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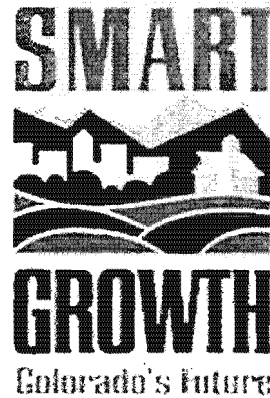
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Best practices in preservation of open

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Colorado Heritage Report

BEST PRACTICES

IN

PRESERVATION of OPEN SPACE, RANCHES and FARMS



December 1999
Department of Local Affairs
1313 Sherman St, Room 521
Denver, CO 80203
(303) 866-2353

Compiled by

Colorado Department of Local Affairs
1313 Sherman Street, Room 521
Denver, CO 80203

Contact: Charles Unseld (303) 866-2353 or Lillie Fuller (303) 866-3296
(303) 866-4819 (fax)
charles.unseld@state.co.us

In cooperation with:

Colorado Counties Inc.
1700 Broadway, Suite 1510
Denver, CO 80290

Contact: Eric Bergman (303) 861-4076

Colorado Municipal League
1124 Sherman Street
Denver, CO 80203

Contact: Sam Mamet (303) 831-6411

Growth Management Alliance of Colorado
225 East 16th Avenue, Suite 690
Denver, CO 80203

Contact: John Plakorus (303) 813-1480

We acknowledge the assistance of the Colorado Chapter of the American Planning Association, the Colorado Healthy Communities Council and Brent Snodgrass, intern, Department of Local Affairs

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INTRODUCTION

This report is one of a series of three Colorado Heritage Reports on Best Practices, developed as part of Governor Bill Owens' Smart Growth: Colorado's Future Initiative. The companion volumes to this report are:

Best Practices: Intergovernmental Agreements

Best Practices: Land Use Planning and Growth Management

The Department of Local Affairs (DOLA) compiled these reports based on input from several sources. Nominees and winners from the 1995 through 1998 Smart Growth and Development Awards Program were the initial source. DOLA also solicited input from the memberships of the Colorado Chapter, American Planning Association, Colorado Counties, Inc., and the Colorado Municipal League. The summaries are presented as submitted by local jurisdictions or as summarized by DOLA staff.

DOLA will update these reports periodically. Those wanting to submit additional information for inclusion in these reports are encouraged to contact DOLA.

These reports are available on the Internet at www.dlg.oem2.state.co.us/fs/field.htm or the State of Colorado's homepage at www.state.co.us/smartgrowth/.

We are hopeful that these reports will assist Colorado communities in their efforts to achieve Smart Growth by learning from other communities of their efforts to manage growth while retaining their quality of life.

As Governor Owens said in announcing Smart Growth: Colorado's Future's:

We are the stewards of Colorado's future. For the sake of our children and grandchildren, we must preserve Colorado's natural beauty and provide opportunities for future generations to pursue their own dreams. Our task is nothing less than to protect that special Colorado way of life.

OPEN SPACE PRESERVATION EFFORTS

OPEN SPACE EFFORTS

PLANS:

JURISDICTION(S): Towns of Breckenridge and Blue River, Summit County
DATE: 1997
TOPIC(S): Joint Upper Blue Master Plan
CONTACT: Town of Breckenridge, Peter Grosshuesch (970) 453-3162

SUMMARY: (See: Colorado Heritage Report - BEST PRACTICES IN LAND USE and GROWTH MANAGEMENT - Regional Efforts)

JURISDICTION(S): City of Colorado Springs
DATE: 1997
TOPIC(S): Open Space Plan
CONTACT: City of Colorado Springs, Robert O'Connor (719) 578-6030

SUMMARY:

Using a sophisticated but straightforward analysis of the natural landscape of Colorado Springs, the plan identifies major natural areas and features that should be protected and lays out a course of action for doing so. The result is a vision of an open space system that will be an integral part of the city.

The plan was developed through an inclusive and cooperative process, as is evident from the range of community groups and organizations represented on the citizens' review committee and the organizations that have explicitly endorsed its implementation. It was also carefully coordinated with the open space planning of each of the adjacent jurisdictions. Use of the plan by the community has enhanced Colorado Springs' sense of place and quality of life, fostered the sustainability of nature in the urban environment and provided an effective structure for making conservation decisions.

JURISDICTION(S): Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG)
DATE: 1998
TOPIC(S): Open Space Element of Metro Vision 2020 Plan
CONTACT: DRCOG's Development Services Division (303) 455-1000

SUMMARY:

Preserving open space has been a priority concern and key planning objective throughout the multi-year process in developing the Metro Vision 2020 regional plan. Open space is one of the six core elements of the plan and is integral to the achievement of other core elements.

The regional open space plan is intended to create a vision for a system of linked and integrated open space across the Denver region. The plan is intended to be a strategic framework for local and state management agency decision making that relies on local coordination and cooperation. The plan provides a comprehensive set of goals and strategies as a means for protecting open space. The goals and strategies in the plan have been developed to provide an integrated and regional perspective to local open space preservation activity.

Five main efforts have been undertaken to help local governments identify and protect important natural resources and open space areas:

- 1) Open space opportunity checklist.
- 2) Open space planning resources and list of contacts.
- 3) Open space opportunities map.
- 4) Open space preservation focus area.
- 5) Case studies.

JURISDICTION(S): Douglas County
DATE: 1995
TOPIC(S): Interstate 25 Conservation Corridor Plan
CONTACT: Douglas County (303) 660-7400, The Conservation Fund
(303) 444-4369

SUMMARY:

In response to considerable concern by Colorado officials and citizens over the issue of growth, and particularly growth along the Front Range, The Conservation Fund of Boulder initiated a study of a 100,000 acre land area in southern Douglas County. The purpose of the project is to develop an Action Plan for protection of lands within the planning area of Douglas County. The Corridor Plan was designed to identify the most critical lands, direct implementation efforts, and identify funding opportunities. The I-25 Conservation Corridor Plan describes the results of the study and contains recommendations for protection of critical lands and funding suggestions.

The recommendations which have emerged from analyzing the 100,000 acre landscape surrounding Interstate 25 are ambitious, and yet reflect an implementation strategy which will result in the protection of the natural values of the area.

JURISDICTION(S): Douglas, El Paso, Jefferson, Boulder and Larimer Counties
DATE: 1995
TOPIC(S): Front Range Mountain Backdrop Project
CONTACT: Boulder County, Peter Fogg (303) 441-3930

SUMMARY:

In 1995, five Colorado counties from Wyoming to Pikes Peak -- Boulder, Douglas, El Paso, Jefferson, and Larimer -- joined forces to better understand and communicate the significance of the Front Range Mountain Backdrop and to cooperate in conserving lands within it. Four principles guide the undertaking:

- 1) Better understand the resources of the Mountain Backdrop.
- 2) Encourage landowners to become involved in the project.
- 3) Involve the public and stakeholders in the project.
- 4) Consider the social and economic, as well as visual and environmental issues in developing strategies for conserving resources in the Backdrop.

The project is a purely voluntary process, one that seeks to raise awareness of the important current conservation opportunities. A visual, natural resources, and geographic information systems analysis have determined forty-one "hot spots" of high resource values to be studied in greater detail.

The Colorado Front Range Mountain Backdrop Foundation has been formed as a non-profit organization to complement the five-county government program as a grassroots citizen's group. Its purpose is to form a collaborative effort to preserve and enhance the extraordinary character, beauty, and quality of life of the Front Range Mountain Backdrop.

JURISDICTION(S): City of Fountain
DATE: 1996
TOPIC(S): Trails Master Plan
CONTACT: Pikes Peak Area Council of Governments

SUMMARY:

The purpose of this study is to identify a preliminary network of trails throughout the city which can link existing and future residential areas to parks, to schools, to downtown and other retail centers, to employment centers, and to regional trail systems. This could and should serve as a network for an alternative mode of transportation. The intent is to fit these trails into the system in a manner compatible with adjacent land uses, wildlife habitat, and natural environment.

A variety of planning processes and procedures have historically been utilized to guide a community and its needs into the future; the Community Forum process has selected for the Trails Master Plan to allow for the important input of all persons concerned with the future success of the community and of this project.

The Trails Master Plan public forum process is designed to solicit the opinions of all those concerned with the success of the project. This requires public meetings or surveys to allow for citizen input into the decision making process.

Upon completion of the initial public forum, a formation phase is begun which typically involves preparation of alternative proposals. These are also aired at a public forum for further public discussion and input. Proposals are then firmed up for action between the administrative staff and the public officials who make the decisions on what projects will best provide for implementation of the plan.

The goals of the Trails Master Plan must be compatible with community expectations, and all interests should be served to as great a degree as possible. An important by-product of this planning process is a heightened awareness of community concerns and an acceptance of the "community as a whole" concept.

JURISDICTION(S): Town of Frisco
DATE: 1998
TOPIC(S): Open Space Plan
CONTACT: Amy Ito, Community Development Director
(970) 668-5276

SUMMARY:

Frisco's Open Space Program is dedicated to identifying, preserving, and protecting the significant and threatened open space resources of the town and surrounding areas. The Plan is intended to be used in conjunction with the Frisco Master Plan, the Ten Mile Basin Master Plan, and other related planning documents that reflect land use desires within the local area. The Open Space Plan comprehensively identifies those areas falling within the definition of open space and outlines a number of objectives. Protection methodologies are provided to satisfy both the citizens' open space interests and the property owners' desires for their property. A wide variety of land protection mechanisms is available. The Plan also states how open space areas will be managed.

The Open Space Plan details the formation and the functions of a standing Frisco Open Space Advisory Committee. The Committee's primary role is to assist the town council in the identification and valuation of lands that should be protected as open space and assist in post designation management issues.

JURISDICTION(S): City of Fruita
DATE: 1994
TOPIC(S): Fruita Riverfront Action Plan
CONTACT: City Of Fruita, John Schneider (970) 858-3663

SUMMARY:

The Fruita Riverfront Action Plan preserves and enhances the last remaining open spaces in the rapidly developing corridor between the City of Fruita, the Colorado River and the Colorado National Monument. The project establishes specific long and short term goals for the preservation of threatened open space along the Colorado River and the enhancement of recreational opportunities throughout the area. (Approximately 160 acres of open space, along the Colorado River in Fruita, is immediately adjacent to a rapidly developing tourist-commercial strip on State Highway 340.)

The project defines trail corridors, boat launch sites, fishing opportunities, habitat improvements and wildlife refuge areas; and strengthens Fruita's role as a trail hub, interconnecting the Fruita downtown with the Colorado Welcome Center, the Devil's Canyon Center, the Colorado River Trail, and the Colorado National Monument.

JURISDICTION(S): City of Gunnison
DATE: 1996
TOPIC(S): Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan
CONTACT: City of Gunnison, Mark Collins (970) 641-8000

SUMMARY:

The City of Gunnison's Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan was completed in December 1996. Parks have been identified by the community as a precious resource which should be appropriately developed, to the greatest extent possible, within current fiscal constraints. The plan provides the guide for sensitive and compatible development by offering the city a series of beautification, recreation and economic development recommendations for these resources.

This plan is visionary, looks to the future in 20 years, and attempts to assist the city in getting from "here to there." It builds on the recommendations of the city's 1994 Master Plan; it provides the information needed at the local level to make more informed decisions regarding park and recreation resources; it offers strategies to enhance parks and recreational facilities and to protect valuable open space which serves as an aquifer recharge area, and it was an inclusive and cooperative process -- the city and county received a joint GOCO grant to develop planning documents (the county for trails and the city for parks and recreation).

JURISDICTION(S): Larimer and Weld Counties, Cities of Fort Collins, Greeley, Loveland, Towns of Estes Park and Windsor.
DATE: 1996
TOPIC(S): The Poudre/Big Thompson Rivers Legacy Project
CONTACT: City of Fort Collins, Mike Powers (970) 221-6649

SUMMARY:

Poudre/Big Thompson Legacy Project is a major cooperative effort. The Poudre River and the Big Thompson River areas provide critical water resources, open space, wildlife habitat and outstanding recreational opportunities. Through a partnership effort by regional governmental entities, the Poudre/Big Thompson Rivers Legacy Project will protect, preserve and enhance over 8,000 acres of land, riparian areas and wetlands from the mouth of the canyons all the way to Greeley.

This is a long-term vision that will evolve over the next 20 years. The first phase is starting and will cost about \$13 million. Of that, \$3.4 million was awarded in a grant from Great Outdoors Colorado which recognized the importance and significance of this project. The grant also was awarded because of the extraordinary partnership created in Northern Colorado. Partners in the legacy project include: Larimer County, Weld County, Fort Collins, Greeley, Loveland, Estes Park, Windsor, Estes Valley Recreation and Park District, Colorado State Parks, Colorado Division of Wildlife, The Nature Conservancy, Friends of the Poudre, and Colorado State University.

Preservation efforts include protection of up to 7,000 acres of the Laramie Foothills in northern Larimer County, and protection of about 1,300 acres of sensitive riparian areas along the rivers. Recreational aspects include a 28-mile trail along the Poudre River from LaPorte to Greeley, completion of the 4.25 mile Lake Estes Trail, and providing public access to the 377-acre Gateway Park in the lower Poudre Canyon. The Legacy Project is one of the most important conservation programs in the state and will lead the way for many more cooperative efforts in Northern Colorado.

JURISDICTION(S): City of Loveland
DATE: 1996
TOPIC(S): Loveland Natural Areas and Open Space Program/Plan
CONTACT: City of Loveland, Deb Pearson (970) 962-2607

SUMMARY:

In an effort to promote the protection of Loveland's natural areas and open space, the city has developed a comprehensive program which was the culmination of a five year planning effort. This program was initiated by the study entitled, "In the Nature of Things, Loveland's Natural Areas." This inventory was prepared and adopted by city council in 1993 and revised in 1996 to include additional land of environmental significance. This led to the city's Open Lands Plan, which details a methodology for protection techniques. This plan was adopted in 1996 and facilitated the formation of an Open Lands Advisory Commission. Subsequently the community pursued the study of one of Loveland's richest resources - the Big Thompson River. This technical study entitled, "The Big Thompson River Corridor" sets the stage for land preservation along the river corridor. Together, these plans and studies provide the basis for the Loveland community to meet the need to protect, enhance and promote the value of natural areas and open spaces, and to preserve a quality of life that can be passed on to future Loveland residents.

JURISDICTION(S): Mesa County
DATE: 1999
TOPIC(S): Transportation and Open Space Planning
CONTACT: Mesa County Civic Forum, Pat Landrum (970) 382-6263
Colorado Center for Healthy Communities, Kate Fay (303) 628-5504

SUMMARY: (See: Colorado Heritage Report - BEST PRACTICES IN LAND USE and GROWTH MANAGEMENT - Transportation)

JURISDICTION(S): Montezuma County
DATE: 1992
TOPIC(S): Mancos Riverwalk Project
CONTACT: Mancos Valley Riverwalk Task Force, Bill Ivy (970) 533-7716

SUMMARY:

Montezuma County has significant land in open space, but land fragmentation is escalating as tourism increases and the continued influx of newcomers occurs. In 1992 the Mancos Valley Association, in partnership with the U.S. Forest Service, and town and community

leaders, developed an action plan with 18 projects including the Mancos Valley Pedestrian and Riverwalk Master Plan.

The Riverwalk plan will create an environmental lab to be used to improve the conservation education program in the local schools and increase the understanding of natural resources in the community. Additionally, the Riverwalk provides a new recreational amenity that is planned to be linked with the Colorado Trail.

JURISDICTION(S): Montrose County
DATE: 1995
TOPIC(S): Uncompahgre Riverway Project
CONTACT: Uncompahgre Riverway, Inc., Phil Helfrich (970) 240-1737

SUMMARY:

This 65 mile greenway will preserve an abandoned Denver and Rio Grande railroad corridor, provide natural and historic interpretive opportunities, boost local economies with non-extractive tourism dollars, and help create an environmental and conservation ethic in the region.

The Riverway is the only non-profit organization in the State of Colorado to be awarded Federal Transportation Funds under the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA).

JURISDICTION(S): Park County
DATE: 1995
TOPIC(S): Platte Canyon Outdoor Resource Master Plan
CONTACT: Park County (719) 836-2771

SUMMARY:

The north fork of the South Platte River is 30 minutes from downtown Denver in one of the country's fastest growing counties. The Platte Canyon valley includes no incorporated towns but is experiencing 15 percent annual growth, all focused on a small amount of private land.

Key objectives are: 1) Documentation of natural and cultural features in GIS; 2) Initiation of community dialogue about resources; 3) Public education concerning open space planning; and 4) Creation of enthusiasm by defining an attainable yet provocative vision.

The approach was to craft a scope that responded to a wide range of objectives. Key elements included: 1) Survey citizens as to importance of natural resources; 2) Apply survey results as weighting factors within GIS composite models to produce a physical expression

of community desires for conservation; 3) Use that physical expression as a foundation for the ecological management framework of the entire headwaters. This model, applied to the landscape, reflects a best effort to protect valley-wide ecological integrity. By using public values as guides, a plan that enjoys tremendous community support was created.

JURISDICTION(S): Pikes Peak Area Council of Governments (PPACOG)
DATE: 1996
TOPIC(S): Coordinated Regional Open Space Planning & Implementation
CONTACT: PPACOG (719) 471-7080

SUMMARY:

Since 1990, population growth has increased dramatically in the Pikes Peak area. The issue of growth and resulting reduction of open space indicated a need for a coordinated effort among the member governments. The planning process recognized the need for a proactive, unified response to efficiently protect lands which are of special value to communities within the PPACOG region.

The PPACOG desired to develop an open space philosophy using public input from citizens within the region. The philosophy will be used as guidance in regional land use planning, will be utilized in the process to acquire open space, and will be used by entities within the area of influence for local planning.

JURISDICTION(S): Routt County, City of Steamboat Springs, State of Colorado, Great Outdoors Colorado Trust Fund
DATE: 1995
TOPIC(S): Open Lands Plan
CONTACT: Routt County, Ellen Crain (970) 879-2704; Open Lands Steering Committee, Susan Dorsey Otis (970) 879-6157; Conservation Partners, Inc., Marty Zeller (303) 831-9378

SUMMARY:

The Routt County Open Lands Plan is the result of a nine-month effort to develop an appropriate and effective framework for protecting Routt County's unique landscape. The process of developing the plan involved and engaged the community, especially landowners, in identifying strategies to protect land of special significance.

The Open Lands Plan identifies and develops strategies for protecting these key open lands in Routt County, Colorado. A menu of land protection strategies has been developed to provide a range of options to landowners, providing technical resources to landowners, incentives, regulations to change development patterns and the purchase of development

rights. Each of these techniques performs a function in the land protection system. The strength of the approach is that it does not rely on any one technique, but creates a spectrum of approaches appropriate for a range of different landowners. The implementation of these techniques will encourage the continuation of a vital farming and ranching sector and protect the open, scenic and productive lands which create Routt County's unique landscape.

The techniques perform the following functions:

- Support the continuation of *productive and profitable agriculture*;
- Provide educational and technical *resources to landowners*;
- Encourage landowners to take *voluntary actions* to protect land;
- Provide *incentives and requirements* to improve rural development patterns; and
- *Compensate* landowners for removal of development rights.

The Open Land Protection System consists of the following eight techniques:

- 1) Statement on Importance of Agricultural Lands, Natural Areas and Open Space Resources to Routt County
- 2) Routt County Right-To-Farm and Ranch Ordinance
- 3) Technical Resource Team (TRT)
- 4) Conservation Easements with Reserved Homesites
- 5) Open Land Subdivision (OLS)
- 6) Land Protection Subdivision (LPS)
- 7) Purchase of Development Rights Program (PDR)
- 8) Transfer of Development Rights (TDR)

JURISDICTION(S): South Suburban Park and Recreation District
DATE: 1997
TOPIC(S): South Suburban Park and Recreation District's Chatfield Basin Reserve Network
CONTACT: South Suburban Park and Recreation District (303) 798-5131

SUMMARY:

South Suburban Park and Recreation District's Chatfield Basin Reserve Network is an in-depth study of the many parcels surrounding open space lands in the south metropolitan area. The Network's mission is to develop a plan that connects existing open spaces. The one common element of all parcels is that they must be capable to function as corridors providing ecological systems for wildlife. Over 30 participants are contributing to the project. Currently, the small islands of open space do not connect. Continuous open space corridors would provide healthy habitat for wildlife. Once the open space network is in place it would link to other systems statewide such as national forests.

JURISDICTION(S): Summit County
DATE: 1996
TOPIC(S): Copper Mountain Sub-basin Plan
CONTACT: Summit County (970) 453-2561

SUMMARY:

The sub-basin plan is intended to provide policy direction for the future land use decisions within the sub-basin area. The plan will be used by the Ten Mile Planning Commission and Board of County Commissioners as a guide for decisions which effect the physical development of the sub-basin. The plan contains a vision goal to respect the natural environment and ensure that future growth fits with the area's open spaces and mountain setting.

Major development proposals must be evaluated to ensure that the proposals are consistent with the sub-basin plan. The plan states that future development should be focused within already developed areas of the sub-basin, creating a compact pedestrian-friendly village setting.

JURISDICTION(S): Summit County, Town of Dillon, Keystone Resort, Summit Cove and Town of Montezuma
DATE: 1995
TOPIC(S): Snake River Basin Master Plan
CONTACT: Summit County, Stephen Hill (970) 453-2561

SUMMARY: (See: Colorado Heritage Report - BEST PRACTICES IN LAND USE and GROWTH MANAGEMENT - Regional Efforts)

JURISDICTION(S): Town of Telluride
DATE: 1993
TOPIC(S): Open Lands Plan
CONTACT: Town of Telluride, Peggy Curran (970) 728-3071

SUMMARY:

The Telluride Open Lands Plan originated with the citizens' recognition that the town's special identity and character, derived from its magnificent setting and compact, historic community, was in danger of attracting the very forces of change that can overwhelm these unique qualities. The plan provides a prime example of a concise, strategic plan that crystallizes a set of shared values and community goals through identified objectives, tools and concrete actions. Through the inclusive process by which it was created, the plan establishes a blueprint for cooperative action between the town, landowners, the Forest Service and others; identifies a menu of flexible protection options which can be tailored to

specific properties; and engages the community in long-term stewardship of special lands. It identifies ways to leverage limited funds and achieve results with partners, such as land trusts, to protect land more productively. The use of a modest GIS system enabled a higher level of public understanding of resource relationships. The cooperative emphasis, strategy of fairness and face-to-face communication have helped to break down the historic antagonism between the town and the Forest Service and major landowners. This plan is a model for how small, western towns facing growth pressures can deal constructively with change and engage the community in the process.

JURISDICTION(S): Town of Vail
DATE: 1990
TOPIC(S): Comprehensive Open Lands Plan
CONTACT: Town of Vail Planning Department (970) 479-2100

SUMMARY:

The Town of Vail is currently at 90 percent of its planned "build-out." Tremendous growth pressures felt in recent years have compelled residents to plan for open space preservation for the remaining undeveloped parcels of land within the town's confines. Specific development threats urged development and adoption of a plan in an accelerated time frame. The town hired a private consultant to survey remaining public and private parcels that had not been developed in an effort to envision ways in which the town could connect and expand its parks and open space. Parks and open space needs of residents were identified through this inventory process as well.

This plan is strategic in nature as it was written with the purpose of guiding certain actions to fruition in a predetermined five to seven year time-frame. The key to its success is development of linked open lands and public recreational areas for the benefit of its residents.

POLICIES/PROGRAMS:

JURISDICTION(S): Boulder, Douglas, El Paso, Jefferson and Larimer Counties
DATE: 1994
TOPIC(S): Front Range Mountain Backdrop Project
CONTACT: Boulder County, Peter Fogg (303) 441-3930

SUMMARY: (See: Colorado Heritage Report - BEST PRACTICES IN LAND USE and GROWTH MANAGEMENT - Regional Efforts)

JURISDICTION(S): City and County of Denver
DATE: 1995
TOPIC(S): Land Dedication Requirements
CONTACT: Ralph Martinez, (303) 640-4781

SUMMARY:

Land Dedication Requirements within the Gateway Zone District require contributions to the area's park and trail system, which focuses on both recreation and protection of environmentally sensitive areas. Landowners in certain mapped areas must also dedicate important watercourses and adjacent areas to the City. In addition, basic layout and site design standards require that important wildlife habitat and wetland areas be protected or enhanced.

JURISDICTION(S): Larimer, Gunnison, and Montezuma Counties
DATE: 1996
TOPIC(S): Code of The West Rural Living Informative Guide
CONTACTS: Larimer County (970) 498-7000; Gunnison County (970) 641-0360; Montezuma County Planning (970) 565-2801

SUMMARY:

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, information is offered to help the citizens who wish to follow in the footsteps of those rugged individualists by living outside city limits. The Code explains that owning rural land means knowing how to care for it.

Larimer, Gunnison, and Montezuma Counties have adopted the "Code" as a way of informing people that it is important 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, information can help one make an educated and informed decision to purchase rural land. Access, Utility Services, Property, Mother Nature, and Agriculture are factors of rural living that must be taken into consideration, as explained by the Code of the West.

JURISDICTION(S): Montezuma County
DATE: 1997
TOPIC(S): Good Neighbor Policy
CONTACT: Montezuma County Planning Office (970) 565-2801

SUMMARY:

"Tools for a Good Neighbor Policy" was implemented through the County Land Use Code in keeping with the recommendations of the Montezuma County Comprehensive Land Use Plan. Good Neighbor Policies and Incentives to protect agriculture and open space include:

- 1) Right-To-Farm
- 2) Conservation Easements
- 3) Cluster Incentive Planned Unit Development (PUD).

The Good Neighbor Policy Tool Kit includes:

- 1) Landowner Initiated Zoning (LIZ).
- 2) Planned Unit Development Options (PUD).
- 3) Flexibility to utilize open space as a feature in high-amenity residential PUDs.
- 4) Threshold Standards and High Impact permitting system.

JURISDICTION(S): Ouray County
DATE: 1991
TOPIC(S): Maintaining Rural Character.
CONTACT: Ouray County (970) 325-4961

SUMMARY:

Ouray County is made up of diverse landscapes and topography. Privately owned land varies widely in terms of the suitability for development. Many of these parcels are not in close proximity to existing planned unit developments or attendant infrastructure. As a matter of public concern, expansion of urban development into rural areas is an issue because of the increased costs of county services (e.g. emergency medical services, fire protection, sheriff services and road and bridge maintenance).

The overall development goal of Ouray County is to allow gradual, long-term population and economic growth in the county in a manner that does not harm the county's irreplaceable scenic beauty, wildlife, air and water resources, and other environmental qualities and that does not unduly burden the county's residents or its government. To better define and implement this overall development goal of the county, the following goals and policies are set forth:

- 1) Develop and implement zoning that maintains low density on large tracts of land that are primarily in undeveloped areas and direct growth toward areas that are already developed or that otherwise clearly supports the goals of this plan.
- 2) Encourage buildout in existing planned unit developments.
- 3) Create open space or low density development areas around the town, city and future unincorporated areas by intergovernmental agreements that further the objectives of the master plan.
- 4) Continue to encourage clustering of residential units within all planned unit developments and those areas of Ouray County where it supports the goals of this plan.

Open Space Acquisition with Dedicated Revenue Sources:

JURISDICTION(S): City of Colorado Springs
DATE: 1997
TOPIC(S): Trails, Open Space, and Parks (TOPS) Program
CONTACT: City of Colorado Springs (719) 578-6030

SUMMARY:

The Trails, Open Space, and Parks (TOPS) Program was passed in April 1997. TOPS dedicates 1/10 of 1% of sales tax revenue for purchase of trails, open space, and parks. An estimated \$5.4 million will be generated annually, 60% of which must be spent on open space. The first purchase involved a partnership with the Trust for Public Land.

The TOPS ordinance guides the city in acquisition, development, and preservation of open space resources. The TOPS working committee evaluates and prioritizes spending options for revenue generated by TOPS sales tax. Criteria for evaluation of properties include wildlife habitat and other environmental features.

JURISDICTION(S): Douglas County
DATE: 1994
TOPIC(S): Open Space Tax
CONTACT: Douglas County (303) 660-7400

SUMMARY:

In 1994, the voters of Douglas County approved a ballot initiative creating the Open Space, Trails, and Parks Sales and Use Tax. This tax generates over \$3.5 million annually for the preservation of open space, the creation of trails and the development of parks. In 1998, approximately \$2.5 million of the total revenue generated by the tax was specifically

allocated toward the preservation of open space. Through revenues generated by the tax, the county seeks to improve the quality of life for its residents.

Douglas County seeks to protect open space by accomplishing a variety of conservation objectives, including: preservation of important wildlife habitat and movement corridors; perpetuation of the county's rural landscape and agricultural heritage; creation of community buffers; protection of scenic views, historic properties, and archaeological resources; and enhancement of recreational opportunities.

JURISDICTION(S): El Paso County
DATE: 1997
TOPIC(S): Open Space and Parks Acquisition
CONTACT: El Paso County (719) 520-6400

SUMMARY:

El Paso County has a tremendous legacy of unique natural features, open space, trails and parklands. However, the relatively open character of the county is changing as urban development, 2-1/2-, 5- and 35-acre sub-divisions increase and interrupt the vast open vistas to the Front Range.

The lands that contribute to the open space system of unincorporated El Paso County encompass a patchwork of public and private holdings. In addition to county and municipal parks, these include Forest Service, military and state lands, utility properties, institutional and school properties, as well as lands held in private ownership.

The County Parks Department currently administers approximately 3000 acres of parks and open space and more than 50 miles of trails either through direct ownership or lease arrangements. The Department's only dedicated funding sources are state lottery proceeds and a limited amount of subdivision and facility use fees. Operations, maintenance and administrative expenses are primarily funded through the county's general fund. Various discretionary grant sources, such as the Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) are vital programs that contribute to additional planning, acquisition, and development of the County's regional parks and open space system.

JURISDICTION(S): Jefferson County
DATE: 1980
TOPIC(S): Open Space Tax
CONTACT: Jefferson County (303) 271-6511

SUMMARY:

Jefferson County has had an open space acquisition program in place since 1972. Funded by a one-half of one percent sales tax that generates \$22 million in annual revenue, the county has spent approximately \$123 million to acquire 29,500 acres of land. The one-half of one percent sales tax funds a free-standing open space acquisition program that does not compete for scarce public monies. In 1972 the tax was adopted solely for natural and historic areas and trails development. In 1980, the purposes of the tax were expanded to include parks and recreation development. The open space lands are used for a variety of purposes, including natural areas, buffers, and trail corridors. Open space funds are also distributed to eight cities in the county, with Lakewood receiving over \$13 million.

JURISDICTION(S): Larimer County
DATE: 1995
TOPIC(S): Open Lands Tax
CONTACT: Larimer County Parks and Open Lands Department
(970) 679-4570

SUMMARY:

In November of 1995 the citizens of Larimer County voted overwhelmingly to support a quarter-cent sales and use tax to protect open space, natural areas, wildlife habitat, regional parks and trails. This initiative represented a grass-roots effort by a group of concerned citizens who joined together to form the Help Preserve Open Spaces Initiative. The Open Lands Program has wasted no time in its land-preservation effort.

After preserving some critical land in the Fort Collins-Loveland Corridor, the board prepared a strategic plan to guide future acquisitions. Among the priorities are establishment of a regional park in the southern foothills of the county, protection of land near Fossil Creek Reservoir, and addition to existing regional parks as well as numerous trails. Distribution of funds over time for open lands is balanced and fairly distributed throughout the county.

JURISDICTION(S): Summit County
DATE: 1993
TOPIC(S): Open Space Tax
CONTACT: Summit County (970) 453-2561

SUMMARY:

Open Space purchases by Summit County are funded through a property tax mill levy approved by county voters in 1993. The property tax, which sunsets in 2004, generates on average approximately \$700,000 per year. At the program's inception the Board of County Commissioners established the Open Space Advisory Council to give recommendations on potential open space purchases and general implementation of the Open Space program. The OSAC consists of eleven county residents, two from each of the county's four planning basins and three appointed at-large. The program is administered by the county's Open Space and Trails Department.

Acquisition Through Easements:

JURISDICTION(S): Douglas County
DATE: 1998
TOPIC(S): Allis Ranch Preserve Development Plan
CONTACT: Colorado Open Lands, Rick Rogers (303) 694-4994

SUMMARY:

The Allis Ranch Preserve will protect approximately 800 acres of land and preserve 1.5 miles of West Plum Creek by offering only 10 homesites on 830 acres. The result will protect over 95 percent of the land from future development forever. Each parcel will be a minimum of 35 acres and shall include a homestead area. Within the homestead, a 3 acre homesite will be selected.

The plan is designed to protect unique environmental qualities, secure wildlife habitat, preserve open space and sustain the agricultural heritage of the area. The tools used to protect open lands will primarily be conservation easements, land use restrictions, and covenants.

JURISDICTION(S): Routt County
DATE: 1995
TOPIC(S): Conservation Easement Land Protection Technique
CONTACT: Routt County, Ellen Hoj (970) 879-2704

SUMMARY:

A conservation easement protects the significant resources of a property on a permanent basis while maintaining private ownership and economic use of the land. Private landowners voluntarily donate conservation easements to a qualified nonprofit conservation organization or government agency. In return for granting the easement, the landowner can receive a number of tax benefits. Conservation easements help to limit estate tax liability for people who wish to keep land in the family. The easement is a flexible instrument that can be tailored to a landowner's financial, family, and conservation objectives. Generally when a conservation easement is granted on a property, the landowner retains the flexibility to create several reserved homesites. Limited development permits the landowner to protect the conservation values of a property while achieving economic objectives through the creation and sale of a few strategically located homesites.

JURISDICTION(S): Routt County
DATE: 1997
TOPIC(S): Storm Mountain Ranch Conservation Easement
CONTACT: Rout County, Lee Dusa (970) 690-8444

SUMMARY:

Storm Mountain Ranch granted a conservation easement to the Yampa Valley Land Trust in Routt County in late 1997. The easement encompasses 793 acres and will keep a highly visible ranch free of condos and a checkerboard of new homes. This signature ranch is located four miles south of Steamboat Springs at the foot of Rabbit Ears Pass. It is well known for its spectacular canyon which frames Walton Creek as it rushes from Walton Creek Falls. The ranch will stay in agricultural production, true to Steamboat's ranching heritage. Perhaps more importantly, another two-mile section of Walton Creek containing important wildlife habitat in Walton Creek Canyon will be spared from development.

The easement is comprised of three parcels - large hay meadows bordering Highway 40, a heavily wooded hillside overlooking the Yampa Valley, and a two-mile stretch of secluded Walton Creek Canyon.

JURISDICTION(S): Teller County
DATE:
TOPIC(S): Catamount Ranch Open Space Project
CONTACT: Teller County Planning Department, Mike Davenport
(719) 689-2988

SUMMARY:

Teller County's Catamount Ranch Open Space Project depicts how public/private partnerships can collaborate to acquire, plan, and protect a 1,480 acre natural resource on the north slope of Pikes Peak. This process has been successful because of its focus on inclusion and cooperation.

Fundraising partners include: Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO); Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation (RMEF); Teller County exchanging with State Land Board; Gates Family, El Pomar, Johnson, Edmondson and Kissinger Family foundations; Division of Wildlife through Arkansas River Habitat Partnership Program. The non-profit Catamount Institute bought 160 acres. The Trust for Public Land facilitated with Palmer Parks Foundation in granting the conservation easement.

Locally 55 entities and more than 100 individuals contributed. The "adopt-an-acre" program in two elementary schools resulted in four acres adopted through their own fundraising. A golf tournament and silent auction involved many community members.

The planning process included 13 individual neighbors to the land as well as the U.S. Forest Service; Colorado State Forest Service, Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation, and Division of Wildlife; National Park Service; equestrian, motor sports, bird-watching, trails and agricultural groups; Colorado Springs Watershed Department; RMEF; Palmer Foundation; Catamount Institute; Natural Resource Conservation Service; Trust for Public Land, and Teller County Parks Coordinator, Parks Advisory Board and Commissioners.

Other Acquisition Programs:

JURISDICTION(S): Routt County
DATE: 1995
TOPIC(S): Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) Program
CONTACT: Routt County, Ellen Hoj (970) 879-2704

SUMMARY:

The purchase of development rights (PDR) program provides ranchers and large landowners a financially competitive alternative to selling their land for development. The PDR agreement is a legally recorded deed restriction limiting future development of the property.

Landowners continue to retain full control over their land, except for limitations on development. The PDR program will provide compensation to landowners for the loss of development potential on their land. The amount paid for development rights is based on the difference between the land's agricultural value and its development potential.

PDR can assist in retaining Routt County's productive ranch land and prevent conversion to non-agricultural use. The PDR program helps stabilize the farm economy in addition to protecting open lands and productive farmland.

JURISDICTION(S): City of Steamboat Springs
DATE: 1999
TOPIC(S): Yampa River System Legacy Project Land Protection
CONTACT: City of Steamboat Springs (970) 879-2060

SUMMARY:

Concerned individuals and public agency representatives formed the broad-based Yampa River System Legacy Project to protect traditional agricultural values and preserve open space, wildlife, and recreational resources in the Yampa River valley. At the gateway of fast-growing Steamboat Springs, the spectacular 3,921-acre Yampa Valley Land and Cattle ranch was at risk of sale for development, and was thus targeted as essential to the Legacy Project's program goals.

The Trust for Public Land, a nonprofit conservation organization, stepped in to acquire the Land and Cattle ranch. Through a unique partnership among several public agencies, conservation developers, and conservation organizations, a complex series of sales to public and private buyers was completed. Environmentally sensitive development on a small portion of the ranch helped fund preservation of the remainder of the ranch, while maintaining hay production on one portion and protecting habitat along 1.5 miles of the Yampa River.

REGULATIONS:

JURISDICTION(S): Douglas County
DATE: 1996
TOPIC(S): Design Enhancement Overlay District
CONTACT: Douglas County Planning Division (303) 660-7460

SUMMARY:

Douglas County adopted the Design Enhancement Overlay District (DEO) to address traditional subdivisions. The county's objectives are to create open spaces, preserve resources and the rural character, protect wildlife habitat, and reduce infrastructure costs. DEO is a zone district that overlays the base zoning of the property, but does not change the uses or densities permitted on that property. DEO provides for flexibility of design, allows for open space preservation, and permits reduced lot sizes. To encourage the preservation of open space in a subdivision, Design Enhancement Overlay provides for density bonuses. A minimum of 30 percent of the site must be preserved as open space. If 40 percent of the site is dedicated to open space, the developer receives a 10 percent increase in the number of residential units permitted in the subdivision.

JURISDICTION(S): Douglas County
DATE: 1996
TOPIC(S): Rural Site Plan Program
CONTACT: Douglas County Planning Division (303) 660-7460

SUMMARY:

Douglas County is one of the fastest growing counties in the nation. New subdivisions and 35-acre lot developments create a variety of problems in rural counties. As development pressures from the Denver area march south, the county has created methods to ensure that new developments are consistent with its goals, especially the issues of preserving open space and the rural character of the county.

The county's Rural Site Plan program provides incentives for developing large parcels in a manner that preserves open space and is environmentally sensitive. The program offers developers increased densities if development plans are consistent with the county's open space, rural landscape, and environmental objectives. Developers can receive density bonuses of up to 40 percent of the development parcel, based on certain criteria. The open space may be preserved by a conservation easement or donated to an open space land trust or wildlife group.

JURISDICTION(S): Lake County
DATE: 1998
TOPIC(S): Density Bonuses
CONTACT: Lake County Planning Commission (719) 486-1796

SUMMARY:

A technique available to implement Lake County's Comprehensive Land Use Plan is to provide density bonus provisions in exchange for clustered development and open space. Preservation of open space for wetlands protection, critical wildlife habitat, and viewshed protection can be fostered by offering incentives to developers that grant density bonuses in return for clustering and dedicating more than the minimum required open space. Density bonuses can be applied to reduce minimum lot size requirements or reduce maximum density limitation.

JURISDICTION(S): Larimer County
DATE: 1998
TOPIC(S): Transfer of Density Units
CONTACT: Larimer County, Steve Ryder (970) 498-7695

SUMMARY:

The Transfer of Density Units (TDUs) program for the Fossil Creek Reservoir area provides a means, on a voluntary basis, to transfer development from "sending areas" to "receiving areas." Its purposes are to guide future growth and development, and promote the preservation of agriculture, rural open space, scenic vistas, recreational lands, and environmental resources. Landowners in sending areas who sell transferable density units agree to limitations on the future use and development of their land. Land in the receiving area may be developed at densities greater than the underlying zoning by transferring TDUs from sending areas.

If a property owner in a designated sending area voluntarily sold all or a portion of his/her density units, the future development potential of the property would be diminished accordingly. Upon arranging the sale or transfer of the necessary number of Transferable Density Units, landowners/agents submit plans in accordance with the county's development review process. Landowners/agents may request the TDU Administrator to conduct a review of their parcel(s) to determine the number of Transferable Density Units. The sale of TDUs is negotiated privately between buyer and seller.

JURISDICTION(S): City of Manitou Springs
DATE: 1996
TOPIC(S): Open Space Zone
CONTACT: City of Manitou Springs (719) 685-5481

SUMMARY:

The Open Space Zone was established to encourage the acquisition, retention, preservation and restoration of open lands in Manitou Springs for the protection of flora and fauna in their natural state and for the recreational use by citizens of the city and to accomplish the following:

- 1) To enable lands under city ownership to be rezoned Open Space by the city.
- 2) To enable the city to receive donations of land from private individuals, corporations or trusts.
- 3) To enable the city to acquire land and rezone all or portions of such land as Open Space.
- 4) To enable owners of land to petition to rezone their land as Open Space.

JURISDICTION(S): Routt County
DATE: 1995
TOPIC(S): Open Land Subdivision
CONTACT: Routt County, Ellen Hoj (970) 879-2704

SUMMARY:

The Open Lands Subdivision (OLS) provides landowners with county incentives to voluntarily restrict development on their lands and meet financial objectives through a combination of tax benefits and creation of a few reserved homesites. This technique involves the use of conservation easements. The OLS encourages landowners to reduce the number of lots that could be created in a 35-acre pattern on their property to a minimum and permanently protect the remaining open land.

The main techniques which are critical to the benefits of the OLS are conservation easements, reserved homesites, and estate planning. In order to qualify for OLS, a landowner must restrict development on the property to 25 percent or less of the density that would have been created through the creation of 35-acre lots.

JURISDICTION(S): Routt County
DATE: 1995
TOPIC(S): Land Protection Subdivision
CONTACT: Routt County, Ellen Hoj (970) 879-2704

SUMMARY:

The Land Protection Subdivision* (LPS) encourages landowners to take the number of lots that could be created in a 35-acre pattern and cluster them on smaller lots in compact areas that do not have high visual, agricultural, or natural values. LPS aims for the sensitive placement of homesites away from key agricultural and open scenic lands on a property.

Cluster development is a development pattern which groups homesites on one or more portions of a site in order to preserve other portions of the site. In Routt County, cluster development involves taking the number of 35-acre sites that could be accommodated on a tract of land, and concentrating them in one or more locations on smaller lots, in the 2 to 5 acre range. *The LPS is currently being amended.

JURISDICTION(S): Summit County
DATE: 1998
TOPIC(S): Cluster Subdivisions
CONTACT: Summit County (970) 453-2561

SUMMARY:

A cluster subdivision is a form of land subdivision in which the residential density allowed by a property's zoning remains unchanged, but dwelling units are clustered rather than distributed on a uniform basis over the property by reducing the lot area required for each dwelling unit and placing the remaining land in open space. In allowing cluster subdivisions rather than requiring rezoning to reduce lot sizes, it is the county's intent:

- 1) To obtain the best possible fit between the proposed development and the property's physical characteristics.
- 2) To encourage the preservation of a property's natural assets.
- 3) To avoid placing development in areas subject to environmental hazards.
- 4) To preserve view corridors along arterial highways wherever practical.

AGRICULTURAL LAND PRESERVATION EFFORTS

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PLANS:

JURISDICTION(S): Town of Fairplay, Park County
DATE: 1997
TOPIC(S): South Park Heritage Project
CONTACT: CSU Cooperative Extension/South Park Heritage
(719) 836-4289

SUMMARY:

Preserving ranching as a way of life and identifying ways to save ranchland from development are the objectives behind the South Park Heritage Project. Recently, an open workshop was held to promote agricultural land preservation; to develop interest in conservation easements as a protection method; and to make ranchers aware of the vision of preserving ranchland to preserve the quality of life in Park County. Open space and ranching are critical to the future of Park County. Conservation easements are now better understood by landowners and are a viable option for land preservation, thanks to the South Park Heritage efforts.

JURISDICTION(S): City of Fort Morgan
DATE: 1994
TOPIC(S): Agricultural Preservation Plan/Strategies
CONTACT: City of Fort Morgan (970) 867-3001

SUMMARY:

In its Comprehensive Plan, Fort Morgan encourages the preservation of agriculture around the city and recognizes that a cooperative effort between the city, Morgan County and the surrounding communities will be necessary for a successful preservation effort. Policy 1.2 ensures that development in the Fort Morgan planning area is guided toward the city. Furthermore, Strategy 18.1.7 aims to protect sensitive areas like prime agricultural land, wetlands, and designated wildlife habitat areas as the city grows. The plan also states that the city will work cooperatively with landowners regarding preservation and/or acquisition of significant preservation areas.

JURISDICTION(S): Garfield County
DATE: 1996
TOPIC(S): Lower Roaring Fork Open Lands Heritage Program
CONTACT: Garfield County Planning Department (970) 945-8212

SUMMARY:

The purpose of the Open Lands Heritage Program is to identify significant open lands in the study area, define an approach that can be used by all interested parties to conserve open lands, and to initiate the development of partnerships among public and private entities to build support for open lands protection. The program relies upon creative, incentive-based tools that can be used to meet the community's needs while respecting individual property rights. The program is also intended to serve as a pilot approach that may be replicated in other parts of the county.

Specific objectives of the Lower Roaring Fork Open Lands Heritage Program are to identify land protection tools to help retain agricultural, natural and scenic open lands, focusing on voluntary, incentive-based techniques; to provide direction to the county for encouraging developers and landowners to preserve productive agricultural land and to retain wildlife habitat and natural resources areas; and to provide direction to the county on methods to preserve agricultural lands.

JURISDICTION(S): Ouray County
DATE: 1995
TOPIC(S): Agricultural Land Preservation Planning Concept
CONTACT: Ouray County (970) 325-4961

SUMMARY:

Agricultural uses within Ouray County are important physical, environmental, cultural, aesthetic, and economic assets to both urban and rural residents. In addition, preservation of these lands in large tracts is necessary to maintain the agricultural economy of the County. Development of these agricultural properties is a matter of public concern in both the agricultural community and the residential community because of the interface between agriculture and development activities.

The planning concept encourages the continued use of lands for agricultural productivity and the right to farm and ranch. Policies planned to implement land preservation include:

- 1) Ranching and farming shall remain a use-by-right within specific land use zones except as restricted or modified when a change in land use is granted by the County.

- 2) Right to farm/ranch regulations that protect the agricultural community by ensuring the right to continue agricultural activities.
- 3) Regulations and a process that gives incentives to an owner to develop the land in a manner that conserves productive agricultural lands.

JURISDICTION(S): Routt County
DATE: 1994
TOPIC(S): Upper Elk River Valley Land Protection Plan
CONTACT: Routt County (970) 879-0108

SUMMARY:

In the Spring of 1992, a number of landowners in Colorado's Upper Elk River Valley began to discuss their common concerns regarding future growth and development in the valley. The landowners desired to protect the open and productive working landscape that gives the valley its special character. The local land-based enterprises would be jeopardized if any one of the large properties were to be sold for subdivision.

The primary strategy developed to meet the valley vision is a conservation-based development strategy or a "protected development" strategy. Limited or protective development is a means to protect the open and productive character that serves as the basis for the valley's economic viability. The concept of protective development is made up of three main components:

- 1) Protection of productive agricultural and scenic lands through the use of conservation easements.
- 2) Identification of a number of reserved homesites to address family economic and estate planning objectives.
- 3) Creation of a compact housing settlement at Clark to provide affordable housing to residents who work in the valley.

This plan is a step toward protecting a special place and creating a community that can provide for stewardship of the Upper Elk River Valley resources.

JURISDICTION(S): Routt County
DATE: 1998
TOPIC(S): Yampa River Basin Partnership
CONTACT: Routt County (970) 879-0108

SUMMARY:

The Yampa River Basin Partnership is a newly formed partnership that includes landowners and local, state, and federal officials. The partnership seeks greater compatibility of federal

and state policies and programs with local policies and programs that promote agriculture. Developing grassroots and regional strategies for meshing growth with viable agriculture can foster increased interaction with federal and state agencies. Greater cooperation would minimize conflicts that occur because of multiple agency policies and regulations. Managing the Yampa Valley Ecosystem to respect the needs of all stakeholders is the basis of the partnership.

JURISDICTION(S): San Miguel County
DATE: 1997
TOPIC(S): Wrights Mesa Planning Concept
CONTACT: San Miguel County (970) 728-3844

SUMMARY:

Wrights Mesa's agricultural setting provides a special rural character that residents desire to retain while encouraging more diverse economic opportunity. Future land use will be aimed to encourage agriculture and ranching to continue and prosper because of their importance to the local economy and lifestyle. Wrights Mesa has a history of agricultural, residential and small business uses that co-exist and comprise its rural character.

The planning concept aims to maintain a set of flexible incentives for keeping large parcels of land intact and economically viable. Alternatives and incentives to cluster buildings, retain open lands, and provide greater economic options for landowners will be offered to counteract the large lot, suburban pattern of sprawl created through 35-acre development. In part, this entails encouraging agriculturally compatible uses on lands that fit in with the rural landscape, and providing increased economic opportunity for landowners. Greater flexibility in uses will be allowed if proposed uses are acceptable to neighbors and conform with the rural character. A "good neighbor" strategy should encourage the local fit. Key to this concept is the idea that design and compatibility are as important as use or density, and that a greater variety of uses can be allowed, provided that such uses do not adversely affect neighboring properties or the rural character of the area.

POLICIES/PROGRAMS:

JURISDICTION(S): Delta, Garfield, Jackson, La Plata, Larimer, Mesa, Montezuma, Morgan, Routt, Washington, and Weld Counties
DATE: 1997
TOPIC(S): Right-to-Farm and Ranch Policy
CONTACTS: Montezuma (970) 565 3278; Delta (970) 874-2100; Garfield (970) 945-2377; Jackson (970) 723-4334; La Plata (970) 382-6200; Mesa (970) 244-1800; Morgan (970) 867-5616; Washington (970) 345-6565; Weld (970) 356-4000; Routt (970) 879-0108; Larimer (970) 498-7000

SUMMARY:

Colorado is changing. Population increases affect many things, including development in areas that have remained rural for decades. When non-agricultural residents move into traditionally agricultural areas, conflict can occur. Counties have a viable economic and cultural agricultural history. When agricultural operators, non-agricultural residents, and visitors collide, the economic viability of agricultural operations may become threatened.

The Right to Farm and Ranch Policy, is a way to protect agricultural operators from complaints concerning operations that are legal and responsible. It is important to educate the public and non-agricultural residents and visitors about the existence, validity and importance of agricultural operations and activities. The policy intentions are to conserve, enhance, and encourage ranching, farming, and all manner of agricultural activities and operations where appropriate. Minimizing potential conflicts between agricultural and nonagricultural users of land and educating new rural residents and long-time agricultural operators alike about their rights, responsibilities, and obligations relating to agricultural activities are further goals of the policy. Planning efforts to provide for the retention of traditional and important agricultural lands in agricultural production as well as the opportunity for reasonable residential and other development are integrated with Right to Farm Policies.

JURISDICTION(S): City and County of Denver
DATE: 1997
TOPIC(S): Agricultural Leaseback
CONTACT: City and County of Denver (303) 640-5555

SUMMARY:

Denver has leased much of the land purchased for Denver International Airport back to farmers to keep it in agricultural uses until it is needed for runway or airfield expansions. Denver purchased the property and then leased it to third parties subject to conditions and

restrictions as provided in the lease. The government must still monitor the land use in order to make sure the restrictions are being observed. The leaseback is an effective tool that allows for continued agricultural operations.

JURISDICTION(S): Larimer County
DATE: 1996
TOPIC(S): Rural Land Use Center
CONTACT: The Rural Land Use Center (970) 498-7686

SUMMARY:

Owners of large parcels in Larimer County who wish to develop their land for housing, while at the same time preserving open space, can now receive assistance from the Rural Land Use Center. Initiated late in 1996 by the Larimer County Commissioners, the center's job is to help property owners creatively plan large-lot development.

The center grew from the work of the 35-acre Task Force which was appointed to find alternatives for landowners with large parcels (70 acres or larger) considering breaking their property into 35-acre tracts. By state law, landowners are allowed to divide large parcels into 35-acre lots without county subdivision review. To preserve more open space in the large tracts and to lessen the impact of roads and other infrastructure, the Task Force wrote guidelines that encourage property owners to cluster development, allow more housing units and leave more land open to preserve rural character and agricultural viability.

The Rural Land Use Center provides preliminary technical assistance, consulting services and land-planning information. The center can also provide basic information concerning estate planning.

JURISDICTION(S): Mesa County
DATE: 1996
TOPIC(S): Mesa County Land Use Incentives
CONTACTS: Mesa County (970) 244-1602

SUMMARY:

The Mesa County Land Use Incentives report recommends to the county different incentives to encourage growth to locate in and around existing rural and urban communities, a land use strategy developed in response to problems and goals identified in the Mesa Countywide Land Use Plan. The Mesa Countywide Land Use Plan identifies preferred land use scenarios for the rural and urban areas of the county which identify concentrated growth as preferable to urban or rural sprawl. The preferred scenarios rest on the principle that sprawl is neither desirable nor cost-effective and that preservation and protection of agricultural land is essential to protecting Mesa County's customs and culture.

The benefits of clustering growth in and around existing growth centers ("Target Areas") include cost savings to developers, local governments and taxpayers because of fewer miles of infrastructure; preservation of open space; energy savings associated with more efficient utility services; reduction in air pollution and traffic congestion and improved aesthetics. The Target Areas process has been identified as a critical solution to growth-related problems.

Mesa County will begin to implement strategies that encourage clustering in Target Areas while protecting agricultural land by taking a series of recommended actions:

- Identify and Evaluate Target Areas
- Negotiate Intergovernmental Agreements
- Establish Overlay Districts
- Establish a Rural Subdivision Exemption
- Initiate a Pilot Project for Transfer of Development Rights
- Coordinate Capital Improvement Planning with Land use Objectives

JURISDICTION(S): Mesa County
DATE: 1996
TOPIC(S): Mesa County Technical Resource Advisory Committee
CONTACTS: Mesa County, Michael Warren (970) 255-7189

SUMMARY:

Mesa County Commissioners appointed volunteer members to serve on a Technical Resource Advisory Committee (TRAC) to provide land conservation guidance to landowners and residents. The TRAC is an alternative approach to protecting agricultural and other significant open lands by combining the expertise of planning, agricultural, and conservation discipline to produce innovative alternatives in land conservation and development. The committee explores the use of various conservation and development options and analyzes legal tax planning and other options to assist farming and ranching families in reaching their agricultural/conservation objectives.

JURISDICTION(S): Pitkin County
DATE: 1998
TOPIC(S): Rural Lands Overlay District
CONTACTS: City of Aspen (970) 920-5090; Pitkin County (970) 920-5200

SUMMARY:

In 1996, the Board of County Commissioners appointed several members of the agricultural community and other interested citizens to a committee whose purpose was to address the

ongoing loss of agricultural lands in Pitkin County. In order to address the issues, the Citizen's Committee developed the following goals and objectives:

Goals:

- *To help preserve a working agricultural landscape while preserving equitable real estate values;*
- *To sustain and encourage agricultural and other low impact commercial and institutional opportunities; and*
- *To preserve and increase the economic options of the agricultural community for the benefit of the landowners and the total community.*

Objectives:

1. *To create a voluntary, incentive-based overlay district for rural lands which provides significant benefits to rural land owners who are willing to give up some development potential in order to preserve large, contiguous tracts of open and agricultural lands to benefit the community as a whole; and*
2. *To involve the whole community in the preservation of open and agricultural lands by placing a square footage restriction on house size county-wide which may only be exceeded through purchase of development rights from agricultural lands.*

Elements of the Rural Lands Overlay District:

1. Eligibility of requirements
2. Benefits/Incentives for those participating in the Program
3. An expanded market for Transferable Development Rights (TDRs)
4. Establishment of a basic entitlement for properties participating in the Rural Land Overlay District
5. Compatible Commercial Businesses
6. Streamline approval
7. Vesting
8. Clustering Option
9. Purchase of Development Rights (PDRs)
10. Getting out of the Voluntary Rural Lands Overlay

Easements:

JURISDICTION(S): Gunnison County
DATE: 1995
TOPIC(S): Eagle Ridge Ranch Protected Development (private sector)
CONTACT: Colorado Open Lands, Lee Dusa (303) 694-4994

SUMMARY:

Eagle Ridge Ranch demonstrates that landowners can capitalize on the development potential of land and still retain the integrity of natural landscapes and the ranching heritage. Protected development allows the landowner to shift some of the development value from protected agricultural lands to a limited number of residential sites. The 15,000-acre Eagle Ridge Ranch has been preserved by selling ownership shares to 15 investors who wanted to become part of a protected ranch development. Although being developed, Eagle Ridge is helping preserve the unspoiled views and the agricultural way of life.

The Eagle Ridge conservation easement guarantees lot owners that the property will remain in ranching. Each residential lot is permanently connected to a 1/15th share of the ranch. Each buyer is deeded 35 acres but only has exclusive use of 4 or 5 acres. The remainder remains in agricultural production. Each homesite was carefully located to have minimum impact on agriculture and to be out-of-sight from the highway. Ranchers up and down the Ohio Creek Valley recognize Eagle Ridge Ranch as contributing to the stability of agriculture.

JURISDICTION(S): Larimer County
DATE: 1996
TOPIC(S): Rural Land Use Process
CONTACT: The Rural Land Use Center (970) 498-7686

SUMMARY:

The concept of the Rural Land Use Process was developed by a diverse group of Larimer county citizens and property owners. The intent is to assist landowners who wish to develop their property while maintaining some land in agriculture and open space.

The purposes and objectives of the Rural Land Use Process are to preserve and protect critical areas by designating and recognizing distinctions in the land such as agricultural land, open lands, preserves, as well as watersheds, wetlands, view corridors and urban areas, and to encourage development that will respect the critical areas.

The Rural Land Use Process is a voluntary process. Under the Process, two thirds or more of a property can be maintained in agricultural production or as private open space utilizing

conservation easements, or protective covenants. The Process enables homes to be clustered or dispersed on well-suited lots that are 2.3 acres or larger. The specific site planning maintains open space, reduces infrastructure needs, retains agricultural land, and provides wildlife habitat.

REGULATIONS:

JURISDICTION(S): Custer County
DATE: 1992
TOPIC(S): Large Lot Zoning
CONTACT: Custer County Planning and Zoning (719) 783-2669

SUMMARY:

Throughout Colorado, real estate ads offer, "For sale, beautiful 35-acre lot, mountain views." The proliferation of 35-acre subdivisions is occurring primarily in rural mountain communities and along the Front Range. The subdivision of rural land into large acreage parcels causes a loss of agricultural and range land, and environmental degradation among other things. Many counties in Colorado have either ignored the 35-acre subdivision issue or have addressed it with zoning. Custer County has used its zoning power to implement an 80-acre minimum lot size. The large lot zoning, called Zone 1, is located in valley floors where prime productive land is located. The objective is to preserve the agricultural land and maintain rural heritage.

JURISDICTION(S): Jefferson County
DATE: 1992
TOPIC(S): Rural Cluster Process
CONTACT: Jefferson county, Alice Reuman (303) 271-6511

SUMMARY:

The purpose of the Rural Cluster Process is to provide an alternative, and completely voluntary, method of land division that encourages the clustering of single family residential dwellings and the preservation of open areas in the rural portions of the county. The incentive is that a developer/landowner can earn double the density of Senate Bill 35 if he or she sets aside two thirds of the land into a conservation easement or dedicates it in fee simple to the county for open space.

The goals of the Rural Cluster Process are as follows:

- Maintain and enhance rural character by protecting, preserving and conserving existing rural landscapes and viewscapes;

- Maintain or create visual amenities by preserving open areas between development, along scenic view corridors, and to and from visual resources;
- Protect flora and fauna by preserving and conserving wildlife habitats and environmentally-sensitive areas;
- Allow for continued or future agricultural or ranching uses by preserving and conserving areas with viable soils and effective land masses;
- Reduce infrastructure costs and impacts emanating from traditional large-lot development by providing greater flexibility and efficiency in the siting and design of services and infrastructure;
- Improve rural planning practices and designs by encouraging appropriate and site-sensitive rural residential development; and
- Implement a simple and streamlined land use process as an alternative to platting, rezoning or 35-acre land division.

JURISDICTION(S): Mesa County
DATE: 1997
TOPIC(S): My Way Ranch Subdivision Project
CONTACT: Mesa County Department of Planning and Development
 (970) 244-1867

SUMMARY:

My Way Ranch includes a Rural Cluster Subdivision which allows farmers and ranchers to sell a part of their land, but retain the productive portions of the land and the wildlife habitat, thereby continuing the farming and ranching tradition of the area. Home buyers benefit from living in a rural area without having more land than they are able to maintain.

Official Development Plan (ODP) allows a Rural Cluster Subdivision of 125 lots in 3 phases. 125 lots of 1-3 acres are clustered in non-productive portions of the ranch. Conservation easements are placed on 2,250 acres of prime ranch land to preserve in perpetuity. The lots must comply with all county and state regulations.

JURISDICTION(S): Montezuma County
DATE: 1997
TOPIC(S): Agricultural Zone, Cluster Incentive PUD
CONTACT: Montezuma County Planning Office (970)-565-2801

SUMMARY:

Landowner Initiated Zoning Options include an intensive agricultural zone with an 80-acre minimum lot size. The A/R 35+ zoning allows clustering and phasing of three homesites per 35 acres, while maintaining agricultural land or open space. Similarly, Cluster Incentive

PUD clusters three homesites per 35 acres, with 75 percent of the parcel remaining in open space.

JURISDICTION(S): San Miguel County
DATE: 1995
TOPIC(S): Regulation for 35-acre Development; Rural Cluster
Subdivision
CONTACT: San Miguel County Planning Department (970) 728-3083

SUMMARY:

The purposes of the rural cluster subdivision are to preserve agricultural land for agricultural uses, preserve critical wildlife habitat by preserving large continuous open areas and to permit a property owner flexibility in site planning without the need to create 35-acre lots. Land within the Forestry, Agriculture and Open Zone District may be approved for a rural cluster subdivision provided that the minimum lot size is two acres. The overall density shall remain one unit per 35 acres. Smaller parcels may be created provided the remaining non-parceled acreage is designated as common open space on the subdivision plat.

JURISDICTION(S): Summit County
DATE: 1990
TOPIC(S): Agriculture Zoning Districts
CONTACT: Summit County (970) 453-2561

SUMMARY:

It is the intent of the agricultural zoning districts to preserve agricultural and ranching uses. The uses, densities, and standards established for this district are intended to protect existing agricultural character, while providing for low intensity use of natural resources, limited residential and recreational development and other compatible uses. Residential densities are limited to no more than 1 primary dwelling unit/20 acres. With the exception of approved cluster subdivisions, each primary dwelling unit shall be located on a separate lot of at least 20 acres.

JURISDICTION(S): Weld County
DATE: 1982
TOPIC(S): Agricultural Districts/Large Lot Zoning
CONTACT: Weld County Planning Department, Monica Daniels-Mika,
(970) 353-6100

SUMMARY:

The proliferation of 35-acre subdivisions is occurring all across Colorado. The demand for these "ranchettes" within easy driving distance of the cities makes this type of development a marketable and simple approach to land subdivision. The subdivision of rural land into large acreage parcels can create a variety of problems. Counties in Colorado have experimented with different techniques to address this issue. Weld County has used its zoning authority to set minimum lot sizes for single family homes at 80 acres in the agricultural zone.

JURISDICTION(S): Weld County
DATE: 1997
TOPIC(S): Three Lot Recorded Exemption
CONTACT: Weld County Planning Department , Monica Daniels-Mika,
(970) 353-6100

SUMMARY:

Weld County contains approximately 18 percent of the state's prime farmland; as such, development mechanisms to preserve this valuable resource are needed. Since the early 1980s, Weld County has employed large lot zoning requirements for agricultural land by requiring an 80 acre lot size. The county developed a provision to split these 80 acre parcels into two pieces through the recorded exemption process.

The recorded exemption provision encouraged farmers to divide parcels containing 160 acres into two parcels containing 80 acres each. In the spring of 1997, an agriculture bonus was added to the provision to allow three cluster pieces of farm land to be created with minimal effort to the consumer. This option encourages larger pieces of farm ground to remain together; allows farmers to set aside the least valuable portion of the farm for clustered residential sites; and provides the financial support many farmers need to continue farming productively. Future development of this parcel will be limited for 10 years.

This provision allows small, less productive parcels to be created in clusters, while the balance of the farms remains in production. Additionally, the funds received for the sale of the created parcel are often being invested back into the farm in the form of center pivot irrigation sprinklers, as an example.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION EFFORTS

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

PLANS:

JURISDICTION(S): Boulder County
DATE: 1995
TOPIC(S): Boulder County Comprehensive Plan - Natural Hazards Elements
CONTACT: Boulder County (303) 441-3930

SUMMARY:

A natural hazard is any threat to human beings or their property by a process that is part of the natural environment. This Natural Hazards Element is directed at those hazards which are common to Boulder County or impact the county. Most of the hazards discussed are normal processes which only become a problem when humans get in their way or human activities upset their equilibrium and trigger or accelerate them to a hazardous level. Those capable of taking lives and/or doing much property damage include wildfires, floods, tornadoes, earthquakes, severe storms, avalanches, and landslides. Those with more limited destructive potential include subsidence, rockfalls, high groundwater tables, unstable slopes, high winds, radioactivity, and problem soils. Although not a significant threat to human life, swelling soils cause more property damage annually than do hurricanes, tornadoes, landslides and earthquakes combined.

JURISDICTION(S): Boulder, Douglas, Elbert, El Paso, Larimer Counties, and Jefferson County Subareas
DATE: 1998
TOPIC(S): Preble's Meadow Jumping Mouse Habitat Conservation Plans and Collaborative Planning Project
CONTACT: Douglas County (303) 660-7400; Larimer County (970) 498-7000; El Paso County (719) 520-6400; Jefferson County (303) 271-6511; Boulder County (303) 441-3930

SUMMARY:

In order to protect the threatened Preble's Meadow Jumping Mouse (PMJM) and its habitat, and to provide for economic expansion and growth in some riparian areas along the Front Range, plans are being developed by six counties in Colorado. As part of the plan, known as a habitat conservation plan (HCP), an assessment of the environmental effects of the plan is necessary, identifying potential alternatives to the plan as well as environmental issues related to carrying out the HCP. The HCP aims to balance land use and development activities with conservation of mouse habitat. The plan will address specific strategies for conserving PMJM habitat in the counties, and how the strategies will be implemented, monitored, and funded.

The PMJM Collaborative Planning Project involves public stakeholders in each of the planning subareas within Jefferson, El Paso, Douglas/Elbert, and Larimer/Weld Counties. Public meetings were held to review a HCP draft analysis for the area prepared by the PMJM Science Team that ranked activities thought to pose some risk to the PMJM into high, medium, and low categories. The Collaborative Planning Project will continue to integrate the subareas planning process and refine the Habitat Conservation Plans to a format that meets the requirements of the Endangered Species Act.

JURISDICTION(S): Douglas County
DATE: 1997
TOPIC(S): Environmental/Visual Study
CONTACT: Douglas County Planning Department,
Don Moore (303)-660-7460

SUMMARY:

Douglas County has recently completed an important environmental and visual study of the county. This study created an extensive database of information in four key areas to be used for updating the County's Master Plan, and for review and analysis of development proposals. Specifically, this study utilized Geographic Information Systems (GIS) computer mapping to do the following:

- 1) Define important highway viewsheds along highway corridors for preservation from negative visual impacts.
- 2) Identify important side slopes and very visible foreground areas of the Northern Douglas County Bluffs for preservation.
- 3) Identify lands that might serve as community separators, such as lands that help maintain the sense of place and identity of communities while avoiding continuous urban development. The study mapped lands that are strategically positioned between communities having important scenic qualities, high quality wildlife habitat or are important agricultural lands.
- 4) Create detailed maps and analysis of lands to be preserved along major stream corridors. This specialized computer mapping software has proven to be a very important component of efforts to accurately identify critical lands for open space preservation.

The system has proven very useful to both the towns of Castle Rock and Parker.

JURISDICTION(S): City of Gunnison
DATE: 1996
TOPIC(S): Gunnison River Greenway Extension Planning Concept
CONTACT: City of Gunnison (970)-641-8000

SUMMARY:

The Gunnison River Greenway extension plan involves a cooperative management agreement approach for the corridor that includes a strategy for land acquisition, trail development, zoning changes and other revisions to city land-use regulations. The planning concept states that conservation of the valuable river greenway will require the cooperation of private landowners and government agencies alike. Actions to maintain and improve the greenway for open space, wildlife habitat, recreation and aquifer recharge are as follows:

- 1) Prepare a Master Development Plan for the Gunnison River Greenway.
- 2) Formalize a cooperative management agreement with private landowners, government agencies, Gunnison County and the City of Gunnison.
- 3) Work with the City of Gunnison to mandate no utility extensions for all areas located within the 100-year floodplain.
- 4) Identify zoning and other regulatory changes required to conform to land use goals.
- 5) Evaluate feasibility of land acquisition, easements, land trusts and other measures for implementing objectives in management agreement.

JURISDICTION(S): Gunnison County, Gunnison Resource Area, Bureau of Land Management
DATE: 1997
TOPIC(S): Gunnison Sage Grouse Conservation Plan
CONTACT: Joe Capodice at the Gunnison Field Office (970) 641-0471

SUMMARY:

Concern about the status, declining populations and the long-term survival of the Gunnison Sage Grouse started to surface in the early 1990s. In 1995, the current initiative was started when the Gunnison Resource Area, Bureau of Land Management (BLM), invited all interested groups and individuals to meet and discuss the current status and potential future of the Gunnison Sage Grouse. More than 65 people with widely diverse perspectives attended the meeting. Soon, a core group of 15 to 20 people began working on strategies intended to increase sage grouse populations in the Gunnison Basin.

The goal of the Gunnison Sage Grouse Working Group was to create a conservation plan that would establish a process and put into place a framework that would guide management efforts aimed at improving sage grouse populations and reverse long-term declines of the

Gunnison Sage Grouse. The group has identified 42 factors that may have contributed to the sage grouse decline and developed over 200 conservation actions that may halt or reverse the decline. The Conservation Plan consists of two parts. The first part, the Conservation Assessment, describes sage grouse distribution and factors that influence or affect sage grouse. The second part, the Conservation Strategy, outlines the goal and objectives, conservation actions, an implementation plan and monitoring requirements.

JURISDICTION(S): Eagle County and Towns of Vail, Avon, Eagle, Minturn, Gypsum and Red Cliff
DATE: 1996
TOPIC(S): Eagle River Watershed Plan
CONTACT: Eagle County Planning, Ellie Caryl (970) 328-8749

SUMMARY:

The Eagle River Watershed Plan outlines a collaborative, local philosophy for protecting and improving water quantity, water quality, wildlife habitat, recreational opportunities and promoting compatible land use practices. The plan is a joint project of the towns of Vail, Avon, Eagle, Minturn, Gypsum and Red Cliff, Eagle County, citizen groups, landowners, regional, state and federal agencies. The decision to initiate the plan was based on a common belief that the Eagle River watershed is negatively impacted by local and regional population growth.

This innovative plan is a proactive outline of actions that should be implemented on behalf of the watershed and its future. Since its adoption in 1996, an implementing committee comprised of citizens and local government representatives have accomplished, or is working on, several projects including elimination of two river hazards, creation of a common erosion and sedimentation control ordinance that will apply to all jurisdictions, creation of a river recreation map to disperse use and reduce trespass, distribution of an erosion control newsletter and field guide, and water conservation display items for local restaurants and hotels. Projects through 1997 include river access improvements, water conservation education, grant preparation for a water quality project, a clean up event and field inventories.

POLICIES/PROGRAMS:

JURISDICTION(S): City of Englewood
DATE: 1990
TOPIC(S): Keep Englewood Beautiful (KEB) Commission
CONTACT: Kate Newman (303) 762-2345

SUMMARY:

The Keep Englewood Beautiful (KEB) Commission promotes community participation and environmentally responsible behavior through partnerships with citizens, schools, businesses, and government agencies. KEB was commissioned in 1990 by Englewood City Council and is an affiliate of Keep America Beautiful. Commissioners strive to improve Englewood's quality of life by implementing programs to reduce litter and solid waste, keep reusable and hazardous materials out of landfills, and raise community awareness. Current activities include: South Platte River Clean Up, Adopt-A-Street, Household Hazardous Material Round Up and many others.

JURISDICTION(S): Cities of Grand Junction, Fruita, Town of Palisade, Mesa County, Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Forest Service, Colorado Division of Wildlife, Colorado Mountain Bike Association, River Front Commission, etal
DATE: 1993
TOPIC(S): Grand Mesa Slope Special Management Area
CONTACT: City of Grand Junction (970) 244-1564

SUMMARY:

The Grand Mesa Slopes Special Management Area is a cooperative resource management program covering approximately 80 square miles of mixed ownership land adjacent to Grand Junction. The purchase of Somerville Ranch by the City of Grand Junction created an opportunity for an open lands and watershed protection program adjacent to a growing urbanized area.

The overall intent of the GMS Plan is to protect existing resource values and improve natural resource commercial, and public use manageability through cooperative management. Anticipated benefits include improved management of watersheds, livestock grazing, wildlife habitat, cultural resources, scenic and long term integrity of GMS as an open land area adjacent to Grand Junction.

JURISDICTION(S): Larimer, Jefferson, El Paso, Douglas, and Boulder Counties
DATE: 1995
TOPIC(S): Front Range Mountain Backdrop Project
CONTACT: Larimer (970) 498-7000; Jefferson (303) 271-6511; El Paso (719) 520-6400; Douglas (303) 660-7400; Boulder (303) 441-3131

SUMMARY:

In 1995, five Colorado counties from Wyoming to Pikes Peak -- Boulder, Douglas, El Paso, Jefferson, and Larimer -- joined forces to better understand and communicate the significance of the Front Range Mountain Backdrop and to cooperate in conserving lands within it. Four principles guide the undertaking:

- 1) Better understand the resources of the Mountain Backdrop.
- 2) Encourage landowners to become involved in the project.
- 3) Involve the public and stakeholders in the project.
- 4) Consider the social and economic, as well as visual and environmental issues in developing strategies for conserving resources in the Backdrop.

The project is a purely voluntary process, one that seeks to raise awareness of the important current conservation opportunities. A visual, natural resources, and geographic information systems analysis have determined forty-one "hot spots" of high resource values to be studied in greater detail.

The Colorado Front Range Mountain Backdrop Foundation has been formed as a non-profit organization to complement the five-county government program as a grassroots citizen's group. Its purpose is to form a collaborative effort to preserve and enhance the extraordinary character, beauty, and quality of life of the Front Range Mountain Backdrop.

JURISDICTION(S): Park County
DATE: 1998
TOPIC(S): Ecological Protection Planning
CONTACT: Park County (719) 836-2771

SUMMARY:

The Outdoor Resource Master Plan contains an ecological management model which recognizes that not all parts of the landscape are equally suited to support development without significant undesirable consequences. The model suggests that a hierarchy of protection be established to safeguard sensitive lands. The Ecological Framework model represents a strategy for how human uses would be organized to minimize the impact on

resources that are most sensitive and are of utmost importance to the quality of life to residents.

JURISDICTION(S): Pikes Peak Area Council of Governments
DATE: 1996
TOPIC(S): Fountain Creek Watershed Project
CONTACT: Tom Johnson, Coordinator (719) 471-7080

SUMMARY:

Growth-related problems have dramatically increased streambank erosion in the Fountain Creek Watershed. Erosion and flooding over the past four years have damaged wildlife habitat, parks, recreation facilities, roads, homes, utilities, agricultural lands, and irrigation structures, and pose a constant threat to city and county infrastructure. On average, the region is losing up to 700 tons of sediment daily. The real economic cost of this damage amounts to millions of dollars per year.

The Fountain Creek Watershed Project has made great strides toward building a framework for cooperative problem-solving in the Fountain Creek Watershed. It has established a vibrant 350-member stakeholder group and a position as the region's forum for discussing strategies for improving watershed health. Members of the project include the watershed's eight cities and three counties, state and federal government organizations, private businesses, community organizations and individual landowners.

The project has developed numerous tools for fostering cooperation, improving coordination and enhancing citizen awareness about the value of coordinated watershed management. Some of the tools include a 15 minute video (recently broadcast on PBS), GIS database, watershed resource library, Best Management Practices brochures, watershed management plan, newsletters and a speakers bureau.

JURISDICTION(S): Ouray County
DATE: 1990
TOPIC(S): Visually Significant Areas Protection Planning
CONTACT: Ouray County (970) 325-4961

SUMMARY:

Ouray County contains some of the most unique and beautiful scenery in Colorado. The diversity of the landscape ranges from jagged high mountain peaks and mesas, to river valleys and irrigated fields. Preservation of this visual beauty is of utmost importance to the citizens of the county. The citizens want to be assured that future development will not hinder, impair or destroy Ouray County's scenic beauty.

Protection and preservation of visually significant and sensitive areas of Ouray County that provide the scenic backdrops and vistas are the principal objectives. The Policies include:

- 1) Maintain strong visual impact regulations.
- 2) Develop and implement strategies for the protection and preservation of critical scenic vistas.
- 3) Evaluate and consider for adoption programs and incentives that encourage the placement of land into conservation easements and other protective status.
- 4) Evaluate and consider for adoption programs for the purchase and/or protection of open space by Ouray County.
- 5) Evaluate and consider for adoption incentives for Planned Unit Developments to surpass the minimum open space requirement as set forth in the Land Use Code.

JURISDICTION(S): Ouray County
DATE: 1990
TOPIC(S): Wildlife and Plant Habitat Protection Planning
CONTACT: Ouray County (970) 325-4961

SUMMARY:

Ouray County is fortunate to have rich and varied flora and fauna. The county recognizes the value residents place upon wildlife and plant resources for enjoyment and the economic impact that is generated by activities such as sightseeing, hunting and photography. Ouray County acknowledges the importance of protecting all species and habitat types currently found in the county and maintaining healthy and diverse wildlife and plant habitats. Policies aimed to protect wildlife and plant habitat are as follows:

- 1) Identify and strive to protect high-quality and significant wildlife and plant habitat areas. These areas shall include habitats of endangered species, species of special concern, migration corridors, breeding and spawning and birthing areas, wetland and riparian areas, important seasonal habitats, and habitats supporting a high diversity of wildlife species.
- 2) Develop and maintain maps and information resources of significant wildlife and plant habitat areas. Each new development shall be evaluated as to the effect the development will have on wildlife and plant habitat areas. If significant habitat loss could occur, mitigation will be required or the proposed development may be denied.
- 3) Develop and implement zoning and land use code requirements that protect and preserve significant wildlife and plant habitats.
- 4) Evaluate and consider for adoption programs and incentives that encourage the placement of land into conservation easements and other protective status.

JURISDICTION(S): Town of Vail
DATE: 1993
TOPIC(S): Environmental Strategic Plan and Other Environmental Studies
CONTACT: Town of Vail, Russell Forrest (970) 479-2146

SUMMARY:

The following are environmental plans and studies conducted by the Town of Vail or its consultants.

I. Environmental Assessment and Impact Statements:

1. *Environmental Assessment: Vail Ski Area Expansion* - The Forest Service chose to adopt the proposal which allows for the expansion of existing boundaries of the Vail Area Ski area to include the headwater drainage of Mill Creek and Two Elk Creek. This assessment analyzes the issues, alternatives to the proposal, effects of the proposal and various alternatives, and discusses mitigating measures which could reduce the impacts.

2. *I-70/Main Interchange Improvements Environmental Assessment* - This document addresses the following environmental impacts and mitigation measures: archaeology/ paleontology, history, sociology and economics, land use, air quality, noise, ecology, wetlands, threatened and endangered species, water quality permits, hydrology, floodplain, farmlands, rights-of-way, traffic operations, traffic safety, park and recreation, and public involvement.

II. Water Quality Studies, Reports, Plans, and Environmental Assessment:

1. *Upper Eagle Valley Nonpoint Source Assessment and Control Plan* - This study is primarily concerned with existing and potential nonpoint sources of water pollution in the Upper Eagle Valley.

2. *The Gore Creek Studies* - The reports presents the methodology used for the hydrologic and hydraulic analyses utilized in the Gore Creek Flood Plain Study; defines flooding threats to existing development, provides for orderly growth within the Gore Creek Valley and an amendment to includes a hydraulic evaluation of two new bridges on Gore Creek with revisions to the flood plains established in the original study; a set of plates delineating both the 100 year and 500 year flood plain with a discussion of flood stage computation procedure ; indication of several areas of problems flooding along Gore Creek; analysis of the water supply position of the Vail Water and Sanitation District and evaluation of potential for consolidation of five other municipal water organizations in the valley; and the potential for reuse of wastewater effluent generated from the treatment plants at Vail and Avon;

3. *Vail Nonpoint Sources Water Quality Management Program* - A program documenting current and potential water quality problems, providing recommendations on management practices, and regulation controls to protect water quality from nonpoint sources of pollutants;

4. *Gilman Mine Water Resource Study* - The evaluation of the feasibility of using the Gilman Mine, and other as water storage reservoirs, to provide water supply and stream augmentation water for some of the water districts located along Gore Creek and the Upper Eagle River.

5. *Water Quality Consideration for Highway Planning and Construction; I-70 - Vail Pass* - The implementation of new and innovative erosion control measures on the new and sensitive, high elevation, mountain pass.

6. *I-70 in a Mountain Environment, Vail Pass* - A booklet on successful environmental protection effort through interagency cooperation.

III. **Other Related Reports, Studies and Plans**

1. *Rapid Mass-Wasting Processes: Vail, Colorado* - Supplements maps of rapid mass-wasting processes and related hazard intensity designations prepared at the request of the Town of Vail.

2. *Vail/Beaver Creek Winter Quality Research* - Concerns for the measure of quality, characteristics of the Vail market, the impact of opening Beaver Creek, and comparison of Vail and Beaver Creek.

3. *Master Plan Town of Vail Municipal Cemetery* - To identify any sensitive environmental issues that might be associated with the development of a cemetery at Donovan Park.

REGULATIONS:

JURISDICTION(S):	City of Boulder
DATE:	1981
TOPIC(S):	Wetlands Protection Regulations
CONTACT:	City of Boulder (303) 441-3020

SUMMARY:

Wetlands are indispensable and fragile natural resources with significant development constraints due to high groundwater, flooding, erosion, and soil limitations. City of Boulder's Wetlands Protection Regulations discourage development activities in wetlands and those activities at adjacent sites that may adversely affect wetlands. The city's goal is no-net-loss of wetlands acreage and function. Conservation of wildlife that live in wetlands is encouraged. City of Boulder administers a Wetlands Protection Program that requires use of Best Management Practices to proceed with development. When development is permitted and the destruction of wetlands cannot be avoided, impacts on wetlands should be minimized and mitigation provided for unavoidable losses.

Wetlands aerial maps at a scale of 1"=100' with wetland boundary delineations have been adopted and will be maintained on file in the mapping and records office of the public works

department. Only areas located within wetland boundaries on the adopted wetlands aerial maps and their associated buffer areas, unmapped wetlands affected by city activities outside the city, and city-owned or managed wetlands outside the city limits are regulated.

JURISDICTION(S): Town of Breckenridge
DATE: 1992
TOPIC(S): Performance Zoning
CONTACT: Town of Breckenridge (970) 453-2251

SUMMARY:

One alternative to traditional zoning is performance zoning, which regulates development by limiting development impacts rather than densities or uses. Performance zoning may target either a single type of impact or a broad range of impacts. Performance zoning ordinances targeting multiple impacts may incorporate point systems. Breckenridge is one community that has implemented point systems, with emphasis on protection of environmentally sensitive areas and promotion of high quality development. Development proposals are assigned point values for their ability to minimize a variety of impacts, and development proposals must achieve certain minimum scores. Points are awarded for meeting certain criteria or subtracted for development in areas identified for protection.

Performance zoning may either supplement or replace traditional zoning. In addition, performance standards provide opportunities for developers to design innovative layouts that can accommodate development and provide environmental protection.

JURISDICTION(S): City of Colorado Springs
DATE: 1996
TOPIC(S): Hillside Area Overlay Zone District
CONTACT: City of Colorado Springs (719) 578-6030

SUMMARY:

The Hillside Area Overlay Zone has been established to conserve natural features and aesthetic qualities of hillside areas. The District restricts development in areas characterized by slope, vegetation, drainage, rock outcroppings, geologic conditions, and other potentially hazardous physical factors. A development plan is required prior to any development, and criteria for approval include whether natural vegetation is preserved and incorporated into the project design to the maximum extent possible.

JURISDICTION(S): City of Fort Collins
DATE: 1996
TOPIC(S): River Conservation Zone District
CONTACT: Fort Collins Zoning Department (970) 221-6760

SUMMARY:

The River Conservation District is designed for the conservation and protection of undeveloped land in the Cache La Poudre River corridor. The main purpose of this District is to accommodate land use functions such as stormwater management, native wildlife habitat, and sand and gravel operations, all of which depend on the continued functioning of natural river systems. Urban development, if any, will be limited and will be located and designed in a way to avoid impacts upon the scenic, cultural, natural, and historical values of the river landscape. Any development shall include a 300-foot natural area protection buffer from the bank of the river. The District offers opportunities for scientific research and education, recreation, and wildlife observation.

JURISDICTION(S): City of Fountain
DATE: 1996
TOPIC(S): Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance
CONTACT: City of Fountain , Planning and Zoning Office (719) 382-8521

SUMMARY:

The City of Fountain's flood plain regulations protect riparian areas by restricting or prohibiting development activities in areas of special flood hazard. The regulations also control the alteration of natural flood plains and stream channels, control filling and grading activities, regulate the construction of artificial flood barriers, and generally prohibit any development that would result in increased flood levels. A Floodplain Administrator determines what development, if any, will be permitted.

JURISDICTION(S): Jefferson County
DATE: 1978
TOPIC(S): Wildlife, Vegetation, and Landscaping Standards
CONTACT: Jefferson County (303) 271-6511

SUMMARY:

Jefferson County Development Planning Standards require that wildlife habitat shall be preserved as required by the board, and noise and light sources shall be oriented away from such habitat areas. Vegetation habitat shall be preserved or supplemented by landscaping to control erosion, buffer and screen adjacent land uses, enhance the appearance of the property, buffer man-made structures on the property where necessary, present a streetscape

or other perimeter landscape treatment that will be compatible with the surrounding community, and protect wildlife. In addition, diseased and infected vegetation shall be removed or treated.

JURISDICTION(S): San Miguel County
DATE: 1996
TOPIC(S): Watershed Protection Program and Regulations
CONTACT: San Miguel County Planning Department (970) 728-3083

SUMMARY:

In 1996 San Miguel County teamed with the Environmental Protection Agency, the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, the University of Colorado Institute of Arctic and Alpine Research, and local citizens to create a Watershed Protection Program to preserve watershed resources and facilitate community-based management of public water supplies.

In 1998 the county adopted Watershed Protection regulations restricting development in ecologically sensitive areas by limiting building footprints, prohibiting sewage disposal by absorption, minimizing road construction, and preventing use of dynamite and fertilizer. The new legislation seeks to protect the health of the entire San Miguel River ecosystem. The Program emphasizes sustainable water quality and preservation of natural resources. Citizens can now manage the watershed area to reduce threats to their water supplies.

JURISDICTION(S): Town of Silverthorne
DATE: 1999
TOPIC(S): Waterbody, Wetland, and Riparian Protection Regulations
CONTACT: Town of Silverthorne (970) 262-7300

SUMMARY:

The Waterbody, Wetland, and Riparian Protection Regulations were enacted to protect the vital, beneficial functions and values of wetlands and water areas within Silverthorne. Protection of water quality, wildlife habitat, aquatic habitats, and wetland areas will promote the goals of the Blue River Amenities Plan. The regulations require that a permit be obtained for development activities in wetlands and water areas, and associated buffer areas. The town reviews disturbance permits and mitigation plans as part of the process.

The regulations and permitting process apply to all site development, including site clearing, grading, excavation, and the placement of material onto wetlands, water areas, or buffer zones. Determining the buffer area boundary will depend upon site-specific features and the use of best management practices.

JURISDICTION(S): Summit County
DATE: 1991
TOPIC(S): Wildlife Habitat Overlay District
CONTACT: Summit County (970) 453-2561

SUMMARY:

Overlay districts are zoning districts which are superimposed over basic districts. Summit County has established overlay districts to address development constraints which require special attention and treatment regardless of the underlying land use allowed by the County's zoning regulations. Overlay districts are intended to alert developers to issues they need to address in preparing an application for development.

The wildlife habitat district includes all wildlife habitat within the county as defined on the official wildlife overlay district map, and establishes a review procedure to identify impacts and to encourage mitigation of impacts.

JURISDICTION(S): Teller County
DATE: 1999
TOPIC(S): Wildlife Habitat Impact Assessment/Regulation
CONTACT: Teller County, Mike Davenport (719) 689-2988

SUMMARY:

The Teller County Wildlife Habitat Impact Assessment/Regulation natural resource zoning ordinance works to prevent impacts on wildlife. The county requires a Wildlife Impact Review for development on properties that are located within a moderate to high impact area. Wildlife habitat overlay maps developed by the Colorado Division of Wildlife are used to determine the impact areas. The Teller County Planning Department submits an applicant's plan to the Division of Wildlife for review and comment prior to an administrative decision concerning approval. The Division of Wildlife serves as an advisor providing services and expertise. If a proposed development's potential impact has been determined to be high or moderate for any of 16 key wildlife species, additional information in the form of Impact Maps and Impact Reports must accompany the application for plat approval.

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