

DRAFT - SUMMARY
Big Horn County Land Use Plan Steering Committee
Sixth Meeting – September 25, 2008
7:00-9:00 p.m., County Annex, Lovell, WY

Persons Present

- Committee Members: Robert Grater, Charles Hessenthaler, Debbi McKim, Dave Neves, Mary Russell
 - Consultants: Ken Markert, Anne Cossitt
 - County Planner: Jim Waller
 - Public: None Present
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Brief Summary

Committee members met to review new inventory information on agriculture and land use, an update on the “energy corridor,” revisions to the first set of maps, and to set schedule for Open House Meetings.

Decisions/Action Items

- Next meeting will be October 23 in Basin (at jail). Purpose of the meeting will be to wrap up and review initial draft goals prior to the county-wide open houses.
 - Open houses:
 - i. Will be held during the first week in December
 - ii. Locations: Committee members agreed that one location would work for the north part of the county (e.g., Lovell), another in Greybull or Basin, and another in Manderson or Hyattville
 - iii. Jim Waller will check on possible locations
 - iv. Markert team will prepare the news advertisements and send out 3 weeks, 2 weeks, (and also possibly one week) in advance of the meetings
 - v. Committee members should attend the meeting closest to where they live (and are welcome at all meetings, but not required to attend all)
 - vi. Committee members should actively encourage attendance at the meetings
 - Land Use Report
 - i. Conclusions, 1st bulleted item: Include state lands as potential for being transferred to private or local government ownership
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Other Discussion (not decision items)

- Debbi McKim said Bruce Blevins’s book about Big Horn County Wyoming describes the history of some of the platted townsites that have never been developed (or developed and later abandoned). The odd circular-shaped townsites (e.g., Alamo) were platted in the 1890s.
- The “Vacant Residential” tax classification includes anything less than 35 acres that does not include a house or that has not been proved to meet the definition of land in agricultural production.

- Committee members discussed the Desert Land Act and potential for individual acquisition of federal land through this program.¹ The Bureau of Land Management is in the NEPA EIS review process to transfer land under this Act to an irrigation company. Debbi McKim commented that this was taking years to get through.
 - Big Horn County's ranking in Wyoming for agricultural production. Committee members commented that the information was from 2002 and the ratings may have changed dramatically since then.
 - The Worland Sugar Beet processing plant may not be running next year (due to market and local supply issues). Contracts to sell sugar beets to the plant might be phasing out and producers choosing not to renew.
 - Difficult to judge trends based on production data alone for the census years (e.g., 2002, 2005). Production could be up or down for a variety of reasons including fewer acres planted, drought, or other.
 - Committee members discussed effects of conservation easements, which can reduce production and have subsequent indirect effects on main street suppliers. Markert suggested that the plan might have a statement that encourages conservation easements to continue some level of production.
 - The Committee reviewed the multi-modal energy corridor map. The BLM shows the corridor as conceptual and only on federal lands. Consequently, there are breaks in the corridor where it will need to cross private and other public lands. Committee members discussed issues of residential and agricultural development within these corridors.
 - Markert reviewed a "Services Efficiency Map" for the county. The map is on the web-site. The map rates the entire county for efficiency of providing basic services (fire protection, law enforcement, schools, and health care).
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Next Steps

- Committee will meet on October 23 in Basin. The Committee will decide then if another meeting is needed in November prior to the Open Houses.
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Corrections

If you would like to make a correction or addition to this summary, please contact Ken Markert (307-587-4480) by no later than September 25.

¹ The Desert Land Act, passed into law in 1877 by the US Congress, grants up to one section--640 acres--of public desert land in California, Oregon, Nevada, Washington, Idaho, Montana, Utah, Wyoming, Arizona, New Mexico, and "Dakota" to any citizen at a total cost of \$1.25 per acre on condition that the claimant demonstrate "reclamation" of the land by irrigation, for which purpose the use of water from other public lands is free.