

CRITICAL AREAS – GOALS AND POLICIES TO CONSIDER

GOALS

1. Protect the public health, safety and welfare and protect opportunities for economic growth and prosperity by protecting air and water quality and avoiding the unnecessary expenditure of public revenues generated by inappropriate development in areas susceptible to natural disasters and hazards.
2. Strive for balance among potential conflicts between economic development and environmental protection objectives when dealing with state, federal and local agencies and other county stakeholders.

POLICIES

1. Implement land use decision-making and development review in a manner that protects the functions and values of identified Critical Areas within the County.
2. Prevent the siting of developments subject to damage or that could result in loss of life in areas of known natural disasters and hazards (e.g. areas potentially subject to flooding, flash flooding, saturated soils or high groundwater, sloughing, landslides, creeping, eroding, rock fall, etc.) unless it can be demonstrated that the development is sited, designed and engineered for long term structural integrity, and that life and property on and off-site are not subject to increased hazards as a result of the development.
3. Encourage low intensity land uses, such as agriculture, recreation, or very low density residential in areas subject to natural hazards.
4. Promote the preservation of natural areas that have scientific, research, historic or educational significance.
5. Identify and protect critical fish and wildlife habitat from destruction or encroachment by incompatible land uses and development methods.
6. Identify and designate for protection those natural wetlands (marshes, sloughs, shorelines, etc.) that are important for wildlife and game habitat and for compatible recreational uses.
7. Reserve unbuildable areas, publicly owned lands, and biologically sensitive natural areas such as rivers, creeks, **ridges** and slopes to create an integrated, contiguous pattern of open lands that serve multiple functions, such as wildlife habitat/migration corridors, hiking trails, recreational uses, stormwater retention, and/or buffers between incompatible uses.
8. Encourage private development that incorporates design approaches that minimize environmental degradation and maximize functional open space networks. Examples of such approaches include low impact development techniques, conservation subdivision design, clustered development, green building design and utility extension policies.
9. Avoid fragmentation of corridors or areas identified through best available science as important for protecting regional bio-diversity. Such actions should not interfere with continued use of lands historically used for the production of food, agricultural products, commercial timber production, grazing of livestock, or for the extraction of minerals in the accustomed manner and in accordance with best management practices.
10. Avoid or minimize development impacts at the watershed or landscape scale by promoting development methods and techniques to address impacts caused by site-specific uses and cumulative impacts. **Comments support stronger language supporting more comprehensive evaluation of “Cumulative Impacts”.**
11. Encourage natural solutions such as bioengineering techniques, where possible, to address environmental impacts of development on the watershed. Examples of such techniques include using live/dead plants and inorganic materials to prevent erosion, control sediment

and other pollutants, providing habitat restoration of native vegetation on river banks to enhance natural decontamination of runoff before it enters the river, and creation of wetland systems for the treatment of storm water.

12. Identify causes or sources of environmental degradation and work with property owners to develop workable solutions to redress or eliminate these impacts.
13. Coordinate with federal, state and local agencies to monitor watershed health and adapt local approaches where the need for such change is indicated.

WATER, FLOODPLAINS, WETLANDS, ETC.

Goal:

Water and sewer systems will be planned and managed to maintain the level and high quality of the aquifer; to assure adequate high quality stream flows for fisheries and to assure the quantity and quality of downstream users' water supplies within the limits of natural stream flows.

Policies:

- Flood plains will remain free of substantial structures, sewage disposal, and impervious surfaces. This is to provide a filter for surface water entering a stream, maximum water absorption, and unobstructed stream flow and to prevent pollution of surface water.
- Sewage treatment systems will meet **or exceed** all state and county requirements to assure that ground and surface water remains unpolluted.
- Storm water runoff systems will be designed to meet all state and county requirements to assure that ground and surface water remains unpolluted. **enforce/regulate more aggressively in soil types subject to mass wasting, i.e. ground disturbance such as roads should not be permitted in these areas**
- Water conservation will be considered in building and landscape design.
- Any new development which applies for status as a municipality or applies for more than **(a designated number of)** residences will install a state-of-the-art sewage disposal facility, **especially along waterways, wetlands, recharge zones**
- No interruptible water sources shall be considered an adequate water source for residential development.
- Water quality will be protected and enhanced by establishing setbacks for septic tanks near wetlands and waterways.
- Water quality will be protected and enhanced by designing and engineering adequate storm water and drainage systems for all new roads.
- Water quality will be protected and enhanced by limiting livestock access...establishing setbacks for standing water and residential and agricultural chemical use, etc.
- Water conservation will be encouraged..
- Encourage preservation and enhancement of beaver ponds and other wetlands as a method of water storage, water purification, and conservation.

AIR Quality

Goal: Maintain a high standard of air quality to sustain life and to provide clear views of the surrounding scenery.

Policies:

- Transportation planning will be coordinated for the entire Methow Valley to provide for maximum use of human powered modes of travel and mass transportation to prevent air pollution.

- Wood stoves will be limited to EPA-approved systems for new and planned construction. **Wood burning Fireplaces will not be permitted .**
- Encourage measures which will assure clean and healthful air (which would include measures to control resuspended dust , wood smoke, and other fine paraticulate matter.
- **Limit** burning during air inversion periods
- Encourage investigation of air shed characteristics
- Encourage any new developmenst to ban woodburning devices and use propane woodstoves, fireplaces, etc.
- All new homes and developments will use clean burning heating elements such as EPA approved devices.
- Non burning methods of handling organic waste, such as composting, will be encouraged.
- Encourage a locally relevant (ie based on the unique airflow of this locale on the east slopes of the north cascade mts) program to monitor airflow and regulate burning.
- New construction standards should include requirement to meet Energy Good Cents standards, like Manufactured Homes..

WILDLIFE/HABITAT

Goal: Adequate habitat will be provided to support a rich abundance of indigenous species. Open spaces, forests and fields will provide valuable connectivity between public and private lands along historic and seasonally important migratory routes.

Policies:

- Adequate corridors for wildlife migration between hiding cover, food and water will be provided.
- Adequate protection of habitat for migratory birds
- Provide for protection of the shrub-steppe community through education, habitat protection, and conservation easements (or other mechanisms)
- Motorized vehicle access will be limited in sensitive wildlife habitat, or during seasonal periods of sensitivity, such as nesting or breeding.
- Domestic pets will not be permitted to harass wildlife.
- Water quality will be maintained and enhanced, and spawning grounds protected.