood-serving commercial is allowed if part of a Planned Unit Development (PUD).

Intent, Character, and Location
Suburban Residential areas are located near cities and towns and within ACI areas and where municipal services are either already available or are planned to be extended. The bulk of this land use category is located within the Pocatello and Chubbuck ACI boundaries and their urban service areas. The Future Land Use Plan map also designates Suburban Residential near Inkom, McCammon, Lava Hot Springs, and Downey. The category provides for small residential lots on municipal sewage treatment facilities and water systems, or residential development on larger lots at the edge of cities and towns with well and septic.
Suburban Residential is sited near local and collector roads (that typically are built as part of the development) that connect to county roads or city or town arterials. The intent is that new subdivisions adjacent to a city or town boundary will be annexed if they are consistent with city or town standards. (See Urban Housing and Neighborhood Design Principles on page 31.)

**Density and Intensity**
This category allows tiered density within it, depending on the location of the parcel, including:

- **Outside ACIs.** Maximum density is one (1) unit per acre for single family homes, depending on suitability of the site to safely handle domestic well and septic systems.
- **Within Water Resource Protection area.** Maximum density is one unit per five (5) acres with septic systems.
- **Inside ACIs,** Maximum density is one unit per five (5) acres with domestic well and septic unless provisions are made in the County/Cities ACI agreements for extension of future water and sewer service to these properties when utilities are available and a mechanism is identified for developing at lower densities that does not preclude the property transitioning to a higher density once municipal utilities are available.
- **For PUDs in ACI and in Urban Service Area.** Maximum density is three (3) units per acre, where homes will be served by municipal water and sewer and where annexation will occur.

**Open Space Subdivisions**
In Open Space Subdivisions, at least 50% of the parcel shall be retained as conservation area with maximum overall development density of one unit per one (1) acre. Lots shall be a minimum of 1/3 of an acre, provided that municipal water and sewer are available. Bonus units may be available if more of the parcel is conserved. This type of subdivision is required if the property includes designated important wildlife habitat (i.e., winter range for mule deer) or other resource features, such as rivers, streams, riparian areas, or wetlands. See page 27 for more information on rural design principles and open space subdivision requirements.

**Planned Unit Development (PUD)**
PUDs with higher density are allowed in the Suburban Residential category, only if municipal water and sewer is provided, and the project annexes into a city or town. PUDs may have residential uses and mixed-use, which include neighborhood commercial and employment activities subordinate to residential. The PUD should also include paved streets and sidewalks, common open space, parks, trails, and other neighborhood amenities (consistent with the city and town standards).
Chapter 3: Future Land Use Plan

Non-Residential and Mixed-Use

The non-residential and mixed-use categories on the Future Land Use Plan have a variety of uses, development intensities, and characteristics. The development and uses are designed to be compatible with existing and proposed development, site constraints, and also reflect some element of market demand. The following sections describe the various non-residential land use categories shown.

Recreational

Uses Allowed
The Recreational category predominantly consists of single family homes on well and septic and other uses listed in the Suburban Residential category. Plus it allows outdoor recreation uses, such as skiing, tennis, stables, commercial skating rinks, parks, swimming pools, and the like. The County may allow those uses in the Recreational category that are conditionally allowed in the Suburban Residential category such as indoor entertainment and commercial uses, including hotels, inns, indoor recreational activities (e.g., bowling alleys, theaters, restaurants, camp grounds, gift shops, gas stations), public utility and public service facilities, mining, non-hunting firearm uses, campgrounds and RV parks if they meet performance standards and minimize impacts to the environment and neighboring properties.

Intent, Character, and Location
The Recreational classification is located around Lava Hot Springs with a small amount of land classified as such just east of Inkom. The intent of the Recreational area is to promote recreational and tourist activities to conserve the county’s outdoor recreational resources and environmental quality. This Plan aims to provide more guidance as to where and how development should occur to achieve resource protection as well as recreational and economic values. The area has a number of existing subdivisions that would not be affected by the policies of this Plan.

Performance Standards and Requirements
Development proposals in the Recreational classification shall meet performance requirements to ensure that they are compatible with surrounding uses. These standards and conditions provide that a use will be permitted by conditional review only if the Planning and Development Council and Board of County Commissioners finds that the proposed use meets the following standards and conditions:

1. Except as otherwise noted, the use will comply with the minimum zoning requirements of the zoning district in which the use is to be established, and will also comply with all other applicable requirements;
2. Will be in harmony with the character of the neighborhood and compatible with the surrounding area;

3. Will be in accordance with the Comprehensive Plan;

4. Will not result in an over-intensive use of land or excessive depletion of natural resources (e.g., leading to a condition with weeds or soil depletion);

5. Will not have a material adverse effect on community capital improvement programs and the provisions of utilities, emergency services, and other county services;

6. Will not require a level of community facilities and services greater than that which is available;

7. Will not result in undue traffic congestion or traffic hazards;

8. Will not cause significant air, odor, water, noise, or light pollution;

9. Encourage property owners to preserve healthy and significant stands of trees;

10. Will minimize disturbance of ground (to conserve native plant species, inhibit weed growth, and abate dust);

11. Will be landscaped, buffered, and screened and maintained adequately according to county standards; and

12. Will not otherwise be detrimental to the health, safety, or welfare of the present or future inhabitants of Bannock County.

For non-residential property, additional criteria shall include that the site is designed to limit conflicts with surrounding residential uses due to noise, light, litter, or dust, such that that the proposed use meets the following standards and conditions:

1) A landscaped buffer is provided that provides adequate screening between the proposed use and adjacent properties and public right-of-way;

2) Mechanical equipment and outdoor storage is screened;

3) Noise-producing equipment an adequate distance from a property line or mitigated;

4) Lighting should meet dark sky standards and be directed downward;

5) Access is located to minimize disturbance and disruption to adjacent properties;

6) Drainage shall be on site and shall be directed away from residential land which abuts non-residential uses; and

7) Loading, delivery entrances and storage shall be located to minimize interference with residential uses.
Density/Intensity
Density is tiered so that the minimum lot size for new platted subdivision is:

- Maximum density of one (1) unit per acre for portions of parcel not covered by steep slopes.
- With an open space subdivision. Maximum density of one (1) unit per acre, if at least 50% of the land is set aside as open space.
- PUD. Maximum density of up to two units per acre, only with municipal water and sewer and if annexed.

Open Space Subdivision (Clustering)
In Open Space Subdivisions, at least 50% of the parcel shall be retained as conservation area with maximum overall development density of one unit per one (1) acre. Lots shall be a minimum of 1/3 of an acre, provided that municipal water and sewer are available. Bonus units may be available if more of the parcel is conserved. This type of subdivision is required if the property includes designated important wildlife habitat (i.e., winter range for mule deer) or other resource features, such as rivers, streams, riparian areas, or wetlands. See page 27 for more information on rural design principles and open space subdivision requirements.

Planned Unit Development (PUD)
The County will not allow PUDs in remote outlying areas of the Recreational area because they are not consistent with the intent of the area as primarily recreation and low density residential. A PUD may be proposed in the Recreational category with permitted uses only if municipal water and sewer are provided and if annexation will occur.

Commercial

Uses Allowed
The Commercial category allows a wide range of retail, office and professional businesses, and service and maintenance providers. Conditional uses are wholesale businesses, residential uses and agricultural uses. This category generally corresponds with the Commercial General zoning district.

Intent, Character, and Location
The intent of this category is to provide concentrated locations and opportunities for non-residential business and services to meet the area’s needs for small towns or interchanges to serve travelers based on those already zoned as such. This category should not expand into other unincorporated areas of the county or lead to strip commercial development on county roads and highways. Most commercial services should continue to be concentrated in towns and cities and their ACIs. Design of commercial centers will focus on accommodating multi-modal transportation, pedestrians, and bicycles.
Chapter 3: Future Land Use Plan

Commercial development will also provide buffers and screening between service and delivery areas and residential neighborhoods.

**Density and Intensity**

Varies. One acre minimum lot sizes are required for commercial, but larger lots may be required for water quality protection purposes.

**Planned Unit Developments**

PUDs are permitted in the Commercial category but must be annexed.

**County Multiple Use**

**Uses Allowed**

The County Multiple Use category allows a mix of suburban residential, general commercial, heavy and light industry, and employment uses, depending on what is adjacent. For example, a commercial use will be permitted if it is surrounded by a commercial or more intense use.

**Intent, Character, and Location**

This category is based on an existing zoning district. The intent for it and the corresponding zoning district to be gradually phased out and reclassified as other commercial or residential uses. It will not expand. The category allows a range of uses and is generally located within or adjacent to cities and towns and their ACIs. Future development in the County Multiple Use category must carefully consider transitions and compatibility to adjacent uses, and provide for appropriate screening and buffering where uses create visual, noise, or light nuisance. The area of Multiple Use located at the southern end of Pocatello’s ACI should be considered as a “Special Planning Area”.

Prior to any land use changes or development in this area, a subarea plan should be prepared to identify the most appropriate land uses. Since this area is within/adjacent to the city’s Urban Service Area, it is likely to annex to Pocatello sometime in the future.

**Density and Intensity**

- Intensity may vary, but proposed project must not exceed the intensity of nearby uses. (e.g., if adjacent uses are Rural Residential, proposed use should be sited on five acre lots and provide adequate buffering). The minimum lot size is one (1) acre; however, larger lots may be required to ensure clean water.

**Industrial – Heavy**

**Uses Allowed**

The Heavy Industrial category allows agriculture support, wholesalers, equipment and staging, and other businesses that require outdoor storage. All industrial uses that share a boundary with residentially zoned land will require a Conditional Use Permit.
Intent, Character, and Location
The Heavy Industrial areas provide opportunities for production and commerce while minimizing impacts on adjacent properties and the environment; however, such activities should not disperse into other unincorporated county areas. This Plan’s intent is to allow no new heavy industries that potentially pollute water or air quality or that may negatively affect the quality of nearby properties. Future Heavy Industry will generally be located within towns and cities and their ACIs and near major transportation facilities, such as airports, railroads, and highways.

The Future Land Use Plan and category provides some opportunities for more intensive production and storage, light manufacturing, employment uses, wholesale businesses, and warehouses. Higher intensity uses will be appropriately buffered from adjacent lower-intensity uses, especially residential. Design features will accommodate large trucks, the presences of railroads and screened outdoor storage to minimize impacts on neighboring activities.

Density and Intensity
- The intensity may vary, but it must not exceed the intensity of nearby uses. Larger lots and other requirements may be imposed to protect water quality.

Industrial – Light

Uses Allowed
The Light Industrial category allows agriculture support and light manufacturing businesses. Industrial uses that share a boundary with residentially zoned land will require a Conditional Use Permit.

Intent, Character, and Location
The Light Industrial category provides opportunities for some light manufacturing and employment uses in unincorporated areas, but the intent is that most of these activities would occur within cities and towns or be annexed. This category is generally located within towns and cities and their ACIs.

Density and Intensity
- The intensity may vary, but it must not exceed the intensity of nearby uses. Larger lots and other requirements may be imposed to protect water quality.

Public

Intent, Character, and Location
This category encompasses lands owned and managed by the Bureau of Land Management, Forest Service, State of Idaho, and Bannock County. Public lands provide open lands and opportunities for a variety of outdoor recreation activities as well as grazing and energy production. The county does not have jurisdiction over federal or state lands.
**City Categories: Mixed-Use, Residential, Employment**

The plan shows the planned land uses consistent with Chubbuck and Pocatello Comprehensive Plans within their ACIs. The categories are City Mixed-Use, City Residential, and Employment. No specifications are included in this plan on these categories, since they are only intended to apply to property that is annexed to cities. Future development within those categories should be consistent with city plans.

**Reservation**

The Fort Hall Indian Reservation is shown on the Future Land Use Plan to the north. The county does not have jurisdiction over reservation lands.

**Other Features – Future Land Use Plan**

**Water Resource Protection Overlay**

The Future Land Use Plan shows the location for the Water Resource Protection Overlay. Its purpose is to keep the surface and groundwater of the county clean and fit to drink and available for use for other purposes for current and future generations. The boundary illustrated on the Future Land Use Plan map encompasses several GIS data layers including surface water features, wetlands, community water supply areas, and aquifer recharge areas on private lands. Due to the countywide scale and the lack of FEMA floodplain information (currently under development for the county), this boundary is intended to be conceptual. The county and technical advisory agencies will need to refine the boundary when they prepare ordinances to implement the Water Protection Overlay District. This map does illustrate the basic priority areas for protection and should serve as the baseline boundary as the county begins to solidify the overlay into a regulation and as additional or refined GIS data becomes available. More information is located in the goals and policies and implementation chapters of the plan. (Note: See Chapter 15 for more detail on how the county will implement the Water Resource Protection Overlay.)
Land Use Plan Categories

Agricultural

The Agricultural category allows agriculture, agriculture support uses, single family dwellings and accessory structures, recreation, stables, and other commercial uses compatible with a predominantly rural area. The intent of the Agricultural areas is to retain commercial agriculture as a viable use. Most built uses rely on well and septic systems and are accessed either by county roads or unpaved drives.

Density and Intensity for Development: See page 15

The county encourages density transfer of development away from the remote areas and public lands and to locations near roads and services and encourages open space subdivisions to conserve land. PUDs will not be allowed in agricultural areas.

Rural Residential

Lands classified as Rural Residential have rural characteristics and provide for low density housing and agricultural uses. The Rural Residential category allows single family residential, attached residential and residential accessory structures. Agricultural structures and stables are allowed (except feed lots and hog farms). Civic uses and places of worship are appropriate if the scale and appearance of the structure fits the rural character.

Density and Intensity: See page 17

The county encourages use of the open space subdivision option to provide conservation area. PUDs can be built only if they have municipal water and sewer ad if they annex to a town or city.

Suburban Residential

The Suburban Residential category allows a mix of housing types, including predominantly single family. Duplexes are also allowed. It also allows agricultural livestock for personal domestic use (on parcels that are one acre or larger), parks and recreation, golf courses, accessory buildings, civic uses, and places of worship.

Density and Intensity: See page 18

The county encourages use of the open space subdivision option to provide conservation area. PUDs can be built only if they have municipal water and sewer ad if they annex to a town or city.

Industrial (Light and Heavy)

Industrial categories provide opportunities for agriculture support, wholesalers, equipment and staging, outdoor storage, and light manufacturing. Industry is limited in the county. The intent is for these activities to occur mostly in cities. The Plan goals aim for clean industry. Located in or within the ACI areas of cities and towns, and at select I-15 interchange areas to serve travelers.

Density and Intensity: See page 23, for heavy and light

Water Resource Protection Overlay

It generally aligns with the lands that have the most immediate impact on the quality and supply of surface water and city and town groundwater supplies. In some cases, this overlay also addresses sloped areas, the development of which would impact the quality of water. The water resource protection overlay will work with existing zoning districts to protect water resources. (See page 88 for more information.)

Pocatello and Chubbuck City Categories

The plan shows categories within the city Urban Service Boundaries and planned land uses for Chubbuck and Pocatello. They are City Residential, City Mixed-Use, and Employment.

Recreational

The Recreational category predominantly consists of single family homes on well and septic and other uses listed in the Suburban Residential category. The intent of the Recreational area is to promote recreational and tourist activities to conserve the county's outdoor recreational resources. Performance requirements will ensure development is compatible with surrounding uses.

Performance Standards and Requirements: See page 19

Density and Intensity: See page 21

PUDs can be built only if they have municipal water and sewer ad if they annex to a town or city.

County Multiple Use

The County Multiple Use category allows a mix of suburban residential, general commercial, industrial, and employment uses, depending on what is adjacent—with intense uses next to intense uses. This category will be gradually phased out. Future development within this category should be required to carefully consider transitions and compatibility to adjacent uses, and provide for appropriate screening and buffering where uses offer a visual or noise nuisance.

Density and Intensity: See page 22.

County Multiple Use land and Royosi
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Design and Development Principles

Rural Design and Development Principles
If development is to occur in the agricultural or rural areas, it should minimize its impacts on natural areas and on nearby ranching and agricultural operations. The following design principles are appropriate for all rural development that occurs outside of cities and towns and their ACIs.

1. Minimize cut and fill for roads and site grading.
2. Use native and non-invasive plants for landscaping.
3. Steer development away from geologic features, such as rock outcroppings or steep slopes, and natural features such as streams.
4. Use setbacks and position structures to be compatible with adjacent agricultural activities.
5. Design buildings with styles and materials that reflect the rural architectural heritage.
7. Consider location of neighboring structures and locate buildings sensitively.

Open Space Subdivision Design Principles
This section provides guidance on how to prepare a site plan and delineate the conservation area for an Open Space Subdivision. This type of subdivision is required in areas designated for Agriculture, Rural Residential, or Suburban Residential on the Future Land Use Plan if lands to be subdivided include designated important wildlife habitat (i.e., winter range for mule deer) or other resource features, such as rivers, streams, riparian areas, or wetlands. Specific lot size and open space requirements are included in each of the land use category descriptions.

Process to Prepare Site Plan
A thorough site analysis is a key first step for development of any property. Before formal submittal of an Open Space Subdivision application, the applicant will prepare a site analysis map that provides information about site conditions and context of subject site and on lands within 500 feet of the site boundaries. The site analysis must delineate conservation and buildable areas.
Chapter 3: Future Land Use Plan

Graphics above show: (a) an illustrative 320-acre site and (b) a typical subdivision (lower left), and (c) site analysis (upper right). The diagram (d) on the lower right shows the conservation area and buildable lots using a conservation area/conservancy lot that would be owned and managed by the owner of Lot Number 1.

Residential Rural Example (40-acre parcel)

(a) Conventional Rural Residential: Eight 5-acre lots accessed by a new local street. (b) Open Space Subdivision: Eight clustered lots (approx 1 ac.) along a new street with at least 50% conservation area or open space. Natural features managed in the conservation area or open space.
Chapter 3: Future Land Use Plan

A. Identify These Features in Site Analysis
First, identify the following:

1. Roads, trails, utility easements and rights-of-way;
2. Topography (steep slopes and ridgelines);
3. Sensitive natural features, including but not limited to streams and drainages, wetlands, and wildlife habitat or migration corridors;
4. Geologic areas (both hazardous and scenic);
5. Existing conservation easements or protected lands;
6. Adjacent property lot sizes and setbacks;
7. Built features, including driveways, farm roads, houses, fences, walks, barns or sheds, drainage fields, utilities and utility easements;
8. Historically and culturally significant sites and structures; and
9. Adjacent public lands and agriculture;

B. Delineating Conservation Area(s)
Next, delineate the conservation area(s). They should:

1. Provide contiguity with adjacent open lands, conservation areas and agriculture lands.
2. Protect unique natural, historic, or cultural site features.
3. Provide a minimum buffer of 100 feet between any residential structure and adjacent agricultural activities or open lands.
4. Provide a minimum buffer of 100 feet along County roads.
5. Not fragment conservation areas within the site.

Protect conservation areas by conservation easement or deed restriction. This Plan recommends that a Homeowners Association (HOA) be assigned to oversee management and ensure that properties are not a nuisance because of weeds.

C. Designate Buildable Area(s)
Finally, designate the buildable areas. They should:

1. Be located on clearly designated lots or building envelopes.
2. Have direct access to a public or private road.
3. Be designed to take advantage of access to conservation areas, where appropriate.

Rural Residential Building and Siting Guidelines

1. Lot Sizes: Provide a variety of lot sizes within new clustered subdivisions.
2. Vary Setback or Openings along County Roads: Provide varied development setbacks and open space to maintain views.
3. Conserve Natural Features: Design site plans to protect natural features and provide conservation areas (minimum 50% for bonus units).
4. Contiguous Open Lands: Provide contiguous open space within a site connecting to adjacent open land.
5. **Development Away from Sensitive Environmental Features:** Concentrate development lots away from wetlands, streams, riparian areas, wildlife habitat and migration corridors, or agriculture into one or more clusters. Provide a buffer of at least 100 feet between natural features and future development if the site allows. Require homeowner to maintain the buffer.

6. **Streets and Driveways:** Locate streets, driveways, and buildable lots to work with the natural topography and away from environmental features.

**Landscape and Environment Guidelines**

1) **Landscaping with Natural Appearance:** Design common landscaping to appear natural or informal, with clusters of plants and trees. Hedgerows or windbreaks may be appropriate for screening buildings.

2) **Native/Drought-Tolerant Non-Invasive Plants:** Promote native and/or drought-tolerant and non-invasive grasses, plants, and trees. In forested areas, landscape should comply with fire district standards for creating fire protection and defensible space.

**What Not To Do! Undesirable Rural Residential Development**

1. Houses that encroach into natural features and agricultural areas.

2. Homogenous “cookie cutter” development, including uniform model types, roofs, and color schemes.

3. Subdivision development that negatively affects scenic or environmental quality by being out of scale with the surrounding area.

**Urban Housing and Neighborhood Design Principles**

Urban neighborhoods generally will not be built in unincorporated Bannock County; however, in the areas around cities and towns (ACIs), the County will work with the relevant jurisdiction to ensure that new housing and neighborhoods will be well built to have lasting value. The following principles are commonly held for neighborhood design:

1. **Design for Pedestrians:** Residential neighborhoods will be compact and walkable with short blocks (typically less than 400-600 feet in length). Incorporate wide and detached sidewalks and paths, seating, low-level lighting, and signs that are scaled for pedestrians in high activity areas.

2. **Include Community Facilities and Services:** Neighborhoods should include schools, fire and police stations, libraries, parks, and open space, local-serving
commercial services, and other community facilities to serve the needs of residents. Neighborhood commercial uses should be designed to connect to adjacent neighborhoods with streets and sidewalks.

3. **Connected Open Space**: Provide connected open space within developments that is sited to protect natural areas and provide neighborhood amenity. In some instances open space can be achieved by clustering development.

4. **High Density Housing near Services**: Locate high density residential development near community-oriented commercial centers, providing opportunities for residents to walk to shops, services, and jobs. Apartments, lofts, and townhomes can provide transitions between commercial and lower density residential areas.

5. **Designed for Multiple Transportation Modes**: Provide for interconnected block and street patterns and provide access to the arterial street system, help meet national emergency service response time standards, and connect to transit and park-n-rides if possible. Provide connections to trails and greenways.

6. **Resource-Sensitive Design**: Protect and enhance environmental quality (e.g., views, access to open space, protection of natural features such as habitat and riparian areas).

7. **Variety and Community Identity**: Design new residential developments to allow for and encourage a variety of homes types (e.g., single family and multi-family with varying range in price) and activities, connectivity, recreation, and unique community identity. Avoid visual monotony (e.g., “cookie cutter subdivisions”).
Chapter 4: Goals and Policies Overview

Introduction

The Goals and Policies of the Bannock County Comprehensive Plan will guide the county in its decisions, and as new development or changes occur, help to maintain and enhance the qualities that make Bannock County a great place in which to live, work, play and enjoy the natural and community amenities.

Guiding Principles represent the broad values and ideas for the county—the “vision” for the plan. The principles are the organizing element for the plan, under which the goals and policies are structured.

Goals are statements about what the county aims to achieve over the next 20 years, or over the life of the Comprehensive Plan – assuming the county will update the plan periodically as set forth in this Plan. Goals will give decision-makers and citizens a clear idea about the county’s intended direction. They are organized under the following topics and chapter headings:

1. Population, Growth, and Land Use,
2. Economic Development,
3. Housing,
4. Schools
5. Public Services, Facilities, and Utilities,
6. Natural Resources, Hazardous Areas, and Environment,
7. Parks, Recreation, Open Lands, and Trails,
8. Transportation,
9. Community Design and Special Sites, and

Policies provide a definite course of direction for Bannock County. They will guide decisions and set a framework for implementing actions. The policies in Chapters 5 through 14 also provide ongoing guidance for elected and appointed officials, staff, and administrators as these decision-makers guide development, programs, and capital investments in the county.
Chapter 4: Goals and Policies Overview

**Actions** provide a detailed list of strategies and methods for implementing the plan; they are contained in the Implementation Strategy for this Plan.

### How Does the County Implement the Goals and Policies of this Plan?

This Plan is a general policy document to guide the physical development and future changes of Bannock County. It also provides for the intent of the county’s regulations; however, it does not have the force of law that regulations or ordinances do for the enforcement of its goals and policies. The county primarily uses the zoning map and ordinances to regulate and enforce the land use objectives of this Plan. An Implementation Strategy is included in Chapter 15, which provides a “roadmap” as to how to accomplish the plan through regulations, in part, and through other means, such as funding, programs and regional coordination.

### How Does Zoning Relate to the Comprehensive Plan?

The county’s Zoning Ordinance consists of both a zoning map and a written ordinance that divides the county into zoning districts, including various residential and non-residential zoning districts. The zoning regulations describe what type of land use and specific activities are permitted in each district, and also regulate how buildings, signs, parking, and other construction may be allowed and placed on a parcel of land. They also provide procedures for re-zoning and other planning applications. In sum, the zoning map and zoning regulations provide the property “entitlements” to development, while the Plan provides a guide for the future development of the property.

When changing the zoning of a particular property, the proposed zoning must be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Plan, contained in Chapter 3. That is to say, the Future Land Use Plan of this Comprehensive Plan guides future rezoning and development decisions.
Bannock County Geographic Character Areas

The county comprises distinct areas that vary by development patterns, economy, landscape and natural features. This section provides a description of the distinct geographic and cultural places within the county that are used as the organizing framework for the goals and policies. Bannock County has four distinct geographic character areas described in the sections below. See also Figure 4-1: Character Areas, below.

Figure 4-1: Character Areas
1. **Cities and their Areas of City Impact (ACIs) (Pocatello and Chubbuck)**

The hubs of economic vitality for north Bannock County, Pocatello and Chubbuck, are where most people live and work and where most urban services and community facilities are located. The county does not have jurisdiction in the cities. It can, however, cooperate with them to advance this plan’s goals, particularly in the Areas of City Impact (ACIs) that have not yet been annexed and are under county jurisdiction. These ACIs are the areas where Chubbuck and Pocatello annex lands and grow outward.

2. **Towns and their ACIs (Inkom, McCammon, Lava Hot Springs, Arimo, and Downey) and Settlements (Virginia and Robin)**

Inkom, McCammon, Lava Hot Springs, Arimo, Downey are the small incorporated towns in south and east Bannock County. Virginia and Robin are small family-oriented unincorporated settlements. These places provide housing and services to rural areas and showcase the county’s physical and cultural qualities. The county does not have jurisdiction in the incorporated towns, but it can work with them to advance this plan’s goals, particularly in their ACIs.

3. **Rural Areas (Agricultural Valleys, Hillsides, and Mountains)**

Surrounding the cities and small towns of our county are the valleys and rural areas, or parts of the unincorporated county with independent farms and ranches, river valleys, and resource-based economic productivity. The mountains and hillsides are important for wildlife and forests, resource-based economic productivity, scenic beauty and natural environment, and opportunities for outdoor recreation and tourism.

4. **Fort Hall Indian Reservation and Federal and State Lands**

Bannock County is adjacent to the Fort Hall Indian Reservation, and public lands. The agencies that manage these lands in the county, including Bureau of Land Management (BLM), United States Forest Service (U.S.F.S.) Caribou National Forest, and State of Idaho have jurisdiction over them. The county does, however, cooperate with the reservation and agencies to advance this Plan’s goals.
Chapter 5: Population, Growth, and Land Use

Introduction

Background

Most development in Bannock County has traditionally occurred in and around the Cities of Pocatello of Chubbuck, with some housing and services also in the small towns. Since the 1970s and 80s, a fair amount of recreation-oriented development has occurred in the hillsides near Lava Hot Springs. Recent growth trends and predictions suggest that growth may continue to occur along the I-15 corridor and in rural areas. The county’s population could grow by over 31,700 new residents by the year 2035.

General Directions

This Plan is, in part, a plan for how orderly development must occur to accommodate new growth and population and also to protect resources. It is based on the premise that urban growth will be channeled into and near areas that are already urban (where municipal services such as water, sewer, paved streets and sidewalks, and other services are available). Conversely, rural areas will maintain many of their non-urban characteristics with lower levels of services. The plan also attends to coordination of planning for open lands and natural resources with public land management agencies.

The Future Land Use Plan (Chapter 3) establishes a plan that considers infrastructure and transportation plans, captures benefits of development, maintains a high quality of life for residents, and minimizes tax-payers’ costs to pay for new growth.

Guiding Principle: Manage Growth and Development Responsibly

Manage growth and development to maintain livable communities and high quality of life for our citizens and to efficiently sustain public and private resources.
Population, Growth, and Land Use
Goals and Policies

Countywide

Goal LU 1: Direct and manage development in the county that is orderly and fiscally responsible.

Policies

1.1 Future Land Use Plan to Define Growth Patterns - The Future Land Use Plan will guide future growth and development by defining appropriate land use types, densities, and character in different locations including cities and towns’ Area of City Impact (ACI) areas, farm and ranch land, hillsides, and public lands.

1.2 Growth Pays for Needed Services - New development will bear costs associated with providing services to it. (See Chapter 9, Public Services, Facilities, and Utilities goals.)

1.3 Locate Urban Development Within Urban Service Areas - Urban development will locate in areas where municipal water and sewer can serve it and that are close to other municipal services and not “leapfrog” into rural areas. Conversely, low density rural development should not occur in existing or planned urban areas.

Goal LU 2: Valleys, hillsides, mountains, and public lands of Bannock County outside of cities and towns and their Areas of City Impact will continue to be rural.

Policies

2.1 Land Use Patterns in Rural Areas to be Consistent With Future Land Use Plan - New development in rural areas must be consistent with the Future Land Use Plan which establishes areas for agriculture and low density residential development outside of cities and towns and their ACIs.

2.2 Promote Clustering in Rural Areas - New residential development in rural areas should cluster when possible to avoid sensitive natural areas and hazardous areas, retain common, connected open lands, and be efficient and cost effective for developers to build and for homeowners to maintain.

2.3 Regional Cooperation - Cooperate regionally with cities and towns, businesses, and citizens to continue planning for orderly growth in the county and region.

2.4 Public Land Agency Coordination - Coordinate with public land agencies to ensure ongoing stewardship of land and access to public lands and natural areas.
Goal LU 3: Maintain healthy natural areas and connected open lands as part of the land use pattern of Bannock County.

Policies

3.1 Incorporate Natural Resources and Open Lands - New development will be designed in a manner that incorporates contiguous open lands and protects sensitive natural areas and resources (see also Chapter 10, Natural Resources goals and policies).

Goal LU 4: Promote resource-sensitive growth.

Policies

4.1 Encourage Resource-Sensitive Growth and Sustainable Design - The county will encourage development that incorporates the principles of sustainable design and that reduces energy and resource consumption and impacts on the environment, by:

- Minimizing resource consumption, energy use, and water use;
- Using renewable energy sources and locally produced materials;
- Exploring and encouraging alternatives to toxic pesticides and herbicides; and
- Using programs such as LEED™ (Leadership in Energy Efficiency and Design), United States Department of Energy’s Building America Program, and Energy Start, and other standards for energy efficiency.

Pocatello and Chubbuck and ACI Areas

Goal LU 5: Direct urban development to locations with current or planned municipal water and sewer.

Policies

5.1 Future Land Use Plan to Guide Location of Urban Development in ACIs - The Future Land Use Plan will guide location of future urban development, directing it to locations with current or planned municipal water and sewer within their ACIs. It will also reflect the adopted plans and zoning of the cities within the ACI, as they are updated and change from time-to-time.

5.2 Urban Service Boundaries to Define Service Areas - Urban Service Boundaries (defined in cooperation with Pocatello and Chubbuck) will indicate where existing and future municipal water and sewer will be available, generally inside ACI areas. The county will continue to coordinate with Pocatello and Chubbuck to direct future urban development to areas within Urban Service Boundaries.
5.3 Urban Development Required – All new development within the ACI areas that are planned for future water and sewer by the City shall be urban, to occur at densities of no less than one dwelling units per gross acre, unless provisions are made to allow for future intensification through clustering.

5.4 Require Development to be Served By Municipal Water and Sewer – New development in northern ACIs, urban service area, shall be required to be served by municipal water and sewer service, or shall make provisions for service in the future if not immediately serviceable. This shall include provisions for clustering of development that is to be served by septic systems as an interim measure.

5.5 Require Development to Retain and Treat Stormwater – New development will be required to retain and treat stormwater, or shall make provisions for retention and/or treatment through municipal services or stormwater treatment projects.

Goal LU 6: Plan for and direct beneficial, compatible development within Chubbuck and Pocatello Areas of City Impact.

Policies

6.1 Coordinate with Cities to Plan for Growth – Coordinate with Chubbuck and Pocatello to plan for growth in these communities, including issues that cross jurisdictional boundaries such as roads and transit, trails, open lands, and trails, and water quality protection.

6.2 Use Annexation to Reinforce Plan Objectives – Properties within the ACI that are eligible shall be required to apply for annexation at the time of development. Future annexations will avoid creating county islands and checkerboarded governmental jurisdictions.

6.3 Protect Aquifer Recharge Areas – New development must be designed at appropriate densities to protect aquifer recharge areas and mitigate septic effluent to maintain clean drinking water and protect public health.

Towns and ACI Areas

Goal LU 7: Plan for and direct beneficial, compatible development within towns and their Areas of City Impact.

Policies

7.1 ACIs with Towns Updated – Define and update ACI boundaries and create agreements to address future development with the towns of Inkom, McCammon, Lava Hot Springs, Arimo, and Downey.
Chapter 5: Population, Growth, and Land Use

7.2 Direct Growth Within Town ACIs - Direct appropriate residential and non-residential development to areas within Town ACIs, as determined by the Future Land Use Plan and cooperative planning with the towns.

7.3 Unincorporated Settlements - New development in and around the unincorporated settlements of Robin and Virginia will be compatible with those settlements, as determined by the Future Land Use Plan.

Rural Areas

Goal LU 8: Support continuance of farming and ranching for the production of food, fiber, and minerals in rural areas outside cities and towns and ACIs.

Policies

8.1 Locate Urban Development Only in Appropriate Areas Near Cities and Towns - Direct urban development and intensive non-residential, non-agricultural activities to cities and towns and ACIs.

8.2 Buffer Incompatible Uses - In rural areas, buffer farms and ranches and low density residential development from industrial development and high intensity residential uses.

8.3 Allow Density Transfer - Maintain agricultural densities in rural areas, but allow landowners to transfer density from lands less suitable for development (e.g., natural areas, steep slopes) to lands more suitable for development (e.g., near towns and services, roads, and utilities).

8.4 Provide Educational Resources – This plan includes a “Guide to Conservation and Sustainability” prepared by the American Farmland Trust in Appendix F, as well as and other resources. The Guide provides a sampling of tools and organizations that might be of assistance for conserving ranch and farmland in Bannock County.

Transfer of Density

This Plan proposes allowing density transfer within large parcels, or non-contiguous parcels. A Transfer of Development Rights Programs would be more complex, with provisions that allow for the purchase of the right to develop land located in a “sending” area where the county aims to protect resources, and the transfer of these rights to land located in a “receiving” area. Development rights, after severed from the land, are transferred by deed, easement, or other legal instrument authorized by local law to another parcel of land and the recording of that conveyance. Contemporary western examples include Larimer County and Mesa County, Colorado.

8.5 Forestry and Mining with Minimal Impacts - Allow forestry and mining in rural areas so long as these activities occur with minimal impact to water bodies, sensitive natural areas and to adjacent properties, and without adverse impacts on surrounding areas.

8.6 Support for Continued Agriculture and Retention of Water Rights - Support continuation of agriculture,
including non-prime agricultural lands (as classified by NRCS). Acknowledge the benefits of agriculture and irrigated lands as wildlife habitat, and to recharging of aquifer (from irrigation water). Discourage transfer of water rights to municipal uses or outside county boundaries.

8.7 **New Feedlot Operations** – Do not allow additional Confined Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs), or agricultural industries where animals are raised in confined areas, where they may create hazardous discharge conditions for surface water and groundwater or impact air quality aesthetics.

8.8 **Appropriate Design in Rural Areas** – Adopt design guidelines or standards that guide development in rural areas so that it retains the area’s character.
Chapter 6: Economic Development

Introduction

Background

Most of Bannock County’s commercial and industrial development is located in Chubbuck and Pocatello. Since its inception and over time, the county’s economy has been driven by railroads, farming and ranching, mining, heavy industry, and Idaho State University (ISU). However, the economic sectors are shifting somewhat from traditional heavy industries to new clean industries. Fort Hall Indian Reservation and the cities are attracting more of these industries (such as Hoku), in part because of ISU and because of other natural and cultural amenities. Bannock County does not play a primary role in business recruitment or retention, but has focused on partnerships with cities and the Bannock Development Corporation (BDC), which has a business recruitment mission to expand economic development.

The smaller towns in the south part of the county seek opportunities for economic diversification and revitalization. Many have vacant storefronts and buildings in their downtowns or deteriorated buildings and empty silos at the edge of town. Economic development that is consistent with the small town character is desired.

General Directions

This plan promotes diversified commercial and industrial development opportunities to locate in designated places in a way that is environmentally sensitive and has good access to transportation systems and communities. The county has not traditionally attempted to compete with the cities or towns to recruit economic development. In fact, land for commerce and industry is where it can annex into city and town (i.e., in the ACIs, mainly).

Finally, agriculture is a major component of the county’s economic viability. This Plan focuses on retaining and supporting farms and ranches as an important component of the county’s economy, recognizing that farmers and ranchers face more challenges today than a decade ago.

Guiding Principle: Diversify and Balance the Economic Base

Foster a vibrant economy in cities and towns built on living-wage jobs, a thriving business community, and clean industries with sustainable agriculture in rural areas.
Economic Development Goals and Policies

Countywide

Goal ED 1: Provide opportunities for vital commercial and industrial development in designated locations in a manner that protects resources, is nature-friendly, and is compatible with a rural landscape.

Policies

1.1 Commercial and Industrial Uses in Appropriate Locations - The Future Land Use Plan identifies appropriate locations for commercial and industrial uses, generally within cities and town ACIs and consistent with pre-existing non-residential zoning districts.

1.2 Multiple Use Districts - Improve quality of site design and development in Multiple Use Districts by addressing uses and site design issues such as screening outdoor storage and relationships of buildings and activities to one another and to adjacent sites. The intent is to encourage high quality commercial or residential uses, and discourage industrial and haphazard mixed development in these locations. (See Chapter 3, Future Land Use Plan description for the County Multiple-Use category.)

1.3 Enhanced Enforcement of Code Violations - Enforce clean up of existing county land uses and activities that are in violation of codes.

Goal ED 2: Direct shopping, services, and major employment to cities and towns and planned areas within their ACIs.

Policies

2.1 Direct Commercial and Employment Uses to Locations Defined on Future Land Use Plan - Commercial services, jobs, and manufacturing and industrial uses will be directed to places that are convenient to county residents and visitors—primarily in cities and towns and their ACIs. The Future Land Use Plan reserves land for jobs and defines locations for shopping, services, and jobs in areas generally in cities and towns and ACIs where non-residential districts are located (i.e., Multiple-use, General Commercial, Light Industrial, or Industrial).

2.2 Strip Commercial Development Discouraged - Avoid strip commercial development patterns because they are not consistent with the county’s heritage. This form of commercial development is not conducive to walking, affects functionality and efficiency of streets and highways, competes with viable Main Street and downtown businesses, and is not consistent with
maintaining attractive appearance of major roadway corridors.

2.3 *Locate Large Industrial and Commercial Structures and Intensive Activities in Appropriate Locations* – Industrial and commercial buildings with large footprints are most appropriate in urban areas. They should be limited or mitigated if located near agricultural and rural areas of the county, unless they are for uses that are related to agricultural uses.

**Goal ED 3:** Encourage the development of green businesses and industries in Bannock County to promote a healthy, vital economy.

**Policies**

3.1 *Seek Businesses that Provide Family-Wage Jobs* – The county will support efforts of cities and towns, Fort Hall Indian Reservation, and Bannock Development Corporation who continue to recruit larger employers that provide family-wage jobs and that are predominantly clean industries.

3.2 *Support “Quality of Life” Initiatives that Attract Employers* – Continue to support other “quality of life” initiatives that attract employers and families, including support for education and training, cultural facilities, and outdoor recreation.

3.3 *Home Occupations* – Support home occupations and small start-up businesses that create local employment opportunities.

3.4 *Renewable Energy* – Support businesses that increase domestic production of renewable energy sources.

3.5 *Target Green Industries* – The county, together with its cities, will target and promote Green Industry. The county and cities desire more industries that preserve and enhance its significant natural and environmental features, produce high quality educational, scientific resources or products, and minimally pollute the environment and make use of “green industry” principles.

**Towns and ACI Areas**

**Goal ED 4:** Identify opportunities to encourage business recruitment, revitalization, and infill in towns.

**Policies**

4.1 *Support Local Economic Development Efforts* – Work with the small towns to identify measures to support economic development and revitalization in towns.

4.2 *Discourage Incompatible Uses* – Limit further proliferation of junk yards and unscreened outdoor storage and sales in and near small towns. Attend to construction standards for buildings and their placement.
Chapter 6: Economic Development

Goal ED 5: Support agriculture as an important component of the county’s economy.

Policies

5.1 Encourage Agricultural Support Uses - Farmers and ranchers perform important functions. This plan encourages agriculture and agricultural support uses on traditional and operational farm land – promoting flexibility to allow farm and ranch-related economic activity, including tourism, hunting (including preserves), fishing, limited mineral extraction, and renewable energy production.

5.2 Discourage Incompatible Uses - Limit or restrict uses in rural areas that are incompatible with farming, ranching, and very low density development, such as large-scale industries and businesses and structures, and urban residential subdivisions.

5.3 Support Programs that Promote Consumption of Local Agricultural Products – Bannock County will support local agricultural activities by encouraging and promoting Farmers Markets and community supported agriculture (CSA) programs. In addition, the county will assist development of the highest value of agricultural enterprises by linking of the traditional, market-based economy with related industries of tourism and other green industries. (see Goal ED 3 on page 45.)

5.4 Other Means of Supporting Agriculture - Support the business of agriculture and ranching through various options, such as the existing Right to Farm and Ranch programs, and the reduction of regulatory barriers to agricultural support activities.

5.5 Recognize Multiple Benefits of Agriculture - Recognize that agricultural lands offer multiple values to our communities (i.e., for local food production, aquifer recharge, wildlife habitat/migration, and potential for renewable energy production).

5.6 Avoid Residential Impacts on Agriculture - Limit scattered rural residential development and subdivisions in agricultural areas. Where residential development occurs, encourage development to cluster near services and utilities and away from operational farm activities and sensitive natural areas or hazardous areas.
Goal ED 6: Recognize and promote the economic value of wildlife, natural resources, and outdoor recreation in Bannock County.

Policies

6.1 Promote Economic Value of Natural Resources - Work with Bannock Development Corporation and other organizations to build their understanding of the value of natural resources and outdoor recreation in Bannock County and to promote it.

6.2 Promote Environmentally-Sensitive Development - Ensure that development is wildlife-friendly and sensitive to context and surroundings to the extent possible.
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Chapter 7: Housing

Introduction

Background

Over 85% of Bannock County residents live in the incorporated cities and small towns. The other 15% live in rural areas or on farms and ranches. Residents of the towns and cities generally enjoy safe neighborhoods that offer a mix of housing types.

Housing in the unincorporated county at the edge of communities or in more rural and remote areas tends to be single family homes on larger lots. Current trends in Bannock County and around the American West indicate the county may see more pressure for rural residential development on hillsides and rural landscapes. These residential areas are safe and secure; however, more encroachment near forest areas has necessitated need for urban-wildlife interface and wildfire protection strategies. Moreover, the sheriff’s department has needed to increase its frequency and distance of patrols as development becomes more dispersed, leading to increased costs and wearing the department’s ability to serve. In addition, rising costs of land are fueling higher housing costs putting housing affordability on Bannock County’s radar screen. While not a pressing need currently, housing that is affordable for the workforce may become more important.

General Directions

Encouraging a range of housing options in the county and its cities and towns is one way to ensure that people of different age and income levels have attainable housing options. However, most workforce housing will occur in cities to be near jobs, services, and efficient, low cost transportation options.

This Plan directs housing to areas defined by the Future Land Use Plan and recognizes the need for a variety of mixed housing types in the county and safe, secure, neighborhoods.

Guiding Principle: Promote Housing Choices

Be a place where people of all ages and incomes can live and have housing choices, and where high-quality, neighborhoods in cities and towns are the building blocks of livable communities, where people feel safe and secure.
Housing Goals and Policies

Countywide

Goal H 1: Direct new housing to locations defined by the Future Land Use Plan.

Policies

1.1 Direct Housing into Areas with Services - Most new housing will go in cities, towns, and planned growth areas within their ACIs, with urban neighborhoods as the building blocks for livable communities.

1.2 Other Housing Opportunities - The Future Land Use Plan identifies some housing opportunities for unincorporated county areas (including in the following categories: Agricultural, Residential Rural, and Residential Suburban Districts, and some in Recreation, and Multiple Use.) However, residents of these areas must expect that public facilities and services (water, sewer, police and emergency services, parks, etc.) will be limited or non-existent in these areas.

Goal H 2: Plan for a variety of housing types to meet future needs.

Policies

2.1 Coordination on Housing Needs - Coordinate with cities to ensure that the county and its communities have land use plans that address locations for and housing needs of current and future residents.

2.2 Special Needs Housing - Special needs housing will generally locate in cities or in towns that have facilities to serve the population (such as Senior Centers and medical facilities) with access to transit or transportation options.

2.3 Variety of Housing Types - New neighborhoods within City’s Urban Service Boundary and their Area of City Impact will have a variety of housing types in quality neighborhoods designed to protect long term property values and to provide safe and healthy places for different members of the community to live, including families, seniors, youth, singles, and couples.

Goal H 3: Ensure that workforce housing needs are met for Bannock County residents.

Policies

3.1 Encourage Housing Choices - Work with cities and towns to ensure they are allowing and encouraging developers to provide neighborhoods with housing choices, an aspect essential to providing housing that is affordable and for all segments of the population.
Bannock County aims to allow multiple generations of people from families with young children to senior citizens to live and work in cities and towns.

3.3 Multi-Family Housing Location and Design - Multi-family or attached housing types in neighborhoods within City’s Urban Service Boundary and their Area of City Impact will be accessible to major transportation corridors and services and jobs. Such housing will be of high quality and integrated into community neighborhoods with access to amenities.

Goal H 4: Ensure future housing is of high quality and energy efficient to give lasting value.

Policies

4.1 Design for Quality - New housing and neighborhoods will be designed to retain quality over time using high quality building materials and following principles of neighborhood design (below).

4.2 Energy Efficient Design - Promote “Leader in Energy and Environmental Design” (LEED) standards for both neighborhood and building design.

Pocatello and Chubbuck and ACI Areas

Goal H 5: Support urban neighborhoods within Urban Service boundaries as the building blocks for livable communities.

Policies

5.1 Balanced Neighborhoods - Neighborhoods within cities and their Urban Service Areas and ACIs will be the building blocks of Bannock County, making it a livable place. Urban neighborhoods with access to jobs, recreation facilities, places of worship, civic centers, and other urban amenities. They also can be served by municipal water and sewer.

5.2 Residential Site Design - New residential development will address site design to maximize efficiency of roads and utilities, promote safety in wildland interface areas and protect sensitive natural areas to the extent possible.

5.3 Suburban Residential Locations - Plan for and direct Suburban Residential to appropriate locations near cities. Residential Suburban is located in areas with existing and future municipal water and sewer. (i.e., designated within Urban Service Area in ACIs)

Towns and ACI Areas

See Countywide Goals and Cities and ACI Areas Goals for Housing

Rural Areas

See Countywide Goals for Housing
Policies

5.4 Rural Residential Locations - Rural Residential is appropriate as a rural lifestyle choice but only where it is designated on the Future Land Use Plan. Because of cost of services and other impacts, the county will not allow further proliferation of Rural Residential on lands outside of this category. In addition, the county will encourage residential development that is clustered on parcels away from neighboring uses and to conserve common open space—rather than dispersed rural development.

5.5 Residential Site Design - New residential development will address site design to maximize efficiency of roads and utilities, promote safety in wildland urban interface areas and protect sensitive natural areas.

Rural Residential Development
In Bannock County, and most western communities, consumers seek rural homes as well as urban neighborhoods. The County has designated some locations for rural residential housing—where existing districts exist (Rural, Suburban, and Recreational primarily). However, rural residential development has drawbacks. It generally consumes land less efficiently than urban development, fragments agricultural land, wildlife habitat, and natural areas, and it costs more to the County and taxpayers to provide services. This plan recognizes a certain demand for housing in rural areas, but it also explores options and alternatives such as clustered development or density transfers. The Land Use Chapter, 3, explains the Open Space Subdivisions approach and Chapter 15 explains density transfers.
Chapter 8: Schools

Introduction

Background
Two school districts (Pocatello #25 and Marsh Valley #21) are responsible for providing schools and K-12 grade education for children in Bannock County. Other lifelong learning institutions (such as Idaho State University) are generally located in cities and towns. Idaho State University is an important economic aspect of the region that the county will continue to support.

General Directions
This plan promotes coordination of the county with the school districts to ensure that district needs are met as growth occurs.

Guiding Principle: Support Educational Opportunities
Be a county with access to high quality schools and opportunities for life-long learning.

School Goals and Policies

Countywide

Goal S 1: Coordinate with schools to plan for future growth.

Policies

5.1 School Site Coordination - Coordinate with Schools to plan for future locations for schools in the county and plan for future growth. Issues include identifying locations for school bus pick up and turn-around.

5.2 School Facility Financing - Ensure new development contributes to cover the costs of necessary school facilities as growth occurs.

Cities and ACI Areas Goals
See Countywide Goals for Schools

Towns and ACI Areas Goals
See Countywide Goals for Schools

Rural Areas
See Countywide Goals for Schools
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Chapter 9: Public Services, Facilities, and Utilities

Introduction

Background
In Bannock County, a wide range of entities provide cost-effective and efficient facilities and utilities to customers. In unincorporated areas and towns, Bannock County provides public services including roads and bridges (except where roads are privately maintained), landfill, jail, courts, ambulance, County Fairgrounds (north and south), planning, and code enforcement. The Sheriff’s Department also patrols the unincorporated areas and small towns, with a core purpose of protecting the safety and welfare of citizens and providing homeland security. The cities of Pocatello and Chubbuck generally provide urban services to the incorporated areas, including, but not limited to water and sewer, stormwater management, police, paved urban streets and sidewalks, parks and recreation, recreational trails, transit, libraries, and cultural facilities like museums. The various fire districts provide fire protection services. Semi-private utilities provide electricity, telecommunications, and Internet services.

General Directions
Generally, in rural areas and small towns, residents do not expect urban level of services and do not obtain them. Many rural developments rely on well and septic systems (for water and wastewater treatment) and are accessed via unpaved roads. However, as development expands into rural areas, the county will have increased demands for providing services, even while annual funding for roads and bridges and sheriff patrols has either declined or flattened in recent years.

This plan recommends the county continue to provide efficient and effective services to address the health, safety, and welfare needs of current and future residents.

Guiding Principle: Provide Infrastructure and Public Services Efficiently and Effectively
Provide cost-efficient public services and utilities that address citizens’ health, safety, and welfare needs.
Chapter 9: Public Services, Facilities, and Utilities

Public Services, Facilities, and Utilities Goals and Policies

Countywide

Goal PS 1: Ensure cost-effective and efficient county services to promote health, safety, and welfare.

Policies

1.1 Define Appropriate Levels and Needs for Essential Services - Define need for and continue to fund essential services including sheriff and fire protection and road maintenance to meet present and future needs.

1.2 Landfill Operations - Ensure efficient landfill operations to serve countywide needs. Promote solid waste reduction programs to reduce landfill costs.

1.3 Sheriff Services and Safety - Determine adequate response times for different areas of the county and provide efficient services.

1.4 Capital Improvements Planning - Use a Capital Improvements Plan (CIP) to plan for strategic short- and long-term investments that both provide necessary infrastructure and meet other county goals.

1.5 Urban Wildland Interface Fire Codes and Fire Protection - Any development/residential building construction needs to comply to the Urban Wildland Interface Fire Codes and International Fire Codes.

Goal PS 2: Plan for adequate public facilities and services to meet future needs.

Policies

2.1 Locate Development Only Where it can Be Adequately Served by Critical Services - Direct urban development within Urban Service Boundaries where City utilities and safety services can be provided, to maximize efficient and economic use of infrastructure investments (both public and private).

2.2 Service Impacts of Rural Development - Mitigate the impact of rural subdivisions on the provision of present and future public services, facilities, and utilities provided by municipalities, Bannock County, and other service providers.

2.3 Development Reasonable Share of Direct Costs - The county will implement measures to ensure that developers pay the reasonable share of the direct cost of needed support facilities and services at the time of a new development.
Goal PS 3:  Continue to provide access for citizens of Bannock County to information and high quality services.

Policies

3.1  **Web-Based Information** - Make the Comprehensive Plan and other policy and regulatory documents easily accessible via Internet and through other avenues. Continue public web-based services, keeping current information up-to-date.

3.2  **Informational/Educational Materials** – Coordinate with other agencies to provide access to educational materials to implement this plan, including guidelines, information about water resource protection, and agricultural programs.

Pocatello and Chubbuck and ACI Areas

Goal PS 4:  Coordinate county and city development standards to provide consistent infrastructure requirements within ACIs

4.1  **Coordinate Standards with Cities** – New development that will annex into a city will develop according to county standards that are consistent with the city. Consistent standards will address street sections and configuration, lot layout, standards for uses and structures, and environmental protection.

Towns and ACI Areas

See Countywide Goals for Public Services, Facilities, and Utilities

Rural Areas

See Countywide Goals for Public Services, Facilities, and Utilities
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Chapter 10: Natural Resources, Hazardous Areas, and Environment

Introduction

Background

Residents of Bannock County enjoy a high quality of life in livable communities in part because of access to a safe, clean, and healthy environment and abundant nearby natural resources with opportunities for outdoor recreation, solitude, hunting, and fishing. Important and unique natural features or assets of the County include the Portneuf River and its tributaries, American Falls Reservoir, geologically famous lava cliffs and flows, hot springs, and wildlife such as mule deer, elk, and other large mammals. Residents and visitors alike recognize the Bannock and Portneuf Mountain range backdrops as scenic assets.

As growth increases, the community is becoming more aware about the need to protect its drinking water source which requires protection of surface (Portneuf River and its tributaries) and groundwater (primarily the Portneuf River Valley Aquifer). Furthermore, it has become increasingly apparent that near and distant industries or land use activities may threaten the quality of the County’s fish and wildlife resources and may influence recreational opportunities in the Portneuf River. Accordingly, this plan prioritizes and conserves other natural resources for present and future generations.

General Directions

This plan generally promotes livable communities and nature-friendly development in the future by including goals to protect and enhance the quality of the natural environment including air, water, skies, and wildlife habitat—to provide stewardship of the land for current and future generations. In addition, the county will avoid directing development to areas where hazards may occur or are difficult to mitigate, such as in floodplains and fire-prone areas.

Community members and property owners also cite the need to balance rights of property owners with reasonable resource protection measures.
## Natural Resources Goals and Policies

### Countywide

Goal NR 1: **Take positive measures to prevent loss of life or property resulting from known natural or man-made hazards.**

### Policies

1. **Limit Development in 100-Year Floodplain** – New development must avoid the 100-year floodplain (including locations with flash flood potential).

2. **Minimize Development in Areas With High Wildfire Potential** – Residential development must avoid locations with high wildfire potential. Where it is unavoidable, development in wildland urban interface areas will provide fire breaks, defensive space, and other measures to minimize hazards (consistent with standards of fire districts).

3. **Minimize Development on Steep Slopes** – New development will be minimized on steep, unstable slopes as follows:
   - On slopes that are 15 percent to less than 30 percent slope, minimize development (no more than 20 percent of a parcel will develop and only if parcel is configured so that no suitable flatter locations exist), and
   - On slopes that are 30 percent slope and greater, avoid development (no more than five percent of a parcel will develop, and only if parcel is configured such that no suitable flatter locations are available).
   - Development on slopes greater than 20% should have a conservation plan I place or a geo-technical report provided by developers migrating any potential problems or impact to the surrounding area.
Goal NR 2: Maintain clean drinking water by protecting our aquifers, waterbodies, and community, municipal, and domestic wells.

Policies

2.1 Protect Aquifer Recharge Areas - Minimize contamination to Lower Portneuf aquifer and other groundwater sources by addressing site-specific sources of contamination and through regional watershed approach (i.e., Water Resource Protection Overlay District).

2.2 Limit Septic System Use in Vulnerable Groundwater Areas - Limit intensive development and proliferation of septic systems near municipal or community wells and aquifer recharge areas, through Water Resource Protection Overlay standards.

2.3 Protect Streams and Wetlands - Protect streams and wetlands from the impacts of septic systems, urban and rural storm water runoff by establishing and enforcing setback requirements (i.e., at least 100 feet). Retain wastewater on site to prevent wastewater and stormwater contamination to surface water resources.

Goal NR 3: Ensure availability of adequate water supply for present and future generations.

Policies

3.1 Development Concurrent with Water Availability - Plan for future growth and development so it is concurrent with water availability. Growth will not exceed water availability.

3.2 Water Conservation Measures - Promote water conservation for urban uses, such as lawn watering, household appliances, car washes and similar activities.

3.3 Drought-Tolerant Landscape - Require drought-tolerant (and native) planting and efficient watering techniques in new development and where possible the use of non-potable water for landscapes.

Goal NR 4: Maintain clean air in Bannock County.

Policies

4.1 Development Patterns to Minimize Travel - Avoid dispersed development, so that the transportation system is efficient. This minimizes the overall vehicle number of miles traveled and supports multi-modal options (e.g., bike paths, transit, walking, or other transportation options).

4.2 Dust Control Measures - Support clean air measures, such as dust control on construction sites and unpaved roadways.
4.3 **Clean Industry** - Promote industry that does not emit contaminants (such as mercury), contributing to air quality degradation.

**Goal NR 5: Support wildlife-friendly development and open lands for wildlife habitat.**

**Policies**

5.1 **Low Densities of Development in Important Wildlife Habitat Areas** – Maintain low densities of development (i.e., Agricultural or Rural Residential) in important wildlife habitat areas.

5.2 **Habitat Fragmentation Avoided** – Avoid fragmenting wildlife habitat (especially mule deer and also elk, cougar, bear, bobcat, moose, and smaller animals) with roads, fences, and other development to the extent possible. Promote wildlife crossing signage where possible.

5.3 **Open Lands Acquisition** – Identify important wildlife habitat areas for potential acquisition as part of a county-wide open lands program.

5.4 **Compatible Development** – Where development occurs, promote wildlife-friendly building approaches and public education. (Note: Policy 5.2 regarding fragmentation and 5.3 regarding acquisition, will be most effective for protecting wildlife habitat.)

5.5 **Invasive Species Management** – Support weed and invasive species abatement and control measures to manage invasive weeds that are harmful to agriculture and the structure and function of native aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems. In agricultural and natural areas, rehabilitation of “weedy” areas to restore their value as wildlife habitat and for erosion control may be required.

**Goal NR 6: Maintain Bannock County’s scenic and aesthetic quality.**

**Policies**

6.1 **Control Signage to Retain Scenic Views** – Do not allow further proliferation of billboards and large signs in the county to retain visual quality of Bannock County.

6.2 **Context-Sensitive Design** – Promote site design and layout that minimizes visual landscape “clutter” in valleys and on hillsides.

6.3 **Unsightly Uses** – Limit further proliferation of junk yards, unscreened or unsightly gravel pits, and outdoor storage or sheds in highly visible areas through the Future Land Use Plan.

6.4 **Screen Public Facilities** – Work with agencies to better screen public maintenance yards, especially in visually sensitive areas.

6.5
**Goal NR 7: Promote energy-efficient development and design.**

**Policies:**

7.1 *Promote Green Building Programs* - Promote energy-efficient and environmentally-friendly building techniques such as solar-orientation, increased insulation, and recycled materials, and renewable energy resource use in new development.

7.2 *Encourage LEED Compliance* - Use incentives to promote compliance with Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED-certified) and LEED Guidelines for Neighborhoods.

**Pocatello and Chubbuck and ACI Areas**

See Countywide Goals for Natural Resources, Hazardous Areas, and Environment.

**Towns and ACI Areas**

See Countywide Goals for Natural Resources, Hazardous Areas, and Environment

**Rural Areas**

See Countywide Goals for Natural Resources, Hazardous Areas, and Environment

**Goal NR 8: Protect night skies from excessive lighting.**

**Policies**

8.1 *Well Designed Lighting to Protect Dark Night Skies* - Continue to enforce lighting standards so lighting is designed to be safe and avoid spillover onto adjacent properties (i.e., no upward shining lights; must have shielded lights, and the like).

8.2 *Minimize Impacts of Street Lighting in Rural Areas* - Work with highway department to ensure that street lighting in rural areas is designed to be safe while minimizing light spillover.
Chapter 11: Parks, Recreation, Open Lands, and Trails

Introduction

Background

Recreation and outdoor lands are important to residents and visitors for their aesthetic and economic and other values. Bannock County does not currently have an open lands acquisition program, nor does it have resources for trails planning. Bannock County is situated in an arid mountain and plains landscape. As a result, certain features and landscapes are important for consideration as future parks or open lands, such as the Portneuf River and its tributaries and floodplains, open sagebrush and grasslands, geologic sites such as lava cliffs, winter range wildlife habitat, and other resources, identified throughout this Plan. Management techniques must be appropriate for arid landscapes in order to avoid invasive weeds and to conserve and protect water resources. Bannock County also recognizes that its landscapes have economic value for their capability to produce food and fiber and also because of the draw of tourism and visitation to public lands.

General Directions

This Plan recommends planning an open lands and linked trail system that is responsive to the needs and values of Bannock County citizens and complementary to the parks, open lands, and recreation program provided by cities and public land agencies. An open lands program can also overlap with some of the goals of the natural resources chapter—to protect important resources such as riparian areas, wetlands, and meadows, and to ensure a healthy, safe environment for people and wildlife. Citizens have also expressed interest in maintaining access to public lands and defining additional access points in the future.

Guiding Principle: Retain Access to Public Lands and Conserve Open Lands

Retain access to our public lands and conserve private and public open lands in the county.


**Parks, Recreation, Open Lands, and Trails Goals and Policies**

**Countywide**

**Goal OL 1:** Plan for a connected open lands, recreation, and trails system that meets needs of Bannock County citizens.

**Policies**

1.1 *Open Lands and Trails Planning* – Work with cities and towns to jointly plan for open lands and trails that expand on municipal parks and recreation programs, especially along the Portneuf River.

1.2 *Identify Desired Open Lands* – Plan and define desirable types of open lands, and identify potential contiguous open lands parcels or targets for acquisition or conservation with land trusts or other organizations.

1.5 *Voluntary Open Lands Protection* – Protect open lands through other voluntary means, focusing particularly on lands with unique or sensitive natural resources or scenic qualities that contribute to Bannock County’s western identity.

**Goal OL 2:** Maintain and expand access for the public to public lands for outdoor recreation, fishing, hunting, hiking, and other activities.

**Policies**

2.1 *Public Lands Access* – As new development occurs, ensure it provides access to adjoining public lands from traditionally-used trail and road connections and locations for parking and trailheads by the development.

2.2 *Private Lands Access* – Work with landowners to explore access for hunting/fishing and additional access points (e.g., private fee-based).

**Goal OL 3:** Encourage developers to provide easements that allow for connecting recreational pathways throughout the County.

**Policies**

3.1 *Encourage Easements and Connections* – Work with developers to grant public easements for trails to ensure an extension/connection of trails.

3.2 *Extend Greenways* – Coordinate and work with towns to develop and extend greenways throughout their ACIs.

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**Benefits of Open Lands Protection**

Open Lands are seen by many citizens’ as important to “quality of life” for economic, social, and environmental reasons. It provides opportunities for outdoor recreation, places for education and learning, and a way to improve environmental health and wildlife habitat areas, and it helps with keeping buildings and people out of hazardous areas, such as floodplains. Many studies also show that open space creates economic and property value—particularly for neighborhoods or developments next-door to permanently protected lands. Communities with well planned and funded open space programs are able to attract business and employment.

Some important areas in Bannock County might be along the Lava Cliffs and in the Sagebrush Steppe and Mule Deer winter range habitat.

A county does not have to buy all its open space; some open space can be set aside as part of future developments, but it is not possible to achieve all the public aims of an open space program through regulations alone.
Pocatello and Chubbuck and ACI Areas

Goal OL 4: Extend the Portneuf River Greenway and trails in Chubbuck/Pocatello region.

Policies

4.1 Regional Trails Plan – Coordinate with cities of Chubbuck and Pocatello to plan for the Greenway and trails within the ACI.

4.2 Extend Trails in City ACI Areas - Coordinate with cities of Chubbuck and Pocatello to extend the Greenway and trails and complete gaps in the current trail system along the Portneuf River.

4.3 Require Trail Connections - Encourage developers to provide local trails connecting new neighborhoods to the river trail system.

Towns and ACI Areas and Rural Areas

See Countywide Goals for Parks, Recreation, Open Lands, and Trails
Chapter 12: Transportation

(Note – This chapter to be amended when county Transportation Plan is completed.)

Introduction

Background

Unincorporated parts of Bannock County benefit from a relatively connected transportation system with low amounts of traffic, although traffic levels have been rising, particularly in the urban area. The Bannock Planning Organization is responsible for regional transportation planning in the North County cities (Pocatello and Chubbuck and their ACIs), whereas Bannock County plans for its rural transportation system together with the Downey-Swan Lake Highway Department. Railroads have made Bannock County a transportation hub traditionally; however, they provide transportation for freight and no longer for people. Airports (such as Pocatello) are also important as part of a transportation system.

Within Bannock County, great differences exist between the urban and rural transportation systems. For instance, within Chubbuck and Pocatello, people travel on paved roads with curb and gutter (local streets as well as arterial streets and highways), sidewalks, bike lanes and paths, transit corridors and stations, and connect to airports and railroad. The rural transportation system (outside of the cities and towns) consists primarily of local roads—paved and unpaved—connecting to highways or county roads, and typically without curb and gutter and sidewalks or transit.

General Directions

This Plan recommends a connected, well-planned transportation system that differentiates between urban and rural needs and is coordinated with land use, growth and development.

Guiding Principle: Develop a Safe, Comprehensive Transportation System

Be connected by a safe and efficient transportation system that improves mobility in towns and to surrounding areas by creating a comprehensive, multi-modal network of roads, trails, pathways, bicycle facilities, and transit.
# Transportation Goals and Policies

## Countywide

**Goal T 1:** Establish an efficient local and regional transportation system.

### Policies

1.1 *Continued Coordination between Land Use and Transportation* - Coordinate transportation and land use planning in Bannock County to ensure that the transportation system continues to be efficient in the future.

1.2 *Regional Cooperation* - Coordinate across all levels of local, regional, state, and federal transportation representatives and agencies for seamless transportation system.

**Goal T 2:** Improve the operation and finance of our transportation system.

### Policies

2.1 *Regional Cooperation* - Cooperate among all levels of local, regional, state, and federal transportation representatives and agencies.

2.2 *Coordinate with Bannock Planning Organization* - Coordinate with Bannock Planning Organization to update and implement its Transportation Plan for the north county.

2.3 *Coordinate with Downey-Swan Lake Highway Department* - Coordinate with Downey-Swan Lake Highway Department to prepare a plan for the south county that is coordinated with the Future Land Use Plan.

## Pocatello and Chubbuck and ACI Areas

**Goal T 3:** In Chubbuck and Pocatello and their ACIs, plan for a multi-modal transportation system and streets that meet applicable urban standards and needs.

### Policies

3.1 *Consistent Standards in ACI Areas* - In Pocatello and Chubbuck ACI areas, ensure the transportation system consists of streets, sidewalks, bicycle facilities, and transit facilities that are consistent with city standards.

3.2 *Bikeway Facilities in ACI Areas* - Develop and maintain a system of safe and efficient bikeways, connecting neighborhoods with commercial areas, schools, parks, and other neighborhoods.

3.3 *Pedestrian Facilities in ACIs* - Develop and maintain a pedestrian circulation system, including sidewalks and/or
trails that provide direct, continuous, and safe movement within and between residential areas, employment areas, and commercial services. Trails may more appropriate than sidewalks in hilly areas.

3.4 Trail Connections to Expand the Greenway System - With Chubbuck and Pocatello, plan for trail connections to expand the Greenway system (i.e., through voluntary acquisitions respecting property rights, or through development dedication when development occurs). (See also Chapter 11, Parks, Recreation, Open Lands, and Trails Goals.)

3.5 Designated Truck Routes - Plan for designated truck routes to efficiently plan for and maintain roads that will therefore receive more intense wear and tear.

Goal T 4: Support Pocatello Regional Airport.

Policies

4.1 Coordination with Regional Airport - Continue to coordinate with Pocatello to carry forward the city’s goals and policies related to the Pocatello Regional Airport.

Towns and ACI Areas

Goal T 5: In towns and their ACIs, plan for streets to meet applicable town standards and needs.

Policies

5.1 Town/County Coordination - Coordinate with towns and with Downey-Swan Lake Highway Department on transportation planning to address street standards, rural subdivisions fire access, and other issues.

5.2 Right-of-way Reservation - Reserve right-of-way to accommodate expected traffic volume over the next 20 years.

5.3 Pedestrian Facilities - Develop and maintain a pedestrian circulation system within the town’s ACI areas, including sidewalks and trails that provide direct, continuous, and safe movement within and between residential areas and commercial services.

Rural Areas

Goal T 6: Ensure safe and well-designed rural roads in rural areas.

Policies

6.1 Safety and Access Needs - Design rural roads to meet safety and circulation and access needs of current and future traffic as well as agricultural vehicles and livestock. Seek methods to move deer across roads (e.g., bridges, underpasses, flashing lights, and the like).
6.2 Context-Sensitive Roadway Design - Design rural roads to minimize disruption to wildlife, hillsides, the natural environment (i.e., streams and rivers), and aesthetic qualities.

6.3 Design for School Buses - Design rural roads to accommodate needs for school buses to ensure safety.
Chapter 13: Community Design and Special Sites

Introduction

Background
Bannock County contains distinctive places as well as important historical and natural features (such as the lava cliffs). The communities within Bannock County each have a proud heritage and unique events and ways of celebrating their history and differences. However, Bannock County itself is not well known outside the region.

General Directions
This plan highlights those distinct areas of the county and provides directions to identify and protect county assets and carry on events and celebrations that citizens value. It also will help engage citizens in preserving and protecting the county’s natural, historical, and cultural assets.

Guiding Principle: Maintain our Distinct Communities
Recognize and respect the distinct places in the county (including cities; small towns and settlements; rural valleys; mountains and hillsides; and public lands and Fort Hall) and their unique assets. We will honor and showcase our natural and cultural assets and history to convey a positive county image.

Community Design and Special Sites
Goals and Policies

Countywide

Goal CD 1: Maintain and promote the character of distinct areas of the county.

Policies

1.1 Recognize Uniqueness of Different Geographic and Cultural Areas – This plan identifies different geographic regions and goals and policies for each. In addition, it recognizes that cities and small towns all have uniquely different qualities.
Goal CD 2: Promote a positive image for residents and visitors alike.

**Policies**

2.1 *Positive Image for Development* - Ensure that development and landscaping quality positively affects the identity and image of communities. Discourage junk yards or unsightly development.

2.2 *Rural Economic Development* - Work with small towns to promote economic development and provide opportunities for youth.

Goal CD 2: Identify and protect sensitive cultural (i.e., archeological sites or landscapes) and recognize their educational, economic, and aesthetic value.

**Policies**

2.1 *Identify and Protect Archeological and Cultural Features* - Recognizing that archaeological sites and other cultural features add financial and intrinsic value to the county, identify such areas and protect their positive qualities and enhance them to the extent possible.

2.2 *Design Development to Protect Archeological and Cultural Features* - Plan development carefully to protect these assets, using a variety of voluntary techniques including incentives, clustering, and buffering not intended to restrict landowners’ rights, but to encourage better, more creative planning and conservation. Encourage density transfers within large parcels (address lot sizes, setbacks, etc.) to locations more suitable for development.

Goal CD 3: Respect and showcase historic sites and history.

**Policies**

3.1 *Historic Building Restoration* - Support restoring historic buildings to house vibrant businesses (where relevant in unincorporated county).

3.2 *Support for Historic Preservation Programs* - Support historic preservation programs, through education, awareness, and outreach, and working with private groups.

3.3 *Site-sensitive Design near Historic Resources* - Encourage development to locate away from historic sites or landscapes; use site-sensitive design that takes into account these resources and develop incentives.
Pocatello and Chubbuck and ACI Areas

Goal CD 4: Maintain and promote the distinct differences and needs of Chubbuck and Pocatello.

4.1 Support “Our Valley, Our Vision” - Support Chubbuck and Pocatello in achieving the “Our Valley, Our Vision” goals for each community.

Towns and ACI Areas

Goal CD 5: Work with the small towns of Inkom, McCammon, Arimo, Downey, and Lava Hot Springs to promote unique identity and address distinct planning needs.

5.1 Identify and Promote Unique Identity of Small Towns - Work with Inkom, McCammon, Arimo, and Downey to identify their unique characteristics, market assets, and encourage compatible development and revitalization.

5.2 Downey Multiple Use Area - The Plan encourages examining the boundaries of the Downey Multiple Use Area, and examining specific zoning.

5.3 Coordinate to Plan for Town ACIs - The Plan encourages the county working with the towns to examine the ACI boundaries (Inkom, McCammon, Lava Hot Springs, Arimo, and Downey) and specific zoning to discourage sprawling development that is costly to serve and to ensure that new development will have adequate fire protection.

Rural Areas

See Countywide Goals for Community Design and Special Sites
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Chapter 14: Property Rights

Introduction

Background

Both private property rights and local land use control have been the cornerstones of American society for many years, but in recent times the two concepts have often been viewed as unlikely adversaries. The community must recognize that it can exercise planning policies and powers only as they relate to their responsibility and authority to promote community planning, public health and safety needs. Likewise, property rights advocates must understand that rights can be strong, but only up to the point where exercising them does not have a substantial detrimental effect on the county and communities and property rights of other landowners.

The Fifth Amendment to the United States Constitution generally states that private property must not be taken for public use without just compensation. In the case of a government regulatory action (such as zoning), a “regulatory taking” is considered to be an action that so interferes with the use of private property that it has the same effect as a physical appropriation. In most cases, the test of whether an action is a taking is whether the regulation denies an owner of all economically viable use of the property. It is important to note that the courts have been very clear on this last issue; a taking does not occur simply because a regulatory action may impose limits on the use of property. Any laws or regulations governing private property should heavily depend upon the government’s authority and responsibility to protect public health, safety, and welfare. Based upon this premise, courts have supported the limitation of the use of private property through land use plans and regulations such as Comprehensive Plans, Zoning Ordinances, Subdivision Ordinances, and Environmental Quality Acts.

The Takings Clause is often misconstrued as a prohibition against any regulation that either decreases property value or prohibits individuals from "doing what they want with their land." A loss of potential market value or a sense that a plan or regulation may hamper an individual’s use of their property is not enough to trigger a takings claim.

General Directions

This section includes goals and policies to ensure that this Plan’s policies and implementing regulations balance property rights and planning objectives and do not violate property rights.
Guiding Principle: Respect Property Rights

Give property owners reasonable choices for use of their land, while balancing community rights and responsibilities and respecting the property rights of others.

Property Rights Goals and Policies

Countywide

Goal PR 1: Ensure that the county’s land use policies and regulations do not violate private property rights.

Policies

3.1 Balance Property Rights with Planning Objectives - Balance private property rights with community planning, public health, and safety needs within the accepted confines of national, state, and local laws.

3.2 Avoid Unconstitutional Takings of Property - Ensure that county land use actions, decisions, and regulations will not cause an unconstitutional physical taking of private property, and do not effectively eliminate all economic value of the property.

3.3 Dependence on the County’s Responsibility to Protect Public Health, Safety, and Welfare - Ensure that county land use actions, decisions, and regulations mesh with the county’s responsibility to protect public health, safety, and welfare.
Chapter 15: Implementation Strategy

Overview

This chapter recommends how the county may best implement the policies outlined in this Plan. To effectively implement the goals and policies of this Plan, it is necessary for the county to identify the types of actions required and determine the priority and timing of the actions so the agencies are able to allocate resources. The county will carry out this Comprehensive Plan using several approaches, as briefly described below, including:

- Policy Decisions,
- Ordinance Revisions,
- Intergovernmental Coordination,
- New Funding Mechanisms, and
- Promoting the Plan’s ideas.

Policy Decisions

Most of the policies in this Plan will be implemented through day-to-day policy decisions—those made by the planning staff, Planning and Development Council, and Board of County Commissioners. This Plan will serve as the guide for policy decisions throughout its life.

Bannock County Subdivision and Zoning Ordinance Revisions

A major action the county will need to take after the plan is adopted will be to revise its development regulations (i.e., the Subdivision Ordinance and Zoning Ordinance) to be consistent with the goals and policies of the Comprehensive Plan. This chapter recommends a number of regulatory changes including:

2. Strengthen resource protection standards to avoid building in sensitive natural resource or hazardous areas.
3. Refine Recreational District to address land use compatibility.
4. Design Standards or Guidelines for PUDs in Rural and Suburban Residential Areas.
5. Strengthen Open Space Subdivision Standards.
Coordination and Partnerships

A number of the Comprehensive Plan recommendations are best achieved through new or amended Intergovernmental Agreements between the county and other governmental entities, particularly updating its Area of City Impact (ACI) agreements with the cities and towns. Once established, the agreements continue to be operative for as long as the agreements intend. Coordination and Partnerships include:

With Cities and Towns
1. Refine ACI boundaries and agreements with northern cities to designate areas for development.
2. Refine ACI Boundaries and Land Use Plans with Towns.
3. Continue to coordinate with Chubbuck and Pocatello on transportation planning and with the Bannock Planning Organization, as well as the Idaho Department of Transportation and implement plans as updated from time to time.
4. Work with the Cities to create a long-term plan for regional trails to guide future development and funding decisions and ensure a cohesive network.

With State and Federal Agencies
1. Work with the Idaho Department of Transportation and other agencies to ensure that public facilities and storage do not occur in highly visible places.
2. Coordinate with federal and state wildlife agencies and state and county highway departments to plan for safe crossings of mule deer and other wildlife when roadways bisect habitat areas.
3. Coordinate with State and Federal Land Management Agencies for open lands that access and complement public lands system.

With Other Groups
1. Work with foundations, and conservation and other organizations to establish and manage greenways, trails, and open space.
2. Coordinate with fire districts to ensure new development can be served before it is approved.

New Funding Mechanisms
The goals and policies of the plan establish a framework that the county can use to explore options to increase funding for essential services and quality of life facilities in the community. Possible funding mechanisms include: impact fees, where allowed by law (so that new development pays its own way to cover the costs of roads, fire protection, schools, and other services); land dedication requirements (for parks and trails, and other facilities); and possible voter-approved sales tax measures or other approaches (such as to raise funds for a
county open lands program (if citizens desire that) or other desired new facilities. Funding actions include:

1. Conduct a Cost of Services Study to quantify costs of development as relates to developer fees and county taxes.
2. Adopt Level of Service Standards for public facilities and utilities and then plan accordingly to achieve standards through the Capital Improvements Plan (CIP)
3. Identify potential sources of funding for trails and open lands to supplement and leverage county resources and determine if citizens are willing to fund open lands acquisition through sales tax or other measures.

**Promoting the Plan’s Ideas**

To carry out this plan, it is important to keep it visible and accessible to the public. This Plan will continue be available in its full form (via Internet, libraries, county offices, and other locations), as well as in abbreviated “summary” versions, such as an executive summary or brochure. In addition, staff and elected and appointed officials will consider the plan during the process of reviewing proposed developments and considering other actions.

**Citizen and Technical Committees**

The county will need to increase its technical capabilities. In addition, collaborative relationships with local technical resources will be essential to carry out this plan. This plan recommends appointing a technical Working group to continue to advise the county on preparation of ordinances to implement the plan, as well as an ongoing Citizen Advisory Group to make recommendations on keeping the Comprehensive Plan up-to-date.
Summary of Priority Actions

This chapter presents the many actions necessary to implement the Comprehensive Plan. The primary actions are the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority Actions</th>
<th>Requirements to Implement</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. Future Land Use Plan</td>
<td>Plan adoption</td>
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<td>2. Water Resource Protection Standards</td>
<td>Draft/adopt Overlay District</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Environmental Protection Standards</td>
<td>Revise &amp; adopt standards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. City/County ACI Agreements</td>
<td>Revise and adopt ACI Agreements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Town/County Coordination</td>
<td>Revise/adopt ACI agreements; Subarea Land Use Planning</td>
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A description of each of the Priority Actions is contained below.

1. **Future Land Use Plan.** The Future Land Use Plan is a new feature of the Comprehensive Plan, however, it is generally consistent with the intent of the 1995 plan and the county’s zoning districts for unincorporated areas. Through the plan update process, the community did not convey compelling reasons to make any major changes to directions related to growth and development, but simply to carry forward and strengthen the concept of orderly development, with urban development locating in and near cities with services, and rural and agricultural areas maintaining low levels of development consistent with rural qualities of the areas.

2. **Countywide Water Resource Protection Standards.** The community expressed great interest in supporting new standards and regulations to protect water quality. (See page 88 for a broader description of what these standards may entail.)

3. **Environmental Protection Standards.** The community has supported strengthening provisions in the zoning and subdivision ordinances to address the level of development in floodplains, wetlands and riparian areas, steep slopes, and forests.

4. **Agreements between the County and Cities.** To carry forward the intent of this plan and the plans of the cities, it will be imperative for Bannock County to work with the cities of Pocatello and with Chubbuck to prepare intergovernmental agreements (IGAs) to address growth and development at the edge of cities and mechanisms for annexation.

5. **Continued Coordination with Small Towns.** To clarify future land use and ACI boundaries of the towns, continued planning efforts with each of the towns is important.
**Actions to Implement the Comprehensive Plan**

This Implementation Strategy identifies a number of priority items that the county should implement as soon as possible, to ensure that future land use actions and decisions regarding funding and development are aligned with the policies contained in this Plan and with the classifications on the Future Land Use Plan. The actions are described below.

**Population, Growth, and Land Use**

The intent of this Plan is to shape growth in a manner that preserves the region’s natural environment, livability, and sense of community. It directs urban growth to areas that currently can provide or are planned for urban services, including water and sewer, emergency services, parks and schools, and transportation facilities. To implement the population, growth, and land use goals of the Plan, the following priority actions are recommended:

**LU 1. Refine ACI Boundaries and Agreements with Northern Cities to Designate Areas for Development.**

The county and cities (Chubbuck and Pocatello) will review ACI boundaries and agreements and refine them to establish clearly defined areas for “urban development” within existing and future municipal water and sewer boundaries. Coordination with the cities for timing and sequence of development in areas where municipal services are not currently available but are planned is also necessary. Specific aspects of this Plan to address in the city ACI agreements include:

- Work with cities to define urban service areas within the ACI boundaries, and continue to address timing and phasing for provision of water and sewer services.
- Ensure that the county’s Future Land Use Plan is coordinated with the adopted plans and zoning of the cities within the ACI.
- Establish requirements so that all new development within areas of the ACI that are planned for municipal water and sewer service shall be urban, to occur at densities of no less than one dwelling units per gross acre, unless provisions are made to allow for future intensification through clustering or other measures.
- Require that all new development within urban service boundary area within the ACI be served by municipal water and sewer service, or make provisions for service in the future if not immediately serviceable. This should include provisions for clustering of development to be served by septic systems as an interim measure.
LU 2. Refine ACI Boundaries and Land Use Plans with Towns.
The county’s and towns of Inkom, McCammon, Arimo, Downey, and Lava Hot Springs will review and refine ACI boundaries and agreements to establish growth areas within existing and future water and sewer service areas, and areas where emergency services are adequate to serve development. Specific aspects of this Plan to address in the town ACI agreements include:

- Land use subarea planning for areas around the towns, to more clearly define ACI limits for each town, and designate desired land use patterns for areas both within and adjacent to ACI areas.
- Revisions to ACI boundaries and land use designations.

LU 3. Site Planning Standards or Guidelines for Rural Development.
Develop site planning guidelines so that rural development does not conflict with farms and ranches. This process could be instituted at the concept plan phase of development, to guide landowners through the Open Space Subdivision process. Additional requirements could include a site analysis to avoid sensitive natural areas, provide reasonable buffers and setbacks from neighboring uses (depending on the size of the site and neighboring uses), to provide landscape maintenance to avoid creating weeds and disturbance to neighboring properties, and to maximize efficiency of planning roads and utilities.

LU 4. Limit expansion of Planned Unit Developments (PUDs) with Urban Density in Rural Areas
It is the intent of this plan to limit urban pockets of development in rural places where they are far from municipal services. The plan recommends modifying standards for PUDs so that they occur only in locations where municipal services are available.

LU 5. Design Standards or Guidelines for PUDs in Rural and Suburban Residential Areas.
Improve criteria and standards for PUDs in Rural Residential and Suburban Residential areas to ensure cost-efficient building, nature-friendly design, and minimal impacts to neighboring properties.

LU 6. Retain Agricultural and Low Density Residential Zoning.
Retain agricultural and rural residential zoning for valleys, hillsides and mountains, and for farming and ranching areas, and restrict rezoning in these areas for urban development. Allow clustering of development to rural areas that are more conducive for development (i.e., near roads and services and away from fire-prone areas or important wildlife habitat).
LU 7. Revise Regulations to Allow for Non-Contiguous Parcel Density Transfers.
Revise the county’s Land Use Regulations to allow for a transfer of density from a sending area to a receiving area in order to protect specific agricultural, environmental, or open space resources. This approach provides for the assemblage of development units from two or more nonadjacent parcels of land. The development rights attached to the sending parcel(s) are transferred to one or more receiving parcels. Since this approach would be applied on a parcel-by-parcel basis, it would not require the establishment of a county-wide Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) program.

LU 8. Lava Recreational Area Refinements.
The community around Lava Hot Springs has expressed desire to keep the recreational category in place but to refine some of the standards to ensure compatible and quality development (as described more fully in the land use chapter). This plan recommends refinements to the Recreational Zoning District to describe:

- Countywide standards for steep slopes.
- No changes to existing platted lands or built subdivisions.
- Refinements to unplatted lands to allow minimum lot size of one (1) acre with clustering and retention of open space, or minimum lot size of five (5) acres.
- Use compatibility standards.
- Strengthen standards for PUDs, restricting them in locations without municipal services.

Economic Development
While Bannock County does not play a primary role in business recruitment or retention, it has an important role to play in its partnerships with cities, towns, and the Bannock Development Corporation. The county also can play an important role in promoting agriculture and related businesses and encouraging businesses to locate in towns and cities instead of along highways and in remote areas. To implement this aspect of the Plan, the following priority actions are recommended:

ED 1. Measures to Support Continuing Agriculture.
The county will explore and promote a range of voluntary options for farmers and ranchers to support continued agriculture. This Plan proposes a density transfer option to allow density to be transferred from productive portions of a property to unproductive areas with appropriate services that meet the regulations of the District Health Department for water and sewer and otherwise suited for development; and a possible purchase of development rights program if funding can be secured.
Chapter 15: Implementation Strategy

Housing

The policies proposed in this Plan are intended to address the general issues of balance and quality of housing and new neighborhoods and over time, a mix of housing for the county’s workforce. The following priority action is intended to accomplish this goal:

**H 1. Monitor Housing Affordability.**

Work with the cities and towns and the Pocatello Housing Authority to continue to monitor housing affordability and supply needs for the county’s workforce.

Public Services, Facilities, and Utilities

The availability of water, sewer, fire protection and emergency services, police protection, and other utilities and services affects the safety and quality of life for residents and the economic stability of the county. Ideally, facilities and services will develop or expand in a manner commensurate to the rate of growth, and the development that causes demand for increased services will pay for them. The following priority actions are intended to accomplish this goal:

**PS 1. Conduct a Cost of Services Study.**

Prepare a Cost of Community Services study to better understand the costs of developing in the county; the costs that developers cover and where Bannock County is seeing shortfalls; and to identify additional steps needed to adequately fund development costs. In addition to projecting requirements for capital facilities, a Cost of Services study will include an analysis of the county’s tax base, allowing for specific strategies to be implemented in areas where current funding mechanisms are unable to satisfy public needs.

**PS 2. Coordinate with Fire Districts.**

Fire protection in the county is provided by eight different fire districts, each with their own service areas, generally commensurate with town boundaries. As part of follow-up efforts from this Plan, it is important that the county work with each district to ensure that the development is not approved in areas that cannot be adequately served.

**PS 3. Level of Service Standards.**

Adopt written level of service standards for each type of public facility or utility service, and plan for capital improvements to achieve and maintain such standards for existing and future development.

Natural Resources, Hazardous Areas, and Environment

During the preparation of the Plan, citizens of the community expressed a strong desire to see the county implement stronger measures to protect sensitive areas, and ensure that development occurs in a responsible manner. To that end, the following priority actions are recommended:
Water Resource Protection areas shown in the figure below include surface water, city and town water supply areas, critical recharge areas, floodplains, and wetlands that together impact the surface and groundwater quality and supply. The community has expressed a strong desire to protect its surface and groundwater supply for current and future generations. Protection of surface and groundwater resources will help to ensure a viable water supply for current and future generations (see Chapter 10 Goal NR3 pg 61) and will also lead to habitat improvements for fish and wildlife and enhance recreational opportunities on the Portneuf River (see Chapter 6 Goal ED6 pg 47). Therefore, this Plan recommends implementing a Water Resource Protection Overlay District to protect the county’s water supply areas.

The depiction of the Water Resources Protection Overlay Map Boundary is intended to be conceptual and to guide development of maps for ordinances. The county, with technical advisory agencies (e.g., IDEQ, IDWR, District Health) and community representatives will need to refine the boundary using best science available when it prepares ordinances to implement the Water Protection Overlay District. The above map illustrates the basic priority areas for protection and should serve as the baseline boundary as the county begins to solidify the overlay into a regulation and as additional data becomes available. The overlay geographic boundary should be
developed without regard to ownership or jurisdictional boundaries. Additional development standards will be applicable inside the proposed Water Resource Protection Overlay District—for any new development, change of use, or expansion of an existing structure, such as the following:

**Limit potential sources of pollution within the Water Resource Protection Overlay District, as follows.**

- Limit uses that involve hazardous materials (e.g. industrial uses that may use chemical solvents).
- Limit septic systems in areas that are determined to pose greatest impacts to water supply, requiring connections to municipal sewer where it is available. Where they occur within the overlay, require safety measures for residential septic systems, including inspections. Additional safety requirements will be necessary for commercial septic systems (e.g. monitoring pipe).
- Discourage development (i.e., in floodplains, wetlands, and primary recharge areas).
- Create construction and roads standards to protect water contamination caused by soil erosion. Standards will include measures required by DEQ for construction sites in order to comply with Idaho Water Quality Standards and the Portneuf River Total Maximum Daily Load Implementation Plan.

**Manage the amount of water that is diverted and becomes stormwater runoff in the Overlay District.**

- Limit the amount of impervious surface by keeping densities low.
- Require on-site stormwater runoff retention to ensure a no-net-loss of recharge capacity from development on the site. Retention ponds in these areas must be constructed with the appropriate design and materials to facilitate safe and effective groundwater recharge.

**Retain areas that filter and adsorb water back onto the supply.**

- Create tree protection standards to limit deforestation.
- Discourage development in wetlands and floodplains.
- Limit overall amount of development in aquifer recharge areas. Develop standards to reduce impacts on recharge.
- Maintain and/or further develop and enforce setbacks to protect sensitive natural and cultural resources (see Chapter 3, Goals 5, page 11 and Chapter 15, Goal CD2, Page 74).

**NR 2. Strengthen Resource Protection Standards.**

To avoid building in sensitive natural resource areas and hazardous areas, the county will develop and adopt countywide standards that apply to development. Standards to be considered include:
• Improve data for aiding in decision-making.
• Strengthening the county’s setback regulations for wetlands and riparian areas, and enhance enforcement efforts;
• Develop new standards to protect healthy forests, woodlands and significant trees;
• Strengthen and enhance enforcement of the county’s floodplain development standards; and
• Strengthen and enhance enforcement of the county’s development restrictions on steep slopes.

**NR 3. Measures to Protect Wildlife Habitat.**
The county could consider a number of measures to increase protection of wildlife and associated habitat and migration corridors. These measures include:

- Coordinate with federal and state wildlife agencies and state and county highway departments to plan for safe crossings of roadways when they bisect habitat areas.
- Provide wildlife crossing signs on roads, and provide breaks in fencing or other obstructions along roadways.
- Develop wildlife-friendly development guidelines, to assist developers with planning for wildlife needs.
- Improve and mapping resources to aid in development review processes and identifying conservation areas.
- Foster collaborations with other public, educational, and non-profit to increase public awareness of county wildlife and human impacts on habitat.

**Community Design and Special Sites**
The different towns and communities within the county have expressed a desire to maintain their uniqueness and in some cases improve the county’s and individual town image. Suggested actions include:

**CD 1. Site Planning Guidelines**
Develop guidelines and incentives for site planning and development to protect visual quality, avoid marring hillsides, and placing development below ridgelines.

**CD 2. Light Standards**
Develop lighting standards to permit reasonable use of outdoor lighting for nighttime safety, utility, security, and enjoyment, while preventing glare to maintain the ambiance of the dark sky. Standards should minimize spillover and glare by ensuring lighting is of appropriate height, maximum lamp wattage, shielded and downward-directed to areas where it is necessary.

**CD 3. Public Spaces and Highways.**
Work with The Idaho Highway Department and other agencies to ensure that public facilities and storage does not occur in highly visible places. In addition, maintain sign and billboard standards and
consider whether additional criteria are needed. Consider buy-out program for billboards.

**Parks, Recreation, Open Lands, and Trails**

The policies included in this Plan address open space protection, and focus on the need to provide additional tools for open space acquisition and protection. The following priority actions are intended to accomplish these goals:

**OL 1. Partnerships to Enhance Open Space Opportunities.**
Work with foundations, and conservation and other organizations to establish and manage greenways, trails, and open space (consider increasing county staffing if current levels prohibit pursuing such programs).

**OL 2. Coordination with State and Federal Land Management Agencies.**
Work with public land agencies (BLM, USFS, and State) so the county can plan for open lands that provide access to or complement public lands.

**OL 3. Determine if Citizens will Support Funding Open Lands and Trails.**
Identify potential sources of funding to supplement and leverage county resources and determine if citizens are willing to fund open lands acquisition through sales tax or other measures.

**OL 4. Strengthen Open Space Subdivision Standards.**
Strengthen standards in open space subdivision regulations to set aside open space that is connected or that protects resources (not just above 5,000 feet). Priorities are river valley and stream tributaries, mule deer/wildlife habitat, geologic formations, and wildlife migration corridors. (See guidelines recommended beginning on page 27.)

**Transportation**

The primary objective of the transportation chapter is to provide a framework for creating a balanced and integrated transportation system to address the needs of a wide variety of users with a range of transportation alternatives. To implement this aspect of the Plan, the following priority actions are recommended:

**T 1. Continued Coordination with Cities and Planning Agencies.**
The county will continue to coordinate with Chubbuck and Pocatello on transportation planning and with the Bannock Planning Organization, as well as the Idaho Department of Transportation and implement plans as updated from time to time.
T 2. Right-of-Way Reservation.
Reserve right of way needed to accommodate expected traffic volume over the next 20 years. The requirements for future right-of-way should be determined as part of the county’s Transportation Plan update.

T 3. Traffic Study Requirements.
Require that traffic studies be prepared for all larger development proposals (e.g., more than 20 dwelling units) to address automobile, transit, bicycle, and pedestrian travel.

**Property Rights**
The Plan includes policies intended to guide how decision makers can balance private property rights with community planning, public health and safety needs. In order to do so effectively, the county will establish a consistent review process to evaluate whether proposed regulatory or administrative actions may result in a taking of private property without due process of law. In all cases, the city attorney or other appropriate legal counsel will be sought when there are concerns about a potential takings claim. The following guidelines may be considered to determine whether a proposed action may be found to be a “taking”:

1) **Does the regulation or action result in a permanent or temporary physical occupation of private property?**
   Regulation or action resulting in a permanent or temporary physical occupation of all or a portion of private property will generally constitute a “taking.”

2) **Does the regulation or action require a property owner to dedicate a portion of property or to grant an easement that is not related to the project being developed?**
   Project-specific dedications of land or easements that are individually bargained for between a public agency and a developer may become a taking when the purpose of the dedication is not sufficiently related to the project being developed (the “nexus” requirement) and the total cost or amount of the condition is not proportional to the impact of the project (the “rough proportionality” requirement). The dedication of property must be reasonably and specifically designed to prevent or compensate for adverse impacts of the proposed development.

3) **Does the regulation deprive the owner of all economically viable uses of the property?**
   Typically, a regulation is not considered a taking if it allows for economically viable use of the property. The allowed use does not have to be the owner’s planned use, a prior use, or the highest and best use of the property. However, if a regulation prohibits all economically viable or beneficial uses of the land, it may constitute a “taking.” In this situation, the agency can avoid liability for compensation only if it can demonstrate that
the proposed uses are prohibited by the laws of nuisance or other pre-existing limitations on the use of the property. Unlike one and two above, it is important to analyze the regulation’s impact on the property as a whole, and not just the impact on a portion of the property. It is also important to assess whether there is any economically viable use of the remaining property available.

4) **Does the regulation substantially advance a legitimate governmental purpose?**

   A regulation may go too far and may result in a takings claim where it does not substantially advance a legitimate governmental purpose. The goals and policies of the county’s Comprehensive Plan are an important tool in defining the government’s public purpose when it comes to community planning, public health and safety needs.
Appendix A: Planning Influences and Maps

Introduction

This summary presents the background content against which the plan and its policies were developed. The summary drafted and refined early in the process, reflects conditions in the county as they were in the winter of 2006. Conditions, trends, and dynamics contained in this appendix include:

- Context and History;
- Jurisdictions within the County;
- Population and Economy;
- Land Use;
- Natural Features;
- Cultural Resources; and
- Infrastructure and Services.

Context and History

The following sections highlight the location and context of the County as well as key aspects of its settlement history that continue to shape the County today.

Location and Context

Bannock County is an area of approximately 1,147 square miles located in southeastern Idaho. The County is traversed north-south by Interstate 15 and east-west by Interstate 86 west of I-15, and Highway 30 to the east. These highways connect the County, within a two-hour travel time, to numerous regional destinations including: Salt Lake City, UT; Jackson, WY; Sun Valley ID; as well as Yellowstone and Grand Teton National Parks and the Sawtooth National Recreation Area.

The County contains seven incorporated cities, listed in Table 1 from north to south. Each community has an Area of City Impact (ACI), which designates the agreed upon area for future annexations and service expansion for each city. The incorporated jurisdictions and their ACIs are illustrated on Map A-1: Location and Context.
Table A-1: Incorporated Cities in Bannock County

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>Incorporated Area (ac)</th>
<th>Unincorporated Area within ACI (ac)</th>
<th>Total Community Area (ac)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chubbuck</td>
<td>2,253</td>
<td>8,504</td>
<td>10,757</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pocatello</td>
<td>14,668</td>
<td>30,584</td>
<td>45,252</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inkom</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>9,384</td>
<td>9,784</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McCammon</td>
<td>458</td>
<td>4,394</td>
<td>4,852</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lava Hot Springs</td>
<td>911</td>
<td>3,990</td>
<td>4,901</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arimo</td>
<td>243</td>
<td>2,470</td>
<td>2,713</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Downey</td>
<td>630</td>
<td>6,116</td>
<td>6,746</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Bannock County History

Native American History

The County is named for the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes, the original occupants of the region whose first appearance in US history was their August 13, 1805 meeting with Lewis and Clark.

The tribes practiced a hunting and fishing subsistence economy that included both large (Elk, Mule Deer, bison) and small game (rabbits, birds) as well as a variety of fish. The tribes covered a range as far north as Saskatchewan, but wintered along the Portneuf River. The Sho-Ban tribes excelled at crafts, incorporating ornate bone and beadwork into their costume, a craftsmanship tradition that continues today. The Fort Bridger Treaty, drafted July 3, 1868 and ratified February 16, 1869, established the Fort Hall Reservation for the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes. The governing body for the reservation is the Fort Hall Business Council, a seven-member elected body.

Today, Fort Hall celebrates its history and culture with a Shoshone-Bannock Tribal Museum, Bannock language classes, and the long standing Shoshone-Bannock Indian Festival in August offering a Pow-wow dance and song competition and celebration as well as other games, feasts, and a parade.

Pioneers and the Oregon Trail

Fort Hall Reservation draws its name from the Fort Hall Trading Post established by Nathaniel Jarvis Wyeth in 1834 and later sold to the Hudson’s Bay Company. The county motto “Gateway to the West” references the prominence of Fort Hall as a major stopping and supply point along the Oregon and California Trails.

In its early days, the fort was an active trading post for trappers and Indians, and then pioneers during the “Great Migration” that began in 1843. On their way from Soda Springs, many traders and travelers stopped at the hot springs in what is now the City of Lava Hot Springs.

The original fort structure, which would have been located in lands now within the reservation, was abandoned in 1855 and is no longer
in existence. A replica has been created in Ross Park in downtown Pocatello.

**Mormon Settlers**

Mormon settlement began in 1864 in the Marsh Valley area near the current City of Arimo, and the county was formally established March 6, 1893. In 1902, Mormon settlers successfully petitioned the federal government to renegotiate the boundaries of the Fort Hall Reservation, resulting in the release of 400,000 acres from the Reservation that prompted a homesteading rush. Early economic activity was based heavily on agriculture, including wheat and cattle ranching. Mormon settlers began to build the irrigation canals, completed in 1911, to support increased agricultural production.

The major economic engine, however, was the railroad that connected the agriculture of Utah with the mining activity of Montana, an important transportation feature as well as source of industry for the county and remains so today. The City of Pocatello was founded in 1882 as a rail yard and camp for rail employees, which accounts for the strong railroad presence and land ownership patterns that remain in the city today.

**1942 to Present**

The opening of the Naval Ordinance plant in Pocatello in 1942 marked the beginning of industrial activity that tended to be oriented to the resource economy of the county. It included the Bucrus-Erie Company (mining equipment manufacturer), J.R. Simplot (fertilizer), and concrete production. Idaho State University, started as a high school in 1902, developed into the University and has grown into the county’s largest employer and supports many other businesses.

**Population and Economy**

The following sections discuss some key attributes of the people and economy of the county and its cities.

**Population and Demographic Profile**

**Population Growth and Distribution**

The county had a population estimated at 78,155 in 2005. 82% of the county’s population resides in the cities of Pocatello and Chubbuck in the north of the county. An additional 3.7% of the population lives in the other five cities. The remaining 14.3% of the population lives in the unincorporated county. This trend, where the majority (86%) of the population lives in one of the incorporated cities and roughly 14% in the county, has remained constant for the past several decades. See Map A-2: Population Distribution.
Table A-2: Population Distribution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chubbuck</td>
<td>7,791</td>
<td>9,700</td>
<td>10,707</td>
<td>13.7%</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pocatello</td>
<td>46,080</td>
<td>51,466</td>
<td>53,372</td>
<td>68.3%</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inkom</td>
<td>769</td>
<td>738</td>
<td>686</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
<td>-0.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McCammon</td>
<td>722</td>
<td>805</td>
<td>789</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arimo</td>
<td>311</td>
<td>348</td>
<td>319</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Downey</td>
<td>626</td>
<td>613</td>
<td>577</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
<td>-0.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lava Hot Springs</td>
<td>420</td>
<td>521</td>
<td>504</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Incorporated Subtotal</strong></td>
<td><strong>56,719</strong></td>
<td><strong>64,191</strong></td>
<td><strong>66,954</strong></td>
<td><strong>85.7%</strong></td>
<td><strong>1.1%</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unincorporated County</td>
<td>9,307</td>
<td>11,374</td>
<td>11,201</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>County Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>66,026</strong></td>
<td><strong>75,565</strong></td>
<td><strong>78,155</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0%</strong></td>
<td><strong>1.1%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* 15-year Compound Annual Growth Rate (1990 to 2005).

Population Projections

Bannock County has experienced only modest (1.1%) annual population growth since 1990. Recent projections developed by Intermountain Demographics and agreed upon by the Bannock Planning Organization, the cities of Pocatello and Chubbuck, and the county anticipates this slow growth rate to continue into the future. As illustrated in Table A-3: Projected Population Growth, the county is expected to add between 930 and 1,145 new residents annually between now and 2035, reaching a population of 110,931.

Table A-3: Projected Population Growth

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Population Added</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>79,140</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>83,793</td>
<td>4,653</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>89,343</td>
<td>5,550</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>94,959</td>
<td>5,616</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2025</td>
<td>100,678</td>
<td>5,719</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2030</td>
<td>105,933</td>
<td>5,255</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2035</td>
<td>110,931</td>
<td>4,998</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Economy

Agriculture and Mining

The county has a long history of agriculture that includes a mix of crops (wheat, potatoes, sugar, beets), ranching, and dairy operations. Farmland is dispersed throughout the county, with prime irrigated farmland located both in a concentrated area north of the Pocatello-Chubbuck area in northern portions of the county and dispersed between McCammon and Downey in southern portions of the county. Agricultural activity has weathered a challenging period of drought, actually adding farms in the last decade. Farms reduced in size over this time period and the number of irrigated acres increased. The
inventory of cattle decreased slightly, but this figure does not capture recent growth in the dairy industry.

Table A- 4: Agricultural Activity in Bannock County (1987-1997)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Farms</td>
<td>655</td>
<td>588</td>
<td>664</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Acres in Farms</td>
<td>358,189</td>
<td>325,388</td>
<td>309,281</td>
<td>-15.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Farm Size</td>
<td>547</td>
<td>553</td>
<td>466</td>
<td>-17.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Farms in Crops</td>
<td>561</td>
<td>497</td>
<td>555</td>
<td>-1.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Acres in Crops</td>
<td>204,486</td>
<td>182,706</td>
<td>166,700</td>
<td>-22.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cattle Inventory</td>
<td>24,475</td>
<td>23,510</td>
<td>23,795</td>
<td>-2.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number Irrigated Farms</td>
<td>447</td>
<td>410</td>
<td>427</td>
<td>-4.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number Irrigated Acres</td>
<td>40,829</td>
<td>39,574</td>
<td>41,910</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Mining activity, typically involving phosphorous and gravel mining operations, has decreased over the last 20 years. Current mining and agricultural areas are illustrated on Map A-3: Resource-Based Economic Activity.

Public Employment

The public sector has a significant impact on local employment and accounts for 19.4% of employment activity. In addition to local government employees, the City of Pocatello is also home to state and county offices.

Trends and Projections

As illustrated in Table A-5, the largest economic trend has been the strong growth in Service industries. This national economic trend is evidenced within the County by the growth in professional service fields including medical and research linked to the hospital and University. Retail trades also saw significant growth over the last 20 years and now account for the second largest sector with 20.2% of employment. At the same time, the Bannock County economy saw a decline in some its traditionally strong sectors of transportation, mining, and military. Of these, the most significant decline was in the transportation sector (-64.4%).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Farm</td>
<td>833</td>
<td>747</td>
<td>811</td>
<td>-2.7%</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ag., Services, Forest, Fish, &amp; Other</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>217</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>41.9%</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>3,135</td>
<td>1,997</td>
<td>3,054</td>
<td>-2.7%</td>
<td>7.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-29.2%</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>1,556</td>
<td>1,454</td>
<td>2,596</td>
<td>40.1%</td>
<td>6.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation, Communication, Public Utilities</td>
<td>3,417</td>
<td>2,421</td>
<td>2,078</td>
<td>-64.4%</td>
<td>4.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wholesale Trade</td>
<td>1,398</td>
<td>1,536</td>
<td>1,604</td>
<td>12.8%</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail Trade</td>
<td>5,902</td>
<td>6,421</td>
<td>8,576</td>
<td>31.2%</td>
<td>20.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F.I.R.E.</td>
<td>2,855</td>
<td>2,467</td>
<td>2,884</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
<td>6.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Services</td>
<td>5,382</td>
<td>6,837</td>
<td>11,682</td>
<td>53.9%</td>
<td>27.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federal Civilian</td>
<td>408</td>
<td>535</td>
<td>534</td>
<td>23.6%</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federal Military</td>
<td>452</td>
<td>444</td>
<td>314</td>
<td>-43.9%</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State &amp; Local Government</td>
<td>5,534</td>
<td>6,001</td>
<td>8,234</td>
<td>32.8%</td>
<td>19.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>31,029</td>
<td>31,101</td>
<td>42,367</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Due to unavailability of data, the rates for Agriculture, Services, Forestry, fish, & Other and Mining reflect 10 year growth from 1980-1990.


**Land Use**

**Ownership**

Roughly 40% of the total land within the county is under public ownership, with the U.S. Forest Service as the largest single owner (16.2%), followed by the Bureau of Land Management (10.2%). The remaining 57% of land is privately owned. Ownership patterns are illustrated on Map A-4: Ownership.

Table A-6: Land Ownership Patterns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ownership</th>
<th>Acres</th>
<th>% Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Private</td>
<td>417,865</td>
<td>56.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bureau of Land Management</td>
<td>74,754</td>
<td>10.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bureau of Indian Affairs</td>
<td>52,024</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State of Idaho</td>
<td>48,355</td>
<td>6.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S. Forest Service</td>
<td>118,969</td>
<td>16.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Subtotal</td>
<td>294,101</td>
<td>40.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Falls Reservoir</td>
<td>21,927</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>733,893</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


**County Zoning**

Private land within the county is zoned for one of eight categories. These zones and what they allow are described on the following pages:
Agricultural

*Purpose:*

The purpose of the district is to preserve productive agricultural land as a permanent feature of the landscape and economy of the county.

*Maximum Residential Density:*

One (1) unit per 40 acres.

*Permitted Uses:*

Detached single-family residences, agricultural uses and buildings, home occupations, outdoor for-pay recreation uses, day care homes (up to six client children), public utilities, commercial stables, and kennels.

*Conditionally Permitted Uses:*

Animal processing, feed lots, mining, zoo, wildlife preserves, shooting preserves, day care homes or centers (seven or more client children).

Residential Rural

*Purpose:*

The purpose of the district is to provide low-density single family residential areas in rural/semi-rural settings.

*Maximum Residential Density:*

One (1) unit per 5 acres.

*Permitted Uses:*

Detached single-family residences, duplexes (in designated open space subdivision only), livestock (on 1 acre) and livestock pens, parks, home occupations, public schools, fire stations, churches, day care homes (up to six client children), golf courses, private (non-commercial) recreational facilities, commercial agricultural uses, buildings, and structures (except hog farms, feed lots, and agricultural support uses).

*Conditionally Permitted Uses:*

Cemeteries, institutional housing, public utilities, animal processing, feed lots, mining, zoo, wildlife preserves, shooting preserves, day care homes or centers (seven or more client children) day care centers (up to 20 in home or 20 or more client children at a center).

Residential Suburban

The purpose of this district is to provide small residential estates on municipal sewer/water systems or larger lot development where sewer service can and is expected to be extended (within ACI areas).

*Typical Residential Density:*

One (1) unit per acre or three (3) units per acre where development can be served by sewer and water.
**Permitted Uses:**

Detached single-family residences, duplexes, livestock (on 1+acre) and livestock pens, parks, home occupations, public schools, fire stations, churches, day care homes (up to six client children), golf courses, private (non-commercial) recreational facilities.

**Conditionally Permitted Uses:**

Cemeteries, institutional housing, public utilities, animal processing, feed lots, mining, zoo, wildlife preserves, shooting preserves, day care homes or centers (seven or more client children) day care centers (up to 20 in home or 20 or more client children at a center), multi-family dwellings.

**Recreational Purpose:**

The purpose of the district is to encourage a compatible blend of recreation and tourist uses and to preserve Bannock County’s recreational resources. This designation is only appropriate for land not suitable for agriculture, land that is adjacent to land currently used for recreational purposes, land that is not environmentally sensitive or important wildlife habitat, and that would not require additional County arterial or collector roads.

**Maximum Residential Density:**

One (1) unit per acre.

**Permitted Uses:**

Detached single-family residences, duplexes, livestock (on 1+acre) and livestock pens, parks, home occupations, public schools, fire stations, churches, day care homes (up to six client children), golf courses, private (non-commercial) recreational facilities, outdoor recreational uses.

**Conditionally Permitted Uses:**

Cemeteries, institutional housing, public utility and public service facilities (not distribution and service lines), animal processing, feed lots, mining, zoo, wildlife preserves, shooting preserves, day care homes or centers (seven or more client children) day care centers (up to 20 in home or 20 or more client children at a center), multi-family dwellings, hotels, inns, bowling alleys, theaters, skating rinks, parks, dry cleaning, restaurants, RV parks, camp grounds, gift shops, gas stations accessory to a commercial recreational facility, non-hunting firearm uses, or other uses as approved.

**Multiple Use Purpose:**

The purpose of the district is to provide a location for a mix of uses allowed in RS, CG, and LIW districts and had been applied to areas where a mixed land use pattern was already established. This zone will
be eliminated over time, according to predominant development patterns or as development occurs

**Typical Residential Density:**

One (1) unit per 2.5 acres.

**Permitted Uses:**

Until land is redesignated, proposed uses will be permitted according to compatibility with surrounding uses except in the case of industrial uses, unless the land is redesignated as Industrial.

**Conditionally Permitted Uses:**

To be determined by application process.

**Commercial General**

**Purpose:**

The purpose of the district is to provide a location for commercial activities to serve the community.

**Permitted Uses:**

General retail, service businesses, indoor recreation facilities, professional office, public utility and service facilities, bed and breakfasts, building contractors and maintenance, administration offices, building material sales, bars, commercial contractors, campground, cemetery, commercial parking, repair services, day care facilities, dry cleaners, fire stations, financial services, gas stations, commercial greenhouse/nursery, hotel/motel, kennels, mini storage, RV parks, schools, auto sales and service, veterinary services.

**Conditionally Permitted Uses:**

Attached housing, wholesale businesses, residential and agricultural uses, institutional residential, single family detached residences, private golf course, mobile home sales, outdoor entertainment/recreation, research facilities, transmission lines.

**Light Industrial and Wholesale**

**Purpose:**

The purpose of the district is to provide a location for light manufacturing and wholesale business and warehousing. Site plans emphasize accommodating large trucks and rail to move freight.

**Permitted Uses:**

Billboards, auto body and towing, auto parts and service, beer and wine distributors, blacksmith, coal dealers, commercial contractors, component assembly, chemical distribution, construction products supply, farm equipment sales, gas stations, freight terminals, food distributor, warehousing industrial equipment sales, wholesalers, public utility and service facilities.
Conditionally Permitted Uses:

Industrial uses, airport/heliport, explosive storage and manufacture, day care (7+ children), indoor sports and recreation, noise park, professional offices, RV park, refining, retail, schools.

Industrial

Purpose:

The purpose of the district is to provide land for manufacturing, processing raw materials, and use of higher-intensity processes and equipment.

Permitted Uses:

Manufacturing, processing, fabricating, billboards, auto body and towing, auto parts and service, beer and wine distributors, blacksmith, coal dealers, commercial contractors, component assembly, chemical distribution, construction products supply, farm equipment sales, gas stations, freight terminals, food distributor, warehousing industrial equipment sales, wholesalers, public utility and service facilities, rail yards and facilities, public utility and public service facilities, agricultural support.

Conditionally Permitted Uses:

Junk yards, mining, refining, feed lot, commercial incinerator.

Current Zoning Patterns

The largest zoned land use is agriculture, which occupies 36.1% of the total land within the county. Residential activity in the county is zoned for only 11.3% of the land and non-residentially zoned lands occupy 1.4%. This is due to the fact that the majority of residents live, work, and shop in incorporated areas, which together occupy only 2.8% of the land within the county. See Map A-5: Zoning.
### Table A-7: County Zoning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Zoning</th>
<th>Acres</th>
<th>% Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Incorporated Cities</td>
<td>20,169</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fort Hall Reservation</td>
<td>116,699</td>
<td>16.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>257,825</td>
<td>36.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>County Residential</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residential Rural</td>
<td>30,318</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residential Suburban</td>
<td>14,361</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recreational</td>
<td>36,295</td>
<td>5.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Residential Subtotal</strong></td>
<td>80,974</td>
<td>11.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Non-Residential</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple Use</td>
<td>6,505</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Commercial</td>
<td>700</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Light Industrial</td>
<td>1,004</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industrial</td>
<td>1,673</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Non-Residential Subtotal</strong></td>
<td>9,881</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other/Public</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forest</td>
<td>125,096</td>
<td>17.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bureau of Land Management</td>
<td>71,558</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State</td>
<td>51,691</td>
<td>7.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other/Public Subtotal</strong></td>
<td>248,345</td>
<td>34.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grand Total</strong></td>
<td>733,893</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


### Existing Land Use Patterns

Given that the majority of development is concentrated within the incorporated areas of Chubbuck and Pocatello, it is not surprising that agriculture is the single largest land use in the county, occupying 42.1% of the total land area. Public lands together account for 35.7% of the county and are the second largest land use category. Residential (0.6%) and non-residential (commercial and industrial activity) (0.3%) together occupy less than one percent of the total county. See Map A-6: Existing Land Use.
### Table A-8: Existing Land Use

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Land Use</th>
<th>County Within ACI</th>
<th>County Outside ACI</th>
<th>Total Acres</th>
<th>% Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Incorporated Cities</td>
<td>20,169.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>20,169.0</td>
<td>2.76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reservation</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>116,699.0</td>
<td>116,699.0</td>
<td>15.95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Resource Activity</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>34,938.3</td>
<td>269,250.7</td>
<td>304,188.9</td>
<td>41.57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forestry</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>27.7</td>
<td>27.7</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Resource Activity Subtotal</strong></td>
<td>34,938.3</td>
<td>269,278.4</td>
<td>304,216.6</td>
<td>41.58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Residential</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residential Rural</td>
<td>988.5</td>
<td>749.5</td>
<td>1,737.9</td>
<td>0.24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residential Suburban</td>
<td>907.7</td>
<td>345.0</td>
<td>1,252.7</td>
<td>0.17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recreational</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>341.7</td>
<td>350.9</td>
<td>0.05%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufactured Housing</td>
<td>220.1</td>
<td>718.3</td>
<td>938.4</td>
<td>0.13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Residential Subtotal</strong></td>
<td>2,125.5</td>
<td>2,154.5</td>
<td>4,280.0</td>
<td>0.58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Non-Residential</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial</td>
<td>216.3</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>226.3</td>
<td>0.03%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industrial</td>
<td>137.2</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>141.6</td>
<td>0.02%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>650.5</td>
<td>822.2</td>
<td>1,472.7</td>
<td>0.20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Non-Residential Subtotal</strong></td>
<td>1,004.1</td>
<td>836.5</td>
<td>1,840.6</td>
<td>0.25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other/Public</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forest</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>118,374.1</td>
<td>118,374.1</td>
<td>16.18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bureau of Land Management</td>
<td>8,162.4</td>
<td>65,811.6</td>
<td>73,974.0</td>
<td>10.11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>47,443.3</td>
<td>47,443.3</td>
<td>6.48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Public</td>
<td>6,805.3</td>
<td>16,306.1</td>
<td>23,111.4</td>
<td>3.16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other/Public Subtotal</strong></td>
<td>14,967.7</td>
<td>247,935.1</td>
<td>262,902.8</td>
<td>35.93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vacant</td>
<td>7,988.1</td>
<td>13,608.4</td>
<td>21,596.4</td>
<td>2.95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>81,192.6</td>
<td>650,511.9</td>
<td>731,704.5</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


### Residential Development

According to county building permit data, the county has processed an average of 81 permits for new residential construction per year over the past decade. Table A-9 provides the breakdown of new residential development permits issued in 2006 by jurisdiction.

### Table A-9: New Residential Construction Permits, 2006

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>New House Permits</th>
<th>% Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unincorporated County</strong></td>
<td>85</td>
<td>11.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>South County Cities</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arimo</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Downey</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inkom</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lava HS</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McCammon</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>South County Subtotal</strong></td>
<td>22</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>North County Cities</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chubbuck</td>
<td>334</td>
<td>44.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pocatello</td>
<td>306</td>
<td>41.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>North County Subtotal</strong></td>
<td>640</td>
<td>85.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>County Total</strong></td>
<td>747</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Bannock County, City of Chubbuck, City of Pocatello
### Table A-10: Household Characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chubbuck</td>
<td>3,424</td>
<td>11.8%</td>
<td>69.5%</td>
<td>128,900</td>
<td>41,688</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pocatello</td>
<td>20,680</td>
<td>71.1%</td>
<td>62.0%</td>
<td>80,200</td>
<td>51,009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inkom</td>
<td>276</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
<td>80.4%</td>
<td>92,800</td>
<td>32,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McCammon</td>
<td>294</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
<td>77.2%</td>
<td>37,500</td>
<td>32,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arimo</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
<td>75.7%</td>
<td>85,000</td>
<td>33,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Downey</td>
<td>263</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
<td>78.3%</td>
<td>60,000</td>
<td>26,667</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lava Hot Springs</td>
<td>304</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
<td>46.1%</td>
<td>37,500</td>
<td>23,472</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Incorporated Subtotal</strong></td>
<td><strong>25,356</strong></td>
<td><strong>87.1%</strong></td>
<td><strong>63.4%</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unincorporated County</strong></td>
<td><strong>3,746</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>County Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>29,102</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0%</strong></td>
<td><strong>66.0%</strong></td>
<td><strong>83,500</strong></td>
<td><strong>36,683</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


### Development Capacity

The development capacity illustrates how much new development would occur if all undeveloped land within the county were to develop according to current underlying zoning. For the purposes of this plan, the capacity analysis only looks at the development that could potentially be accommodated in the county, including the ACI areas of the cities. It does not count the development that could occur within incorporated city limits.

As illustrated in Table 11, on the following page, the county could accommodate over 49,800 additional housing units. Over half of these units would be Residential Suburban development within the ACI areas of Pocatello and Chubbuck.
### Table A-11: Development Capacity of Unincorporated areas in Bannock County, 2007

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Zoning</th>
<th>Total Development Capacity Outside ACIs</th>
<th>% Total of Zone Category</th>
<th>Total Development Capacity Within Northern ACIs</th>
<th>Total Development Capacity Within Southern ACIs</th>
<th>Total Development Capacity Within ACIs</th>
<th>% Total of Zone Category</th>
<th>Total Development Capacity in Unincorporated County</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Residential Agricultural</td>
<td>4,704</td>
<td>90.9%</td>
<td>291.5</td>
<td>177.2</td>
<td>468.7</td>
<td>9.1%</td>
<td>5,172.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residential Rural</td>
<td>3,004</td>
<td>69.0%</td>
<td>392.7</td>
<td>955.5</td>
<td>1,348.2</td>
<td>31.0%</td>
<td>4,351.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residential Suburban</td>
<td>908</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
<td>25,169.6</td>
<td>1,142.4</td>
<td>26,312.0</td>
<td>96.7%</td>
<td>27,220.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recreational</td>
<td>10,078</td>
<td>89.7%</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>1,157.1</td>
<td>1,157.1</td>
<td>10.3%</td>
<td>11,234.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple Use-Residential</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>8.1%</td>
<td>557.2</td>
<td>1,134.3</td>
<td>1,691.5</td>
<td>91.9%</td>
<td>1,839.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residential Subtotal</td>
<td>18,842</td>
<td>37.8%</td>
<td>26,411.0</td>
<td>4,566.4</td>
<td>30,977.4</td>
<td>62.2%</td>
<td>49,819.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Residential</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial General</td>
<td>4,203,934</td>
<td>76.5%</td>
<td>516,191.6</td>
<td>772,937.0</td>
<td>1,289,128.5</td>
<td>23.5%</td>
<td>5,493,062.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Light Industrial</td>
<td>2,836,062</td>
<td>50.3%</td>
<td>2,798,918.1</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>2,798,918.1</td>
<td>49.7%</td>
<td>5,634,980.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industrial</td>
<td>1,013,666</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
<td>6,237,636.6</td>
<td>1,914,856.4</td>
<td>8,152,493.0</td>
<td>88.9%</td>
<td>9,166,158.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple Use-Commercial</td>
<td>461,275</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
<td>2,167,213.2</td>
<td>43,884,065.3</td>
<td>46,051,278.5</td>
<td>99.0%</td>
<td>46,512,553.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple Use-Industrial</td>
<td>691,912</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
<td>3,467,541.1</td>
<td>33,373,481.7</td>
<td>36,841,022.8</td>
<td>98.2%</td>
<td>37,532,934.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non Residential Subtotal</td>
<td>9,206,848</td>
<td>8.8%</td>
<td>15,187,500.5</td>
<td>79,945,340.5</td>
<td>95,132,841.0</td>
<td>91.2%</td>
<td>104,339,689.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Bannock County GIS data, Clarion Associates 2007

It is notable that over half of the potential residential development in the county outside of ACI areas is attributable to the recreationally zoned land around Lava Hot Springs. 96% of the over 35,000 acres of recreational land in and around the Lava Hot Springs ACI remain vacant. Over 5,100 acres of recreational land is already subdivided into nearly 1,200 parcels, though few of these parcels have been developed to date (135 parcels or 11%). The development of these parcels, as well as the remaining recreational land, would have major impacts on Lava Hot Springs and the county.

If developed as zoned, the county could potentially accommodate over 130,000 additional residents. This number, however, does not reflect any constraints to growth aside from allowable densities under zoning. How these new residents would be distributed within the county is illustrated in Table A-12.

### Table A-12: Distribution of Projected Population at Buildout

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location of County Development</th>
<th>Units</th>
<th>People</th>
<th>% Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Outside ACIs</td>
<td>18,842</td>
<td>49,177</td>
<td>37.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Northern ACIs</td>
<td>26,411</td>
<td>68,933</td>
<td>53.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Southern ACIs</td>
<td>4,566</td>
<td>11,918</td>
<td>9.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>49,819</td>
<td>130,028</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Bannock County GIS data, Clarion Associates 2007
Another zone district with potentially large impacts is the Multiple Use district. Multiple Use areas within ACI areas of south county communities account for 74% of all new non-residential square footage that could be added by buildout, a dramatic shift from the current distribution of land uses. This does not, however, factor in market potential to support this much additional non-residential activity.

**Natural Features**

**Water and Hydrology**

**Surface Water**

The main surface water body in the county is the Portneuf River which flows southwest through Lava Hot Springs, turning northwest along I-15 and running through the City of Pocatello before terminating in the Snake River and American Falls Reservoir. Numerous creeks flow into the river from higher elevation areas. See Map A-7: Water Supply.

The floodplain of the Portneuf River occupies considerable portions of the low lying areas in the River Valley, and has been significantly altered within the City of Pocatello through flood abatement and bank stabilization engineering efforts over the years. Wetland areas along smaller streams and more southerly portions of the Portneuf River are tend to be within agricultural fields; in some cases this has resulted in stream bank degradation. The Portneuf Soil and Water Conservation District has been assisting and will continue to assist landowners with stream bank restoration projects in many of those areas.

**Groundwater**

All water in the county is supplied from the Lower Portneuf River Valley aquifer. This large aquifer enjoys quick recharge through a relatively thin layer of silt and loess to the underlying sand and gravel of the aquifer (see Map 7: Water Supply). Annual recharge is estimated at 7.4 billion gallons per year. The primary recharge area for the aquifer includes the snowmelt and precipitation from the Bannock Range along Mink Creek and Gibson-Jack Creek sub-basins. A secondary recharge area is near the Portneuf Gap and along Pocatello Creek. The Portneuf River is not believed to significantly recharge the aquifer.

Source: Legislative Progress Report, BBC Consulting, 2001

**Environmental Features**

The geologic forces that formed southeastern Idaho offer both amenities and challenges to the county. The massive lava flow that formed the hills to the east of Pocatello as far south as McCammon creates unique scenery. The low lying lands south of Downey, once covered by the ancient Lake Bonneville, are now highlighted by Red
Appendix A: Planning Influences and Maps

Rock Pass just north of Downey, the remnants of the broken natural dam. This major flood event also is responsible for depositing much of the subfloor and the boulders that dot the lower portion of the county. The following sections provide an overview of key environmental features of the county today.

Vegetation and Climate
The arid climate of Southeastern Idaho receives approximately 10.4 inches of precipitation annually (30-year normal) in the Pocatello-Chubbuck area and somewhat more in the southern part of the county (approximately 16.5 inches at MCCammon). Native vegetation includes alpine habitat with numerous lodgepole pines in higher altitudes, and a sagebrush grassland habitat along the valley floor and adjacent low hillsides. In areas of the valley floor where water is more plentiful there are also wetland riparian habitat areas and larger trees such as cottonwoods.

Soils
The loess soils of the county pose certain safety and development concerns. These soils expand when wet and shrink as they dry, causing some subsidence and damage to buildings and their foundations as well as road infrastructure. On hillsides, these soils can become quickly unstable in a rain event and are prone to landslides.

Topography
The topography of the county is varied, offering a landscape of flat agricultural lands offset against a mountainous backdrop of the Bannock mountain range. Slopes pose some limitation to development in certain areas, due to the challenges posed to both development and road and fire response accessibility. Risks of flash flood, landslide, and avalanche due to slopes and soils, affect development not only on the slope itself but also at the base of a slope.

Geothermal and Seismic Activity
The southeastern portion of Idaho is subject to fairly regular seismic activity. While none of the faults within the County have been active recently, the presence of fault lines does need to be considered in the planning of development. One benefit of these faults is the hot springs they create along waterways, including Lava Hot Springs and Downata Hot Springs. Fault lines and geothermal activity areas are illustrated on Map A-8: Geothermal and Seismic Activity.

Wildlife Habitats and Ranges
The County is home to a variety of wildlife. One of the most prominent animals is the Mule Deer, which has habitat areas in the mountains to the east and west along I-15, just south of Pocatello. Deer, bear, elk, moose, and other large wildlife inhabiting the County
create a year-round draw for hunting, fishing, and wildlife viewing. See Wildlife Habitat Map (A-11).

**Cultural Resources**

Many cultural resources and activities highlight the history and natural features of the area, including cultural heritage tourism related to Native American and western settlement history and culture, and wildlife and outdoor recreation.

**Cultural Heritage Attractions and Celebrations**

Cultural heritage attractions include:

**Historic Tours**
- Pioneer Historic Byway
- Oregon Trail Tour

**Museums**
- Fort Hall Replica and Bannock County Historical Museum (Pocatello)
- Shoshone Bannock Tribal Museum (Fort Hall)
- South Bannock County Historical Center Museum (Lava Hot Springs)
- ISU Natural History Museum (Pocatello)

**Festivals and Events**
- Shoshone Bannock Indian Festival
- Rodeos: Days of Thunder Rodeo (Pocatello), Dodge National Rodeo Finals (Pocatello), Fort Hall Indian Rodeo (Fort Hall), McCammon Rodeo, and South Bannock County Fairgrounds (Downey).

**Wildlife and Outdoor Recreation**

The large land holdings of the Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management support a variety of outdoor activities including:
- Year round fishing,
- Game and bird hunting,
- Snowmobiling, telemark, downhill, and cross country skiing, and snowshoeing,
- Hiking,
- Climbing, and
- Wildlife watching/birdwatching.

In addition, the county contains one ski area, the Pebble Creek Ski Area just east of Pocatello.
Infrastructure and Services

Parks and Recreation

The county does not maintain any parks; all parks are located within incorporated cities. Schools also provide park space and supply recreational, meeting, and event space. In addition to these parks and facilities, the county maintains two County Fairgrounds:

- **North Bannock County Fairgrounds (Pocatello):** 160 acres offering soccer fields, a race track, rodeo arena, grandstand, (capacity of 3500,) moto-X track, arena space, horse stalls, and an RV park.
- **South Bannock County Fairgrounds (Downey):** These fairgrounds host the annual South Bannock County Fair as well as rodeos and other events throughout the year.

Transportation

Streets System

The major roads within the county are the Interstate and highways that traverse it in each direction. Interstate 15 is the main north-south road through the county and Highways 30 and 86 provide linkages to the east and west. State Highways 91 and 30 also run north-south through the county from Fort Hall Reservation southeast to Downey and Franklin County. These roads are operating at good capacity and are maintained by the State.

Aside from highways, roads within the unincorporated county are generally sparse, consisting of rural roads with no curb and gutter. Some more prominent county roadways include Buckskin Road, which provides an alternate connection route between Pocatello and Inkom; Mink Creek and Arimo Roads that provide western connection routes in the southern portion of the county to adjacent Power County, and Hawkins Road which provides a connection route to Oneida County to the southwest.

Recent transportation planning efforts conducted by Bannock Planning Organization for the northern portions of the county, including Pocatello and Chubbuck, indicate that Interstates will continue to provide a high level of service (level of service is defined by levels of congestion on roads) as the population grows over the next 30 years. Their analysis found that the local street network, particularly north-south movement, will be most impacted as traffic increases within Pocatello. One main issue facing local street planning and improvement are the complications of crossing the man-made (rail yards) and natural (river and streams) barriers as well as access issues posed by benches and steep slopes outside and within the town.
Many of these local transportation challenges, however, will fall within the jurisdiction of incorporated municipalities to address.

**Rail**

The history of the county is strongly tied to the railroad industry, which is credited with founding Pocatello. Union Pacific Railroad now operates the rail line that runs south along Highway 91 through the county. This rail corridor is a major avenue for the movement of freight and the rail company retains a large rail yard and land holdings within Pocatello.

**Transit**

The only transit service within the county is the Vanpool operated by Pocatello Urban Transit (PRT) serving the Pocatello-Chubbuck urban area and Idaho State University. Future plans call for the expansion of the PRT as a fixed route bus system that would serve the northern urbanized area.

**Water and Sewer**

**Water Supply**

The lower Portneuf River valley aquifer is the primary source of water supply for Bannock County residents. Per capita water consumption within the county is very high, nearly twice the national standard. At this rate of consumption, 2002 projections estimated the aquifer could only support an additional 20,000 people. The cities of Chubbuck and Pocatello have begun to assess alternate water sources to accommodate their growth, including the Snake River and the Snake River Aquifer to the north. Pocatello has obtained the rights to 50,000 acre feet of water form Palisades Reservoir.

The most comprehensive measure of water recharge and capacity of the lower Portneuf River valley aquifer was taken in 1993-1994. The study measured water flow in various stream watershed areas of the Portneuf River, as well as the river itself, to estimate how much water is recharged to the aquifer each year. A related result of this measurement work was a better understanding of the location of the most critical recharge areas. The Mink Creek, Gibson Jack Creek, and City/Cusick Creek watersheds were found to provide the greatest recharge.

The study found that the aquifer gains approximately 7.25 billion gallons per year. At the time of the study, demand already exceeded that capacity at 7.83 billion gallons per year. When the amount of water pumped out exceeds the amount that is returned, the result is a drop in the water table of the aquifer. This disparity widens in a drought year as even less water goes back into the aquifer. Water storage, conservation, and additional water sources are therefore essential to safeguard an adequate water supply for the future.
Water Quality

Over the 1990s, increased groundwater monitoring activity identified five primary pollutants impacting water quality in the aquifer:

- **Ethylene Dibromide (EDB);** found in groundwater supplying semi-rural residential areas; originated on the Fort Hall Indian Reservation where it was applied as a pesticide and soil fumigant.
- **Perchloroethylene (PCE):** Found in Chubbuck municipal wells. Possible source of contamination unknown.
- **Nitrate:** Possible contamination sources include leaking septic tanks, street salt/deicing runoff, and animal waste from agricultural runoff.
- **Sulfate:** Possible contamination sources include industrial waste and street salt/deicing runoff.

Sewer and Septic

The majority of development within the unincorporated County is on well and septic. The county does not provide sewer infrastructure or water treatment facilities. Water treatment facilities within the county are located in and operated by the cities of Chubbuck and Pocatello. Map A-8: Water Supply, illustrates the location of wells within the County. Current County regulations require lots with well and septic to be a minimum of five acres.

Schools

Two school districts serve the county: Pocatello School District 25 to the north and Marsh Valley School District 21 to the south. These School Districts are illustrated on Map A-11: School Districts. Both school districts report declining student enrollment over the past few years. For this reason, additional schools or school expansion plans are not an immediate priority. The largest and growing issue facing both districts is how to safely bus students in, particularly as development has spread into rural areas of the hillsides. Steep roadways create difficult routes, particularly in inclement weather. The county has standing agreements with each district to provide time for districts to review development proposals to ensure appropriate bus access and will continue this arrangement into the future.

Grade Schools

Schools are located within incorporated cities of the county but serve both city and county residents. Information on schools is summarized below by school district.
### Table A-13: Pocatello School District Schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Grades</th>
<th>2004-2005 Enrollment</th>
<th>Student to Teacher Ratio</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Elementary</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Almeda Center</td>
<td>1-6</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Pocatello</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chubbuck Elementary School</td>
<td>PK-6</td>
<td>543</td>
<td>21.5</td>
<td>Chubbuck</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Claude A Wilcox Elementary School</td>
<td>K-6</td>
<td>605</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Edahow Elementary School</td>
<td>K-6</td>
<td>333</td>
<td>20.4</td>
<td>Pocatello</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gate City Elementary School</td>
<td>K-6</td>
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<td>20.1</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Indian Hills Elementary School</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>ISU Early Learning Class</td>
<td>K-2</td>
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<td>N/A</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jefferson Elementary School</td>
<td>K-6</td>
<td>547</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lewis &amp; Clark Elementary School</td>
<td>K-6</td>
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<td>Pocatello</td>
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<td>Lincoln Preschool Center</td>
<td>PK-6</td>
<td>122</td>
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<td>Pocatello Montessori</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rulon M Ellis Elementary School</td>
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<td>541</td>
<td>21.4</td>
<td>Chubbuck</td>
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<tr>
<td>Syringa Elementary School</td>
<td>K-6</td>
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<td>20.0</td>
<td>Pocatello</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tendoy Elementary School</td>
<td>K-6</td>
<td>358</td>
<td>20.3</td>
<td>Pocatello</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tyhee Elementary School</td>
<td>K-6</td>
<td>522</td>
<td>17.8</td>
<td>Pocatello</td>
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<tr>
<td>Washington Elementary School</td>
<td>K-6</td>
<td>340</td>
<td>19.3</td>
<td>Pocatello</td>
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<td><strong>Elementary Subtotal</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>6,262</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Middle</strong></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Franklin Middle School</td>
<td>7-8</td>
<td>688</td>
<td>21.0</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hawthorne Middle School</td>
<td>7-8</td>
<td>512</td>
<td>17.4</td>
<td>Pocatello</td>
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<tr>
<td>Irving Middle School</td>
<td>7-8</td>
<td>532</td>
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<td>Pocatello</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kinport Academy</td>
<td>7-9</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>Pocatello</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Middle Subtotal</strong></td>
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<td></td>
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<td>1,754</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>High</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Century High School</td>
<td>9-12</td>
<td>1,102</td>
<td>21.8</td>
<td>Pocatello</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highland High School</td>
<td>9-12</td>
<td>1,342</td>
<td>19.7</td>
<td>Pocatello</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pocatello High School</td>
<td>9-12</td>
<td>1,173</td>
<td>20.6</td>
<td>Pocatello</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Horizons High School</td>
<td>9-12</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>Pocatello</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>High Subtotal</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3,703</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Special</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Treatment Prom-Unit Fun</td>
<td>K-12</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>Pocatello</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gateway Professional-Technical School</td>
<td>7-12</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Pocatello</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pocatello Community Charter</td>
<td>K-8</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>18.0</td>
<td>Pocatello</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pocatello Juvenile Detention</td>
<td>4-12</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>Pocatello</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pocatello Teen Parenting Program</td>
<td>7-12</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>Pocatello</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Special Subtotal</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>260</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Students</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>11,979</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table A-14: Marsh Valley School District Schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Grades</th>
<th>2004-2005 Enrollment</th>
<th>Student to Teacher Ratio</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Downey Elementary School</td>
<td>1-6</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>Downey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inkom Elementary school</td>
<td>PK-6</td>
<td>208</td>
<td>15.8</td>
<td>Inkom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lava Elementary School</td>
<td>K-6</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>13.4</td>
<td>Lava Hot Springs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mountain View Elementary School</td>
<td>K-6</td>
<td>262</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>McCammon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marsh Valley Middle School</td>
<td>7-8</td>
<td>185</td>
<td>13.7</td>
<td>Arimo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marsh Valley High School</td>
<td>9-12</td>
<td>447</td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>Arimo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marsh Valley Alternative High School</td>
<td>9-12</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>11.7</td>
<td>Arimo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Students</td>
<td></td>
<td>1,351</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Colleges and Universities

Idaho State University, with a student enrollment of 12,676 (2006) 908 member faculty and 1,122 non-faculty employees, is prominent as the only higher education institution within the county and is also its largest employer. Based in Pocatello, the university emphasizes its programs in education, business, biological sciences, health professions, and public administration.

Fire

Fire protection is provided by municipal fire departments, each with their own district (see Map A-10):

- Arimo Fire District
- Downey Rural Fire Protection District
- Fort Hall Fire Protection District
- Jackson Creek Fire Protection District
- Lava Rural Fire Protection District
- McCammon Rural Fire Protection District
- North Bannock (Chubbuck) Fire District
- Pocatello Valley Fire District
Police and Medical

County Sheriff

The County Sheriff’s Department is staffed by 120 trained professionals working in the following Divisions:

- **Patrol Division**: The staff of 19 deputies patrol all unincorporated areas of the county and four contracted municipalities.

- **Detention Division**: The staff of 56 deputies work out of the County Jail constructed in 1994 with a capacity for 253 inmates. These officers also operate the Sheriff/Commissioners Inmate Labor Detail Team where low-risk inmates work out of jail in various community service programs.

- **Detective Division**: Eight trained detectives work on felony cases in the County and partner with other agencies for domestic and child-related investigations.

- **Other Divisions**: Court Services Division, Training Division, Civil Division, Support Services Division, Volunteer Search and Rescue Unit, Records Department and School Resource Officer.

Medical Care

Medical treatment within the county is provided by Portneuf Medical Center, a not-for-profit hospital that recently expanded to include more specialized services including open heart surgery, as well as some care and rehabilitation services offered at the Idaho State Veterans’ Home and several assisted living facilities in Pocatello and Chubbuck.
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Map 1: Location and Context

Source: Bannock County, Idaho Transportation Department, Idaho Department of Water Resources, U.S. Census
Date: June 2008

LEGEND
- Municipalities
- Highways and Interstates
- Minor Services and Highways
- Water Bodies
- Parks and Reservations
- Recreation Pitches
- County Boundary

Comprehensive Plan

Bannock County, Idaho

Power County
Oneida County
Franklin County
Caribou County
Bingham County
Pocatello
Arbon Valley
Fort Hall
Inkom
McCammon
Arimo
Lava Hot Springs
Downey
Oxford

American Falls Reservoir
Mink Creek Rd
Buckskin Rd
Pocatello Creek Rd

Chubbuck
Portneuf River
Portneuf River
Map 2: Distribution of Population
Map 6: Existing Land Use
Map 7: Water Supply
Map 8: Geothermal and Seismic Activity
Map 9: School Districts

Chubbuck Road
Alameda Road
Tyhee Road
Syphon Road
Oak Street
Maple Street
Clark Road
Barton Road
Buckskin Road
Reservation Road
Ballard Road
Rio Vista Road
Laughran Road
Philibin Road
Hi-Line Road

West Side School District
Blackfoot School District
American Falls Joint School District
Aberdeen School District
Arbon Elementary School District
Pocatello School District
Grace Joint School District
Marsh Valley Joint School District
Preston Joint School District
Soda Springs Joint School District
Oneida County School District
North Gem School District

Bannock County School Districts

Comprehensive Plan

Reidell-Chubbuck-Fort Hall

LEGEND

Excerpt from the map showing school districts and other relevant features.
Appendix B: Summary of Current Plans and Policies

County Comprehensive Plan

Bannock County Second Century Comprehensive Plan, 1995-2020

Adopted: May 31, 1995
By: County Staff and the Bannock Planning Organization

Overview

This plan creates the policy framework for the unincorporated county. In addition, the plan provides information of key land use and population conditions and trends, and provides an overview of area differences within the county in terms of attitudes towards growth, economy, transportation, and the environment as found in public outreach and survey efforts.

Recommendations

The plan establishes a number of Goals and associated Actions for the County to pursue. These are organized into the following categories:

Population and Land Use

- Protect agriculture, forestry and mining activities.
- Protect the natural environment including fish and wildlife habitats.
- Address land use compatibility through zoning.
- Direct growth to urban infill areas where infrastructure is in place or easily accessed.
- Develop annexation policy with cities.
- Encourage diversity.

Economic Development

- Increase commercial and industrial development opportunities in appropriate locations throughout the county.
- Protect agriculture as an important component of the economy by diversifying operations.
- Provide a range of shopping and services to serve residents.
- Encourage new business that is compatible and adjacent to a city – encourage annexation of new business into the city.
**Transportation**
- Establish a regional multi-modal transportation system that emphasizes warehousing and shipping.
- Coordinate to finance projects with a variety of funding sources.
- Support multi-modal transportation on local level.

**Public Services, Facilities, and Utilities**
- Provide efficient and effective public services for safety, health and welfare.
- Mitigate impacts of new rural development on public services, facilities, and utilities.

**Natural Resources**
- Encourage development that is compatible with natural habitat, aesthetics, and sensitive areas or the environment.
- Preserve the natural environment for future generations (surface and ground water, air quality, open space).

**Community Design and Special Sites**
- Design standards for commercial and industrial uses to better work with the natural environment.
- Identify natural and culturally sensitive sites and educate on the importance and benefit of preservation. Compile a list of “special sites” in the unincorporated county.

**Parks and Recreation**
- Foster a connected system of trails and open space that is complementary to communities and park and public land resources;
- Retain and expand points of access to public lands.

**Housing**
- Improve neighborhood safety/security;
- Encourage development in appropriate locations;
- Permit a variety of housing types and price points.

**Schools**
- Provide quality education - a safe, engaging, and challenging academic atmosphere.
- Increase number of graduating students and those headed to college.

**Hazardous Areas**
- Reduce impacts of natural hazards on development through advance planning.
Community Comprehensive Plans

Pocatello Comprehensive Plan

Adopted January 2003
By: Shapiro & Associates, Inc.

Overview

The Pocatello Comprehensive Plan reflects the efforts of the Our Valley Our Vision document that establishes the shared long term vision for Pocatello and Chubbuck. The Pocatello Plan establishes an eight-point vision that includes:

- Proactive Economic Development;
- Managed Growth and Smart Development;
- Lower Taxes and Cost Efficient Delivery of Public Services;
- Transportation Improvements and Choices;
- Natural Resources Protection;
- Clean Air and Water;
- Livable Communities and Neighborhoods; and
- Regional Cooperation.

Key goals and recommendations are summarized by element, below.

Recommendations

Population and Demographics

Population growth is anticipated to add 10,000 new residents to Pocatello over the next 20 years. The plan calls for careful planning of services to respond to new residents and changing demographics.

Land Use

The land use plan draws upon smart growth principles of mixed use, infill, new neighborhoods, multi-modal transportation and maximizing services. The plan identifies an Urban Services Boundary (USB) for the city with a 20-year horizon for service extension. The Plan contains a land use plan map to illustrate future land use patterns and associated policies and implementation strategies. These include the following:

- Overlay districts to protect hillsides, water resources, historic resources, and to promote pedestrian activity.
- Promote high-quality neighborhood development with character, amenities, and connectivity to the larger community.
- Preserve open spaces in the ACI through clustering and other means.
- Encourage infill and redevelopment.
- Coordinate land use and transportation planning.
- Use the USB as a growth management tool.
Economy
The City seeks to promote a business-friendly environment to bring in and retain a range of employment opportunities in the community. Related goals include:

- Streamlined development review and good customer service by the City.
- Make information on the City and market available and support economic development efforts or Bannock Development Corporation.
- Work to diversify the economy, including building tourism activity.
- Support ISU Research and Business Park.
- Enhance desirability of the region through attention to schools, attractive built environment, and retail and business offerings.
- Coordinate regionally on economic development.

Public Services, Facilities, and Utilities
In order to meet the anticipated demand over the next 20 years, the City will add:

- New water sources, coupled with water conservation planning, to increase the supply of water which otherwise could not meet anticipated demand. Possible sources include the Snake River Aquifer and surface water and the Palisades Reservoir.
- Address aquifer contamination and protect the aquifer from future contamination.
- Construct two major and several minor wastewater transmission lines.
- Add police and fire substations in newly developing areas.

Natural Resources
A number of goals and policies address retaining and improving the natural resources for future generations, including air, water, land, and wildlife.

- Protect the Portneuf watershed, its streams, riparian areas, wetlands, recharge areas, and wellhead areas.
- Improve air quality through cleaner industry and reduction of vehicle miles traveled.
- Preserve critical wildlife areas and other sensitive lands within the USB.
- Protect hillsides and preserve open spaces through conservation easements, clustering, and acquisition.
Housing

The plan encourages the development of a range of housing choices to meet the needs of different economic and special needs members of the population. The plan also addresses historic preservation, homeownership education, and addressing homelessness.

Transportation

The transportation system of the city includes the airport, Pocatello Regional Transit (PRT), sidewalk and trails system, and local streets. Policies address transportation planning and financing to ensure a multi-modal transportation system.

Community Design

Community design recommendations focus on beautification efforts that include landscaping, signage, historic preservation, and area-specific guidelines to ensure compatible infill.

School Facilities and Transportation

Pocatello is within School District #25. The Plan establishes the City’s continued commitment to coordinate with SD 25 and ISU on school and facility and transportation planning.

Parks and Recreation

The City’s parks and recreation system includes City parks and greenways, recreation centers and programs, and school parks. The City will create a Parks and Recreation System Master Plan to plan for park system expansion and upgrades, and new recreation and arts facilities/programs.

Hazardous Areas

The plan contains goals and policies to minimize risks to the community from natural (landslide, flood, seismic) and man-made (soil contamination).

Special Sites

The City is home to four historic districts and several individual buildings on the National register of Historic Places. The Plan prioritizes continued historic preservation in the community through Historic Overlay zones and the maintenance of an inventory of assets.

Chubbuck Comprehensive Plan

Adopted: January 8, 2002
By: Shapiro & Associates

Overview

The Chubbuck Comprehensive Plan reflects the efforts of the Our Valley Our Vision document that establishes the shared long term
vision for Pocatello and Chubbuck. The Chubbuck Plan reflects many of the goals and vision statements, including a strong emphasis on smart growth principles. The Plan addresses urban services, future land use patterns, preferred neighborhood design elements, transportation needs, and parks, schools and other service needs of the community into the future.

**Recommendations**

**Population and Demographics**

Population growth was aggressive during the 1990s and the Pocatello-Chubbuck area is forecasted to add nearly 20,000 people from 2000-2020, a 28% gain. Policies relate to tracking changing demographics to inform neighborhood planning and service provision.

**Land Use**

The land use plan draws upon smart growth principles of mixed use, infill, multi-modal transportation and maximizing services. The plan identifies an Urban Services Boundary (USB) for the city with a 20-year horizon for service extension. The Plan contains a land use plan map to illustrate future land use patterns and associated policies and implementation strategies. These include the following:

- Overlay districts to protect hillsides, water resources, historic resources, and to promote pedestrian activity.
- Protect small town character and discourage sprawl with a focus on neighborhoods with character, amenities, and connectivity to the larger community.
- Balance economic and environmental needs.
- Create a greenbelt to protect adjacent agricultural lands.
- Promote service provision efficiency.
- Use the USB as a growth management tool.

**Transportation**

Transportation recommendations, informed by traffic modeling and overall goals of the plan, include the following:

- Increasing capacity of certain major roadways.
- Promote transit use through density.
- Encourage bike and pedestrian activity through community design (neighborhoods and activity centers that are well connected) and street improvements.

**Community Design**

Community design recommendations focus on neighborhoods as the basic planning component of the community. Recommendations focus on the improvement of aesthetics, compatible infill development, increased pedestrian connections, and the inclusion of neighborhood centers.
Appendix B: Summary of Current Plans and Policies

**Government Services**

Service recommendations focus on protecting and maintaining a safe water supply, with particular emphasis on groundwater/aquifer protection but also surface water bodies and wastewater treatment. Policy recommendations emphasize coordination of various actors (public and private) to efficiently plan for and provide services for existing and new development within the USB. The plan also contains policies for coordinating school planning with the school district and private education providers.

**Recreation**

Recreation plans focus on providing increased recreation opportunities to youth and creating a high-quality and well-connected parks and trails system.

**Natural Resources**

Key goals and policies for natural resources include the following:

- Improve education of natural systems.
- Protect and conserve surface and groundwater.
- Protect air quality.
- Minimize impact of new development.
- Preserve farmland and open space.
- Conserve energy – showcase renewable energy.

**Housing**

Housing goals and policies address the mix of housing types, affordable housing options, and density and development patterns.

**Economic Development**

The land use plan identifies areas targeted for commercial and industrial development/redevelopment. Policies stress the need to diversify the economic base, provide additional goods and services, and incorporate commercial uses in new and existing neighborhoods.

**Special Sites**

Protect important views of Big Butte and mountains to the north as well as the agricultural heritage of the area.

**Area of City Impact/Growth Management**

Policies emphasize the City’s intent to collaborate regionally to pursue the growth management vision of Our Valley, Our Vision through use of and adherence to the USB concept as a strategy for future locations of development and service provision.
Infrastructure and Service Plans and Studies

Bannock County Emergency Operations Plan

Overview
This Plan addresses natural (winter storms, flood, high winds, fires, earthquake/seismic activity) and technological/manmade hazards (power failure, hazardous materials release, civic disobedience, terrorism and weapons of mass destruction, war and mass casualty). The purpose of this Plan is to allow for timely, organized, and effective multiple agency response to address emergencies within the County if and when they occur.

Recommendations
For each type of hazard, the Plan specifies the response activities to be completed as a set of standard operating guidelines. Response tasks are organized by responsible party; the parties involved in any particular response vary by type of emergency. The list of emergency operations responders includes: County/City Executives, Emergency Services Coordinator, Public Information Officer, Resource Management, Police and Fire/First Responders, Public Works Officer, Damage Assessment, Health, Medical & Mortuary, Mass Care (Red Cross), and Safety Officer. The assigned roles and duties of responding parties are described by position title.

Transportation Plan

September 18, 2006
For: Cities of Chubbuck and Pocatello
By: Bannock Planning Organization

Overview
This transportation plan creates a set of goals and policies to guide the development of a multi-modal transportation system in the Pocatello-Chubbuck urban area. The plan includes sections and recommendations on streets, transit, bike and pedestrian, and freight, as discussed below.
Recommendations

Streets

- The local streets system includes both urban and rural (no curb/gutter) streets. Many streets have not been upgraded to accommodate increasing demand.
- Travel times have increased overall and there are congestion problems on major roadways.
- The biggest challenge facing the streets system is the number of natural and man-made constraints to street widening and improvement, including difficulty crossing the railroad, river, creeks, and the interstate and access issues related to the benches and slopes on the edges of town.
- Traffic projections indicate only a few sections of north-south roadways and portions of the downtown where congestion will occur.
- The Plan recommends several street improvements to address congestion and safety concerns.

Transit

The City of Pocatello operates Pocatello Regional Transit (PRT) that serves limited routes in the Pocatello-Chubbuck area. Increasing Ridership will allow for expansion of the bus fleet and routes by 2010.

Bike and Pedestrian

The Plan addresses the maintenance and expansion of city sidewalks and trails and contains a map of the current and proposed system.

Freight

The railroad and highway infrastructure has long made the Pocatello-Chubbuck area a freight transportation hub. The plan reaffirms the desire to maintain this dimension of the overall transportation system.

North Bannock County Sewer Feasibility Study

Completed September 2006
For: City of Chubbuck, City of Pocatello, Bannock County, Idaho
Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ)
By: J-U-B Engineers, Inc.

Overview

This sewer study represents a multi-jurisdictional sewer planning and evaluation effort for the Pocatello-Chubbuck area. The purposes of this study are

- to evaluate current sewer and water service areas, and the location of well/septic systems;
• to create a strategy for the protection and conservation of groundwater and surface water supplies; and
• to create strategies for a logical and fiscally responsible extension of services.

Recommendations
This study, still in draft form, accomplishes the following:
• Reports the impacts of septic systems on groundwater quality (as documented over 10 years by the Idaho Geological Survey of Idaho State University).
• Identifies the proposed service extension area.
• Recommends an alignment alteration to the proposed preliminary trunk sewer system layout detailed in the Chubbuck Wastewater Collection System facilities Plan.
• Adjusted capacity of the planned sewer line to better align with land use and growth projections.
• Estimates costs of the infrastructure project by phase.
• Evaluates possible funding mechanisms to help finance the project – their relative advantages and disadvantages.
• Estimates capital budget cash flows incorporating new and replacement sewer projects and service and connection rates/fees.
• Establishes an implementation plan that details challenges that will need to be addressed, and the necessary steps, policies, and strategies that should be included as part of the overall process.

Chubbuck Impact Area Wastewater Collection Authority
The Chubbuck Impact Area Wastewater Authority was created in September 2007 for the purpose of designing, constructing, and funding a wastewater collection system in the Chubbuck Area of City Impact north of Chubbuck. Once constructed, the City of Chubbuck will be the agency responsible for operating and maintaining the system, as well as collecting user fees.

Water Balance and Pumping Capacity of the Lower Portneuf River Valley Aquifer
July 2006
By: John Welhan, Idaho Geological Survey

Overview and Key Findings
This study measured the water withdrawal and recharge capacity of the Portneuf Aquifer over a period of 510 days in 1993-1994. The measures found that the total demand more than a decade ago already was at 100-115% of system capacity.
This was determined through evaluation of current water withdrawals from wells (municipal, industrial, agricultural and private) and the estimated recharge. Recharge was calculated for watershed areas on surrounding slopes. Of these, the most significant recharge areas were found to be Gibson Jack Creek, Mink Creek, and City/Cusick Creek. Other recharge sources evaluated, but found to have minimal or no recharge benefit, were the Eastern Slope, Fort Hall Canyon, Trail Creek, and Pocatello Creek.

The study concludes that water supply of the aquifer faces three principal threats:

1. Demand for water exceeds recharge on a normal precipitation year,
2. There are cumulative impacts of successive dry years, and
3. Demand is increasing over time from growth and drier summers.

**Current Planning Efforts**

**Bannock County Transportation Plan**

By: Riedesel & Associates.Inc.

**Overview**

The Bannock County Transportation Plan represents a joint effort between Bannock County Road & Bridge, Downey-Swan Lake Highway Districts, and the cities of Arimo, Downey, Lava Hot Springs, McCammon, and Inkom. This plan will create a strategy and recommendations for the development of a multi-modal transportation system to meet the needs of the future population. The planning process will include:

- Calculate current and projected traffic demands,
- Map and model of base and planned roadways,
- Evaluate alternative transportation improvements,
- Create cost estimates for each alternative,
- Develop recommendations and priorities,
- Develop an asset management plan, and
- Develop a capital improvements plan for each jurisdiction along with potential funding sources.
Related Statutes and Regulations

Idaho’s Local Planning Act
(Idaho Code Title 67, Chapter 65)

Applicability
This State law requires each city and county in Idaho to create comprehensive plans to promote health and safety, protect property rights, ensure adequate facilities, promote economic viability, protection agricultural and other resource economy lands, encourage urban development of cities, and protect natural and hazard areas.

Overview and Intent
The Local Planning Act calls for the creation of planning and zoning commissions to oversee community planning decisions and policies. Each city and county must create and maintain an updated comprehensive plan that looks at current conditions and trends and sets goals for the community in the following areas (at minimum):

- Property Rights
- Population
- School Facilities and Transportation
- Economic Development
- Land Use
- Natural Resources
- Hazardous Areas
- Public Services, Facilities, and Utilities
- Transportation
- Recreation
- Special Areas or Sites
- Housing
- Community Design
- Implementation

Urban-Wildland Interface Code
(Bannock County Ordinance NO. 2005-7)

Applicability
The provisions of this code apply to all “urban-wildland interface areas” within Bannock County and is in addition to all other fire code regulations within the County. These provisions apply to new or renovated structures in the defined UWIA.
Overview and Intent

This Code is intended to reduce the risk of wildland fire damage and danger to residents of the County by reducing the amount and geographic consistency of fuel for fires as they approach urbanized areas. The provisions apply to the Urban-Wildland Interface Area, defined as “that geographical area where structures and other human development meets or intermingles with wildland or vegetative fuels.” This area is declared by the code official, and defined on maps.

The focus of the provisions is twofold: the fire safety/fire retardant feature of new or applicable renovation construction within the UWIA and the landscape management techniques that reduce fire risk. Building regulations address fire flows, access, building materials, sprinkler systems, design features, and signage. Landscape elements are listed under “defensible space” and address the reducing risk potential fuel sources near structures including fuel storage tanks, firewood, etc., as well as landscaping materials within particular proximity to the dwelling/structure.

Area of Impact Resolutions

Idaho State law (Idaho Code 67-6526) requires the establishment of an agreed upon Areas of City Impact (ACIs) between each incorporated jurisdiction and its respective county. The following summaries provide an overview of the goals and issues surrounding existing agreements.

Pocatello Area of Impact Agreement

(Bannock County Ordinance 1998-6, Pocatello Ordinance)

Overview

In designating the Area of Community Impact (ACI), Pocatello considered all developable lands surrounding the City that would likely seek to use the services (water, garbage, sewer, streets) and may one day annex into the City. In some cases, the ACI boundary includes public lands that are surrounded by private (developable) lands. This boundary serves as a future planning area for the city – future land use/development patterns, transportation improvements, and infrastructure extensions.

Goals and Procedures

Goals

The goals of the agreement, as listed within the resolution text, include the following:

- Meet legal requirements of the State; and
Appendix B: Summary of Current Plans and Policies

- To promote orderly growth.

**Procedures**

The agreement established formal procedures outlining the application of comprehensive plans, zoning regulations, and subdivision ordinances within the designated ACI. These procedures address review process steps and assign the roles and responsibilities of the city and county for each stage of the review process. The agreement also contains a land use plan for the ACI to be followed by the county as it reviews development proposals within the ACI.

**Issues/Concerns**

The main issues raised by impacted property owners at the time the ACI was revised include:

- Concern over annexation/jurisdiction,
- Impacts on taxes and land values,
- Concern the ACI would work to encourage development of this area;
- Disagreement that the ACI is necessary as a planning measure prior to development.

**Chubbuck Area of Impact Agreement**

*(Bannock County Ordinance 1998-5, Chubbuck Ordinance 495)*

**Overview**

In designating the ACI, Chubbuck considered all developable lands surrounding the City that would likely seek to use the services (water, garbage, sewer, streets) and may one day annex into the City. This boundary serves as a future planning area for the city – future land use/development patterns, transportation improvements, and infrastructure extensions.

**Goals and Procedures**

**Goals**

The goals of the agreement, as listed within the resolution text, include the following:

- Meet legal requirements of the State; and
- To promote orderly growth.

**Procedures**

The agreement established formal procedures outlining the application of comprehensive plans, zoning regulations, and subdivision ordinances within the designated ACI. These procedures address review process steps and assign the roles and responsibilities of the city and county for each stage of the review process.
Appendix C: Plan Amendment Procedures

For this Plan to function over time, the county must be able to periodically review and update it to respond to significant trends or changes in the economic, physical, social, or political conditions. The county will conduct revisions to this Plan according to two distinct and different procedures:

(1) Plan Update, and (2) Plan Amendments. A Plan Update should occur at intervals of approximately every five years. The purpose of a Plan Update is to re-evaluate the goals, policies, and strategies contained within this Plan (noting those to change and those to remove), and to develop new policies if necessary—to make sure that this Plan is being effective. The Plan Update Process is further described below.

A separate process has been established for Plan Amendments to the Plan, and the county may perform amendments on a yearly or periodic basis as needed. Plan Amendments may include revisions to one or more sections of the Comprehensive Plan as a result of adoption of subarea plans or a specific issue/policy plan, or by directive from the Board of County Commissioners. Plan Amendments may include changes to the Future Land Use Plan map. Other amendments may be as small as correcting text or map errors. The process for making these amendments is described below.

**Plan Update Process**

It is intended that an update of the Comprehensive Plan take place at least every five (5) years, unless otherwise directed by the Board of County Commissioners. The county’s prime consideration in making a determination of when an update should be initiated should include what changes have occurred since the Plan was last updated. These changes may be in areas such as the economy, the environment, housing affordability, traffic congestion, local priorities, projected growth, or others. A Plan Update will include a thorough re-evaluation of the vision, goals, and policies contained within this Plan, noting those that should be changed and those that should be removed, and develop new policies if necessary, to make sure that the Plan is effective. A Plan Update will also include a thorough review of the validity of all information contained within the Plan and should include extensive opportunities for involvement by the public, boards and commissions, elected and appointed officials, county staff, and other affected interests.
Plan Amendment Process and Procedures

All Plan Amendments shall be considered by the Planning and Development Council and Board of County Commissioners pursuant to their respective powers. Based on its consideration of the recommendations from staff, boards and commissions, and evidence from public hearings, the Planning and Development Council could then recommend in favor of the Plan Update (with or without further revisions) or recommend against it. Any review of a Plan Update by a Planning and Development Council would be followed by County Commissioners action including, if applicable, its approval of the Plan Update. When considering a plan amendment, the county should consider whether:

1. The existing Comprehensive Plan and/or any related element thereof is in need of the proposed amendment;
2. The proposed amendment is compatible with the surrounding area, and the goals and policies of the Comprehensive Plan;
3. The proposed amendment will have no major negative impacts on transportation, services, and facilities;
4. The proposed amendment will have minimal effect on service provision, including adequacy or availability of facilities and services, and is compatible with existing and planned service provision;
5. Strict adherence to the Comprehensive Plan would result in a situation neither intended nor in keeping with other key elements and policies of the Plan; and
6. The proposed Plan amendment will promote the public welfare and will be consistent with the goals and policies of the Comprehensive Plan and the elements thereof.

Minor Amendment Process for Future Land Use Plan Updates in City ACI Areas

From time to time, in order to keep the Future Land Use Plan consistent with city land use designations in the city ACI areas, this plan should be amended to reflect land use changes made by Pocatello and Chubbock to their respective land use plans. These changes should be made on an as-needed basis to keep the plan current, but no more frequently than once every six (6) months. All such minor Plan Amendments shall be considered by the Planning and Development Council and Board of County Commissioners pursuant to their respective powers. Based on its consideration of the recommendations from staff, and evidence from public hearings, the Planning and Development Council could then recommend in favor of the Plan Update (with or without further revisions) or recommend...
against it. Any review of a minor Plan Update by a Planning and Development Council would be followed by County Commissioners action including, if applicable, its approval of the minor Plan Update.
Appendix D: Definitions

This section includes definitions for terms used in the Bannock County Comprehensive Plan. Where applicable, it uses the same or like terminology as County ordinances to avoid duplicative terms.

Agricultural Soils, Prime:
Land highly suited for the production of food, feed, and other crops, as defined by the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) standards for location and evaluations.

Agricultural Support Use:
A use that provides services that directly support agriculture on the same property or on adjacent agricultural lands, such as production, storage and sales of seeds, feed, and other produce, processing, repair of farming equipment, and the like.

Agriculture:
Farmland and/or ranchland used for the production of food, feed, and domestic animal grazing. The Agricultural District also allows agricultural support uses.

Animal Feeding Operation (AFO):
A contained area where livestock are confined solely for the purpose of growing or fishing in a confined area for 45 days or more during any 12-month period, and are sustained by means other than grazing. Also described by the common name of “feedlot.” (See also Concentrated Animal Feeding Operation.)

Arterial — Road or Street:
A functional classification of a road or street usually a major throughway, such as a highway, designated to move traffic at high speed, as designated on functional classification map.

Area of City Impact (ACI) (Or “Impact Area”):
That area defined by the City and County ordinances that surrounds a city. In the absence of ordinances Idaho Code defines the area as being one mile beyond a town or city’s borders. The ACIs are locations where cities and towns will likely expand and grow into the unincorporated County and may annex property (with willing landowners).

Billboard:
A sign used for outdoor advertising, usually visible from roads. It advertises a facility, product, or event not on the site occupied by the sign.

Cluster Development (Open Space Subdivision):
Development that conserves open space on a parcel and clusters lots on another portion of the parcel. Cluster development is sometimes referred to as the “Open Space Subdivision” in Bannock County. A cluster development maximizes open space conservation without reducing overall building density. Generally half or more of the buildable land area is designated as undivided, permanent open space.
### Collector – Road or Street:
A functional classification or a road or street, usually a primary road in a subdivision which connects to a larger collector or to an arterial road.

### Common Space:
A lot or portion of a platted subdivision on which development is prohibited or restricted and ownership is held in common by all the lot owners in the subdivision.

### Concentrated Animal Feeding Operation (CAFO):
An Animal Feeding Operation that has been designated by a state permitting authority as a possible point source of pollution to waters of the United States.

### Concept Plan:
The initial proposal presented by a developer. A general sketch of a proposed development.

### Density:
The number of dwelling units per acre of land. The land use categories in this Plan identify a maximum number of units. Each zoning district of the Bannock County Zoning Ordinance also has prescribed uses and a specified density.

### Develop, Development:
To divide land for purposes other than agriculture; to prepare land for division, building, or improvements, including grading, fencing for planned residential lots, road building, or utility placement, or to place structures or utilities or fencing (other than for agriculture), or roads. Includes change of existing structure or land.

### Ditch:
Man-made irrigation system (e.g., Fort Hall Irrigation Ditch, McCammon Ditch).

### Downey-Swan Lake Highway Department:
Independent highway district covering the south portion of Bannock County.

### Drainage or Drainageway:
The natural path of surface water flow above ground.

### Floodplain:
An area susceptible to flooding, as designated by the Army Corps of Engineers on Flood Insurance Rate Maps, published by the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

### Game Farm:
The raising of animals in captivity that are wild by nature on private property for the purpose of the sale of meat as a product to be sold on the property or to market.

### Home Occupation:
An occupational use within a home or dwelling, employing the occupants and no more than one additional person.
**Homeowner's Association:**
An association of homeowners and lot owners having responsibilities for the management and upkeep of common property and improvements in a specific subdivision. Such associations may also be formed to include a specific area or combination of subdivisions.

**Impact Area Agreement:**
An agreement reached by City and County officials which prescribes which entity’s ordinances will apply in the Area of City Impact Area, and how development applications are processed. An impact area agreement is enacted by ordinances by the County and City, the result of which is an ordinance or resolution by both governments.

**Important Agricultural Soils (or Lands):**
“Prime agricultural lands” as defined by NRCS.

**Important Wildlife Habitat:**
Lands where wildlife breed, feed, migrate, or seek shelter. “Important habitat” is determined by Idaho Fish and Game.

**Incorporated Area:**
Lands within a city or town’s jurisdiction by virtue of being within its legal boundaries.

**Local — Street or Road:**
A road used primarily as land access, connecting driveway access to collector or arterial roads. Designed for slower traffic, short travel distances and low traffic volumes. Not necessarily through-streets.

**Lot:**
The contiguous land in the same ownership which is not divided by a public road right of way.

**Open Lands/Open Space:**
Land and water, including agricultural and forestry land, that is in its underdeveloped, natural state or has been protected, developed only to the extent consistent with, or is restored to be consistent with the following:

- water quality protection for rivers, streams, lakes, and wetlands,
- flood protection,
- protection of riparian buffers and other areas that serve as natural habitat and corridors for plant and animal species (if wildlife values benefit from open lands designation),
- scenic protection,
- protection of archaeological and historic resources,
- provision of recreational outdoor activities, or
- connection of existing or planned areas contributing to these goals.

**Open Space Subdivision (Cluster Development):**
A division of land which produces individual lots and reserves a specified amount of the original area of a parcel in perpetually undeveloped or unchanged condition.
Parcel:
A unit of land for which rights or ownership and use can be bought or sold.

Planning and Development Council:
Planning and zoning citizen planning body, which is appointed by the Board to make land use decisions and recommendations.

Planned Unit Development (PUD):
A development of land which is under unified control and is planned and developed as a whole in a single development operation or a programmed series of stages of development. Subdivision and zoning regulations are applied to the project as a whole rather than to individual lots. Underlying densities are calculated for the entire development, allowing trade off between clustering of housing and provision of open space. The PUD may include some non-residential development. Typically PUDs are done in urban or suburban areas. They can give a developer flexibility to be creative and do good design, but should not weaken environmental standards.

Riparian Area, Riparian Corridor:
All lands within and adjacent to areas of groundwater discharge, or standing and flowing surface waters where the vegetation community is temporarily or seasonally affected by the temporary, seasonal, or permanent presence of water. Examples including springs, seeps, cracks, streams, rivers, ponds, and lakes and their margins. Riparian corridors are connected riparian areas, usually serves as a movement route for fish or wildlife.

Road (or Street):
A public or private thoroughfare which affords principal means of access to abutting property.

Setback:
The minimum distance between a structure or improvement and a lot line or feature from which setback is prescribed.

Sewer, Central:
A sewage or effluent pre-treatment facility serving more than one structure, and owned privately or in common by other than a governmental entity.

Sewer, Municipal:
A system of sewer lines and treatment facilities to deliver and treat sewage, developed, serviced, and managed by a governmental entity or agency.

Slope:
The variation of terrain from the horizontal rise or fall to the vertical, expressed as a percentage.

Transfer of Development Rights (TDRs):
The transfer of development rights is a mechanism by which significant properties (e.g., farms, significant buildings, scenic views, or hillsides) may be protected in perpetuity through the sale of "development rights." Typically, owners of land in development-restricted areas called "sending" districts transfer the development rights from their property and sell those rights to property owners in specified "receiving" districts.
**Urban Development:**
Development of or relating to a city that is closely tied to the density (i.e., greater than one unit per acre) and the nature of the services required for that development. Services include municipal water and sewer, an extensive road network, and services, such as public transit and parks.

**Urban Service Boundary:**
A boundary delineating existing and planned municipal water and sewer service areas. The area in which urban services will be provided and outside of which such urban services will not be extended. (Note: Chubbuck and Pocatello have proposed but not designated boundaries).

**Urban-Wildland Interface Area:**
The geographical area where structures and other human development meet or intermingle with wildland or vegetative fuels.

**Wetland:**
Those areas that are inundated or saturated by surface or ground water at a frequency and duration sufficient to support, and that under normal circumstances do support, a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions, defined by the Army Corps of Engineers.

**Wildfire:**
Uncontrolled fire spreading through vegetative fuels, exposing and possibly consuming structures.

**Wildland:**
The area in which development is essentially non-existent, except for roads, railroads, power lines, and similar facilities.

**Wildlife:**
Any form of animal life, living in a natural state and under the authority of Idaho Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

**Wildlife Habitat or Corridor:**
Areas for the daily or seasonal migration patterns of animal species.

**Zoning District:**
Land delineated by the County’s Official Zoning Map in which requirements for the use of land and building and development standards are prescribed by the Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances of Bannock County.
Appendix E: Public Participation Plan

Overview

Broad community involvement in the development of a comprehensive plan was an essential component of developing this Plan. The county sought to engage all the residents of the county from diverse locations and backgrounds and allowed them to provide meaningful input throughout the process. Objectives for public participation included:

1. **Broad-Base Outreach**: Build broad-based and diverse support for plan directions by providing information and seeking input,
2. **Cost-Effectiveness**: Use techniques that are cost effective ways to reach a lot of people,
3. **Informational/Educational**: Provide Information and educate the community to aid in decision-making,
4. **Technical Accuracy**: Seek specific technical input from other departments, agencies, professionals.
5. **Community Capacity**: Build community-capacity or on-going support to implement the plan and participate in on-going planning and volunteerism, and
6. **Legal Requirements**: Meet statutory and local requirements.

The planning team used multiple ways to engage citizens of Bannock County. The specific activities are described below.

Targeted Stakeholder Interactions

**Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC)**

The County advertised and solicited diverse participation for Advisory Committee membership, and intentionally appointed members to reflect the geographic diversity of the county as well as the variety of interests of its citizens. The CAC worked closely with the planning team (staff and consultants) throughout the duration of the project. The CAC met seven times throughout the process. CAC meeting agendas allowed time for public comment, and a number of citizens attended each meeting and provided comments.

**Technical Advisory Group (TAG)**

A Technical Advisory Group worked informally with the planning team (staff and consultants) at key milestones during the project: (1) to check inventory information at early stages, (2) to provide feedback on goals and policies, and (3) to review the early draft plan. The TAG ensured coordination between County departments and other...
municipalities and service providers. TAG members provided a number of comments via email and through direct contact that the planning team incorporated into the plan.

Focus Groups
The planning team held some targeted meetings with stakeholder groups to discuss their priorities as they relate to the comprehensive plan. Stakeholder groups included ranchers and farmers, environmental advocacy groups, and development and real estate groups.

Elected and Appointed Official Meetings

Board of Commissioners/Planning and Development Council
During the planning process, the planning team met with the Board of Commissioners and the Planning and Development Council to ensure that their efforts are coordinated and were reflected in the plan.

City Mayors and Staff
The plan also took and will continue to require inter-jurisdictional coordination to plan and implement meaningful strategies to address common issues with the Cities and Towns. The planning team and Board of Commissioners met with mayors and staff from each city and town to make sure their “key issues” or concerns are adequately incorporated into the plan.

- Met with mayors of south county towns to discuss land use development patterns and service provision concerns and priorities and how the towns and county can best work together on these issues.
- Met with the northern city mayors to discuss infrastructure and service expansion plans, land use patterns, annexation issues, and intergovernmental agreements.
**Broad-Based Community Outreach**

### Community Workshops/Open Houses

Meetings to provide opportunities for local residents to focus on the issues that are most directly relevant to their areas as well as on countywide topics occur in several areas of the County throughout the project, including:

**January: Open House**

**Purpose:** Introduce project and existing conditions information  
**Locations and attendance:** Marsh Valley High School (20) and Highland High School (30).

**April: Public Workshop**

**Purpose:** Present scenarios for discussion and comment.  
**Location and attendance:** Pocatello High School (45)

**September: Public Workshop (Ice Cream Social)**

**Purpose:** To present the preliminary draft plan for public review and comment.  
**Location and attendance:** Inkom Skyline Community Park (75).

### Getting the Word Out

**Project Website**

The Comprehensive Plan had a dedicated website ([www.bannockplan.org](http://www.bannockplan.org)) with project schedule, information, and work products throughout the plan process.

**Media / Full Page Newspaper Inserts**

The planning team prepared press releases, a paid newspaper insert, and worked with the media to get the word out. In addition, the planning team with elected officials prepared editorial pieces for the newspaper to solicit participation and input in the plan development.

- Newspaper Insert
- Editorials

**Promotional Materials**

The project team prepared promotional materials such as bookmarks, posters, and fliers to advertise meetings and access to project website.
**Briefing Bulletins**
As part of the goals and scenarios phase of the effort, the project team prepared “briefing bulletins” about key choices for the plan. These bulletins were available for public events and on the website.

**Student Outreach**
The planning team worked with over 200 high school students at Highland High School and Marsh Valley High Schools to bring youth voices into the process early and spreading the word to parents about the plan. The media, including local television stations, provided coverage on this event.

**Summer Roadshow**
The prepared poster materials and comment forms that went to the following events:

- May 5 – Environmental Fair, Pocatello
- June 6 – Alive at 5, Pocatello
- June 20 – Portneuf River Symposium, ISU
- June 23 – RiverFest, Pocatello
- July 11 & 27 – Farmers Market, Pocatello
- July 11 – Pocatello Founding, Pocatello
- July 21 – Lava LDS Parade, Lava Hot Springs
- August 8 & 10 – South County Fair, Downey
- August 15-17 – North County Fair, Pocatello
- August - Chubbuck Days

This direct outreach at prescheduled events was very effective, resulting in almost 250 responses that helped validate key directions for the plan.
Appendix F: Resources
Appendix F: Resources
Why do Counties Conserve Open Space?

Counties establish open space for a variety of reasons, but mainly because residents believe it contributes to “quality of life and livability”; and it has environmental and economic benefits, described below.

What are “open lands” and “open space”?

Open lands or open space are those lands in an underdeveloped, natural state that are conserved, minimally improved, or restored and managed as part of a public or private system for the reasons listed below. They:

- Provide recreational outdoor activities, such as hunting, fishing, hiking, and bicycling.
- Protect water quality (clean water) in rivers, streams, lakes, and wetlands.
- Minimize flooding hazards or other natural hazards.
- Provide room for wildlife to roam (i.e., lands that serve as natural habitat for plants and animals).
- Maintain scenic assets of a place, such as community “gateways” or important hills or mountains.
- Protect resource areas such as farms or forestry areas (may be conserved as private easements).
- Conserve archaeological or historic resources.
- Connect existing or planned open space areas via trails.

In Bannock County, the term “open space,” is used in our development code to denote private land that has been restricted from development-- for instance, as part of the County’s Open Space Subdivision process. For this paper, we use the term open space more broadly, to include conserved land that might be part of a public program (not just those areas set aside on private parcels.)

Trends Watch: Open Space in the American West and Idaho

In the past ten years, many local communities (including rural places) across the United States have recognized economic, social, and environmental benefits of “open space programs” by approving funding to acquire and manage open space.

Many voters appear to be comfortable supporting conservation programs. For instance, voters in November 2006 approved 100 local ballot measures in 23 states providing almost $6 billion to acquire land for parks and conservation according to Trust for Public Land. A number of areas approved bonds or tax increases for the first time. (Urban Land Institute) The vast majority of programs rely on “willing seller/willing buyer” and do not use eminent domain to acquire lands.

Communities are expanding partnerships and are using a range of tools to protect land—not just acquisitions and not just regulations. They are exploring public-private partnerships, education about private options to conserve land, cluster development approaches, environmental protection standards, and other options.

Open Space Subdivision (or Cluster Development) is one option in Bannock County to retain open space within developments. A property owner has the option to divide and develop land in such a way that 50% or more of the property is conserved as open space and development lots are clustered together without reducing overall building density (or number of eligible housing units). (See Briefing Brochure: Clustered Rural Development.)
What are Pros and Cons of Identifying and Protecting Open Space?

“Pros” of Open Space Program:
Open space is seen by many citizens’ as important to “quality of life” for economic, social, and environmental reasons, including some listed on the previous page. It provides opportunities for outdoor recreation, places for education and learning, and a way to improve environmental health and wildlife areas, and it helps with keeping buildings and people out of hazardous areas, such as floodplains. Many studies also show that open space creates economic and property value—particularly for neighborhoods or developments next-door to permanently protected lands. Moreover, communities with well planned and funded open space programs are able to attract business and employment (e.g., Nature-Friendly Communities book). A county does not have to buy all its open space; some open space can be set aside as part of future developments, but it is not possible to achieve all the public aims of an open space program through regulations alone. See Open Space Protection Tools on the following pages.

“Cons” of Open Space Program
A public open space program does have financial costs – both to start it and to manage lands over time, particularly when a jurisdiction buys land. Over 30% of costs over time in a jurisdiction will be for monitoring and managing lands (Larimer County, Co). Having a mix of tools, including regulations, funding, partnerships, and purchase of development rights can lower costs for open space protection. However, regulations are usually controversial, and even partnerships, education, and leveraging fund with federal and state grants require staff resources (and probably some public funding). Citizens will have to be willing to pay for open space in Bannock County to really develop a full-fledged program. Finally, a public open space program should be coordinated with other social needs, such as affordable housing, to avoid increasing costs of housing and other programs.

Community Examples
A few comparable communities that have protected open space include:

Larimer County, Colorado has a fifteen year-old open lands program. The program focuses on acquiring and managing open lands (for recreation and resource protection) and park land for recreation (hiking, hunting, etc.) Larimer County’s program is one of the most successful in Colorado at leveraging local funds with federal and state grant money and working with partners, such as local land trusts, to get conservation done in ways that minimize costs for county residents.

Voters in Boise, Idaho approved funding in 2001 for the Boise Foothills Open Space campaign. Showing that open space is an issue that crosses party lines, what galvanized so many voters, proponents say, was an unlikely alliance between environmentalists and Boise’s Republican leadership. The push focused on buying public-access easements and certain private parcels in the foothills nearest to the city.

In the 1996 election, in Salt Lake City, Utah, voters endorsed a $48 million bond with 71 percent of the vote.

These are just a few examples. The American West is also full of examples of private initiatives to conserve open space or agricultural lands. The American Farmland Trust publication for Rocky Mountain Agricultural Landowners (Guide to Conservation and Sustainability) is a good resource. Colorado Cattleman’s Agricultural Land Trust has helped landowners in the Steamboat Springs, Colorado area develop easements and conserve lands.
Open Space Protection “Tools”

Counties use a variety of tools to protect open space. These include, in order of prominence: 1

- Conservation easements (85%)
- Floodplain ordinances (82%)
- Fee simple acquisition (75%)
- Private land donations (73%)
- Cluster zoning ordinances (63%)
- Environmental mitigation requirements (56%)
- Farmland protection ordinances (53%)
- Overlay districts (45%)
- Density bonuses (40%)
- Mandatory dedication ordinance (35%)
- Purchase of development rights (33%)
- Tax incentives (32%)
- Impact fees (25%)
- Transfer of development rights (TDRs) (21%)

The top four tools that Western Counties use are:

1) Conservation easements
2) Floodplain and environmental mitigation requirements
3) Cluster zoning
4) Purchase lands

Impact fees and TDRs are the least commonly used tools for open space protection. These types of tools are defined in the sections that follow.

Conservation Easement

A conservation easement is a voluntary deed restriction that landowners place on their land to keep it open or available for agriculture. In return, property owners are eligible for tax benefits. The benefit is it can be strictly voluntary and requires little to no government involvement.

Floodplain Standards

Floodplain standards limit building within designated floodplain(s). They may be set up in many different ways, including a sliding scale—where they allow limited development in less flood prone areas and no development in the flood zone, where flooding is more likely (e.g., Summit County, Utah adopted such restrictions.) The benefit is in protecting health, safety and also environmental quality. Any sort of regulation such as this may be controversial if it is onerous for landowners, particularly with smaller parcels of land.

Cluster development / Open Space Subdivision

Cluster zoning or open space subdivision is an approach to development where lots within a parcel are clustered to retain most of the parcel as open space. Bannock County has open space subdivision standards, but they provide little guidance on how to designate open space or a conservation area.

Transfer of Development Rights (TDRs)

Transfer of Development Rights (TDRs) are often seen as an ideal solution for conserving land, but are rarely put into place because they can be complex to establish and administer. The approach relies on severing development rights from a parcel and transferring them from a mapped “sending area” (conservation lands) to a certain “receiving area” (where increased development can occur). TDR advantages include low cost for protecting lands – where development rights are transferred instead of purchased. Idaho statutes limit the ways TDRs can be used.

Ridgeline and/or Scenic Protection

“Change is inevitable. Ugliness is not” is the slogan on the Scenic America website. Bannock County has many beautiful views and scenery important to property values and increased tourism revenue. Protecting views and vistas from the effects of haphazard development allows a community to maintain its assets and build pride and attract positive growth and clean industries to the area. However, citizens of Bannock County have mixed opinions about whether the backdrop and ridges are important to protect and how to do so in ways that are fair to property owners. As with any other conservation approaches, a variety of tools to protect scenic quality are most effective--ranging from educational and voluntary to incentives and regulatory (e.g., Ridgeline Protection Districts). Educational and voluntary methods are less likely to be 100% effective, but give property owners options. Regulatory approaches are likely to be more effective but mean that developers must comply with additional standards. Ridgeline Protection Districts can also be tied to a set of incentives encouraging property owners to design sites in a manner that protects the uninterrupted skyline and minimizes adverse visual impact on designated ridgelines, hilltops, and adjacent slopes. More information is available at http://www.scenic.org/.

Bannock County Open Space Challenges

A potential challenge in Bannock County to establish a public open space program in 2007 is the limited staff resources to do planning, acquisitions, and management of lands and lack of a dedicated source of funding. Moreover, current staffing levels make it difficult to revisit standards for resource protection or open space subdivisions, or to apply for funding or establish partnerships. The Comprehensive Plan is an opportunity to identify if open space protection is a priority for the county, to identify types of open space that are high priority, and to recommend some tools for conserving land.

Funding sources outside Bannock County

Potential funding sources include: state, federal, county budget appropriations, private sources, and donations.
What are the growth cost issues in rural areas?

Growth in western counties is inevitable and can be a positive factor; for example, it provides opportunities to revitalize small towns and brings new jobs and housing. Problems that arise due to growth are not usually because of the conversion of lands for development, but are usually a result of poorly planned (or unplanned) location and pattern of development. High rates of unplanned or piecemeal growth can detract from some of the assets of a place and cost more for a county (i.e., taxpayers) to provide services than if rural growth is planned and put in locations where services are efficient. This paper explores costs of rural residential development and considerations in planning for fiscally responsible growth in Bannock County.

Cost of Rural Residential Development

Does "piecemeal" or unplanned rural residential development pay its own way for community services? The American Farmland Trust has been doing studies for twenty years on Cost of Community Services around the country. The answer is generally, no—a county is likely to experience a short-fall over the long-term with unplanned pattern of dispersed rural development. Working lands and farms generally generate more public revenues than they receive back in public services. Conversely, rural residential land uses do not cover their costs. For every one dollar of revenue raised by residential development, the median cost to provide public services to different land uses is $1.15. (American Farmland Trust, Fact Sheet, Cost of Community Services Studies, August 2004.)

What Community Services Does Bannock County Cover?

Bannock County provides services that are fairly typical for a county that encompasses a large rural area. The major budget items are road and bridge upkeep and the sheriff’s department. The planning team has not completed any analysis with the county to determine much the county is spending per household for these services or what fiscal trends are occurring.

What is a Cost of Community Services Study?

Because, communities can pay a high price for unplanned growth, it is important for leaders and the public to understand the relationships between residential and non-residential growth, working lands, conservation lands, and the county’s bottom line. Cost of Community Services (COSC) studies get at this bottom line information.

Essentially, a COCS study organizes financial records to assign the cost of services to working lands as well as residential and non-residential development. They involve three basic steps:

1. Collect data on local revenues and expenditures.
2. Group revenues and expenditures and allocate them to the community’s major land use categories.
3. Analyze the data and calculate revenue-to-expenditure ratios for each land use category.

COCS studies help address issues in rural areas facing growth and give a community a tool to make decisions about its future. They often dispel the idea that working lands are “interim” land use waiting for a highest and best use, from the county’s perspective.

1 Counties will often evaluate growth impacts on the budget by doing a fiscal impact analysis. Such an analysis will project the public costs and revenues from different land use patterns. They generally show residential development is a net fiscal loss for a community and recommend commercial or other development instead. Fiscal impact analyses rarely consider the contribution of working lands or conservation uses, which are very important in rural economies.
Trends Watch: Rural Growth and Cost of Services in the American West and Idaho

- Most growth in western states is occurring in rural areas outside incorporated towns and cities—in counties. These western places are seeing a great increase in rural populations. In some places in the Rocky Mountains and west (e.g., in Wyoming), almost all growth has been outside of towns and cities. Idaho has not experienced this as much, but trends have been tipping in that direction, and Bannock County is seeing more demand for rural “ranchette” style development.
- Rural residential development costs more to serve than working lands or commercial or industrial development or conservation areas.
- Property taxes from rural development fail to cover the economic costs of county governments and local school districts. As the saying goes, “cows don’t drive and wheat doesn’t go to school!” (Source: Dr. Rick Knight, Public Lands and Forests Subcommittee Hearing, United States Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, “Ranchers as Keystone Species in a Healthy West,” September 2005.

What are Some tools for the County to Plan for Fiscally-Responsible Growth?

Counties are limited from putting all the burden of fiscally responsible growth on landowners and need to find judicious ways to plan for growth. Like other thorny problems, solutions come in a mixed “toolkit” of approaches. No one technique will suffice. These techniques must combine financial incentives with regulations, including:

- A Comprehensive Plan
- Low Density Zoning Districts (e.g., Agricultural, Rural Residential).
- Clustering / Subdivision Regulations
- Capital Improvements Plans
- Urban Service Areas
- Property Tax Incentives
- Purchase and Transfer of Development Rights

Comprehensive Plan

The County’s Comprehensive Plan is the first step in the process of determining what future growth and development patterns should happen in the rural areas. The comprehensive plan is the foundation and policy direction for the zoning ordinance, especially through the Future Land Use Plan map.

Low Density Zoning Districts

Zoning is a key ingredient in making rural dispersed development affordable. Places that have managed to balance costs of rural development use agricultural zoning of 20 acre or greater minimum lot sizes. Much of Bannock County’s rural area already has this type of zoning district, which will help immensely in curbing costly exurban development. The large agricultural lots have options to transfer density closer to roads and highways—a good option for landowners and the county. A balance of residential development types in the future is important. Bannock County also has some rural residential zones (e.g., with 1- to 5-acre minimum lot sizes), which is important to balancing the demand for some rural residential development with good quality and fiscally responsible development.

The planning team has not heard support for any major zoning changes from the public to date.

Rural Cluster Development

Rural cluster or “open space subdivision” is a solution to providing more conservation lands and open space, but it is not a solution to costly rural residential development. In fact, many cluster developments in rural areas can create “clustered sprawl” that is just as costly to serve. These developments are still auto-dependent and the residents can bring on conflicts with farming or ranching neighbors. In sum, cluster development has proven to help the conversion of rural areas and ranches to suburbs.
Capital Improvements Programs

Capital improvements programs spell out what infrastructure will be supplied where and when, and how the infrastructure will be financed by the county. They have not been widely used in rural areas.

Urban Services Area

Establishment of an Urban Service Area relies on cooperation among cities and the county to identify land use needs over the next 20 years and to draw a limit to the extension of urban services, especially municipal sewer and water lines. This promotes a more compact style of development that is cheaper for the county to serve.

This strategy will work only if the unincorporated rural areas do not allow proliferation of small lots—where development can leap frog out of cities. If the rural areas is zoned in 2-acre lots, a large amount of residential development will spread.

Financial and other Incentives

Financial incentives can be combined with zoning to encourage farm and ranching operators to remain in business. Financial incentives are strictly voluntary. For example, preferential farm property tax programs exist in every state. The shortcoming of these programs is that most have minimal eligibility requirements, and the size of the tax break often is small compared to what a developer can offer.

Purchase of Development Rights/ Transfer of Development Rights

The purchase and transfer of development rights hold some promise for protecting farming and ranching areas, and for directing growth away from these areas. To date, dozens of counties have active PDR programs and have conserved over hundreds of thousands of acres. PDRs take capital funding to buy—an obvious downside--and counties never have enough money to conserve an entire rural area. Many landowners will also choose not to participate. Nevertheless, PDR programs can be helpful.

TDRs have enjoyed far less success than PDRs, but the opportunity to transfer development potential from rural areas to developing areas is interesting to many people.
**Introduction to Groundwater Protection**

Most of the water that Bannock County residents, farmers, and businesses use each day is drawn from an aquifer under the ground. Like many challenging planning issues, the aquifer crosses jurisdictional boundaries between cities and the county; therefore, protection strategies need to be intergovernmental, collaborative efforts involving governmental agencies, non-profits, and landowners. This paper looks at the dynamics of the groundwater supply in Bannock County and reviews potential management strategies the County could employ to protect the water supply into the future.

**Groundwater in Bannock County**

In Bannock County, the aquifer is located in the low lying valley areas generally along Interstate 15 and Highway 30. This aquifer is an open aquifer, meaning that there is no barrier of rock between the aquifer and the surface, only soil and gravel. This means that water can permeate and enter the aquifer from anywhere. All aquifers, however, have areas known as "recharge areas" where the absence of development, presence of water, and soil composition allow for significant recharge of water into the aquifer. In Bannock County, these most recharge comes from the following sources:

- Mountainous/sloped areas – thin soils overly bedrock allowing water to flow downhill into low-lying recharge.
- Agricultural valleys – including irrigated lands and wetland areas along streams and rivers where water can permeate down to the aquifer.
- Surface water – including the Portneuf River, feeds the aquifer where the surface water meets the water table.

Of these potential sources, the low lying areas directly below the mountainous/sloped areas offer the most recharge benefit to the water supply of the aquifers in Bannock County. It is in these areas where the mix of soils, vegetation, and location (downhill from sloped areas and along streams) provide the most recharge capacity.

The soils of Bannock County tend to include a mix of gravel. The presence of gravel means that the soil is more porous and water can permeate more quickly. While rapid recharge allows for water to return to the aquifer quickly, it also means that contaminants can reach the water supply quickly. The next sections look at the water supply balance and threats to quality in Bannock County.

Who is already involved in learning about and protecting the water supply in Bannock County?

- Idaho Department of Environmental Protection (DEQ),
- United States Geological Survey (USGS),
- Greater Portneuf Water Resources Partnership (GPWRP), and
- Others.

These agencies and groups are important resources for information about the aquifer and water supply and would likely get involved at some level with implementing County policies on water supply protection.
Balancing Supply and Demand to Ensure a Continued Resource

The key to ensuring a supply of water that meet the future needs of the community is a matter of balancing the supply. This is done by keeping permeable surfaces in “recharge areas” where the right mix of soil/geology, vegetation, and geography allow them to contribute a significant volume of water back into the aquifer. On both sides of the equation, communities can shift the balance to ensure a continuous supply of drinking water to meet the needs of people and businesses now and in the future.

Supply: Maximizing Water Supply

Water enters the aquifer as rain, irrigation water, and snowmelt soak into the ground. Therefore, one major factor in the amount of water that refills an aquifer is annual precipitation levels. In a drought year, recharge will be lower than in a wet year.

While communities can do to little to control moisture falling from the sky, they can take steps to maximize the amount of precipitation that returns to the aquifer—rather than letting it run off into storm drains or surface water bodies.

Demand: Reducing Water Use

Municipalities and counties can help balance the supply-demand equation by reducing the demand placed on the aquifer. In Bannock County, the current per capita water consumption is nearly double the national average. In some ways this is good news, because it means efforts to save water could go a long way to balance the demand with supply. Bannock County could more effectively employ water conservation programs, efficient irrigation practices, gray water recycling by businesses and homes, and other such water-savvy tools to help reduce water use.

Water Quality: How does Groundwater get Polluted?

Contaminants that reach both surface and ground water are classified into two broad pollution source categories:

Point Source: pollution from a specific place such as a factory or landfill.

Non-point Source: pollution coming from a more dispersed area such as runoff from streets or pesticides on yards or fields.

The Bannock County Water Balance: How Do We Measure Up?

Bannock County’s water supply and demand is out of balance, as shown below. This table shows measurements taken in an average precipitation year (1993) and a drought year (2000).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Precipitation Level</th>
<th>Recharge</th>
<th>Demand</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average Year</td>
<td>1.36 Bgal/yr</td>
<td>1.72 Bgal/yr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drought Year</td>
<td>1.31 Bgal/yr</td>
<td>2.13 Bgal/yr</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Idaho Geologic Survey, 2006

The annual deficits in the water supply have resulted in the water supply of the aquifer falling by 10 feet since 1997.

- **Point Source:** pollution from a specific place such as a factory or landfill.
- **Non-point Source:** pollution coming from a more dispersed area such as runoff from streets or pesticides on yards or fields.

Since point sources are easier to locate and regulate, most water pollution in the U.S. and in Bannock County is from non-point source pollution. Pollutants—either in surface water or on land—can enter the aquifer as they are adsorbed as recharge. Thus, how we use the land and the quality of surface and groundwater are strongly related. Once pollutants enter an
aquifer, it is difficult (or impossible) and expensive to remove them. At that point, water needs to be pumped and treated before it is safe for consumption.

**Water Contamination in Bannock County**

The Department of Environmental Quality routinely tests the water quality in Bannock County to ensure it is clean and safe to drink. On-going tests have found high levels of certain contaminants that make the water unsafe to drink, and they have identified the likely sources of pollution, including:

- Septic effluent (fecal coliform),
- Street and highway runoff (sulfates), and
- Agricultural and construction site runoff (nitrates and sediment).

**Weighing the Costs of Water Supply Protection**

Water supply systems and the management and investment into those systems have typically focused on the built infrastructure related to water supply: water storage, delivery infrastructure, and treatment and filtration plants. The costs of infrastructure maintenance and upgrades are impacted by growth and intensification within a community as well as the ever-growing list of contaminants that need to be tested for and treated in the water supply. In some cases, these are the result of new pharmaceutical, chemicals, and industrial processes that release new chemical contaminants into water supplies that then require new or upgraded treatment methods to address.

Communities looking for ways to expand the capacity of their expensive infrastructure and treatment facilities have begun to note the benefits of land conservation to the overall treatment and filtration costs. Land conservation allows for natural process of filtration (soils and vegetation) to help treat water before it reaches surface and groundwater supplies. This enables community filtration and treatment systems to start with cleaner water, reducing overall treatment costs and improving system capacity. This land conservation approach expands the focus of the water supply from the immediate (rivers, lakes, wellheads) area to the watershed level (land, tributaries).

**Managing Water Supply at the Watershed Level**

Science demonstrates that the best way to protect water supplies is to manage them at the watershed level. This includes not only focusing on safeguarding key recharge areas, but also the lands over which water runs to feed into them. “Watersheds” are lands that gather water towards streams and recharge areas to help fill up the aquifer. Areas within a watershed that tend to be very important to the overall water quality and supply include:

- Forestlands
- Wetlands
- Natural grasslands
- Steep slopes
- Land close to or encompassing small streams

Given that watersheds follow physiological (slopes), not jurisdictional, boundaries; a watershed approach to safeguarding water supply will require a coordinated effort between the County, the cities and towns in it, and other agencies.

**Costs and Benefits of Land Protection**

While communities often weigh benefits of land protection in terms of scenery, recreation, and wildlife habitat values, many are beginning to calculate conservation’s long-term financial benefits in terms of reduced water treatment and filtration costs. A 2002 study of 27 water suppliers found that a 10% increase in forest cover in a watershed decreased treatment costs by 20%.

**Considering the Long-Term Costs to the Community**

As communities in Bannock County begin to make significant upgrades to their water systems to meet expanding service needs, they will need to consider the initial, upgrade, and maintenance cost associated with the treatment systems and the way those costs are impacted by land use patterns.

- Usually decisions on capital investments and land acquisitions are made looking at a 1-5 year timeframe.
- Development impacts on the water supply do not occur until 5-10+ years. So the costs of not protecting land occur later and are not typically looked at when decisions are made.

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1 American Farmland Trust and American Water Works Association, 2002.
What Can a Community do to Ensure a Safe and Adequate Supply of Drinking Water?

Communities can take three types of measures to protect their surface and ground water supply. They can be selected and used individually or in some combination based on needs and preferences of the community. They are:

1) Voluntary, Incentive-Based Tools
2) Regulatory Actions
3) Best Management Practices

The sections that follow describe and provide some examples of each type and where they are being used today.

Voluntary, Incentive-Based Tools

Counties, cities, and towns can potentially implement a number of voluntary programs or incentives to safeguard their water supply. Such approaches generally focus on retaining open lands that offer the most benefit to filtering and recharging the water in the aquifer. They offer financial and tax incentives to landowners to sell their land or the development rights off their land. (See “Briefing Brochure: Open Space – What is it? How is it Protected?” for more information on two incentive-based approaches: Transfer of Development Rights (TDRs) and conservation easements.). A third one is acquisition, described in the following section.

Pros:

✓ Achieve land conservation goals systematically and permanently.
✓ Open lands available for public use and recreation.

Cons:

✓ Expensive – requires willing community commitment to pay for open lands.
✓ Requires strong political commitment to fund, especially if on annual basis and can’t buy it all.

Regulatory Actions

Aquifer Protection Overlay Zones

Overlay zones, including watershed/aquifer overlay zones, build on current zoning districts and enable communities to protect specifically identified locations (such as recharge areas) from incompatible land use activities. Should Bannock County be interested, a variety of model ordinances are available to address the needs of the community.

Pros:

✓ Target negative impacts of development in critical areas.
✓ Do not require rezoning or a complete zoning re-write.

Cons:

✓ Lands are not completely conserved so some impacts to water supply.
✓ Effectiveness relies on enforcement in the development review process – could be variable.

Acquisition of Aquifer Protection Lands with a Dedicated Funding Source

One straightforward way to conserve land is to purchase it. This typically requires a plan that identifies and prioritizes acquisition lands and a dedicated funding source to finance purchases. Dedicated funding sources such as a bond or a ¼ cent sales tax create an annual pool of funding for communities to pursue land acquisition goals. Communities also dedicate funds from their general fund.

Pros:

✓ Open lands available for public use and recreation.

Cons:

✓ Expensive – requires willing community commitment to pay for open lands.
✓ Requires strong political commitment to fund, especially if on annual basis and can’t buy it all.
Other Regulatory Tools

Other regulatory tools can be incorporated into existing zoning regulations can also help protect open space and water quality, including:

- Limits on impervious surface cover,
- Cluster development provisions (which can also be incentive-based, not mandatory),
- Minimum lot sizes or maximum density, and
- Open space dedication requirements.

Best Management Practices (BMPs)

Best Management Practices (BMPs) are actions that reduce negative impacts of daily activities on water. They can be both regulatory and volunteer efforts and are often implemented through collaborations between jurisdictions, public agencies, non-profits, educational instructions, and private property owners.

A Source Water Protection Plan

One of the most effective ways a communities can protect their water supply is to create a Source Water Protection Plan for the watershed. Such a plan builds a firm understanding of the water supply – including recharge and pollutant sources – and develops a comprehensive strategy to protect it. The plan is developed and implemented using 5-steps:

1. Understand your watershed,
2. Use maps and models to prioritize protection,
3. Build strong partnerships to work watershed-wide,
4. Create a Comprehensive Source Water Protection Plan, and
5. Develop and Implement a Funding Quilt (to implement the plan).

What should a Source Water Protection Plan Contain?

- Strategies to manage threats and protect natural resources;
- A combination of voluntary and regulatory strategies and BMPs;
- A long-term vision and short term actions strategies and measurable goals; and
- A funding strategy to support implementation.²

Water Quality BMPs

Communities can use a number of voluntary and regulatory BMPs to protect their water supply. These practices primarily focus on ways to manage avenues for non-point pollutants to reach surface and ground water supplies to reduce pollutant loads. This includes a variety of stormwater management practices, addressing sewage impacts, and stream protection measures, including:

- Reduction of sewer discharges,
- Reduction of sediment via improved enforcement of erosion control at construction sites,
- Infiltration basins,
- Regional stormwater retention basins,
- Stream buffering system, and
- Streamside forestry and restoration.

Each community can “mix and match” the set of practices, both voluntary and regulatory, to best address the sources of contamination impacting their water supply.

Public Education and Outreach

An important tool for water supply protection is simply educating residents and businesses about the threats facing the aquifer or surface water and simple actions and precautions that can be taken by the individual to reduce negative impacts on the water supply. Some educational programs share information on:

- Aquifer and water supply and threats to it, and
- Water conservation campaigns (can also offer incentives).

What are Typical Rural Development Patterns?

Many rural counties in the Western United States are experiencing fast growth rates and development that is increasingly dispersed in rural areas—outside of cities and towns. As rural places are “discovered,” growth rates and land values can spike sharply. In the face of such discovery, counties often look at alternatives to dispersed rural development.

One such alternative is rural residential clustering, which is beneficial in many ways; however, this pattern can also contribute to “clustered sprawl” and is only one piece of the growth puzzle.

Dispersed Rural Development

Dispersed rural development is low-density residential development that is scattered outside cities or towns and their suburbs. Typically, development occurs on sites that have been converted from former ranches or farms. People like this housing choice and the option to have a large lot with room for horses. However, it creates some planning challenges, including:

- It usually occurs away from municipal sewer and water systems. Homeowners rely on on-site septic systems and on wells, many of which fail over time. When septic systems fail in large numbers, sewer lines must be extended at high cost; creating more incentive for hook ups in rural areas.
- Rural residents are completely auto-dependent and are often long-distance commuters. These commuting patterns put greater demands on existing roads and increase the demand for new and better roads. More traffic also means more air pollution.
- Scattered rural development consumes more land per capita than concentrated development and eventually it increases the price of land in rural areas.
- As land prices rise, farmers and ranchers are more likely to sell their land for house lots, making it harder for other ranchers to continue.
- Newcomers often have little understanding of their farming and ranching neighbors. Conflicts between farmers and non-farm neighbors are well-known.

Because of these challenges, more counties are looking into alternative development patterns, such as cluster development, that give landowners options other than dividing parcels into large lots and dispersing houses.

Unincorporated Bannock County Development Choices

In unincorporated Bannock County, the vast majority of lands outside of cities and their Area of City Impact (ACI) boundaries are zoned three ways: (1) Agricultural (generally allows 1 home per 40 acres); (2) Rural Residential (generally allows 1 home per 5 acres); and (3) Recreational (generally allows 1 home per acre). The County also has “Open Space Subdivision” provisions that allow cluster development in these districts (See the last page of this brochure for more information.)

The land encompassed by these districts altogether could accommodate almost half of all future residential units in unincorporated Bannock County. The Comprehensive Plan will need to answer the question: What kind of rural development should occur in rural areas? Assuming the County will not make major zoning changes (i.e., reducing potential development), rural development could happen in two ways in Bannock County: (1) Dispersed or (2) Clustered. This paper compares the two patterns and explains how the county could improve cluster provisions.

In a Dispersed Rural Pattern, development occurs on large lots (e.g., 1 acre or larger) without conservation areas.

In a Clustered Pattern, the same number of development lots are clustered within a parcel, (with possible bonus lots). This option also allows a landowner to conserve at least half of the parcel.

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1 Remaining county lands are zoned either Multiple Use or Residential Suburban. These lands are very limited and tend to be located adjacent to a city/town ACI area.
General Example of Dispersed Rural Residential Development

This representative parcel with farms to the north and south is divided into nine 5-acre parcels. Lots encompass streams and riparian areas and building sites occur on ridges.

What are the Pros?
✓ Allows the landowner full development potential of the property.
✓ Offers individual property owners a sense of space and “elbow room” on larger lots.

What are the Cons?
✓ May cost more to build and serve (i.e., roads and utilities).
✓ Fragments ranch land, habitat, and other natural systems, such as rivers and streams.

General Example of Clustered Residential Development

The same site is developed with two clusters (with one bonus unit – 10%). The clustered lots are sited away from sensitive natural areas (such as riparian areas), away from farms, and are near the roads. In this example, approximately 70% of the site is conserved and it buffers adjacent agricultural lands.

What are the Pros?
✓ Allows the landowner full development potential of the property, plus 10% bonus development unit(s).
✓ Permanently conserves land that can be used for recreation, equestrian uses, farming (that can be connected to other conservation areas).
✓ Sustains natural features such as riparian areas, slopes and ridgelines.
✓ Buffers neighboring working lands.
✓ Save money on utility costs (roads, electric, etc.).

What are the Cons?
✓ Can result in checkerboard cluster development if applied extensively—causing negative effects for farmers and ranchers.
The following examples demonstrate clustered versus non-clustered development patterns if applied to three different zoning districts in Bannock County, including: (1) Agricultural, (2) Residential Rural, and (3) Recreational.

1. Agricultural Examples (160 acre Parcel)

Dispersed pattern: Four 40-acre lots accessed by a new local street.

Clustered pattern: Four 5-acre lots clustered near an existing roadway, with at least 50% conserved for farming.

2. Residential Rural Examples (40-acre parcel)

Dispersed pattern: Eight 5-acre lots accessed by a new local street.

Clustered pattern: Eight clustered lots (approx 1 ac.) along a new street with at least 70% conservation area or open space. Natural features managed in the conservation area.
3. Recreational Example (40-acre parcel)

Dispersed pattern: 16 two and a half acre lots accessed by new local streets.

Clustered pattern with bonus unit: 17 one-acre lots along new local street with 23 acres open space.

What is the Market for Cluster Development?
Cluster development is still a niche market, but it is growing and will likely become the norm in the next decade. Homebuyers think natural open space, walking and biking trails, equestrian land, and gardens are important in their housing choice. A 2000 survey by Professional Builder magazine found that nearly 90 percent of buyers said they would pay extra for green features.²

Bannock County Cluster Development Option
Bannock County’s Open Space Subdivision ordinance allows rural clustered development in the Agricultural, Rural Residential, and Recreational Districts (and also Residential Suburban district). Clustered subdivisions are required on parcels over 5,000 feet and are optional for all others.

The existing cluster development provisions are a helpful start to providing options for developers and landowners; however, they currently provide little guidance for site planning—particularly how to establish conservation areas to achieve the greatest benefit. In addition, the amount of conservation area required with the Open Space Subdivision is minimal compared with many jurisdictions (i.e., 50% in Open Space Subdivision versus 65-75%). It would be helpful for Bannock County’s ordinance to provide recommendations on how to plan a site, require more conservation land (sometimes in exchange for slightly larger bonus), and explain how to effectively manage the common areas (i.e., to prevent invasive weeds and to keep lands attractive or productive for ranching or farming).

If the Citizen Advisory Committee and public are interested in pursuing the idea of providing better guidance in the Open Space Subdivision, the planning team can provide some guidelines for establishing conservation areas and suggestions for when additional density bonuses might be appropriate (e.g., when water rights are retained with the conservation land.)

**Agricultural Lands**

Farms and ranches are important for their ability to produce food and fiber for people and for their potential ability to provide future energy and/or mineral production. They also provide less tangible benefits, such as habitat protection. Yet, farmers and ranchers in Bannock County and around the West are facing many pressures to convert land to other uses. Such pressures include, but are not limited to, rising energy prices and other costs of doing business, rising land values and nearby development pressures, potential transfer of water rights from farming to municipal uses or to other jurisdictions. The Bannock County Comprehensive Plan is supportive of sustaining farming and ranching in the County. This paper explores a range of options that are fair to property owners and that can help achieve that aim.

**Good Information Sources:**

The American Farmland Trust (AFT) and USDA’s Natural Resources Conservation Service have partnered to form the Farmland Information Center (FIC)--a clearinghouse for information about farmland protection and stewardship. (See: www.farmland.org.) Another good source is: “The Rocky Mountain Agricultural Landowner’s Guide to Conservation and Sustainability,” collaboration between AFT and Coleman Natural Foods, which identifies many options for landowners.

**What Tools Can Help Landowners and the County Sustain Farms and Ranches?**

As with any program or goal, a range of tools works best to make it work. Tools for farm and ranch support and protection vary from regulatory to voluntary and landowner-initiated. Bannock County has districts in place that are generally conducive to farming and ranching and that allow a range of agricultural-related activities on properties.

The county’s farmers and ranchers have not expressed interest in additional standards. One of the county’s best options, therefore, is to keep many of the current agricultural districts in place, limiting widespread expansion of rural residential districts in remote areas, while providing flexibility for landowners to do agricultural activities and transfer development or density to suitable locations. Thus, this paper primarily focuses on the non-regulatory and incentive-based agriculture programs.

**Agriculture Toolkit**

**Differential Assessment**

Almost every state, including Idaho, provide some tax relief to farmers and ranchers by directing local governments to assess agricultural land at its value for agriculture, instead of its fair market value. Bannock County has this differential assessment approach in place.

**Agriculture Districts**

Districts allow farms to form special areas where commercial agriculture is encouraged. They stabilize the land base and support farming by providing farmers with incentives. Typically, programs are authorized by state law and implemented at the local level. Most are intended to be comprehensive responses to the challenges facing farmers in developing communities. (More information is available at www.farmlandinfo.org.)

**Purchase of Agricultural Conservation Easements.**

These are programs that compensate property owners for restricting the future use of their land. Landowners have a bundle of different rights, including the right to use land, lease, sell it, build on it or mine it (subject to reasonable local regulations). Some or all of these rights may be sold or transferred, including development rights. (See AFT information on Purchase of Agricultural Conservation Easements (PACE) Programs and funding sources.)
Agricultural Conservation Easements, continued…

Pros: | Cons:
---|---
✓ PACE programs protect land permanently while keeping it in private ownership.
✓ Participation is voluntary.
✓ PACE provides farmers and ranchers with a financial alternative to development. | ✓ PACE is expensive. It isn’t possible to buy all the rights.
✓ PACE programs are usually not able to keep up with demand to sell easements.
✓ Funding sources are limited.

Conservation Easements

Conservation easements are voluntary agreements that a property owner enters into with a municipality or qualified conservation organization (e.g., Colorado Cattlemen’s Agricultural Land Trust in Colorado). The landowner agrees to limit the future development of the land—retaining it for farming or ranching. Conservation easements can be either temporary or perpetual and can help achieve ranching objectives as well as broader benefits (e.g., retaining scenic views, protecting water quality, or maintaining habitat for wildlife/game).

Pros: | Cons:
---|---
✓ Voluntary and keep land in private ownership.
✓ Landowners may be eligible for income, estate, and property tax benefits.
✓ Retain natural areas without the higher costs of purchasing the land. | ✓ Tend to be complex and administratively challenging to set up and monitor.
✓ Require strong political commitment to operating and educating.

Transfer of Development Rights (TDRs)

TDRs conserve land by transferring the rights to develop the property from one location to another. Usually a community or county helps define the “sending areas,” where development rights can be removed and the “receiving areas,” where development rights can go (where higher intensity development is appropriate, usually near services or roads). Sending areas could focus on conserving irrigated agricultural lands if Bannock County decided to pursue such a program. Idaho laws require TDRs to be voluntary which could limit its effectiveness.

Pros: | Cons:
---|---
✓ Landowners receive financial benefits without developing and land stays in private ownership.
✓ Retain natural areas without the higher costs of purchasing the land. | ✓ TDRs tend to be complex and administratively challenging.
✓ Require strong political commitment to operating and educating about the program.

Right to Farm Law

Bannock County already has this in place. A Right to Farm Law is intended to protect farmers and ranchers from nuisance lawsuits.

Trend Watch: Western United States and Idaho

Rising oil prices may continue to affect the costs of food and fiber production in two main ways:

1) Increased transportation costs will make imported food prices go up and will also increase the cost of getting goods to market.

2) Increased demand for crops such as corn and other grains for ethanol and biofuels may decrease the supply of land getting used for food (human and livestock), and therefore may increase the price of foods.
The Rocky Mountain Agricultural Landowners Guide is the product of a unique partnership between American Farmland Trust and Coleman Natural Foods through the Coleman Eco-Project 2015, a 10-year relationship that addresses the critical need to protect U.S. working farms and ranches. In this guide, you will find information outlining tools and federal and state programs to help farmers and ranchers conserve their land and maintain its long-term health for future generations.

American Farmland Trust (AFT) is a nonprofit organization that works across the nation with partner organizations, communities and individuals to protect the best land, keep it healthy and plan for the future of agriculture. Coleman Natural Foods (CNF), the leading natural and organic meat and poultry company in the United States, shares with AFT a commitment to protect family-owned ranches and farms and advance a holistic approach to land stewardship. The goal of the AFT-CNFParkship is to facilitate the placement of 50 million acres of farm and ranch land under sound stewardship and sustainable management practices by 2015. “We’ve undertaken our land-based eco-system program to improve and preserve our environment, and keep working lands in their highest and best use,” said Mel Coleman Jr. “This challenge is on behalf of today’s generation of Americans and for many more generations to follow.”

The Coleman family has a long and rich history in western ranching. In 1875, one year before the Colorado Territory became the 38th state, the Colemans began ranching in the grasslands of Saguache. A pioneering spirit of conservation and protecting the land, handed down through the generations, was at the center of Mel Coleman Sr.’s vision. In 1979, Mel Sr. founded Coleman Natural Meats, the first-ever enterprise to raise and market natural beef for the general public.

Twenty-six years later, Coleman Natural Foods has grown into a family of natural and certified organic meats that includes beef, pork, poultry, sausage, lamb and bison. Its practices set the standard for quality, flavor and integrity, and Coleman continues to broaden its legacy by expanding and promoting the economic, environmental and consumer-centered values of natural and organic meat production.

To read more about AFT or the Coleman Natural Foods Eco-Project 2015, please visit AFT’s Web site at www.farmland.org or log onto www.colemannatural.com. The Rocky Mountain Agricultural Landowners Guide is also available online at these Web sites and at AFT’s Farmland Information Center online library of farmland protection and stewardship resources at www.farmlandinfo.org.

To order AFT’s estate planning guide YOUR LAND IS YOUR LEGACY, A GUIDE FOR PLANNING THE FUTURE OF YOUR FARM, call (800) 370-4879.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

• Take the next step — learn more about the public and private opportunities described in this landowners guide. Contact American Farmland Trust, Coleman Natural Foods and other resources that can help you and your community protect farm and ranch land.

• Speak up about the benefits working lands provide. Help your community take control of its future — talk to your local planning commission and elected leaders.

• Support public programs and financing, such as PACE/PDR programs, that keep farm and ranch land in production.

• Be a steward of the land; encourage sustainable management practices that keep the land healthy.

• Prepare now for the future of your land, your business and your family. Consult with your legal, financial and tax advisors to develop your estate plan.
INTRODUCTION

The Rocky Mountain region is known for its breathtaking landscapes and the rugged individualism of its settlers. Its spirit has been shaped by a long tradition of agriculture, from ranches to crop farms and orchards. Today, the farms and working cattle ranches in the seven states included in this guide—Arizona, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, New Mexico, Utah and Wyoming—are a linchpin holding together an increasingly fragmented landscape.

Competition for land threatens the land base and livelihood of western producers. Ranches require large amounts of land to sustain livestock in an arid climate. Shifting demographics, sprawling development and rising land prices all affect the viability of farming and ranching in the Rocky Mountain region, where more than 350 acres of agricultural land are converted to development every day.

 Eleven percent of its ranchland is vulnerable to conversion by 2020. Montana and Idaho contain the greatest amount of strategic ranchland at risk (over 5 million acres each), closely followed by Colorado.

According to the 2002 Census of Agriculture, this region’s 131,424 farms cover 220 million acres and produce more than $16 billion of crops and livestock annually. Western farmers and ranchers are proud of their natural heritage—the vast landscape, its beauty, economic productivity, recreational opportunities, wildlife habitat and clean water. They, like American Farmland Trust and Coleman Natural Foods, believe strongly that private land ownership is essential to safeguard the future of working lands and their multiple economic and environmental benefits.

The purpose of the rocky Mountain Agricultural Landowners Guide is to provide ranchers and farmers in these seven states with information and tools to augment both the productivity and stewardship of their land. The guide gives an overview of the variety of private options and public programs that are available to landowners who want to conserve their land and use innovative and sustainable practices to improve its productivity. Different terms may be used across the region to describe similar techniques. This guide tries to apply the most common terms when describing techniques generally but defers to the specific terms states use for their programs.

The guide is organized in four sections:

I. Farm and Ranch Land Protection: to save farm and ranch land for future generations
II. Conservation and Stewardship Programs: to enhance wildlife and natural resources on private lands
III. Sustainable Ranchland Management Practices: to support the long-term environmental health and the economic viability of ranches
IV. Resources: contact information for agencies and organizations to help landowners achieve their agricultural and conservation goals
Rising land prices, due to shifting demographics and sprawling development patterns, challenge many western farmers and ranchers. They need ways to protect their investment in their land and operations and to remain economically viable. One protection available to landowners in every Rocky Mountain state is right-to-farm laws. In addition, counties throughout the region have adopted right-to-farm and ranch policies and/or ordinances. Some have published “codes of the West” or “country codes.”

The common law of nuisance forbids individuals from using their property in a way that causes harm to others. Right-to-farm laws give farms and ranches legal protection from nuisance suits, which often arise when nonagricultural land uses expand into agricultural areas. In Colorado, New Mexico and Utah, ranches also receive right-to-farm protections from “unreasonable” local regulation. Right-to-farm laws help prevent agricultural land loss caused by common law nuisance actions. They provide a more stable investment climate for agricultural infrastructure and a sense of security that new neighbors won’t overwhelm producers with frivolous lawsuits. Local laws reinforce state laws and may expand notification requirements or provide for local mediation. Country codes educate the public about agricultural practices and right-to-farm protections.

Beyond nuisance protection, the following public and private options provide farmers and ranchers with incentives to protect the large tracts of working land needed to support western agricultural operations. Unless otherwise noted, these programs are available to working landowners in all seven states covered in this guide. Programs vary from state to state, and their funding, eligibility requirements and application timelines may change year to year.

Program descriptions in this guide are general in nature and intended to outline the opportunities available. As a rule of thumb, to explore fully the pros and cons of any of these options, contact the agencies listed below the program descriptions and consult with your legal and financial advisors to find out how an option would affect your operation. The Resources section, pages 22 to 23 of this guide, provides detailed contact information for each of these programs.
PRIVATE OPTIONS TO PROTECT YOUR LAND

Agricultural Conservation Easements

An agricultural conservation easement (ACE) is a deed restriction that landowners voluntarily place on their land to keep it available for agriculture. Typically, it limits subdivision, non-agricultural development and other uses inconsistent with commercial agriculture. Landowners retain private ownership of the property and all the other rights that come with it, including the right to use it, lease, sell and bequeath it, borrow money against it, and even to further protect it from development. Most ACEs are permanent; term easements impose restrictions for a specified number of years. Regardless of the duration, the easement is legally binding on future landowners for the agreed upon time period.

Landowners who place easements on their land are easement donors. Donors must find a government entity or a qualified private, nonprofit organization, such as a land trust, to hold the easement and agree to monitor it to be sure that the terms of the easement are fulfilled in perpetuity. This organization is known as the easement holder. Easement donors may receive state and federal income tax charitable deductions, as well as a reduction in the value of the property for estate tax purposes. Determining easement value is usually the same regardless of agency involvement or whether the easement is donated or sold.

For more information on tax advantages, contact your state Department of Revenue.

Estate Planning

According to the 2002 Census of Agriculture, more than 111 million acres of land in farms in this Rocky Mountain region are managed by operators 55 years old and older. Thus, millions of acres are likely to change hands in the next generation, perhaps the greatest transfer of wealth in the region’s history.

Land is most vulnerable to development pressures when it passes from one owner to the next, even within a family. Farm transition and estate planning are private ways that farmers and ranchers can protect their land — often with the use of conservation easements. Passing on the land takes more than transferring the land from one generation to another. It requires a well-thought-out, thorough plan to address issues such as retirement and disability, as well as to accommodate taxes and heirs. Farmers and ranchers often would like to support conservation efforts with gifts of land, conservation easements or other charitable donations. Donating an agricultural conservation easement can ensure that your land remains in production and provide tax savings.

Most landowners have a will, which is an essential part of an estate plan. But a will is not enough to secure the future of your land and agricultural enterprise. A good estate plan goes beyond a will to accomplish at least four goals:

- Avoiding unnecessary income, gift and estate taxes;
- Ensuring financial security and peace of mind for all generations; and
- Developing the next generation’s management capacity.

Successful estate planning is a team effort and requires effective communication to make sure it meets a variety of unique situations. Be sure to consult with your legal, financial and tax advisors.

For more information, contact AFT’s Farmland Information Center or order AFT’s Your Land is Your Legacy: A Guide to Planning for the Future of Your Farm by calling (800) 370-4879.

Land Trusts

Landowners often work with land trusts to protect farm and ranch land. Land trusts also partner with state and local governments to ensure that agricultural conservation easements are maintained in perpetuity. In addition to holding and monitoring easements, land trusts can help landowners receive funding from state and federal programs.

Sometimes land trusts work with national organizations, such as The Nature Conservancy, to protect working lands. There are many strong state and local land trusts in the Rocky Mountain region that can help landowners fulfill their conservation objectives and offer landowners assistance in estate planning, providing specific information about the tax laws and incentives.

For more information on land trusts in your area, contact the Land Trust Alliance or the Partnership of Rangeland Trusts. See the Resources section, pages 22 to 23, for contact information for some of the leading land trusts in the region.
**FEDERAL EASEMENT PROGRAMS**

**Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program**

The Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program (FRPP) is administered by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to provide matching funds to help purchase agricultural conservation easements on productive farm and ranch lands. Originally authorized as the Farmland Protection Program in the 1996 Farm Bill, it became the Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program in the 2002 Farm Bill.

To qualify, landowners must work with state and local governments or non-governmental entities to secure a pending offer with funding at least equal to 50 percent of the land’s fair market easement value. The FRPP can provide the remaining 50 percent for qualified applications. Only parcels large enough to sustain agricultural production are eligible. In addition, in many arid parts of the region funding depends upon the availability of water. With NRCS assistance, participants develop a conservation plan that outlines the management strategies that they propose to use on the enrolled land. The NRCS accepts applications from eligible entities during the annual application window.

For more information, contact the USDA NRCS state office or AFT’s Farmland Information Center.

**Forest Legacy Program**

The USDA Forest Service and the state forestry agencies jointly administer the Forest Legacy Program. The program was established in the 1990 Farm Bill to fund the purchase of conservation easements on working forestland threatened by conversion to non-forested uses. Participation in the Forest Legacy Program is limited to private forest landowners. To qualify, landowners must prepare a multiple resource management plan. The federal government may fund up to 75 percent of the cost of the easement acquisition, with the remaining percentage coming from private, state or local sources. Most Forest Legacy Program conservation easements restrict development, require sustainable forestry practices and protect other natural resource values. The Forest Legacy Program is available in all of the Rocky Mountain states except Wyoming.

For more information, contact your state forestry agency.

**Grassland Reserve Program**

The NRCS also administers the Grassland Reserve Program (GRP) to protect, enhance and restore grasslands under threat of conversion to cropland and other uses (trees, homes, developments, strip malls, etc.) and to help maintain the viability of grazing operations. The 2002 Farm Bill authorized the program. Private lands of 40 or more contiguous acres historically dominated by grasses or shrubs are eligible for the program. The land should have livestock currently grazing.

Landowners with eligible property may receive compensation through permanent or 30-year easements, or enter into 10-, 15-, 20- or 30-year rental agreements. The program enables the NRCS to enter into restoration agreements with landowners who have a GRP easement or rental agreement. All participants must develop conservation plans that outline strategies for enhancing forage vitality and preserving the viability of the grasslands. The NRCS accepts applications for the GRP on a continuous basis, although it may identify one or more ranking and selection periods per fiscal year. The NRCS evaluates and ranks applications based on selection criteria developed by the state technical committee.

For more information, contact an NRCS representative at your local USDA Service Center.
SECTION I: FARM AND RANCH LAND PROTECTION

COLEMAN RANCHES

When Mel and Polly Coleman founded Coleman Natural Beef in 1979, their Colorado ranch was facing debt and chronically depressed cattle prices. Today, Coleman Natural Foods is the world’s leading producer and marketer of natural beef and poultry.

Coleman beef comes from cattle that have been raised from birth without antibiotics or added growth hormones and have been fed a 100 percent vegetarian diet. At Coleman Ranches in Saguache, Colorado, cattle graze on native rangeland grasses, hay and alfalfa, with a minimal amount of time in feedlots on grain. Although it takes longer for the cattle to reach market weight, Coleman is able to charge a premium for its all-natural beef. The Coleman Certified Rancher program was started after the demand for natural beef exceeded Coleman’s production. Today a network of several hundred Western ranchers, stewarding millions of acres of ranch and range land, raise cattle without antibiotics or growth hormones for the Coleman program.

At Coleman, the concept of “natural” beef also encompasses environmental awareness, a holistic approach to sustainable rangeland management practices and livestock handling practices that promote higher standards of animal welfare.

During the 1960s, Coleman Ranches were among the first to work with the U.S. Forest Service to integrate a pasture rotation system into their rangeland management plan. In the 1970s, in conjunction with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Department, 16 miles of pristine fishing stream were put into a recreational easement with the purpose of keeping the ranch open to the public in perpetuity.

During the 1980s Coleman was recognized as a “Trail Blazer” by the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) for livestock handling practices. For their conservation work and ranch improvements, Jim and Tim Coleman were named Conservationists of the Year in 2001 by the Colorado Association of Soil Conservation Districts.

“We believe that all beef should be raised under these or similar standards,” says Mel Coleman Jr. “Coupled with the consumer-driven fact that natural and organic meats are the fastest growing segment in the meat and poultry industry, we believe programs like that of Coleman Natural Foods offer today’s farmers and ranchers the opportunity to break away from the commodity markets and increase the value and revenue of the livestock they raise.”

For more information about Coleman Natural Foods, visit www.colemannatural.com or call (800) 442-8666.
STATE PROGRAMS THAT SUPPORT EASEMENT PURCHASES

In the mid-1970s, state and local governments created the first public programs to purchase agricultural conservation easements from willing landowners. People also use the term “development rights” to explain the interest in the land that is sold by the landowner, therefore these programs are called purchase of development rights (PDR) programs or purchase of agricultural easement (PACE) programs, among other names. They make it possible for landowners to separate and sell the right to restrict future development on their land to a government entity or qualified private organization, such as a land trust. In exchange, the public or private agency monitors and enforces the terms of the easement to ensure that nothing happens to interfere with present or future agricultural uses. Public access is not required.

Typically, PDR/PACE programs pay landowners for the difference between full market value and the value of the land after it has been protected for agricultural use. The “before” and “after” values are determined through a certified appraisal, preferably by an appraiser who specializes in the valuation of agricultural land.

The following Rocky Mountain state programs are — or have been — authorized to purchase conservation easements/development rights. Program requirements vary, as does available funding. Some states have local programs.

For information on local programs available in your state, contact AFT’s Farmland Information Center.

ARIZONA

Agricultural Protection Fund

In 2002, Governor Jane D. Hull signed the Arizona Agricultural Protection Act (AAPA) to enable and facilitate the conservation of the state’s farm and ranch land using agricultural easements. The act established the Arizona Agricultural Protection Commission (AAPC) to help farmers and ranchers keep their land in agriculture. As of December 2005, the commission was working to secure a funding source for the Agricultural Protection Fund program.

For more information, contact the Arizona Agricultural Protection Commission, c/o the Arizona Department of Agriculture.

COLORADO

Colorado Conservation Easement Tax Credit Program

The Colorado Conservation Easement Tax Credit Program allows a tax credit to be taken against state income taxes by an individual or entity donating a conservation easement. The program allows landowners to transfer the tax credit to another individual or entity, and bargain sales qualify under the credit program.

A taxpayer is allowed to claim only one tax credit per income tax year that is generated by the donation of a conservation easement, and that credit is capped at $260,000 (100 percent of the first $100,000 plus 40 percent of any amount in excess of $100,000). The credit may be carried forward for up to 20 years from the initial year it is taken.

For more information, contact the Colorado Department of Revenue.

Great Outdoors Colorado Open Space Grant Program

The Great Outdoors Colorado Open Space Grant Program (GOCO) awards competitive grants for projects that protect and enhance Colorado wildlife, parks, rivers, trails, open spaces and agricultural land. Funding comes from state lottery proceeds. Since 1994, GOCO has invested nearly $500 million in projects throughout the state. Nonprofit land conservation organizations, local governments, Colorado State Parks and the Colorado Division of Wildlife are eligible to apply.

For more information, contact Great Outdoors Colorado.

IDAHO

The Idaho state legislature passed enabling legislation in 1999 to authorize counties to issue bonds to purchase public open space land and/or conservation easements for scenic and recreational purposes. However, while farm and ranch land may qualify as scenic open space, Idaho does not have a program to purchase agricultural conservation easements. Producers can apply for federal funding by working with land trusts that are active in the state and have preserved tens of thousands of acres of land.

For more information, contact the Land Trust Alliance.
MONTANA

Montana Agricultural Heritage Program

The Montana Agricultural Heritage Act was passed by the state legislature in 1999 to allocate state funding to purchase agricultural conservation easements on family farm, ranch and forest lands with significant public values. However, the program has terminated and is no longer acquiring conservation easements.

For more information, contact the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation.

NEW MEXICO

Land Conservation Incentives Act

While there is no state funded agricultural easement program in New Mexico yet, in 2003 the state legislature passed the Land Conservation Incentives Act. The act gives a tax credit of up to $100,000 to landowners who donate land or conservation easements to open space programs or environmental organizations for natural resource, open space or agricultural conservation. To take advantage of the tax credit and protect their land, some landowners have worked with local or national land trusts to place conservation easements on their property.

For more information, contact the New Mexico Taxation and Revenue Department.

UTAH

Critical Agricultural Land Conservation Fund

The Utah legislature allocated funds to the Utah Department of Agriculture and Food in 1998 for the protection of “critical resource agricultural lands.” Individuals, groups and political entities can submit proposals for financial assistance from the fund to purchase conservation easements on agricultural land and to support long-term leases of agricultural property. The Critical Agricultural Lands Conservation Committee makes recommendations on which projects to support. High priority is given to projects that incorporate additional local, state, federal or private sources to match the funds requested from the committee.

For more information, contact the Utah Department of Agriculture and Food.

LeRay McAllister Critical Land Conservation Fund

In 1999, Utah’s Quality Growth Act established the LeRay McAllister Critical Land Conservation Fund, an incentive program that provides grants to local governments and nonprofit organizations to preserve open space and farm and ranch land. The fund targets land that is deemed important to the community, including agricultural land, wildlife habitat, culturally and historically unique landscapes, and land necessary for watershed protection. The fund is administered by the Governor’s Office of Planning and Budget and the Utah Quality Growth Commission. Projects should conform with the local plan, if one exists, but can qualify for program funds even if no local plan exists. Applicants are required to provide a match equal to or greater than the amount of money received from the fund.

For more information, contact the Governor’s Office of Planning and Budget.

WYOMING

Wildlife and Natural Resource Funding Act

Wyoming does not have an agricultural easement program. However, in March 2005 Governor Freudenthal signed the Wyoming Wildlife and Natural Resource Funding Act into law. The bill establishes a $15 million trust fund to preserve and restore wildlife habitat and open spaces, places the income from the trust fund into an account to be used to supply grants to nonprofit and government groups for specific projects, and seeds the income account with $300,000. The bill allows the state to buy conservation easements on private land, including agricultural land.

For more information, contact the Wyoming Department of Agriculture.
In addition to the federal and state programs listed here, many private organizations work in partnership with landowners to restore and protect the environmental benefits of working lands. Most wildlife habitat in the U.S. is on farm and ranch lands. Working in partnership with organizations that restore, protect and manage that habitat, farmers and ranchers can often achieve multiple benefits for their operations.

National organizations such as Ducks Unlimited, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, Pheasants Forever and Trout Unlimited can offer technical assistance and funding to farmers and ranchers with relevant habitat attributes on their land.

Regional organizations, such as the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, have partnered with landowners on easement purchases and habitat improvement plans. Some landowners are then able to generate additional revenue from their land through private hunting fees.

State and federal agencies collaborate through several voluntary programs to provide monetary incentives to help landowners achieve resource conservation goals. Unless otherwise noted, these programs are available to working landowners in all seven states covered in this guide. Beyond the programs described below, technical assistance is available to agricultural landowners through each state’s USDA service center.
FEDERAL PROGRAMS

Agricultural Management Assistance

The Agricultural Management Assistance (AMA) program provides cost-share assistance to agricultural producers to voluntarily address issues such as water management, water quality and erosion control, and to mitigate risk through diversification or transition to organic farming. The AMA program was authorized by the Agricultural Risk Protection Act of 2000 and amended in the 2002 Farm Bill.

AMA is available in Utah, Wyoming and 13 other states where participation in the federal Crop Insurance Program is historically low. The NRCS administers the AMA program. There is a continuous sign-up with periodic ranking cutoff dates.

For information, contact an NRCS representative at your local USDA Service Center.

Conservation Reserve Program

The Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) is administered by the Farm Service Agency (FSA) to encourage farmers to convert highly erodible cropland and other environmentally sensitive land to vegetative cover such as wildlife friendly tame or native grasses, wildlife plantings, trees, filter strips, habitat buffers or riparian buffers. Authorized by the 1985 Farm Bill, the CRP is one of the nation’s oldest conservation programs. Participating landowners receive annual rental payments for the term of their 10- to 15-year contracts. The CRP provides cost-share funding for the installation of approved vegetative practices on eligible cropland.

Landowners also may receive funding to fence streams to exclude livestock and to build grass waterways. Eligible land must have a weighted average erosion index of eight or higher and have been planted to an agricultural commodity four of the six previous years. Land also can be classified as marginal pastureland for riparian buffer enrollment. Sign-ups for environmentally sensitive land devoted to certain conservation practices occur on a continuous basis. Producers may enroll all other eligible land during designated sign-up periods. The FSA ranks applications according to an environmental benefits index (EBI) and extends offers based on an application’s ranking.

For more information, contact an FSA representative at your local USDA Service Center.

Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program

A variation of the CRP, the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) helps farmers and ranchers protect environmentally sensitive land, decrease erosion, restore wildlife habitat and safeguard ground and surface water. Montana is the only Rocky Mountain state that partners with the USDA’s Commodity Credit Corporation to implement the CREP.

The Montana program targets 26,000 acres located in nine designated counties — Blaine, Broadwater, Cascade, Chouteau, Gallatin, Fergus, Lewis and Clark, Phillip, and Madison. Its goals are to improve the water quality and enhance wildlife habitat along the Missouri and Madison rivers. Administered by the FSA, the program requires landowners to make a 10- to 15-year commitment to keep their land out of agricultural production; haying and grazing are not permitted. In addition to a one-time signing incentive payment and annual rental payment, the CREP provides cost-share assistance of up to 50 percent for the installation of certain conservation practices, including the establishment of tree buffers, planting of native and other grasses, and the restoration of wetlands.

Eligible land must meet cropping history criteria and be physically and legally capable of being cropped in a normal manner. Marginal pastureland is also eligible for enrollment provided it is suitable for use as an eligible riparian buffer. Landowners with an existing CRP contract or who have a contract pending are not eligible for the CREP until the CRP contract expires. The Montana FSA accepts applications on a continuous basis.

For more information, contact an FSA representative at your local USDA Service Center in the nine designated Montana counties.

Conservation Security Program

The Conservation Security Program (CSP) is a new program established in the 2002 Farm Bill to provide financial and technical assistance to support conservation efforts on tribal and private agricultural land. The program helps producers maintain existing conservation practices and encourages them to implement new practices that will provide additional
levels of conservation benefits. All participants must develop a conservation stewardship plan that outlines the conservation and environmental benefits that the land will provide while enrolled in the program. Producers choose to participate at one of three tiers. Higher tiers require a greater commitment to conservation but also offer higher payment rates. All privately owned land that meets established soil and water quality criteria is eligible. There is an annual sign-up period for the program.

For more information, contact an NRCS representative at your local USDA Service Center.

**Debt for Nature**

The Debt for Nature Program is available to landowners with FSA loans secured by real estate. The program reduces a borrower’s debt in exchange for a conservation contract with a term of 10, 30 or 50 years. Participants may not develop land placed in the Debt for Nature Program, use it to raise livestock or for agricultural production. Eligible lands include wetlands, highly erodible lands and areas of high water quality or scenic value.

For more information on land eligibility and application procedures, contact an FSA representative at your local USDA Service Center.

**Emergency Watershed Protection**

Created by the 1996 Farm Bill, the Emergency Watershed Protection Program (EWP) responds to emergencies caused by natural disasters. The program has two components. Under the cost-share component, the NRCS provides communities or local sponsors with up to 75 percent of the funds needed to restore the natural functions of the watersheds. Projects on private land require a local sponsor from state, county or city government. Under the EWP’s floodplain easement component, landowners sell the NRCS a permanent conservation easement that allows the NRCS to restore the natural functions of the floodplain. To be eligible for an EWP easement, land must have been impaired by flooding during the past 12 months or have a history of repeated flooding. Landowners, with permission from the NRCS, may continue to use the land for haying, grazing and managed timber harvests.

For more information, contact an NRCS representative at your local USDA Service Center.

**Environmental Quality Incentives Program**

The NRCS Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) pays up to 75 percent of the cost for producers to implement structural and management practices on eligible agricultural land. Higher cost-share percentages may be available to limited resource producers and beginning farmers (fewer than 10 years in business), who must self-certify they meet the criteria. Authorized by the 1996 Farm Bill, the EQIP is open to any producer engaged in livestock, forestry or crop production on eligible land.

The EQIP provides technical and financial assistance to producers to plan, design and install conservation practices that have been approved for use in the local area. Examples of such practices include manure management facilities, grassed waterways, prescribed grazing systems, livestock watering facilities and stream bank stabilization.

The 2002 Farm Bill added EQIP funding for ground and surface water conservation (GSWC), which provides cost-share and incentive payments where the assistance will result in a
net savings in ground and surface water resources in the agricultural operations of a producer. State technical committees identify a set of natural resource concerns that landowners can use EQIP funds to address. EQIP allocations may vary between counties and states. While the NRCS accepts applications on a continuous basis, it evaluates applications and awards contracts during established ranking periods. Sign-up information for each state, the ranking criteria used to evaluate applications and links to EQIP forms are available online at http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/eqip. Go to “State EQIP Application Information.”

For more information, contact an NRCS representative at your local USDA Service Center.

Forest Stewardship Program
Established by the USDA Forest Service in 1991, the Forest Stewardship Program provides technical assistance to any private landowner, Indian tribe or other private legal entity with at least 10 acres of forestland. The state forester is the lead individual in this multi-agency partnership, which will arrange for a forester, wildlife biologist and other natural resource professionals to meet with a woodland owner, examine the property and help prepare a Forest Stewardship Plan. The plan is based on the owner’s personal goals and objectives, and is designed to help the landowner manage his or her property for the future, while enhancing water quality protection, wildlife habitat and recreational opportunities.

For more information, contact your state forestry office.

Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program
The Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program helps private landowners restore wetlands and other important fish and wildlife habitats on their land. It is a voluntary partnership program administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service that provides financial and technical assistance to private landowners through voluntary cooperative agreements to restore degraded wetlands, native grasslands, streams, riparian areas and other habitats for the benefit of declining federal trust species and the interests of the landowners.

Landowners usually can achieve a dollar-for-dollar cost share by working with a host of nationally based and local entities such as federal, state and local agencies, soil and water conservation districts, and private conservation organizations. Landowners must commit to maintaining projects for the life of the agreement, usually a minimum of 10 years, but otherwise retain full control of their land.

For more information, contact the Division of Fish and Wildlife Management and Habitat Restoration at your local U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service office.

Wetlands Reserve Program
Authorized by the 1996 Farm Bill, the Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) provides landowners with technical and financial assistance to protect, restore and enhance wetlands on their property. Landowners can receive as much as 100 percent of the appraised agricultural market value of the property for permanent conservation easements or 75 percent for 30-year easements. They also can participate in a restoration cost-share agreement. These 10-year agreements pay for 75 percent of the cost of restoration activities and do not place an easement on the property. Eligible land includes wetlands cleared or drained for farming or pasture and must be restorable and suitable for wildlife. The NRCS accepts applications for the WRP on a continuous basis.

For more information, contact an NRCS representative at your local USDA Service Center.

Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program
Authorized by the 1996 Farm Bill, the Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP) provides cost-share assistance and technical assistance to develop and improve habitat for fish and wildlife on private land, tribal land, or state and local government land. Landowners work with the NRCS to create wildlife habitat management plans that list the goals and practices needed to improve wildlife habitat. As part of their conservation plans, landowners agree to implement habitat practices and maintain the enrolled acreage, usually for a period of five to 10 years. In exchange, the NRCS provides up to 75 percent in cost-share assistance to implement the plan. Fifteen-year agreements provide a higher level of cost-share assistance. Interested producers may file an application at any time with the NRCS. The WHIP is a competitively ranked program in which applications with the highest wildlife benefits receive priority for funding.

For more information, contact an NRCS representative at your local USDA Service Center.
STATE PROGRAMS

ARIZONA

Water Quality Improvement Grant Program

The Arizona Department of Environmental Quality oversees the Water Quality Improvement Grant (WQIG) Program, which allocates money from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for on-the-ground water quality improvement projects that minimize nonpoint source pollution from agriculture, forestry and other sources. Individuals as well as public and private entities may apply for funding for projects that focus on improving or protecting water quality within Arizona.

For more information, contact the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality.

Arizona Water Protection Fund

Ranchers and agricultural landowners can apply to the Arizona Water Protection Fund for grants to protect water quality and maintain, enhance and restore rivers, streams and riparian habitats. The fund, administered by the Arizona Department of Water Resources, receives $5 million annually from the Arizona state legislature. Any person, entity or municipality can apply for these grants. Priority is given to projects that enhance or maintain streamflow and associated riparian habitat, address issues in geographic areas of public concern, and include matching contributions from other sources.

For more information, contact the Arizona Water Protection Fund Commission c/o the Arizona Department of Water Resources.

Landowner Relations Program

Landowners can apply to the Arizona Game and Fish Department’s Landowner Relations Program (LRP), which coordinates habitat improvement projects on private lands within the state. Every year, the LRP implements more than $2 million in projects to enhance wildlife habitat and/or protect access to public and state trust lands. For instance, the program may pay for establishing perpetual easements into public or state trust lands in return for mutually beneficial wildlife habitat improvement projects. A variety of project funding sources are available through the program, and program administrators can recommend which would best meet a landowner’s specific situation. In addition, the LRP’s Adopt-a-Ranch program allows community groups to volunteer to perform ranch maintenance activities.

For more information, contact Arizona Game and Fish.

Livestock and Crop Conservation Grant Program

The Arizona state legislature created the Livestock and Crop Conservation Grant Program (LCCGP) in 2003 to help ranchers and farmers with conservation projects that “reduce the fragmentation of open spaces in rural areas.” The program typically receives $2 million per year from the state’s Land Conservation Fund. Eligible applicants include individual landowners and grazing or agricultural lessees of state or federal lands interested in implementing “conservation based management alternatives.” The LCCGP gives priority to applicants of greatest need — typically ranchers who are considering “subdividing their property as a last resort to financially maintain their ranch and/or applicants running smaller ranching operations.” Applicants must demonstrate that their conservation projects will provide public benefits, such as wildlife habitat or riparian buffers, and help preserve open space.

For more information, contact the Arizona Department of Agriculture.

COLORADO

Cooperative Habitat Improvement Program

The Cooperative Habitat Improvement Program (CHIP) helps landowners develop or improve wildlife habitat, control erosion and enhance farm and ranch aesthetics. In addition to providing technical assistance, the CHIP makes small grants of up to $4,000 to complete projects such as woody plantings, grass plantings, wetland enhancements and/or stream improvements. Individual landowners are eligible to apply to CHIP, a flexible program that offers landowners several options to create habitat for a specific species. Projects can be supplemented by partnering with other habitat programs, such as those offered by the NRCS.

For more information, contact the Colorado Division of Wildlife.
MCNEIL RANCH

Prolonged drought forced Colorado ranchers Mike and Cathy McNeil to reevaluate how they operate the family’s 3,033-acre ranch. By using “holistic management” to assess the impacts of their land use, cattle management and financial planning, the McNeils have been able to stay economically viable during times of poor commodity prices and increasing pressure from land and water development interests. Today, the McNeil Ranch sells its grass-fed beef directly to consumers.

The McNeils, winners of AFT’s 2001 Steward of the Land Award, are now a model of ecologically sound, profitable and community-minded ranching. The McNeil Ranch is located in the San Luis Valley, a high desert basin at 7,700 feet in elevation with a relatively harsh climate and little annual precipitation. As a first major change in their operation, the ranch transitioned from winter calving to a spring schedule that allows cows to calve in warmer temperatures. The ranch also adopted a piled hay method of forage management to make winter feeding easier and more economical.

With pressure from real estate development affecting many Colorado ranchers, the McNeils helped found the Rock Creek Heritage Project, a landowner-driven effort to secure a future for agriculture in the Rock Creek watershed. The initiative has been working to protect a block of 15,000 acres of agricultural land and water. The project involves not just land protection but also watershed enhancement, support for value-added and direct marketing, cooperatives, and training in holistic management and other sustainable practices.

The McNeils have permanently protected over 1,500 acres of their own land with the remainder scheduled for protection in 2006. “A society measures its wealth by the state and quality of its land and its ability to feed its population,” says Cathy McNeil. “That’s why protecting our land is important for future generations.”

For more information about the Rock Creek Heritage Project, contact mcneilranch@fone.net.
**Colorado Species Conservation Partnership**

Great Outdoors Colorado, the Colorado Division of Wildlife (DOW) and the U.S. Department of Interior have developed the Colorado Species Conservation Partnership (CSCP). The program funds habitat conservation easements that provide incentives to private landowners to actively assist with the management and protection of Colorado’s declining wildlife species. The CSCP uses conservation easements to ensure that landscapes remain intact so they will provide fundamental wildlife resources on a long-term basis. Private landowners can choose either term or perpetual conservation easements. The program requires that its easements have a management plan agreed upon by the landowner and the DOW. Landowners, land trusts and other conservation organizations that own property with needed habitat for Gunnison Sage Grouse, Preble’s Meadow Jumping Mouse and other shortgrass prairie species are eligible to apply.

*For more information, contact the Colorado Division of Wildlife.*

**Colorado Wetlands Program**

The Colorado Wetlands Program protects wetland-dependent wildlife through landowner incentives and other voluntary means, including restoration, management and/or purchase of conservation easements or fee titles by land trusts, private landowners, non-government organizations or government agencies. Grants are given to entities (including individual landowners) with relevant projects within focus areas. (For map of focus areas, visit [http://wildlife.state.co.us/habitat/wetlands](http://wildlife.state.co.us/habitat/wetlands).) Grant amounts have varied from $3,000 to $500,000 for projects ranging from weed mitigation to conservation easements.

*For more information, contact the Colorado Division of Wildlife.*

**Colorado Wildlife Conservation Grant Program**

The Colorado Wildlife Conservation Grant Program (CWCG) supports projects that conserve, restore or enhance Colorado’s threatened, endangered or declining wildlife resources. In 2005, CWCG provided $200,000 of funding with a cap of $50,000 for any single project. CWCG projects focus on species and habitat conservation; conservation partnerships with private landowners are a program priority. Examples of possible projects include native vegetation enhancement and riparian corridor protection. Non-Division of Wildlife entities, such as private conservation or education organizations, local governments, school districts and water districts, are eligible to apply. Most projects require a 50 percent match of federal funds; however, for planning projects, up to 75 percent of project costs can be covered by CWCG funds.

*For more information, contact the Colorado Division of Wildlife.*

**Colorado Wildlife Heritage Foundation**

The Colorado Wildlife Heritage Foundation (CWHF) was created by the “Wildlife 21” task force in 1989 to raise additional funds to help fill the gap between available funds and wildlife needs. Projects completed by the CWHF include wetland protection and planning, conservation easements/fee acquisition, fire and drought relief, and wildlife education. Any organization with a project that benefits wildlife is eligible to apply. Since its inception, the CWHF has provided an average of $400,000 to $450,000 per year, funding conservation easements on thousands of acres of ranch land.

*For more information, contact the Colorado Wildlife Heritage Foundation.*

**IDAHO**

**Conservation Improvement Grants**

Idaho’s Conservation Improvement Grants program provides financial assistance to eligible applicants for the implementation of natural resource conservation projects. Priority is given to projects with the greatest public benefit and conservation impact. Eligible projects include soil and water conservation, water quality and riparian area improvement, and fish and wildlife habitat protection and enhancement. Grants are limited to $10,000. All private and public land within Idaho is eligible; any individual or entity may apply.

*For more information, contact the Idaho Soil Conservation Commission.*
**Habitat Improvement Program**

The Habitat Improvement Program (HIP) applies to both public and private lands in Idaho, but the program is designed primarily to help private landowners, particularly farmers and ranchers, enhance upland game bird and waterfowl habitat. The HIP provides both technical and financial assistance and is financed by a portion of all hunting license fees. Funds are available for cost sharing on habitat projects by Idaho Fish and Game in partnership with private landowners, non-profit organizations and state and federal agencies. On approved projects, landowners are reimbursed up to 75 percent for out-of-pocket expenses with a general limit of $10,000 per project.

*For more information, contact Idaho Fish and Game.*

**Range and Cropland Program**

The Range and Cropland Program provides technical guidance for the management of agricultural leasing activities on state land, including cropland and grazing leases. Prior to leasing grazing land from the state, ranchers must agree to a written Grazing Management Plan that addresses all activities that may take place under the lease, including number and movement of livestock, the season of use, construction of improvements, vegetation, noxious weed control and other factors.

*For more information, contact the Idaho Department of Lands.*

**Water Quality Program for Agriculture**

The Water Quality Program for Agriculture (WQPA) provides financial incentives to owners and operators of agricultural land in Idaho to apply conservation practices that protect and enhance water quality and fish and wildlife habitat. The local soil conservation district designates lands eligible for assistance as critical areas. Project sponsors may be soil conservation districts, irrigation districts, canal companies, individuals, or other agricultural or grazing interests. Cost sharing may be provided for up to 90 percent of the cost of approved practices.

*For more information, contact the Idaho Soil Conservation Commission.*

**Montana**

**Future Fisheries Improvement Program**

The Future Fisheries Improvement Program helps Montana landowners work with their local fishery biologists to plan and finance projects that improve native and wild fish habitat, for example, restoring stream banks and natural stream channels or enhancing fish spawning. Projects demonstrate that healthy streams can be compatible with agricultural and livestock operations. About $1 million is available annually to fund these projects. Landowners and other project partners usually share in the project costs.

*For more information, contact Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks.*

**Habitat Montana**

Habitat Montana offers incentives to landowners to conserve fish and wildlife habitat on private land, including the purchase of conservation easements. The program, funded in part with hunting license fees, is typically used to protect wildlife habitat on ranch property. Since 1988, the program has worked with 30 Montana ranch families to protect more than 213,000 acres of key, threatened wildlife habitat through the purchase of conservation easements.

*For more information, contact Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks.*
SID GOODLOE

To restore his ranch in Lincoln County, New Mexico, Sid Goodloe began rebuilding the natural savanna ecosystem 40 years ago. Thanks to holistic land management that focused on short-duration grazing and vegetation management, Goodloe’s Carrizo Valley Ranch is now a productive watershed. “If you provide a properly functioning watershed, everything else falls into place,” Goodloe says. Overgrazing and unnatural fire suppression in the past had allowed water-hungry piñon and juniper trees to out-compete native grasses, causing erosion and drying up the ranch’s creeks and springs.

Now that invasive trees have given way to an open savanna, dried-up streams and springs have come to life again, allowing native grassland plants to flourish on the ranch. Riparian areas are grazed only in the dormant (winter) season, resulting in the establishment of willows and other riparian vegetation that hold the silt and build up the water table. Goodloe uses prescribed fire to keep old-growth ponderosa stands healthy and to establish herbaceous cover that provides excellent habitat for wildlife.

Goodloe met Allan Savory in Rhodesia in 1964. He credits his own follow-up investigation and use of Savory’s methods for his “out-of-the-box” approach to land management. “We have achieved the biodiversity and watershed health that has been our goal for 40 years,” Goodloe says. “We even received an award this year for mule deer habitat enhancement from the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish.”

Goodloe and his wife Cheryl formed the Southern Rockies Agricultural Land Trust (SRALT) to hold conservation easements on working ranches in New Mexico. “We believe it is extremely important to protect family ranching. We have our ranch under easement so our heirs can raise their families in a rural environment,” he says. Goodloe now knows that he doesn’t have to worry about what happens to the ranch after his death. “I certainly don’t want my grandkids to drive by a new subdivision and say, ‘that used to be my Granddad’s ranch.’”

For more information about the SRALT, call (505) 354-2379 or e-mail sralt@hotmail.com.
**Montana Wetlands Legacy**

Montana Wetlands Legacy helps landowners create projects to protect, conserve and develop wetlands and riparian areas, including the purchase of conservation easements on agricultural land. Landowners may receive direct funding for the project, materials or construction work, or technical assistance in identifying funding sources.

*For more information, contact Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks.*

**Upland Game Bird Habitat Enhancement Program**

Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks will share up to 75 percent of the cost for landowners to work with biologists developing upland game bird habitat. Projects may include establishing and maintaining shelterbelts, planting nesting cover and food plots, and implementing improved grazing management systems. Upland Game Bird Habitat Enhancement Program projects must be open to some free public game bird hunting and usually involve at least 160 contiguous acres.

In addition, the program’s Montana Sagebrush Initiative uses federal Landowner Incentive Program funds to pay for 30-year agreements with private landowners who agree to protect sage grouse habitat.

*For more information, contact Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks.*

**NEW MEXICO**

**Habitat Stamp Program**

The Habitat Stamp Program (HSP) is funded annually with nearly $1 million in revenue from the purchase of validation stamps by hunters, anglers and trappers. These funds are dedicated to habitat conservation and rehabilitation projects. More than 200 conservation and rehabilitation projects are developed each year in the areas of wetland, waterway and riparian improvements; vegetation projects; water developments; and numerous other projects that benefit wildlife habitat.

*For more information, contact the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish.*

**UTAH**

**Landowner Incentive Program**

The Landowner Incentive Program (LIP) is a new voluntary state program, funded by federal Landowner Incentive Program grants, that provides technical and financial assistance to private landowners to protect and manage habitat to benefit federally listed, proposed, candidate or other at-risk species on private lands. Habitat restoration practices include: mechanical treatment and seeding of decadent sagebrush stands, fuel breaks to control the spread of wildfires, stream channel restoration and riparian plantings. The LIP also provides for the acquisition of conservation easements from willing sellers to protect habitats in key areas.

*For more information, contact the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources.*

**WYOMING**

**Private Lands Public Wildlife Access Program**

Under the Walk-In Area Hunting Program, the Wyoming Game and Fish Department leases hunting rights on private land for public enjoyment. Participating landowners receive monetary compensation based on the amount of land enrolled in the program. An interested landowner may contact the department to set up a field visit that evaluates the suitability of land for participation in the program. Landowners must have a minimum of 80 contiguous acres (or 40 if the land supports waterfowl hunting). Public access to a walk-in area is limited to hunting by foot traffic only, unless otherwise designated. Hunters are expected to obey safety zones next to buildings or livestock. The Walk-in Area Fishing Program leases fishing rights on private land for public enjoyment.

*For more information, contact Wyoming Game and Fish.*

**Wyoming Game and Fish Easement Program**

The purpose of the Game and Fish Easement Program is to provide habitat for wildlife and public access for sportsmen and sportswomen. The Wyoming Game and Fish Commission purchases public access easements along various waterways to allow pedestrian access within a specified width of the river bank, usually 50 or 100 feet, for fishing and waterfowl hunting. The commission also acquires vehicular right-of-way easements across private land in order to provide access to larger inaccessible blocks of public land.

*For more information, contact Wyoming Game and Fish.*
Today’s ranchers face many challenges, from the threats of land fragmentation to growing consumer concerns about food safety and livestock production. The goal of sustainable ranching is to maintain the long-term health of the environment while supporting the quality of life and economic viability of the ranch. Grasslands that have deteriorated are subject to a whole range of problems, including the loss of desirable plant species, increased soil erosion, weed invasions, desiccated watersheds and the loss of wildlife.

Sustainable beef production promotes the stewardship of natural resources, generates increased profits, addresses consumer concerns about cattle ranching and uses a whole-system approach to managing grasslands, water, energy, labor and livestock. Well-managed rangelands help maintain healthy watersheds, provide essential habitat for many species of plants and animals, and effectively convert low-quality forage to high-quality agricultural products.

This section contains brief descriptions of sustainable management practices that ranchers can follow in order to increase profits and protect natural resources. Because all ranches are unique in climate, topography, soils, vegetation and management resources, the following practices may differ in implementation on any given ranch.
Conservative Stocking

Overgrazing can degrade range conditions and threaten soil, water, plant and wildlife resources. To prevent overgrazing, ranchers should control the number of their livestock. Rangeland should never be permanently stocked at a rate higher than 60 to 70 percent of average rainfall carrying capacity. Conservative livestock stocking not only helps the environment, it also helps ranchers survive periods of extended drought.

Humane Livestock Handling

Humane conditions for livestock include suitable shelter, fresh water, access to the outdoors and balanced feed rations. In addition, low-stress animal handling techniques can help increase ranch profits. Handling practices that minimize the stress on livestock can improve cattle weight gains and reduce sickness rates and death losses.

Integrated Pest Management

Noxious and invasive plants threaten biological diversity and can have a debilitating effect on rangelands. Infestations of noxious and invasive plants should be contained and controlled using integrated pest management (IPM) techniques whenever possible. IPM is a sustainable approach that uses a variety of tactics to control unwanted plant, animal and insect species. IPM practices help protect the environment, human health and ranching profitability. For instance, herbicide use can be minimized by controlling invading weeds and brush with fire, goats and sheep, or other nontoxic means, such as high-impact, short-duration grazing.

Prescribed Fire

Over the last century, fire suppression activities have contributed to the loss of the natural western savanna, allowing trees such as piñon pine and juniper to flourish. By restoring fire to the ecosystem, ranchers can promote the return of healthy grasslands. Prescribed burns can be used to manage weeds and brush, and improve forage quality and grazing distribution. When strategic fires are used and healthy grasslands return, soils regain water absorbency, helping to control erosion and replenish watersheds.

Planned Grazing

Planned grazing monitors the effects of livestock on soil and plants. Livestock are moved according to environmental conditions in a controlled, deliberate process. Ranges are divided into separate pastures by fences and natural barriers with stock rotated when plants have been effectively grazed and fertilized. Planned pasture rotation leaves each section of pasture completely free of livestock at some point during the growing season, allowing plants to recover. Planned grazing helps ranchers reduce dependence on grain and harvested forage and minimizes overgrazing problems, such as soil erosion.

Benefits of Planned Grazing

- Optimizes the use of pasture while reducing feed grain and harvested forage, lowering inputs and saving money.
- Addresses social concerns about food safety and environmental degradation.
- Allows more production for a longer period of time.
- Helps to distribute manure more uniformly.
- Permits easier interaction with cattle since the animals are kept close together.
- May provide more cover for game than continuous grazing. Wildlife and lease hunting can be sources of income for ranchers.
HOLISTIC MANAGEMENT INTERNATIONAL

Holistic Management International (HMI) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting resource management in a way that restores land to health, productivity and profitability. The worldwide pioneer of Holistic Management, HMI has worked successfully with ranchers, farmers, pastoral communities and other entities since 1984.

Contrary to the belief that ranching has contributed to the desertification of parts of the American West, Holistic Management demonstrates that effective livestock management can actually improve land health. Holistic Management® Grazing Planning incorporates periodic disturbances of grasslands to simulate the herd effects of wild animals. By herding cattle in patterns mimicking the wild grazers, grassland can be revitalized and biodiversity increased, including an increase of more perennial grasses and wildlife.

Holistic Management principles involve planning livestock movements carefully so that animals do not overgraze plants but actually increase soil fertility. Livestock are moved frequently, often grazing in higher densities for shorter duration. Holistic Management practitioners monitor plant growth and recovery, concentrating on building a healthy pasture that supports microbes, earthworms and diverse plant life. Increased soil health leads to increased land and animal productivity and profit.

With high stock density, cattle more effectively graze available plants, mulch nutrients into the ground by trampling in their own manure, knock down dead plants and break the soil crust. When cattle help break up the soil, they also allow the soil to better trap moisture. By improving vegetative ground cover and increasing water infiltration, ranchers can then get the most out of limited precipitation. And with more water, plant and wildlife communities thrive.

HMI founder Allan Savory first realized that livestock could be used as land reclamation tools some 40 years ago and began working with ranchers in a number of countries to learn how to do that effectively. “Plant species not seen in decades have returned, springs have reappeared and wildlife has grown more plentiful and diverse,” says Savory. “Any number of ranchers in the Rocky Mountain West who are using this planning process and managing in this more holistic manner have received good stewardship awards for their land management. There is no reason why the grasslands in the Rocky Mountain West cannot once again sustain abundant wildlife and healthy rural communities.”

HMI offers training, educational materials and consulting to farmers and ranchers, public land managers, agricultural and development agencies, and Holistic Management educators.

For more information, visit www.holisticmanagement.org or call HMI at (505) 842-5252.
Rangeland Inventories

Sustainable rangeland management requires a lengthy system of monitoring to judge the effectiveness of grazing practices and rangeland health. Adjustments in grazing times or stocking rates should be made by monitoring rangeland resource conditions over the years. Carrying capacity should be evaluated according to the impacts of historical and current stocking rates. Photographs can be used to compare changes in the range over time.

Riparian Protection

Riparian areas occur next to streams, rivers, springs and other bodies of surface and subsurface water. Riparian areas provide many important watershed functions, such as groundwater recharge, nutrient cycling and maintenance of water quality. They also tend to support different plants and wildlife than adjacent uplands. Accordingly, riparian areas should be protected from sediment and chemical contamination and livestock waste. Cattle should be grazed in riparian areas in a controlled manner and only for a short time.

Time-Controlled Grazing

Grazing should be planned to match grazing times and livestock numbers to the condition of the grassland resources. The proper timing of grazing allows rangeland to recover sufficiently before being grazed again, which gives key species of range plants an opportunity to rest and re-grow after each grazing period. The correct timing, intensity and frequency of grazing will largely be determined by the individual environment of a given ranch.

Written Grazing Plans

A written grazing plan can help ranchers meet the nutritional needs of livestock while maximizing the production of forage. A meaningful grazing plan coordinates the timing of grazing with pasture conditions and management activities, such as weaning and calving. It also accounts for changes in stocking rates throughout the year and gives ranchers a means for recording and evaluating ranch management practices. Ranch management plans should also account for drought contingency strategies and financial projections.

For more information on sustainable ranching techniques, contact Holistic Management International, Malpai Borderlands Group, National Sustainable Agriculture Information Service, Quivira Coalition, Society for Range Management, and Western Rangelands Partnership.
IV. Resources

State Agencies

Arizona
Arizona Department of Agriculture
(602) 542-4373
www.azda.gov

Arizona Department of Environmental Quality
(800) 234-5677
www.azdeq.gov

Arizona Department of Water Resources
(602) 771-8500
www.awpf.state.az.us

Arizona Game and Fish
(602) 942-3000
www.gf.state.az.us

Arizona State Land Department – Forestry Division
(602) 771-1400
www.aazstatefire.org

Arizona State Parks
(602) 542-4174
www.pr.state.az.us

Colorado Division of Wildlife
(303) 297-1192
www.wildlife.state.co.us

Colorado State Forest Service
(970) 491-6303
www.forestry.state.co.us

Colorado Wildlife Heritage Foundation
(303) 291-7212
www.wildlife.state.co.us/cwhf

Great Outdoors Colorado
(303) 863-7522
www.goco.org

Idaho
Idaho Department of Agriculture
(208) 332-8500
http://www.agri.state.id.us

Idaho Department of Lands
(208) 334-0200
www.state.id.us/lands

Idaho Fish and Game
(208) 334-3700
www.fishandgame.idaho.gov

Idaho Forest Products Commission
(208) 334-3292
www.idahoforests.org

Idaho Soil Conservation Commission
(208) 332-8650
www.scc.state.id.us

Contact information is provided here for agencies and organizations referenced in the guide.
MONTANA
Montana Department of Agriculture
(406) 444-3144
http://agr.state.mt.us
Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation
(406) 444-3533
http://www.dnrc.state.mt.us
Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks
(406) 442-2535
www.fwp.state.mt.us

NEW MEXICO
New Mexico Department of Agriculture
(505) 646-3007
http://nmdaweb.nmsu.edu
New Mexico Energy, Minerals & Natural Resources
(505) 476-3328
http://www.emnrd.state.nm.us
New Mexico Game and Fish
(505) 476-8000
www.wildlife.state.nm.us
New Mexico Taxation and Revenue Department
(505) 827-0700
www.state.nm.us/tax

UTAH
Utah Department of Agriculture and Food
(801) 538-7100
www.ag.utah.gov
Utah Division of Forestry, Fire & State Land
(801) 538-5555
www.ffsl.utah.gov
Utah Division of Wildlife Resources
(801) 538-4700
www.wildlife.utah.gov
Utah Governor’s Office of Planning and Budget
(801) 538-1027
www.governor.utah.gov/planning

WYOMING
Wyoming Department of Agriculture
(307) 777-7324
http://wyagric.state.wy.us
Wyoming Game and Fish
(307) 777-4600
www.gf.state.wy.us
Wyoming Office of Governor
(307) 777-7434
www.wyoming.gov/governor

STATE AND REGIONAL LAND TRUSTS
Colorado Cattlemen’s Agricultural Land Trust
(303) 431-6422
www.ccalt.org
Colorado Coalition of Land Trusts
(303) 271-1577
www.cclt.org
(Colorado) Rock Creek Heritage Project
e-mail: mcneilranch@fone.net
(Indiana only) Teton Regional Land Trust
(208) 354-8939
www.tetonlandtrust.org
(Indiana) Wood River Land Trust
(208) 788-3947
www.woodriverlandtrust.org
Montana Land Reliance
(406) 443-7027
www.mtlandreliance.org
(New Mexico) Southern Rockies Agricultural Land Trust
(505) 354-2379
e-mail: sralt@hotmail.com
Partnership of Rangeland Trusts
(307) 772-8751
http://www.maintaintherange.com
Wyoming Stock Growers Agricultural Land Trust
(307) 772-8751
www.wsagalt.org

FEDERAL AGENCIES
CSREES / USDA Cooperative State Research, Education & Extension Service
Directory of State Extension Partners
http://www.csrees.usda.gov
Soil and Water Conservation District
Local office locator
USDA Forest Service
Regional office locator
http://www.fs.fed.us/contactus/regions.shtml
USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/partners/for_farmers.html

For more information about Coleman Natural Foods, call (800) 442-8666
or visit www.colemannatural.com.

NATIONAL CONSERVATION ORGANIZATIONS
American Farmland Trust
Farmland Information Center
(800) 370-4879
www.farmlandinfo.org
Ducks Unlimited
(800) 45DUCKS
www.ducks.org
Land Trust Alliance
(202) 638-4725
www.lta.org
National Fish and Wildlife Foundation
(202) 857-0166
www.nfwf.org
Pheasants Forever
(877) 773-2070
www.pheasantsforever.org
The Conservation Fund
(703) 525-6300
www.conservationfund.org
The Nature Conservancy
(800) 628-6860
http://nature.org
Trout Unlimited
(703) 522-0200
www.tu.org

SUSTAINABLE RANCHLAND MANAGEMENT
Holistic Management International
(505) 842-5252
www.holisticmanagement.org
Malpai Borderlands Group
(520) 558-2470
http://www.malpaiborderlands.org
National Sustainable Agriculture Information Service (ATTRA)
(800) 346-9140
www.attra.org
Quivira Coalition (New Mexico only)
(505) 820-2544
www.quiviracoalition.org
Society for Range Management
(303) 986-3309
http://www.srmo.org
Sustainable Agriculture Research & Education / Western Region
(435) 797-2257
http://wsare.usu.edu
American Farmland Trust (AFT) is a nonprofit conservation organization founded in 1980 to protect our nation’s strategic agricultural resources. AFT works to stop the loss of productive farmland and to promote farming practices that lead to a healthy environment. AFT provides a variety of services to landowners, land trusts, public officials, planners, agricultural agencies and others. Services include Cost of Community Services studies, workshops on farmland protection and estate planning, farmland protection program development and agricultural economic analysis.

AFT’s Farmland Information Center (FIC) is a clearinghouse for information about farmland protection and stewardship operated by AFT in partnership with the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Natural Resources Conservation Service. The FIC maintains an online collection of agricultural and land use statistics, laws, literature and technical resources. It also offers an answer service to provide direct technical assistance via phone, e-mail and fax.

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AFT also thanks its staff members who researched, wrote and helped produce the Rocky Mountain Agricultural Landowners Guide to Conservation and Sustainability: Don Buckloh, Julie Burgwald, Rebecca Crouse, Jennifer Dempsey, Kirsten Ferguson, Julia Freedgood, DeAndra Flicks, Ben Kurtzman, Peg McCabe, Doris Mirtasch, Amelia Montjoy, Howard Souder, Heather Todd and Bob Wagner.
The Rocky Mountain Agricultural Landowners Guide is the product of a unique partnership between American Farmland Trust and Coleman Natural Foods through the Coleman Eco-Project 2015, a 10-year relationship that addresses the critical need to protect U.S. working farms and ranches. In this guide, you will find information outlining tools and federal and state programs to help farmers and ranchers conserve their land and maintain its long-term health for future generations.

American Farmland Trust (AFT) is a nonprofit organization that works across the nation with partner organizations, communities and individuals to protect the best land, keep it healthy and plan for the future of agriculture. Coleman Natural Foods (CNF), the leading natural and organic meat and poultry company in the United States, shares with AFT a commitment to protect family-owned ranches and farms and advance a holistic approach to land stewardship. The goal of the AFT–CNF partnership is to facilitate the placement of 50 million acres of farm and ranch land under sound stewardship and sustainable management practices by 2015. “We’ve undertaken our land-based eco-system program to improve and preserve our environment, and keep working lands in their highest and best use,” said Mel Coleman Jr. “This challenge is on behalf of today’s generation of Americans and for many more generations to follow.”

The Coleman family has a long and rich history in western ranching. In 1875, one year before the Colorado Territory became the 38th state, the Colemans began ranching in the grasslands of Saguache. A pioneering spirit of conservation and protecting the land, handed down through the generations, was at the center of Mel Coleman Sr.’s vision. In 1979, Mel Sr. founded Coleman Natural Meats, the first-ever enterprise to raise and market natural beef for the general public.

Twenty-six years later, Coleman Natural Foods has grown into a family of natural and certified organic meats that includes beef, pork, poultry, sausage, lamb and bison. Its practices set the standard for quality, flavor and integrity, and Coleman continues to broaden its legacy by expanding and promoting the economic, environmental and consumer-centered values of natural and organic meat production.

To read more about AFT or the Coleman Natural Foods Eco-Project 2015, please visit AFT’s Web site at www.farmland.org or log onto www.colemannatural.com. The Rocky Mountain Agricultural Landowners Guide is also available online at these Web sites and at AFT’s Farmland Information Center online library of farmland protection and stewardship resources at www.farmlandinfo.org.

What You Can Do

• Take the next step — learn more about the public and private opportunities described in this landowners guide. Contact American Farmland Trust, Coleman Natural Foods and other resources that can help you and your community protect farm and ranch land.

• Speak up about the benefits working lands provide. Help your community take control of its future — talk to your local planning commission and elected leaders.

• Support public programs and financing, such as PACE/PDR programs, that keep farm and ranch land in production.

• Be a steward of the land; encourage sustainable management practices that keep the land healthy.

• Prepare now for the future of your land, your business and your family. Consult with your legal, financial and tax advisors to develop your estate plan.

To order AFT’s estate planning guide Your Land Is Your Legacy, A GUIDE FOR PLANNING THE FUTURE OF YOUR FARM, call (800) 370-4879.
**Code of the West (Model from Larimer County, Colorado)**

by John Clarke, former Larimer County (Colorado) Commissioner

The Code of the West was first chronicled by the famous western writer, Zane Grey. The men and women who came to this part of the country during the westward expansion of the United States were bound by an unwritten code of conduct. The values of integrity and self-reliance guided their decisions, actions, and interactions. In keeping with that spirit, we offer this information to help the citizens of Larimer County who wish to follow in the footsteps of those rugged individualists by living outside city limits.

**Introduction**

It is important for you to know that life in the country is different from life in the city. County governments are not able to provide the same level of service that city governments provide. To that end, we are providing you with the following information to help you make an educated and informed decision to purchase rural land.

**Access**

The fact that you can drive to your property does not necessarily guarantee that you, your guests and emergency service vehicles can achieve that same level of access at all times. Please consider:

1.1 - Emergency response times (Sheriff, fire suppression, medical care, etc.) cannot be guaranteed. Under some extreme conditions, you may find that emergency response is extremely slow and expensive.

1.2 - There can be problems with the legal aspects of access, especially if you gain access across property belonging to others. It is wise to obtain legal advice and understand the easements that may be necessary when these types of questions arise.

1.3 - You can experience problems with the maintenance and cost of maintenance of your road. Larimer County maintains 1103 miles/1775 kilometers of roads, but many rural properties are served by private and public roads which are maintained by private road associations. There are even some county roads that are not maintained by the county - no grading or snow plowing. There are even some public roads that are not maintained by anyone! Make sure you know what type of maintenance to expect and who will provide that maintenance.

1.4 - Extreme weather conditions can destroy roads. It is wise to determine whether or not your road was properly engineered and constructed.

1.5 - Many large construction vehicles cannot navigate small, narrow roads. If you plan to build, it is prudent to check out construction access.

1.6 - School buses travel only on maintained county roads that have been designated as school bus routes by the school district. You may need to drive your children to the nearest county road so they can get to school.

1.7 - In extreme weather, even county maintained roads can become impassable. You may need a four wheel drive vehicle with chains for all four wheels to travel during those episodes, which could last for several days.

1.8 - Natural disasters, especially floods, can destroy roads. Larimer County will repair and maintain county roads, however, subdivision roads are the responsibility of the landowners who use those roads. A dry creek bed can become a raging torrent and wash out roads, bridges, and culverts. Residents served by private roads and/or bridges have been hit with large bills for repairs and/or reconstruction after floods.

1.9 - Unpaved roads generate dust. When traffic levels reach specific levels, Larimer County treats county system roads to suppress the dust, but dust is still a fact of life for most rural residents.

1.10 - If your road is unpaved, it is highly unlikely that Larimer County will pave it in the foreseeable future. Check carefully with the County Road and Bridge Department when any statement is made by the seller of any property that indicates any unpaved roads will be paved!

1.11 - Unpaved roads are not always smooth and are often slippery when they are wet. You will experience an increase in vehicle maintenance costs when you regularly travel on rural county roads.

1.12 - Mail delivery is not available to all areas of the county. Ask the postmaster to describe the system for your area.
1.13 - Newspaper delivery is similarly not always available to rural areas. Check with the newspaper of your choice before assuming you can get delivery.

1.14 - Standard parcel and overnight package delivery can be a problem for those who live in the country. Confirm with the service providers as to your status.

1.15 - It may be more expensive and time consuming to build a rural residence due to delivery fees and the time required for inspectors to reach your site.

**Utility Services**

Water, sewer, electric, telephone and other services may be unavailable or may not operate at urban standards. Repairs can often take much longer than in towns and cities. Please review your options from the non-exhaustive list below.

2.1 - Telephone communications can be a problem, especially in the mountain areas of Larimer County. From time to time, the only phone service available has been a party line. If you have a private line, it may be difficult to obtain another line for fax or computer modem uses. Even cellular phones will not work in all areas.

2.2 - If sewer service is available to your property, it may be expensive to hook into the system. It also may be expensive to maintain the system you use.

2.3 - If sewer service is not available, you will need to use an approved septic system or other treatment process. The type of soil you have available for a leach field will be very important in determining the cost and function of your system. Have the system checked by a reliable sanitation firm and ask for assistance from the Larimer County Environmental Health Department.

2.4 - If you have access to a supply of treated domestic water, the tap fees can be expensive. You may also find that your monthly cost of service can be costly when compared to municipal systems.

2.5 - If you do not have access to a supply of treated domestic water, you will have to locate an alternative supply. The most common method is use of a water well. Permits for wells are granted by the state engineer and the cost for drilling and pumping can be considerable. The quality and quantity of well water can vary considerably from location to location and from season to season. It is strongly advisable that you research this issue very carefully.

2.6 - Not all wells can be used for watering of landscaping and/or livestock. Permits from the state engineer may restrict water to use to that which is used inside of a home. If you have other needs, make certain that you have the proper approvals before you invest. It may also be difficult to find enough water to provide for your needs even if you can secure the proper permit.

2.7 - Electric service is not available to every area of Larimer County. It is important to determine the proximity of electrical power. It can be very expensive to extend power lines to remote areas.

2.8 - It may be necessary to cross property owned by others in order to extend electric service to your property in the most cost efficient manner. It is important to make sure that the proper easements are in place to allow lines to be built to your property.

2.9 - Electric power may not be available in two phase and three phase service configurations. If you have special power requirements, it is important to know what level of service can be provided to your property.

2.10 - If you are purchasing land with the plan to build at a future date, there is a possibility that electric lines (and other utilities) may not be large enough to accommodate you if others connect during the time you wait to build.

2.11 - The cost of electric service is usually divided into a fee to hook into the system and then a monthly charge for energy consumed. It is important to know both costs before making a decision to purchase a specific piece of property.

2.12 - Power outages can occur in outlying areas with more frequency than in more developed areas. A loss of electric power can also interrupt your supply of water from a well. You may also lose food in freezers or refrigerators and power outages can cause problems with computers as well. It is important to be able to survive for up to a week in severe cold with no utilities if you live in the country.

2.13 - Trash removal can be much more expensive in a rural area than in a city. In some cases, your trash dumpster may be several miles from your home. It is illegal to create your own trash dump, even on your own land. It is good to...
know the cost for trash removal as you make the decision to move into the country. In some cases, your only option may be to haul your trash to the landfill yourself. Recycling is more difficult because pick-up is not available in most rural areas.

The Property

There are many issues that can affect your property. It is important to research these items before purchasing land.

3.1 - Not all lots are buildable. The Larimer County Assessor has many parcels that are separate for the purpose of taxation that are not legal lots in the sense that a building permit will not be issued. You must check with the Larimer County Planning Department to know that a piece of land can be built on.

3.2 - Easements may require you to allow construction of roads, power lines, water lines, sewer lines, etc. across your land. There may be easements that are not of record. Check these issues carefully.

3.3 - Many property owners do not own the mineral rights under their property. Owners of mineral rights have the ability to change the surface characteristics in order to extract their minerals. It is very important to know what minerals may be located under the land and who owns them. Much of the rural land in Larimer County can be used for mining, however a special review by the county commissioners is usually required. Be aware that adjacent mining uses can expand and cause negative impacts.

3.4 - You may be provided with a plat of your property, but unless the land has been surveyed and pins placed by a licensed surveyor, you cannot assume that the plat is accurate.

3.5 - Fences that separate properties are often misaligned with the property lines. A survey of the land is the only way to confirm the location of your property lines.

3.6 - Many subdivisions and planned unit developments have covenants that limit the use of the property. It is important to obtain a copy of the covenants (or confirm that there are none) and make sure that you can live with those rules. Also, a lack of covenants can cause problems between neighbors.

3.7 - Homeowners associations (HOAs) are required to take care of common elements, roads, open space, etc. A dysfunctional homeowners association or poor covenants can cause problems for you and even involve you in expensive litigation.

3.8 - Dues are almost always a requirement for those areas with a HOA. The by-laws of the HOA will tell you how the organization operates and how the dues are set.

3.9 - The surrounding properties will probably not remain as they are indefinitely. You can check with the Larimer County Planning Division to find out how the properties are zoned and to see what future developments may be in the planning stages. The view from your property may change.

3.10 - If you have a ditch running across your property there is a good possibility that the owners of the ditch have the right to come onto your property with heavy equipment to maintain the ditch.

3.11 - Water rights that are sold with the property may not give you the right to use the water from any ditches crossing your land without coordinating with a neighbor who also uses the water. Other users may have senior rights to the water that can limit your use or require you to pay for the oversizing or other improving of the ditch.

3.12 - It is important to make sure that any water rights you purchase with the land will provide enough water to maintain fruit trees, pastures, gardens or livestock.

3.13 - The water flowing in irrigation ditches belongs to someone. You cannot assume that because the water flows across your property, you can use it.

3.14 - Flowing water can be a hazard, especially to young children. Before you decide to locate your home near an active ditch, consider the possible danger to your family.

Mother Nature

Residents of the country usually experience more problems when the elements and earth turn unfriendly. Here are some thoughts for you to consider.
4.1 - The physical characteristics of your property can be positive and negative. Trees are a wonderful environmental amenity, but can also involve your home in a forest fire. Building at the top of a forested draw should be considered as dangerous as building in a flash flood area. Defensible perimeters are very helpful in protecting buildings from forest fire and inversely can protect the forest from igniting if your house catches on fire. If you start a forest fire, you are responsible for paying for the cost of extinguishing that fire. For further information, you can contact the Larimer County Emergency Services Department.

4.2 - Steep slopes can slide in unusually wet weather. Large rocks can also roll down steep slopes and present a great danger to people and property.

4.3 - Expansive soils, such as Bentonite Clay (which is common in the foothills) can buckle concrete foundations and twist steel I-beams. You can know the soil conditions on your property if you have a soil test performed.

4.4 - North facing slopes or canyons rarely see direct sunlight in the winter. There is a possibility that snow will accumulate and not melt throughout the winter.

4.5 - The topography of the land can tell you where the water will go in the case of heavy precipitation. When property owners fill in ravines, they have found that the water that drained through that ravine now drains through their house.

4.6 - A flash flood can occur, especially during the summer months, and turn a dry gully into a river. It is wise to take this possibility into consideration when building.

4.7 - Spring run-off can cause a very small creek to become a major river. Many residents use sand bags to protect their homes. The county does not provide sand bags, equipment or people to protect private property from flooding.

4.8 - Nature can provide you with some wonderful neighbors. Most, such as deer and eagles are positive additions to the environment. However, even "harmless" animals like deer can cross the road unexpectedly and cause traffic accidents. Rural development encroaches on the traditional habitat of coyotes, bobcats, mountain lions, rattlesnakes, prairie dogs, bears, mosquitoes and other animals that can be dangerous and you need to know how to deal with them. In general, it is best to enjoy wildlife from a distance and know that if you do not handle your pets and trash properly, it could cause problems for you and the wildlife. The Colorado Department of Wildlife and the Larimer County Health Department are two good resources for information. They have many free publications to help educate you about living in the wild.

Agriculture

The people who tamed this wild land brought water to the barren, arid east slope of the Rockies through an ingenious system of water diversion. This water has allowed agriculture to become an important part of our environment. Owning rural land means knowing how to care for it. There are a few things you need to know:

5.1 - Farmers often work around the clock, especially during planting and harvest time. Dairy operators sometimes milk without stopping and hay is often swathed or baled at night. It is possible that adjoining agriculture uses can disturb your peace and quiet.

5.2 - Land preparation and other operations can cause dust, especially during windy and dry weather.

5.3 - Farmers occasionally burn their ditches to keep them clean of debris, weeds and other obstructions. This burning creates smoke that you may find objectionable.

5.4 - Chemicals (mainly fertilizers and herbicides) are often used in growing crops. You may be sensitive to these substances and many people actually have severe allergic reactions. Many of these chemicals are applied by airplanes that fly early in the morning.

5.5 - Animals and their manure can cause objectionable odors. What else can we say?

5.6 - Agriculture is an important business in Larimer County. If you choose to live among the farms and ranches of our rural countryside, do not expect county government to intervene in the normal day-to-day operations of your agri-business neighbors. In fact, Colorado has "Right to Farm" legislation that protects farmers and ranchers from nuisance and liability lawsuits. It enables them to continue producing food and fiber.
5.7 - Colorado has an open range law. This means if you do not want cattle, sheep or other livestock on your property, it is your responsibility to fence them out. It is not the responsibility of the rancher to keep his/her livestock off your property.

5.8 - Before buying land you should know if it has noxious weeds that may be expensive to control and you may be required to control. Some plants are poisonous to horses and other livestock.

5.9 - Animals can be dangerous. Bulls, stallions, rams, boars, etc. can attack human beings. Children need to know that it is not safe to enter pens where animals are kept.

5.10 - Much of Larimer County receives less than 15 inches (38 cm) of precipitation per year. As a result, we have a problem with overgrazing, and fugitive dust. Without irrigation, grass does not grow very well. There is a limit to the amount of grazing the land can handle. The Larimer County Cooperative Extension Office can help you with these issues.

**In Conclusion**

Even though you pay property taxes to the county, the amount of tax collected does not cover the cost of the services provided to rural residents. In general, those living in the cities subsidize the lifestyle of those who live in the country by making up the shortfall between the cost of services and the revenues received from rural dwellers.

This information is by no means exhaustive. There are other issues that you may encounter that we have overlooked and we encourage you to be vigilant in your duties to explore and examine those things that could cause your move to be less than you expect.

We have offered these comments in the sincere hope that it can help you enjoy your decision to reside in the country. It is not our intent to dissuade you, only inform you.