

# ***Sublette County Comprehensive Plan:***

**County Vision, Goals and Policies**

*A Citizen-based Planning Effort  
For the Future of Sublette County*

***Sublette County  
Comprehensive Plan Update  
1999-2003***

*The 2003 Sublette County Comprehensive Plan update was a “grassroots” planning effort that actively involved County residents and communities. A special thanks to all the Sublette County residents, Sublette County and community officials, and the Sublette County departments and organizations that participated in this project.*

*Sublette County Board of Commissioners  
Sublette County Planning Commission  
Amended November 18, 2005*

**SUBLETTE COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**  
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## **SUBLETTE COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2003 County Plan Update Process**

### **Introduction**

The 2003 Sublette County Plan update to revise the Sublette County Comprehensive Plan was an effort by County leaders and citizens to address the County's present and future land use needs. The 2003 Comprehensive Plan updates the County's 1978 Comprehensive Plan, clarifies and reconfirms the County's land use and development goals and policies.

Wyoming State statutes provide for the development of county-level comprehensive plans under Title 9-8-301 and Title 18-5-202. As stated, locally developed, adopted and implemented county plans apply to the unincorporated areas within the county and may address public health, safety, moral and general welfare issues. These statutes also highlight the expectation that county governments will coordinate their land use plans and planning efforts with incorporated communities and other local entities. In addition, through Title 18-5-208, Wyoming planning statutes encourage the coordination of county planning efforts with federal land and resource management agencies. The 2003 Sublette County Comprehensive Plan focuses on these issues as prioritized, and discussed by County leaders and residents, through an extensive public involvement and plan development process.

Primary benefits of the 2003 Comprehensive Plan are two-fold. First, the County again possesses a document that articulates a consistent and clear direction for its future land use decisions and development guidelines. It is anticipated that the Plan will be proactively supported by County decision makers and further implemented through County land use regulations. For the Plan to function and remain a valuable planning tool, it should be reviewed and amended as necessary to address emerging County issues and interests.

Second, the planning process itself was a valuable learning experience for Sublette County citizens. A diverse group of County residents actively participated in various stages of the project. Through this process, County residents have truly planned for Sublette County's future. The revised Sublette County Comprehensive Plan is the result of their combined expertise and experience. Public ownership of the Plan and familiarity with the accompanying policies will be invaluable as County leaders adopt the document and begin Plan implementation.

### **Plan Development Process and Public Involvement**

Sublette County leaders recognized the need for proactive County-level planning and land use regulations. As noted, Wyoming State law allows local plans and development guidelines to address public health, safety, moral and general welfare issues. The law also requires a minimum level of public participation through adequate public notice and open public meetings/hearings.

By design, this Plan update went beyond the minimum level of public participation required by law and involved County residents and other interested parties throughout the process. The initial step began with a Planning and Zoning Commission solicitation for volunteers to assist the County in updating and revising the plan. It was decided that volunteers should be full-time residents and/or registered voters in Sublette County. Forty-three individuals responded and were assigned to one of five focus groups addressing land use, natural hazards, public facilities, recreation and natural resources. Two other volunteers, representatives of the County's two newspapers, were asked to report on the planning process. An eight-member volunteer steering

committee was also formed to oversee the project and assist County planning staff throughout the process.

As charged by the Planning Commission, the focus groups met individually over the next eighteen months. Using the 1978 Comprehensive Plan as a guide, the groups reviewed the County-adopted goals and policies for their respective area of focus and discussed potential revisions and additions. When a group's recommendations were compiled, one or more members of that group presented their results to the steering committee. The steering committee then reviewed all the chapters and made some additional changes.

After compiling the various focus group reports into a single document, the steering committee and County Planning and Zoning Commission worked with County planning staff and project consultants to improve clarity, establish consistency from section to section, and reconcile conflicting goals and policies as necessary. Although a challenging task, every effort was made to respect all thoughts and positions proposed by the various focus groups. In the end, steering committee members were responsible with providing, for Planning Commission consideration, an organized compilation of goals and policies that could be embraced by Sublette County citizens as the vision for the future.

Ultimately, elements of the emerging *draft* Plan provided goals and policies addressing plan implementation, land use and development, natural hazards and environmental considerations, facilities and services, transportation, recreation, natural and cultural resources, and public lands and resources. Combined with the County confirmed "vision", these statements were reviewed by the Planning Commission and recommended for broader public review and comment as the *draft* 2003 Sublette County Comprehensive Plan. As outlined in Wyoming State statute, the *draft* Plan is subject to public review and comment through an open Planning Commission and County Commission public hearing and adoption process.

Initial public review and comment on the updated plan began with two public open houses, one held in Pinedale and one held in Big Piney. These outreach efforts provided an opportunity for County residents to ask questions concerning the updated County goals and policies and provide comments prior to the formal adoption process. After Planning Commission review of the comments, a revised *draft* Sublette County Comprehensive Plan was made available for public review and Planning Commission public hearings were scheduled.

The Sublette County Planning Commission held two public hearings on the *draft* Comprehensive Plan. The first public hearing was conducted on August 21, 2003. The Planning Commission incorporated public comments received at this meeting and created a revised *draft* Comprehensive Plan. The revised *draft* Plan was made available for public comment and review via the Internet ([www.SublettePZ.org](http://www.SublettePZ.org)) and by distributing copies in the Sublette County Libraries and in the Planning & Zoning Office. A second public hearing was conducted on November 10, 2003. At the conclusion of the second public hearing, the Planning Commission recommended approval of the *draft* Comprehensive Plan, with the inclusion of specific public comments, to the Sublette County Board of Commissioners.

A *final draft* of the Sublette County Comprehensive Plan was prepared and disseminated for public comment. On December 16, 2003, the Sublette County Board of Commissioners conducted a public hearing on the proposed *final draft*. After the public hearing, the Board of Commissioners adopted the revised Sublette County Comprehensive Plan as presented.

## **Using and Amending the Sublette County Comprehensive Plan**

Sublette County officials and citizens are to be commended for their proactive commitment to planning and updating the Comprehensive Plan. It is intended that the 2003 Plan will serve as a framework for County decision-makers as they consider future private and public land use and development decisions. The Plan is also designed to provide a policy foundation for improving County and community cooperation, fostering County (government) and citizen relations, coordinating infrastructure planning and pursuing economic development activities.

To successfully implement specific portions of the Comprehensive Plan, County leaders will need to take action beyond formal Plan adoption. In the 2003 Plan, specific policies accompany each stated County goal.

While this Plan, upon adoption, reflects the thoughtful direction of Sublette County in 2003, it is anticipated that the Plan will be updated and revised as circumstances change and new challenges arise. The process for amending the Plan, as outlined in Wyoming State statute and County regulations, requires adequately noticed public hearings and formal action by both the Sublette County Planning Commission and Board of County Commissioners.

## **Sublette County Vision**

Sublette County remains a relatively undiscovered treasure. The elements of this treasure include clean air and water, vast open spaces, rich natural resources, accessible public lands, private property and dramatic beauty. Of equal importance, though less visible, are the independent character of its people, the security of its small, close knit communities and its traditional, rural culture.

The residents of Sublette County recognize this, and through open and public dialogue, have identified specific critical and mutually dependent values, which describe a vision for Sublette County's future:

1. Sublette County's unique, local culture shall be preserved and enriched - characterized by a rural, Wyoming flavor; a thriving private business community; an atmosphere friendly to working families; and the security of friendly, crime-free communities.
2. There shall be an abundance of economic freedom, and diverse opportunities for residents old and new to pursue prosperity and happiness - complemented and sustained by a business friendly atmosphere, reasonable taxation, a low cost of living, limited regulation, wise development of its natural resources and a strong tradition of a good work ethic.
3. Our environment shall reflect the high value Sublette County residents place on clear air and water; the wide open, rural landscape; and a healthy, diverse base of natural resources including water, land, minerals, oil, gas, plants and animals.
4. Sublette County shall remain free from excessive land use regulation and shall continue to be vigilant in the protection of private property rights.

This comprehensive plan calls upon policy makers in Sublette County to be ever mindful of this vision, and asks that these values be used as guidelines in order to make decisions that are socially, economically and ecologically sound.

## **County Vision, Goals and Policies: *A Framework for Action***

This section includes Sublette County Goals and Policies, as recommended by the Sublette County Planning and Zoning Commission, and adopted by the Board of County Commissioners.

County Goals and Policies have been developed for the following issues:

- Plan and Policy Implementation
- Land Use and Development
- Natural Hazards/Environmental Considerations
- Facilities and Services
- Transportation
- Recreation
- Natural Environment/Cultural Resources
- Public Lands and Resources

An all-inclusive listing of the Comprehensive Plan policies is provided on the following pages (pgs. 6 - 19) for quick reference. The policies, which were developed to accomplish the County's Vision and Goals, are further detailed in their respective sections, beginning on page 20.

## SUBLETTE COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN POLICIES

### Plan and Policy Implementation:

#### Plan Consistency and Conformity

- a. **County Policy:** Utilize County-adopted plans, policies and regulations as guides for all land use and development decisions.
- b. **County Policy:** Maintain current and applicable County land use plans, policies and regulations. County-adopted land use plans, policies and regulations will be reviewed and updated by the Sublette County Planning and Zoning Commission and the Sublette County Planning Administrator.
- c. **County Policy:** Provide an annual public forum to discuss the County's Comprehensive Land Use Plan and related regulations.

#### Inter-jurisdictional Coordination and Cooperation

- a. **County Policy:** Coordinate and cooperate with other local, state and federal entities and interests to pursue mutually beneficial land use planning and development issues and opportunities.

### Land Use and Development:

#### General Land Use and Development Approach and Philosophy

- a. **County Policy:** Encourage orderly growth and land use development patterns.
- b. **County Policy:** Maintain a professional and well-trained County planning staff/office and planning commission. Continue to provide accessible and responsive public assistance.
- c. **County Policy:** Work with developers to coordinate the adequate and efficient provision and delivery of services (e.g. utilities, water, sewer, solid waste).
- d. **County Policy:** Plan and locate new development carefully to avoid excessive costs in providing public services.
- e. **County Policy:** Encourage new development in a manner that minimizes environmental pollution and disruption of natural resources.
- f. **County Policy:** Require developers to provide legal right-of-ways and easements for roads and public utilities (including power, telephone, water and sewer).
- g. **County Policy:** Encourage new development in areas that are capable of sustaining private water and sewer, either through individual systems or by community/central water and sewer systems.
- h. **County Policy:** Require all new or upgraded utilities be placed underground unless crossing a river or highway.

- i. **County Policy:** Require developers to provide assurance at the preliminary plat stage that he/she is adequately financed to fulfill capital outlay upon approval of the final plat. Developers will not be required by the County to make capital outlay for roads, facilities and utilities until the final plat is approved.
- j. **County Policy:** Encourage architectural designs and styles that complement the County's character and are consistent with the area's rural setting and landscape.
- k. **County Policy:** Encourage developers to adopt covenants and development standards consistent with the County's land use and development objectives.
- l. **County Policy:** Encourage and support semi-annual County-sponsored beautification days and property owner-initiated removal of nuisance factors.
- m. **County Policy:** Continue to work with landowners to bring non-compliant land uses into compliance with adopted planning and zoning regulations.
- n. **County Policy:** Require developers to provide a written statement of the rights and obligations of the person buying land in the development (issues noted may include road maintenance, ditch rights and easements, covenants, development standards, etc.).
- o. **County Policy:** Encourage development which preserves open vistas.
- p. **County Policy:** Evaluate development of irrigated and non-irrigated land for its impact on the amount and quality of grazing and crop producing lands lost to the local agriculture community.

#### **County/Community Fringe Area Development**

- a. **County Policy:** Cooperate with incorporated municipalities to coordinate the planning and development of community "fringe areas".
- b. **County Policy:** Incorporate community land use and development plans (as they are adopted) into the County's Comprehensive Plan.
- c. **County Policy:** Encourage high-density (1/4-acre or smaller lot size and multiple family dwellings) residential development within a 1-mile radius of the County's incorporated towns. The County could provide incentives to facilitate this goal.

#### **Residential Land Uses and Development**

- a. **County Policy:** Plan and locate new residential development carefully to avoid excessive costs in providing public services.
- b. **County Policy:** Encourage residential development to occur in a manner that minimizes environmental pollution and disruption of natural resources.

- c. **County Policy:** Maintain a two-acre minimum lot size for residential development in areas without central water and sewer.
- d. **County Policy:** Require development proposals to demonstrate the availability of an adequate, safe water supply and a safe, reliable method of sewage disposal.
- e. **County Policy:** Maintain land use regulations that promote and encourage a variety of housing types and residential development options.
- f. **County Policy:** Encourage the provision of adequate, affordable housing.
- g. **County Policy:** Require compliance with adopted County subdivision policies and regulations.

### **Agricultural Lands and Uses**

- a. **County Policy:** Encourage conservation of agricultural and ranch lands and related land uses through various voluntary and incentive-based programs and policies.
- b. **County Policy:** Allow subdivision of lands with adjudicated water rights only after determination that such development will not present major water delivery problems to neighboring water users or adversely affect the interests of an irrigation district or canal/ditch company.
- c. **County Policy:** Discourage residential development deemed likely to create significant disruption of livestock movement or grazing. An appropriate buffer zone should be placed between residential structures and any stock driveway. Per State law, it is the landowner's responsibility to fence out livestock.
- d. **County Policy:** Continue support for locally-accepted, traditional agricultural management practices and land uses.
- e. **County Policy:** Support educational and technical efforts to improve the ability of land custodians, large and small, to retain and enhance the quality of natural resources and agricultural land uses.
- f. **County Policy:** Evaluate development of irrigated and non-irrigated land for its impact on the amount and quality of grazing and crop producing lands lost to the local agriculture community.
- g. **County Policy:** Discourage residential and recreational development on lands of high agricultural value. This category is understood to include high quality grazing lands as well as hay meadows.

### **Commercial Land Uses and Development**

- a. **County Policy:** Locate commercial properties in or near existing towns and/or near other commercial property.

- b. **County Policy:** Encourage commercial property development along major thoroughfares.
- c. **County Policy:** Review commercial zoning districts to ensure that rules don't inhibit logical commercial development.
- e. **County Policy:** Ensure commercial land uses take priority in commercially zoned properties (when conflicts with non-commercial land uses arise).
- e. **County Policy:** Require commercial properties to be maintained and provide adequate parking, taking into consideration the type of business.
- f. **County Policy:** Encourage appropriate landscaping of commercial properties, taking into consideration the type of business.
- g. **County Policy:** Encourage clustering of commercial development, as appropriate.
- h. **County Policy:** Encourage diversified commercial development.

#### **Industrial Land Uses and Development**

- a. **County Policy:** Identify and recommend areas appropriate for industrial land uses.
- b. **County Policy:** Encourage public/private partnerships to stimulate economic opportunity.
- c. **County Policy:** Encourage public/private partnerships to identify and develop appropriate areas for additional light industrial areas.
- d. **County Policy:** Encourage diversified industrial development.
- e. **County Policy:** Encourage the recruitment and development of value-added industries to stimulate economic activity.
- f. **County Policy:** Encourage industrial/commercial development in or near existing commercial and industrial sites.
- g. **County Policy:** Encourage property maintenance to assure a clean, safe and orderly work site with adequate parking, taking into consideration the type of industry.
- h. **County Policy:** Encourage appropriate and diversified industrial uses when doing so does not conflict with other County goals and policies.

**Natural Hazards/Environmental Considerations:**  
**General Approach and Philosophy**

- a. *County Policy:*** Consider site-specific environmental features as part of land use planning decisions and in the review of development proposals. Factors to consider include, but are not limited to, the following:
- (1) natural hazards (as noted in *County Policy b., pg. 10*),
  - (2) topography,
  - (3) soil types,
  - (4) wildlife habitat and migration routes,
  - (5) municipal watersheds/culinary water sources,
  - (6) riparian areas,
  - (7) wetlands,
  - (8) depth to water table,
  - (9) surface drainage patterns,
  - (10) groundwater recharge/discharge areas (including springs), and
  - (11) quantity and quality of surface and underground water resources.
- b. *County Policy:*** Discourage development in known and potentially hazardous areas. The demonstration of adequate/appropriate mitigation measures may be required before development can occur. Types of areas to be avoided include, but are not limited to, the following:
- (1) flood plains,
  - (2) unstable slopes and soils, and
  - (3) areas with high wildfire potential.
- c. *County Policy:*** Inform the public and developers of known environmental/natural limitations potentially making areas unsuitable for development.
- d. *County Policy:*** Require site-specific soils analysis as part of the subdivision development application, as deemed appropriate and necessary to protect public safety.
- e. *County Policy:*** Require persons/interests wishing to develop land to demonstrate the suitability of such ground for development.
- f. *County Policy:*** Require demonstration of adequate/appropriate mitigation measures before development on hazardous and/or environmentally sensitive areas is approved.

**Facilities and Services:**  
**Community Services**

- a. *County Policy:*** Maintain and encourage high quality general and emergency medical facilities, personnel and services throughout the County.
- b. *County Policy:*** Maintain good fire protection service by supporting training programs and recruiting an adequate supply of volunteers.

- c. **County Policy:** Maintain efficient, cost effective law enforcement service that covers the whole County.
- d. **County Policy:** Encourage the grouping of public buildings close together whenever possible in order to foster community cohesiveness and convenience.
- e. **County Policy:** Support agencies and programs that provide services to residents of the County that are in need.
- f. **County Policy:** Encourage and support educational, cultural and recreational opportunities.

### **County-provided Services**

- a. **County Policy:** Maintain that rural areas/residents of the County should not anticipate “urban type/level” services.
- b. **County Policy:** Include the following public utility/service considerations when reviewing proposed land use and development plans and applications:
  - (1) the proposed development's proximity to available facilities and services;
  - (2) the anticipated demand for County-provided services; and
  - (3) the developer's plans for provision and maintenance of required services.

### **Water (Culinary, Irrigation and Fire Protection)**

- a. **County Policy:** Require development proposals to demonstrate the availability of an adequate, safe water supply and a safe, reliable method of sewage disposal. In addition, the availability of suitable quality water in sufficient quantity for the proposed land use(s) must be demonstrated before such uses are permitted.
- b. **County Policy:** Require development proposals to identify potential impacts to existing irrigation systems, as relevant.
- b. **County Policy:** Require development proposals to provide a specific water supply for year-round fire suppression purposes.

### **Sewer and Solid Waste Disposal**

- a. **County Policy:** Require development proposals to demonstrate the availability of adequate and safe sewer and solid waste disposal systems.
- b. **County Policy:** Discourage development on lands that are not suited for on-site absorption systems, unless other acceptable provisions are approved by the County.
- c. **County Policy:** Encourage the location of solid waste disposal sites in areas with minimal environmental constraints (high-water table, ground water, high wind, etc.) Facilities will be designed in a manner that prevents adverse impacts to air quality (including odor) and aesthetics.

- d. **County Policy:** Encourage recycling efforts and programs within the County.

**Transportation:**

**Alternative Transportation Modes**

- a. **County Policy:** Encourage the diversification of public and private sector transportation services.
- b. **County Policy:** Encourage shuttle bus service between Sublette County towns and neighboring Counties.

**Transportation Planning**

- a. **County Policy:** Develop and maintain a master transportation plan to identify and accommodate the current and future transportation needs of the County.
- b. **County Policy:** Coordinate County road planning efforts with the Wyoming Department of Transportation (WYDOT), Bureau of Land Management (BLM), United States Forest Service (USFS), and Wyoming Game and Fish Department (WGFD).
- c. **County Policy:** Require all new roads and streets to be consistent with the approved County transportation plan with regard to classification, right-of-way, design and construction.
- d. **County Policy:** Encourage education on the appropriate use of County roads, i.e., “safe and lawful use and travel” for snowmobiles, ATVs, horses, bikes, etc.
- e. **County Policy:** Encourage/support construction of additional pathways and expansion of existing pathways.

**Roadway Construction, Maintenance and Improvements**

- a. **County Policy:** Maintain/enforce standards for new County roads and work to improve existing roads already in the County roads system.
- b. **County Policy:** Identify and prioritize a list of County roads needing maintenance or upgrades. This task includes developing a schedule of anticipated completion dates.
- b. **County Policy:** Conduct traffic counts to investigate the feasibility of surfacing County roads.
- d. **County Policy:** Consider the provision of services to the greatest number of County residents and the development of the County’s economic potential as primary factors when establishing road maintenance and improvement priorities.
- e. **County Policy:** Consider potential effects that building or improving County roads may have on neighborhoods, residential areas, subdivisions and natural resources.

- f. **County Policy:** Require development proposals for year-round housing to demonstrate adequate primary road construction and maintenance.
- g. **County Policy:** Require County approval prior to the construction of private approaches with direct access to County roads. Considerations of approval include, but are not limited to, compatible grades, anticipated traffic patterns (egress/ingress) and adequate drainage.
- h. **County Policy:** Maintain provisions in the County's Subdivision Resolution that require the developer to be responsible for initial road construction. All roads must be built according to County standards.
- i. **County Policy:** Ensure that future road construction and maintenance of subdivision roads is clearly defined on the plat and in covenants to identify the responsible parties.
- j. **County Policy:** Encourage special improvement districts to help pay for road improvements in existing subdivisions.

**Recreation:**

**General Approach and Philosophy**

- a. **County Policy:** Maintain the County position that no single recreational user group should receive preferential treatment in wilderness areas.
- b. **County Policy:** Coordinate with the Wyoming Game and Fish Department (WGFD) to encourage appropriate management of game and non-game fish and wildlife resources.
- c. **County Policy:** Encourage migratory routes be kept open or established/reestablished where possible, to assist in maintaining game populations.
- d. **County Policy:** Coordinate with the Wyoming Game and Fish Department (WGFD) to preserve the quantity and quality of wildlife and wildlife habitat and provide sustainable hunting and fishing opportunities.
- e. **County Policy:** Maintain viewsheds in areas of high scenic value.
- f. **County Policy:** Monitor river use and work with appropriate agencies to maintain the quality of the rivers.
- g. **County Policy:** Coordinate with the Wyoming Game and Fish Department (WGFD), Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and United States Forest Service (USFS) to prepare a balanced, coordinated interagency river floating plan intended to allow for gradual, controlled growth while preserving the quality fishing experience of all river floaters.
- h. **County Policy:** Encourage the development of privately owned recreational facilities.

- i. **County Policy:** Encourage recreational development that is compatible with County characteristics and values.
- j. **County Policy:** Foster, support and carefully manage recreational uses while respecting the rights of property holders.
- k. **County Policy:** Manage recreational growth in a manner sensitive to and consistent with community values and character of the area.
- l. **County Policy:** Manage recreational vehicles and uses (including off-road and river related) in a manner sensitive to private property rights and the environment.
- m. **County Policy:** Promote educational programs regarding stewardship of natural resources and recreation-related effects.
- n. **County Policy:** Support and encourage Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and United States Forest Service (USFS) decisions that are consistent with the County's Comprehensive Plan.
- o. **County Policy:** Encourage further development and proliferation of hiking trails, walking paths, and other facilities for the pedestrian recreationist.
- p. **County Policy:** Support the development of additional bike routes as doing so becomes important. This would include linking existing routes and working with relevant agencies to develop new ones.
- q. **County Policy:** Consider development/expansion of recreational activities and facilities as the need/desire develops.

**Natural Environment/Cultural Resources:**

**County Approach and Philosophy**

- a. **County Policy:** Ensure that all land use and development proceed in accordance with local, state and federal laws and regulations.
- b. **County Policy:** Evaluate all relevant federal and state land use proposals and plans and provide comments representing the interests of the County.
- c. **County Policy:** Utilize the best science and technical information available when making land use planning decisions.
- d. **County Policy:** Participate, in an official capacity and at the earliest opportunity, in any public land/resource issue affecting the ecological, economic, cultural, or social wellbeing of Sublette County citizens; even to the point of acquiring cooperating agency status.

### **Integration of Resources and the Economy**

- a. **County Policy:** Recognize the importance and strength of a diversified economy.
- b. **County Policy:** Enhance the economic impact of the use and production of our natural resources through value-added enterprises.
- c. **County Policy:** Encourage development of amenities and the secondary or alternative economic opportunities that make the County attractive to families.
- d. **County Policy:** Support the creation of jobs and business opportunities that will help sustain the workforce during periods of limited natural resource development.

### **Air Quality and Resource Development**

- a. **County Policy:** Ensure that Sublette County industries adhere to federal and state air quality standards. Within County budgetary constraints, utilize the best available technology to evaluate present air quality/conditions and the impact of existing and potential pollution sources.
- b. **County Policy:** Consider, as deemed relevant and as information is readily available, the frequency of atmospheric inversions, meteorology, topography, present ambient air quality, significant deterioration limits and applicable local, state and federal laws, when evaluating land use proposals and any other development issues.

### **Water Resource Development**

- a. **County Policy:** Support/encourage water quality monitoring programs.
- b. **County Policy:** Contact the appropriate agency to investigate any potential or detected water quality degradation.
- b. **County Policy:** Discourage land uses which may result in impaired water quality, particularly municipal water sources.
- d. **County Policy:** Oppose the transfer of waters out of the drainage basins of the County (trans-basin diversions).
- e. **County Policy:** Encourage and establish more watering systems on all grazing lands for livestock, wildlife and game and non-game birds where appropriate.
- f. **County Policy:** Encourage the building of small reservoirs and off-channel storage facilities where they may be effective in striking a harmonious balance of use values and conservation values.

- g. County Policy:** Allow subdivision of lands with adjudicated water rights only after determination that such development will not present major water delivery problems to neighboring water users or adversely affect the interests of an irrigation district or canal/ditch company.
- h. County Policy:** Encourage the building and maintenance of sewage disposal systems for RV use. Signs should be posted identifying the location of these facilities.
- i. County Policy:** Consider the potential effects on surface and underground water quality/resources when land uses are planned or proposed, particularly near water courses and lakes.
- j. County Policy:** Consider potential human impacts associated with proposed land uses, particularly in and around watersheds.
- k. County Policy:** Discourage land uses and developments that have the potential to accelerate long term groundwater depletion.
- l. County Policy:** Actively participate in water resource planning, allocation and decisionmaking processes to protect County water resource interests.

#### **Soil and Vegetation**

- a. County Policy:** Consider the suitability of soil composition in all land use decisions.
- b. County Policy:** Encourage land use practices that reduce erosion of topsoil. Encourage land management practices that build topsoil.
- c. County Policy:** Consider the effect any land use change may have on the water catchment capabilities of the specific parcel of land in question.
- d. County Policy:** Consider the effects any land use changes may have on the larger watershed in which the parcel is located.
- e. County Policy:** Consider the long and short-term effects of any disruption of the soil, natural topography, or herbaceous ground cover associated with the proposed land uses or development. An expert analysis from the Conservation District should be obtained for subdivisions.
- f. County Policy:** Seek both public and expert opinion of air quality, hydrology, and soil scientists in assessing impact on environmental quality when considering acceptance of out-of-County refuse or waste.
- g. County Policy:** Monitor and manage encroachment of invasive weeds.

## **Oil and Gas Development**

- a. **County Policy:** Encourage and welcome responsible, orderly, staged energy development. Similarly, discourage the intrusion of the impact of exploration and development activities into the peace and harmony of other land uses.
- b. **County Policy:** Encourage and support the use of best available technologies that are economically, socially and environmentally sound.
- c. **County Policy:** Encourage use of and exploration of alternative energy sources.
- d. **County Policy:** Support the enforcement of state and federal regulations to prevent surface and underground abuses by seismic and exploratory drilling.
- e. **County Policy:** Participate in official capacity at the earliest opportunity regarding oil and gas development on public lands through the official designation of a representative of the County. This representative would aid in the development of a coordinating mechanism between Sublette County, the State and federal agencies.
- f. **County Policy:** Encourage and participate in advance planning between the County, the State, property owners and the oil and gas industry to assure that proactive measures are taken to mitigate impacts on the community.

## **Mining and Quarrying**

- a. **County Policy:** Consider participating in decisions regarding mining on public lands as a cooperating agency.
- b. **County Policy:** Implement buffer zones if active mineral extraction enterprises would present a nuisance or hazard to adjacent residents.
- c. **County Policy:** Encourage and participate in advance planning between the County, the State, property owners and the mineral extraction enterprise to assure that proactive measures are taken to mitigate impacts on the community.
- d. **County Policy:** Encourage the implementation of mitigation measures incorporating the best available technological and management practices to control fugitive dust, particulates, undue noise, and exotic weeds to ensure the safety of the general public and protection of other natural resources.
- e. **County Policy:** Support adherence to State and federal regulations within prescribed time frames.

## **Wildlife Resources**

- a. **County Policy:** Consider wildlife habitat values as part of any new development proposals.

- b. **County Policy:** Encourage close coordination with all federal and State agencies on all issues affecting populations and habitats of all species.
- c. **County Policy:** Consider migration corridors, crucial winter ranges, and other important habitats when evaluating land use proposals. In some cases, the migration corridors that link summer and winter ranges are already tightly constricted. These areas are recognized as being very sensitive and their integrity should be protected. There are many tools available, beyond County zoning regulation, to shelter the function of important wildlife areas.
- d. **County Policy:** Advance and employ those tools and techniques which enhance wildlife friendly developments. Encourage early coordination among Sublette County, Wyoming Game and Fish Department (WGFD), and project proponents to enhance the inclusion of wildlife friendly recommendations into proposed developments.
- e. **County Policy:** Encourage/support maintaining wildlife populations that are in balance with available habitat and other uses.
- f. **County Policy:** Support wildlife management techniques that minimize conflicts with agricultural operations and/or practices.
- g. **County Policy:** Encourage close cooperation between the Wyoming Game & Fish Department (WGFD) and private landowners in dealing with game damage on private property, particularly in winter.
- h. **County Policy:** Promote healthy fish populations, particularly native species, by maintaining or improving fisheries habitat.
- i. **County Policy:** Encourage County cooperation/coordination with State and federal agencies concerning the management of wildlife resources.
- j. **County Policy:** Support proactive wildlife conservation efforts.
- k. **County Policy:** Minimize conflicts between wildlife and domestic pets.

**Forestry/Timber Resources**

- a. **County Policy:** Support proper forest management, including timber harvest, while at the same time taking into consideration watershed, wildlife habitat, and aesthetic values.
- b. **County Policy:** Encourage the use of resource/environmentally sensitive harvesting methods/techniques, particularly when harvesting areas with fragile soils and marginal slopes.
- c. **County Policy:** Maintain accessibility to an adequate fuel wood supply for County residents.

- d. **County Policy:** Encourage timber sales sized to be attractive to small operators.

**Public Lands and Resources:**

- a. **County Policy:** Designate a County representative to foster cooperative relationships with public land and resource agencies and to participate in relevant public land and resources planning and decision-making processes.
- b. **County Policy:** Evaluate private development plans, proposals and decisions for potential impacts on public lands/resources. Evaluate public land/resource plans, proposals and decisions for potential impacts on private lands and interests.
- c. **County Policy:** Evaluate developed access points to public lands to minimize adverse effects on adjacent private and public lands, e.g., river access points, camp grounds, trail-head parking, etc.
- d. **County Policy:** Ensure that the designation of special use areas are carefully considered for both their benefits to a healthy recreation industry and other possible economic impacts.
- e. **County Policy:** Support grazing as an important and compatible use on public lands, including wilderness. Recognize that grazing and associated animal impacts can be beneficial to public rangelands if implemented appropriately.
- f. **County Policy:** Advocate that land use plans adopted by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and United States Forest Service (USFS) are coordinated and consistent with the Sublette County Comprehensive Plan and the Sublette County Conservation District Natural Resource Statement.
- g. **County Policy:** Schedule, through the designated County representative, regular reporting and informational updates with entities of County, State and federal government, thus enabling all interested parties to participate in public land planning and decision-making processes.
- h. **County Policy:** Support/encourage multiple-use policy implementation on federal and State lands, thus assuring a strong sustained economic base for the County.
- i. **County Policy:** Require public land and resource management agencies to protect County residents' safety, health and property as part of providing/allowing development of non-renewable resources.
- j. **County Policy:** Support the maintenance of healthy wildlife populations as an appropriate and desired use of public lands.
- k. **County Policy:** Recognize that overuse of the wilderness can compromise the amenities that we value in this resource. Good conservation policies should be encouraged.

## County Vision, Goals and Policies: *A Framework for Action*

### A. PLAN AND POLICY IMPLEMENTATION - *Sublette County Goals and Policies*

1. **COUNTY GOAL:** Develop Sublette County in an orderly manner consistent with the goals and policies of this plan.
2. **COUNTY GOAL:** Encourage County coordination and cooperation with other local, state and federal entities and interests to effectively plan for and address land use and development issues.

Sublette County will pursue the following policies relating to plan implementation and interjurisdictional cooperation:

#### Plan Consistency and Conformity

- a. **County Policy:** Utilize County-adopted plans, policies and regulations as guides for all land use and development decisions.
- b. **County Policy:** Maintain current and applicable County land use plans, policies and regulations. County-adopted land use plans; policies and regulations will be reviewed and updated by the Sublette County Planning and Zoning Commission and the Sublette County Planning Administrator.
- c. **County Policy:** Provide an annual public forum to discuss the County's Comprehensive Land Use Plan and related regulations.

#### Inter-jurisdictional Coordination and Cooperation

- a. **County Policy:** Coordinate and cooperate with other local, state and federal entities and interests to pursue mutually beneficial land use planning and development issues and opportunities.

**B. LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT - Sublette County Goals and Policies**

1. **COUNTY GOAL: Encourage orderly growth and land use development patterns which:**
  - provide a compatible/complementary arrangement of various land uses, - promote the efficient and cost-effective delivery of services,
  - protect sensitive areas and the environment, and
  - provide for the proper use and conservation of renewable and non-renewable resources.
2. **COUNTY GOAL: Maintain County land use plans, policies and regulations designed to protect property values and balance private property rights with the general health, safety and welfare interests of present and future County residents.**
3. **COUNTY GOAL: Maintain County land use plans, policies and regulations that meet the residential needs of Sublette County.**
4. **COUNTY GOAL: Encourage the development of commercial and industrial zoning districts to support diversification of the local and regional economy.**
5. **COUNTY GOAL: Recognize and value the historical significance of agricultural lands and uses.**
6. **COUNTY GOAL: Encourage economic stability and opportunity of the agricultural sector.**
7. **COUNTY GOAL: Foster mutually beneficial relationships between agriculture and wildlife.**
8. **COUNTY GOAL: Encourage the preservation of working agricultural/ranching landscapes to maintain the dominant open character of Sublette County.**
9. **COUNTY GOAL: Optimize beneficial use and retention of water resources.**
10. **COUNTY GOAL: Promote ecological stewardship of natural resources to increase the health and biodiversity of the land beneficial to agriculture, wildlife, and society as a whole.**

Sublette County will pursue the following policies relating to land use, growth and development:

**General Land Use and Development Approach and Philosophy**

- a. **County Policy:** Encourage orderly growth and land use development patterns.
- b. **County Policy:** Maintain a professional and well-trained County planning staff/office and planning commission. Continue to provide accessible and responsive public assistance.

- c. **County Policy:** Work with developers to coordinate the adequate and efficient provision and delivery of services (e.g. utilities, water, sewer, solid waste).
- d. **County Policy:** Plan and locate new development carefully to avoid excessive costs in providing public services.
- e. **County Policy:** Encourage new development in a manner that minimizes environmental pollution and disruption of natural resources.
- f. **County Policy:** Require developers to provide legal right-of-ways and easements for roads and public utilities (including power, telephone, water and sewer).
- g. **County Policy:** Encourage new development in areas that are capable of sustaining private water and sewer, either through individual systems or by community/central water and sewer systems.
- h. **County Policy:** Require all new or upgraded utilities be placed underground unless crossing a river or highway.
- i. **County Policy:** Require developers to provide assurance at the preliminary plat stage that he/she is adequately financed to fulfill capital outlay upon approval of the final plat. Developers will not be required by the County to make capital outlay for roads, facilities and utilities until the final plat is approved.
- j. **County Policy:** Encourage architectural designs and styles that complement the County's character and are consistent with the area's rural setting and landscape.
- k. **County Policy:** Encourage developers to adopt covenants and development standards consistent with the County's land use and development objectives.
- l. **County Policy:** Encourage and support semi-annual County-sponsored beautification days and property owner-initiated removal of nuisance factors.
- m. **County Policy:** Continue to work with landowners to bring non-compliant land uses into compliance with adopted planning and zoning regulations.
- n. **County Policy:** Require developers to provide a written statement of the rights and obligations of the person buying land in the development (issues noted may include road maintenance, ditch rights and easements, covenants, development standards, etc.).
- o. **County Policy:** Encourage development which preserves open vistas.
- p. **County Policy:** Evaluate development of irrigated and non-irrigated land for its impact on the amount and quality of grazing and crop producing lands lost to the local agriculture community.

**County/Community Fringe Area Development**

- a. **County Policy:** Cooperate with incorporated municipalities to coordinate the planning and development of community "fringe areas".

- b. **County Policy:** Incorporate community land use and development plans (as they are adopted) into the County's Comprehensive Plan.
- c. **County Policy:** Encourage high-density (1/4 acre or smaller lot size and multiple family dwellings) residential development within a 1-mile radius of the County's incorporated towns. The County could provide incentives to facilitate this goal.

### **Residential Land Uses and Development**

- a. **County Policy:** Plan and locate new residential development carefully to avoid excessive costs in providing public services.
- b. **County Policy:** Encourage residential development to occur in a manner that minimizes environmental pollution and disruption of natural resources.
- c. **County Policy:** Maintain a two-acre minimum lot size for residential development in areas without central water and sewer.
- d. **County Policy:** Require development proposals to demonstrate the availability of an adequate, safe water supply and a safe, reliable method of sewage disposal.
- e. **County Policy:** Maintain land use regulations that promote and encourage a variety of housing types and residential development options.
- f. **County Policy:** Encourage the provision of adequate, affordable housing.
- g. **County Policy:** Require compliance with adopted County subdivision policies and regulations.

### **Agricultural Lands and Uses**

- a. **County Policy:** Encourage conservation of agricultural and ranch lands and related land uses through various voluntary and incentive-based programs and policies.
- b. **County Policy:** Allow subdivision of lands with adjudicated water rights only after determination that such development will not present major water delivery problems to neighboring water users or adversely affect the interests of an irrigation district or canal/ditch company.
- c. **County Policy:** Discourage residential development deemed likely to create significant disruption of livestock movement or grazing. An appropriate buffer zone should be placed between residential structures and any stock driveway. Per State law, it is the landowner's responsibility to fence out livestock.
- d. **County Policy:** Continue support for locally accepted, traditional agricultural management practices and land uses.
- e. **County Policy:** Support educational and technical efforts to improve the ability of land custodians, large and small, to retain and enhance the quality of natural resources and agricultural land uses.

- f. **County Policy:** Evaluate development of irrigated and non-irrigated land for its impact on the amount and quality of grazing and crop producing lands lost to the local agriculture community.
- g. **County Policy:** Discourage residential and recreational development on lands of high agricultural value, e.g. high quality grazing lands as well as hay meadows.

#### **Commercial Land Uses and Development**

- a. **County Policy:** Locate commercial properties in or near existing towns and/or near other commercial property.
- b. **County Policy:** Encourage commercial property development along major thoroughfares.
- c. **County Policy:** Review commercial zoning districts to ensure that rules don't inhibit logical commercial development.
- d. **County Policy:** Ensure commercial land uses take priority in commercially zoned properties (when conflicts with non-commercial land uses arise).
- e. **County Policy:** Require commercial properties to be maintained and provide adequate parking, taking into consideration the type of business.
- f. **County Policy:** Encourage appropriate landscaping of commercial properties, taking into consideration the type of business.
- g. **County Policy:** Encourage clustering of commercial development, as appropriate.
- h. **County Policy:** Encourage diversified commercial development.

#### **Industrial Land Uses and Development**

- a. **County Policy:** Identify and recommend areas appropriate for industrial land uses.
- b. **County Policy:** Encourage public/private partnerships to stimulate economic opportunity.
- c. **County Policy:** Encourage public/private partnerships to identify and develop appropriate areas for additional light industrial areas.
- d. **County Policy:** Encourage diversified industrial development.
- e. **County Policy:** Encourage the recruitment and development of value-added industries to stimulate economic activity.

- f. **County Policy:** Encourage industrial/commercial development in or near existing commercial and industrial sites.
- g. **County Policy:** Encourage property maintenance to assure a clean, safe and orderly work site with adequate parking, taking into consideration the type of industry.
- h. **County Policy:** Encourage appropriate and diversified industrial uses when doing so does not conflict with other County goals and policies.

### **Background Information/Data (Land Use)**

#### **Preserving Private Property Rights**

Sublette County recognizes its citizens' inalienable, natural rights to private property. The people who make up the citizenry of Sublette County are reliant upon the land and its productive uses. Private ownership and the incentive to provide such ownership are the driving forces which support the livelihood, culture, custom and economic stability of Sublette County citizens.

#### **County/Community Cooperation**

The incorporated cities of Big Piney, Marbleton, and Pinedale have their own planning and zoning commissions. The County shall continue to work with the towns to further organize development within the County.

As mandated by Wyoming State law, planning and zoning commissions shall continue to require that all plans for development within one mile of city limits be submitted to the planning commission or governing body of that town for review, comment and approval.

#### **Agricultural Land Uses**

In the context of this plan, agriculture is more than an industry. It is also the guardian of resources and the underpinning of our culture. Sublette County residents desire that agriculture continue to be a dominant element in Sublette County's identity. Agricultural lands used for ranching and grazing have provided the historical foundation for community development and economic growth since the late nineteenth century. These lands are valued for their economic significance as well as their natural resources, scenic beauty and support of cultural and ecological diversity. In addition, Sublette County is well suited for cattle production. Annually, more than 31 million pounds of beef are exported from the County.

Data for Sublette County Agriculture is available from the United States Census of Agriculture, which is completed every five years. Employment information is available from the Wyoming Division of Economic Analysis. Agriculture, in 1998, provided 401 of the County's 3,912 jobs.

Private lands tend to cluster along the County's waterways, an artifact of early settlement of the County when settlers acquired lands adjacent to water sources for stock water and irrigation purposes.

### **Industrial Land Uses and Development**

Appropriate and diversified industrial uses, including oil and gas development, are vital components of Sublette County's economic base. Growth in this sector can be expected to yield additional employment opportunities and enhance overall economic activity. Public entities can assist in the development of these activities. Well-planned industrial development and sites can minimize adverse impacts and encourage the most efficient use of available properties.

### **C. NATURAL HAZARDS/ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS - Sublette County Goals and Policies**

**1. COUNTY GOAL: Protect public health, safety and welfare by discouraging development in areas of potential environmental/natural hazards.**

**2. COUNTY GOAL: Generate and provide data on development limitations.**

Sublette County will pursue the following policies relating to natural hazard and environmental considerations:

#### **General Approach and Philosophy**

**a. County Policy:** Consider site-specific environmental features as part of land use planning decisions and in the review of development proposals. Factors to consider include, but are not limited to, the following:

- (1) natural hazards (as noted in *County Policy b., below*),
- (2) topography,
- (3) soil types,
- (4) wildlife habitat and migration routes,
- (5) municipal watersheds/culinary water sources,
- (6) riparian areas,
- (7) wetlands,
- (8) depth to water table,
- (9) surface drainage patterns,
- (10) groundwater recharge/discharge areas (including springs), and
- (11) quantity and quality of surface and underground water resources.

**b. County Policy:** Discourage development in known and potentially hazardous areas. The demonstration of adequate/appropriate mitigation measures may be required before development can occur. Types of areas to be avoided include, but are not limited to, the following:

- (1) flood plains,
- (2) unstable slopes and soils, and
- (3) areas with high wildfire potential.

**c. County Policy:** Inform the public and developers of known environmental/natural limitations potentially making areas unsuitable for development.

- d. **County Policy:** Require site-specific soils analysis as part of the subdivision development application, as deemed appropriate and necessary to protect public safety.
- e. **County Policy:** Require persons/interests wishing to develop land to demonstrate the suitability of such ground for development.
- f. **County Policy:** Require demonstration of adequate/appropriate mitigation measures before development on hazardous and/or environmentally sensitive areas is approved.

### **Background Information/Data (Natural Hazards/Environmental Considerations)**

In an effort to promote the public health, safety and general welfare, development on certain lands must be regulated. Of specific concern are natural hazards which arise owing to the topography of the site itself. Among these are hazards associated with (1) flooding and high ground water, and hazards found with (2) steep slopes and adverse soils. In an effort to minimize losses-both public and private-from such hazards, considerable mitigation efforts may be required before such lands are deemed suitable for development.

#### **Flood Plains**

Flood plains are areas which are periodically susceptible to flooding. While commonly associated with stream and river bottoms, dry gulches, which channel runoff or large areas, may also pose hazards to development.

Flood plain maps are available which delineate the boundaries of known flood plains. Adequate mitigation efforts may be possible to permit development in such areas. For example, elevated roads, anchored buildings, alteration of stream channels and protective barriers may be used to lessen hazards associated with development in flood plains. Clear demonstration that such mitigation efforts are effective may be required before development can proceed. It should be noted that such efforts may not adversely affect adjacent land owners.

#### **Wetlands**

Many areas surrounding streams and rivers also pose hazards stemming from high ground water. Wetlands are defined as areas that are inundated or saturated by surface or ground water at a frequency and duration sufficient to support, and under normal circumstances do support, a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions.

Wetlands not only provide wildlife habitat but also improve water quality by holding sediment and taking up pollutants. In many cases, wetlands decrease flooding by storing surface water and recharging ground water. The development of these areas should be discouraged. In addition to Sublette County's mitigation requirements, it should be noted that both the United States Army Corps of Engineers and Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) extensively regulate activities on wetlands.

Maps delineating flood plains and wetlands are available. As with flood plains, development in wetlands shall occur only when all responsibility for damage is borne by the land owners.

### Steep Slopes

Extreme caution must be exercised when attempting to develop areas on or accessed via steep slopes. Such slopes pose numerous hazards, among them slope stability, i.e. land slides. In addition to land slide hazards, slopes represent barriers to ongoing and emergency services. Extensive engineering to minimize erosion and slope failure may be required. Likewise revegetation and storm water management may be required to mitigate hazards associated with development of steep slopes. It should be noted that the Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality regulates septic tanks on steep slopes. Slumps evident in steep slopes indicate poor slope stability. Such areas may require geotechnical analysis to determine if development may be permitted.

### Adverse Soils

Any particular piece of land may, to some extent, be defined by the soil of which it is composed. With this in mind it must be cautioned that some soil types may require extensive mitigation to make access and development possible. For example, increased seasonal soil moisture may cause some soils to swell and shift, while other soils may heave and expand. Any developer may be required to demonstrate that the soils on the site are suitable for the proposed use. Adverse soils may pose substantial hazards to roadways and structures alike.

In summary, natural hazards such as flood plains, wetlands, steep slopes, slumps and adverse soils may represent substantial detriments to the public's health, safety and welfare. In addition, other hazards such as high winds and wildfires may also require mitigation.

It is not within the scope of this comprehensive plan, nor within Sublette County's capabilities to identify every natural hazard which may be associated with a particular proposed development. Suffice it to say, persons wishing to develop land may be required to demonstrate the suitability of such ground for development.

#### **D. FACILITIES AND SERVICES - Sublette County Goals and Policies**

1. **COUNTY GOAL: Promote and provide for the health, safety and well being of people in Sublette County.**
2. **COUNTY GOAL: Promote and provide for the administrative, educational, cultural and community needs of the people in Sublette County.**
3. **COUNTY GOAL: Coordinate and cooperate with local government entities and service providers to plan, design and provide public services and facilities in an effective and efficient manner.**

Sublette County will pursue the following policies relating to public facilities and services:

#### **Community Services**

- a. **County Policy:** Maintain and encourage high quality general and emergency medical facilities, personnel and services throughout the County.
- b. **County Policy:** Maintain good fire protection service by supporting training programs and recruiting an adequate supply of volunteers.
- c. **County Policy:** Maintain efficient, cost effective law enforcement service that covers the whole County.
- d. **County Policy:** Encourage the grouping of public buildings close together whenever possible in order to foster community cohesiveness and convenience.
- e. **County Policy:** Support agencies and programs that provide services to residents of the County that are in need.
- f. **County Policy:** Encourage and support educational, cultural and recreational opportunities.

#### **County-provided Services**

- a. **County Policy:** Maintain that rural areas/residents of the County should not anticipate “urban type/level” services.
- b. **County Policy:** Include the following public utility/service considerations when reviewing proposed land use and development plans and applications:
  - (1) the proposed development's proximity to available facilities and services;
  - (2) the anticipated demand for County-provided services; and
  - (3) the developer's plans for provision and maintenance of required services.

#### **Water (Culinary, Irrigation and Fire Protection)**

- a. **County Policy:** Require development proposals to demonstrate the availability of an

adequate, safe water supply and a safe, reliable method of sewage disposal. In addition, the availability of suitable quality water in sufficient quantity for the proposed land use(s) must be demonstrated before such uses are permitted.

- b. **County Policy:** Require development proposals to identify potential impacts to existing irrigation systems, as relevant.
- c. **County Policy:** Require development proposals to provide a specific water supply for year-round fire suppression purposes.

#### **Sewer and Solid Waste Disposal**

- a. **County Policy:** Require development proposals to demonstrate the availability of adequate and safe sewer and solid waste disposal systems.
- b. **County Policy:** Discourage development on lands that are not suited for on-site absorption systems, unless other acceptable provisions are approved by the County.
- c. **County Policy:** Encourage the location of solid waste disposal sites in areas with minimal environmental constraints (highwater table, ground water, high wind, etc.). Facilities will be designed in a manner that prevents adverse impacts to air quality (including odor) and aesthetics.
- d. **County Policy:** Encourage recycling efforts and programs within the County.

## **Background Information/Data (Facilities and Services)**

The County's public facilities include fire and law enforcement protection; public health; schools; civic, community and senior citizen centers; fairgrounds and parks; and cemeteries. While many of the actual facilities are located in incorporated towns or rural centers, they are included in this section because they potentially benefit all County residents.

### Fire Protection

Pinedale, Big Piney, Bondurant, Boulder, and Daniel have volunteer fire departments that protect property in incorporated and unincorporated Sublette County. Funding is obtained from the towns, Sublette County, and through their own fund-raising efforts. The United States Forest Service (USFS) and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) fight fires with their own personnel on federal land, with local assistance as requested.

### Law Enforcement

The Sublette County Sheriffs Office polices the incorporated towns, rural centers, and the rest of the County. Deputies are based in Pinedale and Marbleton. The Wyoming Highway Patrol has an office in Pinedale. State officers patrol Wyoming State and federal roads and provide assistance as requested.

### Public Health

Two medical clinics service the County: the Marbleton-Big Piney Clinic, and the Pinedale Medical Clinic. Each facility includes helicopter pads for the quick transport of patients. Both clinics are staffed with physicians, patient associates, and nurses. Contracts with physicians and clinic operation are under the jurisdiction of the Rural Health Care District, a board of locally elected members.

The Health Care District also oversees County ambulance service. Ambulances are based in Big Piney and Pinedale and are staffed by paid personnel and volunteers. The Public Health Nurse maintains offices in Big Piney and Pinedale, as does the Community Counseling Services. A privately-operated physical rehabilitation service is available in Pinedale and Big Piney. In Pinedale that facility is housed next to the Sublette Center, a nursing home that offers long-term care, post acute care, and independent living quarters.

The State Family Services Department has an office in Pinedale and Big Piney. There is also the Sublette County Sexual Assault Family Violence Task Force and Sublette County Victim Assistance.

### Schools

School District No. 1 encompasses the northern portion of the County. An elementary, middle, and high school are located in Pinedale. School District No. 9 serves the southern part of the County, and the elementary, middle, and high school are located in Big Piney. Bondurant has an elementary school, with middle and high school aged children being bused to Pinedale.

Additional educational facilities exist that offer private education, special education, kindergarten, and preschool. They include: Sublette County Christian School, the Learning Center, Head Start, Children's Discovery Center, and Pinedale Preschool. All are located in Pinedale. Western Wyoming Community College also offers outreach programs to County residents through long distance learning.

### Civic, Community and Senior Centers

The three incorporated towns have municipal public offices that serve their residents. Sublette County's courthouse is in the County seat, Pinedale. The County courthouse annex is in Marbleton. Federal offices are maintained in Big Piney and Pinedale for the United States Forest Service (USFS). The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) maintains an office in Pinedale. The Natural Resource Conservation Service (US Department of the Agriculture) is based in Pinedale.

The Wyoming Game and Fish Department (WGFD) has an office in Pinedale, along with the Wyoming Department of Transportation (WYDOT). The State Water Commissioner and County Extension Office are housed in the County Courthouse in Pinedale. The State Engineer Board of Control maintains an office in Big Piney.

Post offices are located in Big Piney-Marbleton, Bondurant, Boulder, Cora, Daniel, and Pinedale.

The Museum of the Mountain Man on the eastern edge of Pinedale showcases the history of the mountain man era and includes displays about early Sublette County. Green River Valley Museum in Big Piney features a historical collection that covers the early days of this region.

Boulder and Daniel hold community events in former school buildings. Bondurant area residents use a local church to host community functions. An indoor arena was constructed at the County Fairgrounds near Marbleton-Big Piney, and while limited because of its dirt floor, it too can be used for some community functions. A community center is proposed for Pinedale. County libraries are found in Big Piney and Pinedale.

Two senior citizens' service organizations are in operation at each end of the County to provide assistance to seniors, including meals and social activities. Pinedale and Marbleton both have senior centers. A new facility is being built in Pinedale to replace the existing center. Senior activities also occur at the Sublette Center in Pinedale.

### Fairgrounds and Parks

See the Recreation section of the County Comprehensive Plan for complete information about area parks and recreation facilities. The County Recreation Board plans to complete a Countywide master plan for recreation. The plan will include discussion about a multi-use recreational facility, which would be the first of its kind in the County.

The County Fairgrounds are located north of Marbleton. The complex includes an outdoor rodeo arena, indoor arena, show ring, display and livestock buildings, and a baseball diamond. The County Sporting Association has 35 acres southeast of Pinedale that are used as a rodeo arena and for the annual Green River Rendezvous pageant.

### Cemeteries

Several cemeteries remain in operation in the County, including ones found in the vicinity of Pinedale, Big Piney, Daniel, Boulder, and Bondurant. A number of small cemeteries are also found throughout the County, such as Silvercreek and another outside of Cora.

#### Landfill and Transfer Station

Solid waste disposal becomes more important as the County's population continues to grow. Currently, the County has a waste disposal site (landfill) near Marbleton and a transfer facility located near Pinedale. The County is presently engaged in an agreement with Teton County which allows the deposition of Teton County origin refuse in the Marbleton facility. At current rates, the anticipated storage capacity of the Marbleton landfill is approximately 100 years.

## **E. TRANSPORTATION - Sublette County Goals and Objectives**

1. **COUNTY GOAL: Encourage multi-modal transportation availability.**
2. **COUNTY GOAL: Provide adequate County road system to safely move people and vehicles.**

Sublette County will pursue the following policies relating to transportation:

### **Alternative Transportation Modes**

- a. **County Policy:** Encourage the diversification of public and private sector transportation services.
- b. **County Policy:** Encourage shuttle bus service between Sublette County towns and neighboring Counties.

### **Transportation Planning**

- a. **County Policy:** Develop and maintain a master transportation plan to identify and accommodate the current and future transportation needs of the County.
- b. **County Policy:** Coordinate County road planning efforts with the Wyoming Department of Transportation (WYDOT), Bureau of Land Management (BLM), United States Forest Service (USFS), and Wyoming Game and Fish Department (WGFD).
- c. **County Policy:** Require all new roads and streets to be consistent with the approved County transportation plan with regard to classification, right-of-way, design and construction.
- d. **County Policy:** Encourage education on the appropriate use of County roads, i.e., “safe and lawful use and travel” for snowmobiles, ATVs, horses, bikes, etc.
- e. **County Policy:** Encourage/support construction of additional pathways and expansion of existing pathways.

### **Roadway Construction, Maintenance and Improvements**

- a. **County Policy:** Maintain/enforce standards for new County roads and work to improve existing roads already in the County roads system.
- b. **County Policy:** Identify and prioritize a list of County roads needing maintenance or upgrades. This task includes developing a schedule of anticipated completion dates.
- c. **County Policy:** Conduct traffic counts to investigate the feasibility of surfacing County roads.

- d. **County Policy:** Consider the provision of services to the greatest number of County residents and the development of the County's economic potential as primary factors when establishing road maintenance and improvement priorities.
- e. **County Policy:** Consider potential effects that building or improving County roads may have on neighborhoods, residential areas, subdivisions and natural resources.
- f. **County Policy:** Require development proposals for year-round housing to demonstrate adequate primary road construction and maintenance.
- g. **County Policy:** Require County approval prior to the construction of private approaches with direct access to County roads. Considerations of approval include, but are not limited to, compatible grades, anticipated traffic patterns (egress/ingress) and adequate drainage.
- h. **County Policy:** Maintain provisions in the County's Subdivision Resolution that require the developer to be responsible for initial road construction. All roads must be built according to County standards.
- i. **County Policy:** Ensure that future road construction and maintenance of subdivision roads is clearly defined on the plat and in covenants to identify the responsible parties.
- j. **County Policy:** Encourage special improvement districts to help pay for road improvements in existing subdivisions.

## **Background Information/Data (Transportation)**

Federal, State, and County roads serve as the primary method for moving people, goods, and services through the County. Local airports provide additional transportation services. Taxi and special transport services and pathways round out the transportation network for the County.

### **Roadway System**

The road system has three functions: to serve residents and funnel traffic through the County, support economic and commercial activities, and support area recreational activities. US Highways 191 and 189 are part of the federal system of highways. State Highways 350, 351, 352, 353, and 354 are also found in the County. All of these roadways are maintained by the Wyoming Department of Transportation (WYDOT). The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and United States Forest Service (USFS) provide approximately 3095 and 865 miles of unpaved roads respectively. These roads provide access to public lands for recreation, grazing, natural resource extraction, and other uses.

Sublette County has 107 County roads which cover approximately 444 miles. These roads are maintained by the County Road and Bridge Department. The majority of the roads are gravel-based. Steps are underway to stabilize the soil on a number of roads by quasi-paving them. When considering road maintenance and improvement priorities, the primary consideration should be provision of the greatest service to the most residents and development of the County's economic potential. The roads that serve the greatest number of people should be improved first, with consideration made for citizens with special needs. The County should also coordinate their road plans with the State, Bureau of Land Management (BLM), United States Forest Service (USFS) and Wyoming Game and Fish Department (WGFD).

Subdivision roads are designated as either private for the use of the subdivision property owners and their guests, or public. Even though they are dedicated for public use, these roads are not part of the County-maintained system. It is the responsibility of property owners to maintain the roads within their subdivisions. At the time a subdivision is approved, the County Subdivision Resolution requires the developer to be responsible for the initial construction of the road. The roads must be built according to County specifications. Typically a property owners' association is formed to oversee the maintenance of the roads after their initial construction.

### **Public Transportation**

Public transportation is limited to a private taxi service based in Pinedale and a senior citizen van used to transport seniors to events. In addition, private bus service is available.

### **Airports**

Two airports are located in the County. Appointed airport boards are used to oversee each airport operation. Airport master plans are routinely prepared and updated, in association with the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). The southern part of the County has an airport north of Marbleton, and the northern section has an airport southeast of Pinedale. Neither offers commercial passenger service. No plans are in place to initiate such service. Both facilities have hangars and support buildings for air traffic.

In a few cases, private landowners with airstrips on their property have agreed that the airstrips will be available for emergency use. Helitec pads are located at the Pinedale Clinic and Marbleton-Big Piney Clinic for emergency evacuation of patients.

#### Pathways

Volunteer efforts and federal funding have been used to construct three asphalt paths in the County. One path that is approximately 1 mile long links Marbleton and Big Piney. A second path, also several miles in length, begins on the northeastern outskirts of Pinedale and ends at the CCC (Civilian Conservation Corps) ponds by Fremont Lake. A third path links Tyler Avenue, Pine Creek, and the Pinedale Town Park. All paths are usable by pedestrians, joggers, bicyclists, rollerbladers, cross country skiers, and any other non-motorized user.

#### Continental Divide Snow Machine Trail

The multi-county trail is located in the vicinity of Green River Lakes in the Upper Green area through the Boulder region. It's designated as a snow machine trail that will provide users with numerous drop-off points for riding and sight-seeing along the route.

## **F. RECREATION - Sublette County Goals and Policies**

1. **COUNTY GOAL:** Consider the County's natural beauty, rural atmosphere, wildlife, and recreational resources for the benefit of present and future generations.
2. **COUNTY GOAL:** Support and encourage the development of recreational facilities, events, and activities that are not in conflict with the quality of life as espoused in the County Vision Statement.

Sublette County will pursue the following policies relating to recreational land uses and development:

### **General Approach and Philosophy**

- a. **County Policy:** Maintain the County position that no single recreational user group should receive preferential treatment in wilderness areas.
- b. **County Policy:** Coordinate with the Wyoming Game and Fish Department (WGFD) to encourage appropriate management of game and non-game fish and wildlife resources.
- c. **County Policy:** Encourage migratory routes be kept open or established/reestablished where possible, to assist in maintaining game populations.
- d. **County Policy:** Coordinate with the Wyoming Game and Fish Department (WGFD) to preserve the quantity and quality of wildlife and wildlife habitat and provide sustainable hunting and fishing opportunities.
- e. **County Policy:** Maintain viewsheds in areas of high scenic value.
- f. **County Policy:** Monitor river use and work with appropriate agencies to maintain the quality of the rivers.
- g. **County Policy:** Coordinate with the Wyoming Game and Fish Department (WGFD), Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and United States Forest Service (USFS) to prepare a balanced, coordinated interagency river floating plan intended to allow for gradual, controlled growth while preserving the quality fishing experience of all river floaters.
- h. **County Policy:** Encourage the development of privately-owned recreational facilities.
- i. **County Policy:** Encourage recreational development that is compatible with County characteristics and values.
- j. **County Policy:** Foster, support and carefully manage recreational uses while respecting the rights of property holders.
- k. **County Policy:** Manage recreational growth in a manner sensitive to and consistent with community values and character of the area.

- l. County Policy:** Manage recreational vehicles and uses (including off-road and river related) in a manner sensitive to private property rights and the environment.
- m. County Policy:** Promote educational programs regarding stewardship of natural resources and recreation-related effects.
- n. County Policy:** Support and encourage Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and United States Forest Service (USFS) decisions that are consistent with the County's Comprehensive Plan.
- o. County Policy:** Encourage further development and proliferation of hiking trails, walking paths, and other facilities for the pedestrian recreationist.
- p. County Policy:** Support the development of additional bike routes as doing so becomes important. This would include linking existing routes and working with relevant agencies to develop new ones.
- q. County Policy:** Consider development/expansion of recreational activities and facilities as the need/desire develops.

## **Background Information/Data (Recreation)**

Recreation, both dispersed/noncommercial and organized/commercial, represents a valuable renewable resource available to Sublette County residents facing the challenges of growth in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Properly managed, recreation can provide income and quality of life to County residents in perpetuity. For this reason, recreation should be fostered, supported, and carefully managed in a manner that respects the rights of property holders.

It is anticipated that Sublette County, by virtue of its physical setting, will continue to grow as a recreation destination in the west for residents of the United States and international visitors. This is a role offered by geography and geology. Recreational growth cannot be avoided but must be actively managed in a manner sensitive to and consistent with community values and characteristics of the area.

Further, it is probable that recreation will play an ever increasing, year-round role in the economy of the County. One goal should be to consider the County's natural beauty, rural atmosphere, wildlife, and recreational resources for the benefit of present and future generations. This should be a factor when the County is presented with recreational opportunity proposals.

When appropriate, recreational land use decisions should be linked with economic factors affecting the County. Considerable lifestyle and economic benefit is derived from a majority of the following categories of recreation.

### Camping and Picnicking

A wide variety of public and private camping and picnicking facilities are available in the County. The majority of existing facilities are administered by federal and state agencies, although several private, commercial campgrounds are located throughout the County.

### Wilderness Recreation

The Bridger-Teton Wilderness area of the Wind River Range includes 428,169 acres of Sublette County. The area has become increasingly popular both nationally and internationally with visitors and recreational users. Growing demands impact County residents and resources, as well as the natural resources. The backpacker, horse, and llama enthusiasts as well as backcountry skiers and snowshoers enjoy the wilderness experience.

### Hunting and Fishing

Various types of game and fish sports are available. With regard to hunting, the County has a plethora of game animals for those choosing to pursue this form of recreation. The trophy game that reside here draw a substantial number of hunters to the County. In turn, those hunters contribute a great deal to the County's economic well being.

Our lakes, streams, and rivers attract numerous anglers all year long. Anglers from all over the globe come in pursuit of Lake, Brook, Rainbow, Golden and Cutthroat trout. Kokanee Salmon and Mountain Whitefish and Grayling are also present in some lakes and streams. Like hunters, anglers also contribute to the economic welfare of the County.

### Wildlife and Scenic Viewing

Increasing numbers of residents and visitors take advantage of the natural beauty and wildlife found in the County for photography and to observe both wildlife and the local scenery. Photography in particular has become a very popular form of recreation among people of all ages. Amateurs and professionals alike are often seen taking photos from vehicles along roads, at scenic overlooks, hiking in the backcountry, or anywhere else that offers a photographic opportunity. In addition, wildlife observation is enjoyed by both locals and visitors to the County.

### River Floating and Boating

The Green and New Fork rivers are used for floating, boating, and fishing. Several access points have been established to guarantee public access to these rivers. It is anticipated that river use will increase in the coming years. Commercial river floating can and must be carefully managed by the federal and state agencies charged with this important public trust.

Sublette County also has a variety of lakes inside and outside of the wilderness area. Some of the larger lakes have boat ramps and/or docks to accommodate larger boats.

### Private Guest Ranches, Resorts, Lodges, and Outfitters

These privately owned facilities provide a variety of recreational opportunities in Sublette County throughout the year. These facilities are popular with people from all sections of the nation.

Outdoor camps and programs are operated by private individuals, groups such as the Boy Scouts, and church organizations. They provide recreation opportunities for youth from all over the U. S. and other countries.

Licensed big game outfitters offer facilities and quality hunting experiences to County visitors. The outfitters contribute to game management by controlling hunter density and guiding hunters to areas away from roads to effect proper harvest.

Guided fishing and sightseeing trips are also available and provide the recreationist with exceptional opportunities for outdoor enjoyment.

### Golf

A nine hole golf course is located west of Pinedale. There is a plan to expand it to 18 holes in the future. Golf is an increasingly popular pastime, and its economic impact can be appreciable.

### Horse-Related Activities

Many County residents own and use horses for recreation activities, such as hunting, trail riding, rodeo and show competition, cutting, driving (carriage, buggy, and wagons), youth gymkhana events, and general pleasure riding.

There is one County-owned horse facility at the Sublette County Fairgrounds in Big Piney. There are two outdoor arenas and one indoor arena, commonly referred to as the Ag Center.

An arena in Pinedale is owned by the Sublette County Sporting Association, a private entity. It is used for many public horse-related events throughout the year. In addition, there are

many privately owned arenas through the County.

#### Fitness Activities and Facilities

Both high schools offer a variety of facilities and activities to the public, i.e. open gym, lap swim, swim lessons, weight rooms, tennis courts, etc. There is a private fitness club located in Pinedale. The Retirement Center in Pinedale also has fitness equipment and training available. Martial arts classes are offered in Pinedale and Big Piney. In addition, USA swimming, hockey, and wrestling have clubs in Big Piney and Pinedale.

#### Snow Machine/All Terrain Vehicles (ATV)

Snow machining and ATV riding are very popular in Sublette County. There are several hundred miles of marked and groomed snow machine trails and motorized vehicle trails available to users on United States Forest Service (USFS) and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) lands and on State land.

Use is increasing on existing trails. It is important to manage recreational vehicle/off-road vehicle use in a manner that is sensitive to private property rights and the environment. Also, the County is encouraged to promote additional educational programs/activities regarding responsible stewardship of natural resources. Sublette County will support and encourage Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and United States Forest Service (USFS) decisions that are consistent with the adopted County Comprehensive Plan.

#### Skiing

Sublette County offers cross-country skiing, down-hill skiing, and snowboarding. Several groomed cross country ski trails access the Bridger-Teton Forest. There is a privately operated, groomed cross-country track on private property north of Pinedale. White Pine ski area is located in the Bridger-Teton Forest, a short drive north of Pinedale. The addition of the new alpine facility will bring an economic boost to Sublette County in the form of ski rentals, lodging, meals, and other services.

#### Historic And Cultural Sites

Sublette has a rich cultural heritage and colorful history. Many significant historic and cultural sites have been established, and commemorative markers or signs have been erected at several locations. Additional archaeological or geological sites may yet be discovered and established in the future.

Sites currently on the Wyoming Registry of Historic Sites include:

Bondurant Church	Bridge Over New Fork River
Chambers Lodge	Circle Ranch
Daniel School	New Fork
Fort Bonneville	Jensen Ranch
Lander Cutoff of the Oregon Trail	Log Cabin Motel
Steele Homestead	Wardell Buffalo Trap
Father De Smet's Prairie Mass Location	
Upper Green River Rendezvous Site (also on the National Historic List)	

Two museums, the Museum of the Mountain Man (Pinedale) and the Green River Valley Museum (Big Piney) operate in Sublette County. These resources are highly valued.

### Archery And Shooting Sports

There are two archery clubs located in Sublette County, one in Pinedale and one in Big Piney. Both clubs have membership open to the public. Each club sponsors a number of outdoor silhouettes shoot each year. Pinedale Sporting Clay's, Inc. also sponsors a wide variety of shoots during the year. The Fremont Lake Gun Club sponsors black powder and conventional firearm shoots at their facility, and the firing range is open to the public. Big Piney has trap, skeet, and rifle facilities located west of Big Piney.

### Baseball, Softball, Soccer

Baseball and softball are popular with the youth and adults of Sublette County. Pinedale and Big Piney have lighted fields for night games. Both towns offer a range from tee ball to Little League play. Climate has a profound effect on the baseball/softball season.

There is a Men's Softball Association. This group sponsors a tournament in mid-July, which brings in teams from several out-of-County towns.

Soccer has found its place in Sublette County. Presently there is a youth program in Pinedale. At the present time there are no dedicated fields to play on.

### Hiking

A wide variety of vistas abound in Sublette County. Hikers are attracted to the mountain ranges and high plains deserts. Numerous trails access the Wind River and Wyoming Ranges.

Further development and proliferation of hiking trails, walking paths, and other facilities for the pedestrian recreationist should be encouraged. As with all forms of recreation, consideration should be given to the education of hikers who use the mountains and the plains.

### Hockey

Hockey is a popular winter sport that attracts both the youth and adults of Sublette County. Both Pinedale and Big Piney have hockey programs. Pinedale's indoor ice-skating rink is well lit for night practice and evening hockey games. Figure skaters also share ice time with the hockey association. There have been a number of tournaments held in Pinedale, and as time passes there will undoubtedly be more demand put on the hockey facilities.

### Mountain Biking

Mountain biking currently has a small role in the recreation picture of Sublette County. The County will support the development of additional bike routes as doing so becomes important. This would include linking existing routes and working with relevant agencies to develop new ones.

### Rollerblading & Skateboarding

The communities of Big Piney and Pinedale have facilities for roller/skate boarding. The County will consider development/expansion of "alternative" recreation activities and facilities as the need/desire develops.

## **G. NATURAL RESOURCES - County Goals and Policies**

- 1. COUNTY GOAL: Provide guidance for orderly development, use and conservation of the County's natural resources.**
- 2. COUNTY GOAL: Ensure that all land use decisions made by County officials are ecologically, economically, socially and culturally sound.**
- 3. COUNTY GOAL: Balance between the conservation and the use of the County's natural resources in order to support our economy and social fabric.**

Sublette County will pursue the following policies relating to natural resource use and development:

### **County Approach and Philosophy**

- a. County Policy:** Ensure that all land use and development proceed in accordance with local, state and federal laws and regulations.
- b. County Policy:** Evaluate all relevant federal and state land use proposals and plans and provide comments representing the interests of the County.
- c. County Policy:** Utilize the best science and technical information available when making land use planning decisions.
- d. County Policy:** Participate, in an official capacity and at the earliest opportunity, in any public land/resource issue affecting the ecological, economic, cultural, or social well-being of Sublette County citizens; even to the point of acquiring cooperating agency status.

### **Integration of Resources and the Economy**

- a. County Policy:** Recognize the importance and strength of a diversified economy.
- b. County Policy:** Enhance the economic impact of the use and production of our natural resources through value-added enterprises.
- c. County Policy:** Encourage development of amenities and the secondary or alternative economic opportunities that make the County attractive to families.
- d. County Policy:** Support the creation of jobs and business opportunities that will help sustain the workforce during periods of limited natural resource development.

## **Background Information/Data (Natural Resources)**

Our high quality air, water and land resources provide Sublette County residents with a rich quality of life, a working tradition, and a western heritage. Environmental quality is of concern to the citizens of Sublette County, as is an active economy.

To provide wise guidance to land use, there must be recognition of more than the physical attributes of Sublette County. There must be a balance between the conservation and the use of those physical attributes in order to support our economy and social fabric. In this section, the situation, trend, and community values for several primary land uses are discussed. They are accompanied by the goals describing the desired relationship between those uses and the environment. Finally, the policies guiding land use decisions are presented.

Sublette County recognizes the importance and strength of a diversified economy. To reach this end, value-added enterprises which enhance the economic impact of the use or production of our natural resources should be encouraged when possible.

**G(a). AIR RESOURCES - County Goals and Policies**

**1. COUNTY GOAL: Maintain excellent air quality in the County.**

Sublette County will pursue the following policies relating to protecting the County's air resources:

**Air Quality and Resource Development**

- a. County Policy:** Ensure that Sublette County industries adhere to federal and state air quality standards. Within County budgetary constraints, utilize the best available technology to evaluate present air quality/conditions and the impact of existing and potential pollution sources.
- b. County Policy:** Consider, as deemed relevant and as information is readily available, the frequency of atmospheric inversions, meteorology, topography, present ambient air quality, significant deterioration limits and applicable local, state and federal laws, when evaluating land use proposals and any other development issues.

**Background Information/Data (Air Resources)**

Clean air and blue skies are among Sublette County's most valuable natural resources. Residents and visitors alike delight in spectacular distant views. In addition to providing spectacular views, clean air contributes to the health of residents. Sublette County enjoys excellent air quality and it is the County's desire to maintain that quality. Air quality is currently undergoing extensive monitoring by the United States Forest Service (USFS) and Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ). The purpose of the monitoring is to prevent any degradation of air quality as measured by odor, visibility, flora, fauna, soil, and water. Air quality monitoring data for the Green River Basin is available on the Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) web site.

In recognition of the fact that air quality impacts can cross state and county borders, Sublette County authorities should employ their influence with state and federal authorities when Sublette County air quality is impacted.

**G(b). WATER RESOURCES - County Goals and Policies**

- 1. COUNTY GOAL: Maintain and protect our high quality water resources.**
- 2. COUNTY GOAL: Develop strategies to put Wyoming's apportioned share of Colorado River Compact waters to beneficial use.**

Sublette County will pursue the following policies relating to protecting the County's water resources:

**Water Resource Development**

- a. County Policy:** Support/encourage water quality monitoring programs.
- b. County Policy:** Contact the appropriate agency to investigate any potential or detected water quality degradation.
- c. County Policy:** Discourage land uses which may result in impaired water quality, particularly municipal water sources.
- d. County Policy:** Oppose the transfer of waters out of the drainage basins of the County (trans-basin diversions).
- e. County Policy:** Encourage and establish more watering systems on all grazing lands for livestock, wildlife and game and non-game birds where appropriate.
- f. County Policy:** Encourage the building of small reservoirs and off-channel storage facilities where they may be effective in striking a harmonious balance of use values and conservation values.
- g. County Policy:** Allow subdivision of lands with adjudicated water rights only after determination that such development will not present major water delivery problems to neighboring water users or adversely affect the interests of an irrigation district or canal/ditch company.
- h. County Policy:** Encourage the building and maintenance of sewage disposal systems for RV use. Signs should be posted identifying the location of these facilities.
- i. County Policy:** Consider the potential effects on surface and underground water quality/resources when land uses are planned or proposed, particularly near watercourses and lakes.
- j. County Policy:** Consider potential human impacts associated with proposed land uses, particularly in and around watersheds.
- k. County Policy:** Discourage land uses and developments that have the potential to accelerate long term groundwater depletion.

- I. **County Policy:** Actively participate in water resource planning, allocation and decision-making processes to protect County water resource interests.

## **Background Information/Data (Water Resources)**

Water is central to the County's topography, economy, and lifestyle. In addition to the benefits we receive in the County, we recognize that Sublette County is a major watershed for the upper Colorado River System. There are conflicting issues and demands being placed on this valuable resource which threaten its availability, quantity, and quality. Water management issues will become increasingly complex and important.

Water resources of Sublette County consist of surface and ground water, and precipitation that replenishes the supply each year. The bulk of water comes in the winter in the form of snow. Annual precipitation ranges from eight to more than 60 inches, depending upon proximity to mountains. The Upper Green River and its tributaries in the Wyoming and Wind River Ranges form the largest and most complex river system in Wyoming. Sublette County's portion of the system contributes annually 1.2 million-acre feet to the Colorado system. The Green River, which begins high in the Wind River Mountains above Green River Lakes, flows southward about 290 miles through Wyoming before entering Utah and eventually joining the Colorado River some 300 miles downstream. As the river traverses the County, many tributaries enter the river, the preponderance from the Wyoming Range side.

More than 1,000 glacially formed lakes of varying size are in the headwaters of streams that rise on the west slope of the Wind River Mountains. The higher and more numerous of these lakes are small, with surface areas of less than 500 acres. Glacial lakes formed by terminal moraines at lower elevations are considerably larger, with surface areas of up to 5,000 acres.

The Hoback River basin comprises a significant portion of the northwestern portion of the County. A tributary of the Snake River, the Hoback is estimated to deliver approximately 500,000 acre-feet of water per year to the Snake River.

The southeast portion of the County is in the Big Sandy River basin, delivering water to the Green River below Fontenelle Reservoir. Small portions of the County also lie in tributary basins of the Platte and Wind River.

The shallow surface aquifers generally discharge directly into the streams and are the major source for base flow. Recharge areas of the deeper aquifers appear to occur in the adjacent mountain ranges. The depth of shallow groundwater near flowing streams varies from ground level to about 300 feet. Within this depth interval are the unconsolidated aquifers such as flood plain and fan alluvium, terrace gravel, lake deposits, glacial deposits, and shallow consolidated sandstones.

Potable water can generally be obtained down to 2,000 feet deep in the northern part of the County and 1,000 feet in the southern part of the County. Groundwater has been encountered over the major portion of the basin. The yields of most wells in Sublette County range between 10 and 100 g.p.m. Yields greater than 500 g.p.m. could probably be obtained from wells penetrating thick sandstone sections in the Wasatch and Fort Union Formations, and from shallow wells tapping some of the well-sorted alluvial and gravel deposit near Pinedale and east of Boulder. Water well static water levels are part of records kept in the County zoning office.

All domestic water in the County is obtained from ground water except for the Town of Pinedale which obtains its unfiltered supply from Fremont Lake. This practice is rare and under EPA scrutiny due to increasing commercial and recreational uses. Sublette County enjoys high quality in its surface and ground waters. Water quality is excellent in those portions of the Green River and Hoback Basin which lie in Sublette County. Currently limited, but expanding, ground and surface water quality monitoring programs are in place for Sublette County, conducted under the auspices of the Sublette County Conservation District.

Subsurface water quality monitoring is also being conducted in association with the Pinedale Anticline gas field development. Credible data, in the form of chemical, biological and physical parameters, are being collected to document and monitor water quality. In 2000, the County Health Officer reports little incidence of illness as a result of waterborne pathogens.

Sewage treatment is regulated at several levels. Municipal systems are permitted and monitored via the auspices of Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ). Rural residential systems are regulated by County resolutions, permitted and designed by the County Health Officer.

Primary uses of water in Sublette County include domestic, stock, industrial, storage, irrigation, recreation, wildlife and fisheries habitat.

More than 170,000 acres are irrigated in the County making agriculture a significant user of water. There are six significant water control structures providing supplemental irrigation supplies. The Green River Basin Advisory Group has undertaken a comprehensive basin water planning effort which will become a part of the State's water plan. The product will drive the State's priorities into the next decades.

G(c). **SOIL AND VEGETATION - County Goals and Policies**

1. **COUNTY GOAL: Minimize topsoil erosion.**
2. **COUNTY GOAL: Maintain or increase highly diverse native plant communities.**
3. **COUNTY GOAL: Enhance the water, mineral and solar absorption and cycling capabilities of the land.**
4. **COUNTY GOAL: Reduce the number and spread of invasive plant species.**

Sublette County will pursue the following policies relating to protecting the County's land resources:

**Soil and Vegetation**

- a. **County Policy:** Consider the suitability of soil composition in all land use decisions.
- b. **County Policy:** Encourage land use practices that reduce erosion of topsoil. Encourage land management practices that build topsoil.
- c. **County Policy:** Consider the effect any land use change may have on the water catchment capabilities of the specific parcel of land in question.
- d. **County Policy:** Consider the effects any land use changes may have on the larger watershed in which the parcel is located.
- e. **County Policy:** Consider the long and short-term effects of any disruption of the soil, natural topography, or herbaceous ground cover associated with the proposed land uses or development. An expert analysis from the Conservation District should be obtained for subdivisions.
- f. **County Policy:** Seek both public and expert opinion of air quality, hydrology, and soil scientists in assessing impact on environmental quality when considering acceptance of out-of-County refuse or waste.
- g. **County Policy:** Monitor and manage encroachment of invasive weeds.

## **Background Information/Data (Soil and Vegetation)**

Sublette County is a land of high desert, sagebrush steppe, mountain foothills, mountain forests, and alpine tundra. With annual precipitation rates ranging from 8 inches in our lowest elevations, to more than 60 inches at the highest elevations, and growing seasons among the shortest in the nation, native vegetation consists of a diverse complement of the hardiest of species. The environmental factors which require vegetation to be hardy also limit revegetation of disturbed areas. The County is among the cleanest counties in the nation with regard to invasive species.

Soil is a living organism, and the biodiversity of the organic material in the soil determines the health of the land in any particular area. Also, healthy and abundant topsoil is vital in the absorption and cycling of water, minerals, and solar energy. Because of this, it should be incumbent on all landowners, large and small, to use land management practices that will build topsoil. Erosion, that is, loss of topsoil, at any rate should be minimized. Soil type is the best single indicator of development limitations such as shrink-swelling properties, bearing strength, erodibility, drainage, and soil depth. While a soil map of sufficient detail to be of use cannot be included in this plan, information on soils for a specific location can be obtained from the Conservation District. Steep slopes and fragile soils warrant special protection, as they are especially susceptible to erosion if disturbed or improperly developed. Limitations are discussed in detail in the section entitled "Lands Unsuitable for Development" in the Natural Hazards section (page 26) of this plan.

General topography and herbaceous ground cover of the land are also important contributing factors in the absorption and cycling of water. Disruption of either, by excavation for roads, walkways, building sites or any other purpose, will diminish the natural water catchment capabilities of any land parcel.

**G(d). OIL AND GAS - County Goals and Policies**

- 1. COUNTY GOAL: Encourage the oil and gas industry to develop in an orderly, sustained fashion that will be cognizant of the economic benefit and general welfare of Sublette County residents while preserving the environmental quality we presently enjoy.**
- 2. COUNTY GOAL: Recognize and value the contribution the oil & gas industry makes to the economy of Sublette County, both in terms of tax revenue and the creation of jobs for a significant number of Sublette County residents.**
- 3. COUNTY GOAL: Optimize the potential development of value added industries derived from oil & gas resources.**

Sublette County will pursue the following policies relating to oil and gas development:

- a. *County Policy:*** Encourage and welcome responsible, orderly, staged energy development. Similarly, discourage the intrusion of the impact of exploration and development activities into the peace and harmony of other land uses.
- b. *County Policy:*** Encourage and support the use of best available technologies that are economically, socially and environmentally sound.
- c. *County Policy:*** Encourage use of and exploration of alternative energy sources.
- d. *County Policy:*** Support the enforcement of state and federal regulations to prevent surface and underground abuses by seismic and exploratory drilling.
- e. *County Policy:*** Participate in official capacity at the earliest opportunity regarding oil and gas development on public lands through the official designation of a representative of the County. This representative would aid in the development of a coordinating mechanism between Sublette County, the State and federal agencies.
- f. *County Policy:*** Encourage and participate in advance planning between the County, the State, property owners and the oil and gas industry to assure that proactive measures are taken to mitigate impacts on the community.

## **Background Information/Data (Oil and Gas)**

For the past 50 years, the oil and gas industry has provided a majority of the tax base and has been a principal industry affecting the economy of Sublette County. After an initial "Boom Period" in the late 1950's, similar to that of many industrially impacted areas in the State, the extraction of these two non-renewable resources has provided an economic basis upon which the County's infrastructure is built.

Historically, the industry has been concentrated in the southwest section of the County. There, the industry has matured to a dynamic balance of exploration, development and production stages and is no longer associated with the heavy influx of new people common to early exploration. Most employees of the long-established businesses are permanent residents of the County and are valuable contributors to the community.

More recently, large-scale exploration and development is occurring in the southeast and central portions of the County. Accompanying this new growth in oil and gas exploration and development are new environmental and social concerns. These developments have increased employment and tax base in the County.

Sublette County's contribution to energy production has national significance, and that contribution is expected to grow. Price structure and advanced technology will drive the development of much gas that heretofore has been uneconomical. Also, coal bed methane (CBM) potential is large, given improved extraction technology. The development of a CBM industry brings a new set of concerns to the development of gas resources. Impacts perhaps unique to CBM in the gas industry include disturbances to aquifers and the management of large volumes of produced water.

Since most oil and gas production is on public land, the level and intensity of activity is often determined by regulations imposed by State and federal government agencies. Therefore, it is important that Sublette County participates in an official capacity, so that the interests of Sublette County are represented.

**G(e). MINING AND QUARRYING - County Goals and Policies**

- 1. COUNTY GOAL: Extract minerals in such a way that will not detract from the quality of life in Sublette County.**
- 2. COUNTY GOAL: Proceed with mineral extraction in a manner that will be socially, economically and environmentally sound.**

Sublette County will pursue the following policies relating mining and quarrying:

- a. County Policy:** Consider participating in decisions regarding mining on public lands as a cooperating agency.
- b. County Policy:** Implement buffer zones if active mineral extraction enterprises would present a nuisance or hazard to adjacent residents.
- c. County Policy:** Encourage and participate in advance planning between the County, the State, property owners and the mineral extraction enterprise to assure that proactive measures are taken to mitigate impacts on the community.
- d. County Policy:** Encourage the implementation of mitigation measures incorporating the best available technological and management practices to control fugitive dust, particulates, undue noise, and exotic weeds to ensure the safety of the general public and protection of other natural resources.
- e. County Policy:** Support adherence to State and federal regulations within prescribed time frames.

### **Background Information/Data (Mining and Quarrying)**

Sand and gravel operations are by far the most extensive mining activities in the County. Sand and gravel production may include rock and stone crushing, washing, transportation, handling and storage.

Much of Sublette County is underlain by coal deposits, and oil shale beds extend into the southern portion of the County.

Although there is no known mineral exploration at this time, a small number of mineral occurrences do exist. The table on the following page identifies specific areas within the County and the associated minerals.

**G(f). WILDLIFE RESOURCES - County Goals and Policies**

- 1. COUNTY GOAL: Attain and maintain appropriate fish and wildlife populations, together with the habitat to sustain those populations.**
- 2. COUNTY GOAL: Recognize and respect the economic activity generated through the use of the wildlife resource, ensuring its future in the ecology, economy, and culture of the County.**

Sublette County will pursue the following policies relating to wildlife resource issues:

- a. County Policy:** Consider wildlife habitat values as part of any new development proposals.
- b. County Policy:** Encourage close coordination with all federal and State agencies on all issues affecting populations and habitats of all species.
- c. County Policy:** Consider migration corridors, crucial winter ranges, and other important habitats when evaluating land use proposals. In some cases, the migration corridors that link summer and winter ranges are already tightly constricted. These areas are recognized as being very sensitive and their integrity should be protected. There are many tools available, beyond County zoning regulation, to shelter the function of important wildlife areas.
- d. County Policy:** Advance and employ those tools and techniques which enhance wildlife friendly developments. Encourage early coordination among Sublette County, Wyoming Game and Fish Department (WGFD), and project proponents to enhance the inclusion of wildlife friendly recommendations into proposed developments.
- e. County Policy:** Encourage/support maintaining wildlife populations that are in balance with available habitat and other uses.
- f. County Policy:** Support wildlife management techniques that minimize conflicts with agricultural operations and/or practices.
- g. County Policy:** Encourage close cooperation between the Wyoming Game & Fish Department (WGFD) and private landowners in dealing with game damage on private property, particularly in winter.
- h. County Policy:** Promote healthy fish populations, particularly native species, by maintaining or improving fisheries habitat.
- i. County Policy:** Encourage County cooperation/coordination with State and federal agencies concerning the management of wildlife resources.
- j. County Policy:** Support proactive wildlife conservation efforts.
- k. County Policy:** Minimize conflicts between wildlife and domestic pets.

## **Background Information/Data (Wildlife)**

Sublette County possesses an abundance and diversity of wildlife found in few other places. The wildlife resource in Sublette County represents a great aesthetic value, but also provides significant recreational values. Resident wildlife includes big game such as mule and white-tailed deer, antelope, elk, moose, and bighorn sheep.

Large predators such as mountain lions, black bears, grizzly bears, lynx, and wolves are also found in the County. A diversity of bird species also call Sublette County home or migrate through the area. These include: sage-grouse, blue and ruffed grouse, Canada geese, sandhill cranes, trumpeter swans, bald and golden eagles, prairie and peregrine falcons, ospreys, great gray owls, long-billed curlews, Harlequin ducks, horned larks, and mountain bluebirds are just a few. The numerous lakes and streams of Sublette County provide habitat for native Colorado River cutthroat trout, rainbow trout, brown trout, brook trout, lake trout, golden trout, kokanee salmon, grayling, and mountain whitefish. Hunting, fishing, and wildlife viewing for these species represent a significant recreational attraction. A number of species are being closely monitored and information regarding species trend and condition are available through agencies with wildlife management responsibilities.

The changing seasons experienced in Sublette County necessitate substantial migrations for many species. Seasonal movements of animals traverse both public and private lands. Annual migrations of mule deer and antelope can exceed 100 miles while trumpeter swans that summer in Sublette County may winter as far away as the Grand Canyon in Arizona. The ability of animals to move freely as environmental conditions change is part of what allows Sublette County to be home to such a diversity and abundance of wildlife.

**G(g). FORESTRY/TIMBER RESOURCES - County Goals and Policies**

- 1. COUNTY GOAL: Encourage the orderly harvest of timber while at the same time assuring a continued supply of this renewable resource by utilizing reforestation and management techniques.**
- 2. COUNTY GOAL: Encourage appropriate forestry management practices that will serve to protect watershed, wildlife habitat and aesthetic values.**

Sublette County will pursue the following policies relating to timber resources:

- a. County Policy:** Support proper forest management, including timber harvest, while at the same time taking into consideration watershed, wildlife habitat, and aesthetic values.
- b. County Policy:** Encourage the use of resource/environmentally sensitive harvesting methods/techniques, particularly when harvesting areas with fragile soils and marginal slopes.
- c. County Policy:** Maintain accessibility to an adequate fuel wood supply for County residents.
- d. County Policy:** Encourage timber sales sized to be attractive to small operators.

## **Background Information/Data (Timber)**

The forested areas found within the Bridger-Teton National Forest, the foothills of the Wind River Mountains and the Wyoming Range on Bureau of Land Management (BLM) lands, and many private lands throughout Sublette County, provide a variety of uses and values. From the sale of saw timber, posts, and poles for local and out of County sawmills, to commercial and personal firewood cutting, to the protection and maintenance of valuable watersheds, to maintenance and improvement of a wildlife habitat, to our unmatched mountain landscapes, Sublette County forests are a key component. Native tree species found within the County range from junipers at lower elevations and narrow-leaved cottonwoods along riparian corridors, aspen, lodgepole pine, and in some cases Douglas Fir at lower to mid elevations, to engelmann spruce and subalpine fir, and limber pine at most elevations, to whitebark pine stands at higher elevations.

Timber as a source of economic enterprise in the County has been severely limited. The individual household use of the resource for home heating fuels and posts and poles continue to be important to the County.

## **H. PUBLIC LANDS AND RESOURCES - County Goals and Policies**

- 1. COUNTY GOAL: Maintain open communication and cooperative relationships between the Board of County Commissioners, Planning and Zoning Commission and the federal and State agencies, chiefly, the United States Forest Service (USFS), Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Office of State Lands and Investments, and the Wyoming Game & Fish Department (WGFD). The County will actively participate in all relevant public land and resource planning and decisionmaking processes.**
- 2. COUNTY GOAL: Encourage /support the management of federal and State lands and resources under a multi-use policy.**
- 3. COUNTY GOAL: Encourage/support the development of renewable and nonrenewable resources in an orderly manner.**
- 4. COUNTY GOAL: Ensure County economic, social and cultural interests and values are adequately and appropriately considered in all relevant federal and State land and resource planning and decision-making processes.**
- 5. COUNTY GOAL: Balance/consider the conservation and enhancement of natural resources with the economic benefit of resource development.**
- 6. COUNTY GOAL: Encourage federal and State land and resource management agencies to recognize the important benefits of recreational uses to local economies. Encourage recreational enterprise.**

Sublette County will pursue the following policies relating to public lands and resources:

### **County Approach and Philosophy**

- a. County Policy:** Designate a County representative to foster cooperative relationships with public land and resource agencies and to participate in relevant public land and resources planning and decision-making processes.
- b. County Policy:** Evaluate private development plans, proposals and decisions for potential impacts on public lands/resources. Evaluate public land/resource plans, proposals and decisions for potential impacts on private lands and interests.
- c. County Policy:** Evaluate developed access points to public lands to minimize adverse effects on adjacent private and public lands, e.g., river access points, camp grounds, trail-head parking, etc.
- d. County Policy:** Ensure that the designation of special use areas are carefully considered for both their benefits to a healthy recreation industry and other possible economic impacts.
- e. County Policy:** Support grazing as an important and compatible use on public lands, including wilderness. Recognize that grazing and associated animal impacts can be

beneficial to public rangelands if implemented appropriately.

- f. **County Policy:** Advocate that land use plans adopted by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and United States Forest Service (USFS) are coordinated and consistent with the Sublette County Comprehensive Plan and the Sublette County Conservation District Natural Resource Statement.
- g. **County Policy:** Schedule, through the designated County representative, regular reporting and informational updates with entities of County, State and federal government, thus enabling all interested parties to participate in public land planning and decision-making processes.
- h. **County Policy:** Support/encourage multiple-use policy implementation on federal and State lands, thus assuring a strong sustained economic base for the County.
- i. **County Policy:** Require public land and resource management agencies to protect County residents' safety, health and property as part of providing/allowing development of non-renewable resources.
- j. **County Policy:** Support the maintenance of healthy wildlife populations as an appropriate and desired use of public lands.
- k. **County Policy:** Recognize that overuse of the wilderness can compromise the amenities that we value in this resource. Good conservation policies should be encouraged.

## **Background Information/Data (Public Lands and Resources)**

From the time of the fur trappers and the tie-hacks, Sublette County's now public lands have opened the doors to prosperity. Their abundant natural resources, scenic beauty, wildlife habitat, and world-class recreational opportunities have drawn presidents and paupers alike. Within Sublette County lie pristine rivers, streams and mountain lakes fed by the melting snows of the Continental Divide. Native fish thrive here, and our rangelands support great herds of deer, elk and antelope as well as domestic animals. Our hundred-mile gaze has beheld little change in our frontier character and wide, open spaces.

As the human population grows, all resources on our public lands face increasing pressure to fulfill a host of demands. It is increasingly important to recognize the need for communication and cooperation between the public and the administering agencies. County residents wishing to participate in guiding policy that affects them need a known source for information and an avenue through which to communicate their preferences. Because 78% of Sublette County is federal land, agency decisions have far-reaching consequences. Communication and cooperation between the public and the administering agencies is mutually beneficial.

Sublette County's United States Forest Service (USFS) and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) lands saw 335,298 total visitor days in 1995.

The bulk of extractive industries, currently generating 80% of the County's tax base through mineral extraction, occurs on public lands.

Annually, approximately 228,000 AUMs of grazing are generated on public lands by the 128 ranches which have grazing permits. Those ranches with grazing permits have woven that forage base into their operations.

Congressionally designated wilderness covers over 500,000 acres in Sublette County, providing use for recreation (particularly backpacking), livestock grazing, and wildlife habitat. Wilderness is a valuable natural and economic resource to this County, and exemplary conservation policies will assure the sustainability of the important amenities that wilderness provides.

**ATTACHMENTS (to be provided in final document)**

**County/Community Populations**

**County Workforce Trends**