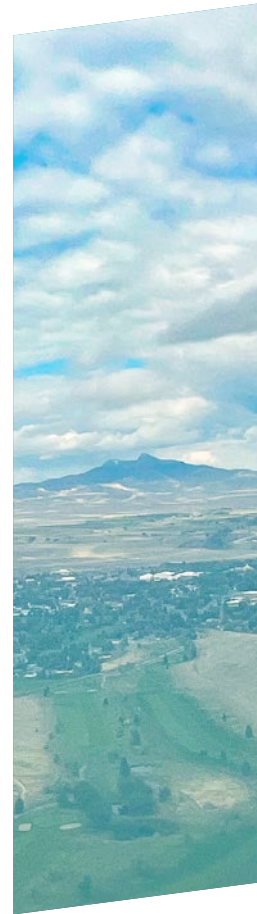


# PARK COUNTY LAND USE PLAN

Park County, Wyoming



**ADOPTION DRAFT**

**AUGUST 2023**

Prepared for the people of Park County by:



**CLARION**





## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

### BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

- Dossie Overfield, Chairman
- Lloyd Thiel, Vice Chairman
- Scott Mangold, Vice Chairman
- Lee Livingston
- Scott Steward
- Joseph E. Tilden

### PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION

- Kimberly Brandon-Wintermote, Chairman
- Duncan Bonine, Vice Chairman
- Guy Eastman
- Bob Ferguson
- Richard Jones
- Brian Peters
- Eugene Spiering

### LAND USE PLAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE

- Bret Allard, Sunlight
- Mike Bromley, Middle South Fork
- Rebekah Burns, Economics
- Matt Curtis, Upper South Fork
- Dave Hoffert, Clark
- Kathleen Jachowski, Environmental
- Tracy Lafollette, Upper Clarks Fork
- Richard Lasko, Sage Creek
- Tiffanie May, Meeteetse
- Marion Morrison, Cody-Powell Rural
- Andy Quick, Cody Local

- Kelly Spiering, Agriculture
- Laurie Steward, North Fork
- Jerry Thompson, Commercial/Industrial
- Brett Trudo, Lower South Fork
- Tye Whitlock, Powell/Real Estate

### TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP

- Joseph Burrell, Black Hills Corporation
- Corey Class, Wyoming Game & Fish Department
- Ben Cook, City of Cody
- Steffen Cornell, Meeteetse Conservation District
- Brian Edwards, Park County Engineer
- Mayor Matt Hall, City of Cody
- Jack Hoffman, Wyoming Department of Transportation
- Ben Hubbard, City of Powell
- Chad Krause, Bureau of Land Management
- Carmen McIntyre, Powell Clarks Fork Conservation District
- Raymond McPadden, National Park Service
- Michael Miller, Wyoming Department of Transportation
- Travis Moger, Willwood Irrigation District
- Trent Reed, Shoshone Irrigation District
- Tony Rutherford, Northwest Rural Water District
- Todd Stowell, City of Cody

- Zack Thorington, City of Powell
- Ann Trosper, Powell Clarks Fork Conservation District
- Mayor J.W. Yetter, Town of Meeteetse

### PLANNING AND ZONING DEPARTMENT

- Joy Hill, Director/Floodplain Administrator
- Kim Dillivan, Assistant Director/SWW Administrator
- Jennifer Cramer, Planner I
- Anthony Camiccia, Planning Technician
- Jolene Brakke, Office Assistant

### COUNTY OFFICES

- Assessor's Office
- Attorney's Office
- Clerk's Office
- Commissioners' Office
- Historical Archives
- Homeland Security
- Information Technology Department
- Public Works Department and County Engineer
- Treasurer's Office

### FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANTS

#### Agriculture

- Curt Bales
- Tom Churchill, Churchill Farms
- Coy Churchill, Churchill Farms
- Spencer George, George Farms



- Dennis Reed, Reed Farms
- Kelly Spiering

### Art, Culture, and History

- Brian Beauvais, Park County Historical Archives
- Dr. Lawrence Todd
- Amy Phillips, Meeteetse Museums
- Dakota Russell, Heart Mountain Interpretive Center
- Brandi Wright, Homesteader Museum

### Business/Economic Development and Chambers

- Rebekah Burns, Powell Economic Partnership
- Kristin Fong, Wyoming Business Council
- Ryan Hauck, Park County Travel Council
- James Klessens, Forward Cody
- Amy Quick, Wyoming Business Council

### Conservation Districts

- Steffen Cornell, Meeteetse Conservation District
- Carmen McIntyre, Powell Clarks Fork Conservation District
- Brittany Swope, Cody Conservation District
- Ann Trosper, Natural Resources Conservation Service

### Development Community

- Nick Hummel, Engineering Associates
- Harold Musser, Musser Bros. Inc.

- Cody Schatz, Engineering Associates
- David Schultz, Sage Civil Engineering
- Colin Simpson, Trail Creek Ranch
- Dusty Spomer, T-O Engineers

### Education/Youth

- Jay Curtis, Park County School District 1
- Tim Foley, Park County School District 6
- Vernon Orendorff, Park County School District 6
- Shane Ogden, Park County School District 16
- Kelly McArdle, Northwest College
- Lisa Watson, Northwest College
- Tycee Mohler, 4-H

### Gas/Electric/Roads Utilities

- Joseph Burrell, Black Hills Energy
- Brian Edwards, Park County Public Works
- Jack Hoffman, Wyoming Department of Transportation
- David Magee, Montana-Dakotas Utilities
- Ben McDonald, Park County Public Works
- Michael Miller, Wyoming Department of Transportation
- Amber Stoffels, BNSF
- Lindsay Van Meter, BNSF

### General Conservation

- Jenny DeSarro, Greater Yellowstone Coalition

- Jarren Kuipers, Land Steward Services
- Chris McBarnes, The WYldlife Fund
- Abby Scott, The Nature Conservancy

### Irrigation Districts

- Travis Moger, Willwood Irrigation District
- Trent Reed, Shoshone Irrigation District
- Mary Reed, Lakeview Irrigation District
- Tyler Weckler, Heart Mountain Irrigation District
- Jim Wenzel, Heart Mountain Irrigation District

### Municipalities

- Mayor Matt Hall, City of Cody
- Mayor John Wetzel, City of Powell
- Mayor J.W. Yetter, Town of Meeteetse
- Ben Hubbard, City of Powell
- Todd Stowell, City of Cody
- Zack Thorington, City of Powell

### Public Lands

- Corey Class, Wyoming Game & Fish Department
- Amy Crawford, Wyoming Outdoor Recreation
- Casey McQuiston, Shoshone National Forest
- Tony Mong, Wyoming Game & Fish Department
- Jon Nicholson, Yellowstone National Park

## Real Estate

- Donny Anderson
- Duncan Bonine
- Kimberly Brandon-Wintermote
- Emily Denney
- Nathan Gesner
- Ed Higbie
- Echo Renner
- Sandi Shearer
- Pia Trotter

## Water Utilities

- Craig Barsness, Shoshone Municipal Pipeline
- Tony Rutherford, Northwest Rural Water District

## Yellowstone Regional Airport

- Aaron Buck, Airport Director

## GENERAL PUBLIC

A special thanks to the residents of Park County and the hundreds of individuals who participated in the Plan Park County process—in-person and online!

## CONSULTANT TEAM

- Clarion Associates
- Economic and Planning Systems
- T-O Engineers

## PHOTOGRAPHY CREDITS

Photos in this document are courtesy of:

- Park County Planning and Zoning Department Staff
- LUPAC Members
- Clarion Associates
- Assorted Creative Commons Licenses through Unsplash, Flickr

## ACRONYMS

<b>BCC</b>	Board of County Commissioners	<b>NRCS</b>	Natural Resources Conservation Service
<b>BLM</b>	Bureau of Land Management	<b>NRMP</b>	Natural Resource Management Plan
<b>BNSF</b>	Burlington Northern and Santa Fe	<b>NRWD</b>	Northwest Rural Water District
<b>BOR</b>	Bureau of Reclamation	<b>P&amp;Z</b>	Planning & Zoning
<b>CCID</b>	Cody Canal Irrigation District	<b>PDR</b>	Purchase of Development Rights
<b>CRP</b>	Conservation Reserve Program	<b>PEP</b>	Powell Economic Partnership
<b>CSA</b>	Community Supported Agriculture	<b>PHMA</b>	Priority Habitat Management Area
<b>CWPP</b>	Community Wildfire Protection Plan	<b>PUD</b>	Planned Unit Development
<b>DEQ</b>	Department of Environmental Quality	<b>SBDC</b>	Small Business Development Center
<b>ECP</b>	Emergency Conservation Program	<b>SHPO</b>	State Office of Historic Preservation
<b>ERAP</b>	Emergency Rental Assistance Program	<b>SMP</b>	Shoshone Municipal Pipeline
<b>FAA</b>	Federal Aviation Administration	<b>SRMA</b>	Special Resource Management Area
<b>FEMA</b>	Federal Emergency Management Agency	<b>TDC</b>	Transferable Development Credits
<b>FSA</b>	Farm Service Agency	<b>TDR</b>	Transfer of Development Rights
<b>GIS</b>	Geographic Information System	<b>TWG</b>	Technical Working Group
<b>GRP</b>	Grassland Reserve Program	<b>USDA</b>	United States Department of Agriculture
<b>HMP</b>	Hazard Mitigation Plan	<b>USFS</b>	United States Forest Service
<b>HPC</b>	Historic Preservation Commission	<b>USGS</b>	United States Geological Survey
<b>IGA</b>	Intergovernmental Agreement	<b>UW</b>	University of Wyoming
<b>IRS</b>	Internal Revenue Service	<b>WSA</b>	Wilderness Study Area
<b>LUIP</b>	Land Use Implementation Program	<b>WYDOT</b>	Wyoming Department of Transportation
<b>LUP</b>	Land Use Plan	<b>YRA</b>	Yellowstone Regional Airport
<b>LUPAC</b>	Land Use Plan Advisory Committee		

# CONTENTS

---

## Chapter 1: Introduction

2

About the Land Use Plan	1	What's Important to Park County Residents?	16
History of Land Use Planning in Park County	3	Our Vision and Shared Values	18
About Park County: Looking at the Past and Planning for the Future	7	Parts of the Plan	22
About the Plan Park County Process	12		

---

## Chapter 2: Countywide Goals & Policies

25

About this Chapter	26	Our Resources	35
Our Rural Landscapes	27	Our Culture, Heritage, and Sense of Community	49

---

## Chapter 3: Countywide Growth Framework

56

About this Chapter	57	Land Suitability Map	64
Factors Influencing Growth	58	Future Land Use Map	68

---

## Chapter 4: Planning Area Policy Statements

88

About this Chapter	89	North Fork Planning Area	139
Clark Planning Area	91	Powell Local Planning Area	148
Cody Local Planning Area	98	Sage Creek Planning Area	157
Cody-Powell Rural Planning Area	108	Sunlight Planning Area	165
Lower South Fork Planning Area	117	Upper Clarks Fork Planning Area	172
Meeteetse Rural Planning Area	124	Upper South Fork Planning Area	179
Middle South Fork Planning Area	132		

---

## Chapter 5: Implementation

187

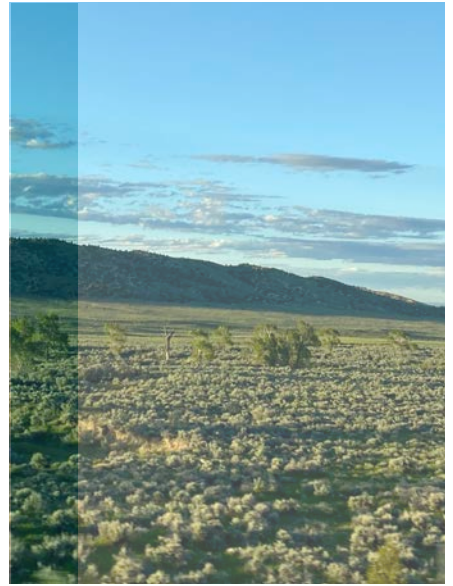
About this Chapter	188	Priority Initiatives	188
--------------------	-----	----------------------	-----

---

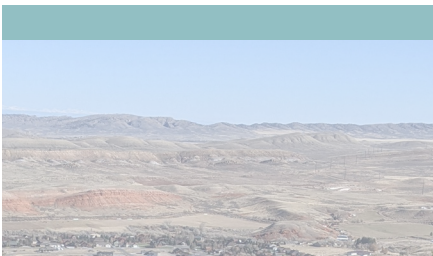
## Appendices

199

Glossary of Terms	200	Appendix B: Supporting Information	212
Appendix A: Park County 101	204	Appendix C: Public Input Summary	238



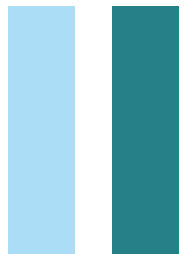
# CHAPTER



# 1



# INTRODUCTION





## ABOUT THE LAND USE PLAN

### PURPOSE OF THE PLAN

The Park County Land Use Plan (LUP) is the official land use policy document of the Planning and Zoning Commission (P&Z Commission), the Board of County Commissioners (Board or BCC), and the Planning and Zoning Department (the P&Z Department). The LUP establishes an overarching vision and goals for the use of land in unincorporated Park County over the next 15 to 20 years, as informed by an extensive public outreach process. The LUP is used to guide day-to-day decisions regarding:

- Zoning, subdivision, and other standards and regulations that influence the physical growth and development of Park County;
- The allocation of staff time and other County resources;
- Plans for public facilities, infrastructure, and utilities; and
- The County's ongoing work with the many local, state, and federal agencies and other partners that have a vested interest in the future of Park County's natural environment, economy, and communities.

The LUP also serves as an educational tool for Park County residents, property and business owners, and others seeking information about the many factors that influence where and how development occurs. While focused primarily on the physical growth and development of Park County, the LUP addresses a broad spectrum of issues that directly or indirectly influence the use of land. These topics include, but are not limited to: private property rights, land development, housing, transportation, historic preservation, natural resources, infrastructure and services, agriculture, hazard mitigation, water, wildlife, and economic development.

### APPLICABILITY OF THE LAND USE PLAN

Park County's authority to regulate land use pertains to the unincorporated areas only. The cities of Cody and Powell, and towns of Meeteetsee and Frannie, adopt and maintain plans for their incorporated areas. State-owned and federal-ly-managed lands in Park County are regulated by applicable government entities and their agencies; however, Park County regularly coordinates with federal and state partners on land and natural resource management issues that influence the local area and economy, and adopts goals and policies that inform these collaborative efforts.



## AUTHORITY TO PLAN

Wyoming State Statute (W.S.) Title 18, Chapter 5, Article 2, authorizes the Board to “regulate and restrict the location and use of buildings and structures and the use, condition of use or occupancy of lands for residence, recreation, agriculture, industry, commerce, public use and other purposes in the unincorporated area of the county.” (W.S. § 18-5-201)

Further, the Board may establish a planning and zoning commission “to prepare and amend a comprehensive plan including zoning for promoting the public health, safety, morals and general welfare of the unincorporated areas of the county, and to certify the plan to the board of county commissioners.” (W.S. § 18-5-202)

Additional statutes apply to specific aspects of land use planning in Park County, and are referenced in other sections of this LUP where applicable.

## RELATIONSHIP TO REGULATIONS

Policy guidance provided by the LUP is advisory. As such, the goals and policies contained in the LUP must be implemented through regulations that support the intent of the LUP. In accordance with W.S. § 9-8-301, “local land use plans may guide local governments in adopting or amending local zoning regulations; however, such plans shall not be construed as a substitute for, or equivalent to, duly enacted local zoning regulations, which have the force and effect of law.”

## RELATED PLANS AND STUDIES

The LUP works in tandem with the *Natural Resource Management Plan for State and Federal lands in Park County* (NRMP), which was adopted by the Board in 2021. The NRMP serves as the basis for the Board to communicate and coordinate with federal and state government entities and their agencies on public land and natural resource management issues that influence the local area and economy.

The LUP also incorporates adopted master plans for incorporated cities in towns in Park County, in accordance with W.S. § 9-8-301(c), as well as references to technical reports prepared by the County and its partner agencies. References to related plans and studies are provided where relevant, along with a brief description.

## PLAN AMENDMENTS AND UPDATES

The Land Use Plan is not intended to be a static document. Periodic plan amendments and updates will be necessary to keep the LUP relevant as conditions change, new issues and opportunities emerge, actions are completed, and priorities shift. Suggested parameters for plan amendments and updates are outlined below.

### Progress Reports

The P&Z Department, in conjunction with the P&Z Commission and the Board, will conduct a periodic review of the Land Use Plan. If changes are needed, the collective group shall produce a report summarizing the

proposed changes and identifying an appropriate course of action to achieve those changes.

### Minor Amendments

Minor amendments to the Land Use Plan may be proposed for targeted text or map revisions that do not significantly affect other Plan goals or policies.

### Major Amendments

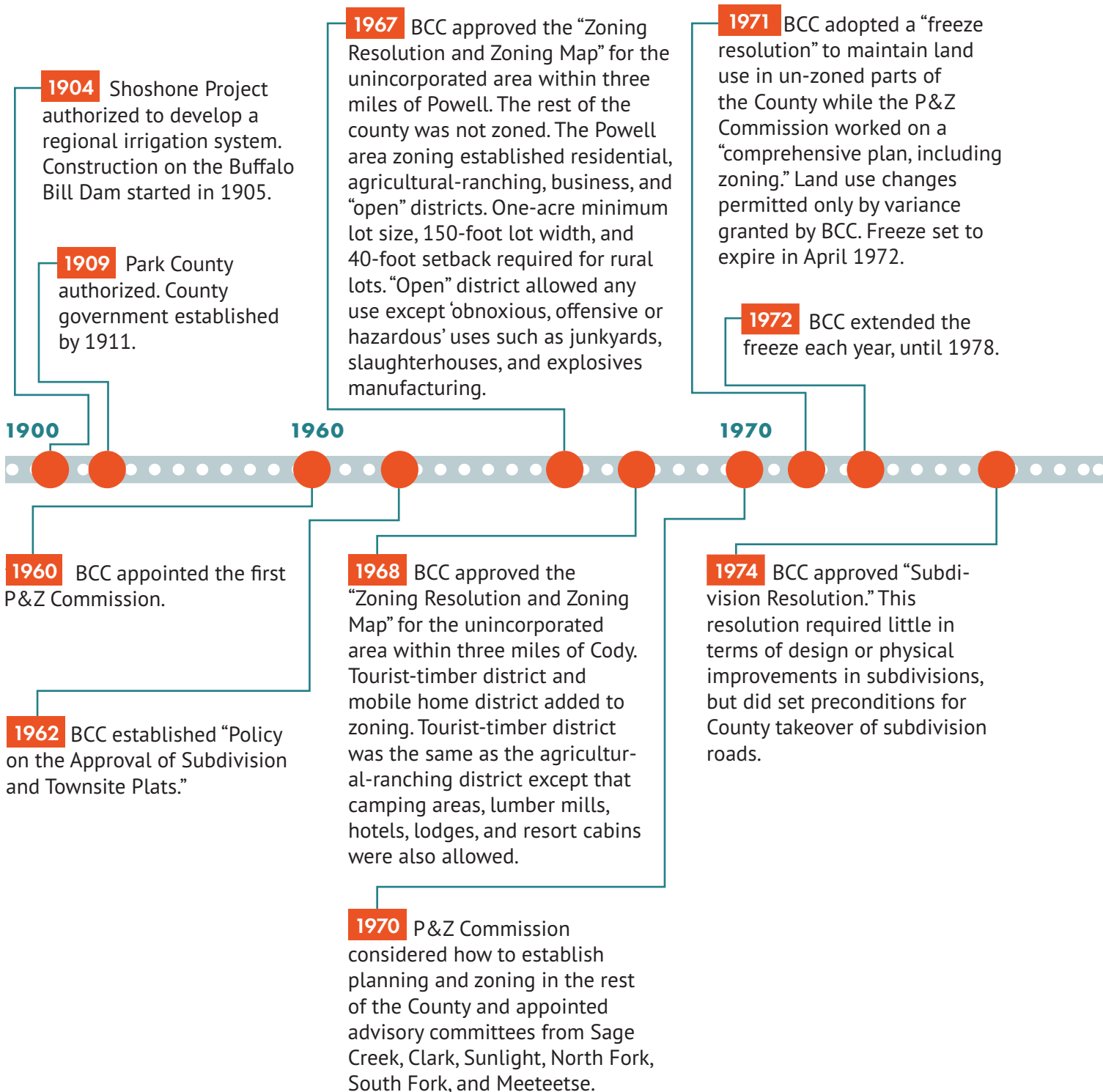
Major amendments to the Land Use Plan, such as those significantly affecting plan goals and policies, can be initiated by the director of the P&Z Department, the P&Z Commission, the Board, or by a person’s application per W.S. § 18-5-201 through § 18-5-208. Major amendments may include updates to the Future Land Use Map and/or Coordinated Planning Areas addressed in Chapter 3.

### Plan Updates

The P&Z Department, in conjunction with the P&Z Commission and Board, will conduct an annual review of the Land Use Plan to evaluate and whether a major update to the LUP is needed and to ensure that the LUP remains current and continues to meet the County’s needs. A major update should include opportunities for involvement by the public, County staff, elected and appointed officials, and other interested interests or stakeholders. It should also include an update to trends and existing condition data, a list of priority initiatives, and a review of the shared values and goals.

## HISTORY OF LAND USE PLANNING IN PARK COUNTY

This timeline provides an overview of major milestones in Park County’s planning activities throughout the last 60+ years. Over the years, Park County has attempted to shape development to the benefit of its citizens. As the timeline shows, strategies have adapted to changing times, but have consistently maintained a focus on a common theme: planned growth—through balancing the rights of landowners with the health, safety, and welfare of the community in mind.



**1975** State Legislature passed Wyoming Real Estate Subdivision Act, requiring subdivision regulations in every county and specifying minimum standards. The Legislature also passed the state Land Use Planning Act, which required counties to develop and adopt land use plans. BCC adopted revised subdivision regulations. These regulations contained significant new design and improvement standards. Requirements included floodplain easements, surveying standards, and road specifications.

**1977** BCC adopted new subdivision regulations.

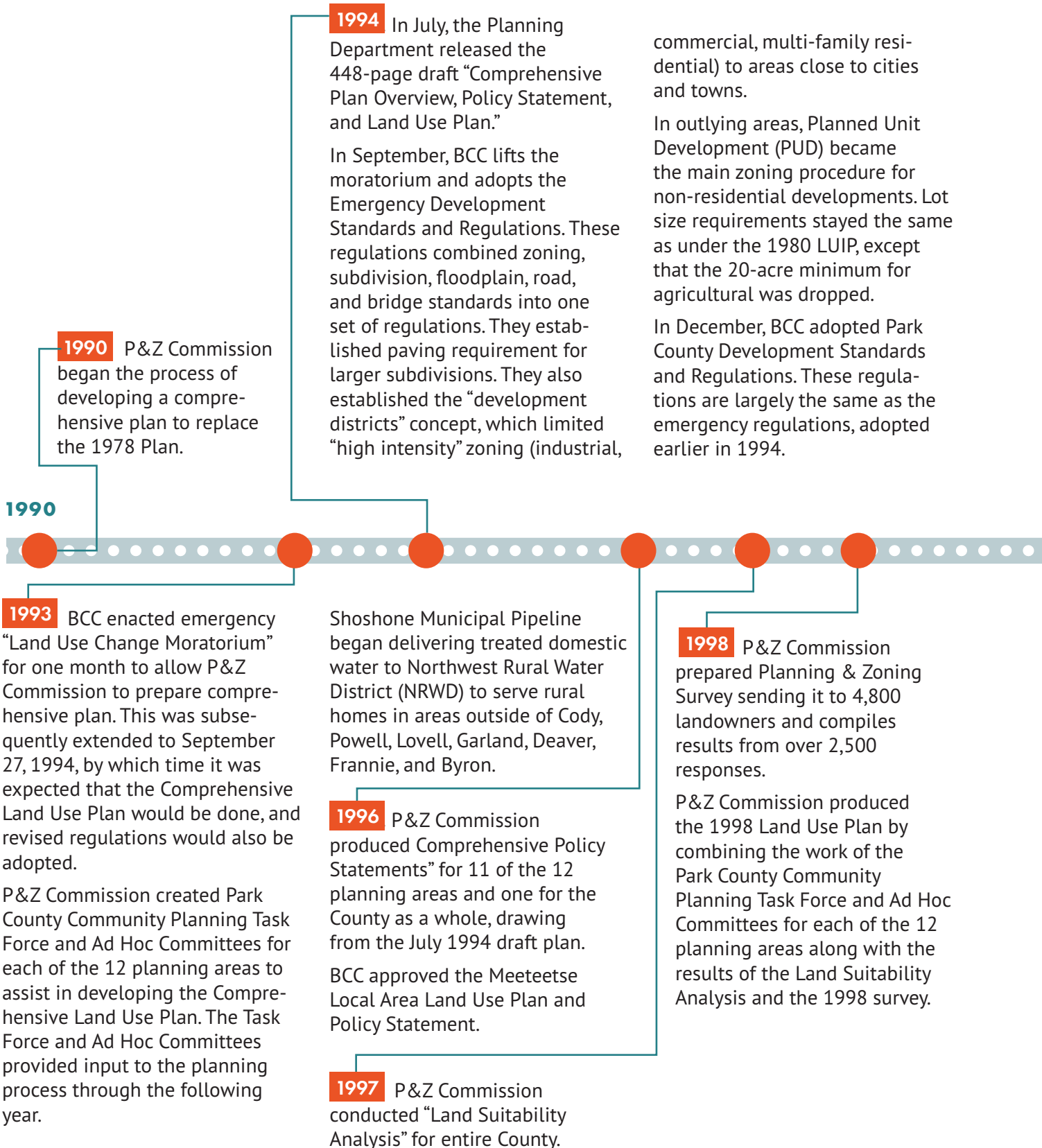
**1980** BCC adopted Park County Land Use Implementation Program (LUIP). This was the first zoning resolution that pertained to the entire County. Established eleven “land use planning areas,” with different zoning requirements in each area. 40-acre minimum lot size established in Sunlight and Upper South Fork. 2-acre minimum lot size in Sage Creek. Established nine different zoning categories (such as residential single family, agricultural, commercial retail, etc.) Agricultural zoning included a 20-acre minimum lot size.

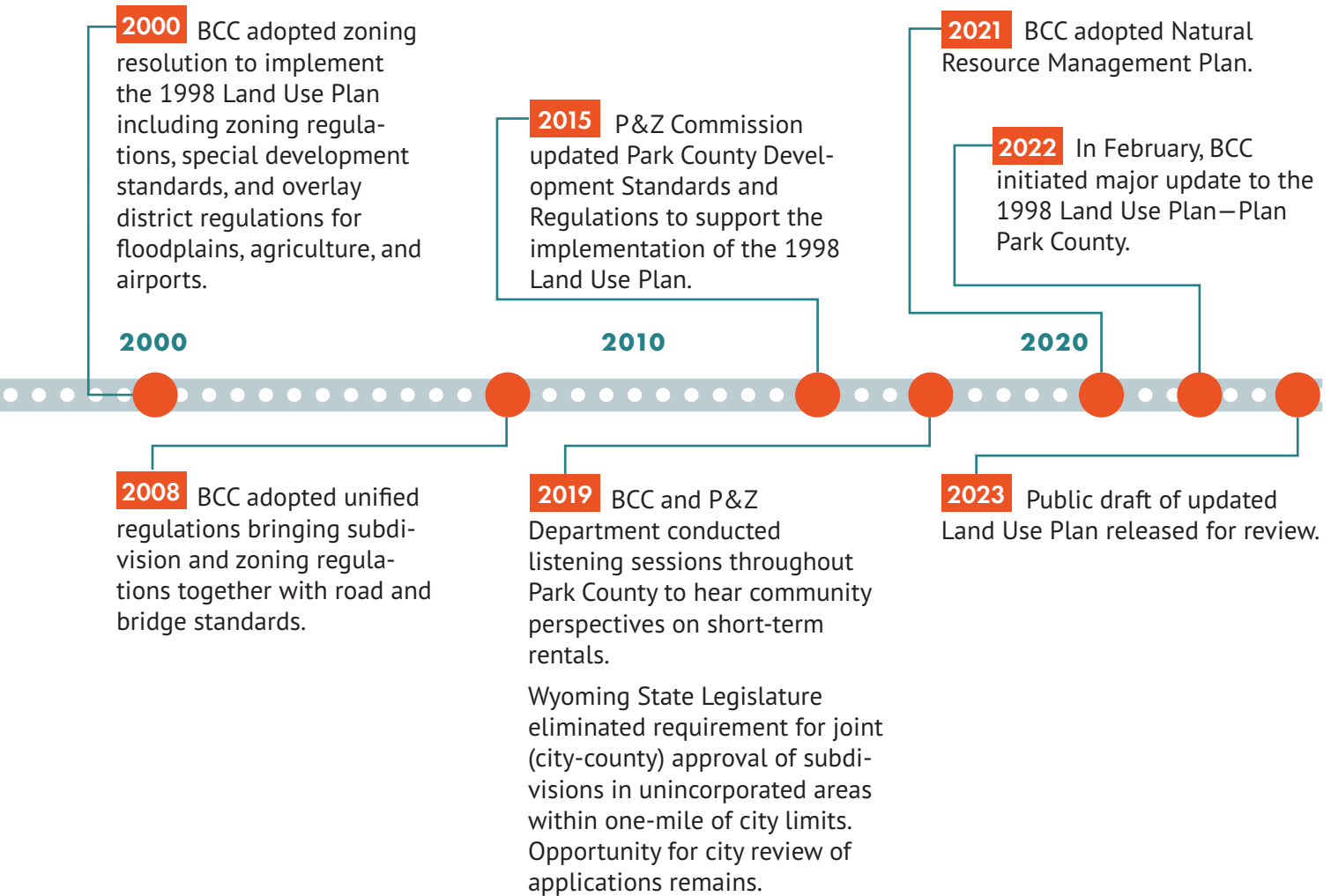
**1978** The Wyoming Supreme Court struck down the Park County “freeze,” which had been in effect since 1971, ending the County’s control of land use in all areas except the three-mile areas around Cody and Powell. BCC adopted a “Preliminary Land Use Plan,” the County’s first “comprehensive plan.” While not a land use plan, the 1978 Plan was intended to serve as a framework for future land use plans. It included a general discussion of major land use issues and policies and included many statements regarding community sentiment on various issues.

The 1978 Plan established nine “local area plans”—Upper Clarks Fork, Sunlight, Lower Clarks Fork, Cody-Powell Rural, North Fork, Lower South Fork, Sage Creek-Oregon Basin, Upper South Fork, and Meeteetse. It was expected that each of these areas would develop their own land use plans. The local area plans were to be considered supplementary to the countywide policies and guidelines of the overall plan.

**1982** BCC adopted revised Subdivision Regulations, which required consideration of subdivision impacts on agriculture, local services, taxation, and the environment. Regulations also: required test wells to verify adequacy of drinking water supply; provided for County takeover of roads after 50 percent of lots were sold; increased minimum road and bridge widths, and culvert sizes; and contained regulations for planned unit developments, cluster subdivisions, and mobile home court subdivisions.

1989



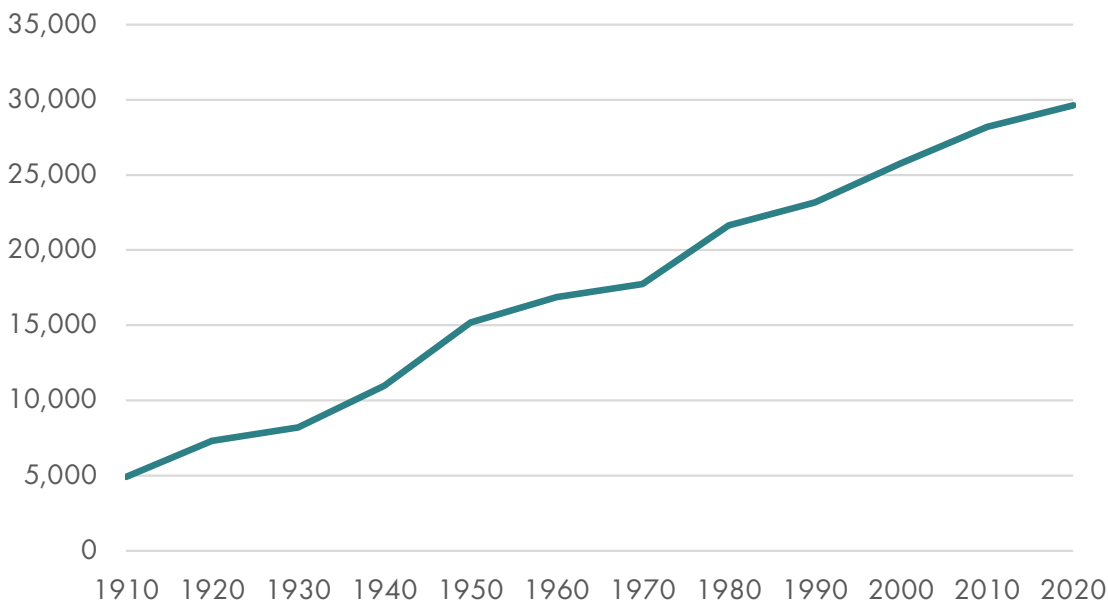


## ABOUT PARK COUNTY: LOOKING AT THE PAST AND PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

Continued growth and concerns about managing future growth were the primary drivers for initiating the update of the Land Use Plan. This section provides a summary of demographic, economic, and development trends that have occurred in Park County since the 1998 Land Use Plan was completed and examines job and housing forecasts through 2040 to estimate demand for housing and commercial development. The results of these analyses informed discussions with the public as part of the Plan Park County public process and the policy recommendations contained in this Plan.

Additional detail is provided in Appendix A, which contains summary fact sheets on Park County’s population, demographics, and employment, and Appendix B, which includes more in-depth documentation of the sources and methodology used to develop the countywide trends and growth forecast.

**Figure 1: Population Trends 1910-2020**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Economic and Planning Systems

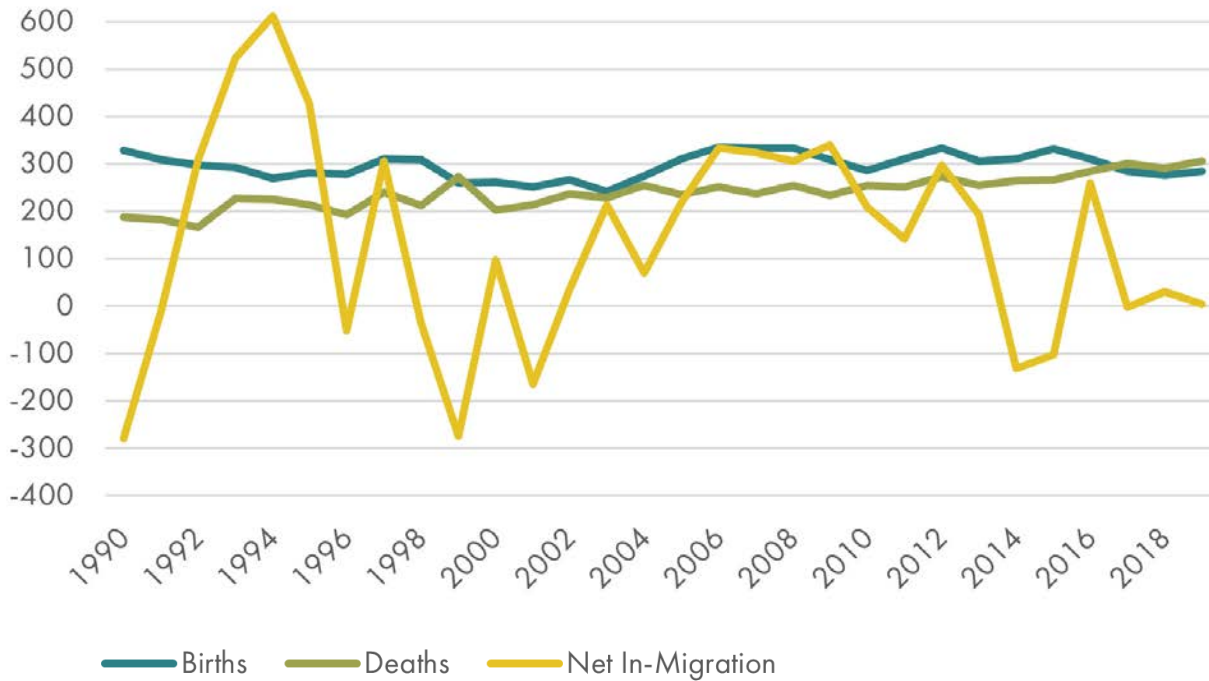
### POPULATION AND DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS

Figure 1 illustrates population trends in Park County over the last century. On average, Park County has grown by 225 residents per year since 1910. Park County’s periods of highest population growth occurred in the 1940s, 1970s, 1990s and early 2000s. The

most recent high growth period was in the 1990s and early 2000s, when the County grew by an average of 250 residents per year. The rate of growth in the County has slowed during the past decade as the County grew by just over 1,000 new residents from 2010 to 2020. However, recent construction and permitting trends indicate a rebound in the rate of growth. The

U.S Census Bureau estimates that Park County’s population totaled 30,108 in 2021.

As illustrated by Figure 2, New residents moving to Park County have accounted for approximately two-thirds of the population growth over the past decade, despite significant fluctuations in in-migration numbers from

**Figure 2: Park County Births, Deaths, and In-Migration, 1990-2019**

Source: Wyoming Department of Health, U.S. Census Bureau, Economic and Planning Systems

year to year. Deaths started to outpace births in Park County in recent years as well. In-migrating residents have, on average, been older (as evidenced by population by age trends) and more affluent than the average County resident (as evidenced by County-to-County Migration Data from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) Statistics of Income Program). In-migration trends coupled with an existing population that is older than average (compared to the state and nationally) means most of the population growth has been in the number of residents aged 65 years or older. The number of residents 65 years or older increased by nearly three percent per year between 2000 and 2020, while the County's population only increased by 0.64 percent annually.

The State of Wyoming forecasts that the population of Park County will grow by an annual rate of 0.37 percent from 2020 to 2040, resulting in approximately 2,300 new residents. This forecast rate of growth is lower than the rate experienced in the past two decades. However, recent growth indicators (such as the number of building permits issued and new address requests) suggest the rate of growth in the County is actually increasing. The recent growth pressures Park County is experiencing has resulted in a surge of development activity between 2020 and 2022 that has coincided with and likely was influenced by the public's response to the impacts of the Coronavirus pandemic. However, it is unclear whether post-pandemic devel-

opment pressure will continue or return to a steadier rate of growth in Park County.

To help guide the Land Use Plan update, Economic and Planning Systems (EPS) developed a forecast of recent trends to supplement the State Demographer's estimate. The EPS methodology and forecast was vetted by a group of local and state economic development professionals. An in-depth discussion of the methodology used by EPS to develop the forecast is provided in Appendix B. As illustrated in Figure 3, the county is likely to experience a range of population growth between the State's estimate of 2,300 new residents and the EPS estimate of 3,800 new residents over the next 20 years. The County's population is likely to reach 33,500 residents by 2040.

## QUICK FACTS



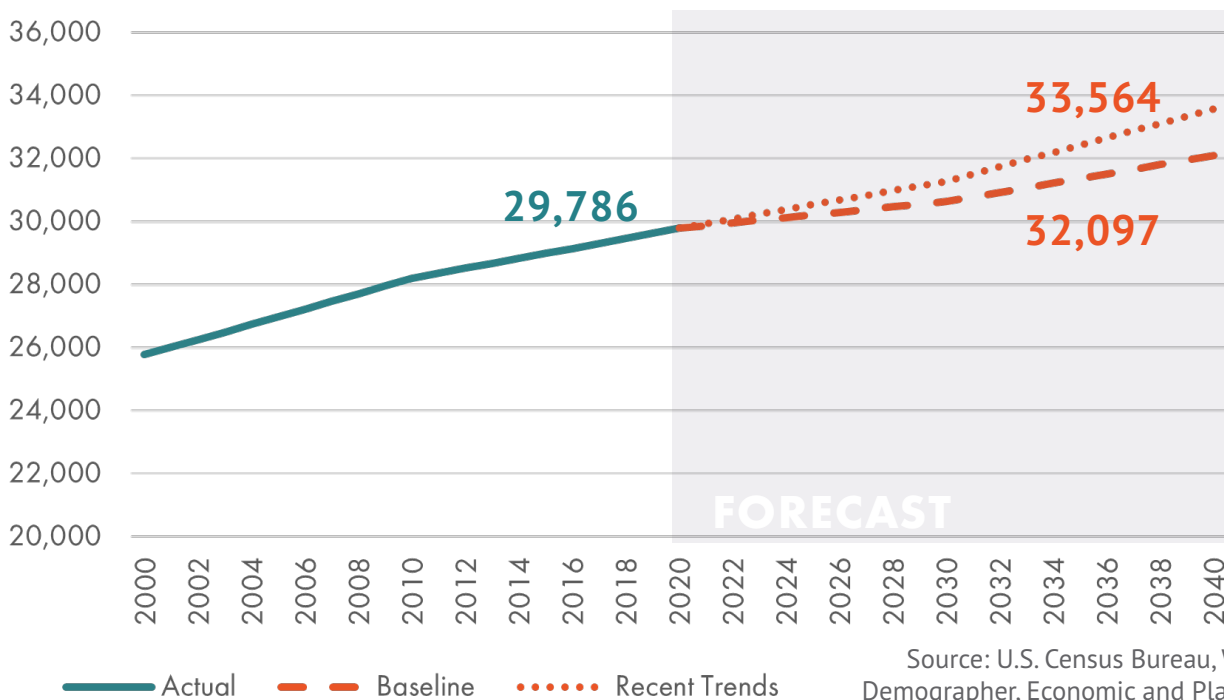
### ECONOMIC AND EMPLOYMENT TRENDS

Park County’s economy is primarily driven by agricultural activity (which impacts multiple industries), mining and oil and gas extraction, tourism, and services to residents of the larger region. The largest industries in terms of employment in Park County today include public administration (including federal, state, and local jobs), accommodation and food services, and retail trade, as shown in Figure 4. Economic growth in

the County over the past ten to 20 years has been driven by growth in agricultural activity, tourism visitation, and increased demand for services from residents and visitors, as evidenced by increases in employment in these industries. Farm employment, specifically, has grown steadily since 2000 (1.7 percent annually) and at an even greater rate since 2010. Farm employment, as reported by the Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA), represents a mixture of the number of farm establishments and employment at estab-

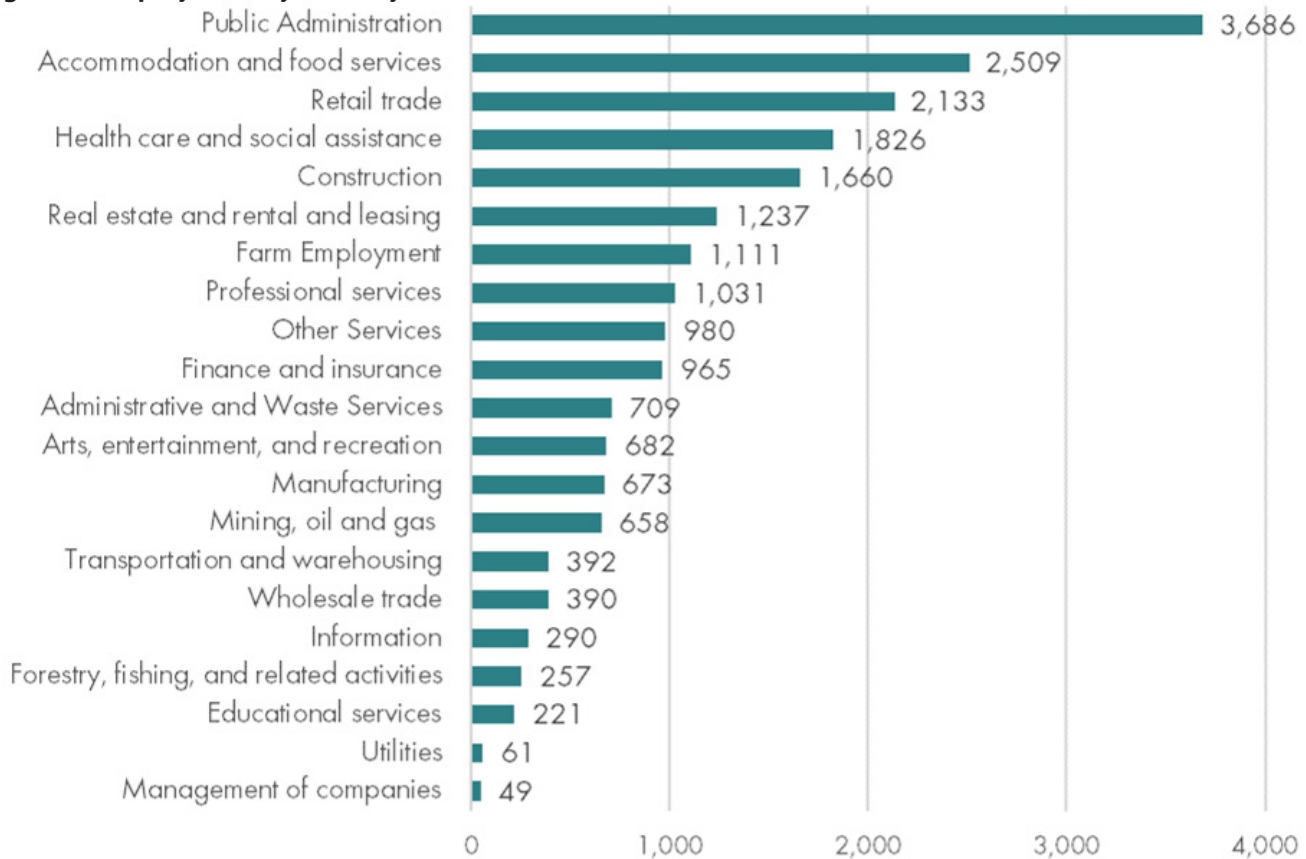
lishments. While it provides a reasonable representation of total Farm employment, it does not capture the full extent of those that do farm work (e.g. one family farm with four to six family members is reported as one job/farm). Historically, oil and gas extraction has been a major contributor to Park County’s employment and tax base; however, employment associated with extraction activity peaked in the region between 2010 and 2012 and has declined over 50 percent since 2010,

Figure 3: Population Trends 2000-2040



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Wyoming State Demographer, Economic and Planning Systems



**Figure 4: Employment by Industry 2020**

Source: U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis

illustrating the volatility of the industry. Despite these declines in employment, extraction industries continue to be major contributors to Park County's tax base. Employment in Park County grew steadily from 2001 through the mid-part of the 2010s. Jobs grew at an annual growth rate of 1.5 percent, increasing from 17,798 jobs in 2001 to 20,395 in 2020. However, employment decreased by 6 percent in 2020 as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and associated recession. U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis data indicates that employment rebounded to pre-pandemic levels in 2021. Park County employment totaled 21,916 in 2021 (U.S. BEA) and is forecast by EPS to increase

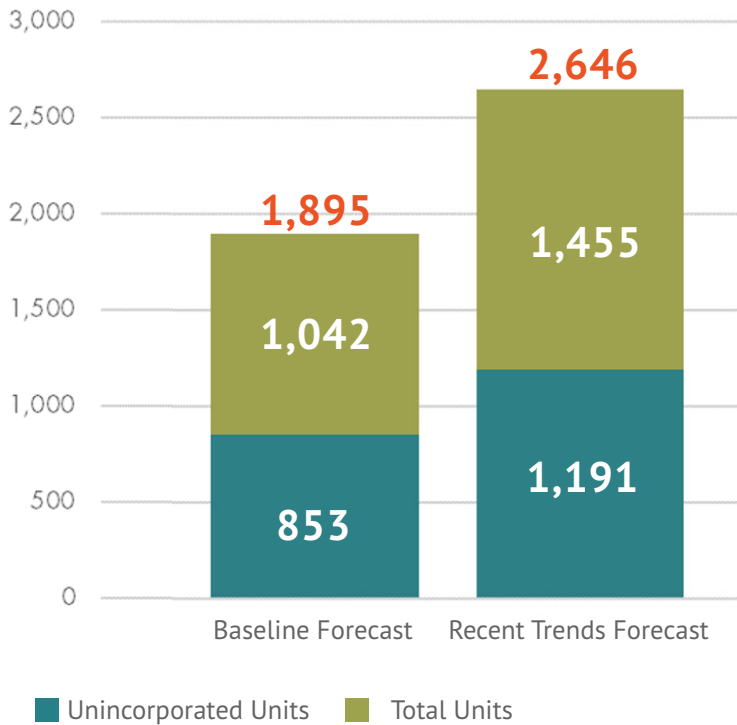
by between 1,740 and 3,000 new jobs by 2040 based on the population forecast.

## HOUSING TRENDS AND DEMAND

Park County has been experiencing growing housing needs to support its residents and economy. Several trends have been driving this growing pressure on the housing market. First, employment growth in Park County has outpaced population growth over the past two decades. As a result, Park County has captured an increasing number of workers that commute into the County for work. U.S. Census Bureau Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (LEHD) data show that an

estimated 22 percent of the people working in Park County commute from other counties for their job (up from 10 percent in 2002). This trend has the potential to continue as housing costs rise in the County and will be exacerbated if limited new housing options for seasonal and low wage-earning workers are not created or preserved. Second, during the same period, the County experienced a decrease in renter-occupied households and growth in owner-occupied households despite increases in housing costs and a decrease in the average household size from 2.55 to 2.26 (U.S. Census American Community Survey). Lastly, the number of vacant homes in the County has increased over the past

**Figure 5: Projected Housing Units 2020-2040**



**QUICK FACTS**

<b>12,575</b> Households (2020)	<b>2.26</b> Avg. Household Size (2020)
<b>73.2%</b> Owner Occupancy Rate (2020)	<b>13.7%</b> Housing Vacancy Rate (2020)

Sources: State of Wyoming, U.S. Census, Economic and Planning Systems

two decades—growing faster than the overall rate of housing growth. The vacancy rate is currently 13.7 percent, which has been driven by increases in seasonal and second homes (considered vacant by the U.S. Census Bureau).

As shown in Figure 5, and based on EPS estimates, Park County will need approximately 1,900 to 2,650 new housing units over the planning horizon (2020 to 2040) to accommodate forecast population growth. Historically, the unincorporated portions of Park County have accounted for 45 percent of households in the County. This equates to potential demand for new housing in the unincorporated portion of the County of approximately 850 to

1,040 new units by 2040, if land use patterns and development trends stay consistent. Most of this demand will be for housing near existing cities and towns. The Powell, Cody Local, Cody/Powell Rural, Sage Creek, and Lower South Fork planning areas are expected to see the greatest demand for housing over the twenty-year planning horizon.

**IMPACTS ON THE LAND USE PLAN**

The trends identified in Park County that have influenced this Plan include:

- The economy in Park County is growing and has rebounded from job losses during the COVID-19 pandemic. Key sectors such as farming, services, and tourism are expected to

continue to grow and rely upon land use decisions that can encourage preservation of agricultural lands and protect the natural resources that attract visitors.

- There has been limited growth of the workforce (16 to 64 years old) and young (under 16 years old) populations over the past two decades. For the economic growth of Park County to thrive, growth of the workforce population will need to exceed the State’s population forecast.
- Recent construction trends and economic trends indicate an increase in visitation and housing development activity to support seasonal home use. Growth in second homeowners, short-term rentals, remote workers, and retirees is putting pressure on the housing market.

## ABOUT THE PLAN PARK COUNTY PROCESS



### PURPOSE AND INTENT

Park County adopted its first comprehensive plan in 1978 and completed a major update to that plan in 1998. In the years that followed, Park County experienced increased growth pressures, rising housing and land costs, the loss of agricultural land, and other challenges that threatened the community's way of life. These challenges were exacerbated by the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic between 2020 and 2022. The 2022-2023 Plan Park County Land Use Plan process was intended to build upon direction established by the 1998 Park County Land Use Plan, while also recognizing that the factors influencing growth in Park County had changed substantially over the prior twenty-plus years.

The Plan Park County process provided County constituents numerous opportunities to identify what was working well and should be carried forward from the 1998 Plan, and to explore what was not working or was missing altogether. The process was conducted over an 18-month period during 2022 and 2023.



## GROUPS IN THE PROCESS



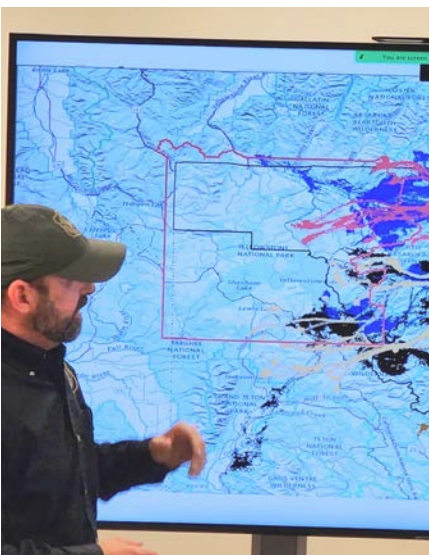
**Project Team.** Select members from the BCC and County staff worked closely with consultants from Clarion Associates, T-O Engineers, and EPS throughout the Plan Park County process. The project team met regularly to plan each stage of the process and participated in regular meetings with the following groups.

**Land Use Plan Advisory Committee (LUPAC).** A 16-member advisory committee was appointed by the BCC to represent different communities, geographies, and interests within Park County and assist in the development of the updated Land Use Plan. Representatives included one member from each of the 12 planning areas and one member each with in-depth knowledge of agriculture, economics, environmental, and commercial/industrial issues and opportunities in Park County. LUPAC members provided citizen perspectives and input on interim work products, assisted with community and stakeholder engagement by helping to get the word out, and generally served as community ambassadors for the Land Use Plan process. LUPAC members collected and communicated informal input received from residents, landowners, business owners, and other stakeholders with the full committee, the BCC, and the project team. The LUPAC met seven times during the process.



**Technical Working Group (TWG).** Comprised of dozens of representatives from Park County departments, districts and service providers, municipalities, and state and federal agency partners, the TWG was convened at key points during the process. The TWG had an opportunity to review and comment on interim work products and generally served as a sounding board for the project team on technical aspects of the LUP. The TWG met four times during the process; however, numerous additional meetings were held with smaller subsets of the TWG (e.g., water providers, municipalities, irrigation districts, and wildlife experts) to review preliminary data and policy directions. In addition, many TWG members participated in focus group meetings early in the process.

**Board of County Commissioners.** Members of the project team provided monthly updates on the Plan Park County process during regular meetings of the Board. Presentation materials for updates were available online.



**Planning and Zoning Commission.** County staff provided P&Z Commission members with periodic updates on the Plan Park County process. P&Z Commission members attended each of the public meetings throughout the process and were given the opportunity to review and comment on interim work products.

# 1,264

SURVEY RESPONSES



# 1,100+

MEETING/FOCUS  
GROUP ATTENDEES



# 260+

PAGES OF COMMENTS/  
INPUT RECEIVED



# 60+

ONLINE & IN-PERSON  
MEETINGS/SURVEYS



## OPPORTUNITIES FOR PUBLIC INPUT

The Plan Park County process included extensive opportunities for public input, as briefly described below. Links to each of the public input summaries prepared over the course of the process are provided in Appendix C.

### Focus Groups: March – April 2022

During March and April 2022, members of the project team met with representatives from a wide range of local stakeholder groups to discuss recent trends, issues, and opportunities related to land use, growth and development, and quality of life in Park County. The project team hosted 17 focus groups with over 75 participants. The following groups were represented: agricultural producers; arts, history, and culture; conservation districts; development community (engineers, surveyors, and builders); economic development and tourism; education/youth; environment and conservation; irrigation districts; municipalities; public lands agencies; real estate representatives; utilities (water); utilities and infrastructure (gas, electric, WYDOT, and BNSF); and Yellowstone Regional Airport (held in June). Four additional focus groups were held with high school students from each school district, as well as students from Northwest College. These conversations facilitated data and information sharing to support a clear understanding of existing conditions in Park County and to help inform the Plan Park County process.

### Vision and Values Survey: April 2022

A preliminary online survey was widely advertised and made available on the project website during the month of April 2022. Participants were asked to weigh in on what is working well in Park County today, and what could be improved with respect to housing and development, economy, recreation, natural environment, and quality of life in the future. Participants also shared their vision for the future of their planning areas and Park County as a whole. Over 700 responses were received. Input was used to inform the preparation of a preliminary plan framework for the updated Land Use Plan.

### Preliminary Plan Framework: June-July 2022

The first of three rounds of community outreach was held in June 2022 to review and seek input on a draft vision, shared values, and countywide goals. This round of engagement included four public meetings (three in-person and one virtual). In-person public meetings were held in the Cody Local, Powell Local, and Meeteetse Rural planning areas on subsequent evenings over the course of a single week, followed by a virtual meeting (via Zoom) the following week. Approximately 140 individuals participated. An online survey was available on the project website from June 27 through July 15, 2022, and received over 150 responses. Input received on the preliminary plan framework was used to inform refinements to the vision and value statements and countywide goals, and the preparation of countywide policies to support each goal.



### Key Policy Choices: October 2022

The second of three rounds of community outreach was held in October 2022 to seek input on key policy choices relative to each of the 12 planning areas in Park County. Topics addressed included agriculture, growth management, crucial wildlife habitat, recreation, large-scale renewable energy and communication facilities, housing, economic development, and tourism. This round of engagement included seven public meetings (six in-person and one virtual), an online survey, and supplemental outreach conducted by LUPAC members. Approximately 321 people participated in the meetings. Meetings were held in-person in the North Fork, Meeteetse Rural, Clark, Powell Local, Cody Local, and South Fork planning areas over the course of a single week, and virtually (via Zoom) the following week. An online survey was available on the project website from October 7 through October 31, 2022, and received 449 responses. Input received on the key policy choices was used to inform the countywide and area-specific policies.



### Consolidated Draft Land Use Plan: February - March 2023

A third round of community outreach was held in late February/early March to introduce the draft LUP. Two full-day open houses were held, one in Powell, and one in Cody. Three presentation times were offered each day (mid-morning, mid-day, and early evening), and residents were invited to stop by to talk with staff and members of the consultant team at any time. Approximately 400 people participated. The Review Draft was also made available online for public comment. Over 900 comments were received and used to inform the preparation of the Adoption Draft.



### Adoption: April - September 2023

The Adoption Draft was released to the public in mid-April, allowing 30+ days for review and comment prior to the public hearings with the Planning and Zoning Commission in late May and June. Following the Planning and Zoning Commission hearings, the public will be afforded 45+ days to conduct further review of the Adoption Draft prior to the public hearing with the Board of County Commissioners, which is tentatively scheduled for early fall.

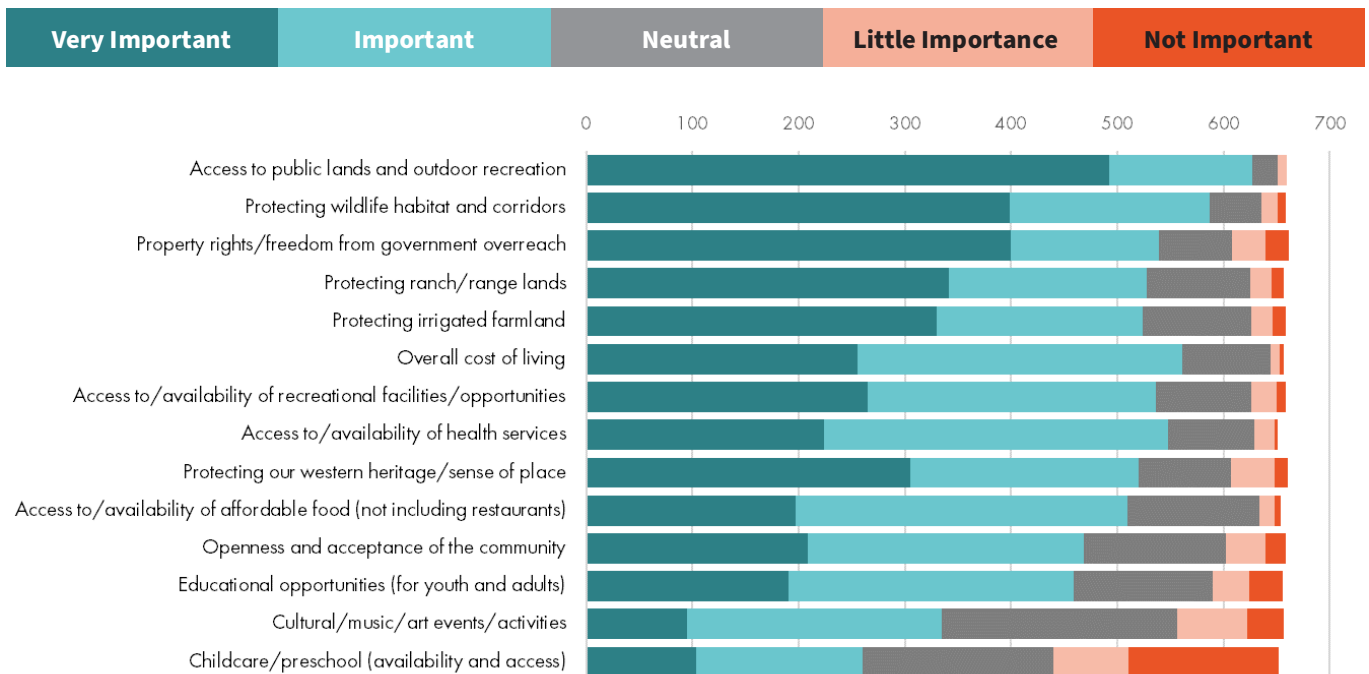


## WHAT'S IMPORTANT TO PARK COUNTY RESIDENTS?

The preparation of this Land Use Plan was guided by what matters to the people of Park County. During the month of April 2022, more than 700 individuals responded to an initial online survey—the Vision and Values Survey—designed to help inform the Plan Park County process. This section highlights some of the common themes that emerged from public responses to the Vision and Values Survey. The excerpts below provide insights into what the community values most about living in Park County overall, and what they would like to see stay the same—or change—in the future. Notably, many of the hopes and concerns that were expressed by the public as part of the Plan Park County process mirrored those addressed by the 1998 Land Use Plan—reinforcing their relevance today and for future generations. The results of the Vision and Values Survey are provided in their entirety via a link in Appendix C.

## WHAT ASPECTS OF PARK COUNTY ARE MOST IMPORTANT TO YOUR QUALITY OF LIFE?

Vision and Values Survey respondents ranked access to public lands and outdoor recreation highest, followed by protecting wildlife habitat and corridors and property rights/freedom from government overreach. Protecting ranch and range land and irrigated farmland and protecting our western heritage/sense of place also ranked higher than other factors. Concerns about childcare and preschool availability and access ranked lowest.



GROWTH IS ON THE COMMUNITY'S MIND MORE THAN ANY OTHER TOPIC, AND 2/3 OF THE TIME IT WAS A PART OF AN IDEA OR PHRASE:

- **Sustainable or Careful Growth**
- **Controlled Growth**, Discourage Unrestricted Growth, Growth With Care, Responsible Productive Growth, Smart Growth, Wise Growth Decisions, Structured Controlled Growth, Manage Growth, Slow Smart Growth, Reasonable Growth Community, Carefully Planned Growth, Well Controlled Growth, Better Control Growth, Focused Areas of Growth, Quality of Growth, Sustained Growth, Sustainable Longterm Growth, Sustainable Planned Growth, Modest Measured Growth, Growth With Planning
- **Slow Growth** Slow Planned Growth, Very Limited Growth, Slow Sustainable Growth, Slower Population Growth, Slow the Growth
- **Expected Growth** Rapid Growth, Embrace Alternative Growth
- **Specific Growth** Economic Growth, Affordable Focused Growth, Recreational Growth

**WHAT CHALLENGES (THINGS THAT CONCERN YOU) DO YOU SEE FOR THE FUTURE OF PARK COUNTY?**

- Property and home prices
- Need for opportunities for workforce and for next generation / young adults / young families
- Focus on residents and workers
- Population and development growth
- Changing values/culture

**WHAT OPPORTUNITIES (THINGS THAT EXCITE YOU) DO YOU SEE FOR THE FUTURE OF PARK COUNTY?**

- Outdoor recreation
- Preserving nature & wildlife
- Agricultural & tourism industries
- High quality jobs
- Improving amenities
- High quality of life
- New ideas from new businesses

**WHAT THREE WORDS BEST CHARACTERIZE YOUR VISION FOR PARK COUNTY'S FUTURE?**

The word cloud below was created using words provided by survey respondents. The most common responses appear largest in the graphic.







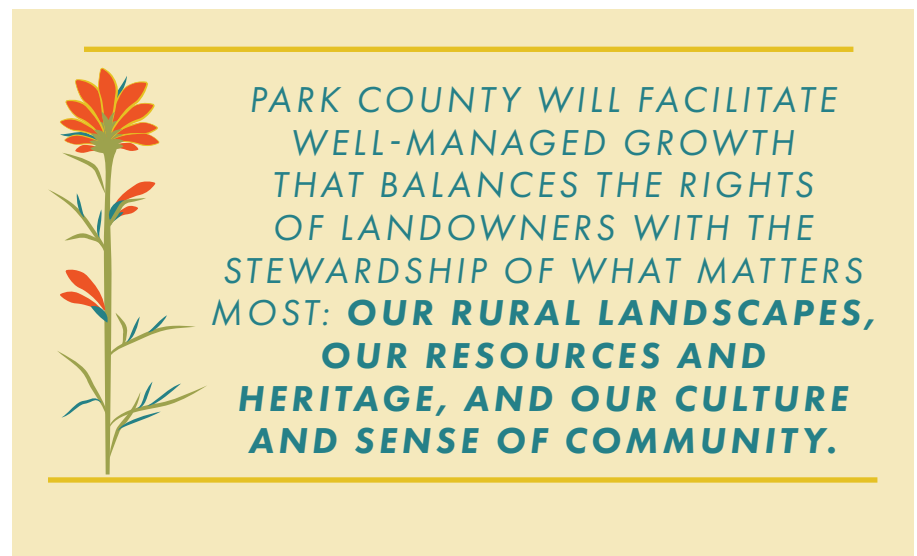
## OUR VISION AND SHARED VALUES

Through more than sixty years of land use planning, Park County has sought to promote growth that balances:

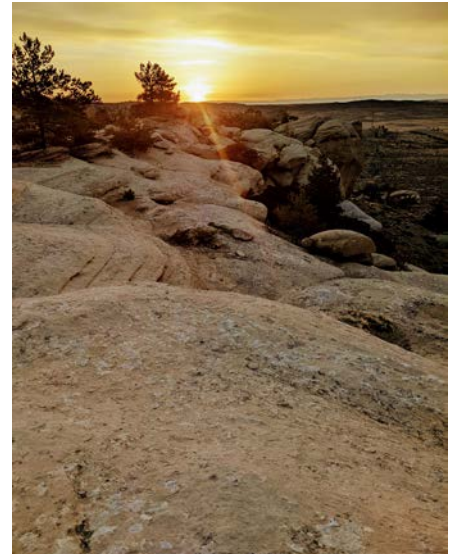
***What makes us unique as INDIVIDUALS.*** Park County is comprised of people from diverse backgrounds. We are families with multi-generational roots in Park County; an array of recent—or not so recent—transplants from elsewhere in Wyoming, the United States, and other parts of the world; and part-time residents that support our economy—either as visitors or as part of the seasonal workforce. Everyone has a story about how they ended up in Park County and why, and what matters most to them now and for the future.

***What we share as a COMMUNITY.*** Setting aside what makes us unique as individuals, we share a love for Park County’s wide-open spaces, public lands, outdoor recreation, agriculture and ranching, western lifestyle, and sense of community.

This philosophy remains central to our vision for Park County:



In our day-to-day lives, these values are closely intertwined. Actions that impact one aspect of our vision will more than likely directly or indirectly impact another. As such, these values are viewed as equal in weight. Decisions about the future of Park County should consider benefits and potential trade-offs in each area.



## OUR RURAL LANDSCAPES

*Park County's rural landscapes and wide-open vistas are valued by residents and visitors alike. Managing where and how we grow to minimize impacts on these finite and precious resources for future generations is essential to our identity and our economy.*

### Desired Outcomes

- Development patterns use land efficiently and minimize impacts to wildlife habitat and agriculture
- Community needs and values are balanced with private property rights
- Public services support resident needs without compromising fiscal responsibility
- Infrastructure is well-maintained and efficiently managed

### WHAT WE'VE HEARD

- “Keep housing in towns without urban sprawl.”
- “Development within the incorporated municipalities and limited development on large lots, greater than 10 or 20 acres in rural areas.”
- “Wild areas such as Sunlight, Crandall and North Fork should see very limited or no further development. They are our legacy to our children and grandchildren.”
- “Preserve as much open space as possible.”
- “No development of farmland, develop the waste (non-irrigated) land.”
- “Small town quality is being lost with all of the formerly beautiful open land being sold off and developed to the highest bidder.”
- “Allow good quality development, both residential and business.”
- “I do not think anything should stay the same. I would like to see the area grow and prosper more.”
- “We will not be able to progress as a community with out growth so lets keep that growth near the city's where have already in place such as roads, utilities easy access to schools, medical, shopping.”
- “More entertainment, shopping, and health facilities. Many residents have to travel to Billings or Denver for their health needs.”
- “More recreation opportunities close by for indoor activities for youth. Right now we have to go further away to do this.”
- “A bus route between Cody and Powell (or Cody and Garland, stopping in Ralston and Powell on the way) would be nice, too, perhaps running a couple times a day.”



## OUR RESOURCES

*Park County's economy and way of life have always been closely tied to our public lands and natural resources. Our communities recognize the importance of wildlife, agriculture, scenery, open space, water, and history in attracting visitors, creating jobs, and providing residents with a high quality of life. We seek growth that doesn't compromise access to recreation, economic opportunity, and a pristine environment for future generations.*

### Desired Outcomes

- A strong and diverse economy that serves residents and visitors alike
- Development that maintains agricultural lands, wildlife habitat and migration corridors, scenic vistas, access to open space, and air and water quality
- Sustainable management of natural resources
- A thriving agricultural economy and community
- Partnerships with other public agencies
- Decisions consider the needs of future generations

### WHAT WE'VE HEARD

"Maintain rural character of area, protect farmland, maintain wildlife migration corridors."

"Access to recreation."

"Keeping farm and ranch land intact. Keep wildlife habitat and wildlife corridors open."

"Fishing, camping and family recreation areas.  
Low enough taxes for small farmers and ranchers.  
Sufficient law enforcement to protect citizens."

"Rural development density focusing on proper resource management (ranching, crop agriculture, mineral extraction)."

"Park County's western heritage, scenery, fish and wildlife habitat, and pristine natural environment are unique and highly valued qualities which should be protected, nurtured, and allowed to thrive in the future."

"Park County does a good job of providing services for tourism which is essential to keep small businesses going. I love the recreational opportunities."

"The farms on Heart Mountain are a great asset to the county and the state. It would be nice to protect those from being broken up into small lot, high density subdivisions."

"I love the convenience and amenities of Park County without the congestion of Billings."

"I would like to see improved private property rights with less government interference and regulation."



## OUR CULTURE, HERITAGE, AND SENSE OF COMMUNITY

*Park County has a rich history and unique Western culture that are built around generations of traditions. We care about maintaining a tight-knit community as we grow—one where people can live affordably, enjoy a high quality of life, and where neighbors look out for each other.*

### Desired Outcomes

- A culture that is friendly, welcoming, and neighborly
- Housing options that are diverse and attainable for all residents
- Transparent and effective government with highly involved citizens
- Collaboration with state and federal agencies to meet community needs
- A commitment to preserving our way of life for future generations

### WHAT WE'VE HEARD

“Friendly people. Easy access to public lands and outdoor recreation. Low taxes”

“The small-town community values, and access to public land and healthcare.”

“Conservative values, neighbors helping neighbors, focus on outdoors and family.”

“I want it to stay a close community which people care for each other...but also stick to our values firmly.”

“Stay away from building or allowing multi-family housing units, duplexes and trailer parks”

“Diversity – values, ages, economic levels, cultural/ethnic (such as it is – more would be better).”

“Provide affordable housing for those helping build local businesses. Our kids shouldn't have to move out of state.”

“Diversity in housing options would be good as people have a variety of needs. I'm okay with apartments, duplexes, single family homes, etc as long as they are planned for and have adequate parking and safe pedestrian options.”

“There needs to be more housing for the middle class. Not everyone can afford housing that is over \$500,000 for purchase nor can most people afford to rent something over \$1000 per month.”

“More arts and culture beyond Cowboy Culture.”

## ALIGNMENT WITH COUNTYWIDE GOALS AND POLICIES

The countywide goals and policies in Chapter 2 are organized by topic and are aligned with the shared value that they most directly support, as listed in the table below. Topics generally mirror those that were addressed in the 1998 Land Use Plan; however, some topics were addressed in greater detail (e.g., water, housing, and energy) and other new topics were added (e.g., hazard mitigation) to reflect emerging issues. Topics are not listed in any particular order of importance.

OUR SHARED VALUES	TOPICS ADDRESSED	
Our Rural Landscapes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Growth Management</li> <li>• Private Land Use</li> <li>• Hazard Mitigation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Infrastructure &amp; Public Services</li> <li>• Transportation</li> </ul>
Our Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Economy</li> <li>• Energy</li> <li>• Water</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Environment &amp; Natural Resources</li> <li>• Agriculture</li> </ul>
Our Culture, Heritage, and Sense of Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Housing</li> <li>• Culture</li> <li>• Historic Preservation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outdoor Recreation</li> <li>• Government</li> </ul>

## PARTS OF THE PLAN

The Land Use Plan contains four interrelated chapters that build upon the vision and shared values articulated in this introductory chapter.



### CHAPTER 2: COUNTYWIDE GOALS AND POLICIES

This chapter outlines the broad goals that Park County as a whole should work towards to achieve our shared vision and values with specific policies that help achieve each goal. Goals provide broad directives that articulate ideal future conditions and desired outcomes, while policies make specific statements that guide decision-making and give clear indication of intent.



### CHAPTER 3: COUNTYWIDE GROWTH FRAMEWORK

This chapter establishes a framework to guide future growth and investment in unincorporated areas of Park County over the next ten to 20 years. It includes a brief overview of the many factors that influence where and how growth occurs in Park County, along with Land Suitability and Future Land Use maps. Guidance provided by this chapter is based on the community's desire to protect private property rights and support well-managed growth without compromising the shared values of people that live and work here.



## CHAPTER 4: PLANNING AREA POLICY STATEMENTS

This chapter provides contextual information and area-specific policy guidance for each of Park County’s 12 planning areas: Clark, Cody Local, Cody-Powell Rural, Lower South Fork, Meeteetse Rural, Middle South Fork, North Fork, Powell Local, Sage Creek, Sunlight, Upper Clarks Fork, and Upper South Fork. It includes an overview of each planning area’s location and context, trends and existing conditions, along with area-specific Land Suitability and Future Land Use maps. In addition, land use guidelines for each planning area are included to reflect community input provided by residents and property owners in each area.



## CHAPTER 5: IMPLEMENTATION

This chapter outlines priority initiatives and implementation strategies to help advance the community’s vision and focus implementation efforts over the next one to three years.



## APPENDICES

### GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Defines terms used throughout the Land Use Plan.

### APPENDIX A: PARK COUNTY 101

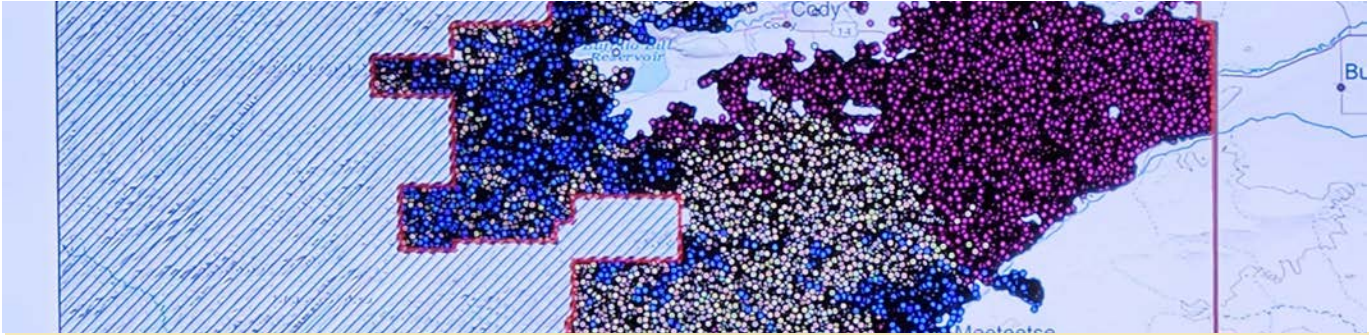
Appendix A provides a brief synopsis of some of the technical data and information that was used to inform the Land Use Plan. Topics addressed include population, demographics, employment, and frequently asked questions about domestic water.

### APPENDIX B: SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Appendix B includes the technical memorandums that were used to inform the Land Use Plan.

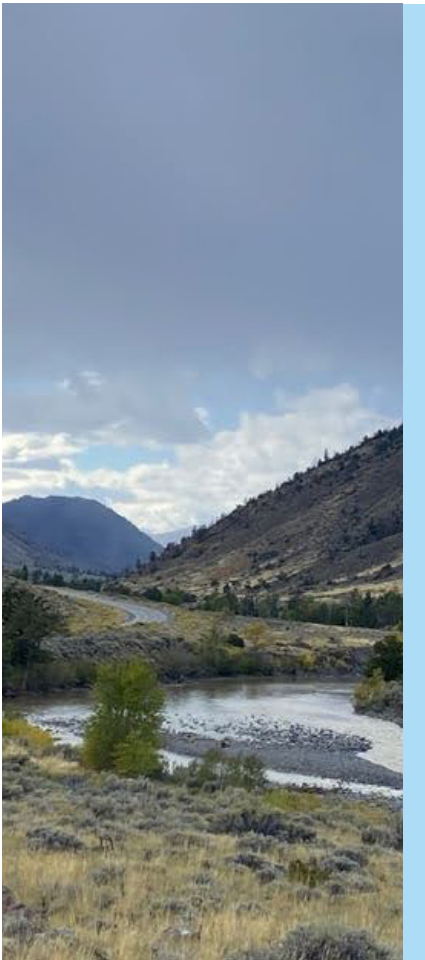
#### *Population and Employment Forecast and Housing Demand Estimates.*

This technical memorandum contains a summary of the methodology used and analysis completed by Economic and Planning Systems (EPS) to develop population and employment forecasts for Park County to support the Land Use Plan update. The forecasts were developed to aid in estimating demand for housing and non-residential development in the unincorporated portion of Park County.



## LAND USE PLAN MAP PORTAL

A web-based GIS map portal was developed as part of the Plan Park County process to provide access to an extensive library of data and information that were used to inform the preparation of the Land Use Plan. Individual maps or “tabs” within the map portal include Planning Areas; Land Use; Ownership; Natural, Historic, and Cultural Resources; Land Class; Population; Zoning; Infrastructure and Services; Agriculture and Ranch Lands; and Subdivisions. The portal may be accessed from the County’s Planning and Zoning Department webpage at <https://parkcounty-wy.gov/planning-and-zoning>.



**Land Suitability Analysis Methodology.** This memorandum summarizes the methodology used to develop the Geographic Information System (GIS)-based land suitability analysis outlined in Chapter 3.

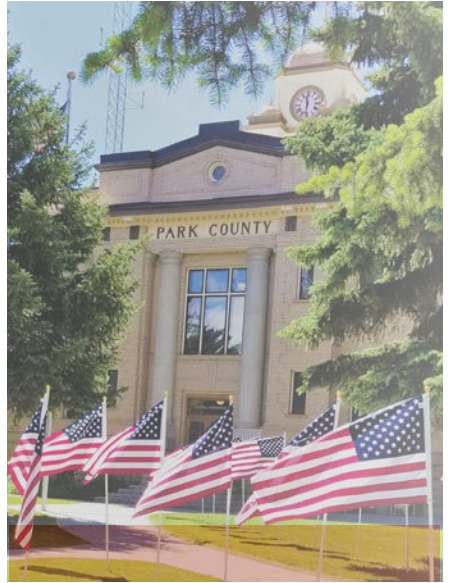
**Domestic Water in Park County.** This section provides an overview of service providers in Park County, and documents each provider’s supply and treatment capacity and capability to support future development. Information provided mirrors that provided about domestic water in Appendix A, but is much more detailed.

**Big Game Use Overlay Methodology.** This section documents methods used to develop the Big Game Use Overlay. See Chapter 3 for information about this overlay.

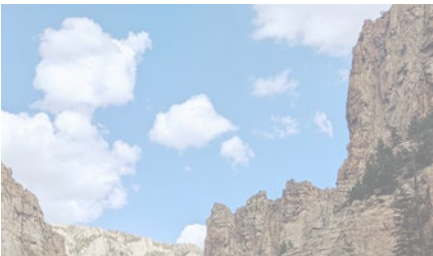
**Conservation Tools and Case Studies.** This section provides an overview of conservation tools/strategies that could be considered by Park County in the future as a supplement to the work of the many land trusts that assist with establishing and managing voluntary conservation easements in the County. Case studies from other rural counties are provided where applicable.

## APPENDIX C: PUBLIC INPUT SUMMARIES

Appendix C includes links to each of the public input summaries prepared over the course of the Plan Park County process. Summaries may be accessed through the Planning and Zoning Department webpage or in hard copy form at the Park County Planning and Zoning Department office.



# CHAPTER



# 2



## COUNTYWIDE GOALS & POLICIES







## ABOUT THIS CHAPTER

### PURPOSE

This chapter establishes a policy foundation to guide decisions that impact Park County as a whole. Countywide goals and policies build from the foundation established as part of the 1998 Land Use Plan, and the shared values outlined in Chapter 1. Many of the goals and policies reflect the current practices of Park County and its local, state, and federal partners. Other goals and policies reflect input received as part of the Plan Park County process. Because they are applicable countywide, the goals and policies in this section are intentionally broad. More detailed policy guidance for each of the 12 planning areas is provided by the land use guidelines in Chapter 4: Planning Area Policy Statements.



## OUR RURAL LANDSCAPES

### WHERE WE ARE TODAY

The vision for growth and development that Park County residents expressed in the 1998 Land Use Plan is similar to what the community values today. However, since 1998, Park County has experienced pressure for more and denser development in unincorporated areas, which threatens the rural landscape. In many cases this development has not followed the approach outlined in the 1998 Land Use Plan, which highlights the need for clearer policy direction and more supportive regulations.

### LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

Park County has an opportunity to plan for responsible growth that will allow for housing and business opportunities while protecting the rural landscapes we cherish. Encouraging the retention of agricultural land and more closely coordinating near-urban development with cities and towns will ensure that future growth better reflects the values of Park County residents.

The goals and policies in this section, in coordination with the Countywide Growth Framework in Chapter 3, support the community's desire for coordinated growth management.



## GROWTH MANAGEMENT

### **Goal GM-1: Encourage higher-density development within and near incorporated communities.**

#### **GM-1.1: Developed/Developing Areas**

Encourage higher-density development in developed/developing areas (as conceptualized on the Future Land Use Map in Chapter 3) where public infrastructure and services already exist or are planned to be improved or expanded, and where opportunities exist to “infill” properties that have already been fragmented.

#### **GM-1.2: Coordinated Planning Areas**

Concentrate urban development in areas around the cities of Cody and Powell, and the Town of Meeteetse, that are planned or have the potential for municipal expansion. Conduct joint planning and review of development proposals in Coordinated Planning Areas to ensure future development is consistent with applicable land use guidelines in Chapter 3 and adopted municipal plans. Discourage scattered development that may preclude future infrastructure and/or municipal expansion.

#### **GM-1.3: Rural Areas**

Encourage the maintenance of larger, contiguous tracts of land in rural areas to support the conservation of agricultural and ranch lands, views and open spaces, and wildlife habitat and use areas. Tailor the types and intensities of development allowed in rural areas to the planning area-specific land use guidelines in Chapter 4.

(For GM-1.1 through GM-1.3, see also, Future Land Use Map and associated land use categories, pages 68-87)

### **Goal GM-2: Align land use, infrastructure, and service plans countywide to ensure that growth occurs in places that can support development.**

#### **GM-2.1: Fiscal Impacts**

Ensure that future development does not place an undue fiscal burden on County government by recognizing the cost to maintain infrastructure and extend services to rural areas.

#### **GM-2.2: Service Providers**

Continue to improve coordination between Park County, municipalities, and service providers regarding the expansion of infrastructure and approval of new development so growth does not result in financial burdens or negative impacts to existing infrastructure for local governments, service providers, taxpayers, or ratepayers.



### GM-2.3: Allocation of Resources

Prioritize investments in and the allocation of resources for the provision and maintenance of infrastructure and services in areas of Park County that are already developed or are well-suited to support new development.

### GM-2.4: Northwest Rural Water District

Support development of coordinated expansion plans for the Northwest Rural Water District (NRWD) that provide domestic water for residential use at rural densities and align with the County's Land Use Plan.

### GM-2.5: Subdivision Improvements

Require developers to provide a financial guarantee to ensure timely completion of subdivision improvements in compliance with state law and County regulations.

### GM-2.6: Special Districts

Consider allowing the use of special districts, as authorized by W.S. § 16-12-201, on a case-by-case basis as a tool for accommodating urban development in areas where municipal services are not able to be provided.

---

## PRIVATE LAND USE

---

### **Goal LU-1: Support development that sustains the economic, environmental, and cultural values of our County.**

#### LU-1.1: Rural Areas

Protect and encourage the retention of rural areas through the implementation of development regulations that maintain and/or encourage development patterns and land uses typical in the rural environment.

#### LU-1.2: Right to Farm and Ranch

Support the right to farm and ranch in Park County in accordance with W.S. §11-44-104, recognizing that dust, noise, and odors normally associated with agricultural practices are acceptable in rural areas. Ensure that non-agricultural development in Park County does not restrict existing agricultural operations.

#### LU-1.3: Commercial and Industrial Development

Allow for flexibility within land use regulations for limited commercial industrial services and other supporting uses that fit the physical context and preferences of individual planning areas, as defined by the land use guidelines in Chapter 4.

### **Goal LU-2: Balance private property rights with the needs of the community and environment.**

#### LU-2.1: Private Property Rights

Consider impacts to private property rights of existing and future owners when making decisions and developing and executing County policies and regulations.





### LU-2.2: Good Neighbor Development

Ensure new development respects and considers impacts on neighbors without infringing on private property rights by enforcing regulations that prevent and mitigate against incompatible and detrimental neighboring land uses.

### LU-2.3: Land Use Conflicts

Consider land use conflicts in a context larger than the boundaries of a particular parcel or project and a time frame longer than a particular transaction. Seek a balance between the interests of different individuals and public or private interests in the decision-making process.

### LU-2.4: Enforcement of Regulations

Administer and enforce the provisions of the development regulations. Assist in resolving citizen complaints related to abandoned vehicles, light trespass, noise, nuisance vegetation, illegal dumping, and other nuisances, through the enforcement of adopted nuisance regulations.

### LU-2.5: Nuisance Vegetation

Support the efforts of the Park County Weed and Pest Control District to educate developers and property owners about the negative effects of nuisance (uncultivated) vegetation on neighboring properties, irrigation systems, native species, wildlife habitat, and agricultural production. Encourage the adoption of site planning and weed management strategies that mitigate the spread of nuisance species as part of the subdivision review process (e.g., minimizing disturbances, using native seed mixes for revegetation where applicable).



## HAZARD MITIGATION

### Goal HM-1: Mitigate the risk and effect of natural or man-made hazards on property, infrastructure, and lives.

#### HM-1.1: Regional Planning and Hazard Response

Participate in coordinated hazard mitigation strategies and disaster response planning with County departments, municipalities, state and federal agencies, and service providers across the Big Horn Basin to reduce risk to natural hazard exposures and increase efficiency in responding to disaster events.

#### HM-1.2: Education

Educate landowners and developers about known hazards on or near their properties before and during permitting processes. Increase property owner awareness of the risks associated with developing in high hazard areas and resources that are available to inform individual decisions and mitigate risk.

#### HM-1.3: High Hazard Areas

Limit or prohibit new development in areas at high risk for flooding, canal failure, wildfire, high winds, geologic instability, or other natural or man-made hazards, where practicable, and encourage the use of site planning and construction techniques or other strategies to mitigate risk.



## WYOMING REGION 6 - REGIONAL HAZARD MITIGATION PLAN

The Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP), is a collaborative plan created by the four counties of the Big Horn Basin. The HMP identifies the possible causes, locations, and severity of potential natural or man-made hazards in the region, and is used to provide county-specific goals and recommended action items to mitigate the risk and effect of hazards on residents and property. The Park County Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Management is responsible for addressing items from the HMP. Park County uses the HMP, along with input from the community, to initiate projects and mitigation actions like public education, resource coordination, and preventative action. Some of the potential hazards discussed in the HMP include:

**Drought.** Drought is likely to impact much of the Western United States in the coming decades, including the Big Horn Region. In cases of drought, water access can be limited and may impact agricultural yields, impacting the local economy. The probability of future occurrences is considered likely to high, and the potential magnitude is considered high.

**Wildfire.** Wildfires typically occur in the spring, summer, and fall and are caused by a variety of sources, among which are human error and/or lightning. Risks of wildfire are higher during periods of drought. As populations grow and urban areas are built closer to forests, risks of wildfires will increase. Many of the wildfires in Park County occur in Yellowstone, but winds bring smoke and ash which can effect local air quality. The HMP uses a Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI) map to show areas where development and undeveloped wildland or vegetative fuels overlap. Mitigation actions and efficient planning can prevent damage or loss from wildfire in these areas. Park County's susceptibility to wildfire is assessed as a high risk.

**Severe Winter Weather.** Winter weather can produce large amounts of snow, ice, wind and extreme cold temperatures, with the potential to isolate, disrupt, and impact communities, disrupt supply lines, and impact utility infrastructure. Older homes with aging and deteriorating infrastructure may experience the loss of electricity or frozen pipes, exposing structures and residents to potential harm. In the coming decades, the likelihood of extreme cold and other winter hazards in the Big Horn Basin region is high. Vulnerability of local infrastructure and utilities is assessed as a medium risk.

**High Winds.** Areas of the Big Horn Basin are prone to dangerously high winds and wind gusts. Risks include damage to structures and property, increased danger while driving, and possible tornadoes. Manufactured or mobile homes are particularly vulnerable in high wind conditions. Park County's susceptibility to high winds is assessed as a medium risk.

## COMMUNITY WILDFIRE PROTECTION PLAN

The Park County Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) was developed through the collaborative efforts of the Wyoming State Forestry Division, the County Fire Warden, local fire district staff, and other state, federal, and local partners. The CWPP identifies areas of Park County that are at higher risk of wildfire—based on historical wildfire data and existing land use plans—and provides recommendations to reduce these risks. Strategies include education and training, use of Firewise construction techniques, vegetation management, and others. The CWPP also provides planning and zoning recommendations and maps of at-risk areas to help inform property owners and encourage the adoption of safety precautions and incentives. The CWPP is updated from time to time to reflect changing conditions in Park County.

### HM-1.4: Wildland-Urban Interface

Collaborate with rural and volunteer fire departments, state/agency partners, and property owners to actively manage the wildland-urban interface (WUI). Support the periodic update of the Park County Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) to reflect changes in land use patterns and natural resource characteristics (e.g., forest health) over time. Consider special development standards for properties within the WUI to mitigate risk and damages from wildfire.

## INFRASTRUCTURE & PUBLIC SERVICES

**Goal IP-1: Prioritize infrastructure improvements, expansion, and maintenance in areas that are best suited to support development.**

### IP-1.1: Regional Infrastructure and Service Planning

Collaborate across jurisdictions to maximize efficiency in determining the location, operation, and potential expansion of facilities and programs that serve residents from around the region.

### IP-1.2: Utility Corridors

Work with local utility providers to ensure that transmission infrastructure is developed to minimize impacts on other uses and maximize the use of existing utility corridors and easements/rights-of-way.

### IP-1.3: Infrastructure Resiliency

Assess the resilience of existing infrastructure, such as roads, water and sewer systems, and the energy grid, in withstanding existing hazards such as extreme heat, wind, drought, flooding, and wildfires, and identify any improvements or alterations that could increase resilience. When siting new infrastructure, incorporate resilience considerations in advance of determining locations for new facilities and structures.

**Goal IP-2: Plan for emergency services as the County grows.**

### IP-2.1: Regional Response Capabilities

Collaborate with fire districts, municipalities, and other government agencies to plan for and adapt emergency response capabilities in response to changing needs.

### IP-2.2: Levels of Service

Coordinate the review of development proposals with fire districts to ensure that response times and service area implications associated with development in rural areas are considered as part of the approval process. Explore development regulations that address water storage infrastructure requirements to serve fire suppression needs for significant developments.



### IP-2.3: Emergency Services Education

Improve the availability and distribution of information on fire prevention and emergency services, including its limitations in rural areas.

---

## TRANSPORTATION

---

### **Goal TR-1: Coordinate with state and regional partners to support the transportation needs of people, goods, and services.**

#### TR-1.1: Transportation Planning

Coordinate with government partners and other agencies to achieve a regional transportation system that is safe, reliable, and efficient year-round to meet the needs of people, goods, and services. Ensure that transportation planning and policy is developed alongside land use planning and regulations to facilitate coordinated decision-making.

#### TR-1.2: Road Maintenance

Continue implementation of improvements and maintenance of Park County roads to support safe, efficient, and convenient travel for all users.

#### TR-1.3: Road Mapping, Naming, and Addressing

Continue to utilize standardized practices for naming and mapping roads and assigning property addresses. Encourage development of easy-to-understand road names, in particular, to benefit emergency response and package delivery services. Coordinate with municipalities regarding addressing in near-city areas.

#### TR-1.4: Public Transportation

Support local and regional efforts to provide public transportation (e.g., bus or shuttle service) between communities or major tourist destinations in Park County or to communities outside of Park County.





## TRANSPORTATION

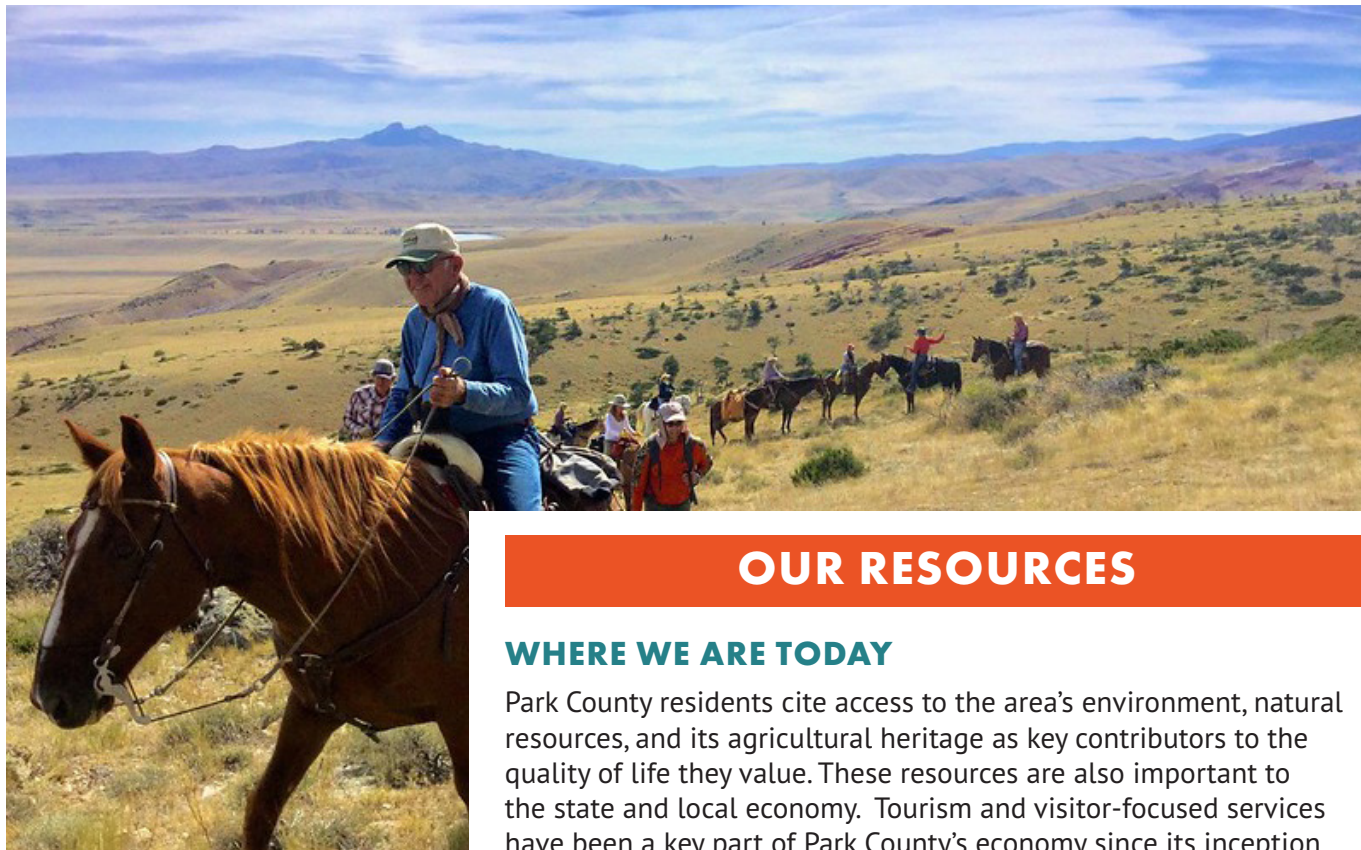
**Park County Public Works.** The Road and Bridge Division of Park County's Public Works Department is responsible for snow removal, traffic control, right-of-way maintenance, and other repair and maintenance efforts on county-maintained roads. Park County does not have a comprehensive Transportation Plan.

**Wyoming Department of Transportation (WYDOT).** WYDOT is responsible for maintaining state and federal highways and rights-of-way in Park County, including the US 14/16/20 (East Gate to Greybull) (North Fork Highway), US 14A (Powell Highway), US 310 (near Frannie), WY 120 (Belfry Highway), (Meeteetse Highway), WY 114 (between Garland and Deaver), WY 295 (Willwood and Elk Basin), WY 296 (Chief Joseph Scenic Byway), WY 294 (Badger Basin Road), WY 291 (South Fork Road), and WY 290 (Pitchfork/Sunshine Reservoir).

**Burlington Northern and Santa Fe Railroad (BNSF).** BNSF operates a branch line between Frannie and Cody that extends from the main line that runs between Billings and Greybull. The branch line offers local agricultural producers and industries a shipping link for their goods and has generally seen consistent traffic and need for rail service. BNSF does not have plans to expand service in Park County but has sufficient capacity to do so. BNSF is primarily concerned with the impacts of development on railroad crossings, and would like new development be located in places that reduce the need for vehicles to cross the branch line in order to access essential services (e.g., schools and fire stations) and would like to see fewer at-grade crossings in the future.

**Yellowstone Regional Airport (YRA).** YRA is owned by the City of Cody and operated by the Yellowstone Regional Airport Joint Powers Board. The Wyoming Airport Coalition considers YRA to be a Commercial Service Airport. YRA fills an important gap in transportation options in the region, with the next closest large airport being Billings Logan International Airport. Because it is the closest airport to Yellowstone National Park, YRA provides a much needed service for regional tourism, providing easy access to the region through daily flights to Denver.

**Powell Municipal Airport (PMA).** PMA is owned by the City of Powell and operated by the Airport Advisory Commission. The Wyoming Airport Coalition considers this to be an Intermediate Airport, not commercial. The airport is primarily used by corporate businesses and local aviators. The City is currently updating their master plan in accordance with FAA regulations and hopes to expand business opportunities associated with the airport.



## OUR RESOURCES

### WHERE WE ARE TODAY

Park County residents cite access to the area's environment, natural resources, and its agricultural heritage as key contributors to the quality of life they value. These resources are also important to the state and local economy. Tourism and visitor-focused services have been a key part of Park County's economy since its inception due to the natural beauty of the area and proximity to Yellowstone National Park, which predated Wyoming statehood. While recreation, service-industry, and professional jobs have grown in recent years, Park County's agricultural and natural resource extraction industries continue to play a major role in the local economy.

### LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

Recent and expected economic trends suggest that more businesses and jobs in Park County will be tied to the natural resources and recreation amenities that the area has to offer. Tourism-focused businesses will likely grow alongside increased visitation to Yellowstone National Park and use of public lands. This will present opportunities to offer a wider variety of activities, like agritourism. Businesses and individuals that can locate anywhere are often attracted to places with a high quality of life and will increasingly be drawn to Park County as improved internet connections and air travel options allow for greater flexibility. The impacts of these trends are already noticeable with higher housing costs, disproportionate growth in the types of lower-paying and seasonal jobs that underpin a tourism-based economy, and increased development pressure on agricultural lands.

The goals and policies in this section support the community's desire to balance opportunities for economic growth with the desire to protect Park County's natural resources and agricultural heritage.



## ECONOMY

### Goal EC-1: Work towards a diverse, year-round economy that reflects our values.

#### EC-1.1: Regional Economic Development

Promote a shared vision and goals for regional economic development in Park County including supporting the sustainable use of public lands, leveraging regional resources such as open space and agricultural lands, and maintaining clear roles and responsibilities within regional partnerships.

#### EC-1.2: Economic Diversity

Allow for the development of a range of agriculture-, healthcare-, energy-, recreation-, and tourism-oriented businesses and industries, consistent with planning area-specific policies in Chapter 4.

#### EC-1.3: Rail Service

Monitor annual trends on the movement of goods transported through the region's freight network and collaborate with Burlington Northern and Santa Fe (BNSF) and other public and private stakeholders to maintain and expand freight rail service to support the movement of goods to and from Park County businesses.

#### EC-1.4: Air Service

Support the continued operation of commercial and private air service to/from Yellowstone Regional Airport and Powell Municipal Airport. Pursue opportunities to expand the frequency of commercial flights and number of destinations served, as appropriate, based on level of passenger demand.

#### EC-1.5: Airport-Compatible Development

Work with the cities of Cody and Powell, Yellowstone Regional Airport, and Powell Municipal Airport to maintain public safety and ensure that future development surrounding each airport supports and protects airport operations.

### Goal EC-2: Expand access to and improve communications networks.

#### EC-2.1: Communications Networks

Collaborate with state, local, and regional partners to identify gaps in cell service and high-speed internet coverage. Work with telecommunications providers to provide service that supports local business needs, emergency preparedness, and the safety and convenience of Park County residents. Monitor and encourage the adoption of emerging technologies (e.g., colocation of telecoms and utilities, satellite communications) that can improve coverage in rural areas while minimizing or eliminating the need for physical infrastructure.

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS

Park County works with a variety of local and state partners that support the growth and diversification of the economy and provides services and support to businesses and workers in Park County, including:

**Wyoming Business Council (WBC).** WBC is the State of Wyoming's economic development agency. Formed in 1998, the WBC has seven offices throughout the state including an office in Cody. WBC provides support to private businesses as well as counties and cities in Wyoming. Programs oriented to businesses focus on startup, expansion, and providing support through grants and loans program. The council works with local economic development organizations to provide funding/financing to local businesses. WBC also supports local communities through its main street program, supporting investments in infrastructure to support economic growth, and growing the broadband network in the state.

**Wyoming Small Business Development Center Network (Wyoming SBDC Network).** The Wyoming (SBDC) Network provides training and advising to entrepreneurs and small businesses in the state, supported by funding from the University of Wyoming, the US Small Business Administration, and the Wyoming Business Council. The Wyoming SBDC Network has nine offices in Wyoming including one in Powell that serves Big Horn, Hot Springs, Park, and Washakie Counties.

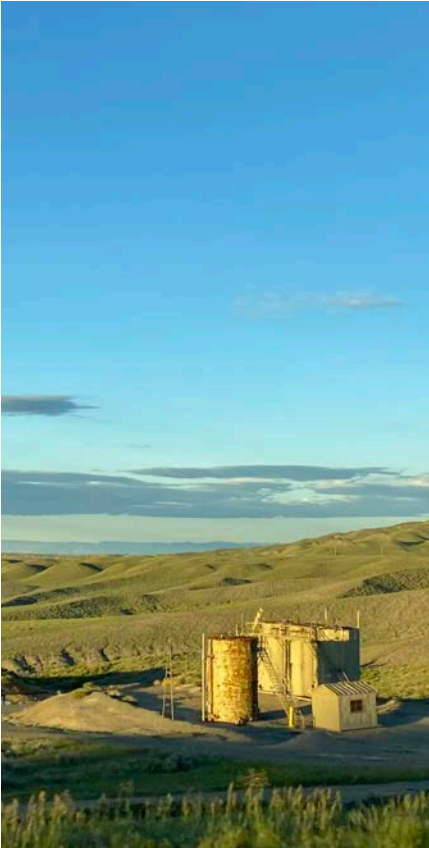
**Powell Economic Partnership (PEP).** PEP is a citizen-created organization established in 2011 to support the growth of the Powell economy. PEP provides economic development services to the Powell area including managing the Powell Chamber of Commerce and the Powell Visitor Center. The organization focuses on economic development, business assistance, and tourism. PEP provides support to its members and partners including business assistance funds from the City of Powell Economic Development Fund and the WBC.

**Forward Cody.** Forward Cody is a private, not-for-profit corporation created to support the economic growth of Cody. The organization is supported through its membership, its programs, and local governments. Forward Cody helps to support attraction, retention, and expansion of businesses in the Cody area by connecting businesses with resources.

**Cody Country Chamber of Commerce (Cody Chamber).** The Cody Chamber is a non-profit, volunteer organization supporting its membership made up of businesses and professionals. The Cody Chamber provides information to businesses looking to relocate to the area, provides workshops and education seminars to members, maintains a comprehensive online calendar of events, operates the Cody Visitor Center, and provides networking opportunities for its members.

**Northwest College.** Northwest College is a fully accredited college located in Powell offering associate and bachelor's degrees programs and skill certification courses. The college provides classes in 20 academic areas in five academic divisions, including; agriculture/business/communications and equine, life & health science, physical science, social science and education, and arts/humanities. These academic divisions provide courses that provide education and training needed to support the businesses in Park County.

**Discover Meeteetse/Meeteetse Visitor Center.** The Meeteetse Visitor Center, also known as "Discover Meeteetse," is a non-profit organization that welcomes visitors to the Town and serves as an information resource for locals and visitors, and promotes local and regional businesses, attractions, recreation and wildlife viewing. In addition to hosting an informational website, Discover Meeteetse releases a weekly electronic newsletter, The Meeteetse Messenger, to advertise events, businesses, and local news.



## EC-2.2: Siting Considerations

Minimize the visual and environmental impacts of communications infrastructure on environmentally sensitive areas, high-value agricultural lands, crucial wildlife habitat, prominent geographical features, viewsheds from state and federal highways, established subdivisions, and rural communities. Establish and enforce siting (e.g., setbacks, height, color, concealment), operational, and decommissioning requirements for towers, antennas, and other communication infrastructure in accordance with state and federal law. Encourage applicants to consider alternative sites in visually or environmentally sensitive areas.

## ENERGY

### Goal EG-1: Support the responsible development of renewable and non-renewable energy on public and private lands.

#### EG-1.1: Natural Resource Development

Encourage the responsible exploration and development of natural and energy resources consistent with Park County's interest in maintaining a clean natural environment, high-value agricultural lands, crucial wildlife habitat, scenery, and open spaces.

(See also, EN-1.7 on page 42.)

#### EG-1.2: Renewable Energy (Utility-scale)

Minimize the visual and environmental impacts of utility-scale wind and solar facilities on environmentally sensitive areas, high-value agricultural lands, big game use areas, prominent geographical features, viewsheds from state and federal highways, established subdivisions, and rural communities. Establish and enforce siting (e.g., setbacks, size, height), operational, and decommissioning requirements in accordance with W.S. § 18-05-501. Encourage applicants to consider alternative sites outside of visually or environmentally sensitive areas.

#### EG-1.3: Renewable Energy (Small-scale)

Accommodate the development of small-scale renewable energy facilities (e.g., rooftop solar and/or individual wind turbines for household or business use) to offset the potential challenges, risks, and costs associated with the provision of utilities and emergency services in remote areas of Park County in accordance with adopted regulations.



## WATER

### Goal WA-1: Promote the stewardship of water to meet the needs of all users.

#### WA-1.1: Water Stewardship

Promote the stewardship of water to meet the needs of domestic, agricultural, industrial, and recreational users and to meet the demands of wildlife.

#### WA-1.2: Water Rights

Support Wyoming in maintaining water and water rights under state ownership and control.

#### WA-1.3: Long-Range Planning

Support efforts by water providers in Park County to plan and provide for future water needs.

#### WA-1.4: Demonstrate Adequate Water

Require that subdivisions demonstrate sufficient domestic water availability (quantity and quality) to support the proposed development prior to approval.

## WYOMING WATER LAW

Wyoming water law dates back to territorial days and is based on the “doctrine of prior appropriation.” Under this doctrine, the first person to put the water to beneficial use has the first right, meaning “first in time is first in right.” Water rights in Wyoming and most of the western states are regulated by priority. This means that those with the earliest water rights are entitled to water during periods of limited supply while those with later water rights are denied water during such times. In addition to establishing priorities for the allocation of water rights, Wyoming water law addresses reservoir storage, groundwater and groundwater permitting, domestic and stock water uses, wells (e.g., priority, location, and depth), preferred and non-preferred uses for water supply, parameters for a change in use, subdivisions with attached water rights, interstate compacts and court decrees, and principles for the administration of the law—including the abandonment of water rights.

The Wyoming Constitution provides that water from all natural streams, springs, lakes, and other collections is the property of the state. The state engineer is the chief administrator of Wyoming waters, assisted by superintendents in each of the four water divisions. Park County largely falls within Water Division 2: Sheridan, and Water Division 3: Riverton.

Water law is extremely complex. It is incumbent on property owners and developers to research water rights associated with their land, respect the role of irrigation districts in diverting allocated surface water rights to those deemed to have priority by the state engineer, and ensure they comply with applicable water laws when irrigating, drilling wells, watering stock.

Source: Jacobs, James J. et. al. 2003. “Wyoming Water Law: A Summary.” University of Wyoming Agricultural Experiment Station.



## PARK COUNTY NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN

Park County adopted a Natural Resource Management Plan (NRMP) to improve communication and coordination with the federal and state government entities and their agencies on land and natural resource management issues that influence the local area and economy. Although Park County and other local governments have no jurisdiction over the federal or state government or the lands they manage, adopting a NRMP allows Park County to better coordinate and collaborate with state and federal agencies during their decision-making processes, and ensures that the priorities of the County are well understood and meaningfully considered.

### WA-1.5: Water Conservation

Encourage water conservation efforts through programs and regulations that reduce domestic water use, as well as the reduction of irrigation water use by expanding drought-tolerant landscaping and installation of water-efficient landscape irrigation systems for residential use, among other initiatives.

### Goal WA-2: Protect the quality of ground and surface water.

#### WA-2.1: Watershed Protection

Collaborate with water providers, conservation districts, property owners, and state and federal agencies to maintain and improve water quality in Park County's rivers, creeks, streams, reservoirs, and other water bodies through improved land management practices, especially in watersheds that provide drinking water to residents.

#### WA-2.2: Groundwater Protection

Pursue land use and vegetation management practices that protect from aquifer contamination, while supporting initiatives that divert potentially overtaxing, harmful, or inappropriate development away from areas reaching water availability limits or with high groundwater recharge potential.

#### WA-2.3: Wastewater Treatment

Prevent effluent pollution from sewage disposal systems (both individual and municipal-scale) from impacting ground and surface water quality by ensuring that sewage disposal systems are environmentally sound and meet state specifications, at a minimum.

#### WA-2.4: Clarks Fork of the Yellowstone River

Place a higher level of scrutiny on land use management practices in areas that abut the Clarks Fork of the Yellowstone River—one of two nationally-designated Wild and Scenic Rivers in Wyoming—to protect the river's ecological, scenic, and recreational values and important fish and wildlife habitat.

#### WA-2.5: Water Education

Support efforts by water providers, conservation districts, the Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality, and others to educate the public about best practices in water rights, water conservation, and maintaining and improving water quality. Explore opportunities to enhance the cataloging and tracking of well productivity and water quality data after initial well permits are issued.

#### WA-2.6: Solid Waste Disposal

Encourage recycling and efficient operations to protect the longevity of Park County's landfills, resulting in environmental and fiscal protections.



## CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

Conservation districts were established by the Soil Conservation Service—now the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)—following the devastation of the Dust Bowl in the 1930s. Wyoming’s conservation districts were established through a 1941 enabling act as non-regulatory agencies with the charge of promoting practices that stabilize ranching and farming operations, preserve natural resources, protect the tax base, control floods, prevent impairment of dams and reservoirs, preserve wildlife, protect public lands, and protect and promote health, safety and general welfare of the people of the Wyoming.

Park County’s three conservation districts—the Cody, Meeteetse, and Powell-Clarks Fork Districts—serve as a resource for property owners, assisting with water quality issues, subdivision review, and other related land management questions.

## ENVIRONMENT & NATURAL RESOURCES

**Goal EN-1: Work with local, state, and federal partners to manage and conserve Park County’s natural resources for the benefit of current and future residents.**

### EN-1.1: Natural Resource Management Plan

Maintain and periodically update the County’s Natural Resource Management Plan as a tool to ensure local interests are reflected in decisions made on public lands within Park County.

### EN-1.2: Environmentally Sensitive Areas

Work with agency partners to identify and encourage the conservation of environmentally sensitive areas as part of future development, including, but not limited to, crucial wildlife habitats, wetlands, riparian areas, steep slopes, flood hazard areas, prominent ridgelines like Heart Mountain, mature stands of trees, and other natural and scenic resources.

### EN-1.3: Priority Conservation Areas

Adopt regulations or consider other strategies to encourage the conservation of areas within the Agricultural Overlay or Big Game Use Overlay that are tailored to conditions and preferences in individual planning areas, as outlined in Chapter 3 and Chapter 4.

(See also, Goals EN-2, page 42, and AG-1, page 44, and associated policies.)

### EN-1.5: Noxious Weeds and Invasive Species

Reduce the introduction and spread of noxious weeds and invasive plant and animal species through public education on common noxious weeds and invasive species (as defined in the County’s NRMP) and greater enforcement of property maintenance regulations. Collaborate with the Park County Weed and Pest Control District and federal, state, and private land managers to enhance weed management and other efforts in accordance with W.S. § 11-5-101.



## LAND TRUSTS IN PARK COUNTY

Land trusts are private and/or non-profit organizations that actively work to conserve land by assisting with voluntary conservation easement acquisition or by planning and managing land use and easements. The goal of conservation land trusts is to preserve natural areas, particularly for agriculture or open space. Land trusts utilize a number of strategies to accomplish these goals, including land acquisition, purchasing development rights or conservation easements, or providing funding to private buyers or government organizations for these activities. As non-profit organizations, land trusts generally rely on volunteers, donations, grants, and public programs for their operations and activities.

There are multiple land trusts and conservation organizations operating in Park County including the Nature Conservancy, the WYldlife Fund, the Greater Yellowstone Coalition, Wyoming Stockgrowers Land Trust, and others. In 2022, the National Conservation Easement Database (NCED) listed 38 conservation easements in Park County, covering approximately 20,000 acres.



### EN-1.6: Conservation Districts

Collaborate with local conservation districts to ensure that natural resources are managed to allow their sustainable use for the benefit of all Park County residents.

### EN-1.7: Extraction Operations

Continue to support mineral, oil and gas exploration, development and production, as well as renewable energy development, in particular on public lands, provided such developments are carefully sited to minimize adverse effects on other resources and values, as well as private properties and landowners within the County in accordance with W.S. § 30-5-104 and W.S. § 35-11-401.

## Goal EN-2: Encourage the protection of crucial wildlife habitat and use areas.

### EN-2.1: Crucial Wildlife Habitat and Use Areas

Continue to work with Wyoming Game and Fish and other agencies to identify and monitor areas of crucial wildlife habitat and use in Park County. Explore a variety of strategies to ensure that crucial wildlife habitat and use areas are not adversely impacted by development.

### EN-2.2: Big Game Use Areas

Encourage the use of no or wildlife-friendly fencing, conservation subdivision design, or other strategies that limit the intensity and impacts of land uses and human activities in big game use areas. Place a particular focus on areas of high or medium use.

**(See also, Big Game Use Overlay, page 84.)**

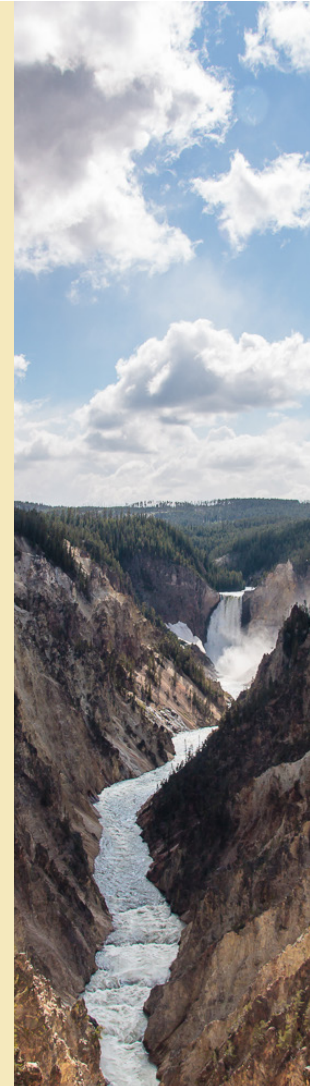
## PARK COUNTY'S ROLE IN THE GREATER YELLOWSTONE ECOSYSTEM

Park County is an integral part of the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem—which includes Yellowstone National Park and surrounding areas of Wyoming, Montana, and Idaho. The Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem is one of the largest nearly intact temperate-zone ecosystems on Earth, and is recognized worldwide for the diversity of migratory species that call it home. The migratory patterns of elk, mule deer, pronghorn antelope, and other big game are wide-ranging and include many of Park County's lower elevation range and agricultural lands.

Wildlife and wildlife-based recreation are valued by residents and are substantial contributors to the state and local economy. A 2017 University of Wyoming Study found that wildlife-based recreation in the state generated over a billion dollars' worth of economic activity and supported nearly 10,000 jobs. Wildlife watching generated more than half a billion dollars.

The proliferation of rural subdivisions and other development activity in areas used by big game has led to increased conflict between people and wildlife in recent decades. Researchers are studying the long-term effects of these conflicts on big game populations and seasonal migration patterns and seeking ways to mitigate potential impacts in collaboration with landowners, local governments, and other stakeholders. Increasing awareness of the importance of high use areas and encouraging responsible development and land management is a priority for Park County residents, as expressed throughout the Plan Park County process.

Sources: Taylor, David T. "Economic Importance of Big Game Hunting, Fishing and Wildlife Watching to the Wyoming Economy in 2017." University of Wyoming, and Kauffman, Matthew J. et. al. 2018. "Wild Migrations: Atlas of Wyoming's Ungulates." Oregon State University Press, Corvallis, Oregon.



## WILDLIFE-FRIENDLY FENCING

Where cattle are concerned, Wyoming is a "fence out" state. Landowners who do not want free-ranging livestock roaming onto their property must construct a "lawful fence," in accordance with W.S. § 11-28-102. While multiple types of fencing are acceptable, barbed wire is most commonly used. Unfortunately, fencing can be dangerous to wildlife. When animals collide or tangle in fences, they can be injured or killed, and wildlife damage to fencing can be costly for landowners. By tailoring fence design and placement, wildlife injuries and fence damage can be reduced. A variety of resources are available to property owners interested in learning more about wildlife-friendly fence designs, seeking technical assistance, and/or exploring possible cost-share opportunities.

Organizations such as the Absaroka Fence Initiative and the Wyoming Wildlife and Roadway Initiative have worked to increase awareness of problem fences, retrofit property fences to make them more wildlife-friendly, reduce wildlife-vehicle crashes, and re-establish or maintain wildlife movement corridors.

Sources: A Wyoming Landowner's Handbook to Fences and Wildlife: Practical Tips for Fencing with Wildlife in Mind (Wyoming Wildlife Foundation), [www.absarokafenceinitiative.org](http://www.absarokafenceinitiative.org) and [www.dot.state.wy.us/wildlife-initiative](http://www.dot.state.wy.us/wildlife-initiative).



## AGRICULTURE

### Goal AG-1: Encourage the protection of high-value agricultural lands.

#### AG-1.1: High-Value Agricultural Land

Maintain and periodically update an Agricultural Overlay that identifies areas of Park County with the highest value for agricultural operations (as defined by this Plan). Establish tools that encourage the preservation of larger, contiguous tracts of high-value agricultural land if and when subdivision occurs (e.g., conservation subdivisions, clustering, density bonuses). Discourage land use decisions that will permanently reduce or eliminate the economic viability of high-value farmland or other highly productive land for agricultural use within the overlay.

### HIGH-VALUE AGRICULTURAL LANDS

High-value agricultural lands are defined based on those characteristics that contribute to the most productive and valuable land for producing crops according to the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). These factors include access to irrigation, precipitation, or another moisture supply; the length of the growing season; and soil quality, including sodium content, acidity or alkalinity, and presence of rocks. The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) of the USDA has identified the following farmland designations and mapped where they are located in Park County:

**Prime farmland.** Land that has the best combination of physical and chemical characteristics for producing food, feed, forage, fiber, and seed crops and that is available for these uses based on a combination of soil properties, growing season, and moisture supply needed to produce sustained high yields of crops in an economic manner if treated and managed according to acceptable farming methods.

**Farmland of statewide importance.** Land determined by Wyoming as well suited for the production of food, feed, fiber, forage, and seed crops. This designation includes lands that are nearly prime farmland and that economically produce high yields of crops when treated and managed according to acceptable farming methods. Some may produce as high a yield as prime farmlands if conditions are favorable.

**Farmland of local importance.** Land determined by an appropriate local agency (like Park County) as well suited for the production of food, feed, fiber, forage, and seed crops even though these lands are not identified as having national or statewide importance. Farmlands of local importance may include tracts of land that have been designated for agriculture by local ordinance.

Additionally, the Wyoming Water Development Commission (WWDC) provides data on areas that are served by irrigation or sub-irrigation (areas irrigated from a sub-surface source due to water received from neighboring irrigated lands), which Park County has also included in its definition of high-value agricultural lands.

Park County's Agricultural Overlay includes lands that meet one or more of the above characteristics as documented through publicly available GIS data. In 2022, there were 203,207 acres of high-value agricultural land in Park County (6.1 percent of the County's total land area). Acres of high-value agricultural land by planning areas is provided in Chapter 4.

Sources: USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service. Web Soil Survey. Wyoming Water Development Commission. Wind-Bighorn Basin Plan Update. May 2010.



### **AG-1.2: Land Use Compatibility**

Minimize potential conflicts between existing agricultural and ranching operations and proposed residential, commercial, or industrial uses through supportive land use regulations.

### **AG-1.3: Water Rights**

Collaborate with water providers, landowners, conservation organizations, and other stakeholders on the identification and implementation of strategies that prevent water rights associated with agricultural land from being severed from agricultural land or being sold for non-agricultural development.

## **Goal AG-2: Nurture the next generation of farmers and ranchers.**

### **AG-2.1: Agricultural Education**

Support efforts by local school districts, Northwest College, the Wyoming FFA Association, the University of Wyoming, and others to develop and implement programs—such as 4-H, National FFA Organization, and the County Fair—that expose young people to agricultural practices in Park County or enhance the experience they already have, through field trips and site visits, volunteer opportunities, peer-to-peer educational campaigns, and other efforts.

### **AG-2.2: Mentorship and Training**

Encourage the growth of secondary and post-secondary programs at local high schools, Northwest College, Central Wyoming College, the University of Wyoming, and other colleges and organizations that offer agricultural education and practical experience through mentoring, apprenticeships, and training with established farmers and ranchers in the region.

### **AG-2.3: Agriculture Programs**

Increase education and awareness of programs that support on-going farming in the region, such as tax incentives for conservation easements, financial support for farming education and internships through Wyoming Works, and other private property tools that could help farmers and ranchers retain their land. Investigate the feasibility of initiating additional programs, such as land leases or microloan programs, modeled on other efforts implemented in rural, western communities.

### **AG-2.4: Agricultural Resiliency**

Support efforts to implement new crops, tools and technologies, farming practices, and other opportunities designed to help maximize the productivity of high-value agricultural lands in the event of severe drought, heat, and other extreme weather.

## CONSERVATION SUBDIVISIONS

Conservation subdivisions (also referred to as cluster subdivisions) are encouraged alongside lot size averaging as alternatives to conventional subdivisions to retain larger, contiguous tracts of land in rural areas of Park County. Conservation subdivisions encourage the preservation of high-value agricultural land and/or environmentally sensitive areas by allowing for smaller lot sizes in exchange for clustering lots and dedicating buildable land area to undivided, permanently protected open space or agricultural use. To the extent feasible, smaller lots should be concentrated on non-irrigated or remnant parcels, or along existing roadways, rather than on high-value agricultural land. In Wyoming, the portion of the land reserved for open space must be designated as such for 65 years or more.

### AG-2.5: Emerging Agricultural Technologies

Provide a supportive policy and regulatory environment for the expansion of emerging technologies in agriculture that support the diversification of Park County's agricultural economy.

### Goal AG-3: Sustain agricultural production and grow agribusiness in the County.

#### AG-3.1: Food Production

Encourage the expansion of programs and initiatives that support local and regional food production, including small-scale agriculture, 4-H, FFA, community supported agriculture (CSA), and other similar efforts. Support specialty designations and/or state legislation that makes it easier for local food producers to market and distribute their products.

#### AG-3.2: Irrigation Practices

In collaboration with local irrigation districts and other stakeholders, explore strategies to encourage non-agricultural irrigation users to transition to conservation-oriented irrigation practices and better educate new irrigation ditch customers on how to use/access water from irrigation districts and the importance of established rights of unimpeded return of irrigation flows to waters of the state.

(See also, *Wyoming Water Law*, page 39.)

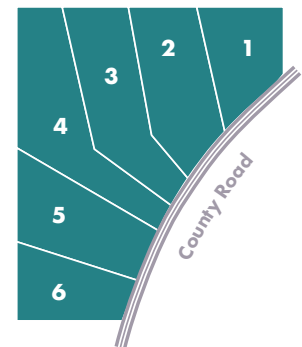
#### AG-3.3: Local Food Supply Chain

Promote the expansion and stability of a local food supply chain that works directly with Park County farms and ranches to grow, process, market, and consume products locally, and to develop new jobs and careers in agriculture. Explore opportunities to partner with the Wyoming Food Coalition and UW Extension on these efforts.

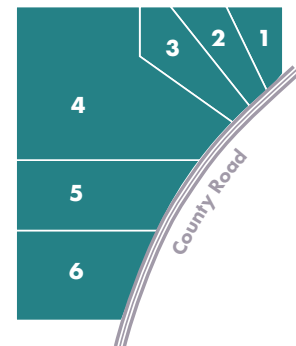
UNDIVIDED PARCEL  
OF 68 ACRES



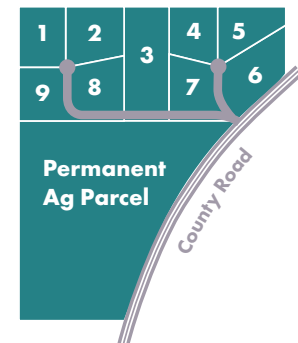
CONVENTIONAL SUBDIVISION  
with 10-acre minimum lot size



LOT SIZE AVERAGING SUBDIVISION  
with 10-acre minimum lot size  
(lots 1-3 are smaller than 10 acres)



CONSERVATION SUBDIVISION  
with density bonus (3 additional lots and  
permanent agricultural parcel)





## AGRICULTURE PROGRAMS

The US Department of Agriculture Farm Service Agency (USDA FSA) offers numerous programs in Wyoming to support farming and encourage land conservation, some of which are summarized below.

**Emergency Conservation Program (ECP).** Provides emergency funding for farmers and ranchers to rehabilitate farmland damaged by wind erosion, floods, or other natural disasters, and for carrying out emergency water conservation measures during periods of severe drought. The natural disaster must create new conservation problems, which, if not treated, would: impair or endanger the land; materially affect the productive capacity of the land; represent unusual damage which, except for wind erosion, is not the type likely to recur frequently in the same area; and be so costly to repair that federal assistance is, or will be, required to return the land to productive agricultural use.

**Conservation Reserve Program (CRP).** Provides a voluntary program for agricultural producers to help them safeguard environmentally sensitive land. Producers enrolled in CRP plant long-term, resource-conserving cover crops or plant species to improve the quality of water, control soil erosion, and enhance wildlife habitat. In return, CRP provides participants rental payments and cost-share assistance. Contract duration is between ten and 15 years.

**Grassland Conservation Reserve Program (Grassland CRP).** The Grassland CRP is part of the CRP program, a federally funded voluntary program that contracts with agricultural producers so that environmentally sensitive agricultural land is not farmed or ranched, but instead used for conservation benefits. FSA provides participants with rental payments and cost-share assistance. The program emphasizes support for grazing operations, plant and animal biodiversity, and grassland and land containing shrubs and forbs under the greatest threat of conversion.

**Microloans Program.** The Microloans Program is tailored to the financing needs of small, beginning farmer, niche and non-traditional farm operations, such as truck farms, farms participating in direct marketing and sales such as farmers' markets, Community Supported Agriculture (CSA), restaurants and grocery stores, or those using hydroponic, aquaponic, organic and vertical growing methods.

**Youth Loans.** Provides operating type loans to eligible rural youth applicants to finance a modest income-producing agricultural project. Maximum loan amount is \$5,000.

A complete list of FSA programs is available at: <https://www.fsa.usda.gov/state-offices/Wyoming/programs/index>

## AGRICULTURE AND THE ECONOMY

Agriculture is a major driver of the Wyoming economy. In 2017, the value of agriculture products sold in Wyoming was over \$1.4 billion. Despite the resiliency of the agricultural industry over the years, conditions are changing. The number of large farms in the state has been declining, while the number of small farms has been increasing. The U.S. Census of Agriculture found the greatest growth between 2012 and 2017 among farms that are between ten and 49 acres.

In Park County, farm employment accounts for five percent of all jobs and generates additional indirect jobs and economic activity including employment in the non-farm agriculture industry and other related sectors. In 2017, the U.S. Census of Agriculture found that there are over 1,000 farms in Park County—accounting for eight percent of all farms in Wyoming and covering almost one million acres of land.

The market value of agricultural products sold in Park County per year (as of 2017) is over \$85 million or \$84,498 per farm. Park County is a major producer of several crops including seed crops, sugar beets, hay, oats, and barley. Park County farms account for 18 percent of the statewide acres used for growing oats and 30 percent of the statewide acres used for production of barley. Supporting continued agricultural production in Park County and mitigating land use impacts on high-value agricultural land emerged as key priorities during the Plan Park County process.

Source: United States Department of Agriculture & National Agricultural Statistics Service. U.S. Census of Agriculture. 2017.

### **AG-3.4: Agritourism**

Support efforts by local farmers, ranchers, and the tourism industry to promote agritourism opportunities that showcase agricultural practices, food, and crafts as a draw for tourism. Opportunities could include farm stands, farm dinners, you-pick produce, seasonal sales and activities, farm tours, or overnight farm stays.

### **AG-3.5: Value-added Agriculture**

Continue to allow uses that support value-added agricultural businesses (e.g., small-scale processing facilities and commercial kitchens) where appropriate.

### **AG-3.6: Marketing**

Support efforts to increase awareness of Park County as a producer of unique, high-quality agricultural products (e.g., specialty hops and seed crops) and services through branding and marketing of Park County products to consumers and businesses outside of Park County.



## OUR CULTURE, HERITAGE, AND SENSE OF COMMUNITY

### WHERE WE ARE TODAY

Perhaps Park County's most defining feature—one that is influenced by and informs the way we grow—is our culture, heritage, and sense of community. Park County has a long history that includes centuries of Native American habitation, hunting, gathering, and culture followed by generations of exploration, trade, farming, ranching, and resource extraction by non-native settlers. Many Park County residents trace their heritage to early homesteaders that developed the area into an agricultural valley. This history is reflected in a robust Western culture that is celebrated with museums, rodeos, historic buildings, the Park County Fair, protected lands and landscapes, and an appreciation for a rural way of life.

Park County residents appreciate the tight-knit, small-town feel of the community and the way that neighbors look out for each other. Park County has long been the type of place where community events draw a crowd from all corners of the County. People can find “elbow room” and privacy, and new residents learn from the “old timers” how to last through the winter. This sentiment extends to the role of local government, which many residents expect to be efficient, transparent, and accessible. However, population growth, recent development, the rise in part-time residents, and rising housing costs have raised concerns from many that the traditions and culture of Park County are at risk of changing.

### LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

The goals and policies in this section support the community's desire to embrace and preserve Park County's culture and sense of community, while also recognizing the opportunity to help guide—rather than reject—change.



## HOUSING PARTNERS

### **Wyoming Community Development Authority.**

Provides resources and directories to connect with local affordable housing developers and resources for securing affordable housing.

**The Yellowstone Country Assistance Network of Park County.** A local non-profit that works with community partners to provide financial assistance to Park County residents in need. Case managers will assist in finding adequate resources for residents struggling to meet housing needs.

**The Wyoming Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP).** ERAP was created in April 2021 to provide rent, utility, and internet assistance to Wyoming residents in need.

Qualifying applicants can find assistance in paying upcoming or past due payments, utility payments, and relocation expenses.

**Wyoming Homelessness Collaborative.** A non-profit that provides funding to engage with homeless individuals and families, improve the number and quality of emergency shelters, cover shelter operation costs, and fund homelessness prevention efforts.

## HOUSING

### **Goal HO-1: Diversify housing options to meet the needs of existing and future residents and employers.**

#### **HO-1.1: Workforce Housing**

Allow for smaller lot sizes and the potential for attached or small-scale apartments in areas that have access to infrastructure and services. Continue to allow limited accessory dwellings and employee housing in rural areas of Park County.

#### **HO-1.2: Regional Housing Partnerships**

Identify partnerships with other government agencies, non-profit organizations, and area employers to collectively work to understand housing needs in Park County and expand the availability of housing units affordable to County residents and workers.

#### **HO-1.3: Urban Residential**

Collaborate with municipalities, service providers, and other regional partners to encourage the construction of higher-density residential development within Coordinated Planning Areas to ensure smaller and/or more affordable housing options are available to meet the changing needs of the Park County community.

#### **HO-1.4: Short-Term Rentals**

Continue to allow opportunities for short-term rentals in accordance with adopted regulations. Inventory existing short-term rentals in unincorporated areas to identify permitted uses and enforce unpermitted uses and to understand the impacts on available housing in the County. Consider developing regulatory language specific to short-term rental uses.

#### **HO-1.5: Age-Friendly Community**

Allow for development of housing types that allow for residents to age in place (e.g., accessory dwelling units) and remain integrated in the community, and that are adaptable to accommodate changing needs.

### **Goal HO-2: Promote safe construction practices.**

#### **HO-2.1: Uniform Building Standards**

Encourage homebuilders, developers, and homeowners to follow standard building codes used in other communities as part of the development review process. Increase awareness of the potential safety, health, and financial risks that can arise from construction “short cuts.” Universal Building Codes cover the fire, life, and structural safety aspects of all buildings and related structures.

**(See also, Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan, page 31.)**



### CODE OF THE WEST

The Code of the West is the official state code for the State of Wyoming. It was officially signed into law on March 3rd, 2010, and draws from the book, “Cowboy Ethics” by James P. Brown. The code is composed of a list of 10 ethics. They are as follows:

— 1 —

Live each day with courage.

— 2 —

Take pride in your work.

— 3 —

Always finish what you start.

— 4 —

Do what has to be done.

— 5 —

Be tough, but fair.

— 6 —

When you make a promise, keep it.

— 7 —

Ride for the brand

— 8 —

Talk less, say more.

— 9 —

Remember that some things are not for sale.

— 10 —

Know where to draw the line.

### HO-2.2: Firewise Construction Practices

Encourage the use of Firewise practices for construction, landscaping, and maintenance, in the Wildland-Urban Interface in collaboration with the County Fire Warden, local fire district staff, and Wyoming State Forestry Division.

(See also, Community Wildfire Protection Plan, page 32.)

## CULTURE

### Goal CU-1: Maintain and promote our friendly, small-town, Western, rural character.

#### CU-1.1: Cultural Landscapes

Recognize the value of Park County’s landscape—open spaces, agriculture, public lands, historic resources, wildlife habitat, and scenic viewsheds—on the culture and economy of the region.

#### CU-1.2: Community Identity

Maintain Park County’s friendly, close-knit community, and unique, Western, rural character by supporting the continuation of local customs and traditions.

#### CU-1.3: Agricultural Way-of-life

Prioritize the needs of production agriculture over more urban interests in rural areas to encourage the viability of farms and ranches, and continuation of agricultural lifestyles in Park County.

### Goal CU-2: Celebrate our shared history and culture while maintaining the unique identity of each community within Park County.

#### CU-2.1: Planning Area Policy Statements

Recognize the unique considerations and needs of individual planning areas in Park County. Consider land use decisions in the context of adopted planning area policy statements.

#### CU-2.2: Rural Communities

Recognize the unique cultural identities of each community within Park County and support efforts to maintain the character, economy, and lifestyles that make them unique.

#### CU-2.3: Community Events

Continue to encourage the communities in Park County to organize and host events that reflect their culture and identity and support local businesses.



## OUTDOOR RECREATION

### Goal OR-1: Maintain and expand access to outdoor recreation.

#### OR-1.1: Public Lands Access

Work with state and federal land management agencies and other stakeholders to ensure existing access to public lands is maintained. Support efforts to expand access to public lands where proposals are initiated by the partner agency and supported at the planning area level.

#### OR-1.2: Access and Private Uses

Require new subdivisions and developments to disclose and maintain existing access points to public lands (e.g., roads or trails) through shared use easements or other tools.

#### OR-1.3: Regional Trails

Partner with public and private partners on opportunities to create trail connections between communities that advance the health and safety of the community and/or advance planning area priorities.

## HISTORIC PRESERVATION

### Goal HP-1: Work with property owners on the identification, protection, and preservation of historic, cultural, and archaeological resources.

#### HP-1.1: Historic Preservation Initiatives

Continue to support education and a greater understanding of Park County's history by supporting the work of the Park County Historic Preservation Commission (HPC), Park County Historical Archives, Park County museums, and other organizations.

#### HP-1.2: Documentation

Work with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), local preservation organizations, land management agencies, and volunteers to pursue grant funding to complete surveys, context studies, and other research needed to more fully document and interpret historic, cultural, and archaeological resources that exist in Park County.

#### HP-1.3: Preservation Incentives

Increase awareness of public and private partner organizations, grant funding, tax incentives, and other resources available to encourage land owners to preserve historic, cultural, and archaeological resources on private lands.





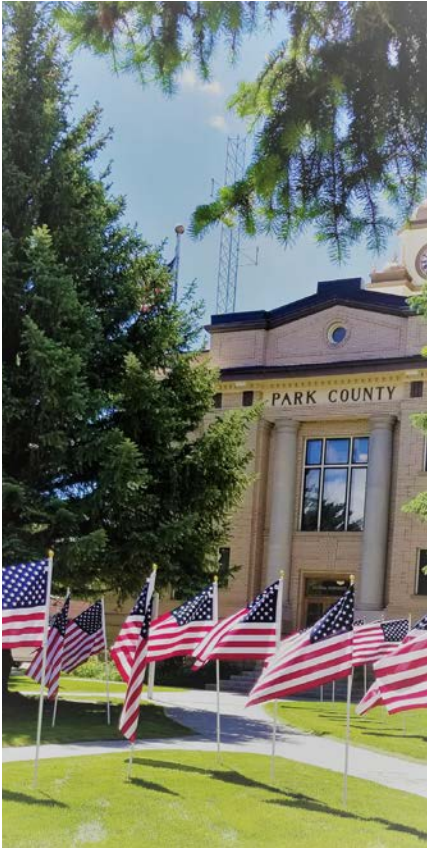
## HISTORIC PRESERVATION IN PARK COUNTY

Park County is one of 22 Certified Local Governments (CLGs) in the State of Wyoming under the Wyoming State Historic Preservation Office's (SHPO's) Community Preservation Program. CLGs are eligible for education, technical assistance, and funding (e.g., grants, historic preservation tax credits) to help protect historic properties. Historic preservation efforts at the state and local level are voluntary. The Park County HPC works in partnership with the SHPO and local volunteers to increase awareness and understanding of the County's historic, cultural, and archaeological resources, and to promote the preservation of these resources for future generations. While many of Park County's resources remain undocumented, some of the more significant historic and cultural resources are documented as part of the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) and the Centennial Farm and Ranch Program:

**National Register of Historic Places.** There are 15 historic and cultural resources in Park County that are listed on the National Register of Historic Places - nine in unincorporated areas of the County, one in Powell, four in Cody, and one in Meeteetse.

**Centennial Farm and Ranch Program.** Since 2006, the program has honored Wyoming families who have owned and operated the same farm or ranch for 100 years or more. A "yearbook" is produced each year documenting the history of each farm or ranch through narrative and photos provided by the families. As of 2022, three farms and ranches in the Meeteetse Rural Planning Area Park County have been honored.

Park County also has significant Native American and archaeological resources. These resources are actively being explored and documented in collaboration with land management agencies, Native tribes, and private property owners. Additional detail on documented historic and cultural resources in individual planning areas is provided in Chapter 4. NRHP listings are also documented in the Land Use Plan Map Portal. The SHPO website ([www.wyoshpo.wyo.gov](http://www.wyoshpo.wyo.gov)) offers a wealth of resources for property owners interested in documenting or rehabilitating a historic property, as well as those who are simply interested in learning more about the history of Park County and the State of Wyoming.



#### HP-1.4: Public Engagement

Engage long-time residents, farmers and ranchers, property owners, and others in efforts to document Park County's history for future generations through oral, written, and pictorial means.

#### HP-1.5: Native American Sites

Encourage opportunities for Native American scholars, elders, historians and cultural leaders to share their knowledge of the ancestral human inhabitants of Park County and their lifeways, as well as their contemporary place-based traditions. Work collaboratively with the Native tribes that call Park County home to ensure that areas of religious and spiritual significance are respected in County land use decisions.

## GOVERNMENT

### Goal GV-1: Identify opportunities to partner with other local, state, and federal agencies while maintaining local control.

#### GV-1.1: Local Control

Recognizing that the County is a political subdivision of the state and is subject to many federal and state regulations, maintain the County's independence and control over many local issues.

#### GV-1.2: Local Plans and Policies

Actively participate in planning efforts led by Cody, Frannie, Meeteetse, and Powell to encourage consistency with Park County policies and regulations and identify opportunities for partnerships.

#### GV-1.3: Intergovernmental Coordination

Work with state and federal government agencies to address issues of mutual importance.

### Goal GV-2: Expand opportunities for citizen involvement in County decision-making.

#### GV-2.1: Community Engagement

Provide meaningful opportunities for residents and property owners to participate in the government decision-making process. Develop and improve methods for gathering community input that reflects the views of people in each planning area.

#### GV-2.2: Citizen Leadership

Encourage more Park County residents to be involved in elected, appointed, and volunteer positions to ensure that decision-makers reflect the desires of the people of Park County.

#### GV-2.3: Education and training

Improve public education and understanding of the roles and responsibilities of County government.



**Goal GV-3: Pursue opportunities to improve the efficiency, effectiveness, and transparency of County government operations.**

**GV-3.1: Efficient Government Operations**

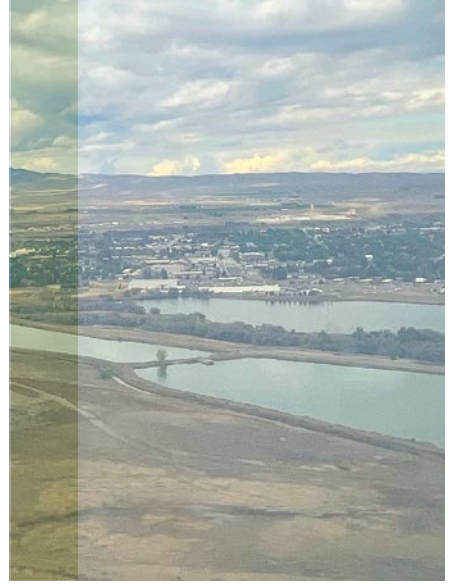
Identify opportunities to make Park County processes and operations streamlined and cost-effective.

**GV-3.2: Transparent Government**

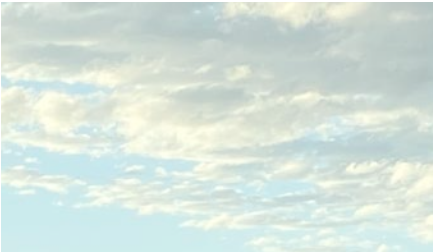
Explore opportunities to improve the public understanding of Park County processes, operations, and decision-making through improvements to the way that the County shares and communicates information, including County meetings, websites, and social media.

**GV-3.3: Property Information**

Work with building contractors, developers, realtors, and service providers (e.g, water districts, irrigation districts, and fire districts) to improve the quality and clarity of information available to property owners.



# CHAPTER

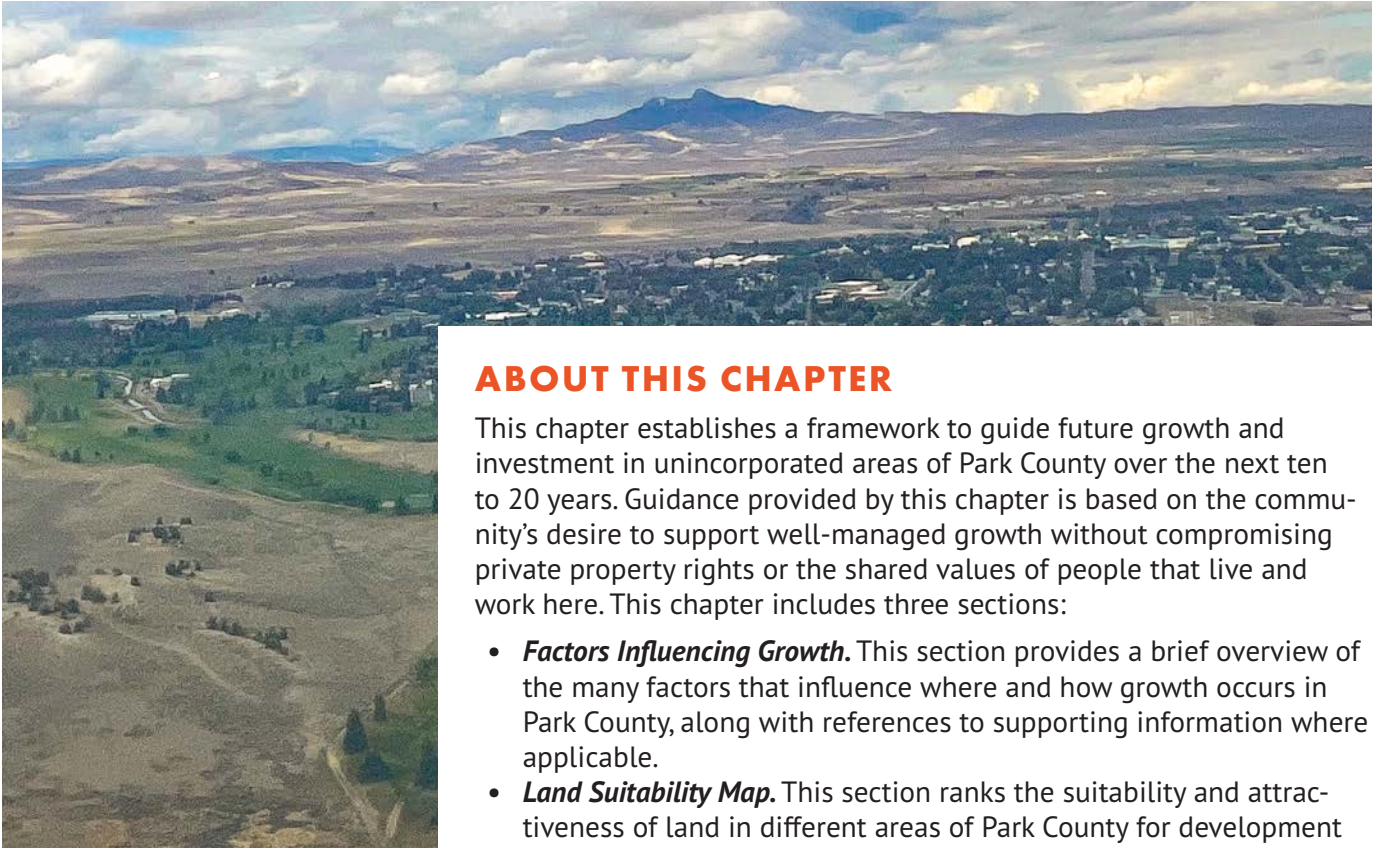


# 3



# COUNTYWIDE GROWTH FRAMEWORK





## ABOUT THIS CHAPTER

This chapter establishes a framework to guide future growth and investment in unincorporated areas of Park County over the next ten to 20 years. Guidance provided by this chapter is based on the community's desire to support well-managed growth without compromising private property rights or the shared values of people that live and work here. This chapter includes three sections:

- **Factors Influencing Growth.** This section provides a brief overview of the many factors that influence where and how growth occurs in Park County, along with references to supporting information where applicable.
- **Land Suitability Map.** This section ranks the suitability and attractiveness of land in different areas of Park County for development based on the results of a land suitability analysis.
- **Future Land Use Map and Land Use Categories.** This section defines a generalized pattern of anticipated land uses in rural and developed/developing areas of Park County based on the range of factors that influence where and how growth may occur in the future.

This chapter is a tool for County staff, elected and appointed officials, service providers, and partner agencies to use in anticipating, evaluating, and making decisions regarding the physical development of Park County and plans for public investment. It is also intended to provide residents, current or prospective property owners, realtors, and developers with access to information that may inform private investment. Policy considerations vary for each of the 12 planning areas in Park County. Policy guidance provided by this chapter should be considered in the context of the planning area-specific land use guidelines contained in Chapter 4.

Cross-references to the countywide goals and policies in Chapter 2 are provided where applicable.



## INTERACTIVE MAP PORTALS

Two interactive map portals may be accessed from the County's Planning and Zoning Department webpage at <https://parkcounty-wy.gov/planning-and-zoning>. A description of each is provided below.

**Land Suitability/Future Land Use Map Portal.** Static (countywide) versions of the Land Suitability Map and Future Land Use Map are provided in this chapter for reference. Planning area-specific versions of these maps are provided in Chapter 4. These maps may be referenced through the [Land Suitability/Future Land Use Map Portal](#) for convenience. Substantive information reflected on these maps may only be changed through the Plan Amendment process, as described in Chapter 1.

**Land Use Plan Map Portal.** As noted in Chapter 1, additional map "tabs" are available within the [Land Use Plan Map Portal](#), including: Planning Areas; Land Use; Ownership; Natural, Historic, and Cultural Resources; Land Class; Population; Zoning; Infrastructure and Services; Agriculture and Ranch Lands; and Subdivisions. This information may be updated from time to time as new data becomes available.

## FACTORS INFLUENCING GROWTH

A variety of factors influence where and how growth occurs in Park County. This section provides a brief overview of these factors, which include public lands, infrastructure and services, energy, mining, and natural resources, municipal plans, zoning, and subdivision exemptions, along with references to supporting information where applicable. These factors—along with the goals and policies contained in Chapter 2—were used to help inform the preparation of the Land Suitability Map and Future Land Use Map that follow.

### PUBLIC LANDS

Over 80 percent of the surface land in Park County is owned and managed by various federal, state, and local government agencies. While government-owned land is occasionally sold, traded, or developed over time, it is not common. As a result, public lands are anticipated to remain under the jurisdiction of partner agencies for the foreseeable future. Although public lands are excluded from discussions about where and how future development should occur, the interface between private land uses and public lands is an important consideration. The Park County Natural Resource Management Plan (NRMP) is used in conjunction with this Land Use Plan to guide day-to-day communication and coordination with state and federal agencies on issues related to land use, the regional economy, and other topics of mutual importance. The NRMP also describes the role of Park County Government as a cooperating agency in planning processes on adjoining federal and state lands, and the legal framework for the County's participation in the decision-making process. Park County does have the authority to review/permit some development actions on public lands. On the rare occasion that public lands are disposed of and become private lands, Future Land Use Map and zoning designations should be considered based on the property's context and the rationale for disposal.

### INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES

Infrastructure and service levels vary dramatically from area to area in unincorporated parts of Park County. This variability impacts the cost and suitability of development in different areas. Residents who choose to live in rural areas of Park County accept that services are not provided at a level found within a city or town, and that certain services may not be available now or in the future.

#### Utilities

Electric and natural gas providers that serve unincorporated areas of Park County include Black Hills Energy, MDU, PacifiCorp/Rocky Mountain Power, Garland Light and Power, Willwood Light and Power, Big Horn Rural Electric Company, and Beartooth Electric Cooperative. While requirements for individual providers vary, property owners and developers are generally expected to cover the cost of extending lines to connect to established utility corridors.



## Transportation

Transportation access in unincorporated areas of Park County is provided via existing county-, state-, and federally-maintained roads, in addition to numerous private roads. The Road and Bridge Division of Park County's Public Works Department is responsible for snow removal, traffic control, right-of-way maintenance, and other repair and maintenance efforts on county-maintained roads.

The construction of direct access points to serve development along state and federal highways is authorized by the Wyoming Department of Transportation (WYDOT) in accordance with W.S. § 37-10-102. Access is limited to protect the capacity, safety, and functionality of the system. The WYDOT Access Manual stipulates access requirements based on the type of roadway facility, the type and intensity of the development that would be served, and other considerations. Direct access to state and federal highways may not always be granted.

Access limitations also exist for parcels that abut the Burlington Northern and Santa Fe Railroad (BNSF). BNSF does not have the authority to approve new at-grade crossings for public roads and actively seeks opportunities to consolidate existing at-grade crossings. Private railroad crossings exist in some locations, primarily for agricultural use. BNSF maintains a record of private crossing agreements, which are non-transferable if a property is sold. New owners may apply to reinstate existing agreements.

## Domestic Water

Domestic water in Park County generally comes from one of three sources—the Shoshone Municipal Pipeline (SMP), the Town of Meeteetse, or individual wells. Northwest Rural Water District (NRWD) delivers treated domestic water to rural homes in areas outside of Cody, Powell, Lovell, Garland, Deaver, Frannie, and Byron. The SMP provides water to NRWD, but NRWD is a special district that was established with the powers of a public or quasi-municipal corporation. Generally, Park County has an adequate water supply to support the forecast population, but it is not accessible in all areas. Also, W.S. § 41-10-104: (vii) states that, “In the event the proposed district or a portion thereof is located within two (2) miles of any city or town the standards to be used in the construction of the facilities of the proposed district shall also be included. These standards shall be no less stringent than the most stringent standards of the nearest local government entity which is within the two (2) mile limitation.” A more detailed discussion of each water provider's capacity, treatment, and capability to support future development is provided in Appendix B.

Properties located outside of municipal boundaries and outside of the NRWD service area (or that do not meet criteria for NRWD service) are typically served by individual wells that rely on groundwater. The USGS notes that the availability of groundwater and viability of wells can vary greatly by the location and depth of wells, which makes some properties

[See also, Wyoming Water Law, page 39, and Appendix C: Domestic Water in Park County.]



unable to access sufficient groundwater.<sup>1</sup> Individual wells are permitted through the Wyoming State Engineer's Office, Ground Water Division. While the location of wells is tracked, their productivity, lifespan, and the quality of water that is extracted over the life of the well are not. As a result, individual property owners must rely on their own due diligence to assess and validate the feasibility and long-term viability of new wells. Even where wells are generally successful, water availability may vary by season and depending on surrounding agricultural practices, including the increased practice of using sprinkler irrigation instead of flood irrigation, which may result in less groundwater recharge.

Some developments in more remote areas of Park County operate small-scale water systems that serve the residents of a particular unincorporated area. Cisterns—fed by wells or SMP water that is trucked in—are also used as a means to provide water to properties in some areas of Park County.

### Septic Systems

Most development in unincorporated areas of Park County relies on on-site septic systems. Park County adopted revised Small Wastewater Regulations in December of 2020 (effective January 1, 2021), as well as Chapter 25 of the Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) Rules and Regulations, to govern small wastewater systems in unincorporated areas. Some small wastewater systems require DEQ permitting oversight based on output, strength, use-type (e.g., non-domestic systems for commercial or industrial facilities), and percolation rates. DEQ requires subdivisions with more than five lots to complete a Chapter 23 subdivision application review. Park County may opt to require subdivisions with five lots or less to follow more stringent rules pursuant to Wyoming Statutes (W.S.) § 18-5-306 (Counties).

Where lot sizes are smaller than one acre, it can be difficult for septic system designs to meet required setbacks from water lines, wells, surface water, slopes, and property boundaries. Aside from those challenges, it can also be difficult to identify adequate room for a future replacement system in the midst of existing and planned structures, driveways and other development. To address complications on smaller lots, the County may need to consider requiring engineered site plans and/or system designs where space is limited or otherwise challenged including vertical separation from annual high groundwater levels.

The suitability of soils for septic systems varies substantially across Park County and even across individual properties. Property owners should consult with their local conservation district for site-specific information.

<sup>1</sup> USGS. Hydrology of Park County, Wyoming, Exclusive of Yellowstone National Park. 1993. <https://pubs.usgs.gov/wri/1993/4183/report.pdf>



### Wastewater Treatment

Park County Public Works manages the County's sewer lagoons which store sewage trucked in from home septic tanks, chemical toilets, etc., and is currently collaborating with the City of Cody to combine facilities to better manage public wastewater long-term.

### Solid Waste/Recycling

Park County's Solid Waste Division manages solid waste disposal facilities (construction/demolition landfills) in Cody, Powell and Clark. The regional landfill in Cody is lined, while the Powell and Clark landfills are "dry" or unlined. The County does not operate recycling facilities at this time; however, Powell Valley Recycling, a nonprofit organization that has received some financial support from Park County, collects limited recyclables at a facility just outside of Powell city limits. The City of Cody also operates a recycling center within its city limits.

### Emergency Services

The Park County Sheriff's Office provides law enforcement and Search and Rescue services for unincorporated areas of Park County. Fire protection services are provided by:

- **Fire District #1 (Powell).** Covers City of Powell and ~ 546 square miles surrounding the City.
- **Fire District #2 (Cody).** Covers the City of Cody and ~ 3,086 square miles surrounding the City. It is one of the largest volunteer districts in the United States.
- **Fire District #3 (Meeteetse).** Covers the Town of Meeteetse and ~ 1,294 square miles surrounding the Town.
- **Fire District #4 (Clark).** Covers ~259 square miles.
- **Fire District #5 (Deaver-Frannie).** Covers ~ 33 square miles in Park County and Big Horn County.

All of the fire districts in Park County are special districts and receive a mill levy. Ground and air ambulance services are available; however, response times can be longer and more unpredictable in remote areas of Park County. Volunteer departments in the South Fork, Sunlight-Crandall, and Wapiti areas serve some of the more remote parts of Park County.

### Irrigation Districts

Irrigation water for Park County's farms and ranches is largely distributed by eight irrigation districts. Districts vary in size and the number of planning areas that they serve:

- **Clarks Fork.** Serves ~ 8.5 square miles in the Clark Planning Area ("Clark Area").
- **Cody Canal.** Serves ~ 32 square miles in the Cody Local, Lower South Fork, Middle South Fork, and Sage Creek planning areas.
- **Deaver.** Serves ~ 54 square miles in the Cody-Powell Rural Planning Area ("Cody-Powell Rural Area") and parts of Big Horn County.
- **Greybull Valley.** Serves ~ 254 square miles in the Meeteetse Rural Planning Area ("Meeteetse Rural Area") and parts of Big Horn County.

(See also, land use guidelines for the Cody Local, Powell Local, Cody-Powell Rural, and Meeteetse Rural planning areas in Chapter 4, and discussion of Coordinated Planning Areas, page 81)



- **Heart Mountain.** Serves ~ 114 square miles in the Cody Local and Cody-Powell Rural planning areas.
- **Lakeview.** Serves ~ 18 square miles in the Lower South Fork and Middle South Fork planning areas.
- **Lovell Irrigation District/Elk Water Users.** Supplies water to lands on the south side of the Shoshone River in the east Willwood area and near the towns of Byron and Lovell.
- **Shoshone.** Serves ~ 105 square miles in the Cody-Powell Rural and Powell Local planning areas. Not to be confused with the Shoshone Project that today serves the Heart Mountain, Willwood, Deaver, and Shoshone irrigation districts.
- **Willwood.** Serves ~ 38 square miles in the Cody-Powell Rural and Powell Local planning areas, as well as parts of Big Horn County.

There are also several privately-owned and maintained ditch companies and unorganized ditches around the County. Many of the canals and laterals operated and maintained by irrigation districts and ditch companies are located in developed or developing areas. When subdivisions occur on lands crossed by these conveyances, review of a water plan by the company, association, or appropriators is required. Property owners should consult with their local irrigation district or ditch company before making improvements, modifying boundaries, or subdividing to identify and mitigate potential conflicts and define maintenance responsibilities. W.S. § 18-5-306 requires state review of water rights for subdivisions with more than five lots; currently it is optional for counties to require it for subdivisions of five lots or less. Park County notifies irrigation districts as part of the subdivision application process; however, some districts request notifications of any changes in property boundaries or exempt subdivisions to allow for the verification of water rights in all cases. Most subdivisions in Park County do or will require a water distribution plan to be submitted and approved by the relevant irrigation district, if applicable.

## ENERGY, MINING, AND MINERAL RESOURCES

Mineral and energy production has played and continues to play a significant role in the culture and economy of Park County. Natural gas, oil, and gypsum constitute the majority of energy and mineral resources in Park County. Sand and gravel are other economic resources present within the County. Renewable energy uses are not abundant in the County at this time, though the County anticipates increased interest in solar, wind, and other emerging renewable resource technologies over time. While mineral and energy production occur primarily on public lands in Park County (see Natural Resource Management Plan), there are cases of existing and proposed uses on private lands. According to W.S. § 18-5-201, “no zoning resolution or plan shall prevent any use or occupancy reasonably necessary to the extraction or production of the mineral resources in or under any lands subject thereto.”

Park County supports mineral, oil, and gas exploration, development, and production, as well as renewable energy development, in particular on public lands, provided such developments are carefully sited to minimize adverse



effects on other resources and values, as well as private properties and landowners within the County. A County-issued permit is required to establish these types of uses.

## MUNICIPAL PLANS

In accordance with W.S. § 9-8-301, all local governments are required to develop a local land use plan within their jurisdiction, or cooperate with the county to develop such a plan. Counties are required to develop a countywide land use plan that incorporates the land use plans of all incorporated cities and towns within the county. This Land Use Plan was developed in coordination with the individual municipalities in Park County and their adopted plans:

- [City of Cody Master Plan, 2014](#)
- City of Powell Master Streets Plan, 2013
- Town of Frannie Community Development Plan, 2005
- [Town of Meeteetse Master Plan, 2014](#)

Future updates to the municipal plans listed above, or efforts to update or develop related plans (e.g., a land use plan for the City of Powell), should be coordinated with Park County to ensure policies and regulations are aligned to the extent practicable. Relevant maps are included in Appendix B.

## ZONING

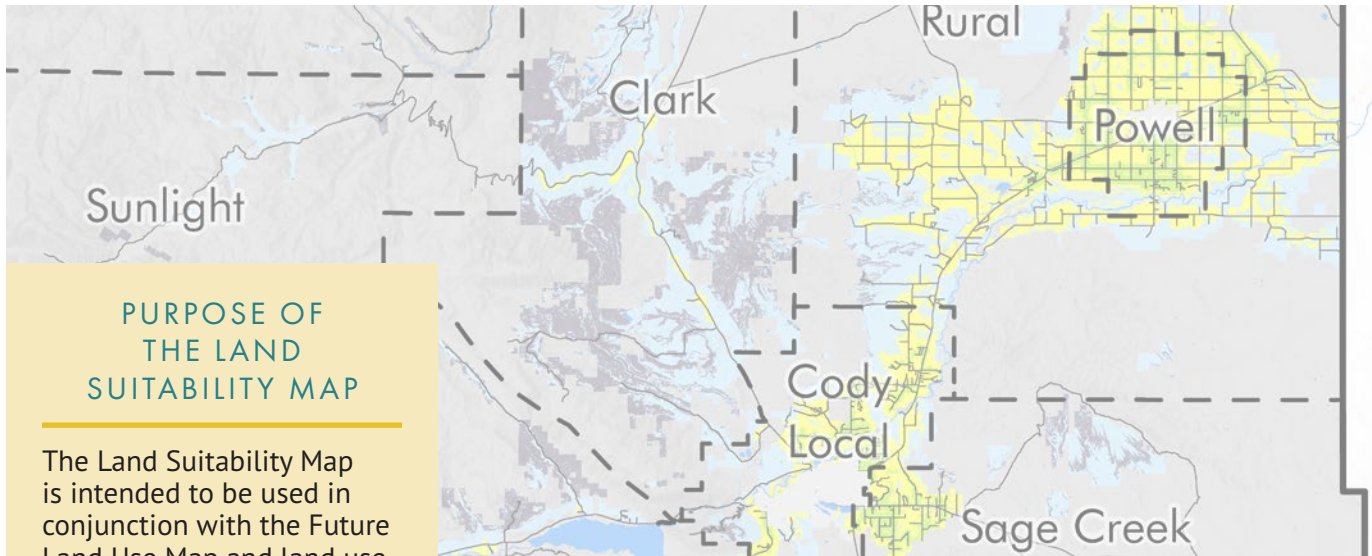
The Future Land Use Map (and many of the goals and policies contained in this Plan) shall be implemented through Park County's Development Standards and Regulations. Zoning regulations determine allowed uses, minimum lot sizes, density allowances, infrastructure requirements, and other requirements based on the location and intensity of the land use. The County's Development Standards and Regulations shall require special considerations for the priority conservation areas identified on the Future Land Use Map.

## SUBDIVISION EXEMPTIONS

W.S. §18-5-301, et. seq. requires that any subdivision of land comply with county rules and regulations and receive a permit from the county, and also exempts some subdivisions from permitting requirements, subject to documentation requirements (e.g., record of survey, certificate of filing). The most commonly used exemptions are:

- An allowance for a landowner to subdivide and gift land to an immediate family member (or in some cases a family member of a corporate shareholder if the land is owned by a business entity), to provide for the housing, business, or agricultural needs of the grantee.
- A division that is created by boundary line adjustments where the parcel subject of the sale or other disposition is adjacent to and merged with other land owned by the grantee.
- An allowance for creating lots 35 acres or larger. Park County has adopted an exemption for subdivisions of ten or fewer parcels between 35 and 40 acres to be exempted from requiring a permit (subject to some standards)

In Park County, a record of survey is required for all exemptions. Additional documentation may also be required, as allowed by statute.



### PURPOSE OF THE LAND SUITABILITY MAP

The Land Suitability Map is intended to be used in conjunction with the Future Land Use Map and land use categories to:

- Evaluate the consistency of proposed development and infrastructure improvements with the goals and policies contained in this Plan.
- Highlight the potential costs and benefits associated with future development in different areas for both property owners and the County.
- Identify areas where more tailored policy and regulatory approaches and a higher level of scrutiny are required to balance the community's desire for proactive growth management and conservation approaches with private property rights.
- Inform future changes to the Future Land Use Map and underlying zoning districts, as well as regulations that encourage the protection of priority conservation areas.

## LAND SUITABILITY MAP

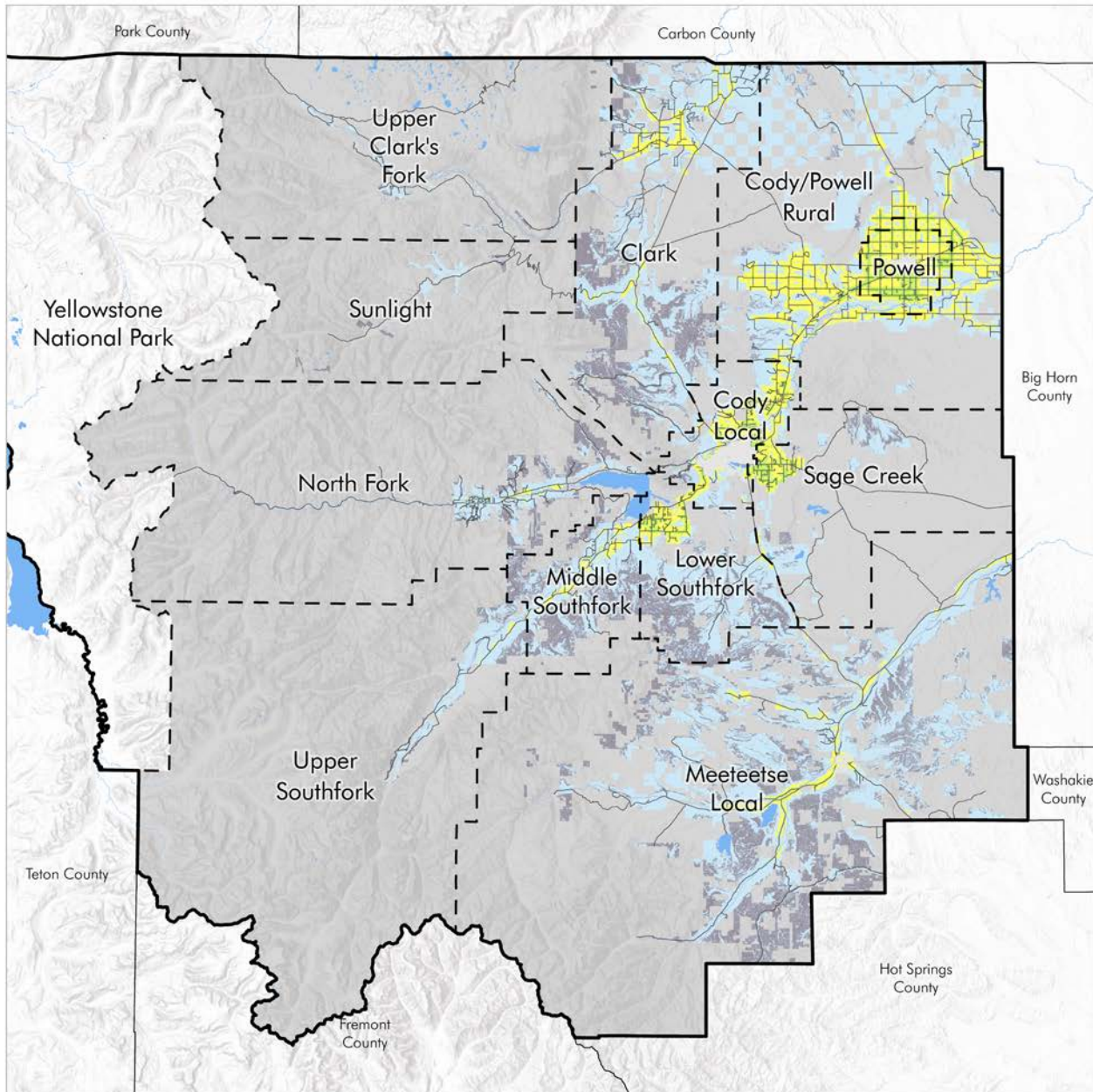
### OVERVIEW

The Land Suitability Map ranks the suitability and attractiveness of land in different areas of Park County for future development on a scale of one (least suitable for development) to five (most suitable for development). Rankings were generated through a GIS-based land suitability analysis, as summarized on the following page. A similar analysis was conducted as part of the 1998 Land Use Plan using more rudimentary tools.

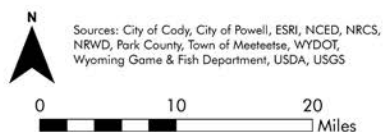
This iteration of the Land Use Plan differs from the 1998 Land Use Plan in that the Land Suitability Map does not dictate future land use. Nor is the Land Suitability Map intended to definitively determine the suitability—or lack of suitability—of a particular parcel for future development. Rather, the Land Suitability Map is intended to be used in conjunction with the Future Land Use Map and land use categories to evaluate the appropriateness and consistency of proposed development and infrastructure improvements with the goals and policies and area-specific land use guidelines contained in this Plan. A Land Suitability Map for each planning area is provided in Chapter 4.

The Land Suitability Map is conceptual. The lines between suitability rankings should not be interpreted as black and white. Some of the areas identified as highly suitable for development are considered to be priority conservation areas, as defined on page 81. Likewise, limiting factors in some of the areas identified as less suitable for development may be overcome through creative (and potentially more costly) engineering, site design, and alternative development methods.

### Land Suitability: All Planning Areas



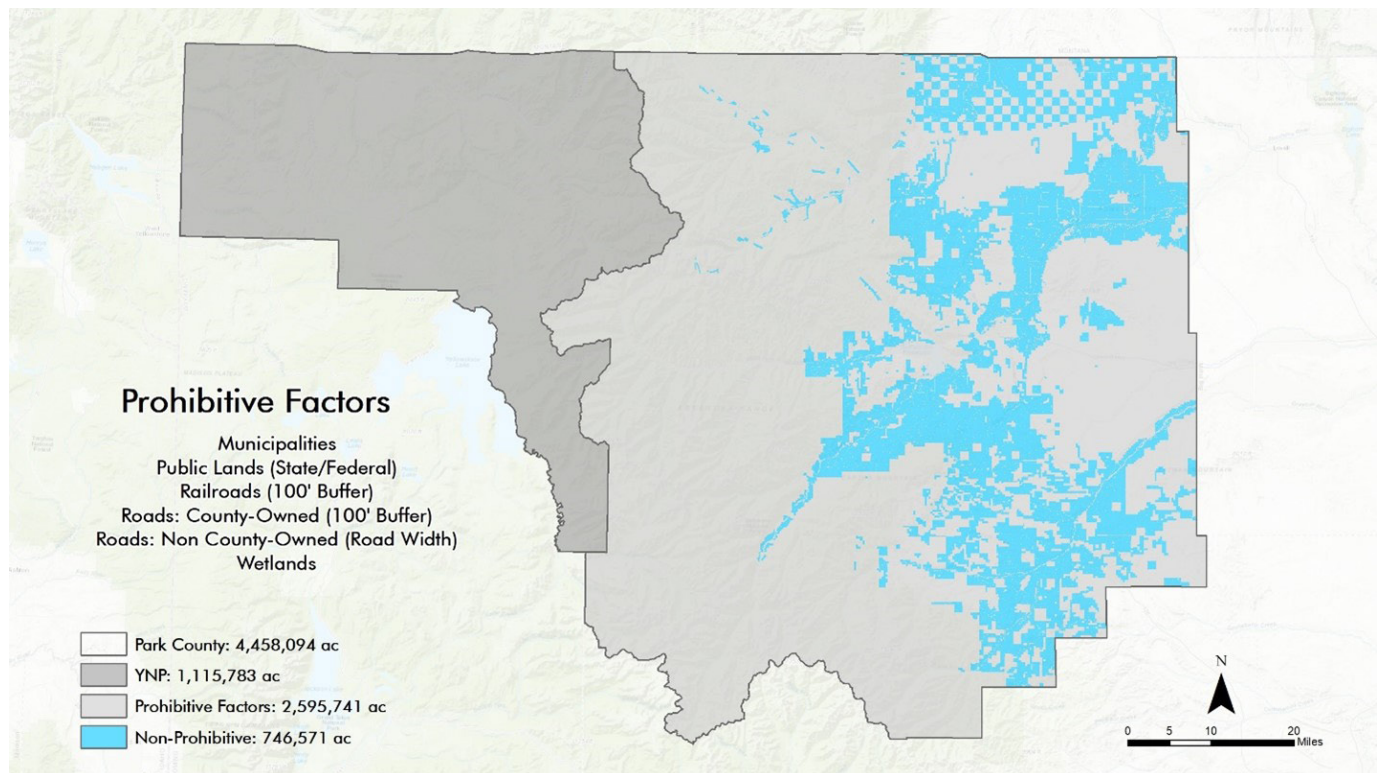
- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>Suitability Ranking</b>  | <b>Other</b>  |
| <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #cccccc; border: 1px solid black;"></span> Prohibitive         | <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #a9a9a9; border: 1px solid black;"></span> Incorporated Area |
| <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #666666; border: 1px solid black;"></span> Least Suitable      | <span style="display: inline-block; border: 1px dashed black; width: 15px; height: 15px;"></span> Planning Area                               |
| <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #add8e6; border: 1px solid black;"></span> Marginally Suitable | <span style="display: inline-block; border: 1px solid black; width: 15px; height: 15px;"></span> County Boundary                              |
| <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #ffff00; border: 1px solid black;"></span> Moderately Suitable | <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; border-bottom: 1px solid black;"></span> Road  |
| <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #90ee90; border: 1px solid black;"></span> Suitable            |   |
| <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #3cb371; border: 1px solid black;"></span> Highly Suitable     |   |





## LAND SUITABILITY ANALYSIS METHODOLOGY

A GIS-based land suitability analysis was completed as part of the Land Use Plan update to help to inform discussions with Park County residents about where and how future development should occur in unincorporated areas. A brief summary of the land suitability analysis methodology is provided below. Appendix B includes a technical memorandum that describes the methodology in greater detail.



### Step 1: Screening out areas with prohibitive factors.

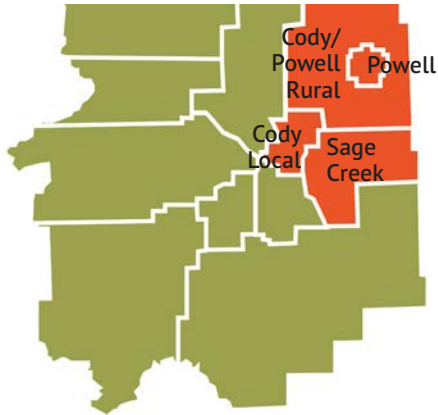
Future development potential is substantially limited in areas such as public lands, public infrastructure rights-of-way, and wetlands. These areas were screened out of the suitability analysis to narrow the focus of community discussions about where and how development should occur to areas that were most suitable for development and/or most likely to experience pressure for development within the planning horizon.

### Step 2: Identify and rank key indicators/criteria for suitable development.

The following criteria were identified as key indicators of development suitability—distance to infrastructure (municipal and rural), distance to municipality, distance to road (gravel, paved, and unimproved), slope, and soil characteristics. Each criterion was rated on a scale of one (least suitable for development) to five (most suitable for development). The criteria were then ranked in order of importance, such that

the highest rated criteria had the greatest influence on which lands are rated most or least suitable while the lowest rated criteria had the least influence. Generally, higher suitability scores were assigned to locations that make more sense to see growth (near cities and towns, near water and sewer infrastructure, near roads, and in areas with level ground and soils that are favorable to septic systems).

HIGH SUITABILITY/  
HIGH CONFLICT



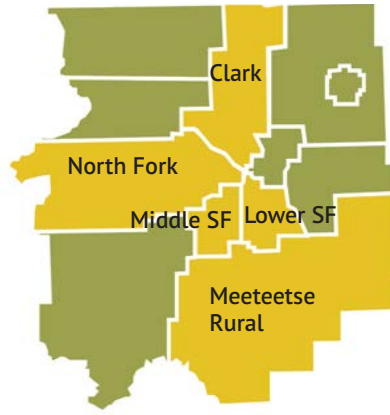
**CHARACTERISTICS**

Most land suitable for development  
High pressure for development  
Areas favorable for development often correspond with irrigated agricultural land and crucial wildlife habitat

**CONCERNS**

Continuation of the current rate of development will negatively impact future viability for agriculture and/or wildlife habitat  
Current density allowances don't always align with development suitability

LOW SUITABILITY/  
HIGH CONFLICT



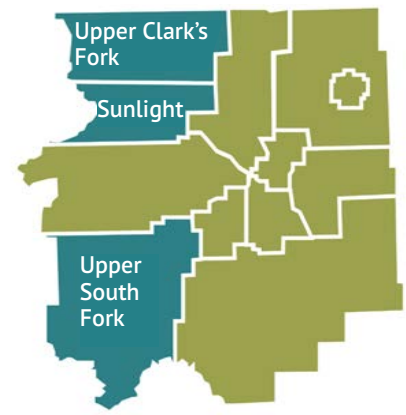
**CHARACTERISTICS**

Pockets of land that are more suitable for development often conflict with agricultural land or scenic areas  
Conflicts with valued lands vary by planning area

**CONCERNS**

Development in certain areas will disrupt contiguous sections of valued land  
Current density allowances don't always align with development suitability

LOW SUITABILITY/  
LOW CONFLICT



**CHARACTERISTICS**

Scenic mountain valleys with limited amounts of private land  
Development suitability and pressure are generally low

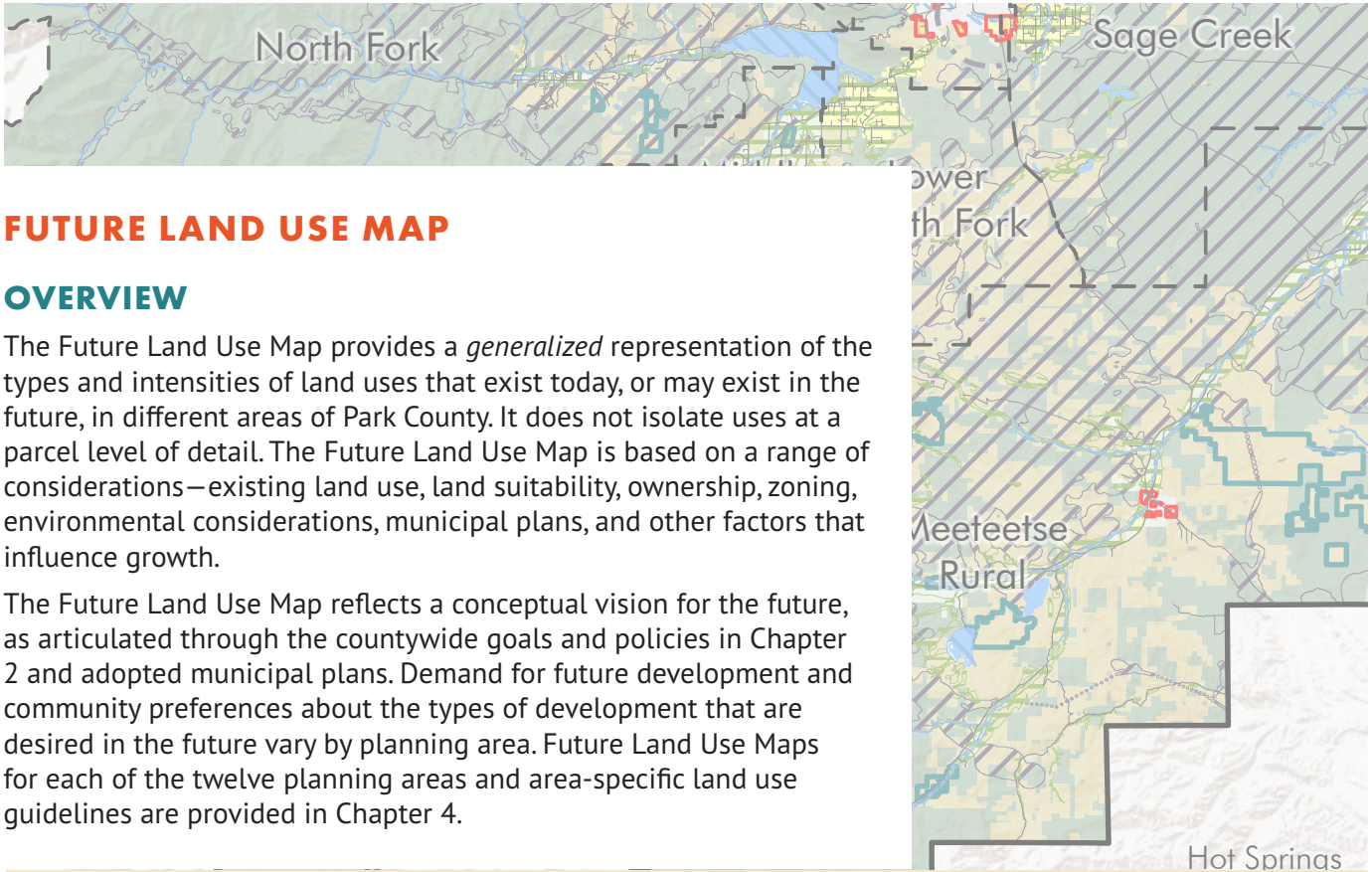
**CONCERNS**

Protecting the wild and scenic quality of these remote areas  
Limiting potential impacts associated with tourism-related uses

**Step 3: Overlay areas of value to identify potential conflicts.**

The land suitability analysis was used to inform key policy choices that emerged from the Plan Park County process by identifying potential conflicts between development suitability and the community's shared values related to conservation of high-value agricultural land and crucial wildlife habitat. Conflicts between land suitability and conservation priorities vary by planning area, as

illustrated above, but are highest in the Cody Local, Cody-Powell Rural, Powell Local, and Sage Creek planning areas. Land suitability maps for each of the twelve planning areas and area-specific suitability considerations are provided in Chapter 4.



## FUTURE LAND USE MAP

### OVERVIEW

The Future Land Use Map provides a *generalized* representation of the types and intensities of land uses that exist today, or may exist in the future, in different areas of Park County. It does not isolate uses at a parcel level of detail. The Future Land Use Map is based on a range of considerations—existing land use, land suitability, ownership, zoning, environmental considerations, municipal plans, and other factors that influence growth.

The Future Land Use Map reflects a conceptual vision for the future, as articulated through the countywide goals and policies in Chapter 2 and adopted municipal plans. Demand for future development and community preferences about the types of development that are desired in the future vary by planning area. Future Land Use Maps for each of the twelve planning areas and area-specific land use guidelines are provided in Chapter 4.

### PURPOSE OF THE FUTURE LAND USE MAP

The Future Land Use Map is intended to be used in conjunction with the Land Suitability Map to:

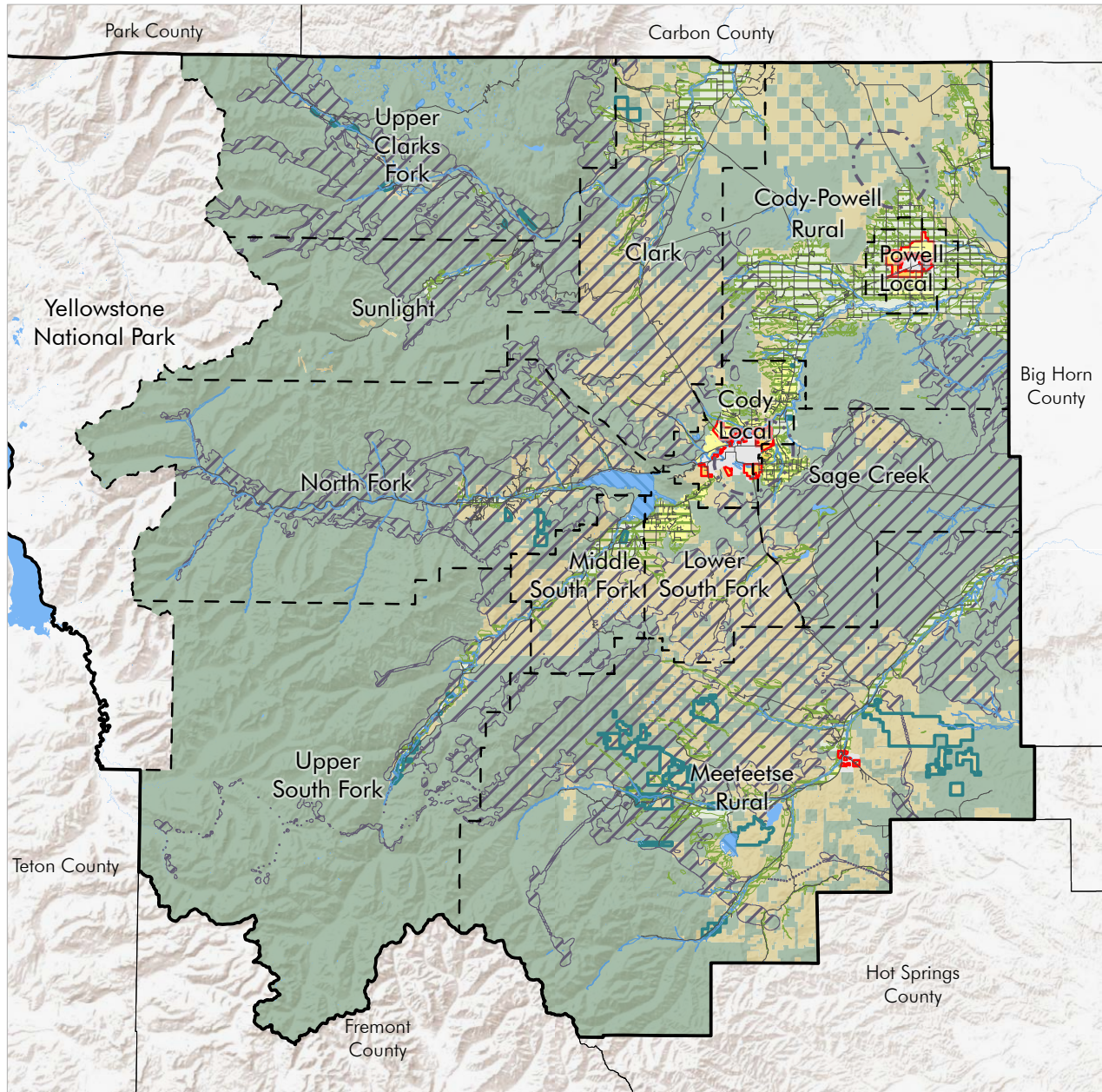
**Inform land use regulations and development review.** County staff, the Planning and Zoning Commission, and Board of County Commissioners use this Plan and the Future Land Use Map to inform the regulations used to guide future development in unincorporated areas of Park County and to ensure such decisions made as part of the development review process to implement those regulations align with the community's vision for future growth.

**Create a more predictable environment.** The Future Land Use Map serves as a reference for private property and business owners, developers, real estate professionals, and residents interested in understanding what is planned for different areas of Park County. Through clear guidance and expectations, this Plan advances the need for predictable development and the alignment of infrastructure and services.

**Promote fiscally-responsible growth.** Allowing development in areas that are more remote and that have a lower suitability ranking can have the unintended consequence of increasing Park County's costs for providing services and maintenance, which in turn, could lead to higher taxes and fees. The Future Land Use Map identifies areas where growth will be encouraged (or not) with the intent of encouraging fiscally-responsible development.

**Inform future changes to the County's zoning and development standards.** The Future Land Use Map is advisory. It does not prevent or limit development on its own. Park County may bring forward zone changes for certain properties to align zoning with the adopted Future Land Use Map.

### Future Land Use: All Planning Areas



#### Future Land Use

##### Rural Areas

- Agriculture
- Ranch/Rangeland
- Resource Management/Recreation
- Rural Communities

##### Developed/Developing Areas

- Rural Residential
- Urban Residential
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Coordinated Planning Area

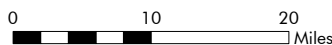
##### Priority Conservation Areas

- Agricultural Overlay
- Big Game Use Overlay
- Conservation Easement

\*See individual Planning Area Maps and the online map portal for Agriculture Overlay, Big Game Use Overlay, and Conservation Easement detail

##### Other

- Special Flood Hazard Area
- Airport Overlay
- Incorporated Area
- Planning Area
- County Boundary
- Road



Sources: City of Cody, City of Powell, ESRI, NCEd, NRCS, NRWD, Park County, Town of Meeteetse, WYDOT, Wyoming Game & Fish Department, USDA, USGS







## LAND USE CATEGORIES

Land use categories depicted on the Future Land Use Map generally fall into three groups:

- Rural areas;
- Developed/developing areas; and
- Priority conservation areas.

A brief explanation of each grouping is provided, followed by a definition for each land use category and overlay. Land use category definitions address the overall intent of each category, along with primary and supporting uses, characteristics that are generally consistent countywide, and land use guidelines (where applicable). Supporting uses listed for individual land use categories are not intended to be all-inclusive. Actual allowed uses will vary based on underlying zoning. For example, institutional and recreational uses, utilities, and public facilities are generally supported in all land use categories, provided they are sited in accordance with the County’s development standards and regulations.

Distinctions in supporting uses, lot sizes, and location/siting criteria are addressed at the planning area level as part of Chapter 4.

RURAL AREAS	DEVELOPED / DEVELOPING AREAS	PRIORITY CONSERVATION AREAS
Agriculture	Rural Residential	Agricultural Overlay 
Ranch/Rangeland	Urban Residential	Big Game Use Overlay 
Resource Management/ Recreation	Commercial	Conservation Easements 
Rural Communities	Industrial	
		Coordinated Planning Areas 



## RURAL AREAS

Rural areas encompass the vast majority of the public and private land in Park County. While limited development exists in and is allowed in these areas, maintaining the integrity of these areas as Park County grows and evolves is essential to protect the community’s social, economic, and environmental health.

Four types of rural areas are identified on the Future Land Use Map:

- Agriculture;
- Ranch/Rangeland;
- Resource Management/Recreation; and
- Rural Communities.

Agriculture
Ranch/Rangeland
Resource Management/ Recreation
Rural Communities



## AGRICULTURE

**Intent:** Retain the viability and productivity of agricultural lands in Park County while ensuring agricultural producers have the ability to grow and diversify their businesses over time.

**Primary Land Uses:** Varies by planning area, but includes production farming of hay, beets, beans, and other crops; seed production; livestock and poultry operations; and agricultural processing facilities.

**Supporting Land Uses:** Primary residences, employee housing, accessory dwelling units, accessory home occupations, farm or produce stands, agritourism, dude ranches, limited agriculture-related commercial and industrial services, greenhouses, equestrian uses (e.g., riding arenas), barns and other (often large) agricultural structures used for hay, grain, or equipment storage, and mineral/resource extraction.

### Characteristics:

- Desirable for long-term agricultural use.
- Parcel sizes vary by location and the type of agricultural operation.
- Includes both irrigated and non-irrigated land. May also include intensive agricultural operations (e.g., dairy farms and feed lots) with designated facilities and equipment.
- Treated water is available on a limited basis. Most properties rely on on-site wells, which are often impacted by stream flows and irrigation practices.
- Most properties rely on individual, on-site septic systems. Oftentimes properties near actively irrigated fields exhibit high groundwater conditions, which may lead to the requirement for engineered septic systems.

Refer to Goals AG-1 and EN-2 and associated policies in Chapter 2 and area-specific policies in Chapter 4 for additional guidance, as applicable.

- Paved and unpaved roads accommodate local traffic and the movement of agricultural machinery.

### Land Use Guidelines:

- Lands within both the Agricultural Overlay and Big Game Use Overlay (limited locations) are considered the highest priority for conservation in agricultural areas.
- Generally, the retention of larger, contiguous tracts of agricultural land is desired to maintain efficiencies of scale and minimize potential impacts on existing agricultural operations and irrigation infrastructure. However, lots as small as one acre may be permitted when:
  - o Lots are clustered to preserve larger, contiguous parcels and/or utilize non-irrigated and remnant parcels within the Agricultural Overlay;
  - o Lots meet requirements for lot size averaging;
  - o Impacts on groundwater and adjacent wells are minimized through an engineered septic system (where high groundwater conditions exist);
  - o Lots are located in areas classified as somewhat suitable or suitable for development on the Land Suitability Map;
  - o Lots are designated for strictly agricultural use (agricultural exemption); and/or
  - o Primary roadway access to the subdivision is available from an existing county/state roadway.



## RANCH/RANGELAND

**Intent:** Maintain larger tracts of ranch and rangeland in Park County while providing opportunities for the adaptation and diversification of business operations over time.

**Primary Land Uses:** Varies by location. Typically consists of rangeland dedicated for grazing and livestock operations and/or natural resource conservation.

**Supporting Land Uses:** Owner/manager residence, employee housing, accessory dwelling unit, home occupations, agritourism, outfitters, dude ranches, resorts, campgrounds, equestrian uses (e.g., riding arenas), limited agriculture-related commercial and industrial sales and services, barns and other agricultural structures used for hay, grain, or equipment storage, and mineral/resource extraction.

**Characteristics:**

- Includes the many sparsely populated ranches and larger rural landholdings that contribute to Park County’s agricultural and recreation/tourism industries.
- Minimum average lot sizes vary by location based on existing subdivision and land suitability.
- Paved and unpaved roads provide local access to these low-density areas, some without regular maintenance.
- Public water and sewer service is generally not available.
- Response times for fire and emergency services are typically longer in more remote areas.

Refer to Goal EN-2 and associated policies in Chapter 2 and area-specific policies in Chapter 4 for additional guidance, as applicable.

**Land Use Guidelines:**

- Lands within the Big Game Use Overlay (particularly areas of high or medium use) are considered the highest priority for conservation in ranch/rangeland areas.
- Generally, the retention of larger, contiguous tracts of rangeland is desirable to maintain efficiencies of scale for grazing and livestock operations and support the conservation of natural resources. Lots as small as one acre may be permitted when:
  - o Proposed lots are located in areas classified as somewhat suitable or suitable for development on the Land Suitability Map;
  - o Impacts on groundwater and adjacent wells are minimized through an engineered septic system (where high groundwater conditions exist);
  - o Proposed lots are clustered to preserve larger, contiguous tracts of land within priority conservation areas (where applicable) and avoid environmentally sensitive areas;
  - o Proposed lots meet requirements for lot size averaging;
  - o Primary roadway access to the subdivision is available from an existing county/state roadway; and/or
  - o Secondary roadway access to the subdivision is available for emergency ingress/egress.





---

## RESOURCE MANAGEMENT/ RECREATION

---

**Intent:** Protect and balance the use of and access to public lands in Park County consistent with the Natural Resource Management Plan.

**Primary Land Uses:** Varies by land management designation and managing agency. Typically includes habitat conservation and recreation. May also include forestry, mineral/resource extraction, renewable energy development, telecommunications, and other uses as may be permitted under applicable land management plans.

**Supporting Land Uses:** Cabins, campgrounds, trailheads, and other recreation- and tourism-related uses, as well as communications infrastructure, transmission lines, and other utility uses as may be permitted under applicable land management plans.

**Characteristics:**

- Open lands and facilities that are owned and managed by state or federal agencies.
- Access and activities are permitted and managed by applicable agencies; however, there are some private entities operating on public lands, some of which have County-issued permits as well.



## RURAL COMMUNITIES

**Intent:** Provide opportunities for the limited expansion of and diversification of uses in established Rural Communities consistent with the characteristics that make each one unique.

**Primary Land Uses:** Varies. Each community generally contains a mix of residential and supporting uses guided by established land use patterns and local needs.

**Supporting Land Uses:** Varies by location. May include accessory dwelling units, community-serving retail, office, light manufacturing, agriculture and agriculture-related commercial services, parks, schools, recreational facilities, places of worship, libraries, and other complementary uses.

**Locations:** Includes the unincorporated communities of Ralston and Garland (as defined by historic townsite boundaries), and the more “loosely” defined areas of Wapiti, Clark, and Willwood (south of the Shoshone River).

**Characteristics:**

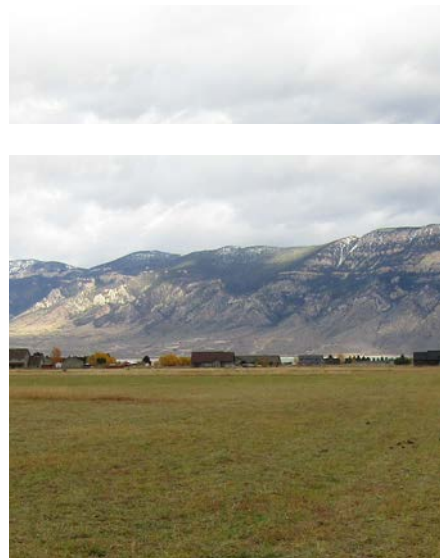
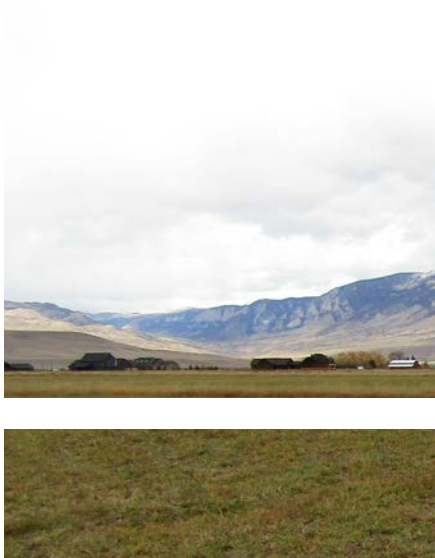
- Lot sizes vary by community, ranging from less than one-half acre to ten acres or more.
- Community amenities vary, but may include parks, recreation centers, community centers, and places of worship.

Refer to area-specific land use guidelines for the Clark, North Fork, Powell Local, and Cody-Powell Rural planning areas in Chapter 4 for additional guidance, as applicable.

- Road surfacing (paved or unpaved) and maintenance vary by level of traffic and purpose of roadway.
- Treated water may be available in some locations on a case-by-case basis; however, most development relies on individual wells and septic systems. Rural communities are and will continue to face uncertainty due to the combination of small lot sizes, varying availability of treated water, and a lack of centralized sewer treatment facilities.
- Fire service and emergency services are available but response times may vary.

**Land Use Guidelines:**

- The scale and intensity of new uses should be compatible with surroundings and designed to minimize impacts on established uses.



## DEVELOPED/DEVELOPING AREAS

Developed/developing areas consist of areas of existing non-rural development in Park County, as well as areas that are expected to develop in the future. Generally, developed/developing areas are located close to cities, towns, and infrastructure and services like central water and central sewer service, energy transmission lines, paved roads, and emergency services. These areas are intended to be the primary locations for accommodating the future growth of residences and businesses in unincorporated areas.

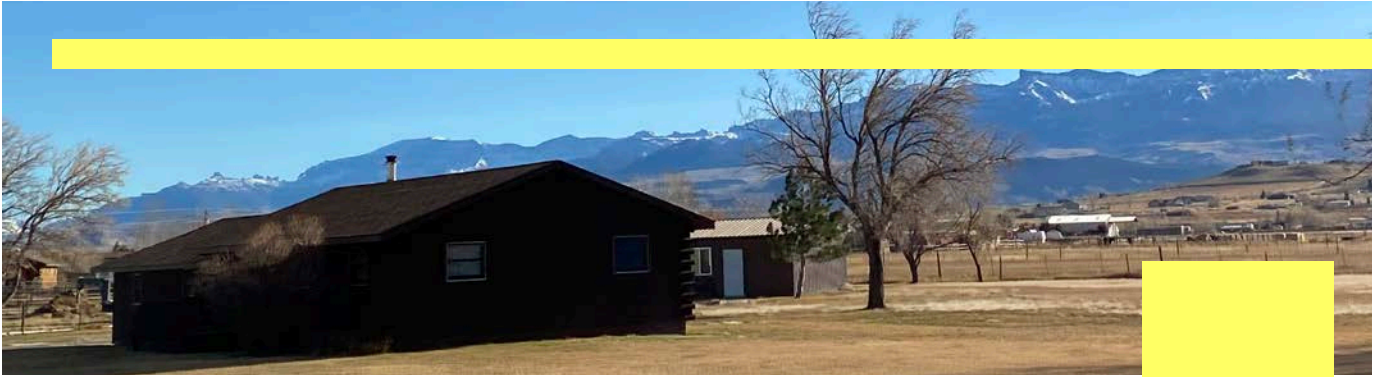
Developed/developing areas are also the areas best suited to address the need for a variety of housing options. Some of these areas are or will be appropriate for annexation into incorporated communities like Cody, Powell, and Meeteetse. Developing areas around Frannie have not been identified but may be in the future.

The Future Land Use Map includes four categories of developed/developing areas alongside a boundary for Coordinated Planning Areas:

- Rural Residential;
- Urban Residential;
- Commercial;
- Industrial; and
- Coordinated Planning Areas.

Rural Residential
Urban Residential
Commercial
Industrial

— Coordinated Planning Areas



## RURAL RESIDENTIAL

**Intent:** Concentrate rural residential development near municipalities (but outside of Coordinated Planning Areas), in areas where such patterns have already been established, and/or in areas where central water service is available or may be in the future, to minimize further fragmentation of high-value agricultural lands

**Primary Land Uses:** Single-family detached homes on large lots.

**Supporting Land Uses:** Accessory dwelling units, food and crop production, raising of limited livestock, equestrian uses, accessory home occupations, accessory structures, and other compatible uses.

### Characteristics:

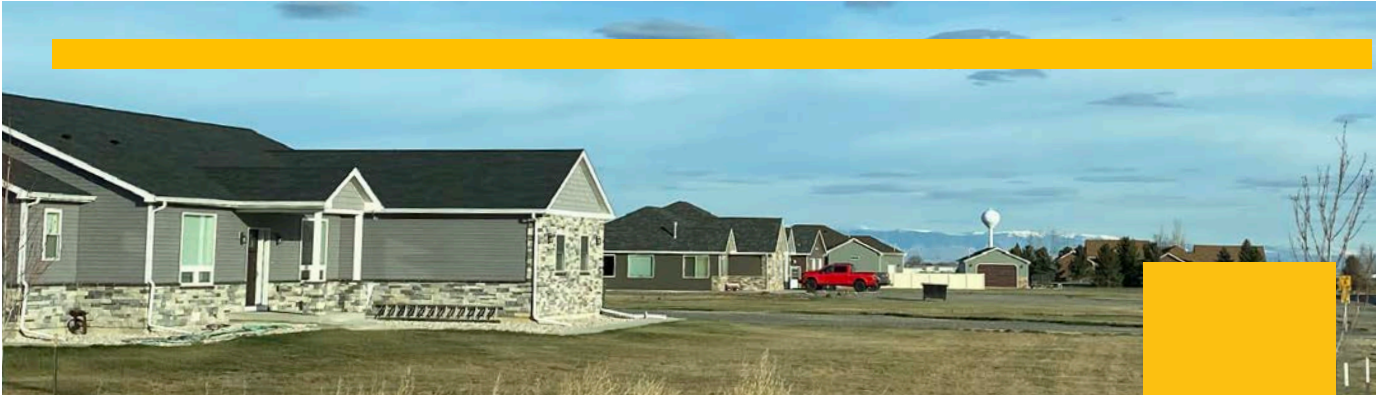
- Provides opportunities for rural residential lifestyles and hobby farms in unincorporated parts of the County, including opportunities for small-scale farming, equestrian uses, and similar activities.
- Central water may be available in some locations. Where on-site wells exist, productivity and quality may be impacted by drought, stream flows, and irrigation practices.
- Road surfacing (paved or unpaved) and maintenance vary by level of traffic and purpose of roadway.
- Fire service and emergency services are available.

### Land Use Guidelines:

- On-site septic systems are required where central wastewater is not provided. Adequate soil for septic systems is required to ensure neighboring wells and waterways are not impacted.

Refer to area-specific land use guidelines for the Cody Local, Powell Local, Sage Creek, and Meeteetse Rural planning areas in Chapter 4 for additional guidance, as applicable.

- Minimum average lot sizes for rural residential development vary by planning area and underlying zoning. Generally, lots as small as one acre may be permitted when:
  - The subdivision is currently served by NRWD or can demonstrate that it will be served by NRWD (or a special district);
  - Lots are clustered to preserve larger, contiguous tracts of land and/or utilize non-irrigated and remnant parcels within the Agricultural Overlay;
  - Lots are clustered to preserve larger, contiguous tracts of land and high/medium use areas within the Big Game Use Overlay;
  - Encourage opportunities for development to “infill” areas of fragmented, smaller agricultural parcels in a developed/developing area with rural residential development where practical (from a water/sewer standpoint) to help accommodate demand while reducing pressure on larger, more contiguous tracts of high-value agricultural lands;
  - Primary roadway access to the subdivision is available from an existing county/state roadway; and/or
  - Impacts on groundwater and adjacent wells are minimized through the presence of, or plan for, an engineered septic or sewer treatment system.



## URBAN RESIDENTIAL

**Intent:** Encourage the development of urban residential neighborhoods in Coordinated Planning Areas to support the efficient and orderly expansion of municipalities and encourage the protection of priority conservation areas.

**Primary Land Uses:** Varies by location, but may include detached and/or attached single-family residential development, as well as small-scale multi-family development and manufactured home parks.

**Supporting Land Uses:** Accessory dwelling units, accessory home businesses, parks and/or common open space, and other complementary uses.

### Characteristics:

- Urban residential may only occur within Coordinated Planning Areas, as defined on page 79.
- Lot sizes vary by location but are generally one acre or less.
- Paved roads and/or regular road maintenance are common when warranted by higher use roadways and proximity to incorporated cities and towns.
- Sidewalks and municipal-level infrastructure are present or are planned to be in the future.
- Fire service and emergency services are present.

### Land Use Guidelines:

- The creation of new lots larger than one acre is discouraged to avoid precluding the planned future expansion of the cities of Cody and Powell and the Town of Meeteetse.
- Lot sizes of one acre or less are strongly encouraged, and may be achieved through one of the following means:

Refer to area-specific land use guidelines for Cody Local, Powell Local, Sage Creek, and Meeteetse Rural in Chapter 4 for additional guidance, as applicable.

- o The proposed subdivision is annexed into the adjacent municipality and built to applicable city/town standards; or
- o The proposed subdivision supports the potential for future urban development and annexation by:
  - Connecting to central water and/or central sewer service;
  - Aligning new streets with existing and planned streets (as applicable) to support the logical extension of the municipal street network over time;
  - Incorporating easements as part of proposed streets that account for future sidewalk, street, and utility development in line with standards of the adjacent city/town;
  - Addressing shared maintenance responsibilities for existing irrigation infrastructure (where applicable);
  - “Infilling” areas of smaller, fragmented parcels in Coordinated Planning Areas to help accommodate demand for more diverse housing options while reducing pressure on larger, more contiguous tracts of high-value agricultural lands in adjacent rural areas;
  - Providing a mix of lot sizes and housing types; and/or
  - Concentrating larger lots at the edges of the Coordinated Planning Area to promote a more gradual transition to the surrounding rural area.



## COMMERCIAL

**Intent:** Provide opportunities for the limited expansion of commercial businesses (as a primary use) in unincorporated areas of Park County.

**Primary Land Uses:** Retail and commercial services, offices, storage, value-added agricultural businesses, campgrounds, and limited wholesale and industrial businesses.

**Supporting Land Uses:** Farm or produce stands, transportation facilities, short-term rentals (where not owner-occupied), and accessory residential uses.

**Characteristics:**

- Intended to primarily serve the immediate surrounding area, travelers passing through, or the agricultural community.
- Existing (mapped) commercial areas are primarily located along major transportation corridors and/or within Coordinated Planning Areas.

**Land Use Guidelines:**

- Larger, region-serving commercial uses should generally be located in Coordinated Planning Areas, near major transportation facilities, and in other areas with adequate services and public infrastructure.
- Consider opportunities for smaller commercial development focused on local services outside of Coordinated Planning Areas on a case-by-case basis, as may be supported by the area-specific land use guidelines in Chapter 4.



## INDUSTRIAL

**Intent:** Provide opportunities for the limited expansion of industrial businesses (as a primary use) in unincorporated areas of Park County.

**Primary Land Uses:** Manufacturing, warehousing, processing, distribution, outdoor storage, railroad yards, large-scale utilities, rock crushing, agricultural processing plants and technology facilities, as well as lands being used for mineral or sand and gravel extraction.

**Supporting Land Uses:** Associated offices, limited commercial services, transportation facilities, and other uses intended to serve employees and residents of the immediate area.

**Characteristics:**

- The scale and intensity of industrial uses varies. May include low-impact uses like light manufacturing as well as higher-intensity uses that involve the use of heavy equipment and other activities that generate significant noise, dust, light spillover, and other undesirable impacts.

**Land Use Guidelines:**

- Lower-intensity industrial uses should generally be located in Coordinated Planning Areas, planned industrial parks, and/or other areas with adequate services and public infrastructure; typically near highways, railroads, and airport access.
- Larger, higher-intensity industrial uses should be located outside of Coordinated Planning Areas and irrigated agricultural lands and away from Rural Communities, only where impacts are limited and/or more easily mitigated.



## COORDINATED PLANNING AREAS

**Intent:** Ensure development in areas planned for municipal expansion is compatible with municipal development standards and goals.

**Location:** Areas adjacent to the cities of Cody and Powell, and the Town of Meeteetse.

**Characteristics:**

- Includes areas identified as part of adopted municipal plans and/or in coordination with the municipality as suitable for future urban expansion, and where both Park County and the municipality have a shared interest in guiding the density, intensity, and other characteristics of future development.
- Municipal water and/or sewer services exist or are planned for expansion in these locations

**Land Use Guidelines:**

- Rural development may be discouraged in Coordinated Planning Areas to avoid precluding the planned future expansion of the municipalities.
- Development in Coordinated Planning Areas should be consistent with applicable Land Use Guidelines and Intergovernmental Agreements (IGAs).
- Proposals should be coordinated with NRWD, irrigation districts, and other stakeholders, as applicable, to ensure service and maintenance agreements are specified as part of development approvals.

Refer to area-specific land use guidelines for the Cody Local, Powell Local, Sage Creek, and Meeteetse Rural planning areas, as applicable.

(See also, Goal GM-1 and associated policies on page 28)





# PRIORITY CONSERVATION AREAS

Unincorporated areas with attributes that warrant an additional level of consideration are designated as priority conservation areas. Conservation attributes vary by location and are addressed at the planning area level. The Future Land Use Map includes three categories of priority conservation areas:

- Agricultural Overlay;
- Big Game Use Overlay; and
- Conservation Easements.

Priority conservation areas are included in the Future Land Use Map as overlays that overlap with underlying land use categories and may also intersect each other in some instances.

-  Agricultural Overlay
-  Big Game Use Overlay
-  Conservation Easements



## AGRICULTURAL OVERLAY

**Intent:** Identify and encourage the conservation of high-value agricultural lands.

**Location:** Varies by planning area. Includes private lands that meet the defined characteristics of high-value agricultural lands.

**Characteristics:**

- The Agricultural Overlay includes areas defined by this Plan as high-value agricultural lands. This designation was developed based on a variety of factors established by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the Wyoming Water Development Commission (WWDC). Data used to develop the Agricultural Overlay may not reflect current conditions (e.g., existing subdivisions, non-irrigated land) in some locations.

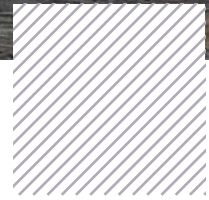
Refer to Chapter 4 for planning area-specific guidance.

**Land Use Guidelines:**

- A higher level of review and scrutiny will be placed upon development proposals or public improvements within the Agricultural Overlay to minimize the impacts of land use activities and infrastructure improvements on high-value agricultural lands.
- Existing conditions or other factors that may reduce or negate the value of a given parcel for agricultural use will be considered on a site-by-site basis (e.g., a lack of irrigation infrastructure, existing development).
- Development within the Agricultural Overlay should be designed to limit impacts on high-value agricultural lands through the use of conservation subdivision design, or other conservation-oriented site design strategies (sometimes including lot size averaging).



## BIG GAME USE OVERLAY



**Intent:** Identify areas of importance to the most prevalent big game species in Park County to increase awareness of potential encounters and encourage the adoption of strategies that minimize impacts on big game species.

**Location:** Varies by planning area. Includes public and private lands within the Big Game Use Overlay.

**Characteristics:**

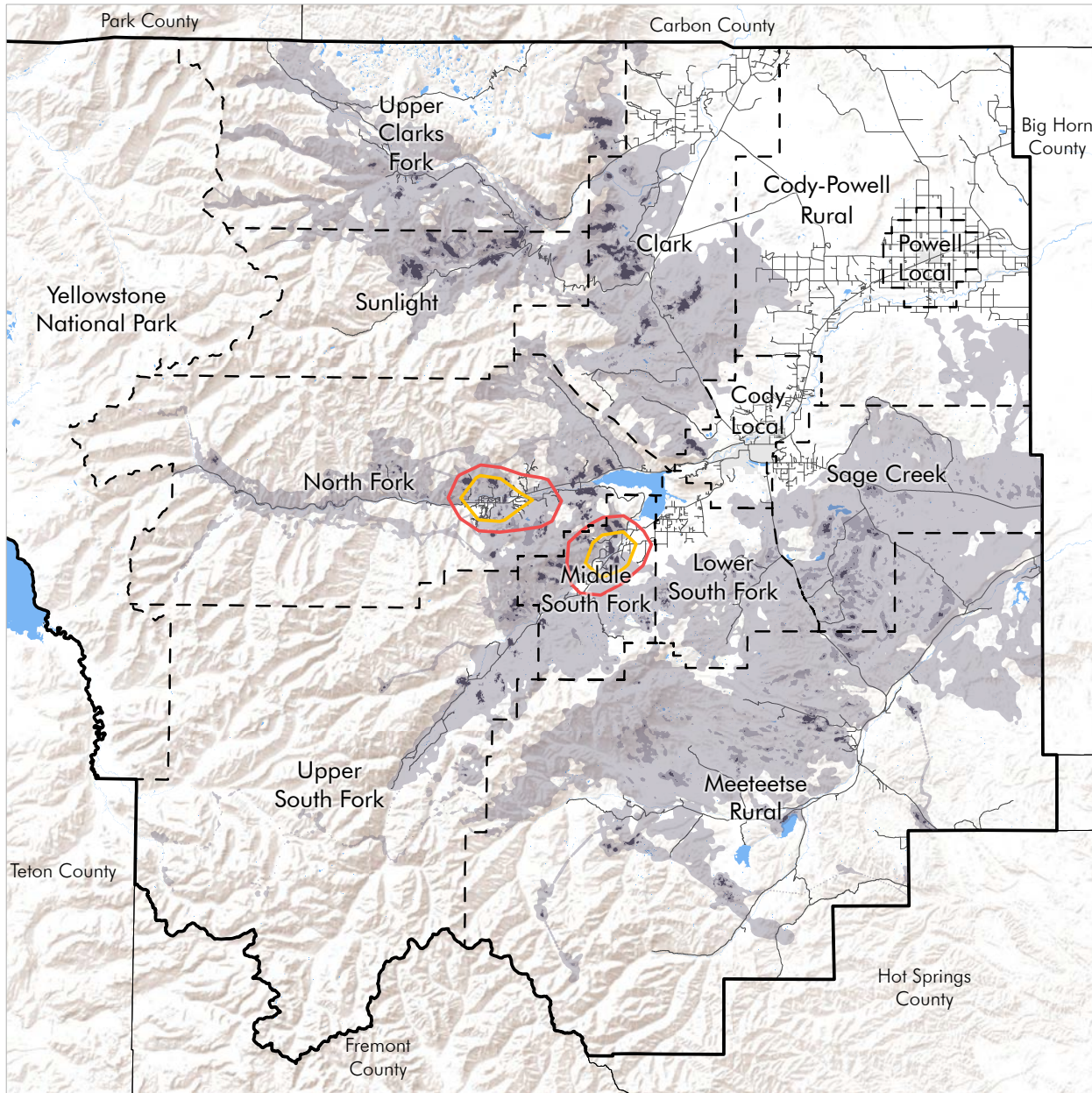
- The Big Game Use Overlay is a “probability of use” map based on large sets of GPS collar data from elk, mule deer and pronghorn antelope. This map depicts the importance of different areas to all big game species on the landscape based on different levels of use from the combined GPS location data. The Big Game Use Overlay was developed by Wyoming Game and Fish in collaboration with wildlife experts Dr. Arthur Middleton (Assistant Professor, Department of Environmental Science, Policy, and Management, University of California, Berkeley) and Dr. Laura Gigliotti (Assistant Unit Leader, West Virginia Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit) in collaboration with Park County.

(See Appendix B, page 231, for additional details on methodology used.)

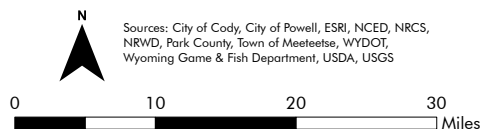
**Land Use Guidelines:**

- Land use considerations vary by planning area as described in Chapter 4.
- Although much of Park County is home to big game, only the most crucial big game use areas are included in the Big Game Use Overlay.
- A higher level of review and scrutiny should be placed upon development proposals or public improvements within the Big Game Use Overlay (particularly in areas of high or medium use) to minimize the impacts of land use activities and infrastructure improvements on wildlife. A map illustrating varying levels of use within the overlay is provided on the following page.
- Development in big game use areas should be designed to limit impacts on big game species through consideration of wildlife-friendly fencing, conservation subdivision design, or other strategies that limit the intensity of land uses and human activities. To the extent practicable, development should be sited to avoid high and medium use big game areas, as reflected by the Big Game Use Overlay.

### Big Game Use Overlay

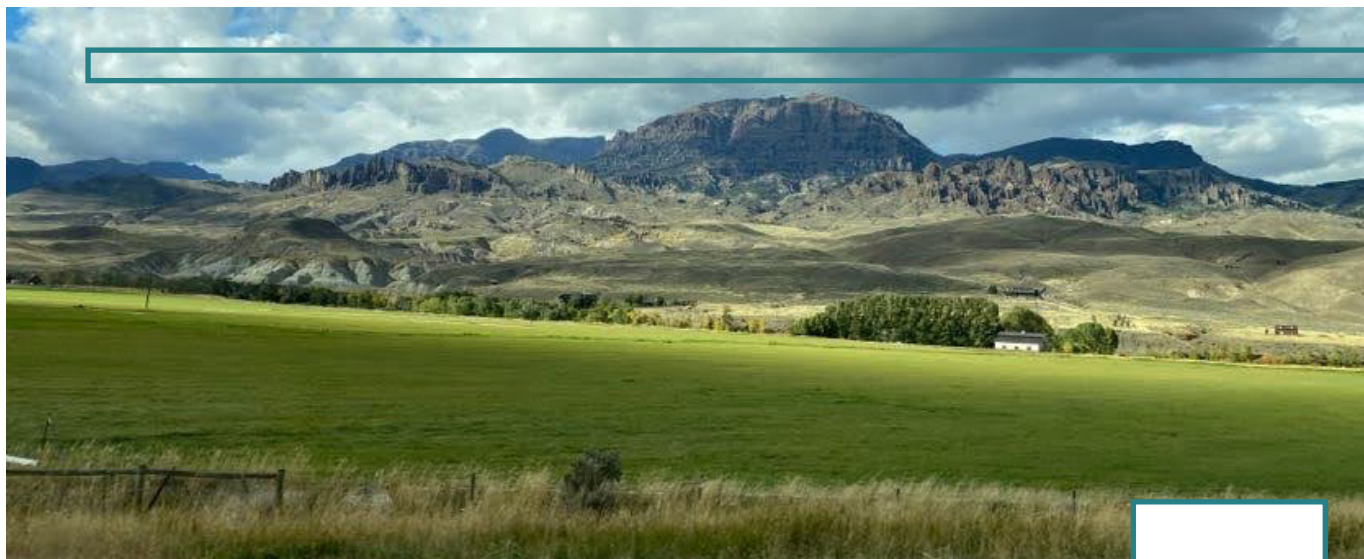


- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>Big Game Use Overlay</b>  | <b>Other</b>  |
| <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px; background-color: #cccccc; border: 1px solid black;"></span> Low Use - All Species    | <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px; border: 1px dashed black;"></span> Planning Area                               |
| <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px; background-color: #808080; border: 1px solid black;"></span> Medium Use - All Species | <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px; border: 1px solid black;"></span> County Boundary                              |
| <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px; background-color: #404040; border: 1px solid black;"></span> High Use - All Species   | <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px; border-bottom: 1px solid black;"></span> Road                                  |
| <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px; border: 2px solid red;"></span> Medium Use - Mule Deer                                | <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px; background-color: #d3d3d3; border: 1px solid black;"></span> Incorporated Area |
| <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px; border: 2px solid orange;"></span> High Use - Mule Deer                               |   |



Sources: City of Cody, City of Powell, ESRI, NCED, NRCS, NRWD, Park County, Town of Meeteetse, WYDOT, Wyoming Game & Fish Department, USDA, USGS





---

## CONSERVATION EASEMENTS

---

**Intent:** Identify and support the conservation of properties that have entered into a deed-restricted conservation easement.

**Location:** Varies.

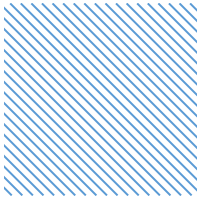
**Characteristics:**

- A conservation easement is a voluntary agreement by a landowner to limit development on a property and/or restrict uses of the property for the purpose of protecting the property’s natural features, agricultural land (if any), historical significance, wildlife habitat and migration areas, and/or other open space qualities, such as preserving a buffer between communities.
- Includes conservation easements recorded as part of the National Conservation Easement Database (which is not all-inclusive). Other conservation easements may be in place on properties in Park County that were established through other entities or means. Due to these variables, the maps of existing conservation easements herein are not complete and are subject to change at any time.

**Land Use Guidelines:**

- Allowed uses vary based on individual conservation easement agreements, which may limit or prohibit development and/or restrict certain uses of the property.

**OTHER**



**SPECIAL FLOOD HAZARD AREA**

**Uses:** Evaluate flood risk, flood prevention, and flood-safe development.

**Location:** Varies.

**Characteristics:**

- Special Flood Hazard Areas (SFHAs) as defined by Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs) developed by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). SFHAs are areas that will be inundated by the flood event having a one-percent chance of being equaled or exceeded in a given year. The one-percent annual chance flood is also referred to as the base flood or 100-year flood.

**Land Use Guidelines:**

- Enforce National Flood Insurance Program floodplain management regulations as required.



**AIRPORT OVERLAY**

**Intent:** Protect lands subject to flight patterns and air traffic and promote the safe and efficient operations of public airports in Park County.

**Location:** Includes approach, transitional, and conical surfaces surrounding the Powell Municipal Airport and Cody Municipal Airport, as defined in Federal Aviation Regulations Part 77.

**Characteristics:**

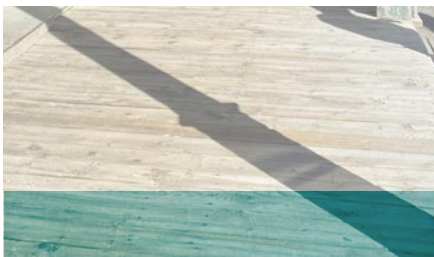
- Enforce adopted regulations that restrict the establishment of uses and equipment that interfere with airport navigation and communication systems; create glare, reduce visibility, or cause confusion with airport lights and markings; increase the risk of bird strikes or wildlife collisions; or increase the concentration of people or flammable substances.



# CHAPTER

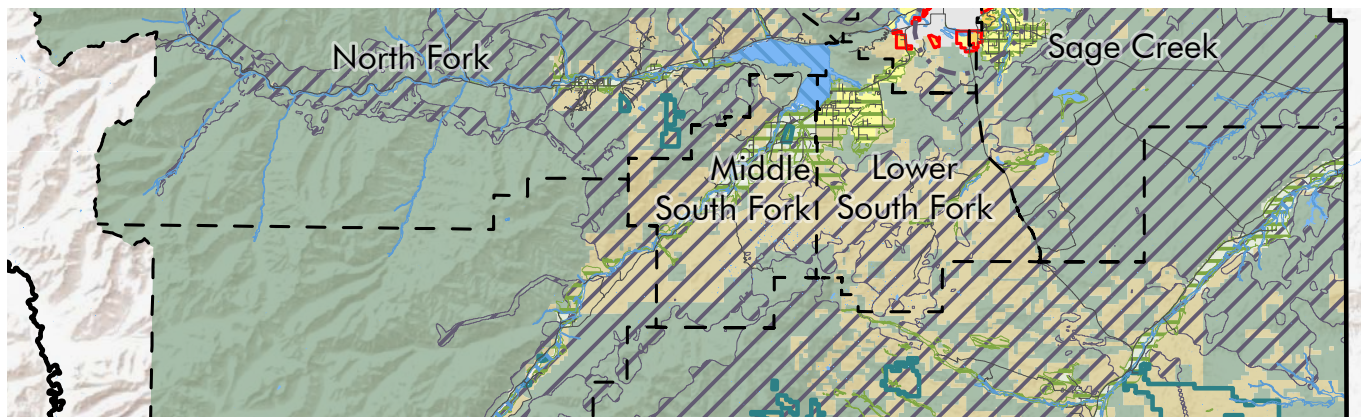


# 4



# PLANNING AREA POLICY STATEMENTS





## INTERACTIVE MAP PORTAL

Two interactive map portals may be accessed from the County's Planning and Zoning Department webpage at <https://park-county-wy.gov/planning-and-zoning/>. A description of each is provided below.

### Land Suitability/Future Land Use Map Portal.

Static, planning area-specific versions of these maps are provided in this Chapter. These maps may be referenced through the [Land Suitability/Future Land Use Map Portal](#).

### Land Use Plan Map Portal.

Additional map "tabs" are available within the [Land Use Plan Map Portal](#), including: Planning Areas; Land Use; Ownership; Natural, Historic, and Cultural Resources; Land Class; Population; Zoning; Infrastructure and Services; Agriculture and Ranch Lands; and Subdivisions.

## ABOUT THIS CHAPTER

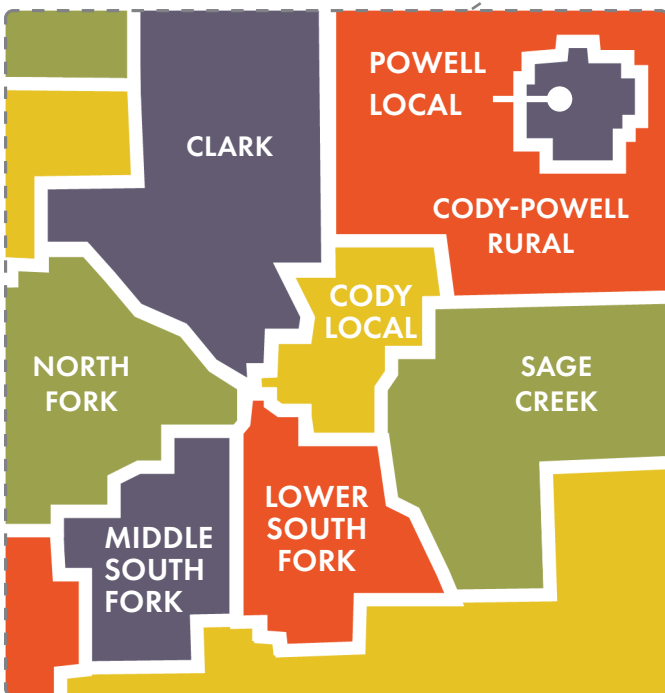
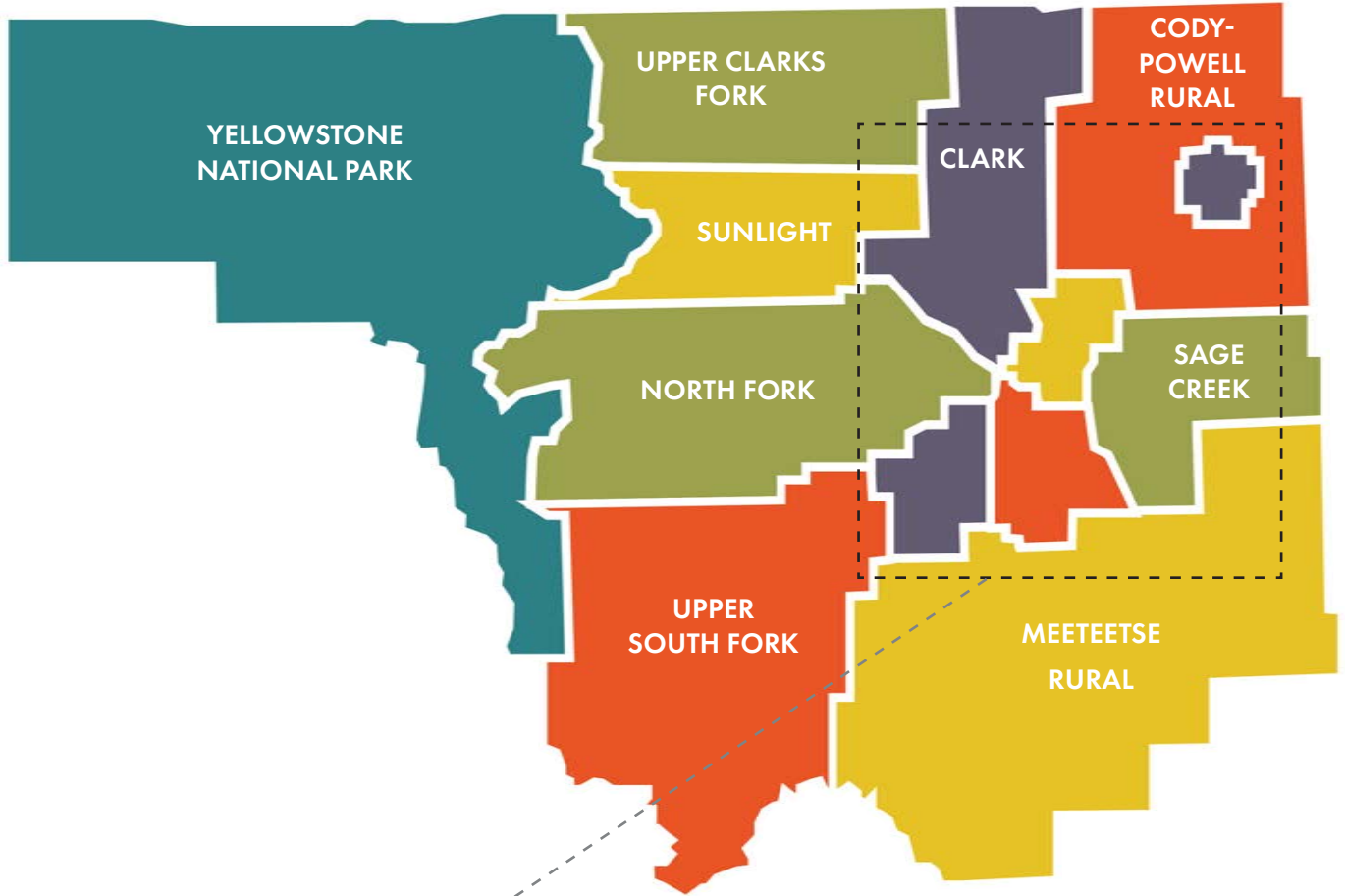
This chapter addresses the unique characteristics of each of Park County's 12 planning areas (as illustrated on next page). The following is provided for each area:

- **Location and Context.** Describes the area's location, landmarks, major travel corridors, and other distinguishing characteristics.
- **Planning Area at a Glance.** Provides a snapshot of facts, figures, and trends that relate to the area's geography, population, employment, growth and development trends, land use, and ownership.
- **Existing Conditions.** Describes the area's economy, infrastructure and services, historic and cultural resources, and environmentally sensitive/constrained areas.
- **Land Suitability Map.** Describes and illustrates the area's suitability for development based on the factors influencing growth and land suitability analysis described in Chapter 3. Suitability rankings should be reviewed in conjunction with Agricultural and Big Game Use Area Overlays.
- **Future Land Use Map and Land Use Guidelines.** Describes land uses reflected on the Future Land Use Map for the area and establishes area-specific land use guidelines that draw from the 1998 Land Use Plan and public input provided as part of the Plan Park County process. Specifically, the guidelines draw from the input provided during the Key Policy Choices phase (October 2022), when residents and property owners in each planning area were invited to provide input on a variety of issues in the context of their area of Park County. The results of this input are provided in their entirety (by planning area) in Appendix C.

Policy guidance provided in this chapter supplements the countywide goals and policies outlined in Chapter 2, and the Countywide Growth Framework in Chapter 3. Unless otherwise addressed for a particular planning area, renewable energy facilities, communications, and nuisances (e.g., light pollution and noxious weeds), are addressed at a countywide level.

(See goals ED-1, EG-1, HO-1, EN-1, LU-2, and associated policies, as well as policy EN-1.4, in Chapter 2.)





Some of the planning area names have been updated in this Plan as follows:

- Upper Clark’s Fork is now Upper Clarks Fork;
- Cody/Powell Rural is now Cody-Powell Rural;
- Meeteetse is now Meeteetse Rural;
- Lower, Middle, and Upper Southfork are now Lower, Middle, and Upper South Fork.

Future adjustments to the planning area names and boundaries may occur alongside upcoming changes to the Development Standards and Regulations and official zoning map for Park County.



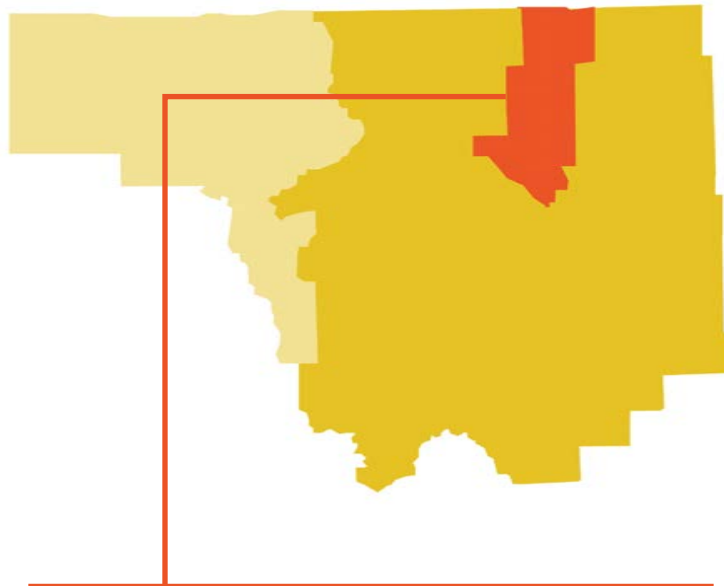
## CLARK PLANNING AREA

### LOCATION AND CONTEXT

The Clark Planning Area (“Clark Area”) encompasses a 408-square mile (261,146-acre) area in north-eastern Park County. The Clark Area is bisected from north to south by WY 120 (Belfry Highway), which extends from Cody to the Montana state line. WY 296 (Crandall Road) provides access west to the Sunlight and Upper Clarks Fork areas. WY 294 provides access east to the Cody-Powell Rural Area.

The Clark Area is sparsely populated and has minimal services due to the presence of large state and federal landholdings as well as numerous private ranches with significant acreage. Most residents live on large lots (35 acres or larger) concentrated in the unincorporated community of Clark, located west of the Clarks Fork of the Yellowstone River near the junction of WY 294 and WY 120.

The varied landscape of the Clark Area was shaped by glaciers over 12,000 years ago. Today, the Clark Area is valued for its spectacular views, vast landscapes, “off-the-grid” lifestyle, outdoor recreation opportunities, and farms and ranches.



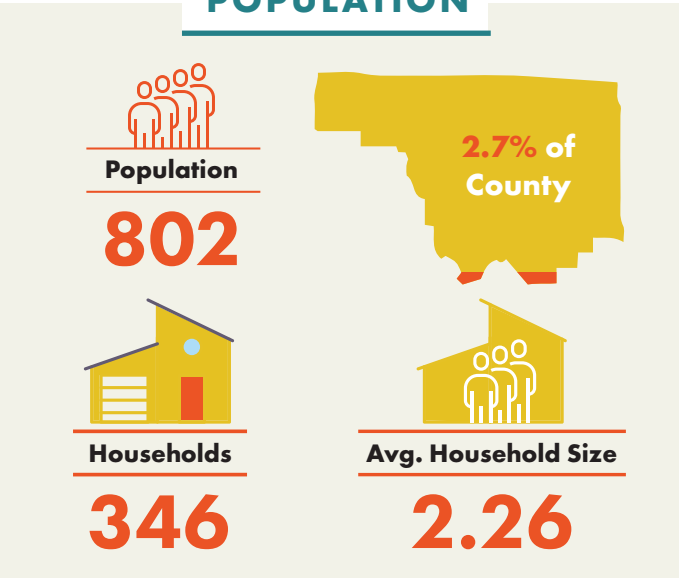
**408 SQ MILES**

**5.9% OF COUNTY**

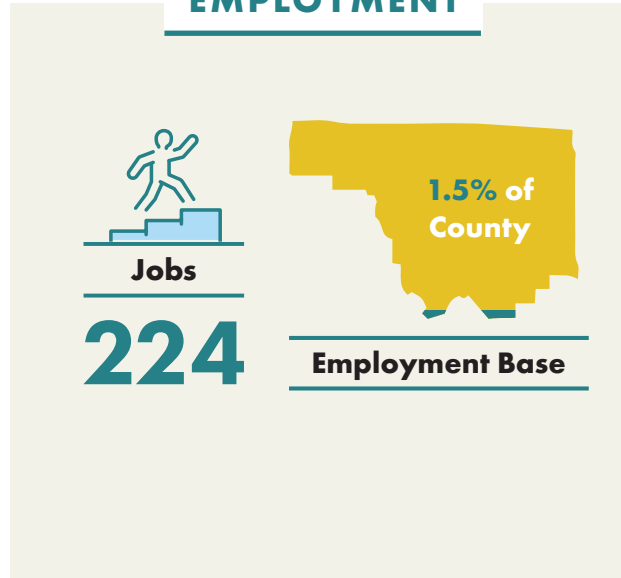
Policy guidance provided for the Clark Area supplements the countywide goals and policies outlined in Chapter 2, and the Countywide Growth Framework in Chapter 3. Direct cross-references are provided where applicable.

# CLARK AREA AT A GLANCE

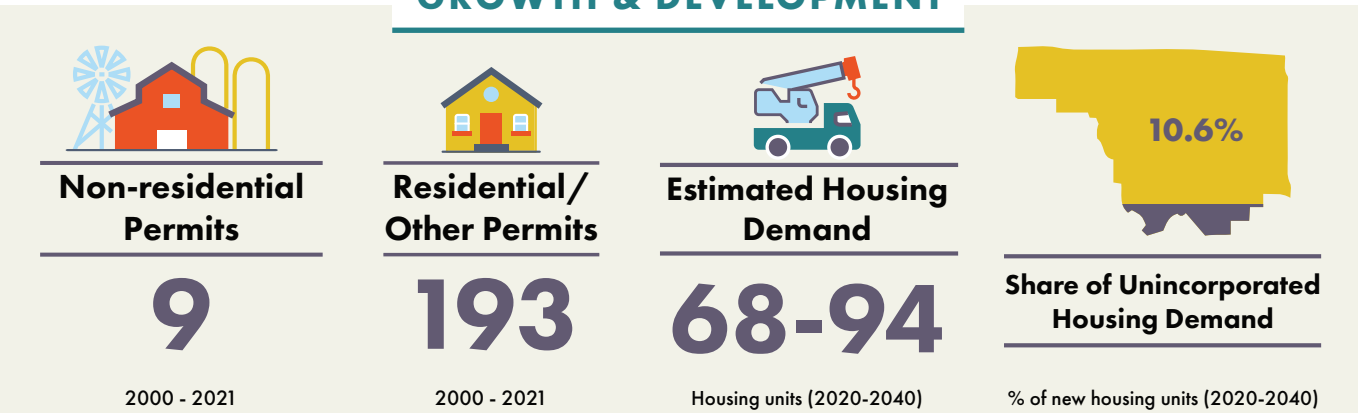
## POPULATION



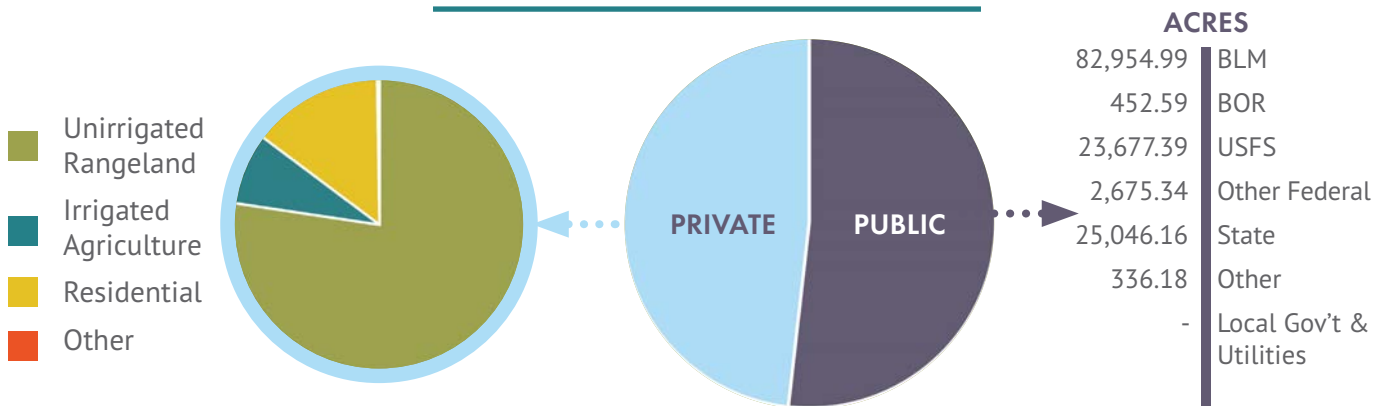
## EMPLOYMENT



## GROWTH & DEVELOPMENT



## LAND USE & OWNERSHIP



Sources: Population and Employment (ESRI Business Analyst, 2021 estimates); Permits (Park County); Housing Demand Estimates (Economic & Planning Systems); Land Use & Ownership (Park County Assessor).



## EXISTING CONDITIONS

### Economy

**Agriculture and Ranching.** Agriculture and ranching are prevalent in the Clark Area with about 23,017 acres of high-value agricultural land as of 2022 (8.8% of all land in the Clark Area). High-value agricultural lands are concentrated along the river and stream valleys in the area—especially along Pat O’Hara Creek, Paint Creek, the Clarks Fork of the Yellowstone River, and Bennett Creek. There are numerous irrigation canals and ditches that serve these lands. Prevalent crops include alfalfa, corn, barley, and dry beans, but also include sod/grass seed, other hay, and other specialty crops. Non-irrigated agricultural lands encompass a majority of the remaining privately held land in the Clark Area and are used primarily for cattle and other livestock production. Major private landholdings include the nearly 59,000 acres owned by the Fs Ranch Corporation. Many

private landowners have grazing allotments on adjoining Bureau of Land Management (BLM) lands.

**Recreation and Tourism.** BLM, state lands, and the Clarks Fork of the Yellowstone River provide access to hunting, fishing, and other outdoor recreation in the Clark Area. The area also serves as a gateway to backcountry recreation and tourism destinations to the west. Prominent landscape features—including Heart Mountain, Pat O’Hara Mountain, and Rattlesnake Mountain—serve as local landmarks and are considered visually significant, as reflected by their Class II designation within the BLM’s Visual Resource Management system.<sup>1</sup>

### Historic and Cultural Resources

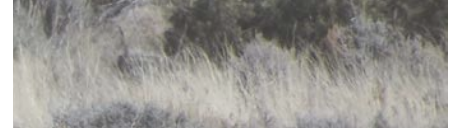
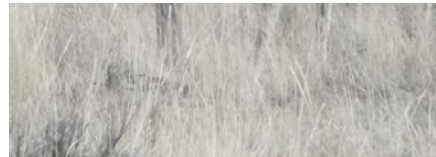
**Nez Perce Historic Trail.** The Nez Perce (Nimiipuu or Nee-Me-Poo) National Historic Trail stretches from Wallowa Lake, Oregon, to the Bear Paw Battlefield near Chinook, Montana. It was added to this system by Congress as a National Historic Trail in 1986.<sup>2</sup> The trail traverses the northwest portion

of the Clark Area from a trailhead at the mouth of the Clarks Fork Canyon and continues northeast into Montana.

**Pioneer School.** The historic Pioneer School is located west of Highway 120 in the rural community of Clark. Pioneer School was built in 1914 and held classes until 1969 when it was consolidated with Powell School District #1. Class rolls indicate that enrollment fluctuated from as few as five students to as many as 28 students over the years. On August 14, 1970, the Pioneer School, along with two acres, was deeded to the Pioneer Service Group to be used as a Community Center. The Center continues to serve as a gathering place and landmark for the Clark Area. The property was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1993.<sup>3</sup>

### Infrastructure and Services

**Water and Wastewater.** Most development in the Clark Area is served by on-site wells, although a small portion of the Northwest Rural Water District (NRWD) boundary



extends into the southernmost portion of the Clark Area near Cody. Central wastewater service is not available in this planning area; as such, property owners rely on septic systems for domestic wastewater disposal.

**Irrigation Districts.** Two irrigation districts serve the Clark Area: Clarks Fork and Heart Mountain. The Clarks Fork Irrigation District (CFID) covers 5,436 acres just east of the rural community of Clark. The Heart Mountain Irrigation District (HMID) covers 72,919 acres in total, most of which lies in the neighboring Cody-Powell Rural Area, although a small portion lies in the southern part of the Clark Area, just northwest of Cody. Many other properties are irrigated via streams and private irrigation ditches that are not owned or maintained by an irrigation district.

### Environmentally Sensitive/ Constrained Areas

**Crucial Wildlife Habitat.** Portions of the Clark Area are considered crucial habitat for elk and mule deer according to the Wyoming

Game and Fish Department. The Clark Area also includes a Priority Habitat Management Area (PHMA) for the greater sage-grouse.

**Special Flood Hazard Area.** Flood-prone areas exist along the Clarks Fork of the Yellowstone River, Pat O'Hara Creek, Big Sand Coulee, and Little Sand Coulee, among other locations in the Clark Area.

**Conservation Easements.** Two conservation easements exist in the northwestern portion of the Clark Area totaling approximately 1,281 acres according to the National Conservation Easement Database (NCED).

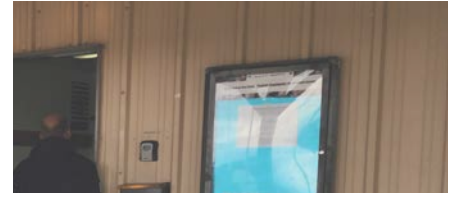
**Zoning.** Current zoning in the Clark Area is limited to two rural districts: General Rural 20-Acre (GR-20) and General Rural 35-Acre (GR-35). These districts establish average lot sizes for development of 20 and 35 acres, respectively, and promote the retention of open space, agricultural land, wildlife and riparian habitat, and scenic areas, while preventing development on unstable geologic features.

### LAND USE SUITABILITY

Land suitability rankings in the Clark Area are influenced by a lack of infrastructure, the presence of major federal and state landholdings, and environmental and topographic constraints. Areas of higher suitability are concentrated along WY 120 (Belfry Highway) and WY 296 (Chief Joseph Scenic Byway) and near the rural community of Clark.

### FUTURE LAND USE

Future land use considerations for the Clark Area reflect the vast public landholdings and rural characteristics of the area. Most of the area is slated for continued public use (Resource Management/Recreation) or farms and ranches (Agriculture or Ranch/Rangeland land use categories) with large average lot sizes (at least 20 to 35 acres). Significant portions of the Clark Area, especially the northern portion of the planning area, are under the Agricultural Overlay. Policy direction maintains existing low-density residential devel-



opment options with some flexibility for establishing a variety of compatible and supportive business/commercial and agricultural uses.

### Land Use Guidelines

The following land use guidelines reflect the preferences of the constituents of the Clark Area, as expressed through the Plan Park County process, and the policy guidance and planning practices best suited to achieve those desires.

#### CK-1: Rural Areas

Accommodate growth in Rural Areas areas that reflects infrastructure, groundwater, and suitability limitations. Encourage the conservation of larger, contiguous tracts of land by considering a minimum average lot size of at least 20 acres and allowing for smaller lot sizes in conjunction with the land use guidelines on page 72 and 73.

#### CK-2: Priority Conservation Areas

Work with landowners, agricultural operators, wildlife managers, and conservation organizations to

protect the viability and stability of agricultural operations and wildlife habitat in Priority Conservation Areas while continuing to accommodate opportunities for the subdivision of land. Consider a minimum lot size of 20 to 35 acres within the Agricultural Overlay but allow for smaller lot sizes in conjunction with the land use guidelines for Rural Areas and Priority Conservation Areas in Chapter 2.

[See also, pages 72, 73, 82, and 84].

#### CK-3: Rural Communities (Clark)

Serve the needs of residents and agricultural producers, especially in the area along Road 1AB and its intersection with State Route 120 (Belfry Highway) by allowing for limited, small-scale commercial services (e.g., restaurant, small format retail) that fit the rural character of the Clark Area. Discourage the establishment of industries and businesses that are primarily region-serving (e.g., hotels, resorts, building materials center, salvage yard, heavy industry).

#### CK-4: Land Uses

Allow a wide range of compatible accessory uses in the Clark Area to maintain the self-sufficiency of residents and agricultural producers, including value-added agriculture, commercial storage, home occupations, short-term rentals, on-site employee housing, and agriculture-supporting services.

#### CK-5: Short-term Rentals

Continue to allow opportunities for short-term rentals in accordance with adopted regulations and countywide policy HO-1.4 on page 50.

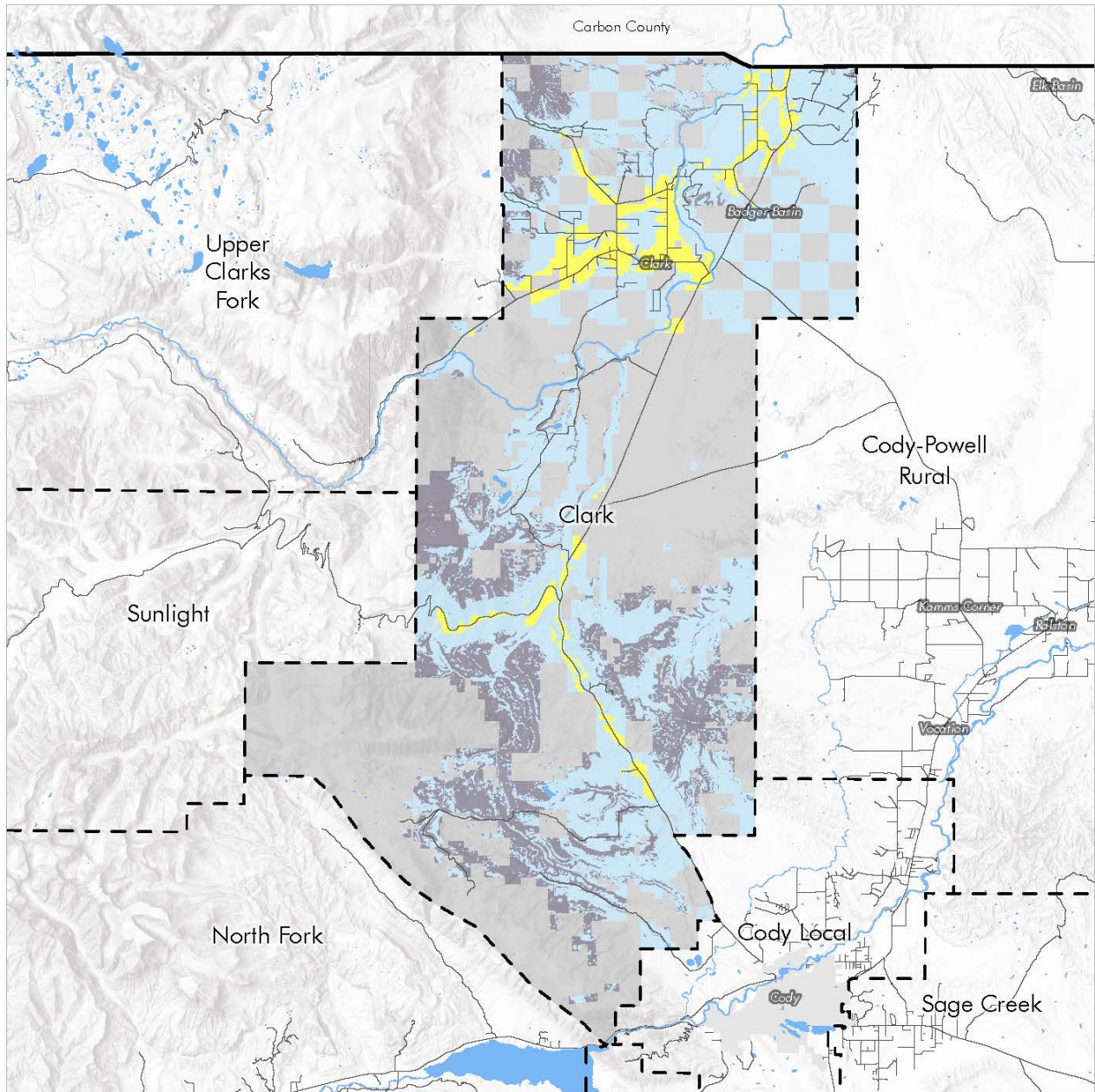
#### CK-6: Recreation and Public Lands Access

Continue to maintain and expand access to outdoor recreation in accordance with countywide goal OR-1 and associated policies on page 52.

#### CK-7: Community Center

Continue to support facilities maintenance, programming, and events at the Clark Pioneer Recreation Center to ensure Clark has a community gathering space and opportunities for indoor recreation.

### Land Suitability: Clark

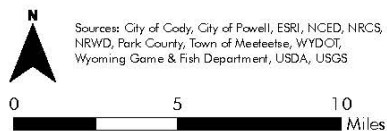


#### Suitability Ranking

- Prohibitive
- Least Suitable
- Marginally Suitable
- Moderately Suitable
- Suitable
- Highly Suitable

#### Other

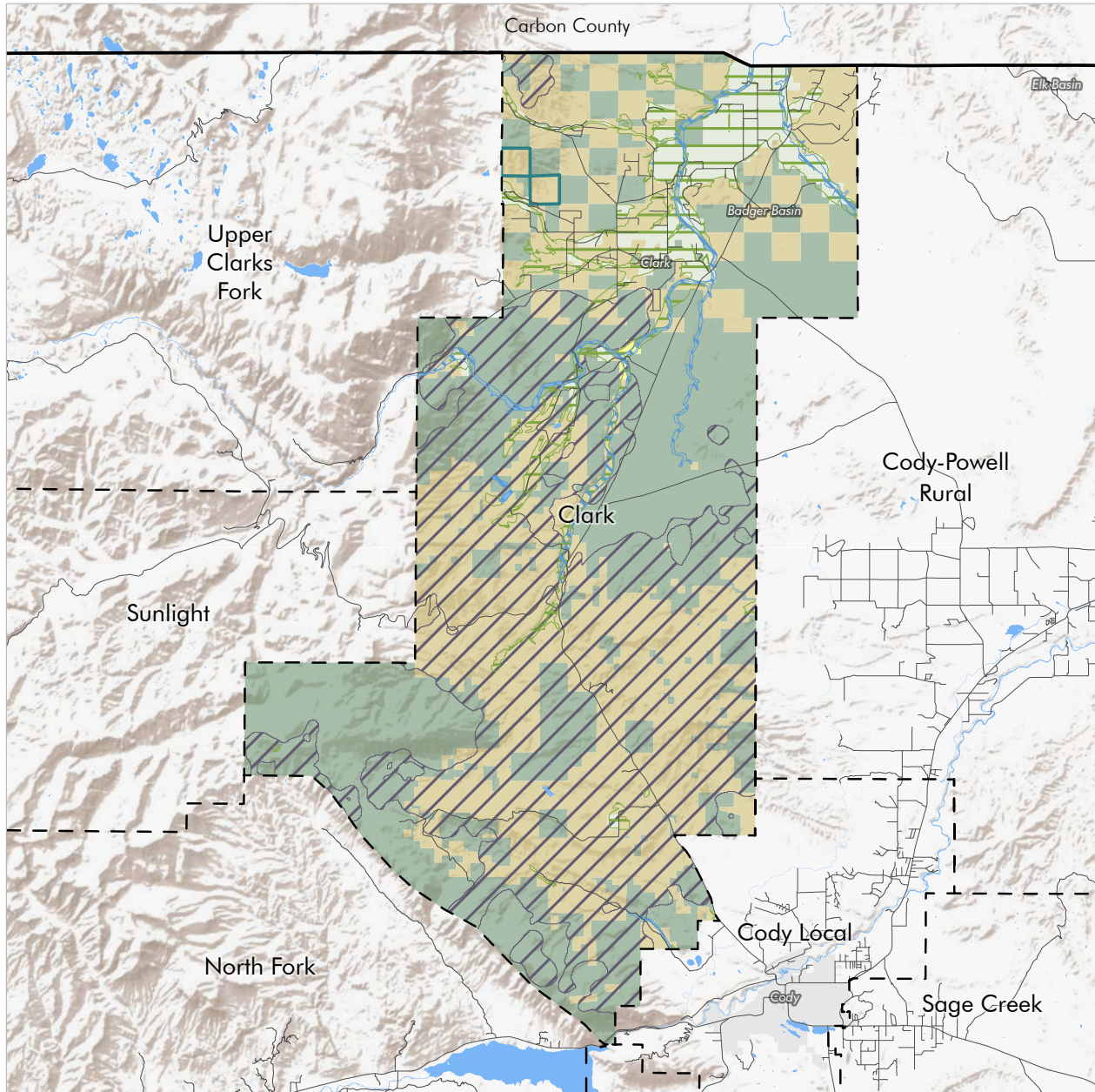
- Planning Area
- County Boundary
- Road



Sources: City of Cody, City of Powell, ESRI, NCED, NRCS, NRWD, Park County, Town of Meeteetse, WYDOT, Wyoming Game & Fish Department, USDA, USGS



### Future Land Use: Clark



#### Future Land Use

##### Rural Areas

- Agriculture
- Ranch/Rangeland
- Resource Management/Recreation
- Rural Communities

##### Developed/Developing Areas

- Rural Residential
- Urban Residential
- Commercial
- Industrial

##### Priority Conservation Areas

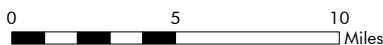
- Agricultural Overlay
- Big Game Use Overlay
- Conservation Easement

##### Other

- Special Flood Hazard Area
- Planning Area
- County Boundary
- Road



Sources: City of Cody, City of Powell, ESRI, NCED, NRCS, NRWD, Park County, Town of Meeteetse, WYDOT, Wyoming Game & Fish Department, USDA, USGS







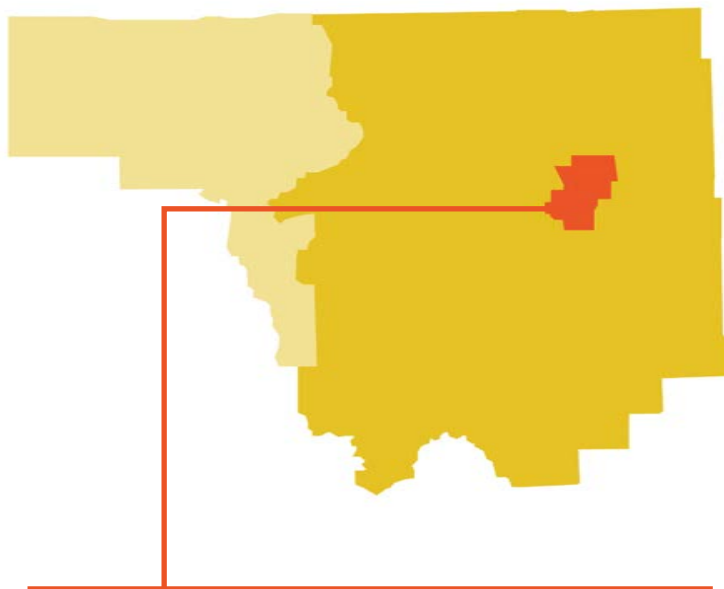
## CODY LOCAL PLANNING AREA

### LOCATION AND CONTEXT

The Cody Local Planning Area (“Cody Local Area”) encompasses a 92.5-square mile area surrounding the City of Cody. Park County’s jurisdiction within the Cody Local Area is limited to the unincorporated areas. The City of Cody serves as the regional service hub for residents of Park County and base for seasonal tourists and outdoor enthusiasts traveling to Yellowstone National Park or other remote destinations. US 14/16/20, US 14A, and WY 120 converge at the center of the Cody Local Area. These roadways, as well as the Yellowstone Regional Airport, connect Cody to other destinations in Park County and beyond.

Cody is known for its western heritage, historic downtown, museums, and long-standing rodeo. The County seat and courthouse are also located in the City of Cody.

Unincorporated areas of the Cody Local Area consist of predominantly public or agricultural lands, with some scattered rural residential development.



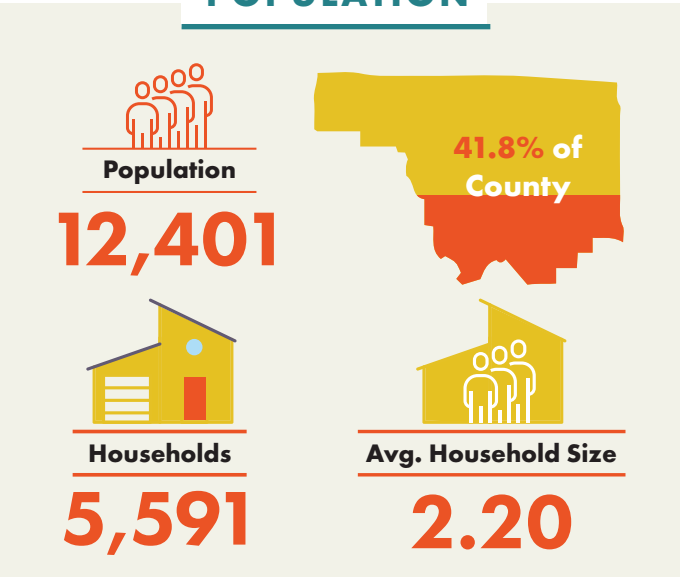
**92.5 SQ MILES**

**1.3% OF COUNTY**

Policy guidance provided for the Cody Local Area supplements the countywide goals and policies outlined in Chapter 2, and the Countywide Growth Framework in Chapter 3. Direct cross-references are provided where applicable.

# CODY LOCAL AREA AT A GLANCE<sup>4</sup>

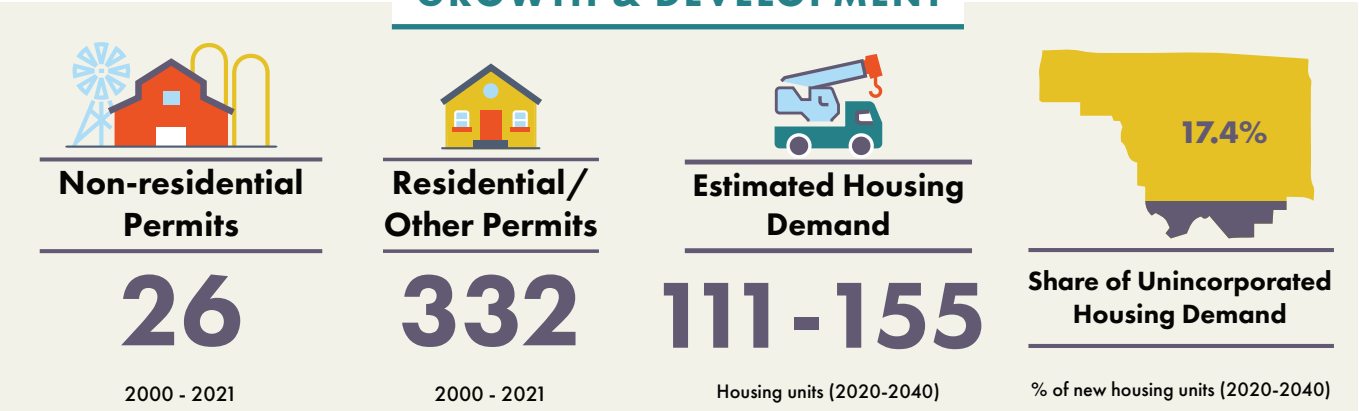
## POPULATION



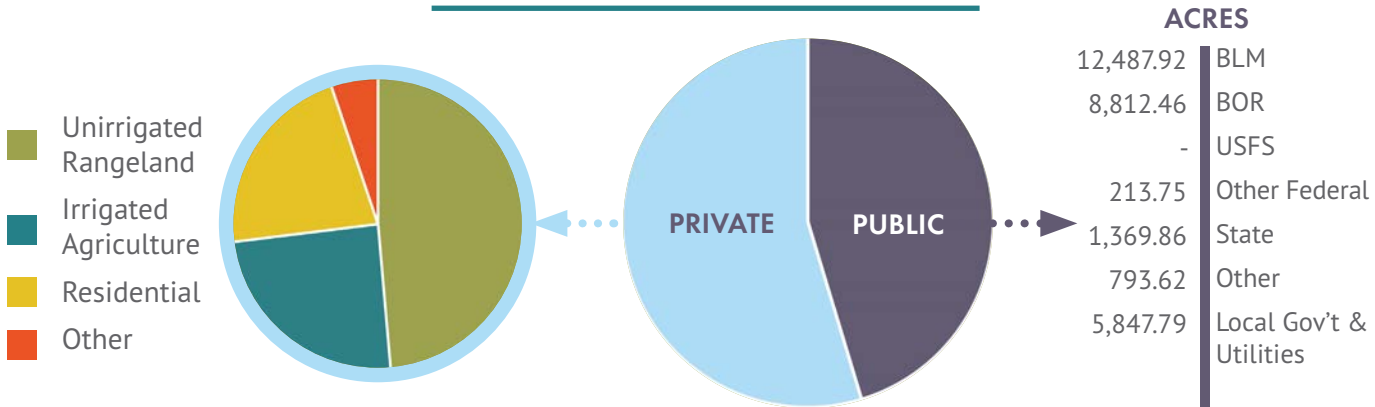
## EMPLOYMENT



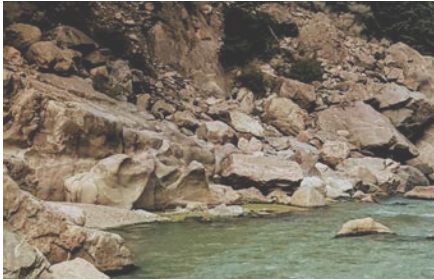
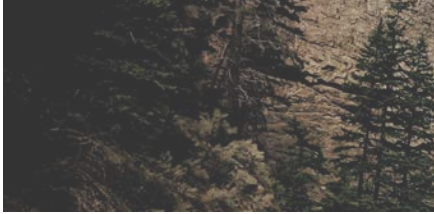
## GROWTH & DEVELOPMENT



## LAND USE & OWNERSHIP



Sources: Population and Employment (ESRI Business Analyst, 2021 estimates); Permits (Park County); Housing Demand Estimates (Economic & Planning Systems); Land Use & Ownership (Park County Assessor).



## EXISTING CONDITIONS

### Economy

**Agriculture and Ranching.** Agriculture and ranching are prevalent in the Cody Local Area with about 14,675 acres of high-value agricultural land as of 2022 (24.8% of all land in the Cody Local Area). High-value agricultural lands are concentrated along US 14A (Powell Highway) between Cody and Powell, as well as areas north of Cody. Predominant crops include alfalfa, barley, and sugar beets, but also dry beans, other hay, and other specialty crops. Non-irrigated rangeland encompass a majority of the remaining privately held land in the Cody Local Area and are used primarily for cattle and other livestock production. Many private landowners have grazing allotments on adjoining Bureau of Land Management (BLM) lands.

**Recreation and Tourism.** Recreation and tourism activities in the Cody Local Area serve both locals and visitors to Park County. For tourists, activities are primarily oriented around lodging and services for those traveling to

Yellowstone National Park or other remote areas of Park County and the surrounding region. Due to seasonal access from Cody to Yellowstone National Park and the outdoor focus of recreational opportunities, visitation is highest during the summer and early fall.

### Historic and Cultural Resources

**Hayden Arch Bridge.** Located west of Cody along US 14/16/20 (North Fork Highway), the Hayden Arch Bridge is the only known concrete arch bridge from the 1920s that remains in Wyoming. The bridge was constructed between 1924 and 1925 and was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1985.<sup>5</sup>

Other recognized historic and cultural resources in the Cody Local Area are located within the City of Cody. These include the **Irma Hotel**, built in 1902 and added to the National Register in 1973; **Buffalo Bill Boyhood Home**, built in 1841, brought to Cody in 1933, and added to the National Register in 1975; **Buffalo Bill Statue**, constructed in 1924 and added to the National Register

in 1974; and **Paul Stock House**, built in 1945-46 and added to the National Register in 2000.

### Infrastructure and Services

**Water and Wastewater.** Most development in the Cody Local Area (not including the City of Cody) is served by the Northwest Rural Water District (NRWD) and septic systems. On-site wells provide domestic water to properties not served by NRWD. The City does not provide municipal water and/or sewer service to development outside the city limits unless it is planned for annexation.

**Irrigation Districts.** Two irrigation districts serve the Cody Local Area: Cody Canal and Heart Mountain. The Cody Canal Irrigation District (CCID) covers 20,434 acres in total, most of which lies south of the Shoshone River in the Cody Local Area. However, the CCID also extends southwest into the Lower and Middle South Fork areas. The Heart Mountain Irrigation District (HMID) serves approximately 72,919 acres in the Cody Local and Cody-Powell Rural planning areas. Many other properties are irrigated via streams and private



irrigation ditches that are not owned or maintained by an irrigation district.

### Environmentally Sensitive/ Constrained Areas

**Airport Overlay.** Lands in proximity to the Yellowstone Regional Airport are subject to federal aviation regulations and additional requirements within the County's Development Standards and Regulations.

**Special Flood Hazard Area.** Flood-prone areas exist along the Shoshone River and Sage Creek, as well as along other tributaries, and are subject to additional permitting requirements.

**Conservation Easements.** There are two conservation easements in the Cody Local Area according to the National Conservation Easement Database (NCED): one just north of US 14A (Powell Highway) and Lane 18 and another east of the Powell Highway off of Road 2EC.

**Crucial Wildlife Habitat.** Portions of the Cody Local Area west and south of the City of Cody are considered crucial habitat for elk and mule deer according to

the Wyoming Game and Fish Department. The Cody Local Area also includes a Primary Habitat Management Area (PHMA) for the greater sage-grouse.

### Zoning

Current zoning in the Cody Local Area includes both urban and rural districts.

**Rural districts** promote the retention of open space, agricultural land, wildlife and riparian habitat, and scenic areas, and prevent development on unstable geologic features:

- **General Rural 20-Acre (GR-20).** GR-20 allows for a range of low-intensity rural land uses, as well as for conventional subdivisions with an average lot size of 20 acres per dwelling unit.
- **General Rural 5-Acre (GR-5).** GR-5 allows for a variety of moderate-intensity land uses, as well as conventional subdivisions with an average lot size of five acres per dwelling unit. GR-5 zoning is concentrated southwest of the City of Cody generally along Southfork Road.

- **Rural Residential Rural 2-acre (RR-2).** RR-2 allows for higher density residential development served by on-site wastewater disposal systems. Conventional subdivisions average two acres per housing unit. Non-residential uses are limited to prevent potential conflicts.

**Urban districts** are concentrated adjacent to the City of Cody and allow for more intensive uses:

- **Residential 1/2-acre (R-H).** R-H allows for moderate density housing development served by public water and sewer.
- **Transitional (T).** The T district serves as an urban holding zone for land around cities and towns. Proposed residential, commercial, or industrial developments proposed in the T district are intended to be rezoned to an appropriate urban or rural district.
- **Commercial (C).** The C district allows for commercial and service activities.



## LAND USE SUITABILITY

Land suitability rankings in the Cody Local Area are influenced by infrastructure availability and environmental and topographic constraints. Areas of higher suitability are generally located in close proximity to Cody city limits, specifically in the Cooper Lane neighborhood just east of the city limits and along Road 2AB. Land adjacent to Southfork Road and US 14A (Powell Highway) are also of moderate to high suitability.

## FUTURE LAND USE

The Cody Local Area includes a mix of land use types and intensities, including irrigated agricultural land, small- and large-lot residential neighborhoods, and commercial and industrial development. Over time, conflicts between incompatible uses have increased, indicating a need for clearer and more predictable land use policies.

Future land use designations in the Cody Local Area accommodate both developed/developing areas and rural areas. Developed/developing areas are concentrated

in Coordinated Planning Areas adjacent to the city limits and in areas where NRWD service exists or can be more readily provided. The Coordinated Planning Area designation encompasses two types of Expansion Areas designated by the [City of Cody Master Plan](#) (see map on pages 26-27):

- **Annexation Areas** are a higher priority for the City based on the anticipated cost and feasibility of extending infrastructure and services.
- **Long-term Annexation Areas** are generally more challenging and/or costly to serve but warrant special consideration for other reasons.

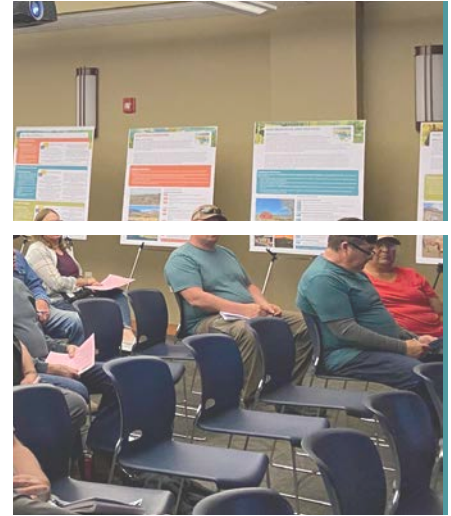
The City of Cody does not intend to annex areas outside of Coordinated Planning Areas in the near future. Future land use designations and land use guidelines for Coordinated Planning Areas generally encourage urban development and discourage the proliferation of rural development that could jeopardize the efficient expansion of municipal services in the future or prevent future urban development.

Outside of Coordinated Planning Areas, the Rural Residential land use designations reflect areas where denser residential development has already occurred or may occur in the future in conjunction with access to NRWD and/or city services. Other future land use designations include pockets of ranch/rangeland, agriculture, and resource management/recreation. These designations generally reflect infrastructure and development suitability limitations, a desire to support orderly development around the City of Cody, conservation priorities, and the presence of public lands.

Close coordination between Park County, the City of Cody, NRWD, the irrigation districts, and other service providers will be important as the Cody Local Area continues to grow.

## Land Use Guidelines

The following land use guidelines reflect the preferences of the constituents of the Cody Local Area, as expressed through the Plan Park County process, the [City of Cody Master Plan](#), input



from the City of Cody, NRWD, and the irrigation districts on infrastructure and service capabilities, and the policy guidance and planning practices best suited to achieve those desires.

**CL-1: Rural Areas**

Accommodate growth in Rural Areas areas that reflects infrastructure, groundwater, and suitability limitations. Encourage the conservation of larger, contiguous tracts of land by considering a minimum average lot size of at least 20 acres and allowing for smaller lot sizes in conjunction with the land use guidelines on page 72 and 73.

**CL-2: Priority Conservation Areas**

Work with landowners, agricultural operators, wildlife managers, and conservation organizations to protect the viability and stability of agricultural operations and wildlife habitat in Priority Conservation Areas while continuing to accommodate opportunities for the subdivision of land. Consider a minimum lot size of 20 to 35 acres within the Agricultural

Overlay but allow for smaller lot sizes in conjunction with the land use guidelines for Rural Areas and Priority Conservation Areas in Chapter 2.

[See also, pages 72, 73, 82, and 84].

**CL-3: Rural Residential**

Allow Rural Residential development (at least one- to five-acre lots) where designated on the Future Land Use Map in accordance with applicable land use guidelines in Chapter 3. Coordinate with NRWD to provide and enhance service capabilities to these areas.

**CL-4: Coordinated Planning Area**

Support the intensification and/or annexation of Coordinated Planning Areas in accordance with the [City of Cody Master Plan](#), applicable land use guidelines in Chapter 3, and the area-specific policy guidance provided below. Discourage rural development or other uses that would fragment or create the potential for land-use and/or infrastructure conflicts

in the City’s planned Expansion Areas, which include Annexation Areas and Long-term Annexation Areas.

See also, map on pages 26-27 of the [City of Cody Master Plan](#).

- **North of River/Belfry Highway Area.** This area is designated by the City as an Annexation Area. The area has good suitability for development of a mix of uses, can be served by expansion of City infrastructure and services, and has limitations for expansion of NRWD service. Urban development (through annexation) is strongly encouraged in this location. The County should maintain larger lot sizes (five-acre minimum) in this area to limit fragmentation in the near-term.
- **West Cody.** The area south of U.S. Highway 14 along State Route 291 is designated by the City as an Annexation Area. The area is generally suitable for development and could potentially be served through the extension of City infrastructure. The area is



subject to potential development constraints related to the presence of geologic conditions (like caves, geyser, cones, and gas pockets). These constraints may limit the extent of—or prevent—development at urban densities. The County should allow for urban densities in these areas following evaluation of geologic concerns and based upon the availability of central water and wastewater service but encourage annexation if desired by the City.

- **City Adjacent Enclaves.**

The City has designated a number of scattered properties on the edge of the City (generally between City limits and the Shoshone River) as Annexation Areas where future annexation and extension of City services could occur. The County should limit development density, incompatible uses, and encourage annexation of these parcels into the City if urban development is proposed.

- **Northeast Cody/Cooper Lane Area.** This area includes a mixture of Annexation Areas or Long-term Annexation Areas as designated by the City. Annexation Areas are generally undeveloped and are priority development areas for the City or planned to remain undeveloped to protect airport operations. Generally, the County should limit density in these areas and strongly encourage annexation into the City. Long-term Annexation Areas generally include existing subdivisions that are served by NRWD infrastructure that is built to City standards but that rely on septic systems for wastewater. These areas should allow for smaller lots sizes (typically one- to five-acre lots) in accordance with the Rural Residential and/or Urban Residential land use guidelines in Chapter 3. Opportunities to accommodate a wider variety of housing types, including smaller, more affordable units,

should be considered in the Cooper Lane area, where a mix of uses, higher density development, and access to infrastructure and services like domestic water and County roads already exists.

- **South Airport Area.** This area is designated as a Long-term Annexation Area. The area is home to Alkali and Beck Lakes which provide important wildlife habitat and are considered important community assets. The City would consider permitting annexation and urban development in suitable portions of this area but anticipates that the immediate development potential is limited due the cost of extending electric, water, and wastewater infrastructure. There is also a community desire to conserve and enhance the wildlife habitat and to protect the private water system that serves the area. Future development in this area should



be limited in density and intensity to support these objectives.

**CL-5: Planned Development**

Allow subdivisions at densities of up to one-half acre per lot in unincorporated portions of the Coordinated Planning Area where conservation subdivisions are used alongside municipal-quality domestic water, wastewater, and street infrastructure. Such infrastructure may be achieved through expansion of NRWD service and/or the establishment of special districts to plan for and fund necessary improvements to serve higher density development.

**CL-6: Land Uses**

Allow a wide range of uses in the Cody Local Area to support agricultural production, processing, and sales, and increase economic development. Support opportunities for home occupations, on-site employee housing, light industry, small- and medium-scale

commercial businesses, agri-business, agriculture-supporting services, and recreation-based businesses provided impacts on established agricultural operations, infrastructure (i.e., roads), and other neighboring uses can be minimized.

**CL-7: Short-term Rentals**

Explore potential limitations on the number, type, and operations of short-term rentals in the Cody Local Area, including conditions of approval (e.g., occupancy limits, parking requirements, duration of stay standards, owner expectations) that minimize impacts on the community and housing availability for permanent residents.

**CL-8: Recreation and Public Lands Access**

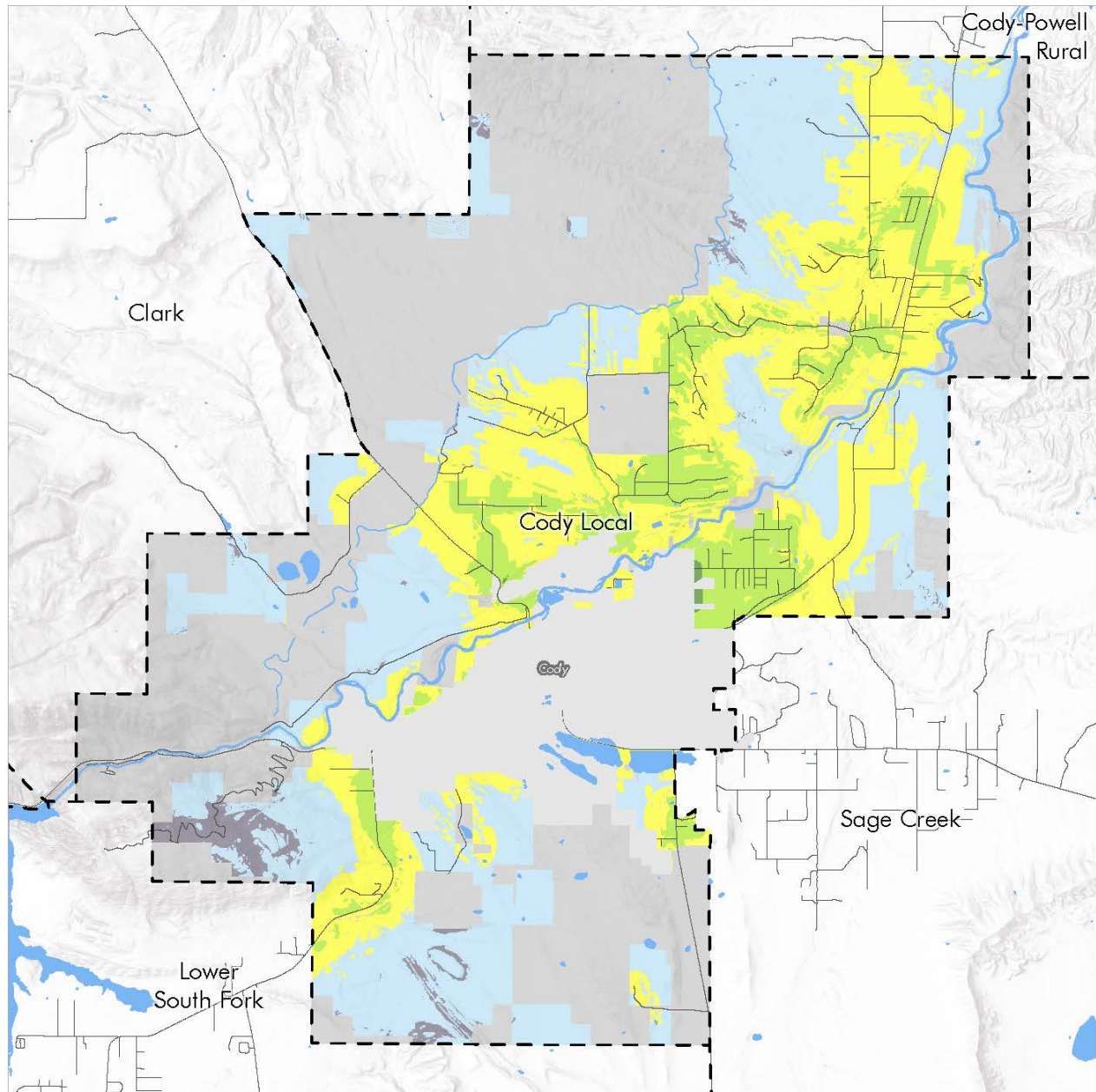
Continue to maintain and expand access to outdoor recreation in accordance with countywide goal OR-1 and associated policies on page 52.

**CL-9: Yellowstone Regional Airport**

Maintain the safety and viability of the Yellowstone Regional Airport by enforcing regulations that prevent the creation of obstructions to airport operations, compromise the safe and efficient operations of the airport, or endanger the lives and property of nearby landowners.



### Land Suitability: Cody Local



#### Suitability Ranking

- Prohibitive
- Least Suitable
- Marginally Suitable
- Moderately Suitable
- Suitable
- Highly Suitable

#### Other

- Incorporated Area
- Planning Area
- Road

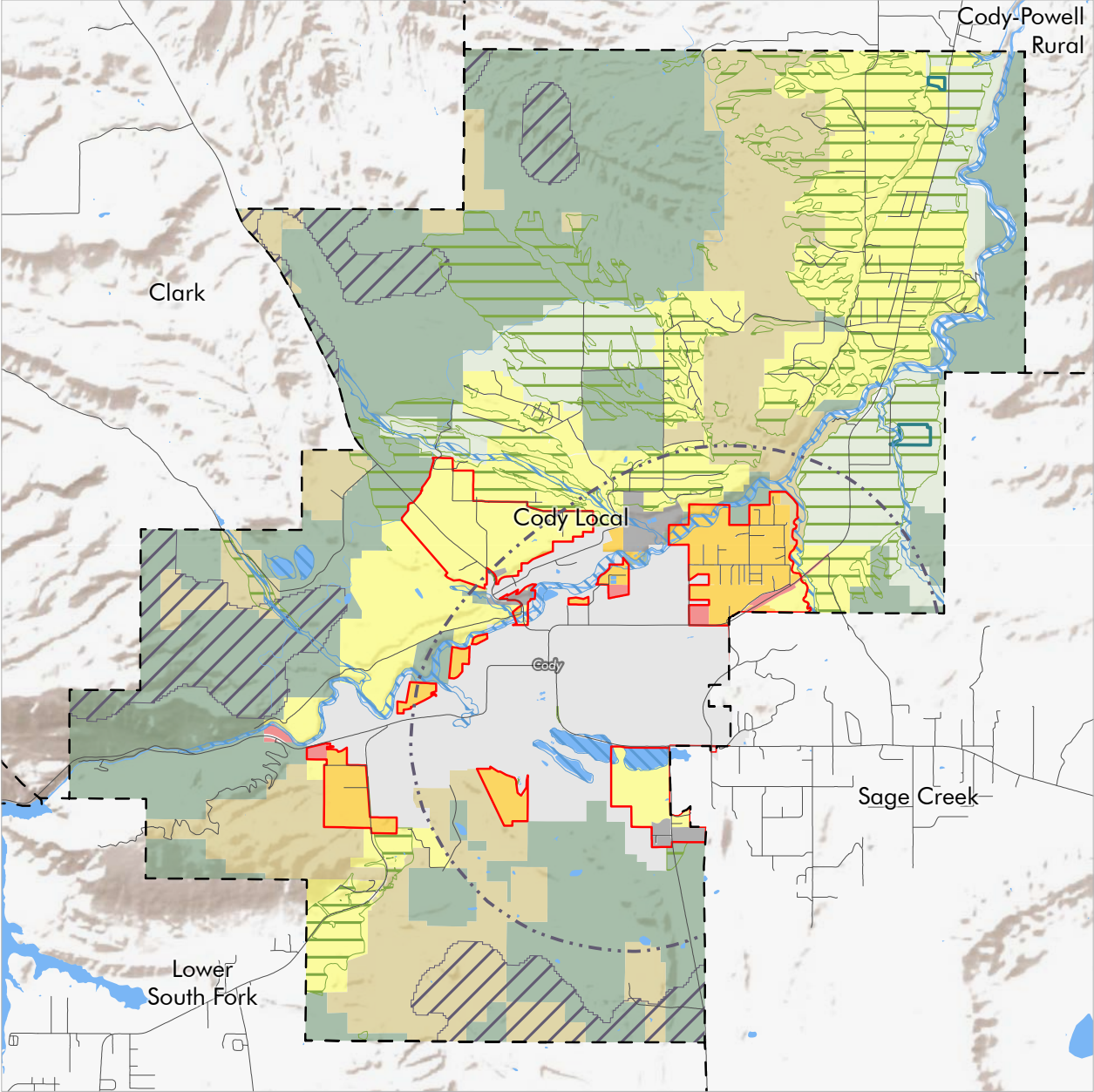


0 1 ½ 3 Miles

Sources: City of Cody, City of Powell, ESRI, NCED, NRCS, NRWD, Park County, Town of Meeteetse, WYDOT, Wyoming Game & Fish Department, USDA, USGS



### Future Land Use: Cody Local



#### Future Land Use

- Rural Areas
  - Agriculture
  - Ranch/Rangeland
  - Resource Management/Recreation
  - Rural Communities
- Developed/Developing Areas
  - Rural Residential
  - Urban Residential
  - Commercial
  - Industrial
  - Coordinated Planning Area

- Priority Conservation Areas
  - Agricultural Overlay
  - Big Game Use Overlay
  - Conservation Easement

- Other
  - Special Flood Hazard Area
  - Airport Overlay
  - Incorporated Area
  - Planning Area
  - Road

Sources: City of Cody, City of Powell, ESRI, NCEd, NRCS, NRWD, Park County, Town of Meeteetse, WYDOT, Wyoming Game & Fish Department, USDA, USGS





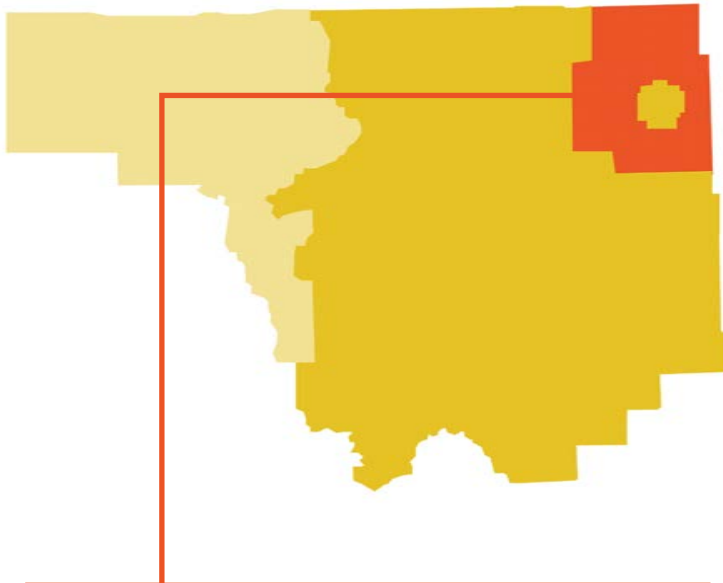
## CODY-POWELL RURAL PLANNING AREA

### LOCATION AND CONTEXT

The Cody-Powell Rural Planning Area (Cody-Powell Rural Area) encompasses 575.3 square miles in the northeastern corner of Park County. US 14A (Powell Highway) runs diagonally through the Cody-Powell Rural Area and connects the City of Powell to Cody (to the southwest) and the rural community of Garland (to the east). The Powell Local Area lies at the center of the Cody-Powell Rural Area.

The Cody-Powell Rural Area contains a mix of public and private lands. Most private lands are concentrated along the Shoshone River and are largely used for agricultural production. Major private landholdings north of and west of Powell include the Fs Ranch Corporation and the Crosby Ranch. Notable public lands include the Shoshone River-Willwood Dam Public Access Area that provides fishing, hunting, and boating opportunities along the Shoshone River, and the McCullough Peaks Wilderness Study Area (WSA) south of Willwood. Willwood Dam has been in use since it was constructed in 1924.

The Powell Municipal Airport, a general aviation airport owned and operated by the City of Powell, is located eight miles north of the City. The Heart Mountain Interpretive Center is also a major landmark in the Cody-Powell Rural Area.



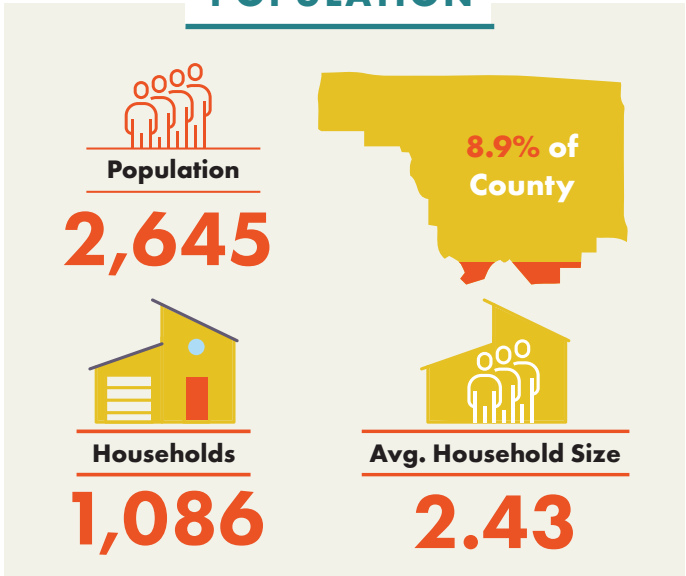
**575.3 SQ MILES**

**8.3% OF COUNTY**

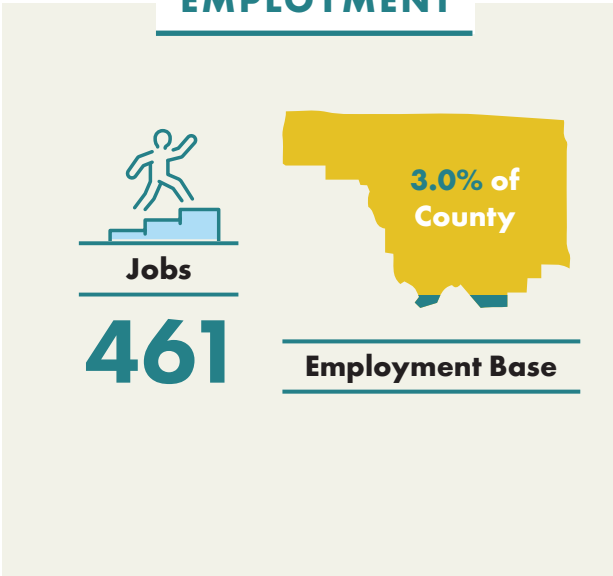
Policy guidance provided for the Cody-Powell Rural Area supplements the countywide goals and policies outlined in Chapter 2, and the Countywide Growth Framework in Chapter 3. Direct cross-references are provided where applicable.

# CODY-POWELL RURAL AREA AT A GLANCE

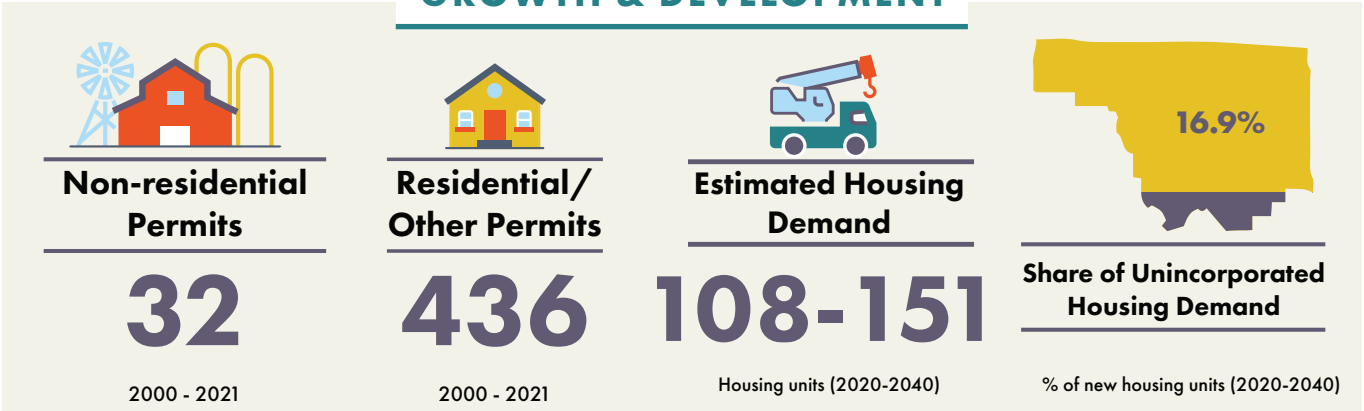
## POPULATION



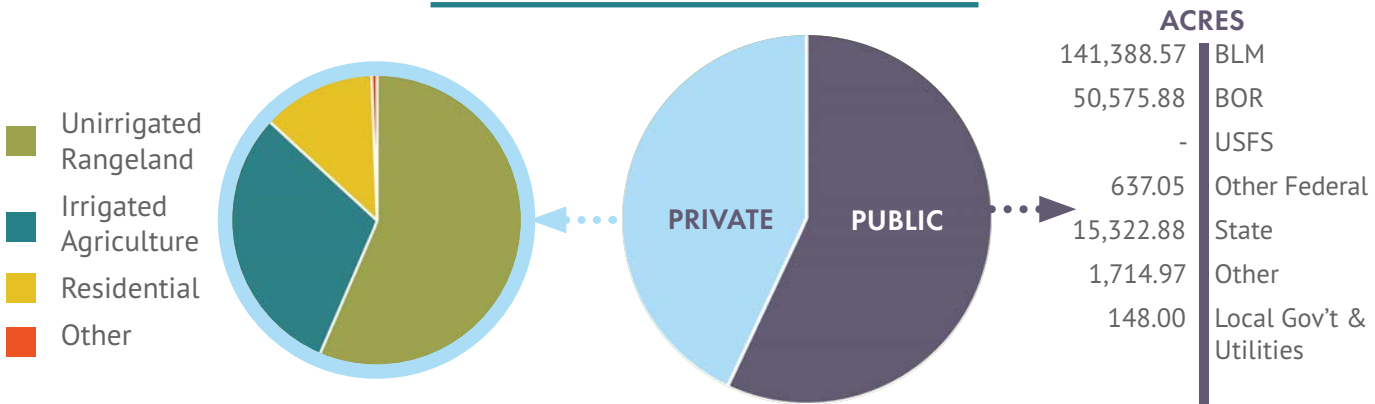
## EMPLOYMENT



## GROWTH & DEVELOPMENT



## LAND USE & OWNERSHIP



Sources: Population and Employment (ESRI Business Analyst, 2021 estimates); Permits (Park County); Housing Demand Estimates (Economic & Planning Systems); Land Use & Ownership (Park County Assessor).



## EXISTING CONDITIONS

### Economy

**Agriculture and Ranching.** The Cody-Powell Rural Area has the largest concentration of high-value agricultural lands in Park County with about 66,632 acres of high-value agricultural land as of 2022 (18.1% of all land in the Cody-Powell Rural Area). Irrigated agricultural lands are concentrated northwest of US 14A, as well as along the Shoshone River and north and east of the Powell Local Area. Prevalent crops include alfalfa, sugar beets, barley, and dry beans, but also sod/grass seed, other hay, and other specialty crops. Non-irrigated agricultural lands encompass a majority of the remaining privately held land in the Cody-Powell Rural Area and are used primarily for cattle and other livestock production. Many private landowners have grazing allotments on adjoining Bureau of Land Management (BLM) lands.

**Recreation and Tourism.** While recreation and tourism have not traditionally been a driver for

the Cody-Powell Rural Area, the expansion of outdoor activities for residents and visitors has become more of a focus for the Powell community in recent years.

### Historic and Cultural Resources

**Heart Mountain Relocation Center.** The site was one of ten relocation camps built during World War II to house people of Japanese descent that were forcibly relocated from the West Coast of the United States. It was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1985.<sup>6</sup> The Heart Mountain Interpretive Center opened to visitors in 2011.

### Infrastructure and Services

**Water and Wastewater.** Most development in the Cody-Powell Rural Area is served by either the Northwest Rural Water District (NRWD) or on-site wells. Central wastewater service is not available in this planning area; as such, property owners rely on septic systems for domestic wastewater disposal.

**Irrigation Districts.** Four irrigation districts serve the Cody-Powell Rural Area: Heart Mountain, Willwood, Deaver, and Shoshone. The Heart Mountain Irrigation District (HMID) covers 72,919 acres south of Powell, generally west of US 14A and extends into the Clark Area, just northwest of Cody. The Willwood Irrigation District (WID) covers 24,500 acres south of the Shoshone River and extends east into Big Horn County. The Deaver Irrigation District (DID) covers 34,331 acres northeast of Powell on both sides of the US 14A. The Shoshone Irrigation District (SID) covers 66,993 acres north of the Shoshone River, most of which lies in the Powell Local Area. Many other properties are irrigated via streams and private irrigation ditches that are not owned or maintained by an irrigation district.

### Environmentally Sensitive/Constrained Areas

**Airport Overlay.** Lands in proximity to the Powell Municipal Airport are subject to federal aviation regulations and additional



requirements within the County's Development Standards and Regulations.

**Special Flood Hazard Areas.** Flood-prone areas in the Cody-Powell Rural Area are primarily concentrated along the Shoshone River and its tributaries, but also along Big Sand Coulee, and are subject to additional permitting requirements.

**McCullough Peaks Wilderness Study Area.** McCullough Peaks encompasses over 120,000 acres of BLM land south of Willwood and north of US 14/16/20 (Greybull Highway). This area includes a Wild Horse Herd Management Area and the McCullough Peaks Wilderness Study Area (WSA) that encompasses more than 25,000 of those acres. The WSA is known for its rugged badlands and population of wild horses.<sup>7</sup>

**Conservation Easements.** There are no conservation easements in place in the Cody-Powell Rural Area according to the National Conservation Easement Database (NCED).

**Crucial Wildlife Habitat.** Portions of the Cody-Powell Rural Area are considered crucial habitat for elk according to the Wyoming Game and Fish Department. The Cody-Powell Rural Area also includes a Primary Habitat Management Area (PHMA) for the greater sage-grouse.

### Zoning

The Cody-Powell Rural Area is largely zoned in the General Rural Powell (GR-P) district that allows for residential subdivisions with a minimum lot size of one acre, subject to the presence of on-site septic systems and other development standards. The GR-P district is also intended to promote the retention of open space, agricultural land, wildlife and riparian habitat, and scenic areas, and prevent development on unstable geologic features. The area around Frannie has limited Transitional (T) and Industrial (I) zoning and the corridor along US 14A in Ralston is designated T or Commercial (C). There is a single, large parcel of land along

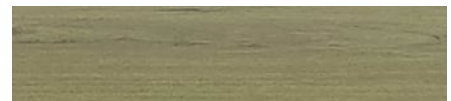
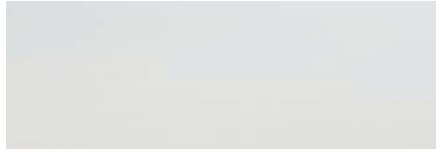
Highway 295 near the Big Horn County boundary that is zoned Industrial (I).

### LAND USE SUITABILITY

Land suitability rankings in the Cody-Powell Rural Area are influenced by large areas of state and federal land, rural/farmland allocations, and availability of infrastructure. Suitable areas for development are located near the rural communities of Ralston and Garland and along NRWD water lines. There are also areas of higher suitability along US 14A.

### FUTURE LAND USE

The Cody-Powell Rural Area covers a large and diverse territory of Park County that includes both irrigated and unirrigated agricultural land, the US 14A corridor, and the rural communities of Garland and Ralston. As such, future land use considerations for the area should reflect a range of characteristics and contexts. For example, different approaches to agricultural land preservation are necessary depending on the type of agricultural activity, the



availability of infrastructure and services, and the level of anticipated development pressure. Future land use on private lands in the Cody-Powell Rural Area is primarily made up of Ranch/Rangeland and Agriculture designations, which generally reduce the likelihood of higher density residential development in less suitable areas. Areas designated as Rural Communities (Ralston and Garland) are intended to accommodate a range of uses and higher density development (based on existing development character) as infrastructure availability allows.

**Land Use Guidelines**

The following land use guidelines reflect the preferences of the constituents of the Cody-Powell Rural Area, as expressed through the Plan Park County process, and the policy guidance and planning practices best suited to achieve those desires.

**CP-1: Rural Areas**

Accommodate growth in Rural Areas areas that reflects infrastructure, groundwater, and suitability limitations. Encourage the conservation of larger, contiguous tracts of land by considering a minimum average lot size of at least 20 acres and allowing for smaller lot sizes in conjunction with the land use guidelines on page 72 and 73.

**CP-2: Priority Conservation Areas**

Work with landowners, agricultural operators, wildlife managers, and conservation organizations to protect the viability and stability of agricultural operations and wildlife habitat in Priority Conservation Areas while continuing to accommodate opportunities for the subdivision of land. Consider a minimum lot size of 20 to 35 acres within the Agricultural Overlay but allow for smaller lot sizes in conjunction with the land use guidelines for Rural Areas and Priority Conservation Areas in Chapter 2. Place a particular focus on conservation efforts west of

Road 14 and in other areas where domestic water infrastructure is not available.

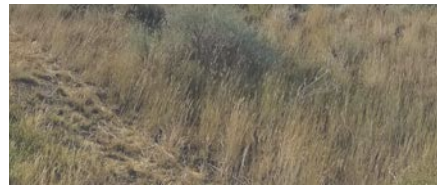
[See also, pages 72, 73, 82, and 84].

**CP-3: Rural Communities (Generally)**

Encourage higher density development and mix of residential, commercial, and industrial uses in existing rural communities—Garland and Ralston—where infrastructure exists or can be expanded to support future growth. Work to address infrastructure limitations in partnership with residents, utilities, and service providers, and area-specific land use guidelines.

**CP-4: Rural Communities (Garland)**

The rural community of Garland features smaller residential lots and some industrial and agricultural uses and is located just south of the intersection of US 14A and WY 114.



- **Infrastructure-limited Development.** Protect the quality of groundwater and safety of the community by limiting subdivisions of land and establishing a minimum lot size to one acre or greater where central water and wastewater infrastructure is not available.
- **Infrastructure-supported Development.** Where either central water or wastewater infrastructure are available through a service provider, special district, or other arrangement, allow for subdivision lot sizes of 1/2-acre or larger. Where both central water and wastewater infrastructure are available, allow for subdivision lot sizes of 1/4-acre or larger.
- **Land Use.** With adequacy of services and infrastructure in mind, allow a mix of residential, commercial, and industrial uses that reflect the existing character of the community and provide flexibility to accommodate future growth.

### CP-5: Rural Communities (Ralston)

The rural community of Ralston features smaller residential lots and a mix of commercial, industrial, and community-serving uses and is located along and north of US 14A near its intersection with Lane 11 (Clark Avenue) and Road 14.

- **Special District.** Support efforts by the Ralston community to create a special district or other agreement to provide central wastewater service and expand domestic water service from NRWD to all properties in Ralston.
- **Infrastructure-limited Development.** Protect the quality of groundwater and safety of the community by limiting subdivisions of land and establishing a minimum lot size to one-acre or greater where central water and wastewater infrastructure is not available.
- **Infrastructure-supported Development.** Where either central water or wastewater infrastructure are available through a service provider,

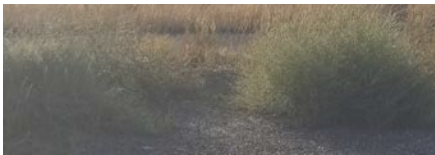
special district, or other arrangement, allow for subdivision lot sizes of 1/2-acre or larger. Where both central water and wastewater infrastructure are available, allow for subdivision lot sizes of 1/4-acre or larger.

- **Land Use.** With adequacy of services and infrastructure in mind, allow a mix of residential, commercial, and industrial uses that reflect the existing character of the community and provide flexibility to accommodate future growth.

### CP-6: Powell Highway Corridor

Encourage the conservation of larger, contiguous parcels outside of the Coordinated Planning Areas to maintain a permanent visual and physical separation between Cody and Powell and protect the long-term viability of agricultural operations. Concentrate new development where there is already a mix of uses, higher density development, access to





NRWD infrastructure, and existing access to U.S. Highway 14A, to the maximum extent practicable.

**CP-7: Land Uses**

Allow a wide range of accessory uses to support agricultural production, processing, and sales, housing affordability, and increase economic development. Smaller, more affordable dwelling units, home occupations, short-term rentals, employee housing, light industry, community-serving commercial businesses, agri-business, agriculture-supporting services, and recreation-based businesses are encouraged with a desire to limit impacts on agricultural operations.

**CP-8: Short-term Rentals**

Continue to allow opportunities for short-term rentals in accordance with adopted regulations and countywide policy HO-1.4 on page 50.

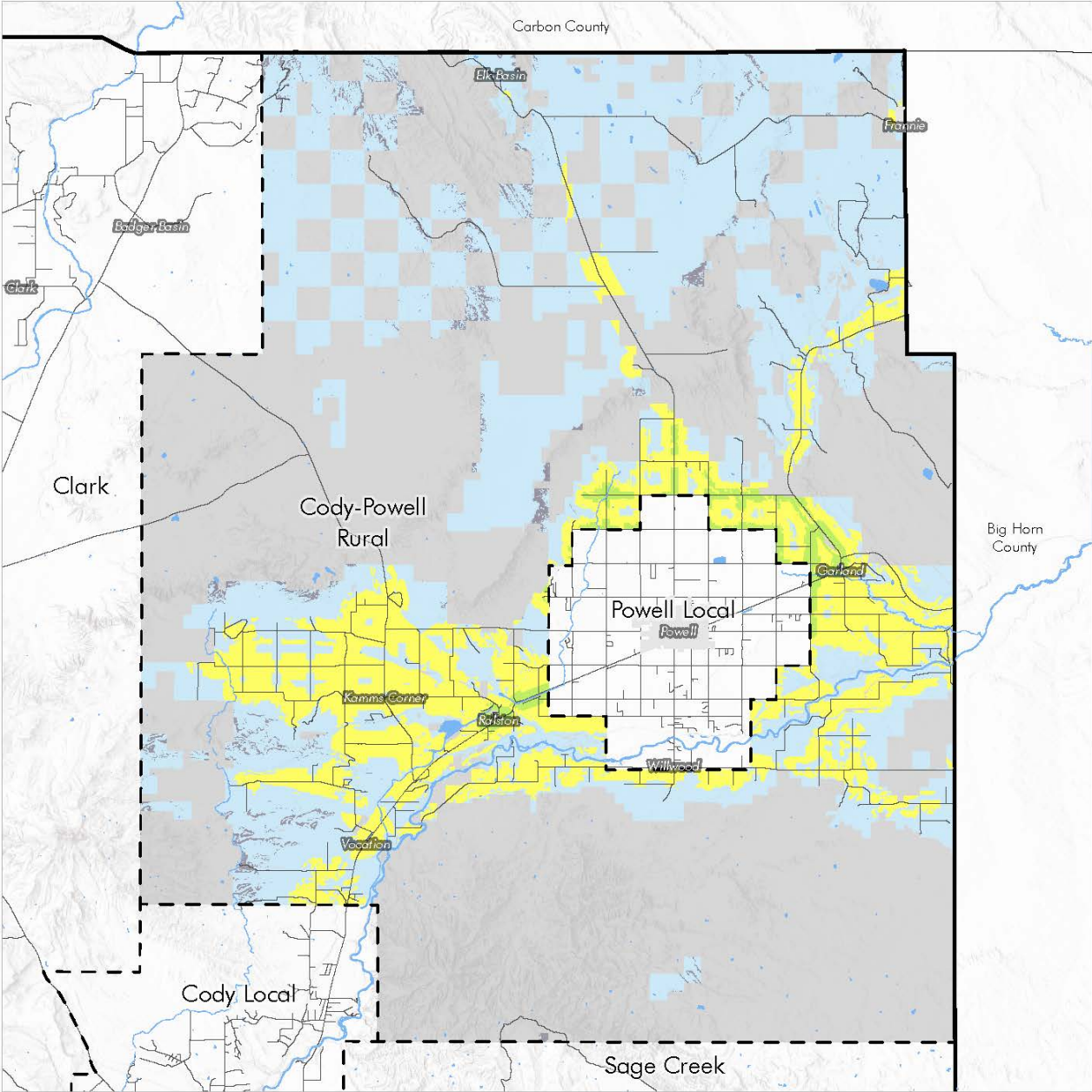
**CP-9: Recreation and Public Lands Access**

Continue to maintain and expand access to outdoor recreation in accordance with countywide goal OR-1 and associated policies on page 52.

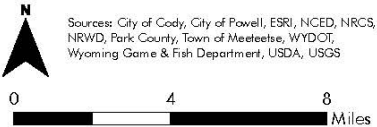
**CP-10: Powell Municipal Airport**

Maintain the safety and viability of the Powell Municipal Airport by enforcing regulations that prevent the creation of obstructions to airport operations, compromise the safe and efficient operations of the airport, or endanger the lives and property of nearby landowners. Coordinate future land use decisions in the vicinity of the airport with the City of Powell to support the implementation of master planning efforts in the area.

### Land Suitability: Cody-Powell Rural



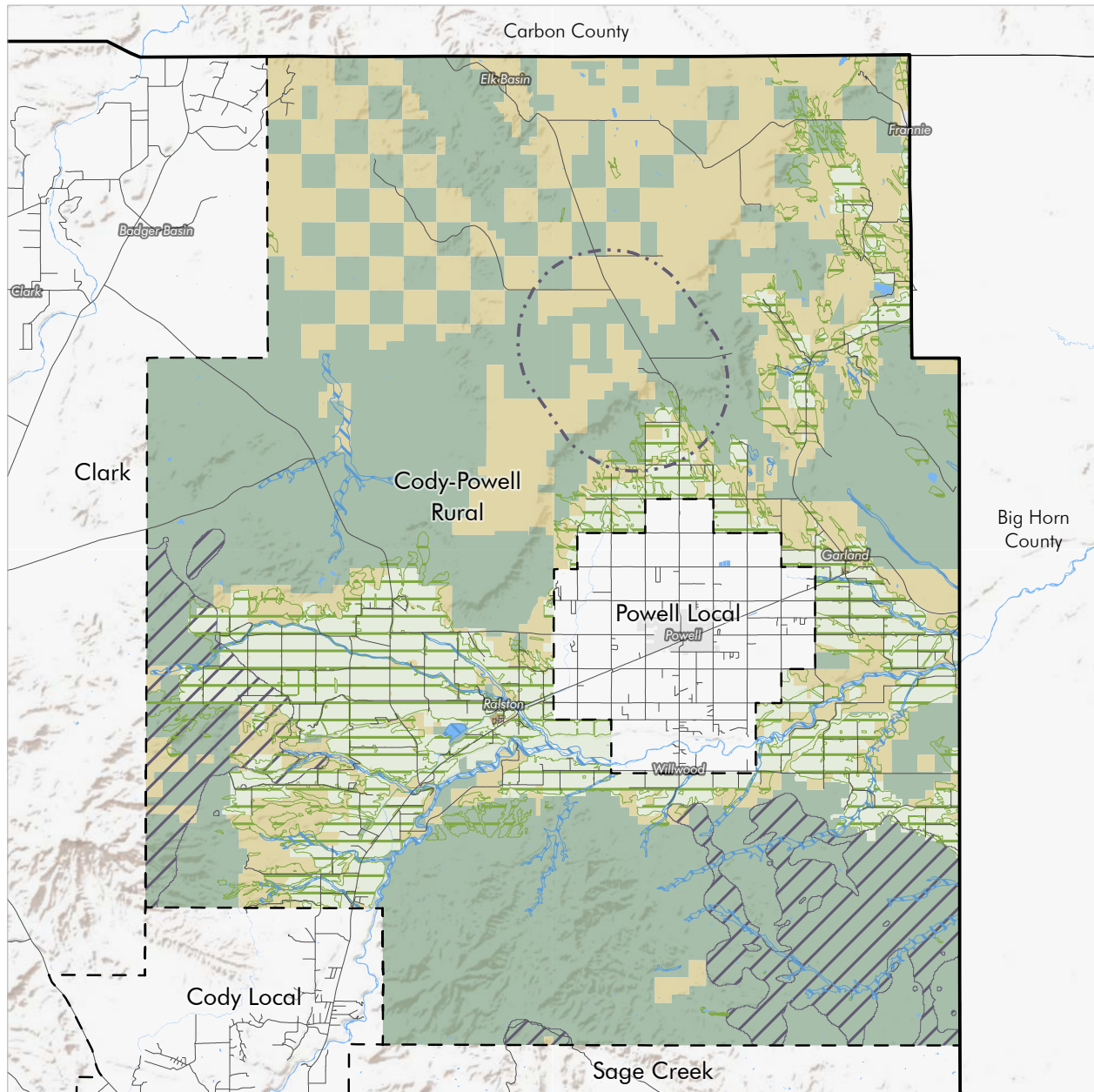
- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Suitability Ranking</b>  | <b>Other</b>   |
| <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #cccccc; border: 1px solid black;"></span> Prohibitive         | <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; border: 2px dashed black;"></span> Planning Area  |
| <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #666666; border: 1px solid black;"></span> Least Suitable      | <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; border: 1px solid black;"></span> County Boundary |
| <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #add8e6; border: 1px solid black;"></span> Marginally Suitable | <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; border-bottom: 1px solid black;"></span> Road     |
| <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #ffff00; border: 1px solid black;"></span> Moderately Suitable |  |
| <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #90ee90; border: 1px solid black;"></span> Suitable            |  |
| <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #3cb371; border: 1px solid black;"></span> Highly Suitable     |  |



Sources: City of Cody, City of Powell, ESRI, NCED, NRCS, NRWD, Park County, Town of Meeteetse, WYDOT, Wyoming Game & Fish Department, USDA, USGS



### Future Land Use: Cody-Powell Rural



#### Future Land Use

##### Rural Areas

- Agriculture
- Ranch/Rangeland
- Resource Management/Recreation
- Rural Communities

##### Developed/Developing Areas

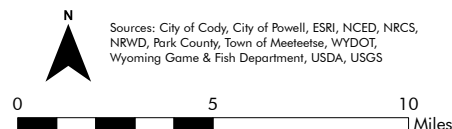
- Rural Residential
- Urban Residential
- Commercial
- Industrial

##### Priority Conservation Areas

- Agricultural Overlay
- Big Game Use Overlay

##### Other

- Special Flood Hazard Area
- Airport Overlay
- Planning Area
- County Boundary
- Road



Sources: City of Cody, City of Powell, ESRI, NCEd, NRCS, NRWD, Park County, Town of Meetetse, WYDOT, Wyoming Game & Fish Department, USDA, USGS





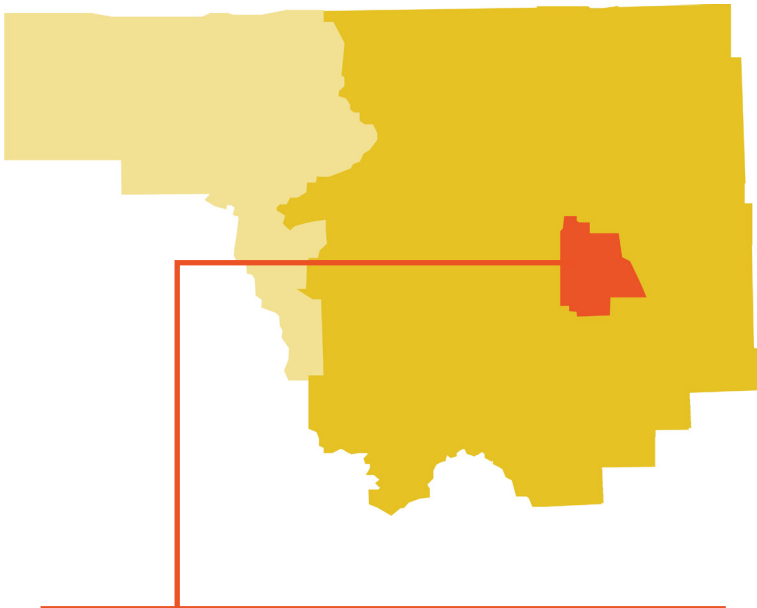
## LOWER SOUTH FORK PLANNING AREA

### LOCATION AND CONTEXT

The Lower South Fork Planning Area (“Lower South Fork Area”) encompasses a 140.1-square mile area south of Cody and west of WY 120 (Meeteetse Highway). This planning area is defined on the north by Cedar Mountain and includes the southeast quadrant of the Buffalo Bill Reservoir, which is the largest reservoir in Park County. This reservoir allows for fishing, boating, camping, and other outdoor activities in the area.

The northwest corner of the Lower South Fork Area is the only portion that is densely populated, which is also where most established services, although limited, are located. The area has been a popular location for subdivisions and development, in part due to proximity to Cody, Buffalo Bill Reservoir, and an abundance of wildlife.

The remainder of the Lower South Fork Area is not accessible from the populated northwest corner and made up of a mixture of public lands and large land holdings—generally accessed via WY 120. One of the largest property owners is Hoodoo Land Holdings.



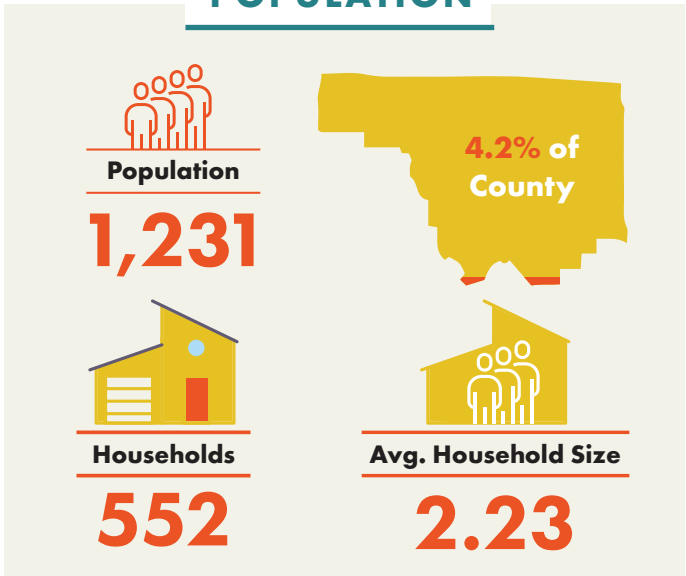
**140.1 SQ MILES**

**2% OF COUNTY**

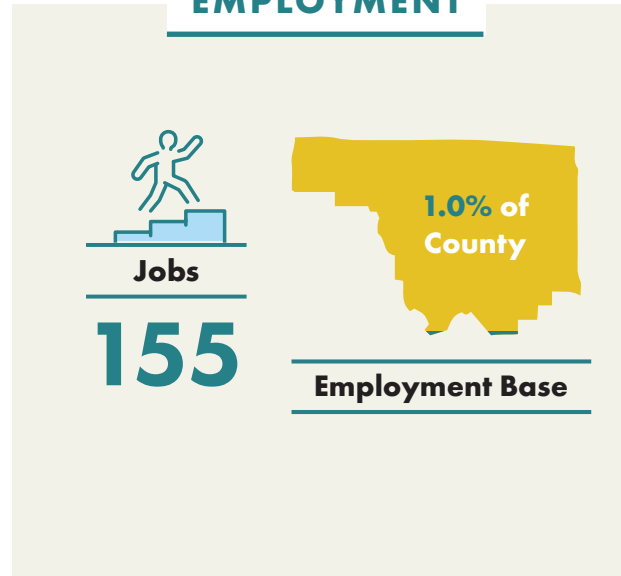
Policy guidance provided for the Lower South Fork Area supplements the countywide goals and policies outlined in Chapter 2, and the countywide Growth Framework in Chapter 3. Direct cross-references are provided where applicable.

# LOWER SOUTH FORK AREA AT A GLANCE

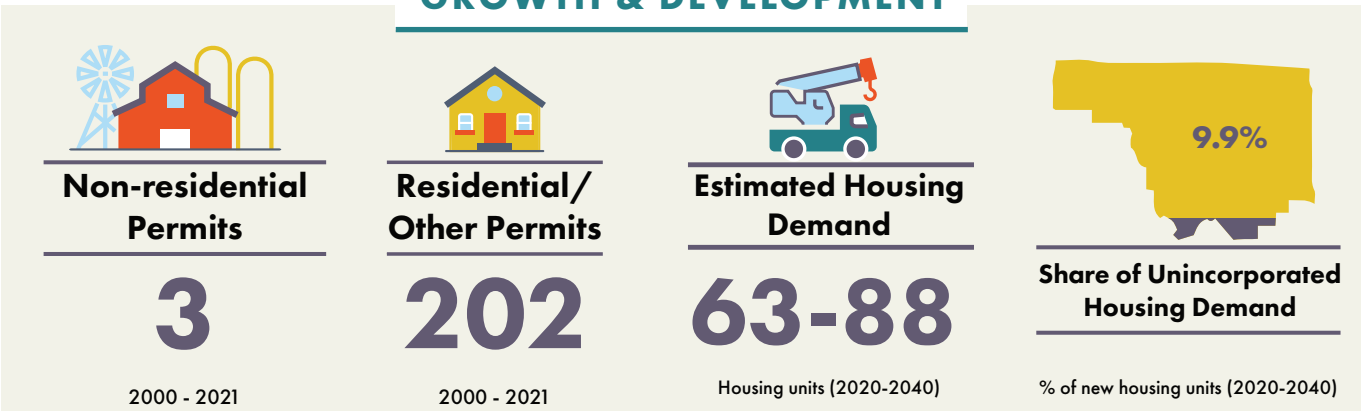
## POPULATION



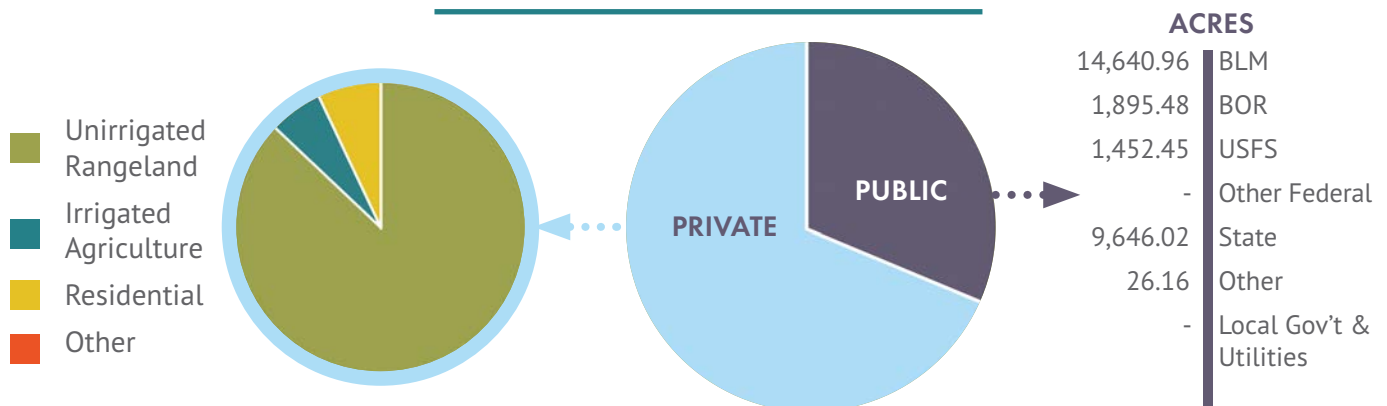
## EMPLOYMENT



## GROWTH & DEVELOPMENT



## LAND USE & OWNERSHIP



Sources: Population and Employment (ESRI Business Analyst, 2021 estimates); Permits (Park County); Housing Demand Estimates (Economic & Planning Systems); Land Use & Ownership (Park County Assessor).



## EXISTING CONDITIONS

### Economy

**Agriculture and Ranching.** Agriculture and ranching are prevalent in the Lower South Fork Area with about 10,619 acres of high-value agricultural land as of 2022 (11.8% of all land in the Lower South Fork Area). Irrigated agriculture is generally concentrated in the northwest corner of the planning area. Prevalent crops include alfalfa, barley, dry beans, and other hay, but corn and other crops are also grown on a limited basis. Non-irrigated rangelands encompass a majority of the remaining privately held land in the Lower South Fork Area and are used primarily for cattle and other livestock production. Many private landowners have grazing allotments on adjoining Bureau of Land Management (BLM) lands.

**Recreation and Tourism.** Recreation and tourism activities in the Lower South Fork Area are centered around Buffalo Bill Reservoir and State Park, which includes a boat launch, developed campsites, trails, parking, and day use areas.

Vacation rentals are also available in residential areas close to the Reservoir.

### Historic and Cultural Resources

There are no historic and cultural resources listed for the Lower South Fork Area on the National Register of Historic Places.

### Infrastructure and Services

**Water and Wastewater.** The Northwest Rural Water District (NRWD) serves development in portions of the northwest corner of the Lower South Fork Area—south of Buffalo Bill Reservoir. Development that falls outside NRWD’s service area relies on on-site wells. Central wastewater service is not available in this planning area; as such, property owners rely on septic systems for domestic wastewater disposal.

**Irrigation Districts.** Two irrigation districts serve the Lower South Fork Area: Lakeview and Cody Canal. The Lakeview Irrigation District (LID) covers 11,763 acres distributed between the Middle South Fork Area and Lower

South Fork Area. The Cody Canal Irrigation District covers 20,434 acres in total, most of which lies in the Cody Local Area. Many other properties are irrigated via streams and private irrigation ditches that are not owned or maintained by an irrigation district.

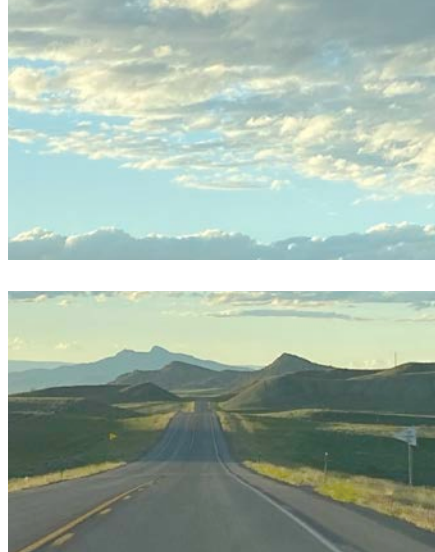
### Environmentally Sensitive/Constrained Areas

#### **Special Flood Hazard Areas.**

Flood-prone areas are concentrated along the South Fork of the Shoshone River and along Diamond Creek, and are subject to additional permitting requirements.

**Conservation Easements.** There are no conservation easements in place in the Lower South Fork Area according to the National Conservation Easement Database (NCED).

**Crucial Wildlife Habitat.** Roughly the southern half of the planning area provides crucial habitat for elk and mule deer. The area



also includes a Priority Habitat Management Area (PHMA) for the greater sage-grouse.

### Zoning

Current zoning in the Lower South Fork Area is limited to three rural districts, General Rural 35-Acre (GR-35), General Rural 20-Acre (GR-20), and General Rural 5-Acre (GR-5). These districts establish minimum average lot sizes for residential development, promote the retention of open space, agricultural land, wildlife and riparian habitat, and scenic areas, and prevent development on unstable geologic features. Areas designated as GR-5 are limited to the northwest corner of the planning area and feature some development at even greater densities where subdivisions are served by NRWD.

### LAND USE SUITABILITY

The Lower South Fork Area contains mostly prohibitive, least suitable, and marginally suitable land, influenced by public lands, environmental constraints, and a lack of infrastructure. Areas

designated as moderately suitable and suitable are in the northwest corner of the planning area, with a few moderately suitable areas adjacent to WY 120 on the eastern edge of the Lower South Fork Area.

### FUTURE LAND USE

The Lower South Fork Area features two unique environments—irrigated agricultural lands and higher density residential development in the northwest corner of the planning area and the remaining portion made up of mostly rangeland and public lands. Due to less suitable land for development and a large, established landowner (Hoodoo Ranch) covering much of the planning area, most of the Lower South Fork Area is designated as Ranch/Rangeland and is unlikely to see a shift from the status quo.

The northwest portion of the Lower South Fork Area, however, is designated as Rural Residential—in part due to proximity to essential infrastructure like domestic water and maintained roads.

### Land Use Guidelines

The following land use guidelines reflect the preferences of the constituents of the Lower South Fork Area, as expressed through the Plan Park County process, and the policy guidance and planning practices best suited to achieve those desires.

#### LS-1: Rural Areas

Accommodate growth in Rural Areas areas that reflects infrastructure, groundwater, and suitability limitations. Encourage the conservation of larger, contiguous tracts of land by considering a minimum average lot size of at least 20 acres and allowing for smaller lot sizes in conjunction with the land use guidelines on page 72 and 73.



### **LS-2: Priority Conservation Areas**

Work with landowners, agricultural operators, wildlife managers, and conservation organizations to protect the viability and stability of agricultural operations and wildlife habitat in Priority Conservation Areas while continuing to accommodate opportunities for the subdivision of land. Consider a minimum lot size of 20 to 35 acres within the Agricultural Overlay but allow for smaller lot sizes in conjunction with the land use guidelines for Rural Areas and Priority Conservation Areas in Chapter 2.

[See also, pages 72, 73, 82, and 84].

### **LS-3: Rural Residential**

Encourage the efficient use of NRWD infrastructure in developed/developing Rural Residential areas and reduce development pressure elsewhere in the Lower, Middle, and Upper South Fork planning areas by allowing for smaller lot sizes (less than five acres) in conjunction with the use of conservation subdivisions and

lot size averaging, and encouraging “infill” on smaller, isolated tracts of agricultural land.

[See also, Conservation Subdivisions, page 46].

### **LS-4: Land Uses**

Allow for a range of supporting land uses in northwest Lower South Fork Area to support agricultural production, processing, and sales, and allow area residents to operate home occupations and short-term rentals. Discourage the establishment of industries and businesses that are primarily region-serving or cause significant traffic impacts.

### **LS-5: Short-term Rentals**

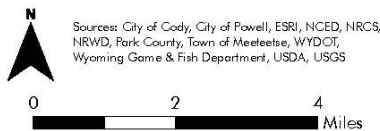
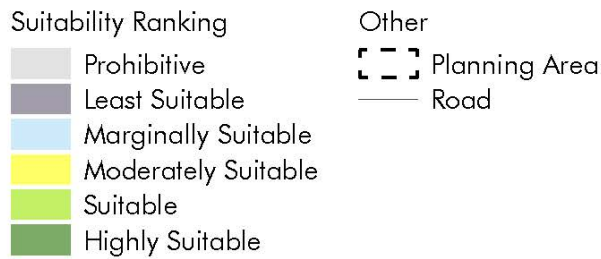
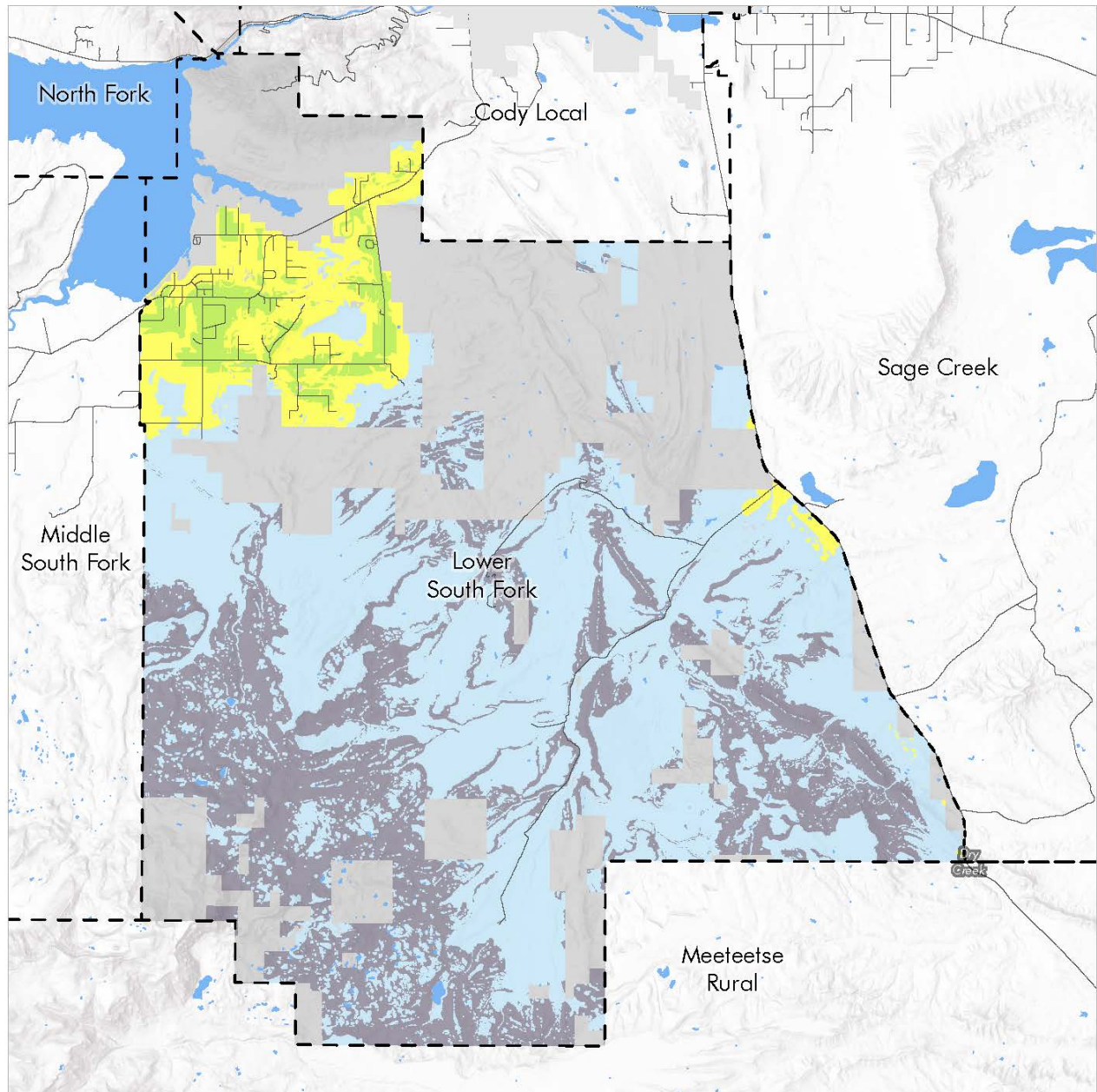
Continue to allow opportunities for short-term rentals in accordance with adopted regulations and countywide policy HO-1.4 on page 50.

### **LS-6: Recreation and Public Lands Access**

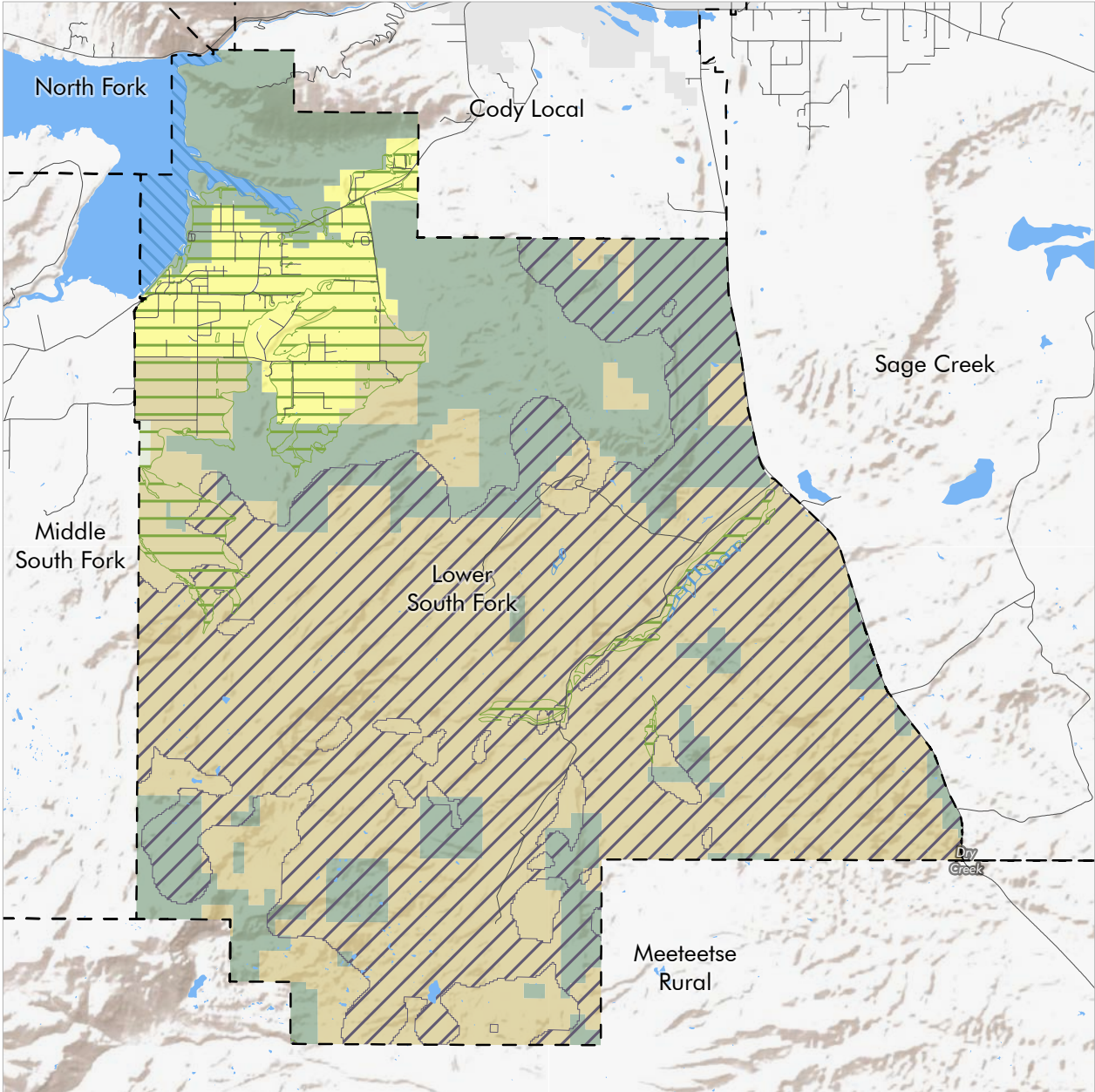
Continue to maintain and expand access to outdoor recreation in accordance with countywide goal OR-1 and associated policies on page 52.



### Land Suitability: Lower South Fork



**Future Land Use: Lower South Fork**

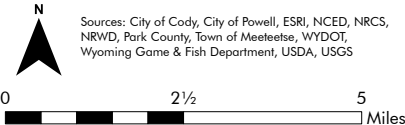


**Future Land Use**

- Rural Areas
  - Agriculture
  - Ranch/Rangeland
  - Resource Management/Recreation
  - Rural Communities
- Developed/Developing Areas
  - Rural Residential
  - Urban Residential
  - Commercial
  - Industrial

- Priority Conservation Areas
  - Agricultural Overlay
  - Big Game Use Overlay

- Other
  - Special Flood Hazard Area
  - Planning Area
  - Road





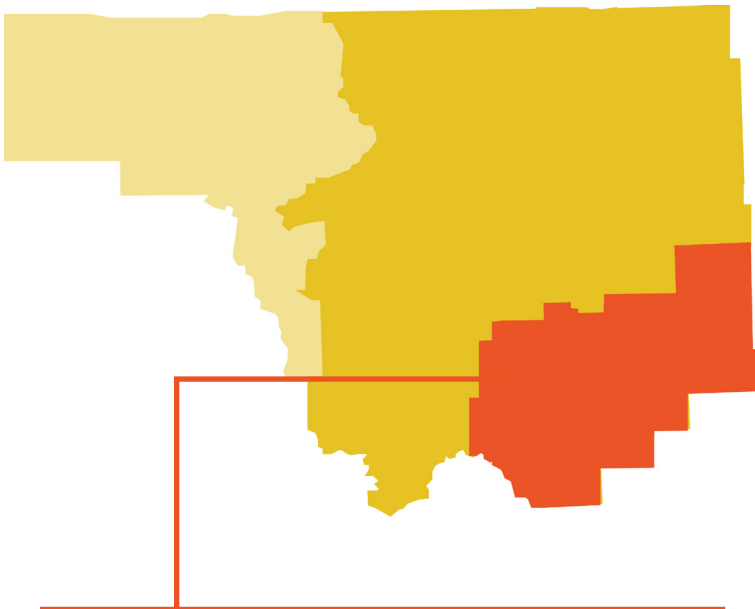
**MEETEETSE  
RURAL  
PLANNING AREA**

**LOCATION AND CONTEXT**

The Meeteetse Rural Area Planning (“Meeteetse Rural Area”) encompasses 1,228 square miles in southeastern Park County—south of the Shoshone River and Sage Creek, but not including the Town of Meeteetse. WY 120 (Meeteetse Highway) provides access to the area from Cody, and south to neighboring Hot Springs County.

Public lands in the Meeteetse Rural Area provide many opportunities for outdoor activities and wildlife-viewing. While some rural residential development exists near the Town of Meeteetse and sporadically throughout the area, most private lands in the Meeteetse Rural Area are used for agriculture and ranching. Major private landholdings include portions of the Pitchfork and Hoodoo ranches.

The Meeteetse Rural Area is also known for its energy development. The Town of Meeteetse’s historic old west downtown provides some local services, making it a destination for area residents and visitors.



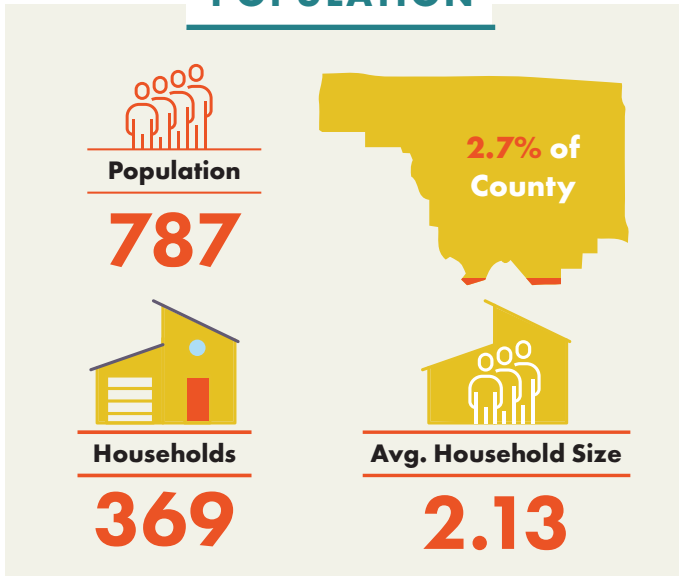
**1,228 SQ MILES**

**17.6% OF COUNTY**

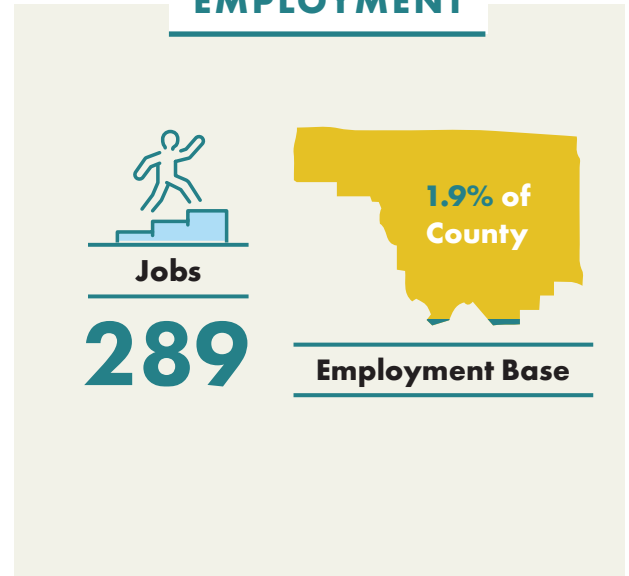
Policy guidance provided for the Meeteetse Rural Area supplements the countywide goals and policies outlined in Chapter 2, and the countywide Growth Framework in Chapter 3. Direct cross-references are provided where applicable.

## MEETEETSE RURAL AREA AT A GLANCE<sup>8</sup>

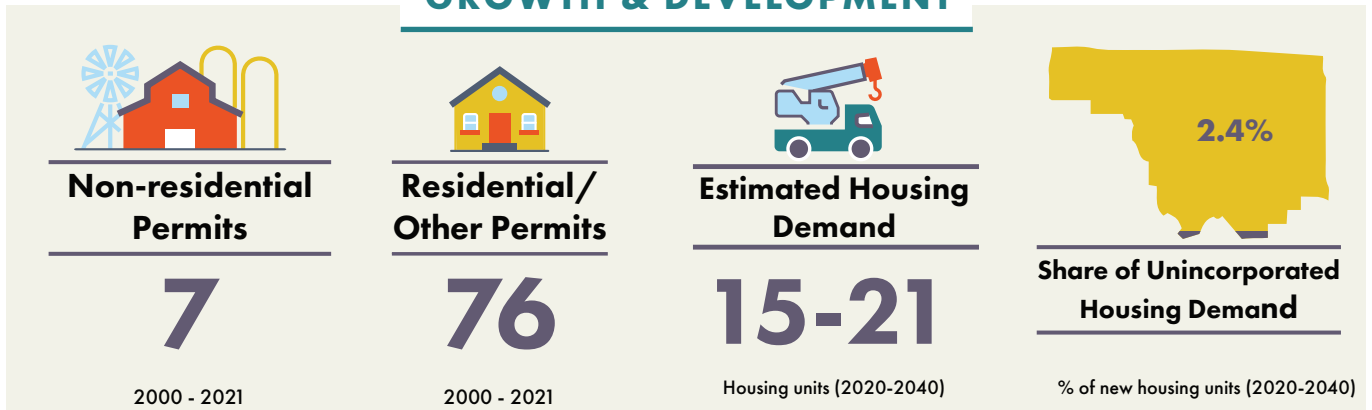
### POPULATION



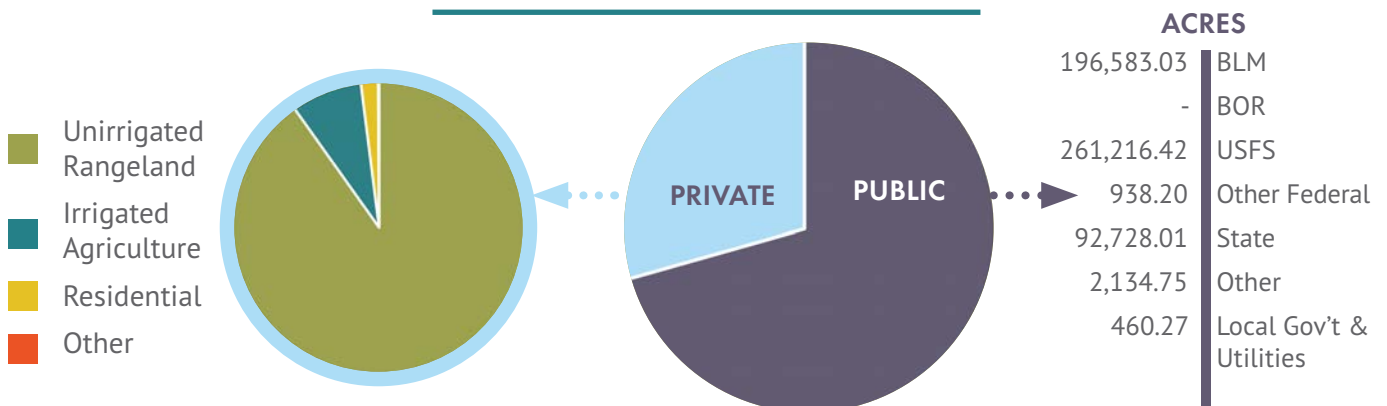
### EMPLOYMENT



### GROWTH & DEVELOPMENT



### LAND USE & OWNERSHIP



Sources: Population and Employment (ESRI Business Analyst, 2021 estimates); Permits (Park County); Housing Demand Estimates (Economic & Planning Systems); Land Use & Ownership (Park County Assessor).



## EXISTING CONDITIONS

### Economy

**Agriculture and Ranching.** Agriculture and ranching are prevalent in the Meeteetse Rural Area with about 36,851 acres of high-value agricultural land as of 2022 (4.7% of all land in the Meeteetse Rural Area). Irrigated agricultural lands are concentrated primarily along the Greybull River. Prominent crops include alfalfa and other hay. Non-irrigated rangelands encompass a majority of the remaining privately-held land in the Meeteetse Rural Area and are used primarily for cattle and other livestock production. Many private landowners have grazing allotments on adjoining Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and U.S. Forest Service (USFS) lands.

**Recreation and Tourism.** The Meeteetse Rural Area is a popular location for hunting, fishing, biking, camping, snowmobiling, ATViing, hiking, and more. The Upper and Lower Sunshine Reservoirs are popular fishing and wildlife-viewing destinations year-round. While some trailheads

and campsites exist at the west end of the Meeteetse Rural Area, outdoor recreation opportunities on BLM lands are generally primitive and unconfined.

### Historic and Cultural Resources

**Centennial Farms and Ranches.** Three family ranches in the Meeteetse Rural Area have been recognized as part of the State of Wyoming's Centennial Farm and Ranch program, which honors families who have owned and operated the same farm or ranch for 100 years or more. These include the PAR Ranch, Webster Ranch, Inc., both recognized in 2006, and the 91 Ranch, recognized in 2007. Photographs and histories of each ranch—as told by the families who continue to own and operate these farms and ranches—are documented in the Centennial Farm and Ranch Yearbooks available online through the Wyoming State Historic Preservation Office.<sup>9</sup>

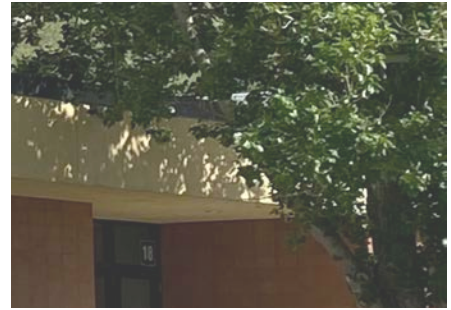
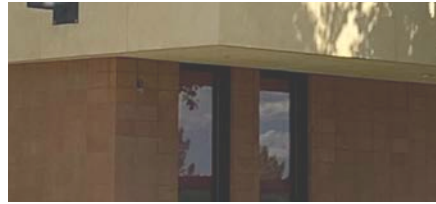
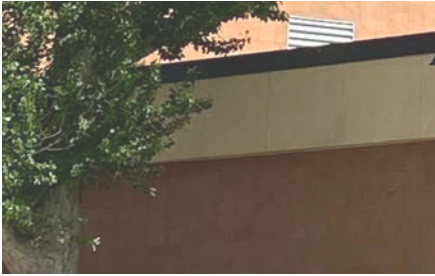
The **First National Bank of Meeteetse**, which was built in 1901 and listed to the National

Register in 1990, is the most notable historic resource in the Meeteetse Rural Area. The bank is now used as a museum and serves as a cornerstone of the Town's downtown commercial district.<sup>10</sup>

### Infrastructure and Services

**Water and Wastewater.** Central water and wastewater service is not available in this planning area, outside of the Town of Meeteetse's service area; as such, property owners rely on on-site wells and septic systems.

**Irrigation Districts.** The Greybull Valley Irrigation District (GVID) serves the Meeteetse Rural Area. The GVID encompasses a service area of 62,289 acres that stretches along the Greybull River from the Wood River area east to the Town of Greybull in neighboring Big Horn County. Many other properties are irrigated via streams and private irrigation ditches that are not owned or maintained by an irrigation district.



**Environmentally Sensitive/  
Constrained Areas**

**Conservation Easements.** The Meeteetse Rural Area has the most land held in conservation easements of any planning area—totaling almost 30,000 acres—according to the National Conservation Easement Database (NCED). Notable conservation easements in the Meeteetse Rural Area include 14,000 acres held by the Wyoming Stock Growers Land Trust and the Greybull River Basin Easement (almost 3,000 acres) between the Upper Sunshine Reservoir and Lower Sunshine Reservoir.

**Special Flood Hazard Area.** Flood-prone land is concentrated along the Greybull River, Meeteetse Creek, Wood River, and other tributaries, and are subject to additional permitting requirements.

**Washakie Wilderness.** The Washakie Wilderness encompasses more than 704,274 acres within the Shoshone National Forest, a portion of which is located along the western edge of the Meeteetse Rural Area. This

rugged and remote area is notable for its many high peaks, unusual geologic formations, petrified remains of forests, and abundant wildlife.<sup>11</sup>

**Zoning**

All private land in the Meeteetse Rural Area is zoned General Rural Meeteetse (GR-M). A one-acre minimum lot size is required for lots with on-site septic systems. Otherwise, no other minimum lot sizes are specified, and all uses are potentially allowed, subject to review for compliance with pre-established performance standards covering such topics as waste disposal, utilities, traffic access, and parking.

**LAND USE SUITABILITY**

Development suitability in the Meeteetse Rural Area is generally low due to large areas of state and federal lands, environmental and topographic constraints, and lack of infrastructure. Suitable and moderately suitable areas are generally located near the Town of Meeteetse and along river valleys.

**FUTURE LAND USE**

Although much of the Meeteetse Rural Area is not suitable for higher density development, the few areas where it is most suitable—the Greybull River Valley and Wood River Valley—are also ideal for their current predominant use—production agriculture. As a result, much of the Meeteetse Rural Area is designated as either Ranch/Rangeland or Agriculture. Where adequate infrastructure could be made available (likely within the Town of Meeteetse Coordinated Planning Area) future land uses should reflect the policies contained in the [Town of Meeteetse Master Plan](#).

**Land Use Guidelines**

The following land use guidelines reflect the preferences of the constituents of the Meeteetse Rural Area, as expressed through the Plan Park County process, the [Town of Meeteetse Master Plan](#), and the policy guidance and planning practices best suited to achieve those desires.



### MR-1: Rural Areas

Accommodate growth in Rural Areas areas that reflects infrastructure, groundwater, and suitability limitations. Encourage the conservation of larger, contiguous tracts of land by considering a minimum average lot size of at least 20 acres and allowing for smaller lot sizes in conjunction with the land use guidelines on page 72 and 73.

### MR-2: Priority Conservation Areas

Work with landowners, agricultural operators, wildlife managers, and conservation organizations to protect the viability and stability of agricultural operations and wildlife habitat in Priority Conservation Areas while continuing to accommodate opportunities for the subdivision of land. Consider a minimum lot size of 20 to 35 acres within the Agricultural Overlay but allow for smaller lot sizes in conjunction with the land use guidelines for Rural Areas and Priority Conservation Areas in Chapter 2.

[See also, pages 72, 73, 82, and 84].

### MR-3: Rural Residential

Accommodate Rural Residential development on lots of one acre or more in designated areas north, west, and south of the Town of Meeteetse, as identified in the Town of Meeteetse Master Plan. Subdivisions east of the Greybull River should be designed to minimize street and traffic impacts on the existing Town of Meeteetse street system. These areas are intended to be residential; however, limited commercial development may be allowed in accordance with Park County's Development Standards and Regulations.

### MR-4: Coordinated Planning Area

Support the intensification and annexation of Coordinated Planning Areas in accordance with the [Town of Meeteetse Master Plan](#). Discourage large-lot subdivisions or other uses that would fragment or create the potential

for land-use conflicts in areas planned for future expansion by the Town of Meeteetse. Continue to coordinate the review of development proposals in Coordinated Planning Areas with the Town of Meeteetse to ensure that future development supports Town goals and policies.

[See also, [Town of Meeteetse Master Plan](#), page 25, [Future Land Use Map](#) and pages 27-29, [One-Mile Planning Jurisdiction and Beyond the One-Mile Jurisdiction](#)].



**MR-5: Land Uses**

Allow a wide range of uses in the Meeteetse Area to provide residents and property owners with economic opportunity, support housing access and affordability, and to sustain the greater Meeteetse community. Accommodate smaller, more affordable dwelling units, home occupations, employee housing, light industry, community-serving commercial businesses, agriculture-supporting services, and tourism and recreation-based businesses, if impacts on neighbors and the rural way of life in the Meeteetse Area are limited and/or can be mitigated.

**MR-6: Short-term Rentals**

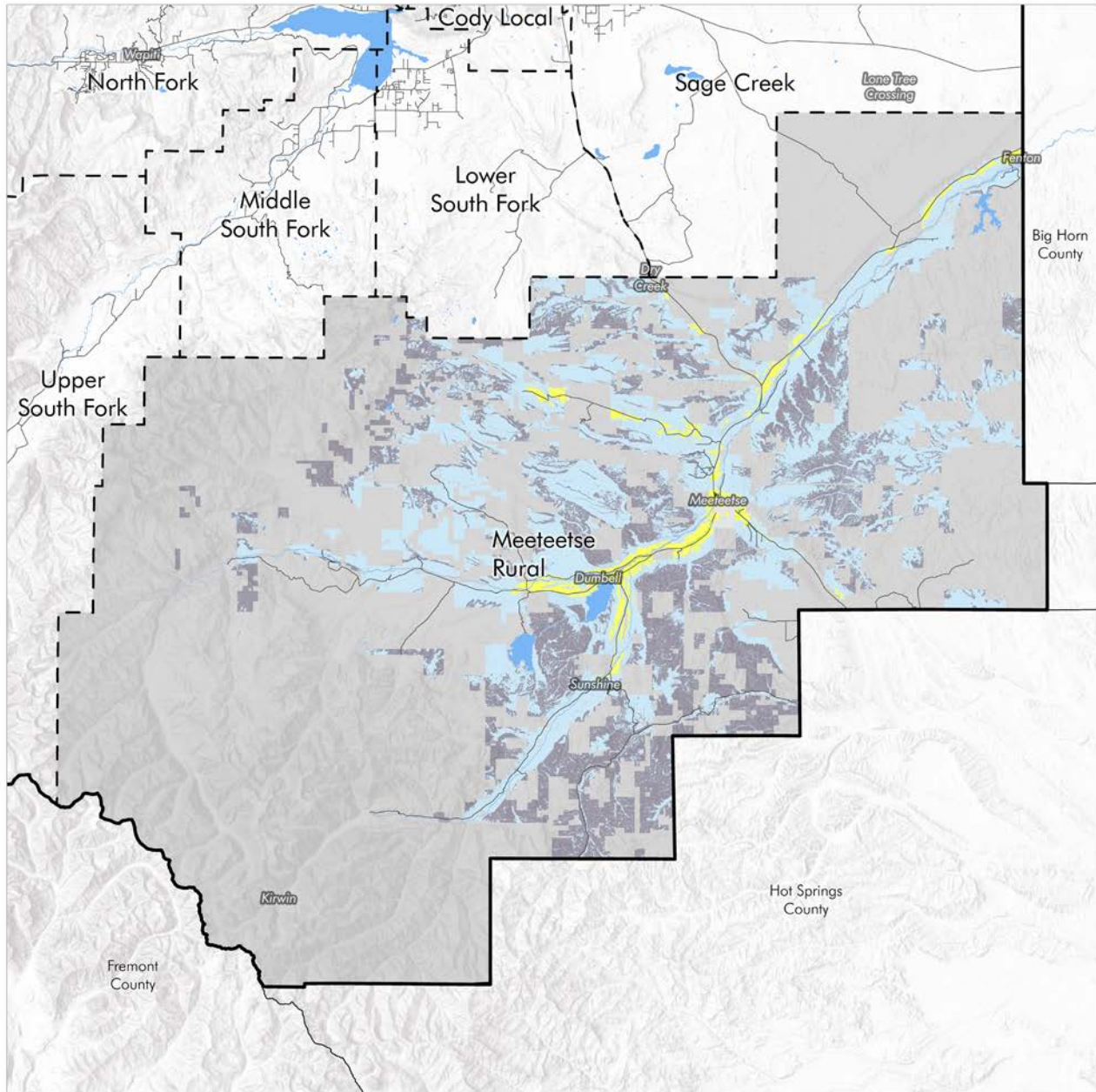
Explore limitations on the number, type, and operations of short-term rentals in the Meeteetse Area, including conditions of approval (e.g., occupancy limits, parking requirements, duration of stay standards, ownership expectations) that minimize impacts on the community.

**MR-7: Recreation and Public Lands Access**

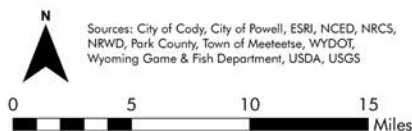
Continue to maintain and expand access to outdoor recreation in accordance with countywide goal OR-1 and associated policies on page 52.



### Future Land Use: Meeteetse Rural



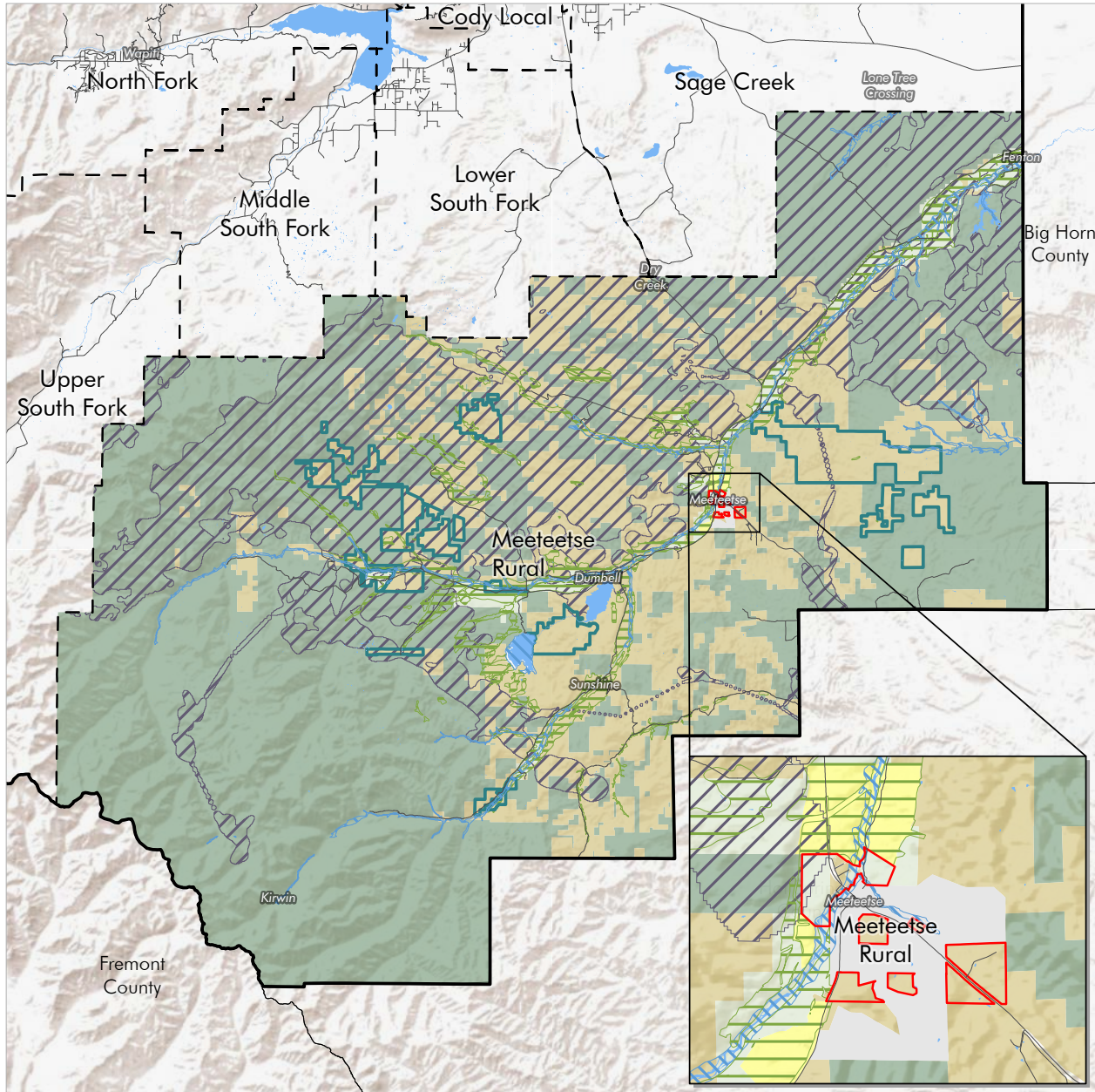
- |                            |                   |
|----------------------------|-------------------|
| <b>Suitability Ranking</b> | <b>Other</b>      |
| Prohibitive                | Incorporated Area |
| Least Suitable             | Planning Area     |
| Marginally Suitable        | County Boundary   |
| Moderately Suitable        | Road              |
| Suitable                   |                   |
| Highly Suitable            |                   |



Sources: City of Cody, City of Powell, ESRI, NCEd, NRCS, NRWD, Park County, Town of Meeteetse, WYDOT, Wyoming Game & Fish Department, USDA, USGS



### Future Land Use: Meeteetse Rural



#### Future Land Use

##### Rural Areas

- Agriculture
- Ranch/Rangeland
- Resource Management/Recreation
- Rural Communities

##### Developed/Developing Areas

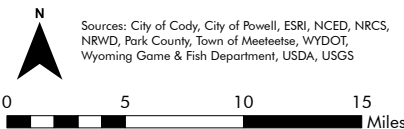
- Rural Residential
- Urban Residential
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Coordinated Planning Area

##### Priority Conservation Areas

- Agricultural Overlay
- Big Game Use Overlay
- Conservation Easement

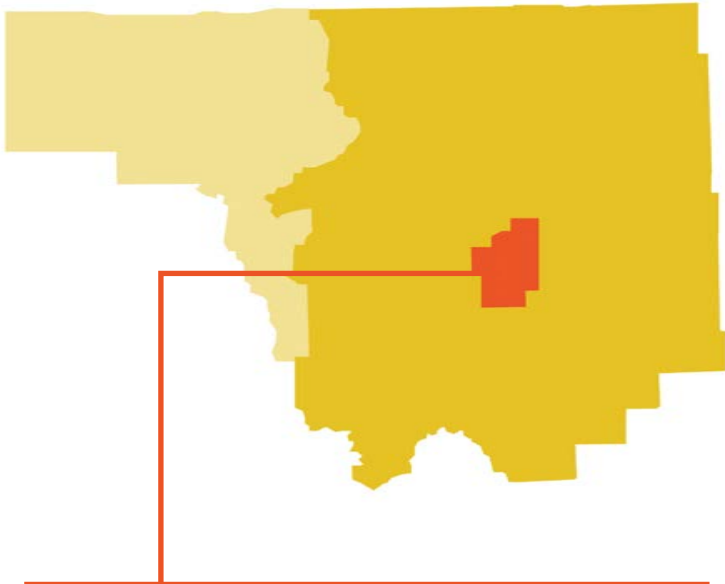
##### Other

- Special Flood Hazard Area
- Incorporated Area
- Planning Area
- County Boundary
- Road





**MIDDLE SOUTH FORK PLANNING AREA**



**121.6 SQ MILES**

**1.7% OF COUNTY**

**LOCATION AND CONTEXT**

The Middle South Fork Planning Area (“Middle South Fork Area”) encompasses 121.6 square miles southwest of the City of Cody and Buffalo Bill Reservoir. Large-lot residential development and agricultural uses are concentrated along the South Fork of the Shoshone River, as it meanders toward the Reservoir. Southfork Road provides dead-end access to the area from Cody. The area has limited services.

Ranching and hay production are prevalent and two of the largest ranches in Park County—T E Ranch and Hoodoo Ranch—have significant landholdings in the area. Outdoor recreation is also popular. Buffalo Bill Reservoir is a popular destination for fishing, boating, camping, ATVing, and hiking, along with access to local landmark, Carter Mountain, a destination for climbing, hiking, and mountain biking.

Policy guidance provided for the Middle South Fork Area supplements the countywide goals and policies outlined in Chapter 2, and the countywide Growth Framework in Chapter 3. Direct cross-references are provided where applicable.

## MIDDLE SOUTH FORK AREA AT A GLANCE

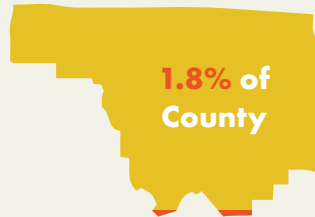
### POPULATION



**533**



**238**

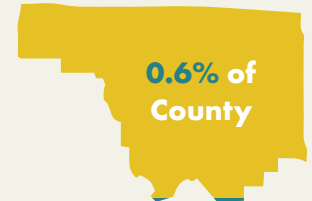


**2.24**

### EMPLOYMENT



**87**



**Employment Base**

### GROWTH & DEVELOPMENT



**Non-residential Permits**

**1**

2000 - 2021



**Residential/ Other Permits**

**76**

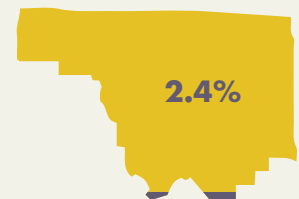
2000 - 2021



**Estimated Housing Demand**

**15-21**

Housing units (2020-2040)

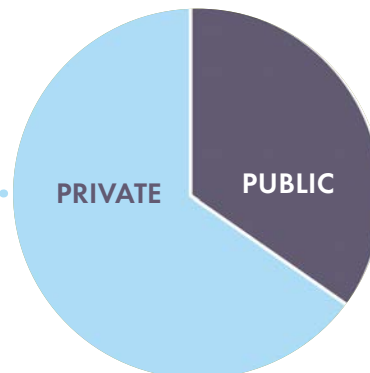
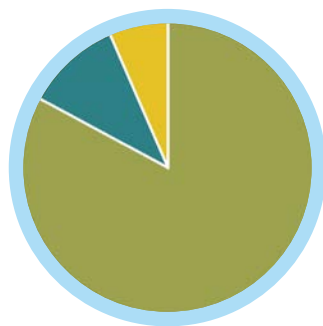


**Share of Unincorporated Housing Demand**

% of new housing units (2020-2040)

### LAND USE & OWNERSHIP

- Unirrigated Rangeland
- Irrigated Agriculture
- Residential
- Other



ACRES	
7,253.65	BLM
769.90	BOR
13,318.34	USFS
-	Other Federal
5,101.04	State
62.53	Other
-	Local Gov't & Utilities

Sources: Population and Employment (ESRI Business Analyst, 2021 estimates); Permits (Park County); Housing Demand Estimates (Economic & Planning Systems); Land Use & Ownership (Park County Assessor).



## EXISTING CONDITIONS

### Economy

**Agriculture and Ranching.** Agriculture and ranching are prevalent in the Middle South Fork Area with about 11,200 acres of high-value agricultural land as of 2022 (14.4% of all land in the Middle South Fork Area). Irrigated agricultural lands are concentrated along the South Fork of the Shoshone River southwest of Buffalo Bill Reservoir. Prevalent crops include alfalfa, barley, and non-alfalfa hay, but corn and other crops are also grown on a limited basis. Non-irrigated rangeland makes up a majority of the remaining privately held land in the Middle South Fork Area and is used primarily for cattle and other livestock production. Many private landowners have grazing allotments on adjoining Bureau of Land Management (BLM) lands.

**Recreation and Tourism.** Recreation and tourism activities in the Middle South Fork Area are centered around Buffalo Bill Reservoir and State Park and U.S. Forest Service (USFS) access.

Vacation rentals are also available in residential areas close to the Reservoir.

### Historic and Cultural Resources

There are no historic and cultural resources listed for the Middle South Fork Area on the National Register of Historic Places.

### Infrastructure and Services

**Water and Wastewater.** The Middle South Fork Area does not have access to municipal or central water or wastewater service; as such, property owners rely on wells for domestic water and septic systems for domestic wastewater disposal.

**Irrigation Districts.** Two irrigation districts serve the Middle South Fork Area: Lakeview and Cody Canal. The Lakeview Irrigation District (LID) covers 11,763 acres distributed between the Middle South Fork Area and Lower South Fork Area. The Cody Canal Irrigation District (CCID) covers 20,434 acres in total, most of which lies in the Cody Local Area. Many other properties are irrigated via streams and

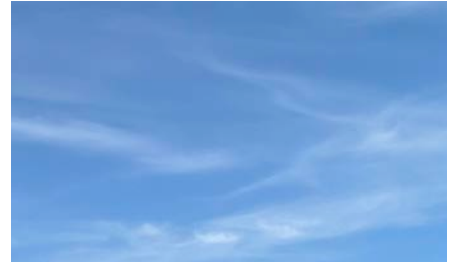
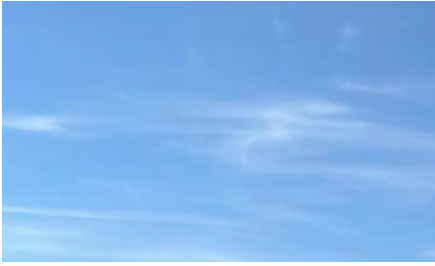
private irrigation ditches that are not owned or maintained by an irrigation district. The Wilson-McKissack Ditch is one such ditch that serves the area between Bear Creek Road and Buffalo Bill Reservoir.

### Environmentally Sensitive/Constrained Areas

**Conservation Easements.** The Middle South Fork Area has one, 244-acre conservation easement held by the Wyoming Stock Growers Land Trust according to the National Conservation Easement Database (NCED).

**Crucial Wildlife Habitat.** Agricultural lands along the South Fork of the Shoshone River provide crucial habitat for elk, mule deer, and bighorn sheep.

**Special Flood Hazard Areas.** Flood-prone areas are concentrated along the South Fork of the Shoshone River, and are subject to additional permitting requirements.



**Zoning**

Current zoning in the Middle South Fork Area is generally limited to two rural districts, General Rural 35-Acre (GR-35) and General Rural 20-Acre (GR-20). A small portion of land along the east side of Southfork Road (north of Diamond Basin Road) is designated as General Rural 5-Acre (GR-5). These districts establish minimum average lot sizes for residential development, promote the retention of open space, agricultural land, wildlife and riparian habitat, and scenic areas, and prevent development on unstable geologic features.

**LAND USE SUITABILITY**

The suitability rankings in the Middle South Fork Area are influenced by access to infrastructure, the presence of major federal and state landholdings, and environmental and topographic constraints. Areas of moderate suitability can be found along the South Fork of the Shoshone River with the

remainder of the planning area being ranked as unsuitable, least suitable or marginally suitable.

**FUTURE LAND USE**

Private land in the Middle South Fork Area is made up of two distinct geographies—the level agricultural fields of the river valley and the hilly rangeland on either side. The agricultural areas are generally irrigated and are categorized as Agriculture on the Future Land Use Map. Unirrigated private land is generally designated as Ranch/Rangeland while public lands in the Middle South Fork Area are shown as Resource Management/Recreation. These designations reflect the historic development pattern in the Middle South Fork Area that has been successful at preserving agricultural operations and the rural character of the area.

**Land Use Guidelines**

The following land use guidelines reflect the preferences of the constituents of the Middle South Fork Area, as expressed through the Plan Park County process, and

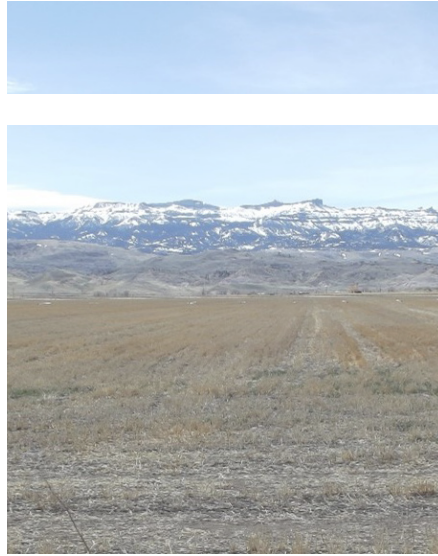
the policy guidance and planning practices best suited to achieve those desires.

**MS-1: Rural Areas**

Accommodate growth in Rural Areas areas that reflects infrastructure, groundwater, and suitability limitations. Encourage the conservation of larger, contiguous tracts of land by considering a minimum average lot size of at least 20 acres and allowing for smaller lot sizes in conjunction with the land use guidelines on page 72 and 73.

**MS-2: Priority Conservation Areas**

Work with landowners, agricultural operators, wildlife managers, and conservation organizations to protect the viability and stability of agricultural operations and wildlife habitat in Priority Conservation Areas while continuing to accommodate opportunities for the subdivision of land. Consider a minimum lot size of 20 to 35 acres within the Agricultural Overlay but allow for smaller lot sizes in conjunction with the land



use guidelines for Rural Areas and Priority Conservation Areas in Chapter 2.

[See also, pages 72, 73, 82, and 84].

**MS-3: Land Uses**

Allow a wide range of supporting uses that meet the needs of agricultural producers, including accessory agricultural production, processing, and sales, home occupations, on-site employee housing, and agriculture supporting services. Discourage commercial and industrial development as primary uses to maintain the rural character of the Middle South Fork Area.

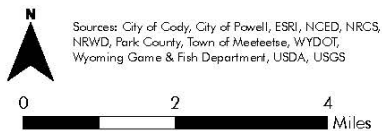
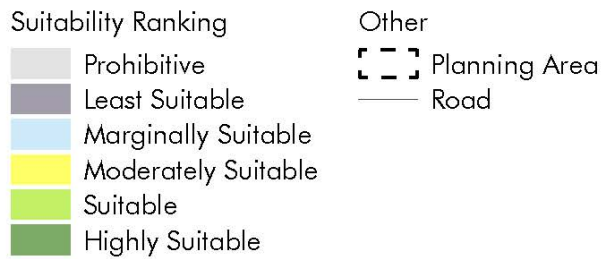
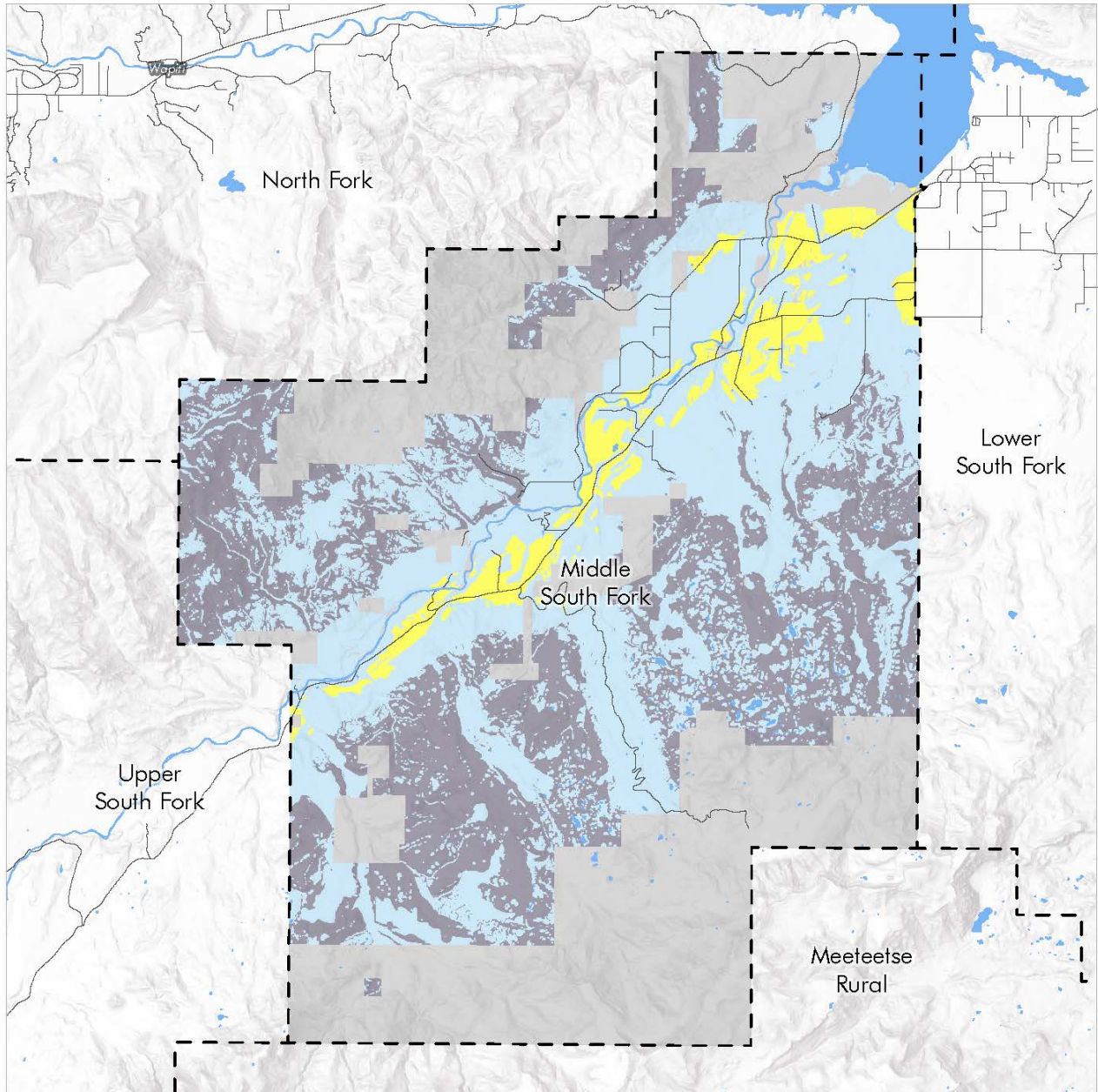
**MS-4: Short-term Rentals**

Explore potential limitations on the number, type, and operations of short-term rentals in the Middle South Fork Area, including conditions of approval (e.g., occupancy limits, parking requirements, duration of stay standards, ownership expectations) that minimize impacts on the community.

**MS-5: Recreation and Public Lands Access**

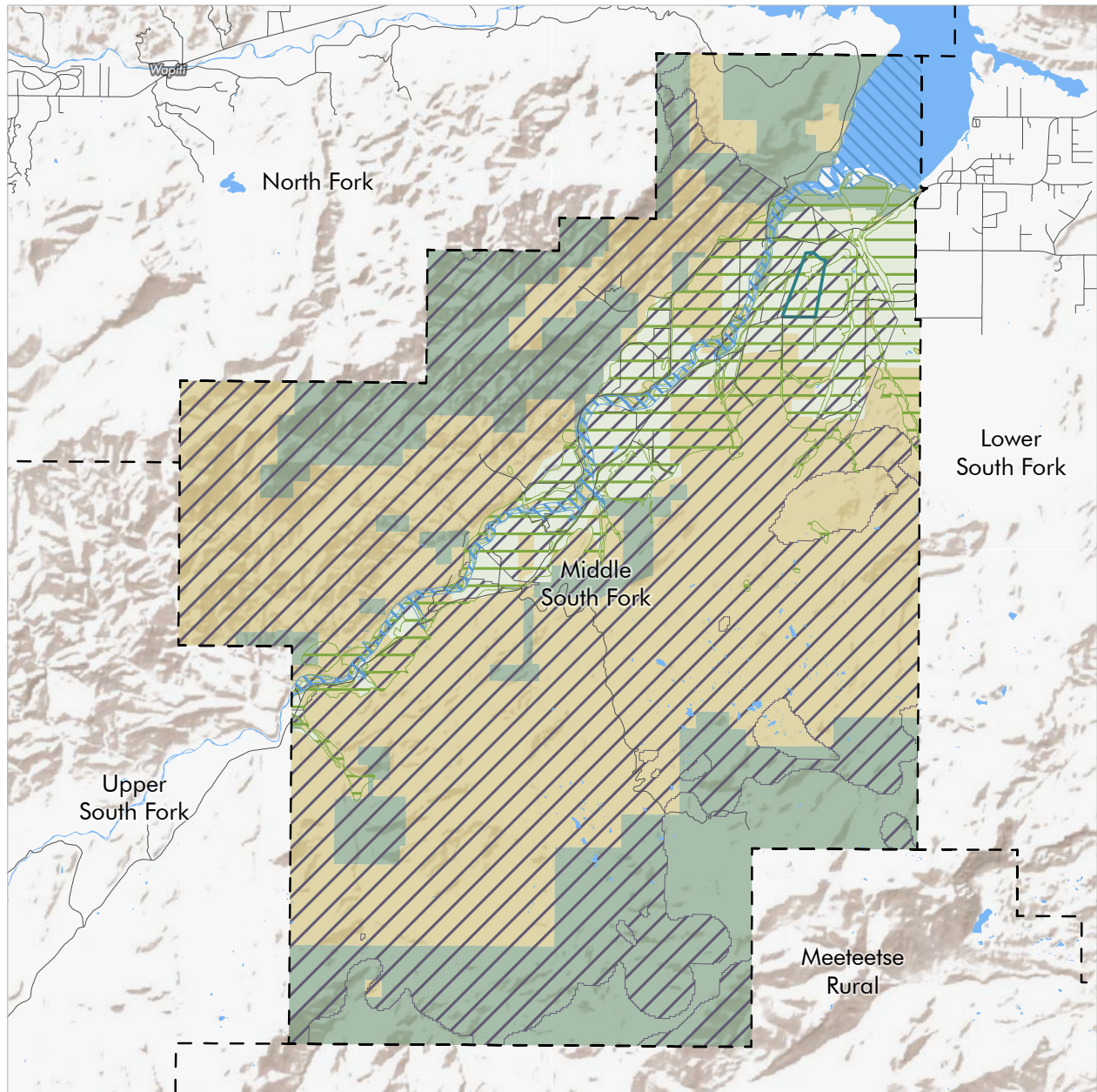
Continue to maintain and expand access to outdoor recreation in accordance with countywide goal OR-1 and associated policies on page 52.

### Land Suitability: Middle South Fork





### Future Land Use: Middle South Fork



#### Future Land Use

##### Rural Areas

- Agriculture
- Ranch/Rangeland
- Resource Management/Recreation
- Rural Communities

##### Developed/Developing Areas

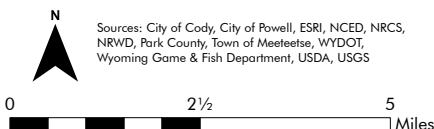
- Rural Residential
- Urban Residential
- Commercial
- Industrial

##### Priority Conservation Areas

- Agricultural Overlay
- Big Game Use Overlay
- Conservation Easement

##### Other

- Special Flood Hazard Area
- Planning Area
- Road



Sources: City of Cody, City of Powell, ESRI, NCED, NRCS, NRWD, Park County, Town of Meeteetse, WYDOT, Wyoming Game & Fish Department, USDA, USGS





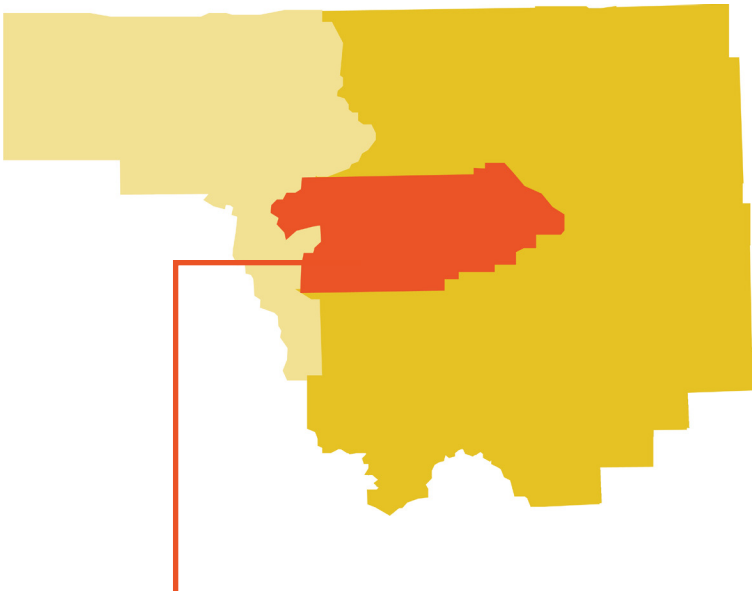
## NORTH FORK PLANNING AREA

### LOCATION AND CONTEXT

The North Fork Planning Area (“North Fork Area”) encompasses 688.7 square miles west of Cody. US 14/16/20 (North Fork Highway) serves as the primary access point into the North Fork Area, which runs approximately 50 miles west from the City of Cody, past Buffalo Bill State Park, and on to the east entrance of Yellowstone National Park. President Theodore Roosevelt called the 50-mile stretch between Cody and Yellowstone National Park’s East Entrance the “50 most beautiful miles in America.”

Historic guest ranches and vacation rentals make this area a popular destination for tourists visiting Yellowstone National Park, seeking access to the Washakie, Shoshone, or North Absaroka Wilderness Areas, or simply looking to take in the scenery and wildlife viewing. The Sleeping Giant Ski area west of Wapiti offers skiing during the winter months, and zip-lining and other mountain activities during the warmer months.

Agriculture and ranching remain prevalent on the private lands along the highway leading up to and around the Wapiti Area, along with single-family homes on large lots. There are also several commercial businesses along this corridor that generally serve the seasonal flow of tourism traffic.



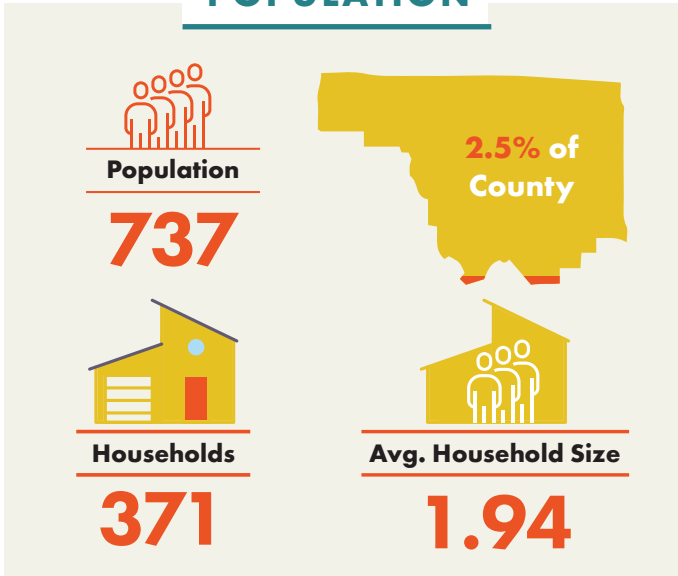
**688.7 SQ MILES**

**9.9% OF COUNTY**

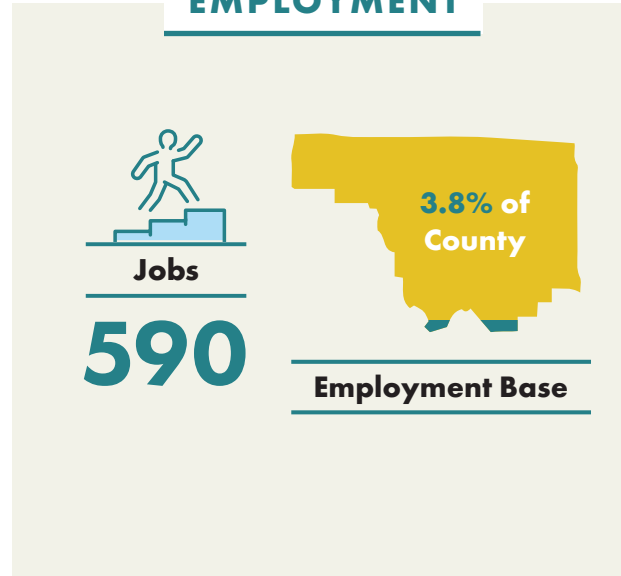
Policy guidance provided for the North Fork Area supplements the countywide goals and policies outlined in Chapter 2, and the countywide Growth Framework in Chapter 3. Direct cross-references are provided where applicable.

# NORTH FORK AREA AT A GLANCE

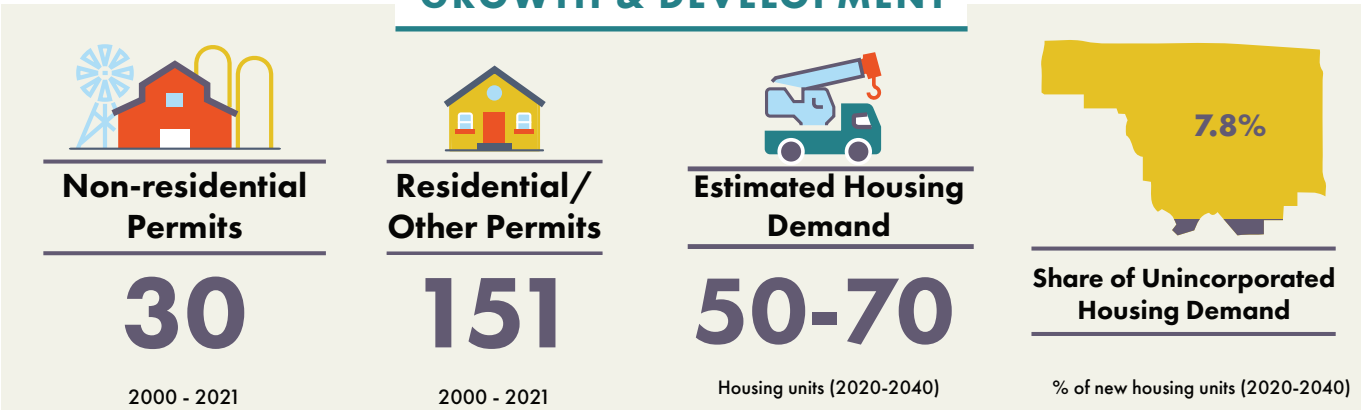
## POPULATION



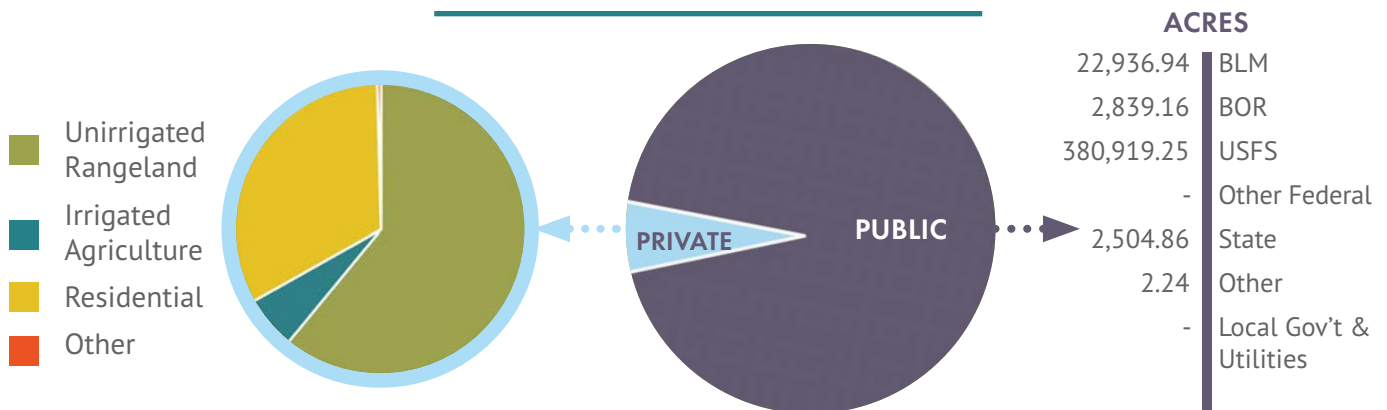
## EMPLOYMENT



## GROWTH & DEVELOPMENT



## LAND USE & OWNERSHIP



Sources: Population and Employment (ESRI Business Analyst, 2021 estimates); Permits (Park County); Housing Demand Estimates (Economic & Planning Systems); Land Use & Ownership (Park County Assessor).



## EXISTING CONDITIONS

### Economy

**Agriculture and Ranching.** Agriculture and ranching in the North Fork Area is limited due to the prevalence of public lands with about 3,739 acres of high-value agricultural land as of 2022 (0.8% of all land in the North Fork Area). Irrigated agricultural lands are concentrated along US 14/16/20, generally between the western edge of Buffalo Bill Reservoir to just west of Wapiti. Grazing allotments are in place on much of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) land that lies south and north of US 14/16/20 at the mouth of the reservoir.

**Recreation and Tourism.** Recreation and tourism are essential to the economy of the North Fork Area. According to the National Park Service (NPS), the east entrance to Yellowstone National Park experienced almost 547,000 visits during the summer season (April – November) in 2021.<sup>12</sup> Day hiking, backpacking, and horseback riding are popular in the nearby Washakie and North Absaroka

Wilderness areas. Hunting, fishing, and other outdoor activities are also popular at Buffalo Bill State Park and in the surrounding BLM lands.

### Historic and Cultural Resources

**Pahaska Tepee.** Located just east of Yellowstone National Park, Pahaska Tepee was built in 1910 as the hunting lodge of Colonel William F. (Buffalo Bill) Cody and as an inn for travelers who followed the long, winding wagon road from Cody. Over the years, Buffalo Bill played host at the lodge to many well-known people. The property was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1973.<sup>13</sup>

**Red Star Lodge and Sawmill.** Located just east of Yellowstone National Park, Red Star Lodge and Sawmill—more commonly known as Shoshone Lodge—is a historic dude ranch established in 1924. The property is historically significant as an operational and nearly intact representation of Western dude ranching as it arose and evolved in Wyoming in the

first half of the twentieth century. The property was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2003.<sup>14</sup>

**Goff Creek Lodge.** Located approximately 11 miles east of Yellowstone National Park, Goff Creek Lodge is a historic dude ranch established in 1910. The lodge evolved over a period of years from 1910 to 1965 and was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2003.<sup>15</sup>

**Absaroka Mountain Lodge.** Located approximately 13 miles east of Yellowstone National Park, the Absaroka Mountain Lodge is a historic dude ranch established in 1917. The evolution of the Absaroka Mountain Lodge and the other historic dude ranches on the old “Cody Road” portion of US 14/16/20 coincides with growing American affluence and the availability of automobiles. The property was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2003.<sup>16</sup>

**Wapiti Ranger Station.** Located approximately 30 miles west of Cody, the Wapiti Ranger Station



is a National Historic Landmark that was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1963. This was the first ranger station constructed in the United States at federal expense. It was also located in the first national forest reserve which was established by President Benjamin Harrison in 1891.<sup>17</sup>

### Infrastructure and Services

**Water and Wastewater.** There are no municipal water or wastewater services in the North Fork Area. While most development is served by individual on-site wells and septic systems, the 155-lot Copperleaf development in the Wapiti area, has its own central water and wastewater systems.

**Irrigation.** There are no irrigation districts that serve the North Fork Area. However, the North Fork Valley Ditch Company (NFVDC) serves many parts of the planning area while many other properties are irrigated via streams and private irrigation ditches that are not owned or maintained by an irrigation district. NFVDC was established in 1905.

### Environmentally Sensitive/Constrained Areas

**Crucial Wildlife Habitat.** Lands to the north and south of US 14/16/20 provide crucial habitat for elk, mule deer, and bighorn sheep.

**North Absaroka Wilderness.** Approximately two-thirds of the land in the North Fork Area that lies north of US 14/16/20 is within the North Absaroka Wilderness. The North Absaroka Wilderness is in the Shoshone National Forest abutting the eastern border of Yellowstone National Park on the west and extending east nearly to Wapiti

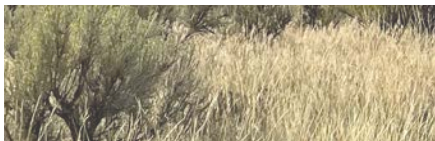
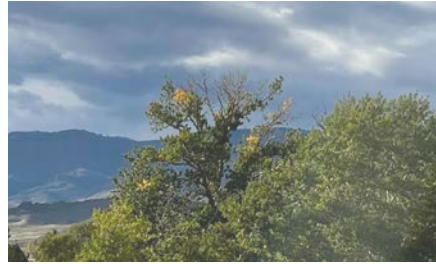
**Washakie Wilderness.** South of US 14/16/20, the Washakie Wilderness is also located within the Shoshone National Forest and abuts Yellowstone National Park on the west. However, the Washakie Wilderness is much larger than the North Absaroka Wilderness, extending south and east to encompass much of the Upper South Fork Area and the western portion of the Meeteetse Rural Area.

### Buffalo Bill Cody Scenic Byway.

The scenic byway is 27 miles of US 14/16/20 (Buffalo Bill Cody Scenic Byway) beginning roughly 25 miles west of Cody at the Shoshone National Forest border and following the North Fork of the Shoshone River to the East Entrance of Yellowstone National Park. The route is known for its abundant wildlife, rugged rock formations, and recreational opportunities.<sup>18</sup>

**Special Flood Hazard Area.** Flood-prone areas exist along the North Fork of the Shoshone River and its many tributaries, and are subject to additional permitting requirements.

**Conservation Easements.** There are three conservation easements in place in the North Fork Area. The Sheep Mountain, Breteche Creek, and Upper Shoshone conservation easements are all located south of US 14/16/20 and generally east of the rural community of Wapiti.



### Zoning

Current zoning in the North Fork Area is limited to three districts—General Rural 35-acre (GR-35), General Rural 5-acre (GR-5), and Rural Residential 2-acre (RR-2). With the exception of the RR-2 district, these districts promote the retention of open space, agricultural land, wildlife and riparian habitat, and scenic areas, and prevent development on unstable geologic features. Also notable is that the GR-5 district allows for some commercial uses that are otherwise not permitted by the GR-35 district.

### LAND USE SUITABILITY

Much of the North Fork Area has limited suitability for development due to limited access to infrastructure, the presence of major federal and state landholdings, and environmental and topographic constraints. Areas of moderate suitability (the highest ranking in the planning area) are generally located along US 14/16/20 and the North Fork of the Shoshone River.

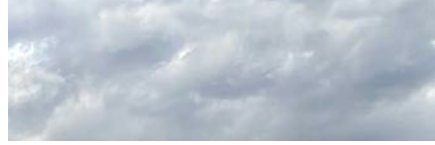
### FUTURE LAND USE

As Park County’s primary gateway to Yellowstone National Park, the North Fork Area is likely to continue experiencing demand for residential development and tourism-supported commercial activity. Limited land suitability, along with the seasonality of access to Yellowstone National Park, reduce that demand but are not likely to prevent all growth.

Future land use designations for the North Fork Area are intended to preserve the qualities that make the planning area special, including areas designated as Agriculture and Ranch/Rangeland that maintain agricultural character, scenery, wildlife habitat, and open spaces. Rural Residential areas reflect existing residential neighborhoods and locations where large-lot residential development is possible. Although there are previously platted neighborhoods in the North Fork Area that feature smaller residential lots, further development of this type is not desirable due to infrastructure limitations and the desire to retain

the character of the planning area. Public lands in the North Fork Area, which are the majority of all land, are planned as Resource Management/Recreation and are highly unlikely to see development.

The residents of the North Fork Area benefit from the presence of commercial businesses and services along US 14/16/20. However, there is limited demand for resident-oriented, year-round businesses as opposed to tourist-oriented businesses. Commercial development that provides goods and services to North Fork Area residents, and reflects the scale and character of the North Fork Area, should be limited to areas with existing establishments in the rural community of Wapiti. Commercial uses in these limited areas are encouraged to prioritize the year-round needs of the community over the seasonal flow of visitors, although a successful business may do both.



## Land Use Guidelines

The following land use guidelines reflect the preferences of the constituents of the North Fork Area, as expressed through the Plan Park County process, and the policy guidance and planning practices best suited to achieve those desires.

### NF-1: Rural Areas

Accommodate growth in Rural Areas areas that reflects infrastructure, groundwater, and suitability limitations. Encourage the conservation of larger, contiguous tracts of land by considering a minimum average lot size of at least 20 acres and allowing for smaller lot sizes in conjunction with the land use guidelines on page 72 and 73.

### NF-2: Priority Conservation Areas

Work with landowners, agricultural operators, wildlife managers, and conservation organizations to protect the viability and stability of agricultural operations and wildlife habitat in Priority Conser-

vation Areas while continuing to accommodate opportunities for the subdivision of land. Consider a minimum lot size of 20 to 35 acres within the Agricultural Overlay but allow for smaller lot sizes in conjunction with the land use guidelines for Rural Areas and Priority Conservation Areas in Chapter 2.

[See also, pages 72, 73, 82, and 84].

### NF-3: Rural Residential

Although higher density Rural Residential development with central water and wastewater service has been approved in the past, this type of development is discouraged.

### NF-4: Rural Communities (Wapiti)

The rural community of Wapiti is generally defined as the area along US 14/16/20 (North Fork Highway) near Wapiti School and the Wapiti Lodge.

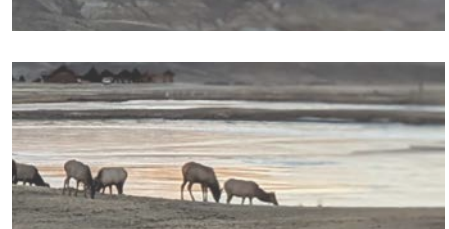
- **Infrastructure Limitations.** Recognizing the infrastructure limitations of Wapiti—no

central water or wastewater service—limit subdivisions of land and development that are best served by such infrastructure.

- **Land Use.** Allow the establishment of limited commercial and community services, like lodging, dining, recreation, health services, and agricultural services in Wapiti to serve North Fork Area residents and seasonal visitors.
- **U.S. Highway 14 (North Fork Highway) corridor.** The scale and character of new services in the Wapiti area should be consistent with the rural character of Wapiti. The adaptive reuse of existing buildings and parking areas is encouraged where feasible. New development should be clustered near existing uses to the extent practicable.

### NF-5: Land Uses

Support the needs of residents, seasonal visitors, and agricultural producers by allowing limited, compatible accessory uses, including value-added agri-



culture, home occupations, on-site employee housing, and agriculture supporting services. Excepting the rural community of Wapiti and existing commercial businesses, discourage the establishment of industries and businesses that are primarily region-serving or cause significant traffic impacts.

**NF-6: Short-term Rentals**

Explore limitations on the number, type, and operations of short-term rentals in the North Fork Area, including conditions of approval (e.g., occupancy limits, parking requirements, duration of stay standards, ownership expectations) that limit impacts on the community.

**NF-7: Recreation and Public Lands Access**

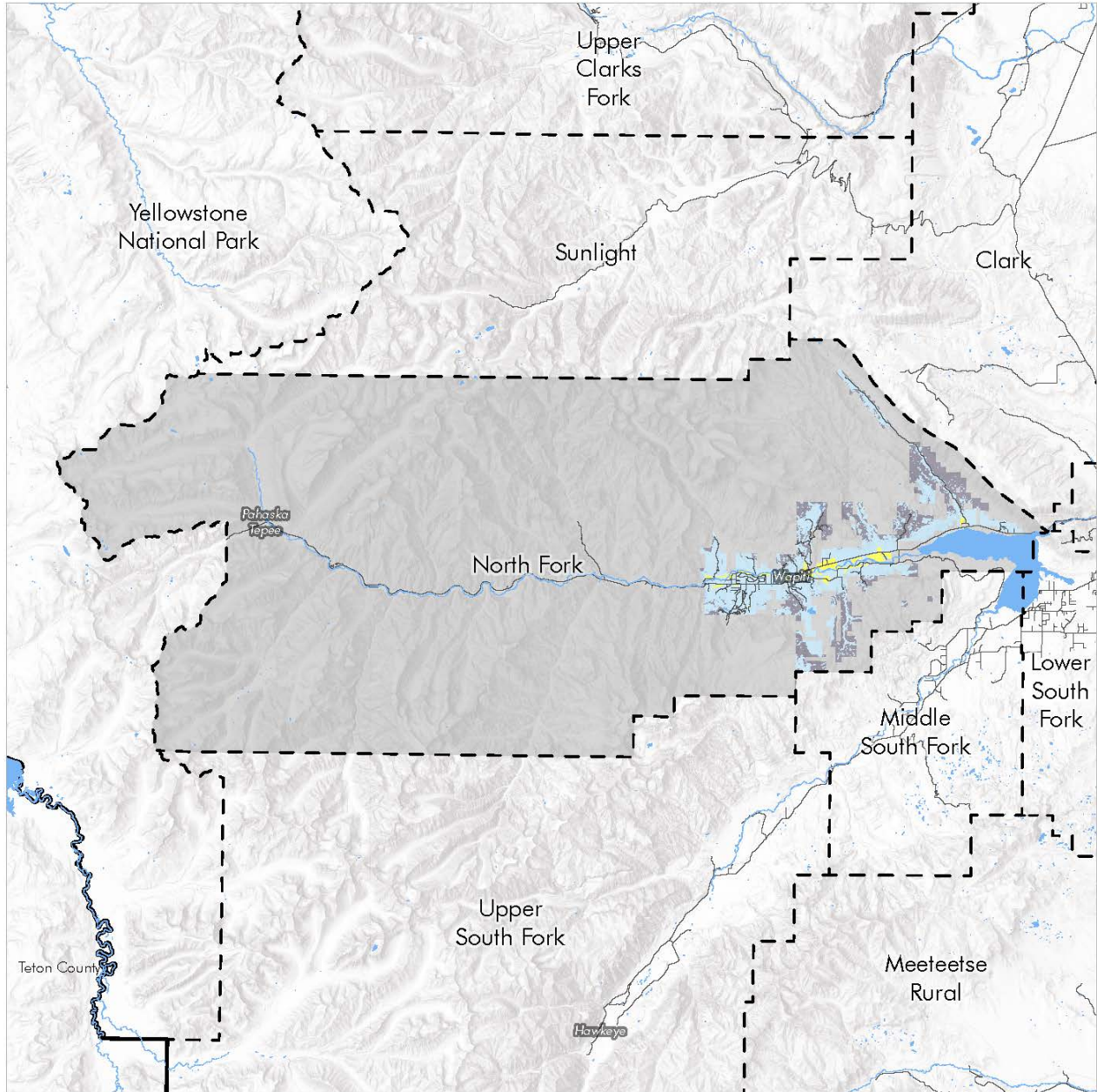
Continue to maintain and expand access to outdoor recreation in accordance with countywide goal OR-1 and associated policies on page 52.

**NF-8: Hazard Route**

Work with Park County Fire District 2, WYDOT, and federal land management agencies in the North Fork Area to explore the creation or improvement of Stagecoach Trail as an alternative access route between the North Fork Area and Cody to ensure access to the area in the event of a natural disaster or other emergency.

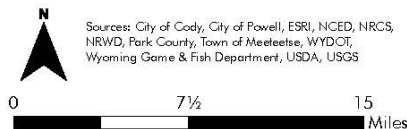


### Land Suitability: North Fork



- Suitability Ranking**
- Prohibitive
  - Least Suitable
  - Marginally Suitable
  - Moderately Suitable
  - Suitable
  - Highly Suitable

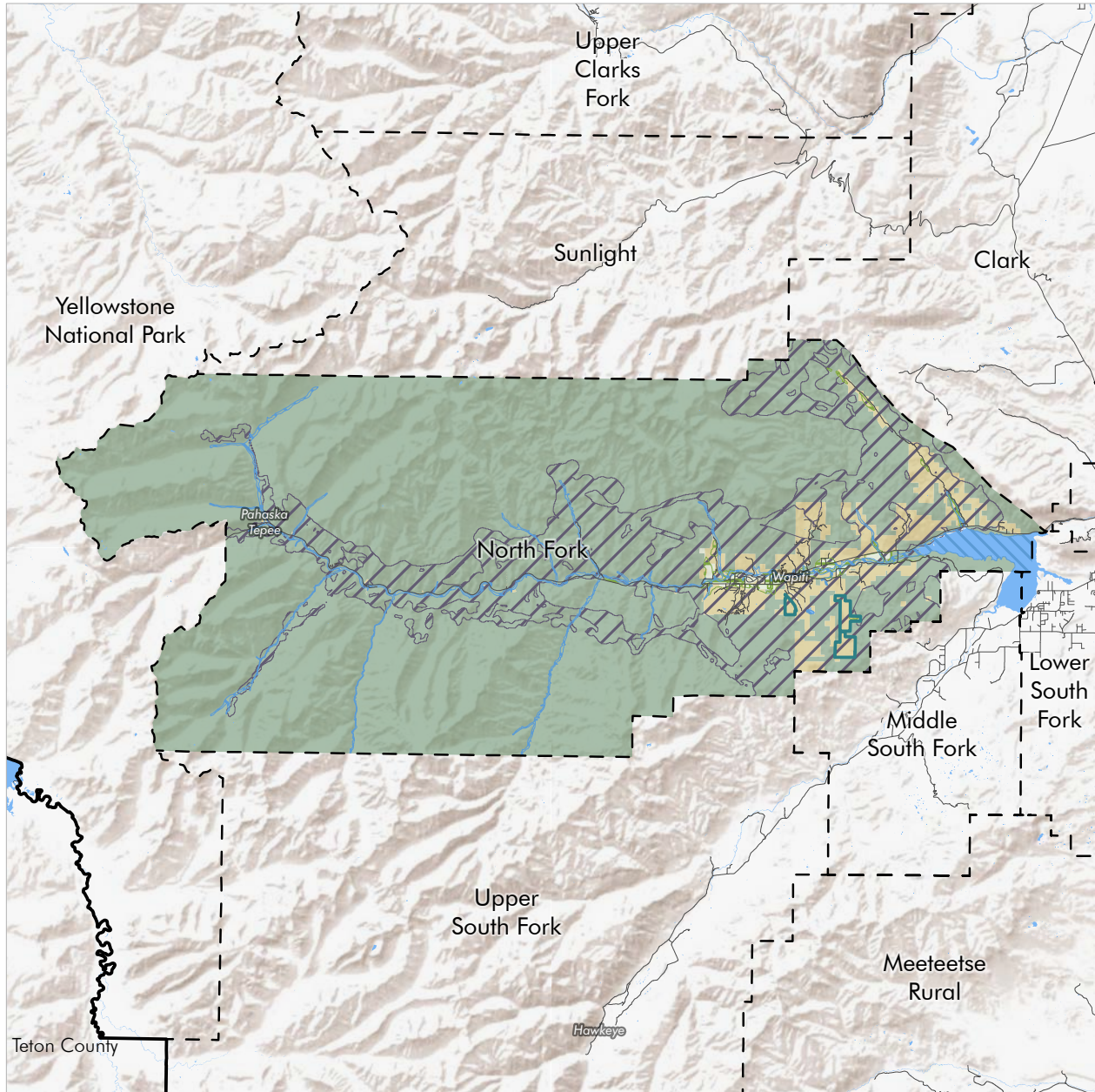
- Other**
- Incorporated Area
  - Planning Area
  - County Boundary
  - Road



Source: City of Cody, City of Powell, ESRI, NCED, NRCS, NRWD, Park County, Town of Meeteetse, WYDOT, Wyoming Game & Fish Department, USDA, USGS



### Future Land Use: North Fork



#### Future Land Use

##### Rural Areas

- Agriculture
- Ranch/Rangeland
- Resource Management/Recreation
- Rural Communities

##### Developed/Developing Areas

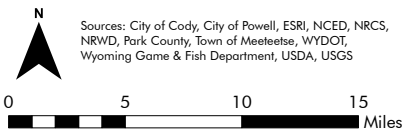
- Rural Residential
- Urban Residential
- Commercial
- Industrial

##### Priority Conservation Areas

- Agricultural Overlay
- Big Game Use Overlay
- Conservation Easement

##### Other

- Special Flood Hazard Area
- Planning Area
- County Boundary
- Road



Sources: City of Cody, City of Powell, ESRI, NCED, NRCS, NRWD, Park County, Town of Meeteetse, WYDOT, Wyoming Game & Fish Department, USDA, USGS

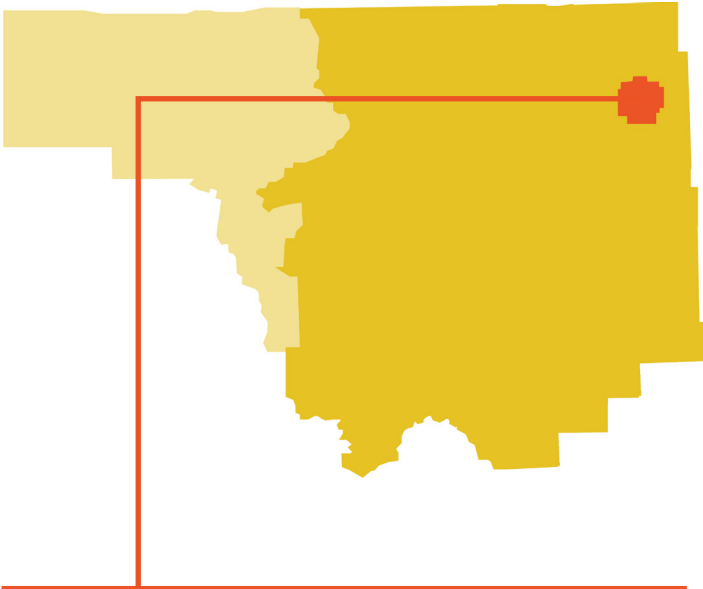




## POWELL LOCAL PLANNING AREA

### LOCATION AND CONTEXT

The Powell Local Planning Area (“Powell Local Area”) encompasses a 47.25-square mile area in northeast Park County that immediately surrounds the incorporated City of Powell. Park County’s jurisdiction is limited to the unincorporated areas surrounding the City. US 14A (Powell Highway) runs diagonally through the Powell Local Area and serves as a primary connection between Powell and Cody (to the southwest) and the rural community of Garland (to the east). State Highway 295 bisects the Powell Local Area from north to south, connecting the City of Powell with the Powell Municipal Airport (to the north) and the rural community of Willwood (to the south). County Lane 9 is a major east/west connection within the Powell Local Area. The Powell Local Area is largely characterized by level, fertile agricultural land that surrounds the City of Powell and the Shoshone River that traverses the southern portion of the planning area. Except for a single section of land owned by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), all of the land in the Powell Local Area is privately-owned. While there are numerous residential subdivisions in the Powell Local Area, most residents live on large lots (35 acre or larger) within close proximity of the City of Powell’s services and amenities. The City of Powell is one of two regional hubs (along with Cody) that serve Park County residents with a full range of services and amenities. The City of Powell is also home to Northwest College.



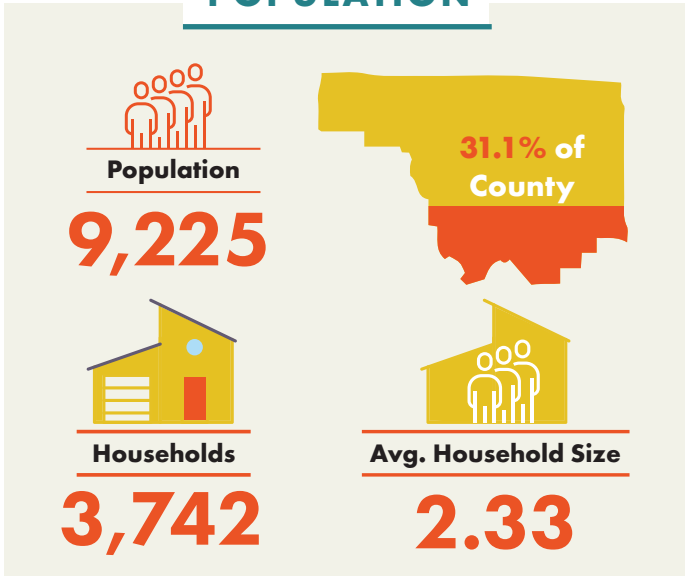
**47.25 SQ MILES**

**0.7% OF COUNTY**

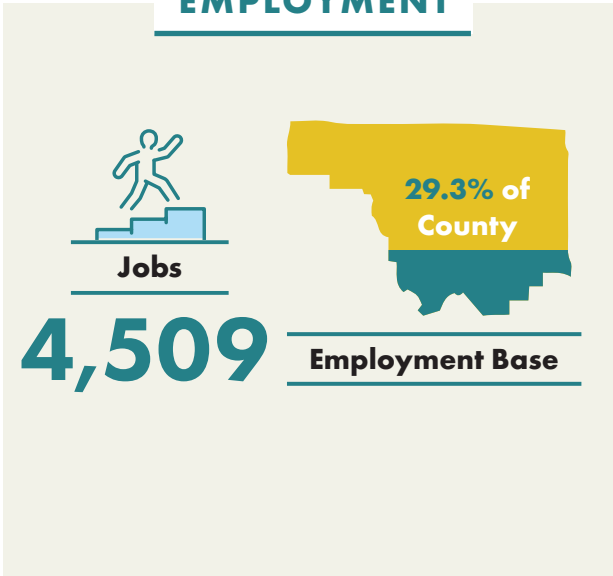
Policy guidance provided for the Powell Local Area supplements the countywide goals and policies outlined in Chapter 2, and the countywide Growth Framework in Chapter 3. Direct cross-references are provided where applicable.

# POWELL LOCAL AREA AT A GLANCE<sup>19</sup>

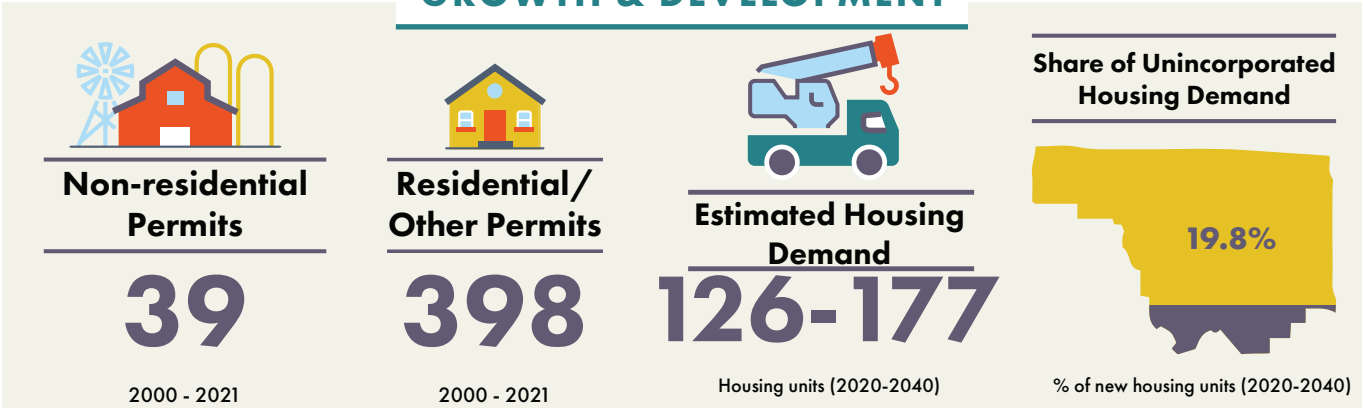
## POPULATION



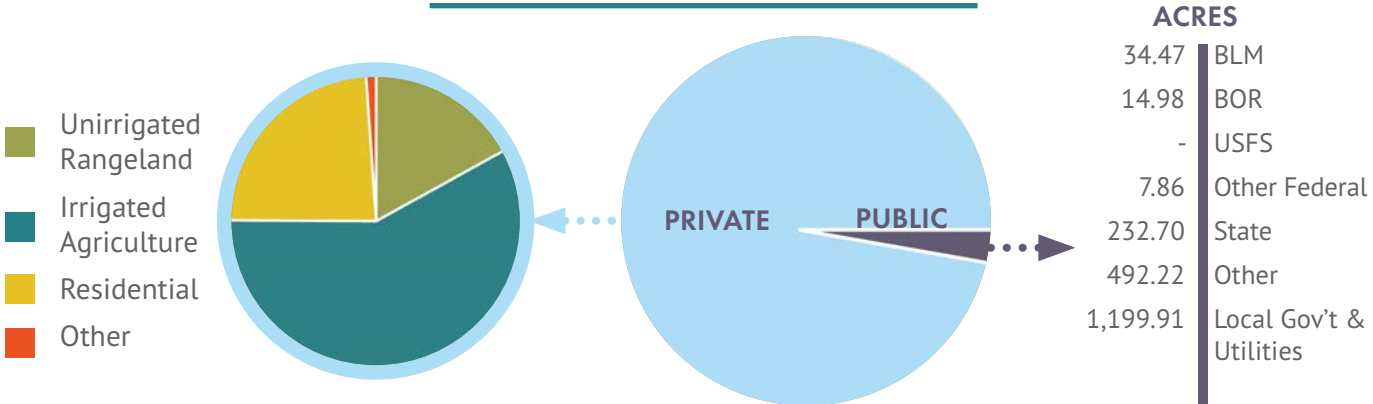
## EMPLOYMENT



## GROWTH & DEVELOPMENT



## LAND USE & OWNERSHIP



Sources: Population and Employment (ESRI Business Analyst, 2021 estimates); Permits (Park County); Housing Demand Estimates (Economic & Planning Systems); Land Use & Ownership (Park County Assessor).



## EXISTING CONDITIONS

### Economy

#### **Agriculture and Ranching.**

Production agriculture is prevalent in the Powell Local Area, particularly north, west, and south of the City of Powell with about 23,055 acres of high-value agricultural land as of 2022 (76.2% of all land in the Powell Local Area). A mix of irrigated and non-irrigated crops are grown. Prominent crops include alfalfa, barley, sugar beets, dry beans, and non-alfalfa hay, but also include sunflowers, corn, and other crops. The practice of flood irrigation on agricultural lands in the Powell Local Area makes it desirable for certain specialty crops, like barley produced for the craft brew industry.

### Historic and Cultural Resources

**Powell Main Post Office.** Located in the City of Powell, this 1937 property was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2008. One of the noteworthy features of the building is a mural entitled:

*Powell's Agriculture Resulting from the Shoshone Irrigation Project*, which was completed in 1938 by Verona Burkhard.

### Infrastructure and Services

**Water and Wastewater.** Development in the Powell Local Area is served with domestic water by either the Northwest Rural Water District (NRWD) or on-site wells. While the City of Powell has extended municipal sewer service in a handful of situations in the past (a practice that is not anticipated to continue), developments outside of City limits are generally served by individual septic systems.

**Irrigation Districts.** Two irrigation districts serve the Powell Local Area: Shoshone and Willwood. The Shoshone Irrigation District (SID) covers 66,993 acres, north of the Shoshone River and including the entire City of Powell, which presents challenges to infrastructure when development occurs. The Willwood Irrigation District (WID) covers 24,500 acres south of the Shoshone River and extends east into Big Horn

County. Many other properties are irrigated via streams and private irrigation ditches that are not owned or maintained by an irrigation district.

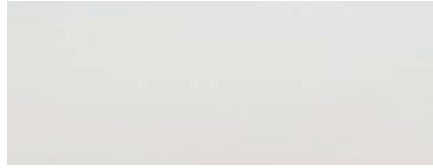
### Environmentally Sensitive/Constrained Areas

**Special Flood Hazard Area.** Flood-prone areas in the Powell Local Area are concentrated along the Shoshone River and Bitter Creek, and are subject to additional permitting requirements.

**Conservation Easements.** There are no conservation easements in place in the Powell Local Area according to the National Conservation Easement Database (NCED).

### Zoning

Current zoning for the Powell Local Area is generally General Rural Powell (GR-P), which allows for residential subdivisions with a minimum lot size of one acre, subject to the presence of on-site septic systems and other development standards. The GR-P district is also intended to promote the retention of open space, agricultural land, wildlife and riparian habitat, and scenic



areas, and prevent development on unstable geologic features. Current zoning for areas adjacent to the City of Powell includes both rural and urban districts:

- **Rural Residential 2-acre (RR-2).** The RR-2 district allows for residential subdivisions with an average minimum lot size of two acres and limited non-residential uses. On-site wastewater disposal systems are required.
- **Residential 1/2-acre (R-H).** The R-H district allows for urban density housing development on average minimum lot sizes of one-half-acre when served by public water and sewer.
- **Transitional (T).** The T district serves as an urban holding zone for land around cities and towns. Residential, commercial, or industrial developments proposed in the T district are intended to be rezoned to an appropriate urban or rural district.
- **Commercial (C).** The C district allows for commercial and service activities.

## LAND USE SUITABILITY

The Powell Local Area has a high proportion of land that is rated as being suitable for development. Suitability in this area is influenced by access to infrastructure, limited environmental and geologic constraints, and level topography. Marginally and moderately suitable land is found along the Shoshone River and areas not served by NRWD domestic water service. Areas rated as suitable or most suitable tend to be located near the City of Powell, rural community of Garland, and near County roads and NRWD infrastructure.

## FUTURE LAND USE

The Powell Local Area encircles the City of Powell and includes some of Park County's most productive agricultural lands. It is also one of the most sought-after locations for future development due to its suitability for development and proximity to the City of Powell. Community concerns about the fragmentation and loss of high-value agricultural lands is reflected by most of the

planning area being designated as Agriculture on the Future Land Use Map. Limited areas of Rural Residential are designated in areas that are more suitable for development and/or have already experienced significant subdivision activity. Both designations indicate that residential development would be limited to larger lots with design considerations that require the use of cluster-style or conservation subdivisions that preserve the viability of agricultural land. In the areas immediately surrounding the City of Powell, a mix of Commercial, Industrial, and Urban Residential land use designations indicate a desire to have higher density development located closer to the City where it can be annexed into the City to be served by municipal utilities and services. Over time, annexation is desirable to accommodate growth that is more orderly and uses infrastructure efficiently.

## Land Use Guidelines

The following land use guidelines reflect the preferences of the constituents of the Powell Local Area, as expressed through the



Plan Park County process, input from the City of Powell, NRWD, and the irrigation districts regarding infrastructure and service capabilities, and the policy guidance and planning practices best suited to achieve those desires.

### PO-1: Rural Areas

Accommodate growth in Rural Areas areas that reflects infrastructure, groundwater, and suitability limitations. Encourage the conservation of larger, contiguous tracts of land by considering a minimum average lot size of at least 20 acres and allowing for smaller lot sizes in conjunction with the land use guidelines on page 72 and 73.

### PO-2: Priority Conservation Areas

Work with landowners, agricultural operators, wildlife managers, and conservation organizations to protect the viability and stability of agricultural operations and wildlife habitat in Priority Conservation Areas while continuing to accommodate opportunities for the subdivision of land. Consider a minimum lot size of 20 to 35

acres within the Agricultural Overlay but allow for smaller lot sizes in conjunction with the land use guidelines for Rural Areas and Priority Conservation Areas in Chapter 2.

[See also, pages 72, 73, 82, and 84].

### PO-3: Rural Residential (Outside of the Coordinated Planning Area)

Allow Rural Residential development (one- to five-acre lots minimum), outside of priority conservation areas, where designated on the Future Land Use Map in accordance with applicable land use guidelines in Chapter 3. Coordinate with NRWD to encourage provision of service to these areas, where applicable.

### PO-4: Rural Communities (Willwood)

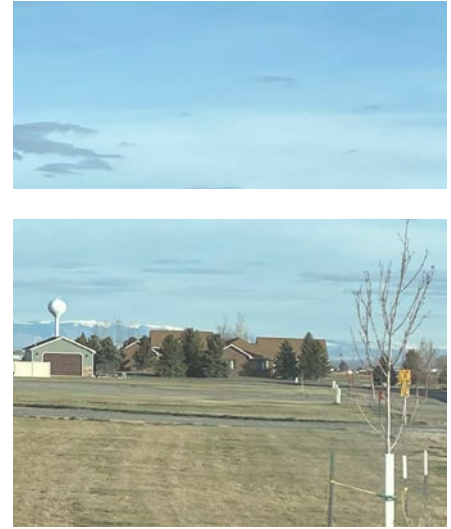
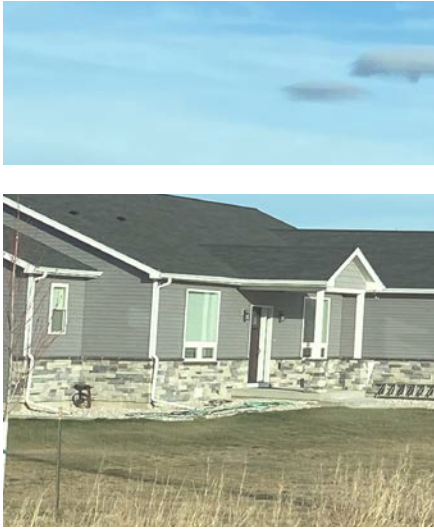
The rural community of Willwood is generally located near the intersection of Lane 13 and Road 9 south of the Shoshone River. The area features some subdivisions with smaller residential lots, clustered development along

the major roadways, and agricultural, commercial, and industrial uses. This pattern of development should be supported as long as it does not compromise agricultural activities or groundwater quality and availability.

- **Septic-supported Development.** Protect the quality of groundwater and safety of the community by limiting subdivisions of land and establishing a minimum lot size of five acres or larger.
- **Land Use.** Allow a mix of residential, agricultural, and supporting commercial and industrial uses that reflect and do not jeopardize the existing character of the community and provide flexibility to accommodate future growth.

### PO-5: Coordinated Planning Area

Support the intensification of development and/or annexation of properties within the Coordinated Planning Area (CPA) in accordance with the Future Land Use Map for the Powell Local Area, applicable land use guidelines in Chapter 3, and the area-specific



policy guidance provided below. Coordinate the review of proposed development in the CPA with the City of Powell, NRWD, and the irrigation districts to discourage the proliferation of rural development and/or limit the potential for land-use and/or maintenance conflicts in areas that can be served by City infrastructure and services in the future, or that currently have NRWD or irrigation infrastructure in place.

- **North Powell (North of Lane 8).** The area north of Lane 8, between Road 11 on the west, Road 7 on the east, and south of the CPA boundary on the north is designated for Rural Residential development. Some portions of the area are currently served by NRWD. The area is not expected to be served by City water in the near to distant future; however, City sewer service may be available along Road 8 between Lane 8 and Lane 7 due to the proximity to the City's Wastewater Treatment Plant.
- **North Powell (Close-in areas and Northwest College vicinity).** The area north of Powell (between Lane 8 and the City of Powell limits) is designated for Urban Residential development. The area has good suitability for a mix of uses and housing options and can be served by the expansion of City infrastructure and services. While Urban Residential development is encouraged as the predominant use, a mix of neighborhood-oriented services (e.g., coffee shops, cafes, small retail) may be appropriate east and west of Northwest College. Urban Residential development is encouraged adjacent to the City if it has central water and sewer service and should generally match the density of the neighborhoods that it abuts. The County should maintain larger lot sizes (five-acre minimum) in this area, if central water and/or sewer are not present, to limit fragmentation and maintain the opportunity for annexation.
- **West of Powell.** The area west of Powell and south of Lane 8 is designated for Urban Residential. The area has good suitability for a mix of uses and housing options and can be served by expansion of City infrastructure and services. Urban Residential development that occurs adjacent to the City should have central water and/or sewer service and should generally match the density of the neighborhoods that it abuts. The County should maintain larger lot sizes (five-acre minimum) in areas designated for Urban Residential if central water and sewer are not present, to limit fragmentation and maintain the opportunity for future annexation. The highway frontage is designated for Commercial uses. Higher-intensity commercial uses should be concentrated within Coordinated Planning Area.



- **East of Powell (North of highway).** The area east of Powell (south of Lane 8 and north of the highway) is designated for a mix of Commercial and Rural Residential uses due to its proximity to the City of Powell. However, due to topographical challenges, it is cost-prohibitive for the City to extend its infrastructure and services to this area in the near to distant future. While urban development is supported in this location in concept, developers would be responsible for the cost of extending service(s) to proposed developments. The County should generally maintain larger lot sizes (five-acre minimum) in this area to limit fragmentation in the near-term.
- **East of Powell (South of highway).** The area east of Powell, and generally ½ mile north of Lane 10, is designated for a mix of Rural Residential, Commercial, and Industrial uses due to its proximity to the City of Powell. However, due to topographical challenges, it is cost-prohibitive for the City to extend its infrastructure and services to this area in the near to distant future. While urban development is supported in this location in concept, developers would be responsible for the cost of extending service(s) to proposed developments. The County should generally maintain larger lot sizes (five-acre minimum) in this area to limit fragmentation in the near-term.

- **South of Powell.** The area immediately south of Powell and generally north of Lane 10 is designated for a mix of Urban Residential and Commercial Uses (along Highway 295 frontage) and can be served by expansion of City infrastructure and services. Urban Residential development is encouraged adjacent to the City if it has central water and sewer service. Urban Residential Development should generally match the density of the neighborhoods that it abuts. Rural Residential development is encouraged where NRWD service exists between Road 9 and Road 8.

#### **PO-6: Land Uses**

Allow a wide range of uses in the Powell Local Area that support agricultural production, processing, and sales, and increase economic development. Home occupations, short-term rentals, employee housing, light industry, community-serving commercial businesses, agribusiness, agritourism, agriculture-supporting services, and recreation-based businesses are encouraged with a desire to limit impacts on agricultural operations.

#### **PO-7: Cody-Powell Highway Corridor**

Allow a greater diversity of agricultural, commercial, and light industrial uses in areas:

- Within the Coordinated Planning Area boundary;
- Where a mix of uses, higher density development, and access to NRWD already exists; and/or
- That are accessible via a shared access point to U.S. Highway 14A.

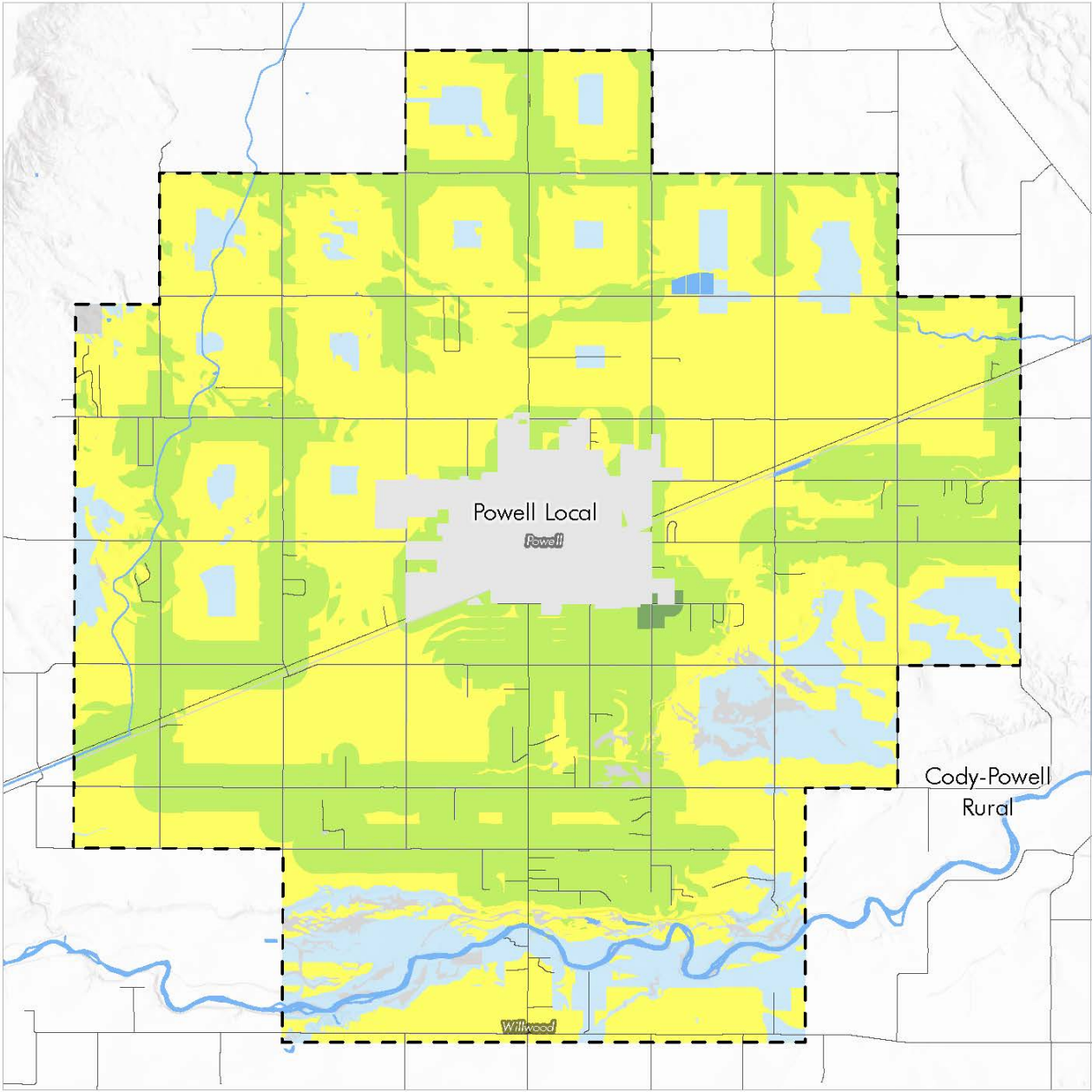
#### **PO-8: Short-term Rentals**

Continue to allow opportunities for short-term rentals in accordance with adopted regulations and countywide policy HO-1.4 on page 50.

#### **PO-9: Recreation and Public Lands Access**

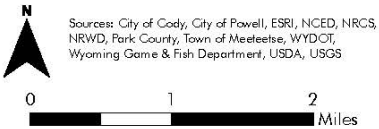
Continue to maintain and expand access to outdoor recreation in accordance with countywide goal OR-1 and associated policies on page 52.

### Land Suitability: Powell Local



- Suitability Ranking
- Prohibitive
  - Least Suitable
  - Marginally Suitable
  - Moderately Suitable
  - Suitable
  - Highly Suitable

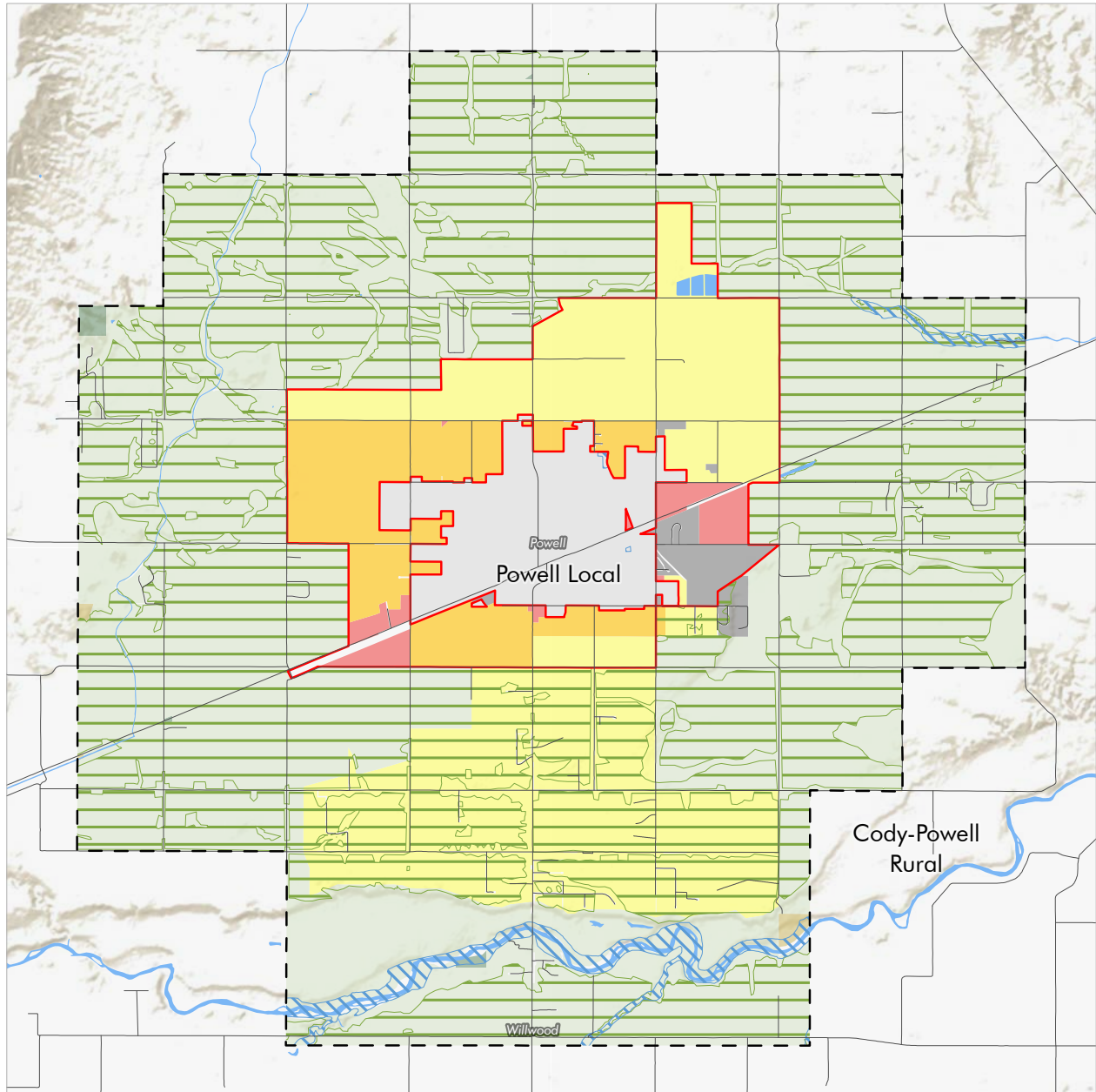
- Other
- Incorporated Area
  - Planning Area
  - Road



Sources: City of Cody, City of Powell, ESRI, NCED, NRCS, NRWD, Park County, Town of Meeteetse, WYDOT, Wyoming Game & Fish Department, USDA, USGS



### Future Land Use: Powell Local



#### Future Land Use

##### Rural Areas

- Agriculture
- Ranch/Rangeland
- Resource Management/Recreation
- Rural Communities

##### Developed/Developing Areas

- Rural Residential
- Urban Residential
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Coordinated Planning Area

##### Priority Conservation Areas

- Agricultural Overlay

##### Other

- Special Flood Hazard Area
- Incorporated Area
- Planning Area
- Road



Sources: City of Cody, City of Powell, ESRI, NCEd, NRCS, NRWD, Park County, Town of Meeteetse, WYDOT, Wyoming Game & Fish Department, USDA, USGS





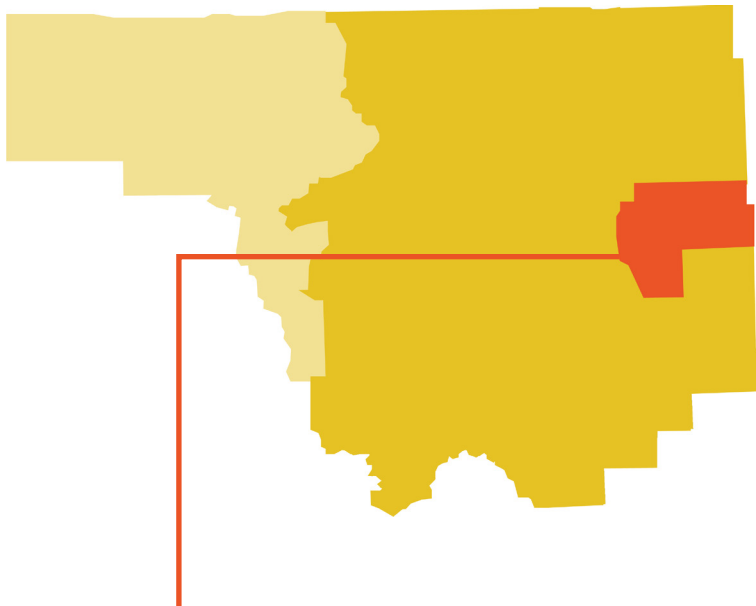
## SAGE CREEK PLANNING AREA

### LOCATION AND CONTEXT

The Sage Creek Planning Area (“Sage Creek Area”) encompasses a 276.4-square mile area to the east and southeast of Cody. The US 14/16/20 (Greybull Highway) corridor travels east-west across the Sage Creek Area, connecting the City of Cody to the Town of Greybull in neighboring Big Horn County. County Road 3JU (Yu Bench Road) and County Road 3FK (Oregon Basin Road) provide access from US 14/16/20 south through the Oregon Basin, connecting to WY 120 (Meeteetse Highway).

Private lands in the Sage Creek Area are concentrated just east of the City of Cody and Yellowstone Regional Airport and include a number of rural subdivisions with lots ranging from less than two acres to 15 acres. Equestrian uses and small-scale farms and ranches are prevalent. The area has limited services but offers easy access to the full spectrum of services and amenities that exist in Cody.

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) owns and manages large tracts of land in the Sage Creek Area, including the Oregon Basin and the McCullough Peaks Special Resource Management Area (SRMA), known for its rugged badlands and population of wild horses. These areas are valued for their energy resources, primitive outdoor recreational opportunities, and sweeping views.



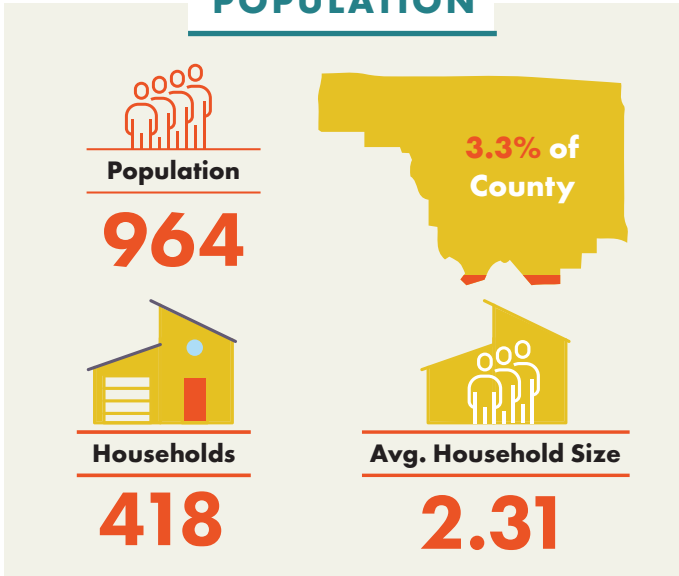
**276.4 SQ MILES**

**4% OF COUNTY**

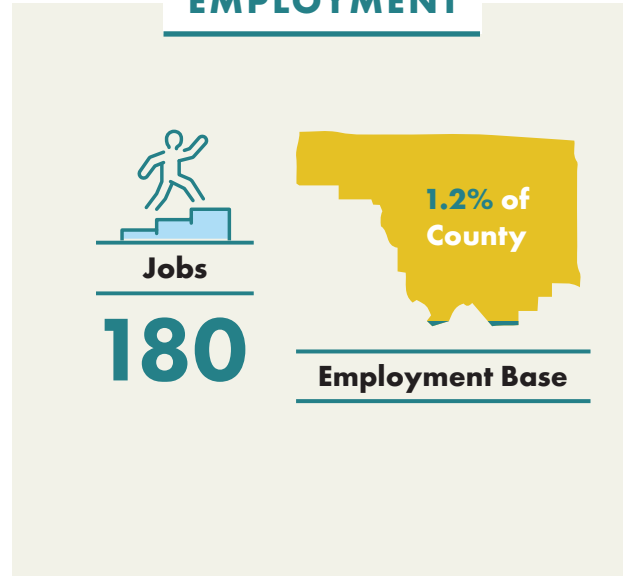
Policy guidance provided for the Sage Creek Area supplements the countywide goals and policies outlined in Chapter 2, and the countywide Growth Framework in Chapter 3. Direct cross-references are provided where applicable.

# SAGE CREEK AREA AT A GLANCE

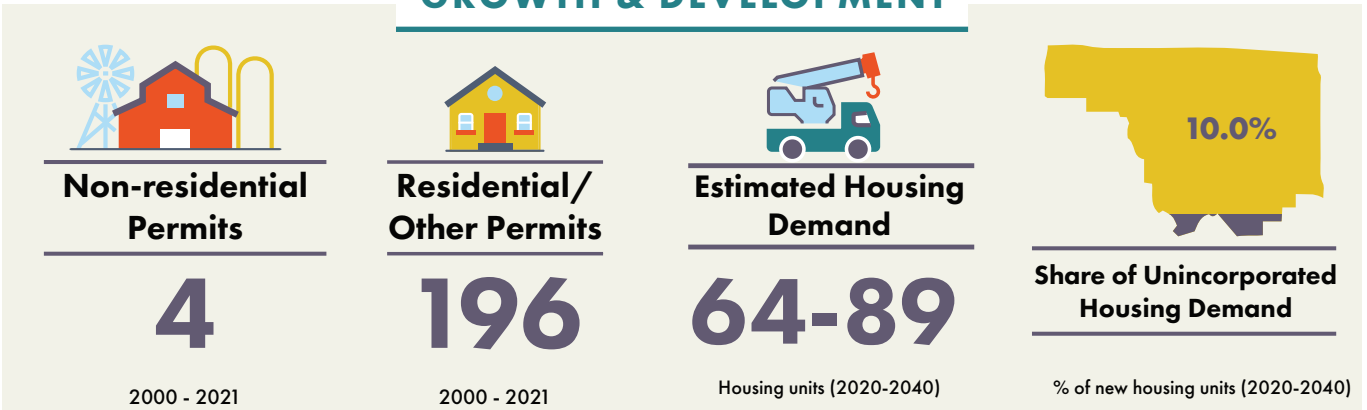
## POPULATION



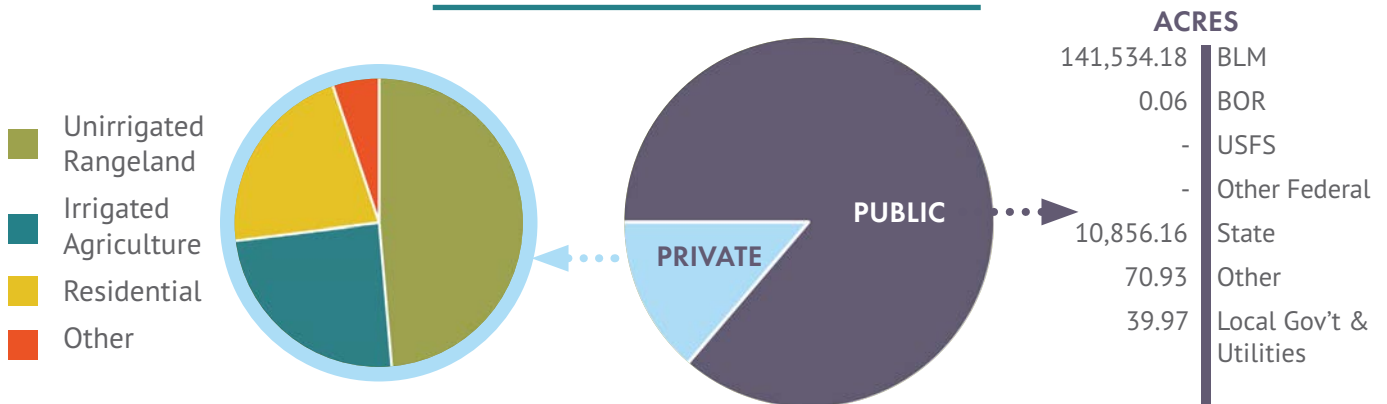
## EMPLOYMENT



## GROWTH & DEVELOPMENT



## LAND USE & OWNERSHIP



Sources: Population and Employment (ESRI Business Analyst, 2021 estimates); Permits (Park County); Housing Demand Estimates (Economic & Planning Systems); Land Use & Ownership (Park County Assessor).



## EXISTING CONDITIONS

### Economy

**Energy.** The Oregon Basin, south of US 14/16/20, is the third largest oil and gas field in Wyoming by cumulative production. Oil and gas production in the Oregon Basin has been occurring for over 100 years, generating local jobs and contributing to state revenues. Production in the basin peaked in 1968. In 2016, Marathon Oil sold their entire interest in the Oregon Basin to Merit, a private oil company out of Texas, after operating as the field operator for 92 years.<sup>20</sup>

**Agriculture and Ranching.** Agriculture and ranching are prevalent on the private lands that exist in the Sage Creek Area but represent a small percentage of the overall land area. As of 2022, there were about 6,314 acres of high-value agricultural land (3.6% of all land in the Sage Creek Area). Irrigated agricultural lands are concentrated north and south of US 14/16/20 just east of Cody. Prevalent crops include alfalfa and other hay, although barley, dry

beans, and corn are also produced on a more limited basis. Non-irrigated rangeland encompasses a majority of the remaining privately held land in the Sage Creek Area and is used primarily for cattle and other livestock production. Grazing allotments exist on BLM lands throughout the Sage Creek Area.

**Recreation and Tourism.** While some interpretive sites and parking areas exist along US 14/16/20, most recreational opportunities on BLM land in the Sage Creek Area are primitive and unconfined. Hiking, biking, hunting, horseback riding, ATVing, and wild horse viewing are popular.

### Historic and Cultural Resources

There are no historic and cultural resources listed on the National Register in this planning area.

### Infrastructure and Services

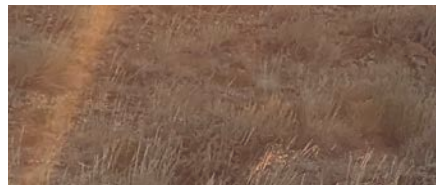
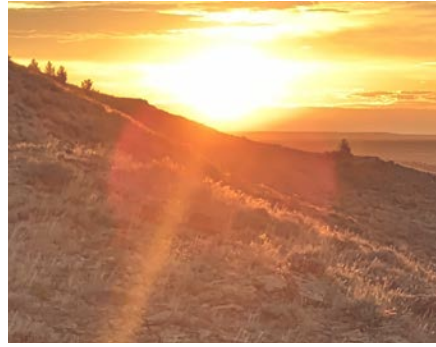
**Water and Wastewater.** Most development in the Sage Creek Area is served by the Northwest Rural Water District (NRWD), although some individual wells exist.

Centralized sewer is not present and individual septic systems are required.

**Irrigation Districts.** The Sage Creek Area is served by the Cody Canal Irrigation District (CCID), which encompasses 20,434 acres. CCID's coverage extends into the Middle South Fork, Lower South Fork, and Cody Local planning areas. While not part of CCID, some parts of the Sage Creek Area are served by CCID irrigation ditches and canals; the Neilson Road area is an example. A portion of the infrastructure is the Wiley Canal, a remnant of a failed and abandoned irrigation project from the early 1900s.<sup>21</sup>

### Environmentally Sensitive/Constrained Areas

**McCullough Peaks Special Resource Management Area (SRMA).** The McCullough Peaks Special Resource Management Area (SRMA) encompasses all BLM lands north of US 14/16/20 and extends north into the Cody-Powell Rural Area, where it transitions into the McCullough Peaks Wilderness Study Area (WSA). The



area is notable for its paleontological and geologic features, as well as its game populations and wild horses.<sup>22</sup>

**Special Flood Hazard Area.** Flood-prone areas in the Sage Creek Area are limited to areas along Spring Creek and Sage Creek, and are subject to additional permitting requirements.

**Conservation Easements.** There are no conservation easements in place in the Sage Creek Area according to the National Conservation Easement Database (NCED).

### Zoning

Current zoning in the Sage Creek Area is limited to four rural districts that allow for limited residential development at a range of intensities. Average lot sizes range from two to five acres in the Rural Residential 2-Acre (RR-2) and General Rural 5-Acre (GR-5) districts. Average lot sizes increase to 20-35 acres in the General Rural 20-Acre (GR-20) and General Rural 35-Acre (GR-35) districts. With the exception of the RR-2 district, these districts promote the retention of open

space, agricultural land, wildlife and riparian habitat, and scenic areas, and prevent development on unstable geologic features.

### LAND USE SUITABILITY

Land suitability in the Sage Creek Area is influenced by state and federal lands and infrastructure availability. Most land is ranked as unsuitable, least suitable, or marginally suitable. Areas of moderate or better suitability are located close to the City of Cody in areas zoned for large-lot residential use with adequate infrastructure. One area that is ranked most suitable is located adjacent to US 14/16/20, just east of Yellowstone Regional Airport.

### FUTURE LAND USE

The vast majority of the Sage Creek Area is owned and managed by state and federal agencies (indicated on the Future Land Use Map as Resource Management/ Recreation) or is not very suitable for significant development (shown as Ranch/Rangeland). The remainder of the planning area—just east of Cody—features

irrigated agricultural lands that are actively in production but that are also heavily fragmented by subdivision development. As some of the most suitable land for development, the northwest corner of the Sage Creek Area is categorized as either Rural Residential (farther from the City of Cody) or Urban Residential (adjacent to the City). Urban Residential areas may be desirable locations for annexation into the City of Cody in the future and should be designed to meet municipal subdivision standards that accommodate annexation. Rural Residential areas are intended to retain their agricultural and large-lot character but could become locations for urban development in the distant future.



## Land Use Guidelines

The following land use guidelines reflect the preferences of the constituents of the Sage Creek Area, as expressed through the Plan Park County process, and the policy guidance and planning practices best suited to achieve those desires

### SC-1: Rural Areas

Accommodate growth in Rural Areas areas that reflects infrastructure, groundwater, and suitability limitations. Encourage the conservation of larger, contiguous tracts of land by considering a minimum average lot size of at least 20 acres and allowing for smaller lot sizes in conjunction with the land use guidelines on page 72 and 73.

### SC-2: Priority Conservation Areas

Work with landowners, agricultural operators, wildlife managers, and conservation organizations to protect the viability and stability of agricultural operations and wildlife habitat in Priority Conser-

vation Areas while continuing to accommodate opportunities for the subdivision of land. Consider a minimum lot size of 20 to 35 acres within the Agricultural Overlay but allow for smaller lot sizes in conjunction with the land use guidelines for Rural Areas and Priority Conservation Areas in Chapter 2. Lot sizes achieved through conservation subdivisions may be as small as one-half to one-acre in areas designated for Rural Residential or Urban Residential (closest to the City of Cody), subject to the availability of water and/or sewer and applicable land use guidelines in Chapter 3.

[See also, pages 72, 73, 82, and 84].

### SC-3: Rural Residential

Allow for the continued subdivision of land in areas designated for Rural Residential, which generally encompass areas in the northwest portion of the planning area where NRWD service is

available and areas that are moderately suitable, suitable, or most suitable for development.

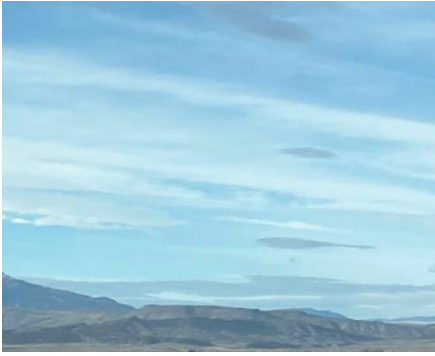
### SC-4: Special Districts

Where smaller lot development in the Sage Creek Area is proposed, work with NRWD and the community to ensure that municipal-quality infrastructure is planned for and provided through expansion of NRWD service and/or the establishment of special districts to provide streets and other infrastructure.

### SC-5: Coordinated Planning Area

Support the intensification and/or annexation of Coordinated Planning Areas in accordance with the City of Cody Master Plan and applicable land use guidelines in Chapter 3. Discourage rural development or other uses that would fragment or create the potential for land-use and/or infrastructure conflicts in the City's planned Expansion Areas. Coordinate the review of proposals within Coordinated Planning Areas with the





City of Cody to ensure that future development supports City of Cody goals and policies.

**SC-6: Land Uses**

Allow a wide range of uses in the Sage Creek Area to support agricultural production, processing, and sales, housing access and affordability, and increase economic development. Accommodate smaller, more affordable dwelling units, home occupations, on-site employee housing, light industry, community-serving commercial businesses, agribusiness, agriculture-supporting services, and recreation-based businesses are encouraged with a desire to limit impacts on agricultural operations. Discourage the establishment of industries and businesses that are primarily region-serving.

**SC-7: Short-term Rentals**

Explore limitations on the number, type, and operations of short-term rentals in the Sage Creek Area, including conditions of approval (e.g., occupancy limits, parking requirements, duration of

stay standards, ownership expectations) that minimize impacts on the community and housing availability for permanent residents.

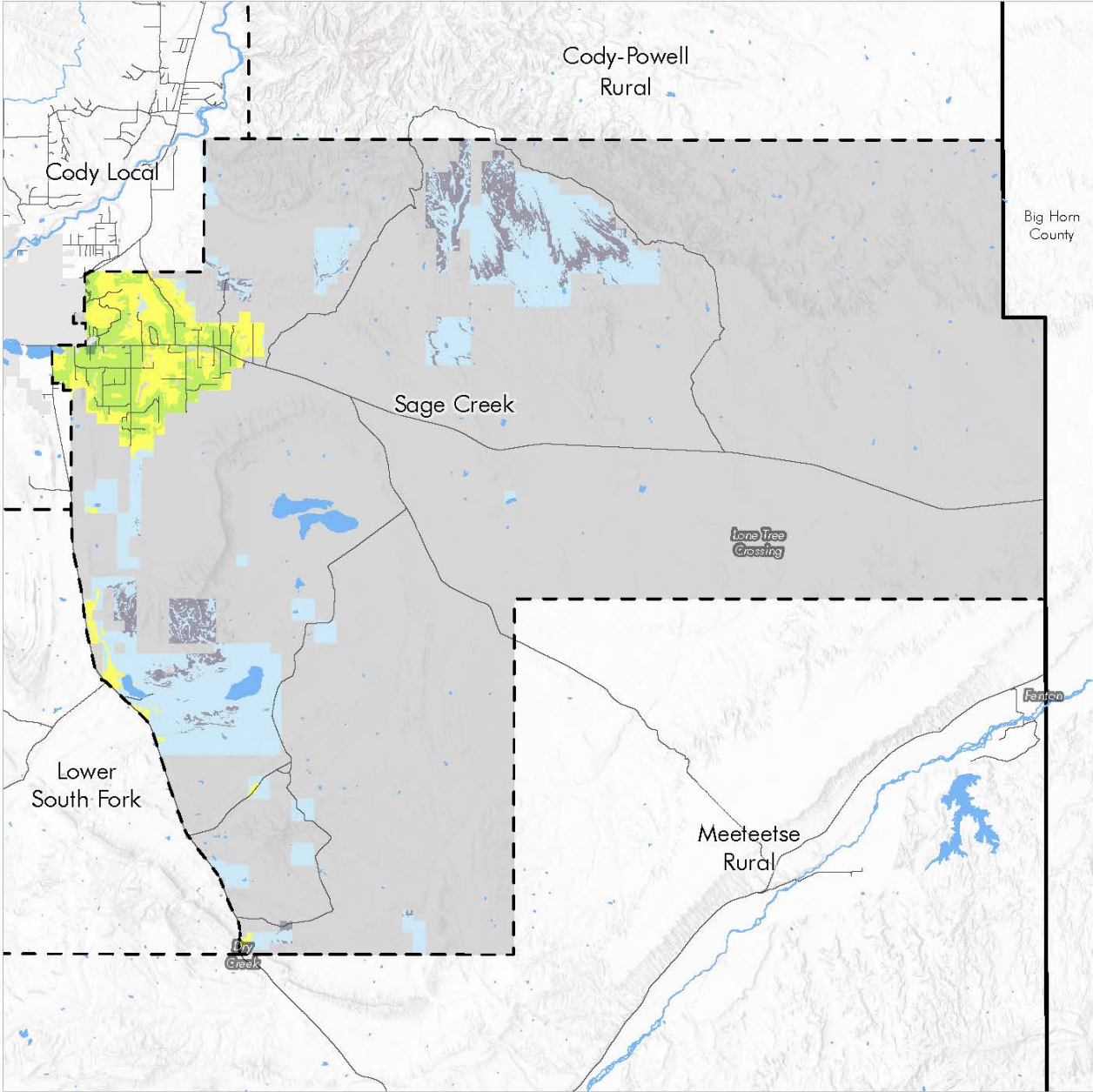
**SC-8: Recreation and Public Lands Access**

Continue to maintain and expand access to outdoor recreation in accordance with countywide goal OR-1 and associated policies on page 52.

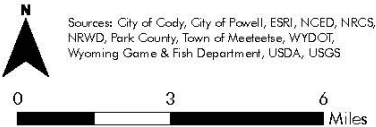
**SC-9: Yellowstone Regional Airport**

Maintain the safety and viability of the Yellowstone Regional Airport by enforcing regulations that prevent the creation of obstructions to airport operations, compromise the safe and efficient operations of the airport, or endanger the lives and property of nearby landowners.

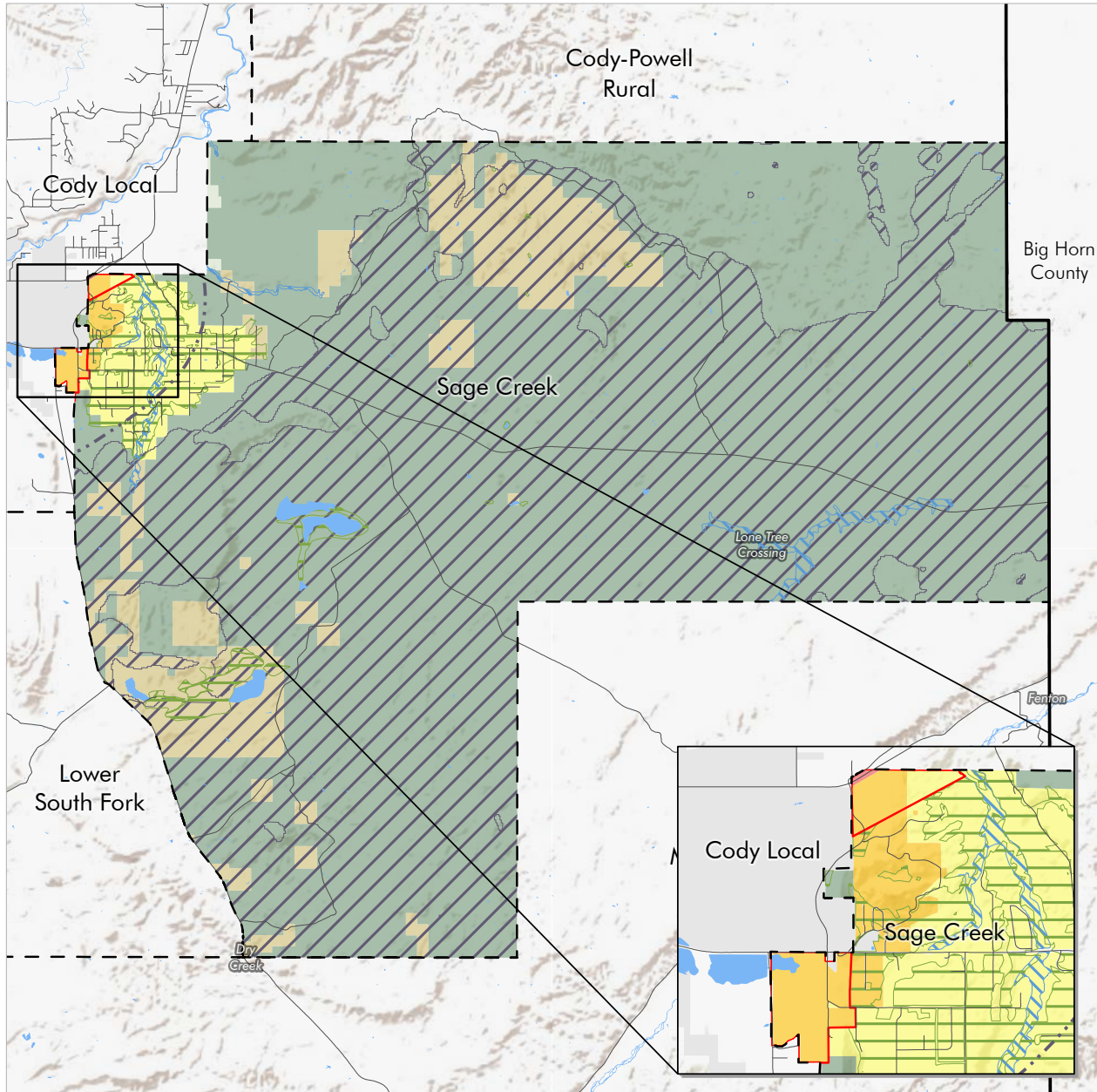
### Land Suitability: Sage Creek



- |                            |                   |
|----------------------------|-------------------|
| <b>Suitability Ranking</b> | <b>Other</b>      |
| Prohibitive                | Incorporated Area |
| Least Suitable             | Planning Area     |
| Marginally Suitable        | County Boundary   |
| Moderately Suitable        | Road              |
| Suitable                   |                   |
| Highly Suitable            |                   |



### Future Land Use: Sage Creek



#### Future Land Use

##### Rural Areas

- Agriculture
- Ranch/Rangeland
- Resource Management/Recreation
- Rural Communities

##### Developed/Developing Areas

- Rural Residential
- Urban Residential
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Coordinated Planning Area

##### Priority Conservation Areas

- Agricultural Overlay
- Big Game Use Overlay

##### Other

- Special Flood Hazard Area
- Airport Overlay
- Incorporated Area
- Planning Area
- County Boundary
- Road



Sources: City of Cody, City of Powell, ESRI, NCED, NRCS, NRWD, Park County, Town of Meeteetse, WYDOT, Wyoming Game & Fish Department, USDA, USGS





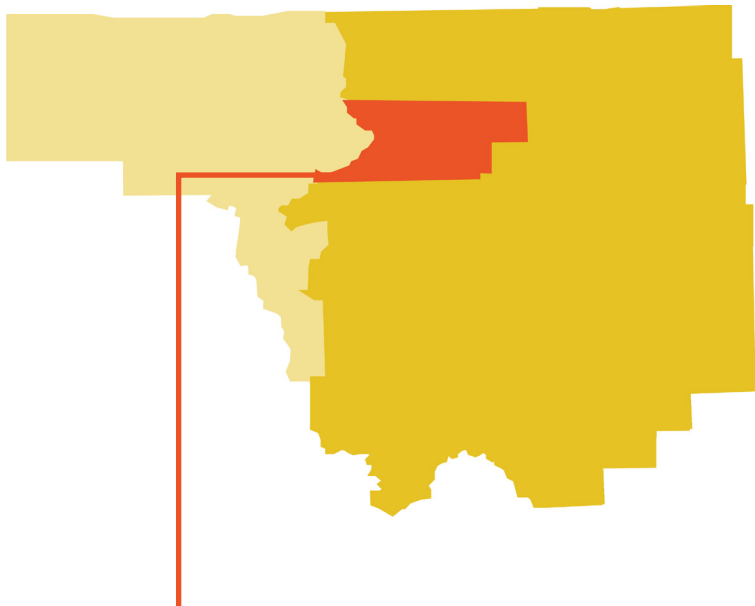
## SUNLIGHT PLANNING AREA

### LOCATION AND CONTEXT

The Sunlight Planning Area (“Sunlight Area”) encompasses 298.2 square miles in the northwest section of Park County, immediately east of Yellowstone National Park. Most of the land in the Sunlight Area is publicly owned and falls within the Shoshone National Forest and/or North Absaroka Wilderness. As a result, the area is remote and rugged with limited services and population. Primary access to the Sunlight Area is provided via WY 296 (Chief Joseph Scenic Byway).

The Sunlight Area is known for its pristine beauty and solitude, which makes it a popular destination for outdoor recreation and for summer visitors on their way to Yellowstone National Park. Popular activities include hunting, fishing, wildlife viewing, horseback riding, and hiking. Several guest ranches provide lodging and guiding services in the Sunlight Area.

Most of the Sunlight Area’s residents live on the smaller ranches clustered along Sunlight Creek.



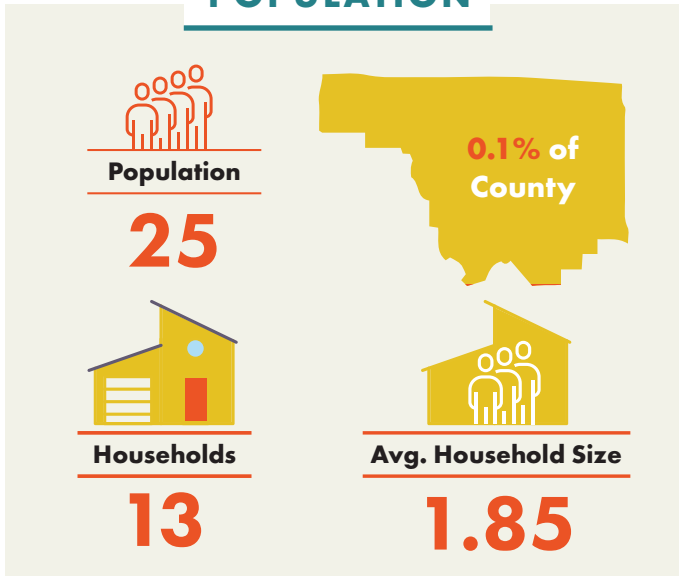
**298.2 SQ MILES**

**4.3% OF COUNTY**

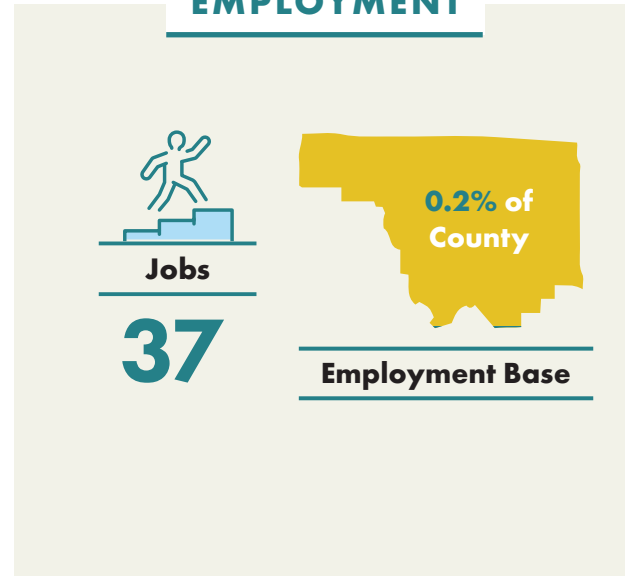
Policy guidance provided for the Sunlight Area supplements the countywide goals and policies outlined in Chapter 2, and the countywide Growth Framework in Chapter 3. Direct cross-references are provided where applicable.

# SUNLIGHT AREA AT A GLANCE

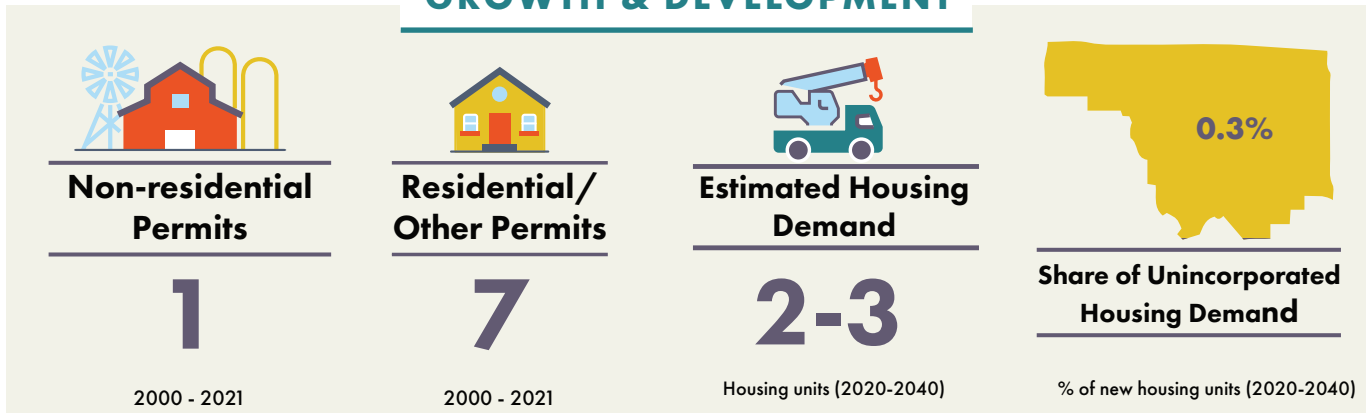
## POPULATION



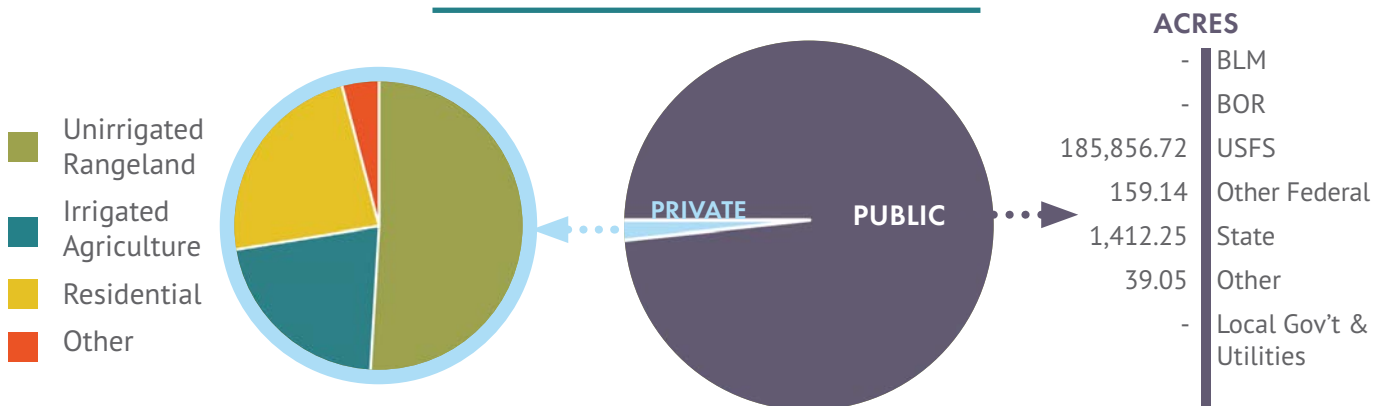
## EMPLOYMENT



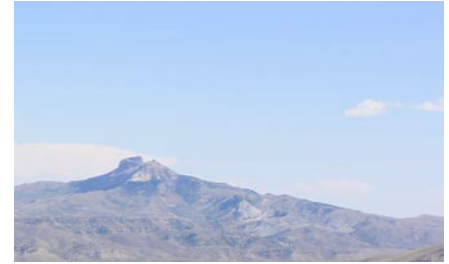
## GROWTH & DEVELOPMENT



## LAND USE & OWNERSHIP



Sources: Population and Employment (ESRI Business Analyst, 2021 estimates); Permits (Park County); Housing Demand Estimates (Economic & Planning Systems); Land Use & Ownership (Park County Assessor).



## EXISTING CONDITIONS

### Economy

**Agriculture and Ranching.** Agriculture and ranching in the Sunlight Area represents a small percentage of the overall land area. As of 2022, there were about 1,454 acres of high-value agricultural land (0.8% of all land in the Sunlight Area). Irrigated agricultural lands are concentrated along Sunlight Creek and primarily produce alfalfa and other hay, although other crops are also produced on a more limited basis.

**Recreation and Tourism.** Vehicular access to the North Absaroka Wilderness, Sunlight Basin, and other areas of the Shoshone National Forest are limited from the Sunlight Area. Day hiking, backpacking, hunting, and horseback riding are popular, but the areas see fewer visitors than more accessible public lands in Park County.

### Historic and Cultural Resources

There are no historic and cultural resources listed for the Sunlight Area on the National Register of Historic Places.

### Infrastructure and Services

**Water and Wastewater.** There are no municipal water or wastewater services in the Sunlight Area. Most development is served by individual on-site wells and septic systems.

**Irrigation.** There are no irrigation districts that serve the Sunlight Area. However, streams and privately-owned and maintained irrigation canals are present on some private lands near Sunlight Road.

### Environmentally Sensitive/Constrained Areas

**North Absaroka Wilderness.** The western and southern portion of the Sunlight Area lies within the North Absaroka Wilderness, which is located in Shoshone National Forest and abuts the eastern border of Yellowstone National Park.

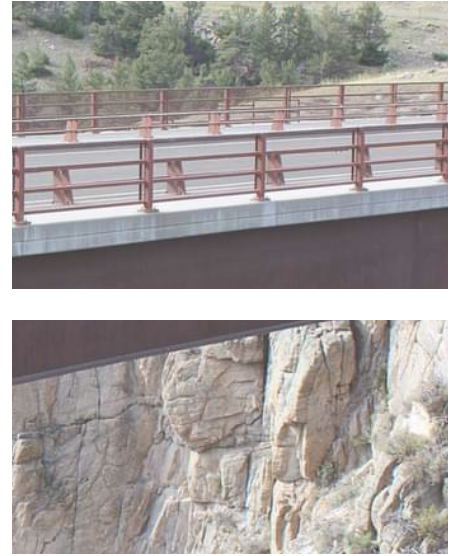
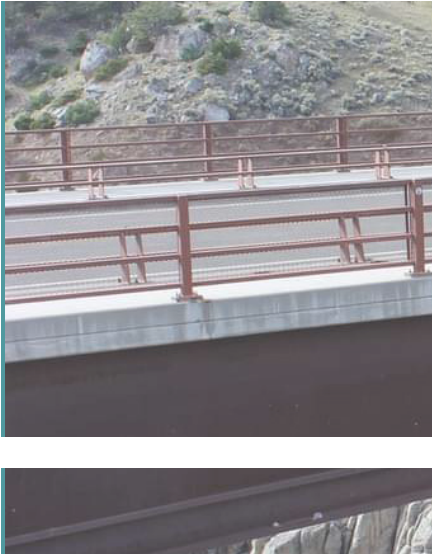
### Sunlight Basin Wildlife Habitat

**Management Area.** Located west of WY 296 along Sunlight Creek, the Sunlight Basin Wildlife Habitat Management Area (WHMA) is managed by the Wyoming Game and Fish Department and provides access with seasonal closures for fishing, hiking, hunting, and other outdoor recreation.

**Special Flood Hazard Area.** Flood-prone areas exist along some portions of Sunlight Creek, and are subject to additional permitting requirements.

**Conservation Easements.** There are no conservation easements in place in the Sunlight Area according to the National Conservation Easement Database (NCED).

**Crucial Wildlife Habitat.** The Sunlight Basin area provides crucial habitat for elk, mule deer, and moose.



## Zoning

Current zoning in the Sunlight Area is limited to two rural districts: General Rural 40-Acre (GR-40) and General Rural 20-Acre (GR-20). Both districts establish minimum average lot sizes for residential development, promote the retention of open space, agricultural land, wildlife and riparian habitat, and scenic areas, and prevent development on unstable geologic features.

## LAND USE SUITABILITY

Most of the land in the Sunlight Area is classified as prohibitive due to the preponderance of public lands. Private lands are rated least suitable or marginally suitable due to a lack of infrastructure and environmental and topographic constraints. Marginally suitable lands are generally found along Sunlight Creek.

## FUTURE LAND USE

The limited amount of private land in the Sunlight Area includes large ranches, single-household dwellings on large lots, mining claims, and seasonal cabins—sometimes surrounded by public lands. These areas are designated as either Agriculture or Ranch/Rangeland on the Future Land Use Map, which facilitates the continuation of rural, agricultural, and large-lot development. The surrounding public lands are all designated as Resource Management/Recreation. Most private lands in the planning area are within the Big Game Use Overlay, Agricultural Overlay, or both.

### Land Use Guidelines

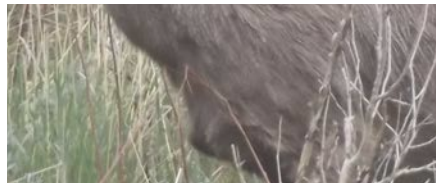
The following land use guidelines reflect the preferences of the constituents of the Sunlight Area, as expressed through the Plan Park County process, and the policy guidance and planning practices best suited to achieve those desires.

## SU-1: Rural Areas

Accommodate growth in Rural Areas areas that reflects infrastructure, groundwater, and suitability limitations. Encourage the conservation of larger, contiguous tracts of land by considering a minimum average lot size of at least 20 acres and allowing for smaller lot sizes in conjunction with the land use guidelines on page 72 and 73.

## SU-2: Priority Conservation Areas

Work with landowners, agricultural operators, wildlife managers, and conservation organizations to protect the viability and stability of agricultural operations and wildlife habitat in Priority Conservation Areas while continuing to



accommodate opportunities for the subdivision of land. Consider a minimum lot size of 20 to 35 acres within the Agricultural Overlay but allow for smaller lot sizes in conjunction with the land use guidelines for Rural Areas and Priority Conservation Areas in Chapter 2.

[See also, pages 72, 73, 82, and 84].

### **SU-3: Land Uses**

Support the needs of residents and agricultural producers by allowing limited, compatible accessory uses, including value-added agriculture, home occupations, on-site employee housing, and agriculture-supporting services. Discourage the establishment of industries and businesses that are primarily region-serving or cause significant traffic impacts).

### **SU-4: Short-term Rentals**

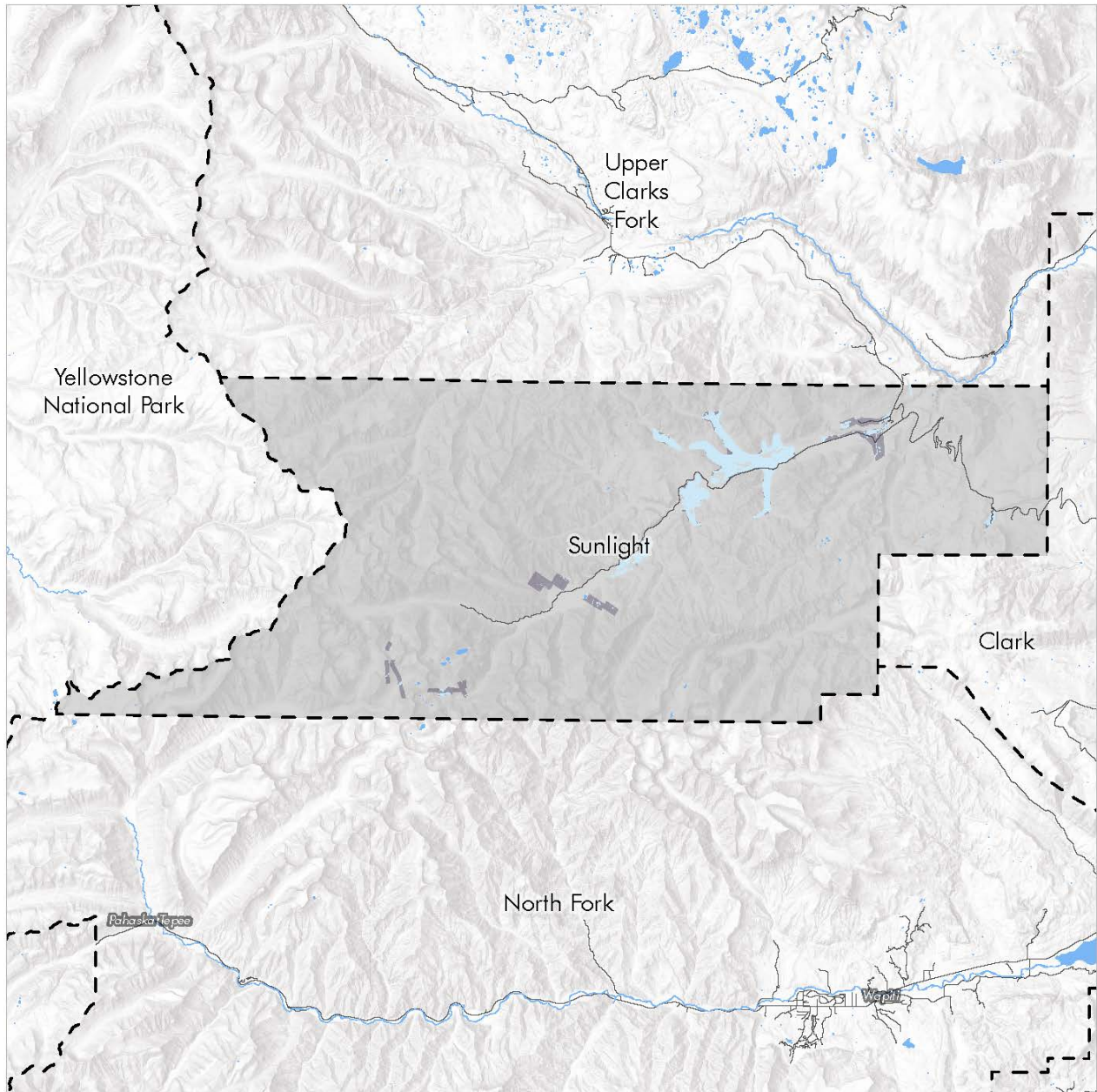
Explore limitations on the number, type, and operations of short-term rentals in the Sunlight Area, including conditions of approval (e.g., occupancy limits, parking requirements, duration of stay standards, ownership expectations) that limit impacts on the community.

### **SU-5: Recreation and Public Lands Access**

Continue to maintain and expand access to outdoor recreation in accordance with countywide goal OR-1 and associated policies on page 52.



### Land Suitability: Sunlight

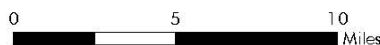


#### Suitability Ranking

- Prohibitive
- Least Suitable
- Marginally Suitable
- Moderately Suitable
- Suitable
- Highly Suitable

#### Other

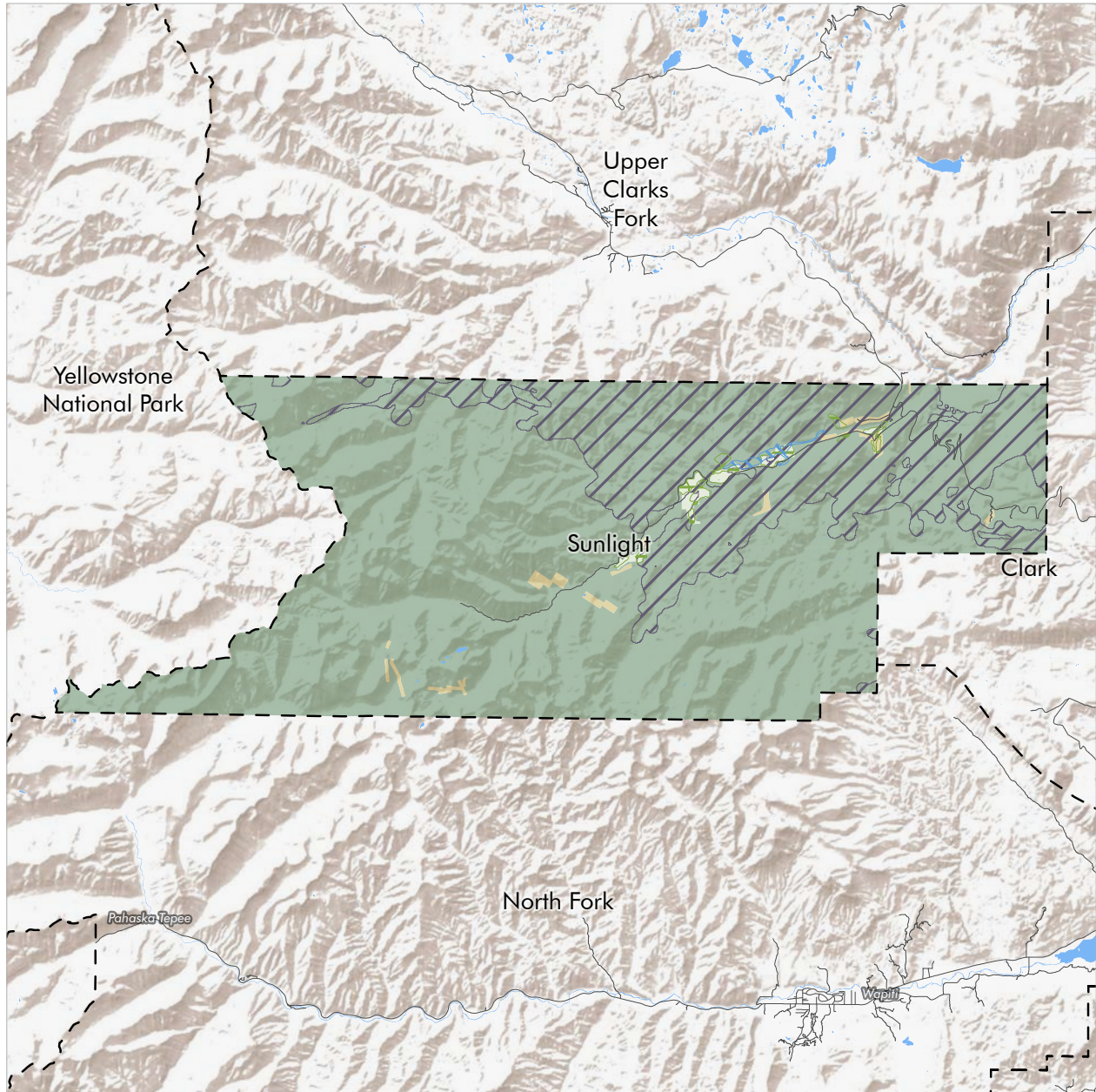
- Planning Area
- Road



Sources: City of Cody, City of Powell, ESRI, NCED, NRCS, NRWD, Park County, Town of Meeteetse, WYDOT, Wyoming Game & Fish Department, USDA, USGS



### Future Land Use: Sunlight



#### Future Land Use

##### Rural Areas

- Agriculture
- Ranch/Rangeland
- Resource Management/Recreation
- Rural Communities

##### Developed/Developing Areas

- Rural Residential
- Urban Residential
- Commercial
- Industrial

##### Priority Conservation Areas

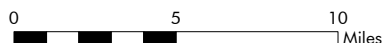
- Agricultural Overlay
- Big Game Use Overlay

##### Other

- Special Flood Hazard Area
- Planning Area
- Road

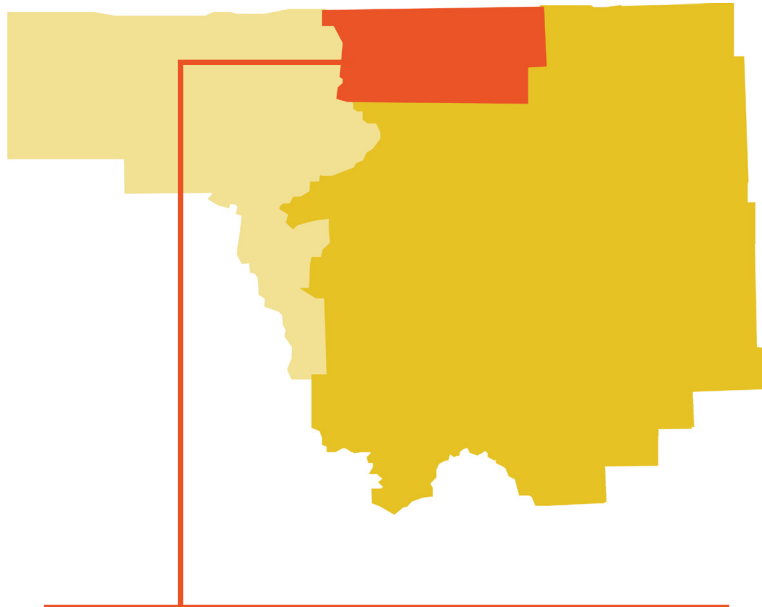


Sources: City of Cody, City of Powell, ESRI, NCEd, NRCS, NRWD, Park County, Town of Meeteetse, WYDOT, Wyoming Game & Fish Department, USDA, USGS





**UPPER  
CLARKS FORK  
PLANNING  
AREA**



**498.1 SQ MILES**

**7.2% OF COUNTY**

Policy guidance provided for the Upper Clarks Fork Area supplements the countywide goals and policies outlined in Chapter 2, and the countywide Growth Framework in Chapter 3. Direct cross-references are provided where applicable.

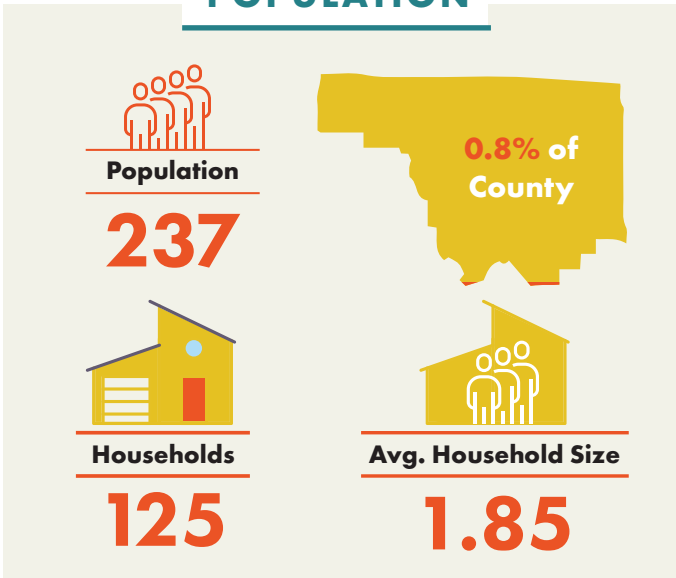
**LOCATION AND CONTEXT**

The Upper Clarks Fork Planning Area (“Upper Clarks Fork Area”) encompasses 498.1 square miles in the northwest portion of Park County—south of Montana and east of Yellowstone National Park. This area is accessible from the south via WY 296 (Chief Joseph Highway) and from Montana via the US 212 (Beartooth Highway), which is closed during the winter. Both of these routes are designated as scenic byways. The Upper Clarks Fork Area takes its name from the fork in the Yellowstone River that intersects and divides the area.

The Upper Clarks Fork Area is known for its rugged, high elevation terrain that offers visitors exceptional views, hiking, and wildlife viewing. The Beartooth Mountains and Pilot Peak are prominent visual landmarks in the Upper Clarks Fork Area.

# UPPER CLARKS FORK AREA AT A GLANCE

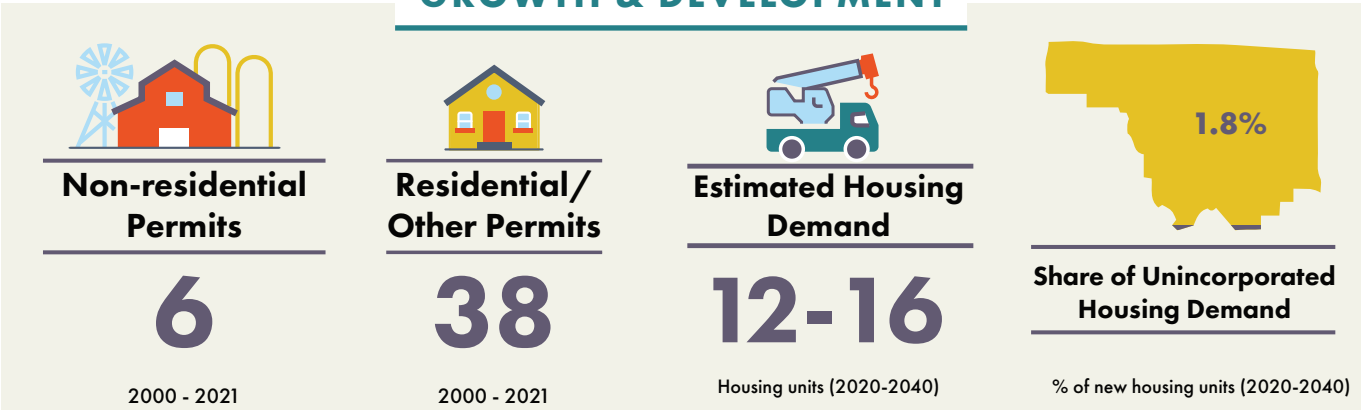
## POPULATION



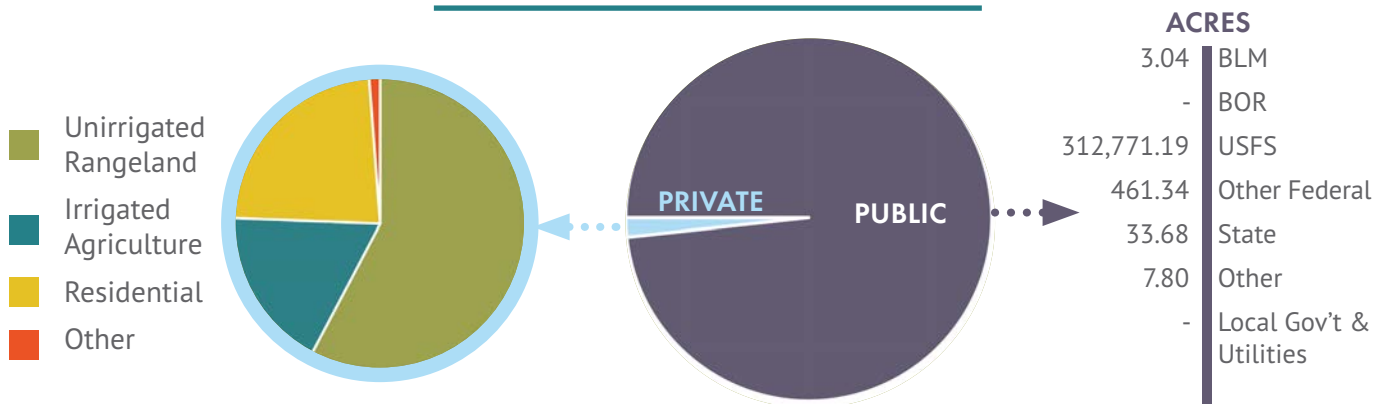
## EMPLOYMENT



## GROWTH & DEVELOPMENT



## LAND USE & OWNERSHIP



Sources: Population and Employment (ESRI Business Analyst, 2021 estimates); Permits (Park County); Housing Demand Estimates (Economic & Planning Systems); Land Use & Ownership (Park County Assessor).



Private landholdings represent a small fraction the Upper Clarks Fork Area's overall land area, contributing to its remote feel and limited development and services.

## EXISTING CONDITIONS

### Economy

**Agriculture and Ranching.** Agriculture and ranching account for a small amount of the land use in the Upper Clarks Fork Area. As of 2022, there were about 1,493 acres of high-value agricultural land (0.5% of all land in the Upper Clarks Fork Area).

**Recreation and Tourism.** Outdoor recreation and tourism are popular in the Upper Clarks Fork Area, particularly during the summer months when sightseeing from US 212 (Beartooth Scenic Byway) is possible. Day hiking, backpacking, and horseback riding are popular, but the planning area generally sees fewer visitors than more accessible parts of Park County.

### Historic and Cultural Resources

The Nez Perce Trail traverses the Upper Clarks Fork Area and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Other important historic and cultural resources in the Upper Clarks Fork Area include the Frank Hammit Monument, John Crandall Monument, the Bannock Trail, and the Wyoming Territorial Road.

### Infrastructure and Services

**Water and Wastewater.** There are no municipal water or wastewater services in the Upper Clarks Fork Area. Instead, development is served by on-site wells and septic systems.

**Irrigation.** There are no irrigation districts that serve the Upper Clarks Fork Area. However, streams and privately-owned and maintained irrigation canals are present on some private lands.

### Environmentally Sensitive/Constrained Areas

#### **Beartooth-Absaroka Wilderness.**

The southernmost portion of the Beartooth-Absaroka Wilderness, which is largely in Montana, is located in the Upper Clarks Fork Area.

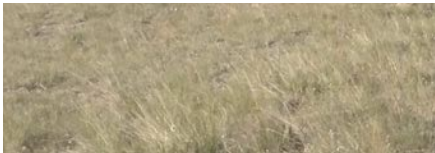
**North Absaroka Wilderness.** The western portion of the Upper Clarks Fork Area lies within the North Absaroka Wilderness, which is located in Shoshone National Forest and abuts the eastern border of Yellowstone National Park.

#### **High Lakes Wilderness Study Area.**

The High Lakes WSA is comprised of two parcels totaling approximately 14,826 acres north of US 212 (Beartooth Highway) and west of the adjacent Absaroka-Beartooth Wilderness.

#### **Clarks Fork Wild And Scenic River.**

Approximately 20.5 miles of the Clarks Fork of the Yellowstone River downstream from Crandall Creek Bridge is designated as a Wild and Scenic River.



**Scenic byways.** The Upper Clarks Fork Area is home to two designated scenic byways— WY 296 (Chief Joseph Scenic Byway) and US 212 (Beartooth Scenic Byway), which is also designated as an All-American Road.

**Conservation Easements.** Multiple conservation easements are in place on private lands along WY 296 and US 212 (west of its intersection with WY 296) according to the National Conservation Easement Database (NCED). While the footprint of these easements is small, they play an important role in protecting agricultural lands and breathtaking viewsheds along the planning area’s scenic byways.

**Special Flood Hazard Area.** Flood-prone areas are concentrated along the Clarks Fork of the Yellowstone River and other tributaries, and are subject to additional permitting requirements.

**Zoning**

Current zoning in the Upper Clarks Fork Area is limited to two rural districts: General Rural 35-Acre

(GR-35) and General Rural 5-Acre (GR-5). Both districts establish minimum average lot sizes for residential development, promote the retention of open space, agricultural land, wildlife and riparian habitat, and scenic areas, and prevent development on unstable geologic features.

**LAND USE SUITABILITY**

Due to the significant share of state and federal lands in the Upper Clarks Fork Area, most of the land is classified as prohibitive. Private lands are rated least suitable or marginally suitable due to a lack of infrastructure and environmental and topographic constraints.

**FUTURE LAND USE**

Private lands in the Upper Clarks Fork Area include large ranches, single-household dwellings and manufactured homes on large and small lots, campgrounds, mining claims, and seasonal cabins— sometimes surrounded by public lands. Almost all private lands in the planning area are also within the Big Game Use Overlay.

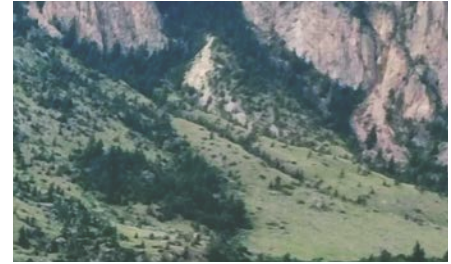
There is limited irrigated agriculture except for areas adjacent to the Clark Area, just east of the Beartooth Mountains. Almost all private land in the Upper Clarks Fork Area is designated as Ranch/Rangeland, although there are some smaller parcels designated as Rural Residential and a few parcels designated as Agriculture.

**Land Use Guidelines**

The following land use guidelines reflect the preferences of the constituents of the Upper Clarks Fork Area, as expressed through the Plan Park County process, and the policy guidance and planning practices best suited to achieve those desires.

**UC-1: Rural Areas**

Accommodate growth in Rural Areas areas that reflects infrastructure, groundwater, and suitability limitations. Encourage the conservation of larger, contiguous tracts of land by considering a minimum average lot size of at least 20 acres and allowing for smaller lot sizes in conjunction with the land use guidelines on page 72 and 73.



### UC-2: Priority Conservation Areas

Work with landowners, agricultural operators, wildlife managers, and conservation organizations to protect the viability and stability of agricultural operations and wildlife habitat in Priority Conservation Areas while continuing to accommodate opportunities for the subdivision of land. Consider a minimum lot size of 20 to 35 acres within the Agricultural Overlay but allow for smaller lot sizes in conjunction with the land use guidelines for Rural Areas and Priority Conservation Areas in Chapter 2.

[See also, pages 72, 73, 82, and 84].

### UC-3: Land Uses

Continue to allow complimentary commercial activities in the Upper Clarks Fork Area, including recreational businesses, services for residents and visitors, short-term rentals, and supporting agricultural uses that allow agricultural producers to remain viable, including a range of accessory agricultural production, processing, and sales, on-site employee housing, and agriculture-supporting services.

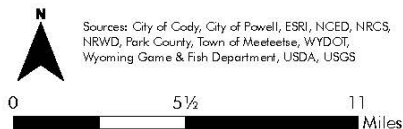
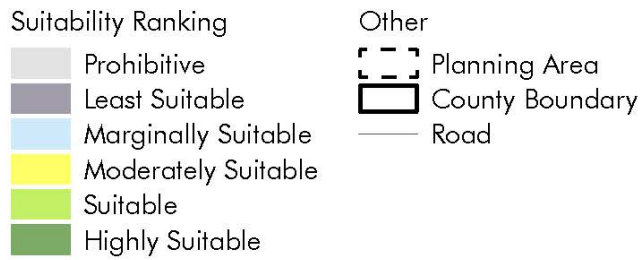
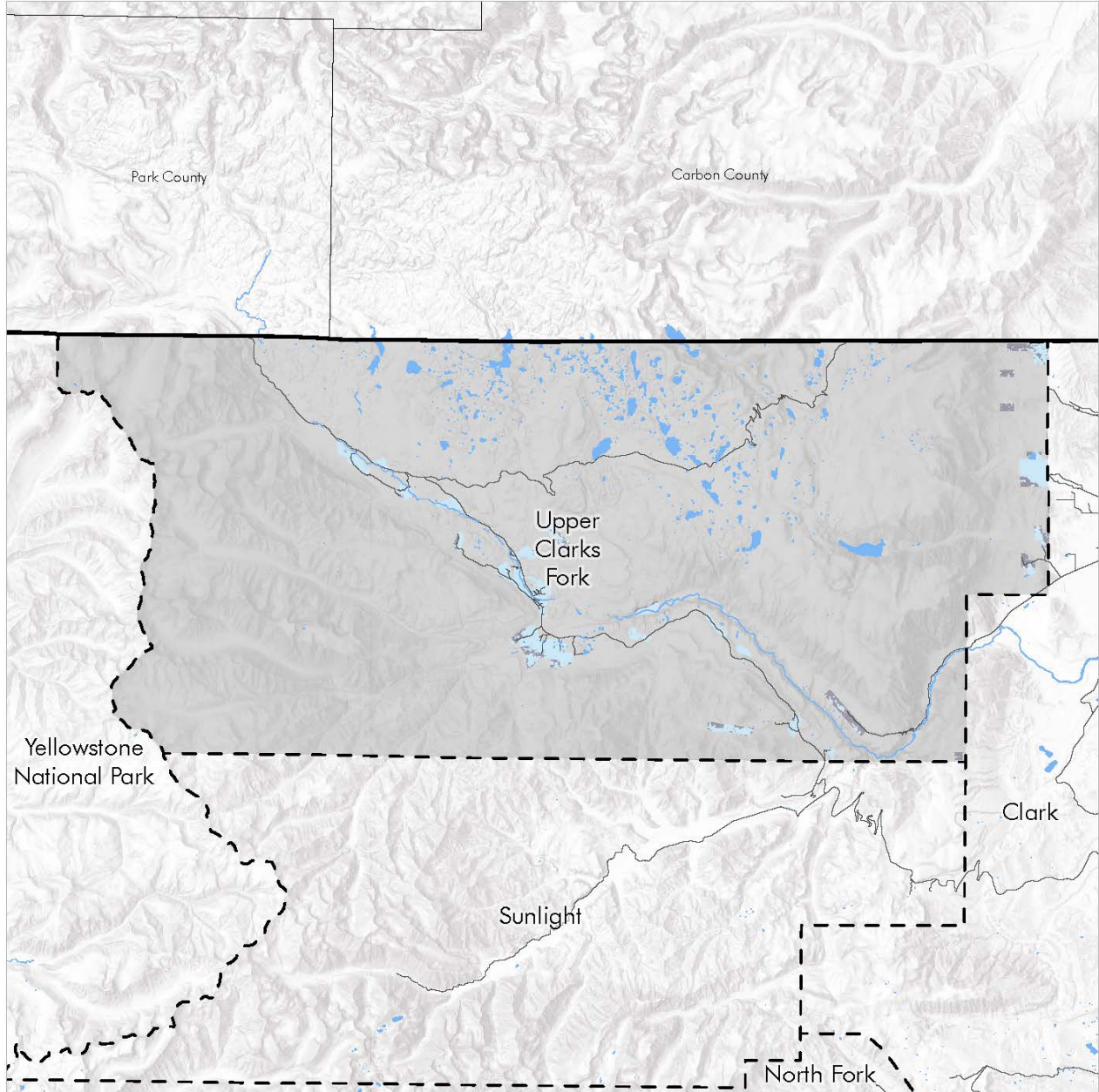
### UC-4: Short-term Rentals

Continue to allow opportunities for short-term rentals in accordance with adopted regulations and countywide policy HO-1.4 on page 50.

### UC-5: Recreation and Public Lands Access

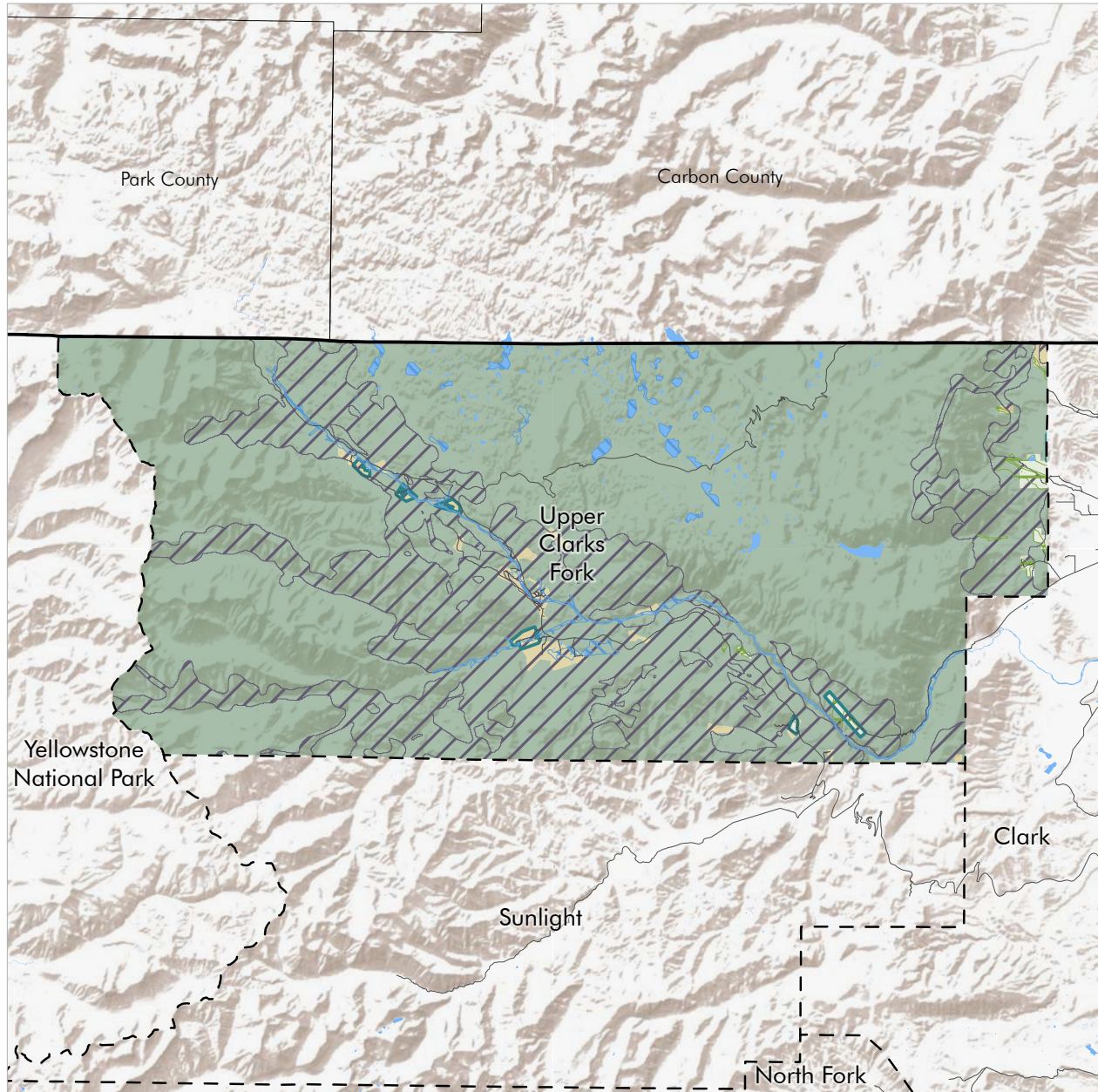
Continue to maintain and expand access to outdoor recreation in accordance with countywide goal OR-1 and associated policies on page 52.

### Land Suitability: Upper Clarks Fork





### Future Land Use: Upper Clarks Fork



#### Future Land Use

##### Rural Areas

- Agriculture
- Ranch/Rangeland
- Resource Management/Recreation
- Rural Communities

##### Developed/Developing Areas

- Rural Residential
- Urban Residential
- Commercial
- Industrial

##### Priority Conservation Areas

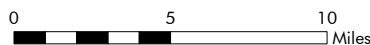
- Big Game Use Overlay
- Conservation Easement

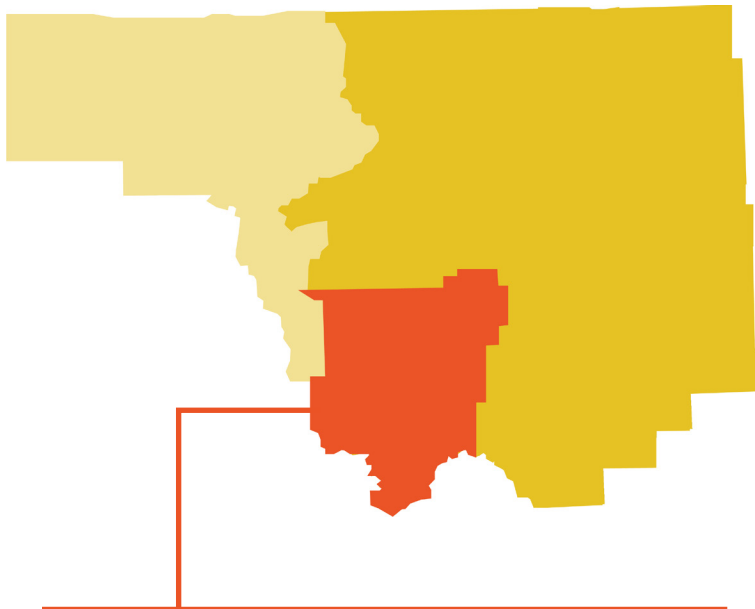
##### Other

- Special Flood Hazard Area
- Planning Area
- County Boundary
- Road



Sources: City of Cody, City of Powell, ESRI, NCED, NRCS, NRWD, Park County, Town of Meeteetse, WYDOT, Wyoming Game & Fish Department, USDA, USGS





## UPPER SOUTH FORK PLANNING AREA

### LOCATION AND CONTEXT

The Upper South Fork Planning Area (“Upper South Fork Area”) encompasses 845.1 square miles in the southwestern corner of Park County. The Upper South Fork Area borders Teton County and Yellowstone National Park to the west. The Washakie and Teton Wilderness areas cover a large portion of the Upper South Fork Area. As a result, the area is sparsely populated and has minimal services or vehicular access. Private landholdings, most of which consist of farms and ranches, are concentrated along the South Fork of the Shoshone River southwest of Cody and are accessed from either Southfork Road or Hunter Creek Road.

**845.1 SQ MILES**

**12.1% OF COUNTY**

Policy guidance provided for the Upper South Fork Area supplements the countywide goals and policies outlined in Chapter 2, and the countywide Growth Framework in Chapter 3. Direct cross-references are provided where applicable.

# UPPER SOUTH FORK AREA AT A GLANCE

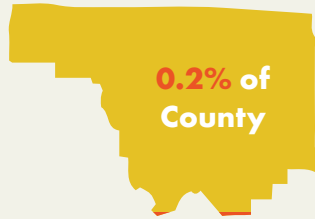
## POPULATION



67



28

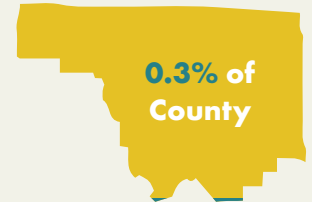


2.39

## EMPLOYMENT



52



**Employment Base**

## GROWTH & DEVELOPMENT



12

2000 - 2021



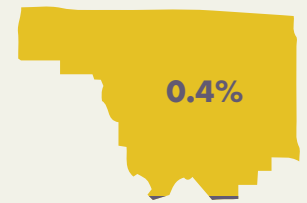
18

2000 - 2021



2-3

Housing units (2020-2040)

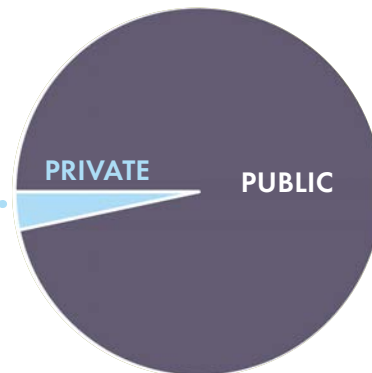
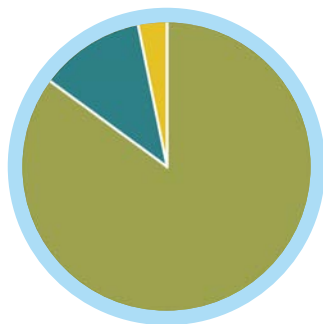


**Share of Unincorporated Housing Demand**

% of new housing units (2020-2040)

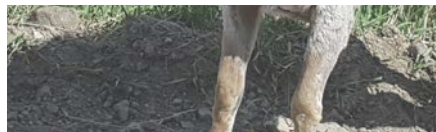
## LAND USE & OWNERSHIP

- Unirrigated Rangeland
- Irrigated Agriculture
- Residential
- Other



ACRES	
1,698.15	BLM
-	BOR
519,621.46	USFS
-	Other Federal
403.39	State
5.06	Other
-	Local Gov't & Utilities

Sources: Population and Employment (ESRI Business Analyst, 2021 estimates); Permits (Park County); Housing Demand Estimates (Economic & Planning Systems); Land Use & Ownership (Park County Assessor).



The Upper South Fork is home to a number of outfitters and guest ranches that provide lodging and guiding services for hunting, horseback riding, and hiking trips.

## EXISTING CONDITIONS

### Economy

**Agriculture and Ranching.** Due to the amount of public lands in the planning area, ranching and agriculture represent a small percentage of the overall land area. In 2022 there were about 4,157 acres of high-value agricultural land (0.8% of all land in the Upper South Fork Area). Irrigated agricultural lands are concentrated along the South Fork of the Shoshone River southwest of Cody. Prevalent crops include alfalfa and other hay, although malt barley and other crops are also produced on a more limited basis. Grazing allotments exist on U.S. Forest Service (USFS) lands at the eastern end of the Upper South Fork Area. Larger farms and ranches in the area include portions of the T E Ranch, the

J Bar 9 Ranch, Brown Thomas Meadow Ranch, and Crocker Ranch.

**Recreation and Tourism.** Vehicular access to the Washakie and Teton Wilderness areas is limited from the Upper South Fork Area. Day hiking, backpacking, hunting, and horseback riding are popular, but the area sees fewer visitors than more accessible public lands in Park County.

### Historic and Cultural Resources

**T E Ranch Headquarters.** Located southwest of Cody, the T E Ranch Headquarters is a single-story log ranch house that was acquired by Colonel William F. (Buffalo Bill) Cody in 1895. Eventually Cody held around 8,000 acres of private land for grazing operations and ran about 1,000 head of cattle. He also operated a free dude ranch, pack horse camping trips, and a big game hunting business from the T E Ranch. The property was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1973.<sup>23</sup>

### Infrastructure and Services

**Water and Wastewater.** There are no public water or wastewater services in the Upper South Fork Area. Instead, development is served by on-site wells and septic systems.

**Irrigation Districts.** There are no irrigation districts that serve the Upper South Fork Area. However, streams and privately owned and maintained irrigation canals are present on some private lands.

### Environmentally Sensitive/Constrained Areas

**Teton Wilderness.** The Teton Wilderness encompasses more than 585,238 acres within the Bridger-Teton National Forest. The Wilderness covers the western third of the Upper South Fork Area, west of the Continental Divide, and extends west into Teton County. The Wilderness hosts the headwaters of several Wild and Scenic Rivers, provides crucial habitat to many wildlife species, and offers opportunities for hiking, hunting, and fishing.<sup>24</sup>



**Washakie Wilderness.** The Washakie Wilderness encompasses more than 704,274 acres within the Shoshone National Forest, a substantial portion of which is in the Upper South Fork Area, east of the Continental Divide. The Washakie Wilderness also extends north into the North Fork Area and south into the Meeteetse Rural Area. This rugged and remote area is notable for its many high peaks, unique geologic formations, petrified remains of forests, and abundant wildlife.<sup>25</sup>

**Special Flood Hazard Areas.** Flood-prone areas are concentrated along South Fork of the Shoshone River, and are subject to additional permitting requirements.

**Conservation Easements.** The Nature Conservancy holds multiple conservation easements in the Upper South Fork Area according to the National Conservation Easement Database (NCED). The eight parcels are clustered along the South Fork of the Shoshone River south of Ishawooa Creek.

### Zoning

Current zoning in the Upper South Fork Area is limited to the General Rural 40-Acre (GR-40) district, which allows for limited residential development while promoting the retention of open space, agricultural land, wildlife and riparian habitat, and scenic areas, and preventing development on unstable geologic features. This district also allows for recreational development, timbering, and other uses traditionally associated with the more remote areas of Park County.

### LAND USE SUITABILITY

Land suitability rankings in the Upper South Fork Area are influenced by the prevalence of state and federal lands (prohibitive to development), availability of infrastructure, and environmental and topographic constraints. Private lands are generally least suitable or marginally suitable, although some moderately suitable land is located along Southfork Road.

### FUTURE LAND USE

The Upper South Fork Area is the second largest planning area and consists primarily of public lands. Large farms and ranches are common along the South Fork of the Shoshone River and are designated as Agriculture or Ranch/Rangeland. All private lands in the Upper South Fork Area are within the Big Game Use Overlay and many are also within the Agricultural Overlay. Public lands are designated as Resource Management/Recreation on the Future Land Use Map.

### Land Use Guidelines

The following land use guidelines reflect the preferences of the constituents of the Upper South Fork Area, as expressed through the Plan Park County process, and the policy guidance and planning practices best suited to achieve those desires.



### **US-1: Rural Areas**

Accommodate growth in Rural Areas areas that reflects infrastructure, groundwater, and suitability limitations. Encourage the conservation of larger, contiguous tracts of land by considering a minimum average lot size of at least 20 acres and allowing for smaller lot sizes in conjunction with the land use guidelines on page 72 and 73.

### **US-2: Priority Conservation Areas**

Work with landowners, agricultural operators, wildlife managers, and conservation organizations to protect the viability and stability of agricultural operations and wildlife habitat in Priority Conservation Areas while continuing to accommodate opportunities for the subdivision of land. Consider a minimum lot size of 20 to 35 acres within the Agricultural Overlay but allow for smaller lot sizes in conjunction with the land use guidelines for Rural Areas and Priority Conservation Areas in Chapter 2.

[See also, pages 72, 73, 82, and 84].

### **US-3: Land Uses**

Allow a range of supporting uses in the Upper South Fork Area, including agricultural production, processing, and sales, home occupations, short-term rentals, on-site employee housing, and agriculture-supporting services where water and wastewater service is adequate.

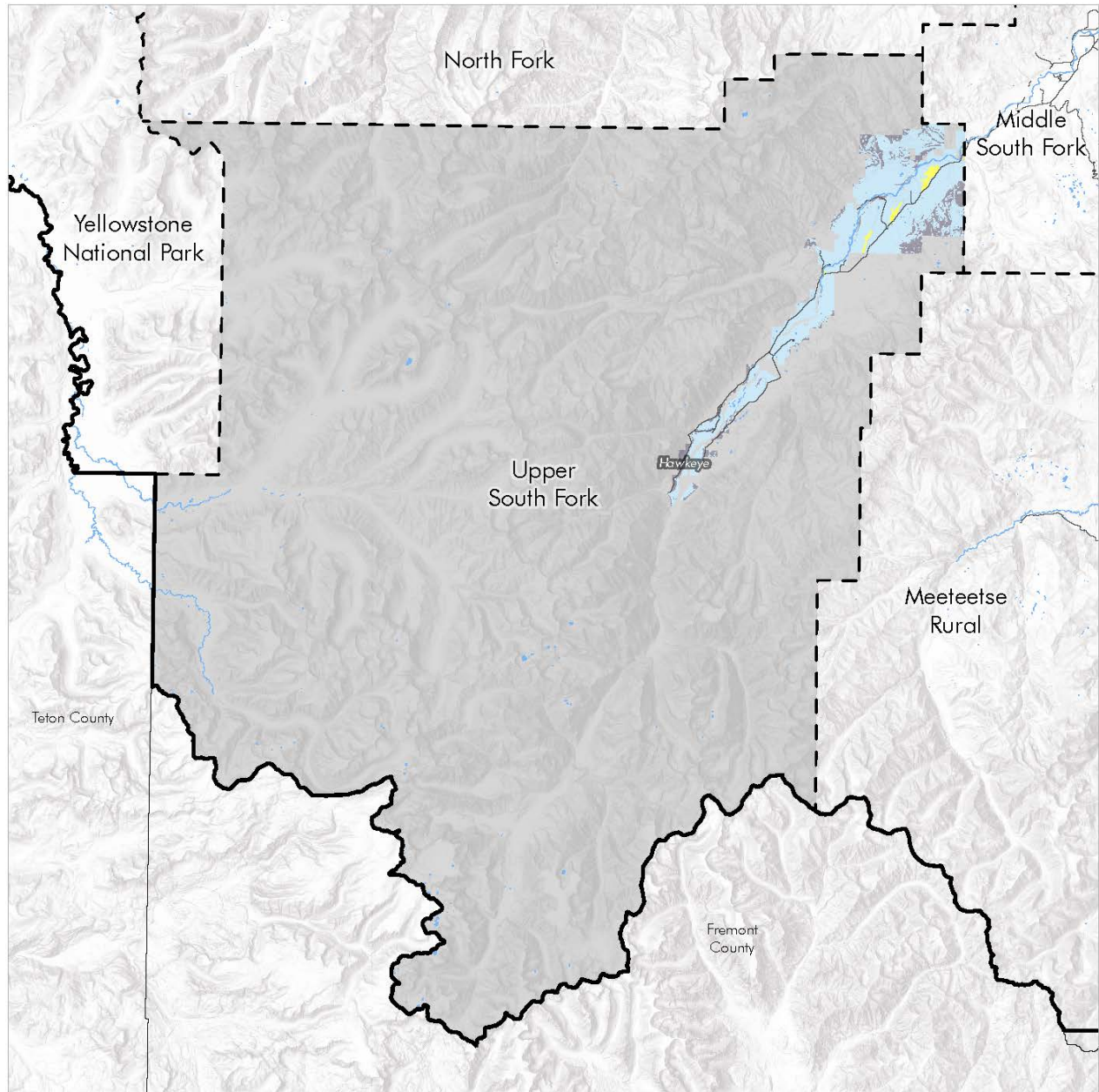
### **US-4: Short-term Rentals**

Continue to allow opportunities for short-term rentals in accordance with adopted regulations and countywide policy HO-1.4 on page 50.

### **US-5: Recreation and Public Lands**

Continue to maintain and expand access to outdoor recreation in accordance with countywide goal OR-1 and associated policies on page 52.

### Land Suitability: Upper South Fork

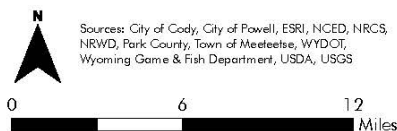


#### Suitability Ranking

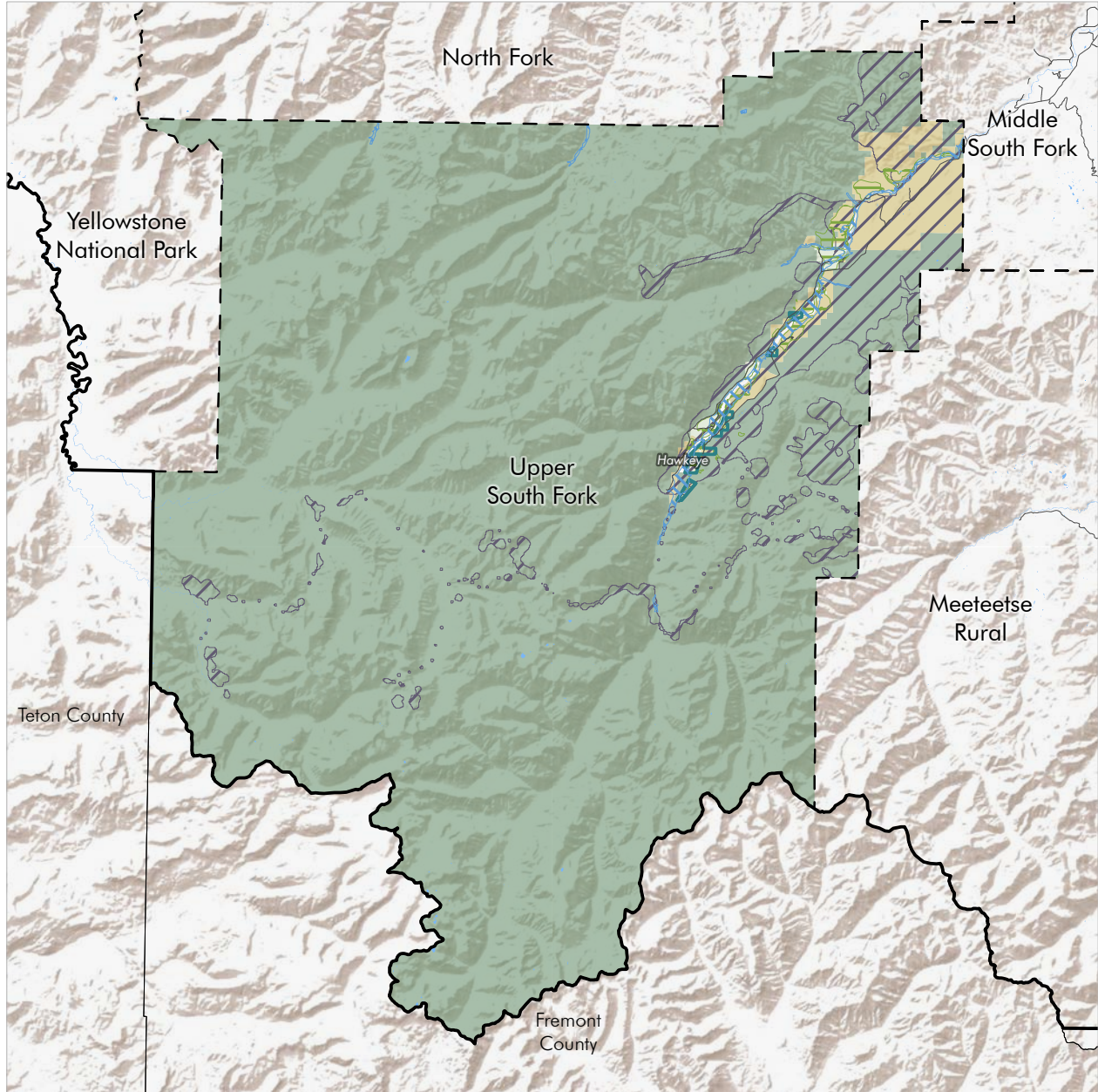
- Prohibitive
- Least Suitable
- Marginally Suitable
- Moderately Suitable
- Suitable
- Highly Suitable

#### Other

- Planning Area
- County Boundary
- Road



### Future Land Use: Upper South Fork

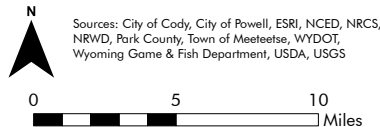


**Future Land Use**

- Rural Areas
  - Agriculture
  - Ranch/Rangeland
  - Resource Management/Recreation
  - Rural Communities
- Developed/Developing Areas
  - Rural Residential
  - Urban Residential
  - Commercial
  - Industrial

- Priority Conservation Areas
  - Agricultural Overlay
  - Big Game Use Overlay
  - Conservation Easement

- Other
  - Special Flood Hazard Area
  - Planning Area
  - County Boundary
  - Road



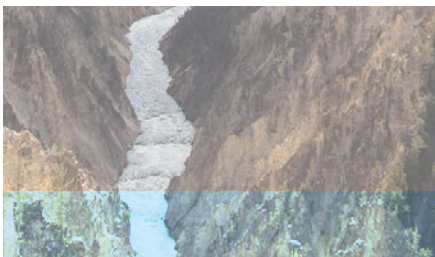
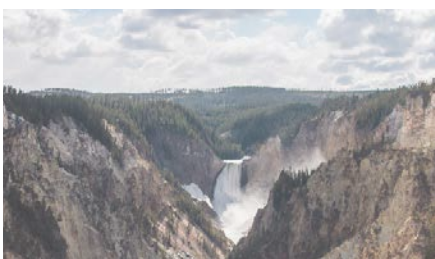
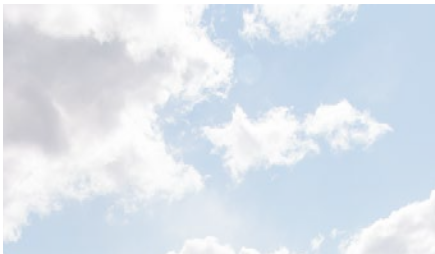


## CHAPTER 4 ENDNOTES

- 1 “NRMP - Park County Wyoming,” February 11, 2020, 93, 27, <https://parkcounty-wy.gov/planning-and-zoning/nrmp/>.
- 2 “Nez Perce National Historic Trail - Home,” accessed May 9, 2022, <https://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/npnht/home/?cid=stelprdb5245289>.
- 3 “Pioneer School,” accessed May 14, 2022, <https://wyoshpo.wyo.gov/index.php/programs/national-register/wyoming-listings/view-full-list/742-pioneer-school>.
- 4 Population and employment data for Cody Local Area includes the City of Cody
- 5 “Hayden Arch Bridge,” accessed May 14, 2022, <https://wyoshpo.wyo.gov/index.php/programs/national-register/wyoming-listings/view-full-list/735-hayden-arch-bridge>.
- 6 Heart Mountain Relocation Center,” accessed May 14, 2022, <https://wyoshpo.wyo.gov/index.php/programs/national-register/wyoming-listings/view-full-list/736-heart-mountain-relocation-center>.
- 7 “McCullough Peaks | Bureau of Land Management.”
- 8 Population and employment data for Meeteetse Rural includes the Town of Meeteetse.
- 9 “Yearbooks,” accessed May 9, 2022, <https://wyoshpo.wyo.gov/index.php/programs/centennial-farm-ranch/yearbooks>.
- 10 “First National Bank of Meeteetse,” accessed May 14, 2022, <https://wyoshpo.wyo.gov/index.php/programs/national-register/wyoming-listings/view-full-list/733-first-national-bank-of-meeteetse>.
- 11 “Shoshone National Forest - Washakie Wilderness.”
- 12 “National Park Service Visitor Use Statistics - Yellowstone National Park (U.S. National Park Service),” accessed January 19, 2023, <https://irma.nps.gov/STATS/Reports/Park/YELL>.
- 13 “Pahaska Tepee,” accessed May 14, 2022, <https://wyoshpo.wyo.gov/index.php/programs/national-register/wyoming-listings/view-full-list/740-pahaska-tepee>.
- 14 “Red Star Lodge and Sawmill,” accessed May 14, 2022, <https://wyoshpo.wyo.gov/index.php/programs/national-register/wyoming-listings/view-full-list/747-red-star-lodge-and-sawmill>.
- 15 “Goff Creek Lodge,” accessed May 14, 2022, <https://wyoshpo.wyo.gov/index.php/programs/national-register/wyoming-listings/view-full-list/734-goff-creek-lodge>.
- 16 “Absaroka Mountain Lodge,” accessed May 14, 2022, <https://wyoshpo.wyo.gov/index.php/programs/national-register/wyoming-listings/view-full-list/723-absaroka-mountain-lodge>.
- 17 “Wapiti Ranger Station National Historic Landmark,” accessed May 14, 2022, <https://wyoshpo.wyo.gov/index.php/programs/national-register/wyoming-listings/view-full-list/751-wapiti-ranger-station-national-historic-landmark>.
- 18 “Stelprdb5330186.Pdf.”
- 19 Population and employment data for the Powell Local Area includes the City of Powell.
- 20 “Oregon Basin Oil Field,” Geology of Wyoming, accessed May 15, 2022, <https://www.geowyo.com/oregon-basin-oil-field.html>.
- 21 “Oregon Basin Oil Field.”
- 22 “McCullough Peaks | Bureau of Land Management.”
- 23 “T E Ranch Headquarters,” accessed May 15, 2022, <https://wyoshpo.wyo.gov/index.php/programs/national-register/wyoming-listings/view-full-list/749-t-e-ranch-headquarters>.
- 24 “Bridger-Teton National Forest - Teton Wilderness.”
- 25 “Shoshone National Forest - Washakie Wilderness.”



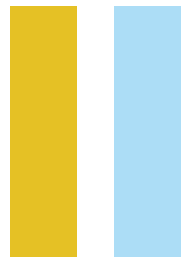
# CHAPTER



# 5



# IMPLEMENTATION



## PURPOSE OF THE IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

In addition to conveying a clear commitment to the implementation of the Land Use Plan, this chapter plays a variety of roles in helping to:

**Set realistic expectations.** Implementation of some aspects of the Land Use Plan will require the allocation of staffing resources and funding, both of which are limited today. Establishing clear priorities will help ensure that the County's resources are focused where they will be most impactful in the near-term.

**Foster a culture of collaboration.** The Land Use Plan is comprehensive in its scope. While some implementation strategies can be executed by Park County staff and elected and appointed officials, others will require cooperation with partner entities and organizations.

**Establish a framework for monitoring progress over time.** Progress that is made toward achieving the citizens' visions and goals must be monitored, and the results of that monitoring should be made available to the community at large.

## ABOUT THIS CHAPTER

Protecting the shared values that reflect/support the citizens' vision for Park County will require a sustained commitment on the part of County elected and appointed officials, County staff, and the County's many partners over the next ten years and beyond. This chapter outlines priority initiatives and implementation strategies to help advance the community's vision and focus implementation efforts.

While some of the implementation strategies contained in this chapter are already underway or are expected to be initiated over the next one to three years, some will be carried out over a longer timeframe.

This chapter should be reviewed on an annual basis to monitor the County's progress; update the status of priority initiatives or add new priority initiatives; review and refine the anticipated timing of longer-term strategies; and add new implementation strategies or remove/refine existing ones, as needed. Amendments and updates to the Land Use Plan may require a public hearing process as outlined in Chapter 1.

## PRIORITY INITIATIVES

Five initiatives have been identified as key priorities to help advance the community's vision and focus implementation efforts. Listed in no particular order of importance, they include:

- Align the Development Standards and Regulations with the Land Use Plan;
- Expand Park County's Conservation Toolkit;
- Coordinate with municipalities and other agencies on development proposals within coordinated planning areas;
- Formalize Geographic Information Systems (GIS) development and management practices; and
- Pursue/collaborate on regional special projects.

A brief explanation of each priority initiative is provided. Each initiative highlights a specific implementation strategy—or set of implementation strategies—that the County will focus on in the coming years. Efforts to advance these initiatives are already underway in several cases.



## PRIORITY INITIATIVE 1: ALIGN THE DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS AND REGULATIONS WITH THE LAND USE PLAN

### WHY IT IS IMPORTANT

Following the adoption of the 1998 Land Use Plan, the County subsequently adopted new Development Standards and Regulations to help implement that plan. While many of the regulations are proven useful, there are others that do not align with the community's vision as described in the 1998 Land Use Plan. The most notable discrepancy is the allowance for lots in much of the county to be subdivided into as small as one-acre lots despite community concerns about preserving agricultural lands, wildlife habitat, and the rural character of Park County—concerns that are also recognized in this Plan. This Plan intends to clarify and strengthen the community's vision and values to support the adoption of future updates to the Development Standards and Regulations that better reflect that policy direction.

### IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

A comprehensive review and update of the County's Development Standards and Regulations is needed to implement the updated Land Use Plan. This process will involve the identification and removal of potential barriers to Land Use Plan implementation, as well as the creation of new tools or mechanisms to achieve the intent of the Land Use Plan. A preliminary list of recommended updates is provided below.

#### Countywide Recommendations

The following recommendations directly support the implementation of the Countywide Goals and Policies in Chapter 2. Updates would be applicable countywide and/or set the stage for tailored guidance at the planning area level.

#### Update Existing Agriculture Overlay (AO)

Consider adopting the updated Agriculture Overlay boundary that is presented in this Plan. The boundaries of the current Agriculture Overlay do not align with the actual extent of the high-value agricultural lands in Park County. An updated boundary is needed to ensure protective measures are in place for these Priority Conservation Areas. As well, policy direction for the overlay does not provide sufficient direction for development standards and regulations to address development in the overlay.

#### Adopt Big Game Use Overlay

Consider adopting the Big Game Use Overlay, established as part of this Plan, as a component of the County's Development Standards and Regulations to minimize the impacts of future development within the overlay. Establish internal/external review procedures for development within the Big Game Use Overlay in collaboration with Wyoming Game and Fish, prioritizing high and medium use areas. Consider low-level standards for development within low-use areas and stronger standards and requirements for development within medium- and high-use areas. Low-level standards may include educating developers about the presence and value of wildlife in the overlay; impacts of fencing on wildlife movement and habitat and the concept of wildlife-friendly fencing; and the option to consult with Wyoming Game and Fish

(See Goal AG-1 and EN-2 and associated policies, pages 42-45.)

Department (WGFD) to learn more. Higher-level standards may include limiting or restricting the placement of fences within the overlay; encouraging the use of conservation subdivisions within the overlay to preserve open spaces and wildlife movement areas; and recommending that developers consult with and follow the recommendations of WGFD.

### **Address Statutory Subdivision Fencing Requirements**

As of July 1, 2023, fencing requirements for subdivisions (previously regulated by W.S. §11-28-106(b)) will be under the purview of Counties as part of the subdivision permitting process according to W.S. §18-5-306(a)(xiii) and W.S. §18-5-319. Park County is required to apply the new fencing requirements to all subdivisions over five lots and will have the option to require subdivisions of five lots or less to comply with the new provisions. These requirements should be incorporated into the Development Standards and Regulations to address subdivision fencing requirements for the protection of livestock and private property. Consider addressing how subdivision fencing may negatively impact continuity of agricultural practices and wildlife use areas in conjunction with the related overlay requirements.

### **Establish/Refine Site Design Standards for the siting of Utility-Scale Wind and Solar Energy Facilities**

W.S. § 18-05-501 establishes minimum standards for utility-scale wind and solar energy facilities. Park County's existing Development Standards and Regulations include specific standards for wind facilities, but not utility-scale solar. Park County residents in all planning areas expressed a desire for a proactive approach to the regulation of utility-scale energy facilities. Existing regulations for wind facilities should be reviewed and updated, and new regulations should be adopted to support the implementation of countywide goals and policies specific to energy facility development and natural resources.

### **Clarify Short-term Rental Regulations**

According to data tracked by AirDNA.CO, Park County saw a 66 percent increase (from 335 to 555) in the number of short-term rental units (STRs) between 2019 and 2023. While the number of active STR listings fluctuates from quarter to quarter and year to year, STRs in Park County are contributing to growing concerns about rising housing costs, housing availability, and associated impacts on the workforce and economy. Park County held a series of listening sessions with the community in 2019 to discuss possible approaches for consideration. No action was taken at that time, in part, because the Board felt it was necessary to update the Land Use Plan before making significant changes to the regulations.

More than 660 people who weighed in on key policy choices related to short-term rentals as part of the Plan Park County process in October 2022. Responses indicate that, at a countywide level, a majority of respondents favor a proactive (36.65%) or moderate approach (24.43%) to the County regulating STRs. Percentages at the planning area level

are far more mixed, with the Clark and Upper South Fork Planning Areas having the highest percentage of respondents that supported a limited approach.

Based on the range of perspectives offered by members of the public in both 2019 and 2022, a “middle ground” approach is recommended.

Potential countywide strategies for short-term rentals could include:

- Establishing and maintaining a database of rentals using secondary data sources (e.g., AirDNA.CO) and tracking changes in number of active rentals over time.
- Developing definitions and standards related to short-term rentals as either accessory housing or commercial uses, which may be dependent upon the number of units, owner occupation of the property, or other factors, a commercial use with a focus on owner vs. non-owner occupied short-term rentals, and clearly distinguishing between short-term and long-term rentals.
- Establishing an annual registration program for short-term rentals that identifies the owner of the unit and an emergency contact number for the owner or property manager.
- Supplemental strategies could be considered at a planning area level, where a desire for more proactive approaches has been expressed:
  - Limits on the number of short-term rentals or number of nights allowed in certain areas;
  - Restricting short-term rental permits to accessory units in certain areas; and/or
  - Fees for short-term rental to offset impacts on county services and infrastructure.

### **Revisit/Adjust Planning Area Boundaries**

The need for potential adjustments to the boundaries of several of the 12 planning area boundaries was identified as part of the Plan Park County process to better reflect variations in topography, access, existing/future land use, and other considerations. Possible adjustments could include the creation of a new ‘Meeteetse Local’ planning area that includes lands adjacent to the Town of Meeteetse where denser development is anticipated, and is distinct from more rural areas (similar to the approach used for the Cody Local and Powell Local Planning Areas); adjustments to the western, eastern, and southern limits of the Clark Planning Area boundary; and minor adjustments to the Cody Local and Sage Creek Planning Area boundaries to reflect the limits of the coordinated planning areas surrounding the City of Cody. Potential updates should be considered in conjunction with future changes to zoning districts and the zoning map.

### **Update the Official Zoning Map of Park County**

Updates to the official Zoning Map of Park County will be required in conjunction with updates to the County’s Development Standards and Regulations and proposed overlays. Typically, a conversion map and accompanying table are prepared as part of a major code update to illustrate the proposed alignment between existing and proposed

(See Goal HO-2 and associated policies, page 50.)

zoning districts. A side-by-side map viewer can also be used to help the public understand what types of changes are proposed in their area prior to adoption of a new map.

### **Explore Strategies to Promote Voluntary Compliance with Standard Building Codes**

The question of whether Park County should explore the adoption of a uniform building code was posed as part of the Plan Park County process. Public input on this question was essentially split down the middle. While public support is lacking for a regulatory approach, the County should continue to explore strategies that encourage home-builders and developers to follow standard building codes used in other communities as part of the development review process and increase awareness of the potential safety, health, and financial risks that can arise from construction “short cuts.” A particular emphasis should be placed on codes that relate to wind, snow-loading, and other climate-related considerations.

### **Clarify Status of Legacy Land Use Changes and Planned Unit Developments**

From the early 1980s through the late 1990s, Park County regulations (referred to as the Land Use Implementation Program) required any change of land use, outside of a single-family residence, to be approved. The Land Use Change (LUC) approval process (also referred to as Land Use Classification or Reclassification) involved public hearings with the P&Z Commission and the Board. Land Use Classifications were essentially zoning district designations; thus, an approved LUC effected a zoning district change for the properties in question. Similarly, in the mid- to late 1990s, the County implemented Planned Unit Developments (PUDs) which were a type of land use classification and, hence, a zoning district designation.

When the County approved a zoning resolution in 2000, previously approved LUCs and PUDs were declared in effect, so long as they were not abandoned, inactive, or not substantially advanced for five years from the effective date of the regulations. Subsequent regulations have not provided clear guidance for staff, the P&Z Commission, and the Board to proceed with proper permitting of uses proposed on lands with these special designations, some of which are not compatible with surrounding land uses and present zoning designations for adjacent lands.

As part of future regulation amendments, the Board should evaluate the status of each LUC and PUD and consider the following actions: 1) Officially expire/abandon LUCs and PUDs that were not established according to the terms of approval and since the date of approval, or which have been abandoned, inactive or not substantially advanced since that time; and 2) provide clear language and guidance regarding the handling of permits for development proposed within the active LUCs and PUDs.



## PRIORITY INITIATIVE 2: EXPAND PARK COUNTY'S CONSERVATION TOOLKIT

### WHY IT IS IMPORTANT

In recent years, Park County has experienced rising development pressures in agricultural areas, increasing conflicts between farms and residential development, and escalating property values fueled by demand for rural lifestyles. As a result, farming and ranching is increasingly cost-prohibitive and the subdivision of farm and ranchland is becoming increasingly attractive.

A majority of the more than 700 people who participated in a discussion of key policy choices as part of the Plan Park County process expressed a desire for a proactive (53.34%) or moderate (23.90%) approach to the conservation of agricultural lands. While specifics varied by planning area, participants generally expressed interest in the use of regulatory tools and incentives, as well as for exploring additional tools and strategies that could broaden the efforts to encourage voluntary preservation of agricultural lands. This sentiment was reflected in the comments and other survey responses at various stages in the process.

### IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

#### Regulatory Tools

Regulatory tools are addressed generally under Priority Initiative 1: Align the Development Standards and Regulations with the Land Use Plan. Strategies may include adjusting average and/or minimum lot sizes to reflect the preferences of residents and landowners in each planning area, encouraging the use of conservation subdivisions, and exploring other conservation strategies within the Agricultural Overlay. Planning area-specific recommendations are addressed through the land use guidelines in Chapter 4. These recommendations are intended to serve as a starting point for further discussion with the public as part of future updates to the Development Standards and Regulations. Regulatory tools are the primary tool used by Park County to support conservation.

#### Additional Tools and Strategies

While there are a number of land trusts operating in Park County today, a very small percentage of the private land in Park County is protected by conservation easements. Park County has an opportunity to play an important role in helping to educate interested property owners about land trusts and other conservation strategies, and in making referrals when asked. Additional tools and strategies commonly used by counties in other western states to support conservation objectives include, but are not limited to:

- **Purchase of Development Rights (PDR).** PDR programs are designed to facilitate the purchase of development rights and place a conservation easement (or other legal easement) on a property that restricts development on the property. In a PDR program, the landowner retains ownership and can use the land for purposes specified in the easement (e.g., agriculture). Public funds are often used to purchase development rights in a PDR program, although funding can also be found through both local and national nonprofit conservation organizations that work to preserve natural resources and farmlands.



- **Transfer of Development Rights (TDR).** TDR programs shift development rights from areas unsuitable for development (e.g., natural hazard areas) or areas where lower density or land conservation are desired (e.g., sensitive lands such as wetlands or agricultural lands) to areas where more growth or higher densities are desired, and infrastructure and services are available. Public funds are generally not used to finance TDR programs. Instead, the programs are intended to stimulate private sector participation by creating a market for development rights. In some cases, however, TDR banks are established, and public funds are used to purchase TDRs from willing sellers to be sold to buyers in receiving areas when there is a market for the TDRs.
- **County Funding and Financing.** Some counties establish programs for purchasing land that is deemed to be high priority for conservation outright. These programs are typically funded through taxation. Counties in Wyoming typically have four primary types of revenue sources: property taxes, sales taxes, intergovernmental revenues (stated and federal funding), and charges and fees. Within these four types are specific funding and financing tools that support programs and services.

Additional detail is provided on each of these potential tools, along with case study examples, in Appendix B. These examples are intended to spur ongoing discussion about the types of conservation tools that will work best for Park County moving forward.



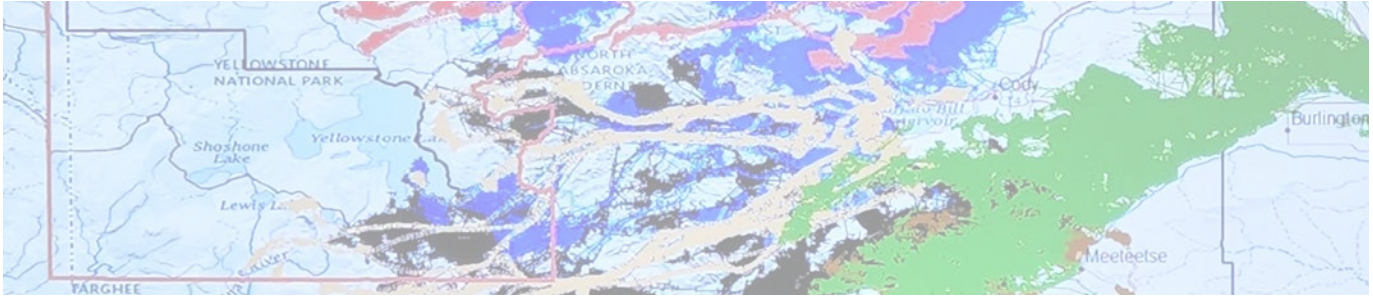
## PRIORITY INITIATIVE 3: COORDINATE WITH MUNICIPALITIES AND OTHER AGENCIES ON DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS WITHIN COORDINATED PLANNING AREAS

### WHY IT IS IMPORTANT

A number of the growth management goals and policies contained in the Land Use Plan will be achieved through cooperation and partnerships between the County, municipalities, outside agencies (e.g., NRWD, irrigation districts, and others), or other governmental entities.

### IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

- Develop a model Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) to use with municipalities and outside agencies within Coordinated Planning Areas that addresses:
  - Statement of objectives;
  - Responsibility for development review and approval;
  - Identification of future annexation areas;
  - Priority areas for conservation;
  - Development standards;
  - Annexation;
  - Maintenance responsibilities; and
  - Amendments and implementation.
- Prioritize adoption of tailored IGAs with the cities of Cody and Powell in the near-term (ideally within two to three years of this Plan's adoption).
- Explore options to establish IGAs with the towns of Meeteetse and Frannie that, at minimum, formalize responsibilities for development review and approval, as opportunities arise (following the adoption of IGAs with the cities of Cody and Powell).



## PRIORITY INITIATIVE 4: FORMALIZE GIS DEVELOPMENT AND MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

### WHY IT IS IMPORTANT

A web-based Geographic Information System (GIS) map portal was developed as part of the Plan Park County process to provide access to an extensive library of data and information that were used to inform the preparation of the Land Use Plan. Ongoing maintenance of this portal and County data included in the portal is essential to protect the County's investment in this resource and ensure the public has access to timely, accurate information. GIS capabilities and responsibilities across County departments currently vary and expanded coordination with outside agencies such as the irrigation districts, NRWD, municipalities, and others will be required to keep the portal current.

### IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

Park County has made incremental improvements to its GIS system in recent years based on the results of a 2019 GIS Needs Assessment. While focused on the map portal for the Land Use Plan, this priority initiative will need to be coordinated with ongoing efforts across departments. Implementation strategies include:

- **Assigning dedicated GIS staff.** A dedicated staff member will be needed to serve as the “go to” for all requests, complete regular updates, and coordinate with outside agencies and others who use the data. Park County could fill this role in one of several ways: 1) hiring a part- or full-time GIS person; 2) training current staff to maintain the portal (and other County data); or 3) hiring an outside consultant.
- **Establishing parameters for regular updates.** Updates to the portal should occur on a quarterly or bi-annual basis at minimum to keep the data current. More frequent updates may be possible if the system is managed by County staff.
- **Establish a GIS data governance framework.** Data governance is a set of principles, policies, standards, and practices that ensures your data is reliable, accurate, and consistent. Park County acknowledges the importance and power of GIS data development and analysis and should not only continue to use and produce GIS data, but also protect the investments the County as an enterprise has already made and will make in GIS. Within a GIS data governance framework, the County can achieve the following, and more:
  - Inventory existing GIS datasets to identify gaps, duplication and potential quality issues;
  - Identify existing and potential GIS data users and creators and determine/establish roles as part of the enterprise;
  - Identify parameters, processes and procedures, and rules for: data creation, access, management (including metadata creation), updates and sharing; quality assurance and control; and security; and
  - Identify opportunities for automation of processes including utilizing modeling tools to standardize and accelerate repetitive tasks.



## PRIORITY INITIATIVE 5: REGIONAL SPECIAL PROJECTS

### WHY IT IS IMPORTANT

Some of the issues identified as part of the Plan Park County process may require a regional partnership, or effort to address, or follow-up work by Park County. These regionally oriented, special projects are focused on topics that have impacts throughout the County and also include partnerships with stakeholders outside of Park County. Several specific issues were identified through community outreach as being of high importance, but require additional study and analysis and/or development of a regional approach to further efforts to address them. Additional information gathered from these analyses can help provide greater input into land policies and forthcoming development regulation changes.

### IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

Regional special projects that are ongoing, or that may require support from Park County in the near-term include:

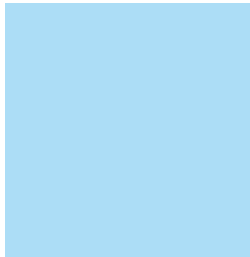
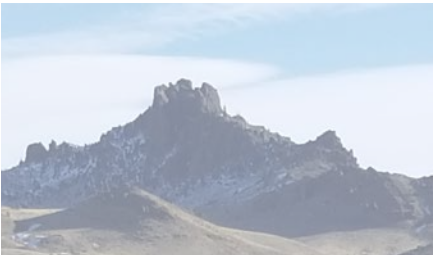
- ***Economic Impact of Agriculture In Park County.*** An analysis estimating the economic impact of agriculture in Park County is currently being developed by the University of Wyoming. The study will help illustrate the importance of protecting agriculture land in the county and to help understand what potential tipping points for loss of agricultural lands may create critical threats to the viability of the industry.
- ***Regional Groundwater Resources Study.*** Fluctuations in the availability and quality of groundwater resources were identified as a key concern during the Plan Park County process; however, current data on these resources is not available. A comprehensive study is needed to evaluate the quantity, quality, and distribution and longevity of groundwater resources in Park County, and to evaluate the effect of changing irrigation practices, subdivision patterns, and other trends on those resources. This effort will require coordination with the Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality, conservation and irrigation districts, agency partners, and others.
- ***Educational initiatives surrounding rural development.*** The need for expanded educational initiatives surrounding the “basics” of rural development was a recurring theme as part of the Plan Park County process. Realtors, irrigation districts, conservation districts, and others noted that their organizations have conducted workshops and seminars (independently and/or together) in an attempt to help inform and educate new residents and hobby farmers about standard practices and customs that should be adhered to in rural areas. Moving forward, these efforts should be coordinated with the County to leverage available information and resources, and ensure messages are aligned.
- ***Countywide Transportation Plan.*** While this Plan establishes broad policy guidance on transportation-related issues, it is not a substitute for a comprehensive transportation plan. In addition to the types of background information and policy guidance that’s contained in this Land Use Plan, county transportation plans typically include a master streets plan, road and bridge standards (which are currently embedded in Park County’s Regulations), access management guidelines, and

a capital improvement plan to help prioritize short- and long-term improvements. This effort will require coordination with the Wyoming Department of Transportation and municipalities.

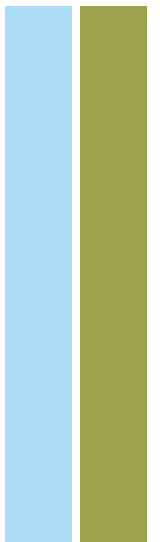
- **Regional Housing Needs Study and Strategy.** A comprehensive understanding of regional housing needs is lacking in the County. A study to identify demand for housing by household types, income levels, and locations would help illustrate how well local land use plans address future housing needs. Furthermore, an understanding of gaps in housing availability by income is also needed to understand how well the current housing stock meets regional needs of residents and workforce. Lastly, the study can help identify roles, responsibilities, and strategies for local communities to address housing issues collectively.
- **Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) update.** Park County's current CWPP was completed in 2008. A major update of the CWPP was initiated by the Wyoming State Forestry Division and local fire districts in 2020, but was paused due to the COVID-19 Pandemic. Opportunities to fund and restart the process through grant funding are currently being explored.
- **Cost of Growth in Park County.** Park County and its partners want to understand the impacts of different land uses in the unincorporated portions of Park County to educate residents, landowners, and elected officials about how different land use decisions impact the on-going fiscal health of the community. Specifically, an understanding of the impacts of residential development in the unincorporated portion of the County versus agricultural uses is desired to help illustrate the value of conservation efforts.
- **Coordination with Northwest Rural Water (NRWD).** The County worked closely with NRWD as part of the Park County process. Ongoing coordination will be necessary as NRWD works to update its data and plan for system improvements and expansion in the future to ensure the County's land use policies are aligned with NRWD's near and long-term plans.



# APPENDICES



- GLOSSARY OF TERMS**
- A: PARK COUNTY 101**
- B: SUPPORTING INFORMATION**
- C: PUBLIC INPUT SUMMARY**





## Glossary of Terms

### Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU)

An dwelling unit accessory to a principal dwelling unit, located on the same lot or parcel, and smaller in floor area of living space, including but not limited to accessory apartments, caretaker's quarters, guest houses, and housing units for family members or relatives. ([Park County](#))

### Big Game Use Overlay

The Big Game Use Overlay depicts the importance of different areas to all big game species on the landscape based on different levels of use documented by scientists over an extended period of time. (Refer to Appendix C for additional information about the methodology used to develop the overlay.)

### Big Game Use Area

Area of high, medium, and/or low use by big game species.

(See [Big Game Overlay](#), page 84)

### Code of the West

The Code of the West is the official state code for the State of Wyoming. The Code is composed of a list of ten ethics.

(See [Code of the West](#), page 51)

### Certified Local Government (CLG)

A program to develop and support local historic preservation programs throughout Wyoming. The State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) assists local communities in achieving their preservation goals by providing education, funding, and technical assistance to help protect historic properties in communities across the state.

### Community Supported Agriculture (CSA)

A community of individuals who pledge support to a farm operation so that the farmland becomes, either legally or spiritually, the community's farm, with the growers and consumers providing mutual support and

sharing the risks and benefits of food production. ([U.S. Department of Agriculture](#)).

### Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP)

A plan created to identify and address communities within Park County that are at higher risk of wildfire, and proactively implement plans to reduce such risks.

(See [Community Wildfire Protection Plan](#), page 32)

### Conservation

To safeguard land in its current state (e.g., as wildlife habitat, ranch/rangeland, cultivated agricultural land).

### Conservation Easement

A voluntary agreement by a landowner to limit development on a property and/or restrict uses of the property for the purpose of protecting the property's natural features, agricultural land (if any), historical significance, and/or

other open space qualities, such as preserving a buffer between communities.

### Conservation Subdivision

A residential subdivision meant to encourage the preservation of environmentally sensitive areas and/or high-value agricultural land by allowing for smaller lot sizes in exchange for clustering lots and dedicating buildable land area to undivided, permanently protected open space or agricultural use. Also referred to as a cluster subdivision. In Wyoming, the portion of the land reserved for open space must be designated as such for 65 years or more. ([www.uwyo.edu/toolkit/overview-regulations/overview-history.html](http://www.uwyo.edu/toolkit/overview-regulations/overview-history.html))

(See conservation subdivision examples, page 46)

### Coordinated Planning Area

Areas where both Park County and unincorporated cities within the County have an interest in guiding the density, intensity, or character of new development.

(See Land Use Categories (Coordinated Planning Areas), page 81)

### Crucial Wildlife Habitat

Lands that have characteristics that are the determining factor in a population's ability to maintain itself at a certain level long-term, as determined by the County's Natural Resource Management Plan.

### Developed/Developing Areas

Areas of existing and future development in Park County located near cities, towns, and public infrastructure. These areas are intended to be the primary locations for accommodating future growth in unincorporated areas.

(See Land Use Categories (Developed/Developing Areas), page 76)

### Domestic Water

Water used for indoor and outdoor household purposes, such as drinking or watering the garden. In Park County, domestic water general comes from the Shoshone Municipal Pipeline, the Town of Meeteetse, or individual wells. Cisterns and small-scale water systems are also used to provide water to more remote areas of the county.

### Effluent

Effluent is wastewater from sewers, septic systems, or industrial outfalls that flows directly into surface waters either untreated or after being treated at a facility.

### Firewise Construction Practices

The National Firewise Communities Program offers a series of practical steps (landscaping, home construction and design, and maintenance) that individuals and communities can take to reduce their vulnerability to wildfire. Examples of Firewise techniques for property owners include

creating a defensible space around residential structures by thinning trees and brush; choosing fire-resistant plants; selecting ignition-resistant building materials; positioning structures away from slopes; and working with firefighters to develop emergency plans. ([National Fire Protection Association, Firewise USA](http://NationalFireProtectionAssociation.org))

### Goal

A concise statement describing a condition to be achieved. It does not suggest specific action but describes a desired outcome to be achieved through the implementation of this Land Use Plan. Countywide goals are intentionally broad and should be used as a reference when guidance is needed on the County's position on a particular topic or issue. Planning area-specific goals provide more detailed guidance for each of the County's 12 planning areas.

### High-value Agricultural Land

A priority conservation area with characteristics that contribute to the most productive and valuable land for producing crops according to the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). Areas identified as high-value agricultural land can be found in all local planning areas except Sunlight and Upper Clarks Fork.

(See high-value agricultural lands, page 44, and planning area-specific Future Land Use Maps in Chapter 4.)



## Home-Based Business

An occupation or activity which is clearly incidental and secondary to use of the premises as a dwelling and that does not alter the exterior of residential dwellings or affect the residential character of the property.

## Land Trust

Private and/or nonprofit organizations that actively work to conserve land by assisting with voluntary conservation easement acquisition or by planning and managing land use and easements.

## Land Use Compatibility

Land uses need not be identical to be “compatible”, but must be sited, designed, constructed, and used in such a way that the normal functions and operation of neighboring uses do not seriously conflict, and so that their appearance is generally harmonious. ([Park County](#))

## Land Use Guideline

A specific statement to guide land use decisions specific to individual land use categories and/or topics of importance in each of County’s 12 local planning areas.

## Land Suitability

Measuring the appropriateness and attractiveness of land in different areas of Park County for future development on a scale of one (least suitable for development) to five (most suitable for development).

(See Purpose of the Land Suitability Map, page 64)

## Microloan

A program administered by the Farm Service Agency to provide financing for small, beginning farmers, niche and non-traditional farm operations, farms participating in direct marketing and sales, or those using hydroponic, aquaponic, organic, and vertical growing methods.

(See Agriculture Programs, page 47)

## Multiple Use

The management of various resources, such as timber, range, water, recreation, and fish and wildlife on national forest land in such combinations to best meet the needs of present and future generations as required by the Multiple Use and Sustained Yield Act of 1960.

## Natural Resource Management Plan

A plan adopted by Park County in 2021 to improve communication and coordination with federal and state government entities and their agencies on land and natural resource management issues that influence the local area and economy.

## Non-native Species

Organisms that do not occur naturally in an area, but are introduced as the result of deliberate or accidental human activity. ([National Park Service](#))

## Non-Renewable Energy

Energy obtained from sources of which there are a finite supply, such as fossil fuels.

## Noxious Weed

Plants that are considered detrimental to the health or welfare of Wyoming due to their ability to aggressively invade native plant communities and/or agricultural crops, be injurious or poisonous to livestock, carry disease or parasites, and negatively impact management of agricultural systems and/or natural ecosystems. Examples include but are not limited to: leafy spurge, spotted knapweed, houndstongue, oxeye daisy, etc. For more information, visit: [www.parkcounty-weeds.org](http://www.parkcounty-weeds.org). (Park County Natural Resource Management Plan)

## Nuisance Vegetation

Any plant species not considered noxious. Examples include but are not limited to: kochia, annual mustards, cheatgrass, Russian thistle, pigweed spp. lambsquarter, orache, etc. Does not include landscaped plants such as trees, shrubs, perennial and annual flowering (nursery) species. Perennial grasses and native plant species are also excluded

## Policy

A specific statement to guide decision making, derived from goals of the Land Use Plan.

## Practicable

Capable of being put into practice, done, or accomplished given consideration of available technology and project economics.

## Priority Conservation Areas

Unincorporated areas with attributes that warrant an additional level of consideration.

(See [Land Use Categories \(Priority Conservation Areas\)](#), page 82-86)

## Ratepayer

A person who pays a regular charge for the use of a public utility.

## Renewable Energy

Energy obtained from sources that are essentially inexhaustible, such as wood, waste, geothermal, wind, photovoltaic, and solar thermal energy.

## Resilience

The ability to prepare for, absorb, recover from, and more successfully adapt to adverse events. ([National Academy of Sciences](#))

## Right to Farm and Ranch

Wyoming Statute §11-44-104 protecting agriculture as a vital part of the state economy by

guaranteeing the rights of farmers and ranchers to engage in farm or ranch operations.

## Rural Areas

Area where limited development exists, encompassing the vast majority of public and private land in Park County

## Special Flood Hazard Areas

An area having special flood, mudflow, or flood-related erosion hazards, as defined by the Federal Emergency Management Association (FEMA) as areas where the National Flood Insurance Program's (NFIP's) floodplain management regulations must be enforced and the area where mandatory purchase of flood insurance applies. (FEMA)

## Stewardship

The wise management and use of natural resources to ensure their health and productivity for future generations. In the context of this document, stewardship also encompasses the preservation of culture and way of life.

## Suitability

A measurement of appropriateness of future development found by evaluating an area's distance to infrastructure, distance to municipalities, distance to roads, slope, and soil characteristics. Conflicts between land suitability and conservation priorities vary by planning area.

(See [Land Suitability Analysis Methodology](#), pages 66-67)

## Sustainability

The conditions under which humans and nature can exist in productive harmony to support present and future generations. ([Environmental Protection Agency](#))

## Utility-scale Renewable Energy

Wind or solar facilities generating more than 0.5 megawatt of electricity that are generally used to provide electricity to a utility provider.



## Appendix A: Park County 101

Appendix A provides a brief synopsis of some of the technical data and information that was used to inform the Land Use Plan. Topics addressed include population, demographics, employment, and frequently asked questions about domestic water.

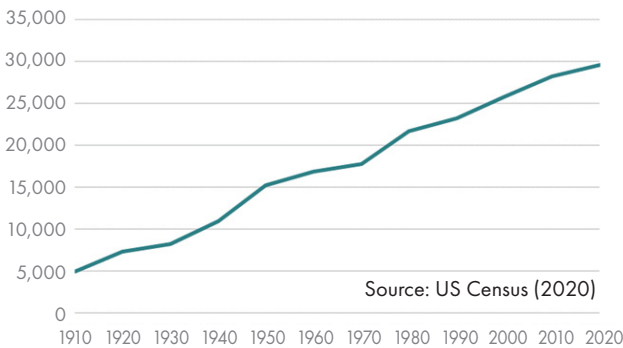
# POPULATION TRENDS AND FORECASTS IN PARK COUNTY



## HISTORIC TRENDS (1910-2020)

Park County has grown steadily since its establishment in 1909 - increasing from 4,909 residents in 1910 to 29,624 in 2020. The County's growth has varied over time with notable periods of rapid growth in the 1940's and 1970's when the County population grew by 4,206 and 3,887 residents, respectively. Population growth since 1980 has been more consistent with the County growing at annual rate of between 0.5% and 1.0%.

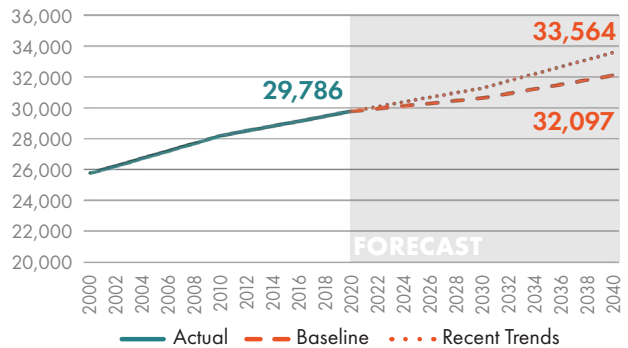
### POPULATION (1910-2020)



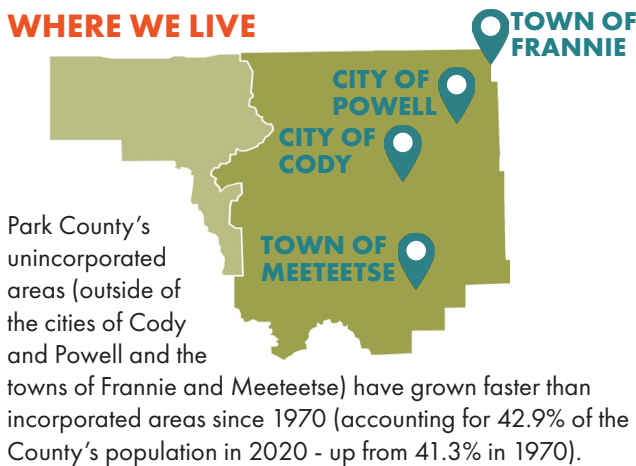
## POPULATION FORECAST (2020-2040)

The State of Wyoming predicts that Park County's population will grow at a slower rate over the next 20 years than it has grown since 2000 - adding 2,311 residents (116 residents annually) by 2040, which is annual rate of growth of 0.4%. A forecast based on recent trends (population growth, development, and migration) expects Park County's population to increase by 3,778 residents (189 per year) by 2040 - an annual growth rate of 0.6%.

### POPULATION (2020-2040)

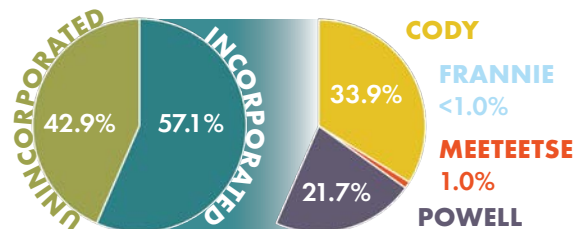


## WHERE WE LIVE



The cities of Cody (pop. 10,028) and Powell (pop. 6,419) have grown at a similar rate to Park County overall, while the towns of Meeteetse (pop. 309) and Frannie have had a declining population over the past 50 years.

## POPULATION BY JURISDICTION (2020)



**LEARN MORE: [www.PlanParkCounty.us](http://www.PlanParkCounty.us)**

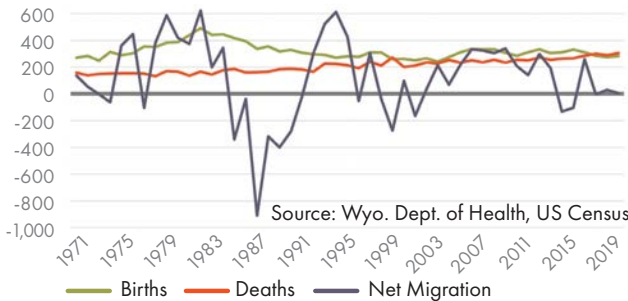
# POPULATION TRENDS & FORECASTS, cont.

## FACTORS INFLUENCING GROWTH

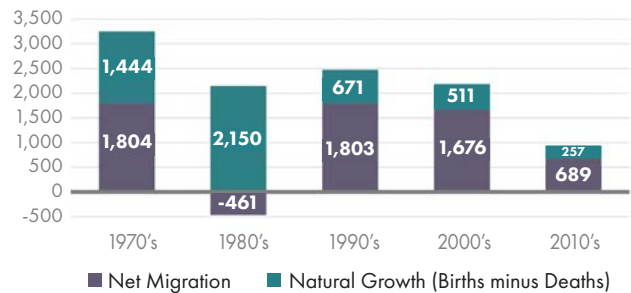
The increase in Park County’s population over the past three decades has been caused primarily by migration to the county from elsewhere in the United States. New residents that migrated to Park County accounted for 75 percent of the population growth from 1990 to 2020. Natural growth of the population (births minus deaths) has declined slowly over the past 30 years as the number of deaths annually have increased while the rate of births in Park County have remained relatively constant.

Park County’s steady, declining natural growth results in the migration of people playing an increasingly important role in the overall population of the county. Migration varies greatly from year-to-year and often reflects larger economic trends like employment and the growth and decline of industries. Following significant out-migration during the 1980s, net migration into Park County has generally recovered, although annual trends continue to vary.

### BIRTHS, DEATHS, & MIGRATION (1971-2020)



### GROWTH FACTORS BY DECADE (1970S-2010S)

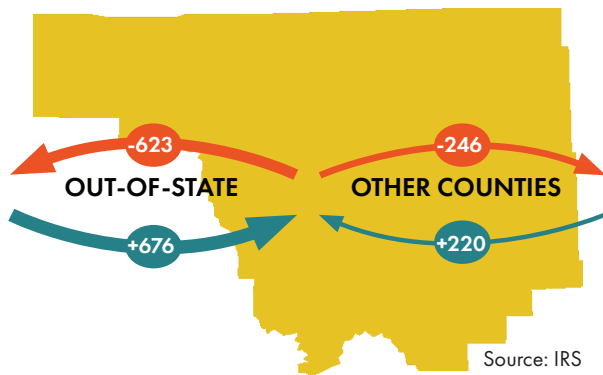


## MIGRATION TRENDS

Data from the US Internal Revenue Service (IRS) can be used to indicate where residents of a county are moving to or from in a given year by tracking the location of individual tax filings by county. The data shows migration patterns of residents moving into (in-migration) and out of (out-migration) Park County and the states and counties they are moving to and from.

In recent years (2018-2019) Park County has experienced more in-migration than out-migration, which has driven population growth. This is despite the fact that Park County lost slightly more residents to other Wyoming counties (246 residents) than it gained (220 residents). Instead, Park County experienced stronger growth from out-of-state residents - gaining 676 and losing only 623. New residents from outside of Wyoming are most often from the West (57%) or South (21%).

### PARK COUNTY MIGRATION TRENDS (2018-2019)



The counties with the most residents moving to Park County were Big Horn (WY), Yellowstone (MT), and Albany (WY) counties. Meanwhile, Big Horn (WY), Yellowstone (MT), Albany (WY), Natrona (WY), and Maricopa (AZ) counties attracted the most residents away from Park County.

The average adjusted gross income of the tax returns filers moving into Park County is higher (\$69,817) than the average adjusted gross income of filers moving out of Park County (\$53,336).

**LEARN MORE: [www.PlanParkCounty.us](http://www.PlanParkCounty.us)**

# DEMOGRAPHICS

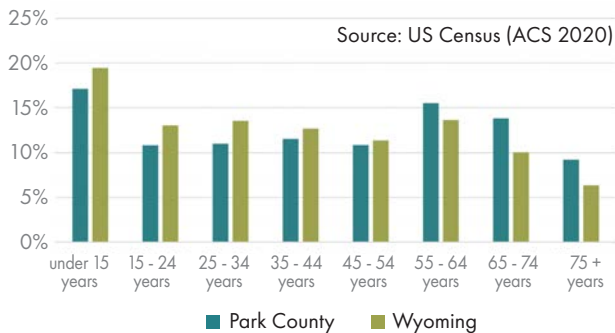
## WHO LIVES IN PARK COUNTY?



### AGE

Park County residents are older, on average, compared to residents of Wyoming. The median age of a Park County resident is 44.6 compared to the state median of 38.0. Park County has a higher concentration of residents older than 55 years old compared to the state and lower share for all age cohorts younger than 55 years old.

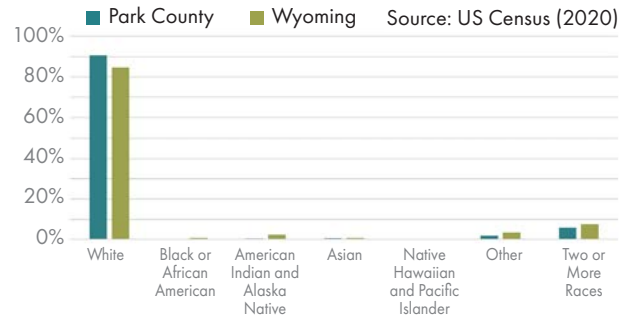
#### AGE COMPOSITION (2020)



### RACE/ETHNICITY

Like the rest of Wyoming, Park County residents are predominately White (91%). However, Park County is generally less racially diverse than Wyoming as a whole, which is only 85 percent White. Park County also has a low presence of residents who are of Hispanic origin (6%) compared to the state (10%).

#### RACE COMPOSITION (2020)



### HOUSEHOLDS

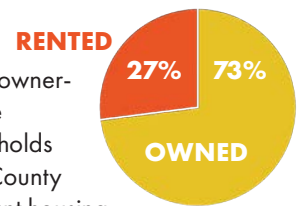
Since 2000, Park County's rate of household growth has been slightly higher than the rate of population growth. The county added 2,367 households (118 annually) - about one percent growth annually - between 2000 and 2020. The average household in Park County is made up of 2.3 residents, which is smaller than the state average of 2.5 residents.



Source: US Census (ACS 2020)

### HOUSING UNITS

Most households (73%) are in owner-occupied housing units with the remaining 27 percent of households in renter-occupied units. Park County features a high number of vacant housing units (1,994 units). Of these, the majority (51%) are used seasonally, indicating that second home ownership and vacation rentals are common.



Source: US Census (ACS 2020)

### HOUSEHOLD INCOME

The average household income in Park County is **\$81,880** and the median household income is **\$64,049** - both are just below the statewide average.

**LEARN MORE: [www.PlanParkCounty.us](http://www.PlanParkCounty.us)**

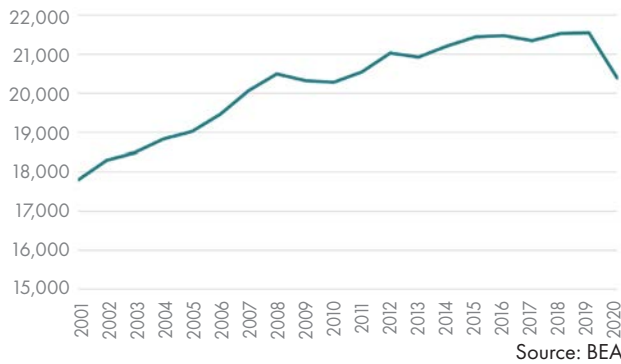
# EMPLOYMENT INDUSTRIES & TRENDS



## EMPLOYMENT

In 2021, Park County was home to 21,916. Jobs declined from 21,545 in 2019 to 20,395 jobs in 2020 due to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and associated economic uncertainty. Despite the drop in 2020, employment has grown at a rate of 0.7 percent annually since 2001.

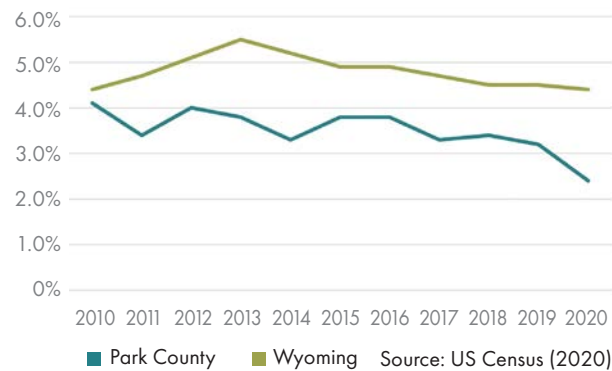
### EMPLOYMENT (2001-2020)



## UNEMPLOYMENT

Park County’s unemployment rate reached a low of 2.4 percent in 2020 - down from a high of 4.1 percent in 2010.

### UNEMPLOYMENT (2010-2020)

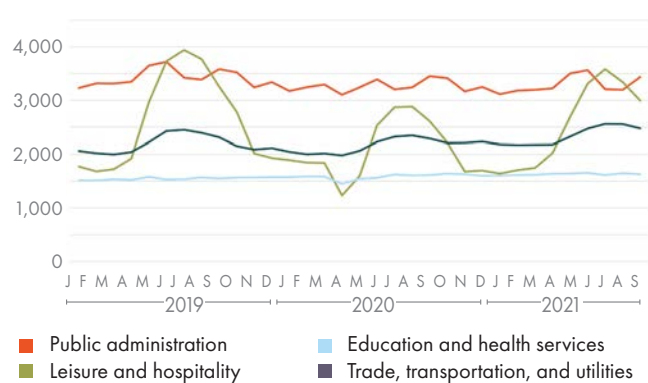


Although both Park County and Wyoming have maintained a low unemployment rate over the past decade, Park County has consistently had a lower unemployment rate than the state overall.

## RECENT EMPLOYMENT TRENDS

The COVID-19 pandemic and its impacts to the economy resulted in significant changes to leisure and hospitality employment (part of service-related industries), which declined because of the reduction in travel and visitation to the region during the summer of 2020. Leisure and hospitality employment in Park County peaked in July 2019 with 3,937 jobs, declined by 27 percent to 2,870 jobs by July 2020, and rebounded to 3,582 jobs by July 2021 (ten percent less than the July 2019 peak). Public administration employment also fell significantly from 2019 to 2021; however, through the pandemic and recession, employment in other major sectors, such as education and health care and trade, transportation, and utilities, actually increased significantly and nearly offset the losses experienced in the tourism-related industries.

### RECENT EMPLOYMENT TRENDS (2019-2021)



**LEARN MORE: [www.PlanParkCounty.us](http://www.PlanParkCounty.us)**

# EMPLOYMENT, INDUSTRIES & TRENDS cont.

## EMPLOYMENT SECTORS

Public administration is the largest industry by employment in Park County with 3,686 jobs. The next two largest industries are accommodations and food services and retail trade, which are both directly related to the tourism industry and proximity to Yellowstone National Park. Healthcare is another large industry in the County with 1,826 jobs.

### EMPLOYMENT BY SECTOR (2020)



Source: BEA

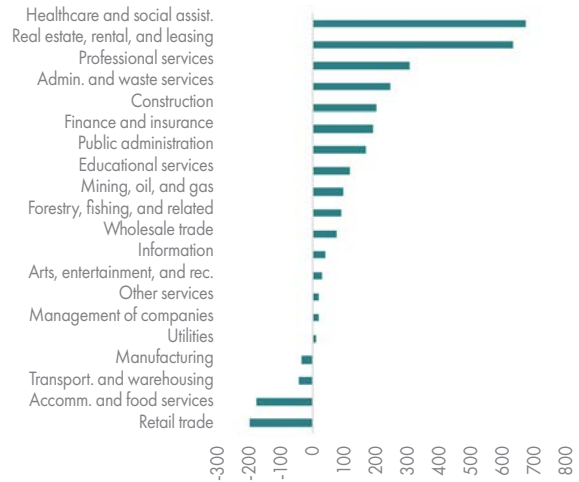
Farm employment accounted for five percent of all jobs (1,110) in Park County in 2020 and has grown at the same rate as the County (0.7%) over the past 20 years. Public administration (i.e., federal, state, and local government jobs) is another major component of the economic base in Park County accounting for 17 percent of jobs.

## EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

Park County residents have a higher level of educational attainment than the state as whole. Thirty-five percent of Park County residents (over the age of 25) have a Bachelor's degree or higher compared to 29 percent of Wyoming residents (over the age of 25). Park County residents are also more likely to have completed an associate degree (14%) than the state average (11%).

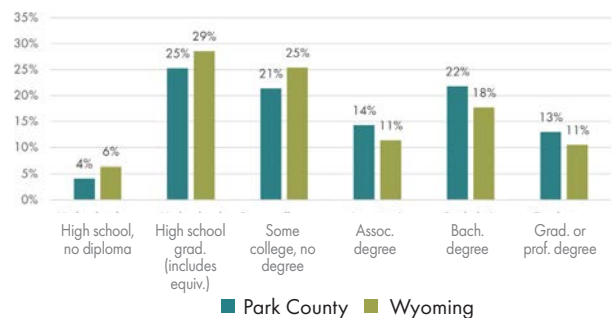
The industries that have experienced the largest increases in employment over the past two decades are health care, real estate, professional services, and administrative/waste services. Employment in health care and real estate industries each increased by over 600 jobs over the past 20 years. Employment in retail trade and accommodations and food services industries declined from 197 to 177 jobs respectively between 2001 and 2020. This is largely due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which negatively impacted these sectors, especially in 2020. Since 2001, Park County also lost employment in manufacturing and transportation.

### CHANGE IN EMPLOYMENT BY SECTOR (2001-2020)



Source: BEA

### EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT (2001-2020)



Source: US Census (ACS 2020)

**LEARN MORE: [www.PlanParkCounty.us](http://www.PlanParkCounty.us)**

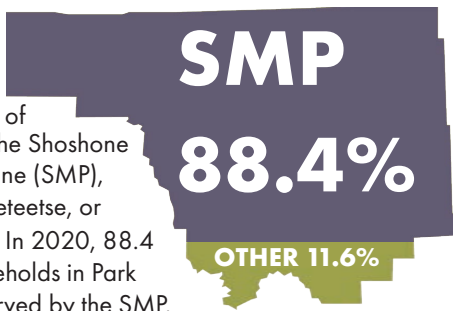


# FAQs DOMESTIC WATER IN PARK COUNTY



## WHERE DOES OUR DOMESTIC WATER COME FROM?

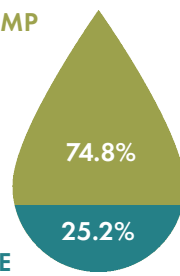
Domestic water in Park County generally comes from one of three sources—the Shoshone Municipal Pipeline (SMP), the Town of Meeteetse, or individual wells. In 2020, 88.4 percent of households in Park County were served by the SMP.



## HOW MUCH WATER DOES SMP HAVE?

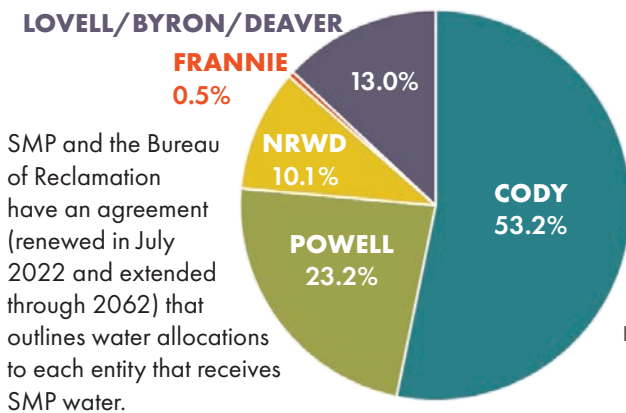
UNUSED SMP WATER CAPACITY

AVG. DAILY WATER USE



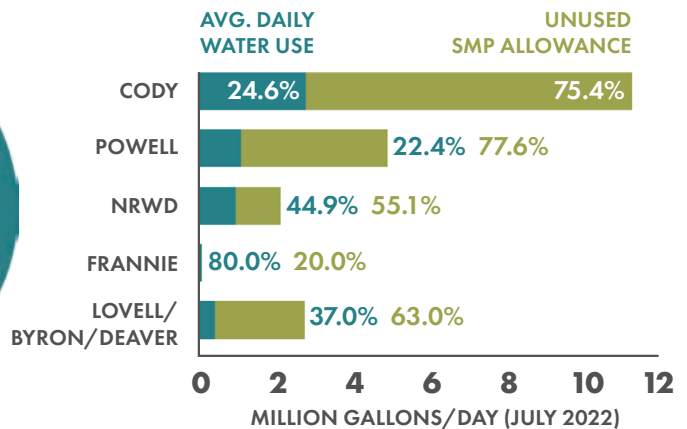
Today, SMP has ample water supply to serve current and forecasted customers without the need for conservation mandates, despite recent growth trends in Park County and higher water use during the latest hotter and drier years (2020-2021).

## HOW IS SMP WATER ALLOCATED?



SMP and the Bureau of Reclamation have an agreement (renewed in July 2022 and extended through 2062) that outlines water allocations to each entity that receives SMP water.

## HOW MUCH WATER DOES EACH WATER PROVIDER HAVE?



## IS THERE ENOUGH WATER TO SUPPORT GROWTH?

In 1986, SMP estimated a water service population of 36,660 by 2020 and 41,350 by 2030 with over 90% of growth expected to occur within municipalities. Instead, Park County has grown more slowly than the projections with a population of 29,624 in 2020 and unincorporated areas accounting for a greater share of population than expected (having almost 45% of Park County's residents).

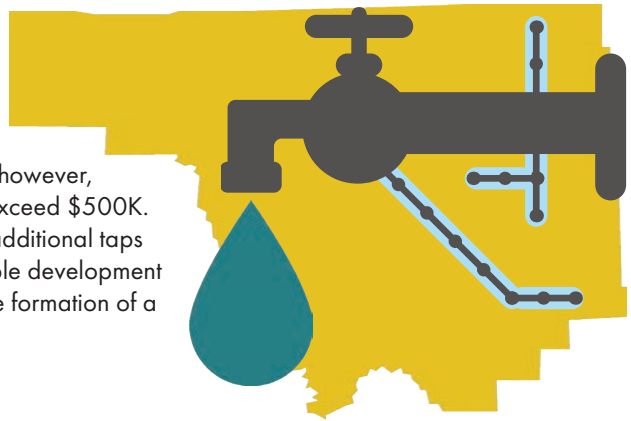
Growth forecasts prepared by Economic and Planning Systems as part of the Land Use Plan update estimate that Park County will add between 2,311 and 3,778 residents and 1,666 to 2,327 households by 2040. Based on these forecasts, SMP does not anticipate shortages in water supply or treatment capacity within the planning horizon.

**LEARN MORE: [www.PlanParkCounty.us](http://www.PlanParkCounty.us)**

# DOMESTIC WATER IN PARK COUNTY, cont.

## IF THERE IS WATER CAPACITY, WHY ISN'T WATER AVAILABLE EVERYWHERE?

SMP's main transmission line is designed to accommodate 18 taps for large service areas, which so far are used by Cody, Powell, and NRWD. The potential to add additional taps exists; however, the cost to install a single new tap in the main line could easily exceed \$500K. Based on cost alone, the likelihood of a private entity pursuing additional taps is small. Any request would probably be associated with a sizable development proposal and would likely require approval from the state for the formation of a new water district.

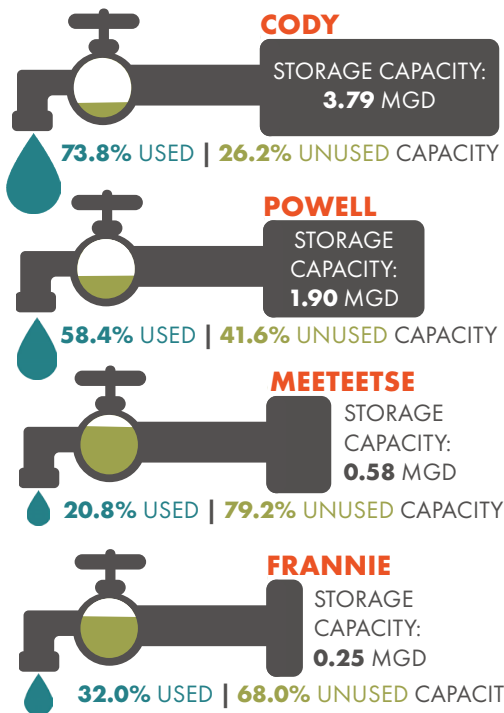


## IS THERE INFRASTRUCTURE CAPACITY TO SUPPORT GROWTH?

It depends on the water provider. Even if there is plenty of water, the existing infrastructure (water treatment, storage, and delivery) may make it harder to support growth in some areas and easier in others.

**Municipalities.** Cities and towns in the County generally have ample storage capacity to provide for forecast growth.

**Northwest Rural Water District.** In unincorporated areas, infrastructure is more difficult and costly to extend. Water lines need to go farther but serve less people. NRWD is the major water provider in unincorporated Park County and was formed to deliver treated domestic water to smaller properties (generally less than 50 acres). Although NRWD's average daily usage of 0.97 million gallons represents less than half (44.9%) of its SMP allowance, and despite about \$7 million in infrastructure improvements since 2017, growth has impacted NRWD capacity in some areas due to infrastructure constraints. In March 2022, NRWD imposed a suspension of new transmission mains districtwide through April 2023. NRWD has also paused providing additional service taps in the rural Powell service areas to allow time for completion of a planned capacity expansion project.



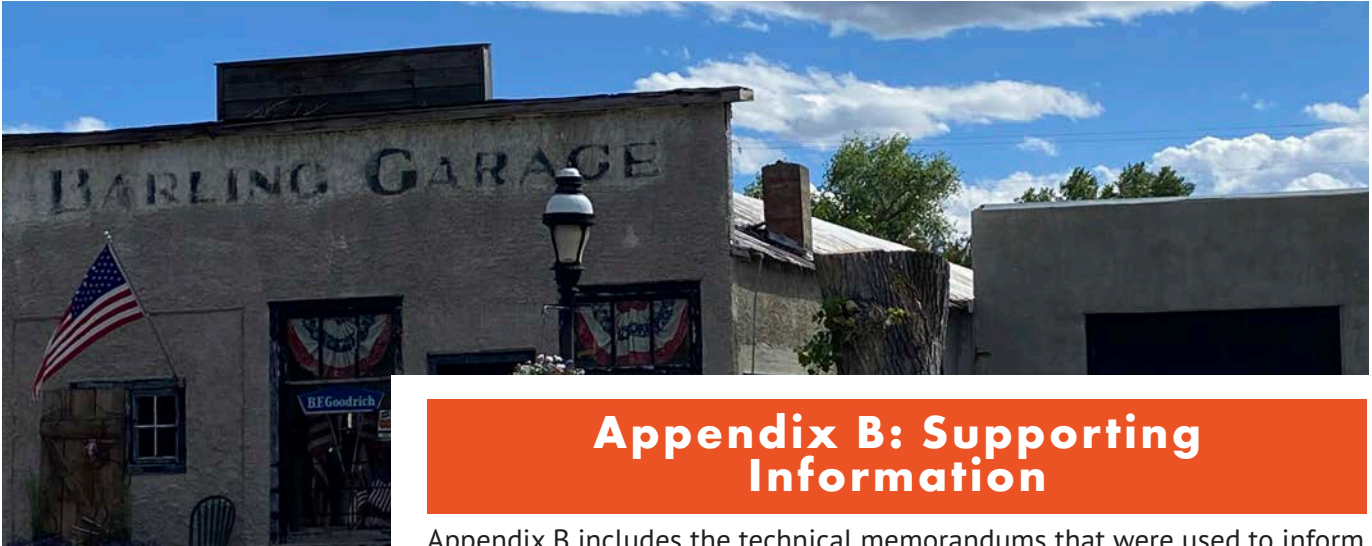
## WHAT ABOUT WELLS?

Properties located outside of municipal boundaries and outside of the NRWD service area (or that do not meet the criteria for NRWD service) are typically served by individual wells that rely on groundwater. The availability of quality groundwater and viability of wells can vary greatly by the location and depth of wells, which makes some properties unable to access sufficient groundwater.

## ARE THERE OTHER OPTIONS?

Some developments in more remote areas of Park County operate small-scale water systems that serve its residents (e.g., the Copperleaf Subdivision in the Wapiti area). Otherwise, cisterns—fed by wells or SMP water that is trucked in—are used as a means to provide water to properties in some areas of Park County.

LEARN MORE: [www.PlanParkCounty.us](http://www.PlanParkCounty.us)



## Appendix B: Supporting Information

Appendix B includes the technical memorandums that were used to inform the Land Use Plan.

- ***Population and Employment Forecast and Housing Demand Estimates.*** This memorandum contains a summary of the methodology used and analysis completed by Economic and Planning Systems (EPS) to develop population and employment forecasts for Park County to support the Land Use Plan update. The forecasts were developed to aid in estimating demand for housing and nonresidential development in the unincorporated portion of Park County.
- ***Land Use Suitability Analysis Methodology.*** This memorandum summarizes the methodology used to develop the Geographic Information System (GIS)-based suitability analysis outlined in Chapter 3.
- ***Domestic Water in Park County.*** This memorandum provides an overview of service providers in Park County, along with documentation of each provider's capacity, treatment, and capability to support future development.
- ***Big Game Use Overlay Methodology.*** This section documents methods used by Dr. Laura Gigliotti (Assistant Unit Leader, West Virginia Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit) under the direction of Dr. Arthur Middleton (Assistant Professor, Department of Environmental Science, Policy, and Management, University of California, Berkeley) to develop the Big Game Use Overlay.
- ***Conservation Tools and Case Studies.*** This section provides an overview of conservation tools/strategies that could be considered by Park County in the future as a supplement to the work of the many land trusts that assist with establishing and managing voluntary conservation easements in the County. Case studies from other rural counties are provided where applicable.
- ***Related Master Plans.*** This section provides links to municipal master plans used to inform the Coordinated Planning Areas for the Cody Local Area, Powell Local Area, Sage Creek Area, and Meeteetse Rural Areas.

# POPULATION AND EMPLOYMENT FORECAST AND HOUSING DEMAND ESTIMATES

## Memorandum

To: Park County, Wyoming, and Clarion Associates  
 From: Economic & Planning Systems  
 Subject: Park County Land Use Plan: Population and Employment  
 Forecast and Housing Demand Estimates  
 Date: August 15, 2022

This memorandum contains a summary of the methodology and analysis completed to develop population and employment forecasts for Park County to support the Land Use Plan update. The forecasts were developed to aid in estimating demand for housing and nonresidential development in the unincorporated portion of Park County.

Two forecasts were created to form a range of potential growth in the county over the plan horizon 2020 to 2040. A “Baseline” forecast was developed using the State of Wyoming’s population forecast for Park County as a basis. A “Recent Trends” forecast was developed to estimate the potential for a greater amount of development based on the rate of growth Park County has experienced in the past five years.

This memorandum contains three sections, which are described below, and the tables from the forecast model used to create the forecasts.

- **Economic Trends and Conditions** – This section provides a summary of the economic trends that influence the model. The supporting data is summarized in the “Supporting Tables” portion (Tables i-viii) of the attached model.
- **Forecast Methodology** – This section provides an overview of the approach used to forecast growth in the county over the plan horizon.
- **Forecast Summary and Housing Demand** – This section provides a summary of the two forecasts including population, households, and employment. As well, potential housing unit and land demand for the unincorporated portion of Park County is summarized.

## ECONOMIC TRENDS AND CONDITIONS

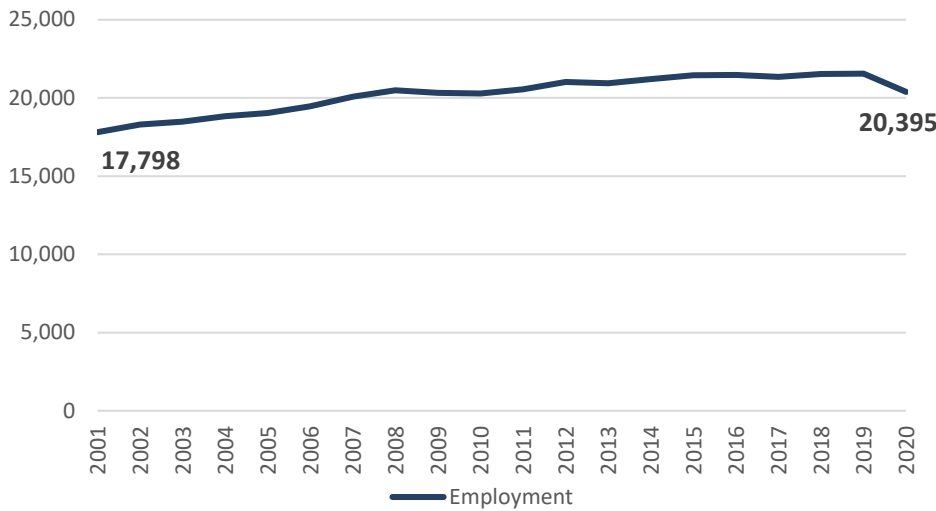
Economic and demographic trends for Park County were documented to develop the base of the forecast model. Changes in employment, commuting patterns, population, and households were evaluated to understand historic and recent changes in the county. The analysis also documents the different components of employment and population in the county to better model changes.

### Employment Trends

Employment in Park County grew steadily from 2001 through the mid-part of the 2010s. Employment increased from 17,798 jobs in 2001 to 20,395 jobs in 2010, an annual growth rate of 1.5 percent. Employment continued to increase from 2010 to 2015, but growth has been minimal since 2015. The COVID-19 Pandemic had a significant impact on the economy, as evidenced by a 6 percent decrease in employment in 2020. Data for 2021, however, indicates that employment has rebounded to near pre-pandemic levels.

Unemployment in Park County has been low over the past 20 years. The highest unemployment rate was recorded in 2010 during the Great Recession but was still well below national and state averages. The unemployment rate is currently 4.1 percent (2021). (See **Table i**). Employment data tracking wage and salary employment (a component of total employment) in the county indicates that employment has been declining slightly since 2016, despite unemployment rates below 5 percent.

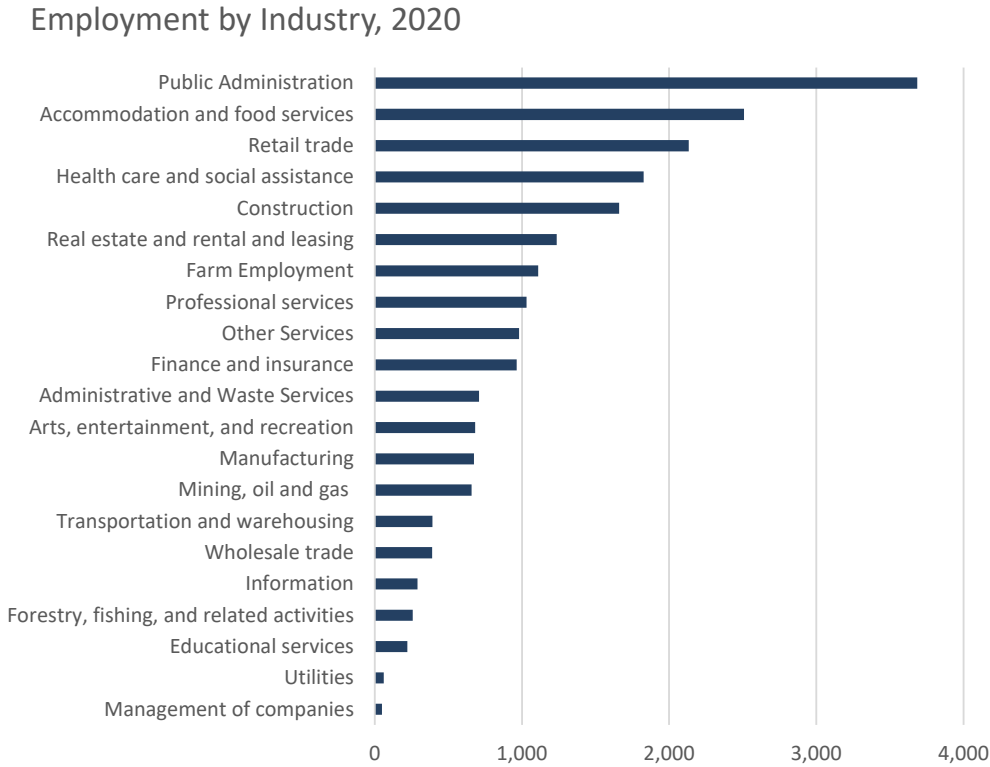
**Figure 1. Park County Total Employment 2001 to 2020**



Source: US Bureau of Economic Analysis

The Park County economy is primarily driven by agriculture activity (which impacts multiple industries), tourism, and services to residents of the larger region. The largest industries in Park County include public administration (including federal, state, and local jobs), accommodations and food services, retail trade, and health care. **Figure 2** also includes Farm Employment (1,111 jobs in 2020).

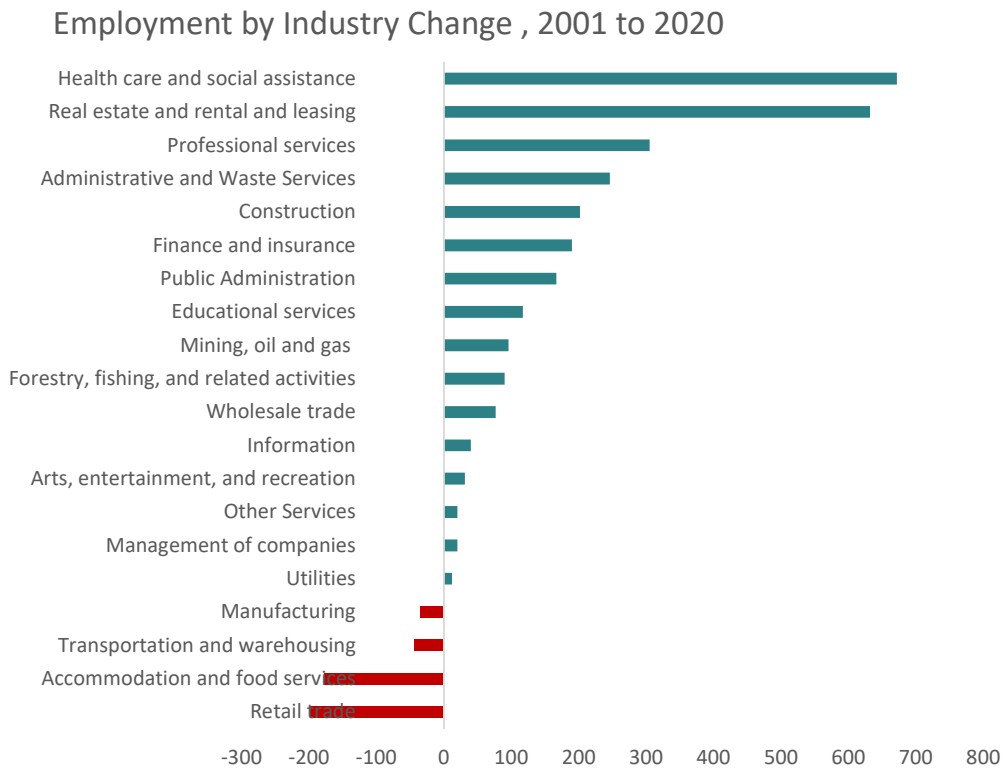
Figure 2. Park County Employment by Industry, 2020



Source: US Bureau of Economic Analysis

Economic growth in the county over the past 10 to 20 years has been driven by growth in agricultural activity, tourism visitation, and increased demand for services from residents and visitors.

- Farm employment has grown steadily since 2000 and has increased in rate since 2010. Farm employment increased by 156 jobs since 2000 (1.7 percent annually) and the forestry, fishing, and related activities increased by 25 jobs (1.1 percent annually).
- The health care industry grew by the most jobs since 2001 (672) as Park County has grown as a regional location for health services.
- Tourism-related industries (arts and entertainment, accommodations, and food services) grew by 1.6 percent annually from 2001 to 2019. However, the COVID-19 Pandemic had a significant impact on these sectors as employment dropped by 20 percent from 2019 to 2020.
- The retail trade industry has declined in employment over the past 20 years. The industry was losing employment even prior to the pandemic, which further impacted its decline. The decline is likely driven by changes in the retail industry impacting communities throughout the US.
- Oil and gas extraction has historically been a periodic driver of economic activity in the county. Employment in mining and extraction industries peaked in the county in 2012 and has contracted significantly since.
- There has been significant growth in service industries related to real estate in the past two decades as the real estate, professional services, and administrative services sectors have all grown by over 2 percent annually, although from a small basis. Construction is a related industry that has not grown as much but has a larger presence (in terms of jobs) in the economy.

**Figure 3. Park County: Change in Nonfarm Employment by Industry, 2001 to 2020**

Source: US Bureau of Economic Analysis

## Employment Components

Trends in the components of the employment base and commuting patterns were also analyzed to support the growth forecasts. Employment in any given geography is made up of both “wage and salary” jobs and sole proprietors. Wage and salary employment refers to jobs associated with businesses that have more than one employee and where the employer makes regular payments to employees (either based on hourly rates or salaries) and are subject to unemployment insurance. Proprietor employment includes businesses that are run by a single person, independent contractor, or family businesses. There are approximately 13,700 wage and salary jobs in Park County (67 percent) and 6,695 proprietors (33 percent). (See **Table vii**). Proprietor employment has been growing by a faster rate than wage and salary employment in the county.

Park County has been experiencing an increase in the number of workers that commute into the county for work. An estimated 22 percent of the people working in Park County commute from other counties for their job. This percentage has grown from 10 percent in 2002 and peaked at 24 percent in 2012 to 2014. Most in-commuters come from neighboring counties in Wyoming, including Big Horn, Campbell, Natrona, and Sheridan, as well as Park and Yellowstone counties in Montana. The increase of in-commuters can be an indicator of economic growth opportunities in the county but can also be an indicator of the impacts of the increased cost of living. This trend has the potential to continue as housing costs rise in the county, and will be exacerbated, if limited new housing options for seasonal and low wage-earning workers are not created or preserved. (See **Table ii**).

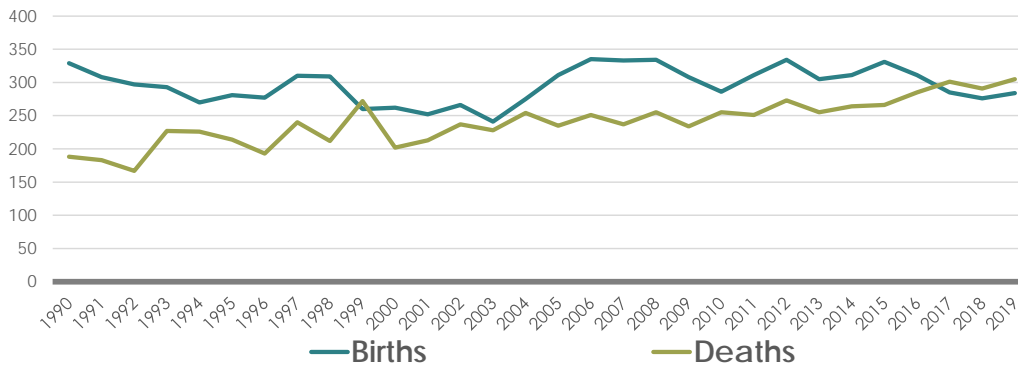
By contrast, the percent of Park County residents that commute out of the county for work has remained relatively steady, increasingly slightly from 18 percent to 21 percent (2002 to 2019). (See **Table iii**).

## Population and Household Trends

Population growth in Park County slowed in the 2010s in comparison to the previous two decades. The county grew by just over 1,000 new residents from 2010 to 2020 compared to 2,600 in the 1990s and 2,400 in the 2000s. However, recent construction and permitting trends indicate a rebound in in-migration to the county. Park County grew by 3,485 residents from 2000 to 2020, which is an annual rate of 0.65 percent. Most of the population growth was in the older age cohorts. The number of residents 65 or older increased by 3,005 over the past 20 years, while the residents in the workforce ages (15 to 65 years old) increased by only 427. The number of residents younger than 15 years old increased by the least amount. (See **Table iv**).

Similar trends were identified when looking at the change in births, deaths, and in-migration on Park County's population. Since 2016, the number of deaths has outnumbered the number of births (**Figure 4**). The increase in deaths is an indicator of the aging of existing residents in Park County, while the number of births has remained flat decreased over the past 10 years. Net migration (net migration is in-migrants minus out-migrants) to Park County has been positive historically, however, the amount annually has been highly volatile. As a result, in-migration of new residents has been contributing significantly to population growth, accounting for two-thirds of the population growth over the past decade. In-migrating residents have been older (as evidenced by population by age trends) and more affluent than the average county resident (as evidenced by IRS County to County Migration Data).

**Figure 4. Park County Annual Births and Deaths, 1990 to 2019**



Source: Wyoming Department of Health and U.S. Census Bureau

These trends indicate a slowing and aging of the population growth in the county compared to previous decades. The State of Wyoming's forecast for population growth mirrors these trends. The county is forecast to grow by 2,254 residents over the next 20 years, at an annual rate of 0.37 percent. This rate and amount of growth is 35 to 40 percent less than experienced in the past 20 years (see **Table v**).

Lastly, the population trends in the county appear to be impacting the household and housing unit trends in the county. The county has experienced a decrease in renter-occupied households and growth in owner-occupied households despite increases in housing costs that have outpaced wage growth. The average household size in the county has decreased from 2.55 to 2.26 in the past 20 years. Lastly, the number of vacant homes and vacancy rate for housing in the county has increased over the past two decades – growing faster than the overall rate of housing growth. The vacancy rate is currently 13.7 percent, which has been driven by increases in seasonal and second homes (which are considered vacant by the U.S. Census Bureau). The housing trends reinforce the population trend findings (see **Table viii**).



## FORECAST METHODOLOGY

Based on the State Demographer’s forecast, the population growth rate compared to employment trends in the county, as well as recent (past five year) construction trends, there is concern that the State’s forecast for population might be understating potential development in the county over the plan horizon. To estimate the range of potential growth scenarios that could occur in Park County over the plan horizon, two employment-driven forecasts were developed as a supplement to the State’s population forecast.

The forecast change in wage and salary employment and sole proprietors drive estimates for increases in the workforce and overall population growth. To estimate the size of the workforce, relative to the total population, the components of employment in the county were broken down by wage and salary employment, proprietor employment, unemployed residents, in-commuting workers, out-commuting residents, and residents out of the workforce (generally under 16 years old or 65 years and older). This breakdown is provided in **Table 1** of the model.

The Baseline forecast was developed using the State’s forecast as a starting point. The State’s forecast is only for population growth. The Baseline forecast uses the State’s population forecast to estimate the associated household and employment growth that can be expected. This forecast incorporates a mixture of historic and recent employment trends to mirror the changes in the county’s major employment sectors and results in a change in employment and workforce that will match with the forecast population growth the State estimated. The assumptions made for the major industries in the county as well as population trends are provided in **Table 2** of the model and shown in **Figure 5** below.

The Recent Trends forecast was developed based on assumptions that recent employment and development trends will continue and drive a rebound of in-migration from younger people and a resulting increase in births. This upper-end forecast is meant to approximate potential shifts in demographic and economic trends based on economic expansion and construction activity.

Figure 5. Forecast Model Assumptions

	Actual Change (2001 to 2020)	Actual Change (2010 to 2019)	"Baseline" Assumptions	"Recent Trends" Assumptions
	<b>Jobs</b>	<b>Job</b>	<b>Jobs</b>	<b>Jobs</b>
<b>Significant County Employment Sectors</b>				
Agriculture/Farming	Moderate Increase	Strong Increase	Moderate Decline	Moderate Increase
Construction	Moderate Increase	Moderate Increase	Minimal Increase	Moderate Increase
Retail Trade	Moderate Decline	Moderate Decline	Minimal Increase	Moderate Increase
Health Care	Strong Increase	Moderate Increase	Strong Increase	Strong Increase
Professional & Technical Services	Strong Increase	Strong Increase	Minimal Increase	Strong Increase
Accommodation and Food Services	Moderate Decline	Strong Increase	Moderate Increase	Strong Increase
<b>Government (Military and Non-Military)</b>				
Public Administration	Minimal Increase	Minimal Decline	Minimal Decline	No Change
	<b>Residents</b>	<b>Residents</b>	<b>Residents</b>	<b>Residents</b>
<b>Natural Growth</b>				
Net Births vs Deaths	Net Positive Growth	No Net Growth	No Net Growth	Net Positive Growth
<b>Migration</b>				
Net In-Migration	Positive Net In-Migration	Positive Net In-Migration	Positive Net In-Migration	Positive In-Migration
<b>Demographic (Age Cohort)</b>				
Labor Force (16-65 Age Cohort)	Minimal Increase	Minimal Decline	Minimal Increase	Moderate Increase
< 16 Age Cohort	Minimal Increase	Minimal Increase	Minimal Increase	Moderate Increase
> 65 Age Cohort	Strong Increase	Strong Increase	Moderate Increase	Moderate Increase

Definition:

- Minimal 0.0% to 0.4% annual growth
- Moderate 0.5% to 1.4% annual growth
- Strong 1.5% or greater annual growth

EPS developed estimates for annual growth rates for each 2-digit NAICS industry in the county over the next 20 years to forecast wage and salary employment growth. The annual growth rates were benchmarked to recent employment trends and to the US Bureau of Labor Statistics 10-year forecast for occupation growth for Northwest Wyoming, which includes more than just Park County (see **Table 3**).

The forecast rates are tempered over 20 years to approximate a constant change in the number of jobs annually in the county. The model estimates the county will increase in Wage and Salary employment by 1,400 jobs (0.49% annually) from 2020 to 2040 in the Baseline forecast and 2,280 jobs (0.77% annually) in the Recent Trends forecast (see **Table 4**).

The model estimates a constant rate of in-commuting and out-commuting of workers and residents consistent with 2019 percentages (see **Table 5**). The unemployment rate of 4.1 percent is assumed to remain constant as well (see **Table 6**).

The proportion of proprietors' employment to wage and salary employment (one-third proprietors and two-thirds wage and salary) is also assumed to remain consistent to the 2019/2020 numbers. Adding wage and salary workers (factored for in- and out-commuting) to unemployment workers and sole proprietors translates to an estimate of county's workforce population. Park County's workforce population is forecast to grow by 1,156 people (0.27% annually) from 2020 to 2040 in the Baseline forecast and to grow by 2,328 people (0.53% annually) in the Recent Trends forecast (see **Table 7**).

The workforce population is added to the non-workforce population to estimate total population. The total population is estimated by adding the workforce population, residents under 16 years old, residents 65 years old or older who are estimated to not be working, and the group quarters population. The Baseline forecast was developed to create a change in employment that results in the same rate of population change the State of Wyoming forecasts for Park County. The Recent Trends forecast uses the increased rate of employment growth in the county to approximate an increased rate of growth of the workforce population (i.e., residents aged 15 to 64 years old) that induces an increased rate of growth of for the under 15-year-old age cohort (see **Table 8**).

The resulting impact on household formation and housing unit growth is estimated based on the employment growth. The housing unit estimates use the current rate of residents per households and current housing unit vacancy rates to estimate new households and housing units in the county in each forecast from 2020 to 2040 (see **Table 9**).

## **BASELINE AND RECENT TRENDS FORECASTS**

The estimated change in population, households, housing units, wage and salary employment, and total employment for both forecasts are shown in **Figure 6**.

- The Baseline Forecast estimates 2,311 new residents over the plan horizon within 1,666 new households. Employment is forecast to grow by 1,740 jobs by 2040.
- The Recent Trends Forecast estimates 3,778 new residents by 2040 within 2,327 households. Employment is forecast to grow by 2,988 jobs by 2040. The Recent Trends forecast results in a 60 percent increase in population growth, 40 percent increase in housing demand, and 70 percent increase in employment growth.

Figure 6. Park County Population and Employment Forecasts

Park County	2020	2025	2030	2035	2040	2020-2030			2030-2040			2020-2040		
						Total	Ann. #	Ann. %	Total	Ann. #	Ann. %	Total	Ann. #	Ann. %
<b>Total Population</b>														
Baseline	29,786	29,797	30,629	31,386	32,097	843	169	0.28%	1,468	147	0.47%	2,311	116	0.37%
Recent Trends	29,786	29,965	31,279	32,464	33,564	1,494	299	0.49%	2,285	228	0.71%	3,778	189	0.60%
<b>Households</b>														
Baseline	12,575	13,043	13,467	13,863	14,241	893	179	0.69%	774	77	0.56%	1,666	83	0.62%
Recent Trends	12,575	13,118	13,758	14,346	14,902	1,183	237	0.90%	1,144	114	0.80%	2,327	116	0.85%
<b>Housing Units</b>														
Baseline	14,296	14,828	15,311	15,760	16,190	1,015	203	0.69%	880	88	0.56%	1,895	95	0.62%
Recent Trends	14,296	14,913	15,641	16,310	16,942	1,345	269	0.90%	1,301	130	0.80%	2,646	132	0.85%
<b>Employment (Wage and Salary)</b>														
Baseline	13,700	14,128	14,497	14,816	15,104	797	159	0.57%	607	61	0.41%	1,404	70	0.49%
Recent Trends	13,700	14,391	14,992	15,511	15,978	1,292	258	0.91%	986	99	0.64%	2,278	114	0.77%
<b>Total Employment (W/S Plus Proprietors)</b>														
Baseline	20,395	20,704	21,245	21,712	22,135	850	170	0.41%	889	89	0.41%	1,740	87	0.41%
Recent Trends	20,395	20,997	21,901	22,682	23,383	1,506	301	0.71%	1,483	148	0.66%	2,988	149	0.69%

Source: Economic & Planning Systems

Z:\Shared\Projects\DEN\213156-Park County WY Comprehensive Plan\Models\213156-Growth Forecast\_8-12-22.xlsx\TABLE 10 - SUMMARY

## Forecast Takeaways

The following major takeaways were developed based on the analysis of economic and demographic trends and from the development of the forecasts.

- The demographic and economic trends have been indicating over the past decade that there has been limited growth of the workforce (16 to 64 years old) and young (under 16 years old) populations. As well, employment in the county appeared to be beginning to decline prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. The demographic and economic trends reinforce the forecast the population State of Wyoming produced, showing a lower rate of growth over the plan horizon than experienced in the previous decades.
- Recent construction trends and economic trends indicate an increase in visitation and housing development activity to support seasonal home use. These growth pressures appear to be masking the underlying demographic trends going on with the full-time resident population.
- The economy has mostly returned to pre-pandemic levels and appears to be continuing to grow in key sectors such as farming, services, and tourism. If this economic growth is going to continue, growth of the workforce population will need to exceed the State's forecast.
- Policy Consideration: The increase in attraction of second homeowners, short-term rentals, remote workers, and retirees is putting pressure on the housing market that is impacting the workforce housing supply. How should land use policy for the unincorporated portion of the county address negative impacts of recent trends?
  - Should the county increase the capacity and opportunity for workforce housing development in the unincorporated portion of the county?
  - Should the county encourage and direct new housing development towards the city and/or places best suited for denser development?
  - Should the county consider limiting the amount and/or types of certain types of housing products that may be detrimental to workforce housing access or affordability? (e.g., ranchettes, short-term rentals)

## Housing Unit Demand

The forecast change in population, households, and housing units were compared to recent growth trends and other benchmark data to illustrate how the forecast brackets these trends. The annual rate of household change from 2000 to 2020 and 2010 to 2020, along with a six-year average of new address requests to the county were compared to the two forecasts (see **Table 11**).

The estimated capture of new housing units within the unincorporated portion of Park County was estimated using the current rate of population and households in the unincorporated part of the county (45 percent). The result is an estimated growth of between 853 (Baseline) and 1,191 (Recent Trends) housing units in unincorporated Park County by 2040. The forecast change in housing units was compared to single family residential permit activity in the county over the past 20 years and Northwest Rural Water Tap Permits between 2015 and 2021 (see **Table 12**).

The estimated housing demand for unincorporated Park County was split into three housing types based on permit trends. The three types are:

- **Ranchettes** – Smaller, subdivided “ranchettes” of approximately 10 acres in size. The average size parcel for newly permitted homes in the county was 11 acres as a comparison. These smaller than 40-acre ranches accounted for approximately 75 percent of the permitted units in the county over the past 20 years.
- **Large Ranches** – This category is for homes permitted on large acreage ranches. The average size of these parcel is estimated to be 300 acres. These ranch homes account for 15 percent of the permitted units.

- **Other** – This category encompasses all other permitted residential units in the county, which are built on a wide variety of parcel sizes and on parcels with existing homes. One of the most common permits is for an accessory dwelling unit on a parcel that already has a primary home. Accessory dwelling units are estimated to account for 10 percent of permitted units and are assumed to be on parcels 10 acres in size for modeling purposes.

The allocation of housing unit demand by these three housing types was used to estimate land demand (acres) based on the average size of parcels for each type of housing unit. The Ranchettes housing unit type is estimated to generate demand of between 6,394 acres (Baseline forecast) and 8,930 acres (Recent Trends forecast) (see **Table 13**).

- The estimated demand of units and resulting acres from the Ranchettes was developed based on the historic rate of capture of housing in each planning area. This allocation of housing unit demand by planning area and corresponding acreage demand can be modified to evaluate different scenarios of capture and housing densities allowable in each planning area (see **Table 14**).

# LAND SUITABILITY ANALYSIS METHODOLOGY

August 2022

## BACKGROUND

A GIS-based suitability analysis was completed as part of the Park County Land Use Plan update to help to inform discussions with the community about where and how future development should occur in unincorporated areas of Park County. While the primary focus of this analysis was to evaluate suitability for residential development, similar criteria apply for non-residential development. The suitability analysis included three steps:

1. Screen out areas of that are undevelopable due to prohibitive factors;
2. Identify and rank key indicators/criteria of suitable development; and
3. Overlay areas of value (i.e., irrigated agricultural land, critical wildlife habitat) to identify potential conflicts.

This memo outlines considerations for the first two of these steps, which were developed based on input from the Technical Working Group (TWG). The project team sought additional input from the TWG through an online survey to confirm the model criteria and inform the weighting of each criterion.

## PROHIBITIVE FACTORS

The prohibitive factors identified below are locations in Park County where unincorporated development cannot occur. These lands were excluded from development capacity calculations for new development.

- **Municipalities**
- **Public Lands** (State and Federal)
- **Railroads** (100' ROW buffer – Areas within 50 feet of each side of the rail track).
- **Roads**
  - *County-Owned*: 100' ROW buffer – Areas within 50 feet of each side of end of the row for county-owned roads
  - *Not County-Owned*: Buffer to width of road (0-20: 20', 24-32: 30', 42: 40') – Areas within a specified distance of non-county roads based on the width of the road.
- **Wetlands**. Areas within a designated wetland which is inclusive of bodies of water, waterways, and flood zones.

## MODEL CRITERIA

Category	Criterion	Rank	Highly Suitable	Suitable	Moderately Suitable	Marginally Suitable	Least Suitable
		Suitability Grade	5	4	3	2	1
Socio-economic	Distance to Infrastructure - Municipal (ft)	<500	500-1000	1000-1500	1500-2000	>2000	
Socio-economic	Distance to Infrastructure - Rural (ft)	<500	500-1000	1000-1500	1500-2000	>2000	
Socio-economic	Distance to Municipality (mi)	<0.2	0.2-1	1-2	2-3	>3	
Socio-economic	Distance to Road - Gravel (ft)	<500	500-1000	1000-1500	1500-2000	>2000	
Socio-economic	Distance to Road - Paved (ft)	<1000	1000-2000	2000-3000	3000-4000	>4000	
Socio-economic	Distance to Road - Unimproved (ft)	<250	250-500	500-750	750-1000	>1000	
Topographic	Slope (°) *	<2	2-5	5-10	10-25	>25	
Ecological	Soil - Dwellings w/o Basements (Dominant Condition) **	Not limited	--	Somewhat limited	Not Rated	Very limited	

\*Luan et al. (2021)

\*\*SSURGO (2014)

The purpose of the model criteria listed in the table above, and described below, is to identify the location and quantity of land within the unincorporated portion of Park County based on its suitability for development. The criteria were identified and designed to measure the attractiveness/likeliness for new development within the County. The criteria represent the basic elements needed to support development. Each criterion was rated on a scale of one (least suitable for development) to five (most suitable for development). The criteria are then ranked in order of importance. The highest rated criteria will have the greatest influence on which lands are rated most or least suitable while the lowest rated criteria will have the least influence.

Additional criteria that were discussed with the TWG but were ruled out due to data limitations or other factors, included well water/availability, emotional attachment (to things like viewsheds), proximity to intersections, farm to market status of roads, aquifer potential, private easements, power availability, and conservation easements. While they were not included in the model, many of these criteria factored into policy discussions with the community.

- **Distance to Infrastructure - Municipal (ft).** This criterion identifies land that is close to existing municipal infrastructure (water and sewer lines) both inside and outside of the municipal boundaries for Cody, Powell, and Meeteetse. Municipal water and sewer infrastructure is best suited to accommodate new development.
- **Distance to Infrastructure – Rural (ft).** Access to water is an essential attribute to support development. If an area is not near municipal water lines, then proximity to existing Northwest Rural Water District (NWRWD) lines is *an* indicator of suitability. Proximity to NWRWD lines does not guarantee that NWRWD can serve the area, nor does it preclude the possibility that a new home could be served by an individual well.
- **Distance to Municipality (mi).** Proximity to a municipality is judged to be attractive to new development because of the increased access to goods and services this proximity creates and the potential for future annexation into the city.
- **Roadway access.** Road access is essential element for supporting new development. The quality of the roadway increases or decreases the attractiveness of a site. The proximity to three types of roadways is measured including gravel roads, paved roads, and unimproved roads.
  - Distance to Road - Gravel (ft)
  - Distance to Road - Paved (ft)
  - Distance to Road - Unimproved (ft)
- **Slope (°)** The steepness of the land, as measured by percent slope, has a significant impact on the ability to build and the cost of construction. The slope of the land is measured to identify areas that are more or less suitable.
- **Soil Conditions.** The quality of the soil in an area impacts the ability and the type of construction that can occur. Wastewater treatment is an essential element to supporting new development. The quality of the soil to support a septic tank absorption field was identified as potential measure of suitability. However, analysis of building permit activity overlaid on soil quality ratings for septic tanks revealed that often building occurs in areas rated least suitable for septic tanks and does not appear to be enough of a limiting factor for developers. There was found to be a more direct correlation between the rating of the soil for dwellings without basements (as opposed to with basements) and where building permit activity has occurred. This measure was deemed to be a better indicator of soil quality and impacts. Note the quality of soils to accommodate septic tanks is an important consideration but may not be the best indicator of likeliness of development. Based on this analysis, two distinct soil conditions are included in the model.
  - Soil - Septic Tank Absorption Fields (Dominant Condition)
  - Soil - Dwellings w/o Basements (Dominant Condition)

## DOCUMENTATION OF CRITERIA RANKING

After the values of the criteria were grouped and transformed to a common scale, the model criteria were ranked relative to one another. Relative weights were assigned to the model criteria by six outside experts and local stakeholders using a pair-wise comparison matrix. The responses were then normalized and averaged to derive individual criteria weights.

n	Criterion	Weights	+/-
1	Distance to Inf. - Municipal	16.5%	4.2%
2	Distance to Inf. - Rural	26.2%	7.8%
3	Distance to Municipality	7.2%	1.2%
4	Distance to Road - Gravel	7.9%	2.1%
5	Distance to Road - Paved	13.9%	4.1%
6	Distance to Road - Unimproved	5.7%	1.6%
7	Slope	10.6%	2.2%
8	Soil - Dwellings w/o Basements	12.1%	3.6%





## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS: DOMESTIC WATER IN PARK COUNTY

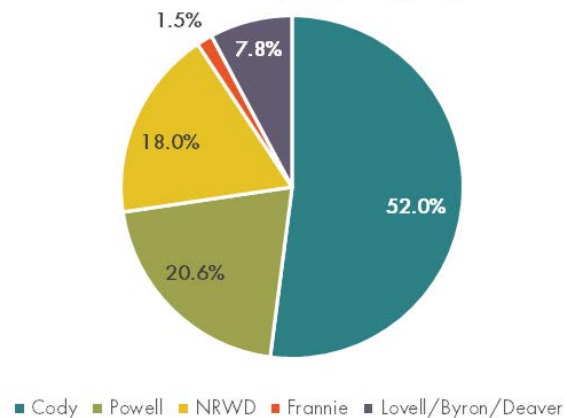
### Where does our domestic water come from?

Domestic water in Park County generally comes from one of three sources—the Shoshone Municipal Pipeline (SMP), the Town of Meeteetse, or individual wells. In 2020, 88.4 percent of households in Park County were served by the SMP. The SMP was formed as the Shoshone Municipal Water Joint Powers Board in 1986 as a partnership between the cities of Cody, Powell, Byron, Lovell, Deaver, and Frannie to address the need for an improved domestic water source. The regional collaboration began delivering treated domestic water from Buffalo Bill Reservoir to municipalities in 1991, and to the Northwest Rural Water District (NRWD) in 1993. While the Park County Land Use Plan focuses specifically on the *unincorporated* areas outside of the cities and towns, information regarding municipalities is provided below and throughout this document to help provide a more complete picture of domestic water in Park County.

### How is SMP water allocated to entities within Park County?

Each entity in the partnership receives a set allocation of year-round water, as outlined in SMP's original water service contract with the Bureau of Reclamation (illustrated at right). The terms of this agreement were renewed by SMP in July 2022 and extend through 2062. Allocations and 2022 usage for each entity are summarized below.

SMP Water Usage by Entity, July 2022



SMP Water Allowance and Usage (Million Gallons per Day), 2022						
Entity	Allowance	July 2022 (Highest Day)		July 2022 (Average Day)		
		Usage	% of Allowance	Usage	% of Allowance	
Cody	11.36	3.24	28.5%	2.80	24.6%	
Powell	4.95	1.50	30.3%	1.11	22.4%	
NRWD	2.16	1.14	52.8%	0.97	44.9%	
Lovell	1.74	0.44	25.3%	0.32	18.4%	
Byron	0.81	0.18	22.2%	0.08	9.9%	
Deaver	0.23	0.08	34.8%	0.02	8.7%	
Frannie	0.10	0.14 <sup>[1]</sup>	140.0% <sup>[1]</sup>	0.08	80.0%	
<b>Total</b>	<b>21.35</b>	<b>6.72</b>	<b>31.5%</b>	<b>5.38</b>	<b>25.2%</b>	

Source: SMP

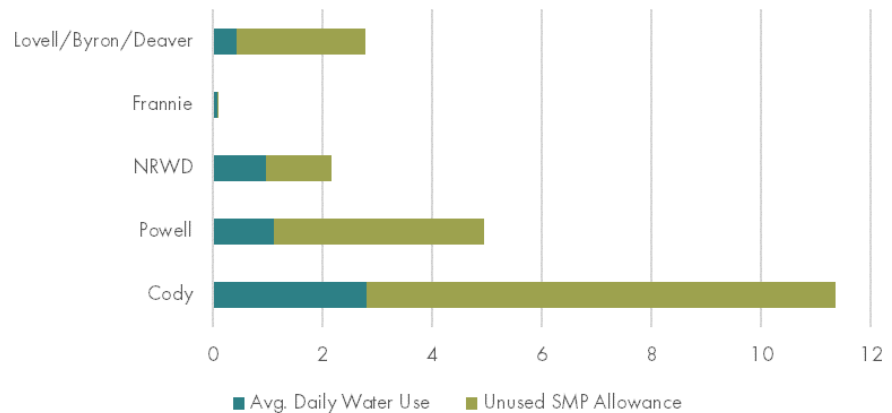
Note [1]: Frannie experienced a well failure issue that resulted in the temporary use of SMP water for irrigation in July 2022.

## How much growth can SMP accommodate?

Initial SMP allocations in 1986 were based on water service population estimates for Park County prepared by the project engineer. These estimates forecast a water service population of 36,660 by 2020 and 41,350 by 2030 with over 90% of growth occurring within municipalities. Instead, Park County has grown more slowly than the projections with a

population of 29,624 in 2020 and unincorporated areas capturing a greater share of growth (having almost 45% of residents). Growth forecasts prepared by Economic and Planning Systems as part of the Land Use Plan update estimate that Park County will add between 2,311 and 3,778 residents and 1,666 to 2,327 households by 2040. Based on these forecasts, SMP does not anticipate shortages in water supply or treatment capacity within the planning horizon.

Avg. Daily Water Use and Allowance by Entity (MGD), July 2022



### WATER SUPPLY

Based on the terms of its 2022 agreement with the Bureau of Reclamation, SMP has ample water supply to serve current and forecast customers without the need for conservation mandates, despite recent growth trends in Park County and higher water use during the latest hotter and drier years (2020-2021). If a water shortage due to severe drought conditions were to occur in the future, allocations for all members would be cut proportionately.

### TREATMENT CAPABILITY

The SMP Water Treatment Plant was completed in 1991 and has a capacity of 16.5 million gallons per day (MGD). The plant was designed with the potential to expand capacity to 22 MGD by 2010, but capacity remains well below original estimates and no expansions are planned as of 2022. Plans for expansion of the plant would be triggered when water usage reaches 10 MGD during peak days.

### TAPS

SMP's main Treated Water Pipeline runs from the treatment facility near Cody to Lovell with a spur line running to Deaver and Frannie. The main transmission line was designed to accommodate 18 community-sized taps. Of those used so far, all are used by the municipalities and NRWD. The potential to add additional taps exists; however, the cost to install a single new tap in the main line could easily exceed \$500K. Based on cost alone, the likelihood of a private entity pursuing additional taps is small. Any request would probably be associated with a sizable development proposal and would likely require approval from the state for the formation of a new water district. The spur line running to Deaver and Frannie has 30 individual residence taps that are not designed for larger service areas. The Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality, which is responsible for monitoring and protecting surface and groundwater in the state, is not in favor of expanding beyond the existing number of taps on the spur line to Deaver and Frannie.

## How much growth can individual entities that serve Park County accommodate?

### NORTHWEST RURAL WATER DISTRICT

Northwest Rural Water District (NRWD) was formed to deliver treated domestic water to rural homes in areas outside of Cody, Powell, Lovell, Garland, Deaver, and Frannie. The SMP provides water to NRWD, but NRWD is a separate entity that was established by the State of Wyoming with the powers of a public or quasi-municipal corporation. NRWD is governed by a Board of Directors elected by the resident landowners of the District and is generally tasked with serving smaller properties (less than 50 acres). Although NRWD is able to levy taxes on properties within the district to finance operations and infrastructure development, it currently relies on user fees, including fees on extending service lines and taps.

NRWD provides water to ten service areas, nine of which are individual distribution systems. NRWD's 2017 Master Plan identifies recommended improvements for each service area. However, growth rates in recent years have far exceeded the factors used in the plan.<sup>i</sup> Between 2018 and 2021, NRWD saw a 2.65 percent increase in active accounts. Between 2020 and 2021, NRWD saw a 3.99 percent increase in active accounts overall. During the same period, increases in active accounts were greatest in the North End (10.66%), O'Donnell (7.65%), and O'Donnell/Garland (5.52%).

Growth and development trends in the past few years have created challenges for NRWD. Demand to extend service lines and taps for individual properties have increased dramatically, as has demand for larger subdivisions. Responding to this increased demand has been made more challenging by infrastructure constraints. Since the completion of the 2017 Master Plan, NRWD has invested in approximately \$7 million in infrastructure improvements, and has also been working to address a historic disconnect between user fees and the actual cost of sustaining and expanding the NRWD system.

NRWD is not required to serve every user within its service areas, but anyone within its service areas can request service. NRWD has historically tried to honor individual requests regardless of location (although some areas are more challenging to serve than others). Rapid growth in recent years led NRWD to temporarily suspended the addition of new transmission mains districtwide between March of 2022 and April 2023. Additionally, NRWD has paused providing additional, new services in the rural Powell service areas (O'Donnell, Garland, and North End) to allow time for completion of a planned capacity expansion project for the area. The O'Donnell Storage project, which is anticipated for completion in 2024, will result in a 75% storage capacity increase for that site—enough to serve about 300 new (average) users in the area—and is expected to result in an end to the pause in expanding services in O'Donnell, Garland, and North End areas.<sup>ii</sup> NRWD's average July daily usage of 0.97 million gallons (MG) represents less than half (44.9%) of its SMP allowance; however, current storage and distribution capabilities (due to variations in the size and consistency of the lines) are limiting factors for development in a number of service areas.<sup>iii</sup>

### MUNICIPALITIES

**Cody.** The City of Cody provides both treated water and raw water service to residents within its municipal boundaries, the latter of which is used for landscape irrigation. Without the use of the raw water system, much of the City's treated water system would need to be upsized to accommodate the demands of summer irrigation. The City has a storage capacity of approximately 3.792 MG and a peak average daily usage of 2.80 MG.<sup>iv</sup> The City's maximum allocation from SMP is adequate to provide treated water to 25,586 equivalent dwelling units (EDUs)—four times the current number Cody has and three times the number needed to accommodate the City's 2042 population projections. Cody has a policy to not extend water infrastructure outside of municipal boundaries unless the extension is associated with a proposed annexation. The City has identified the following potential annexation areas: The North-West Cody Residential Area, North Cody Annexation Area, Sage Creek Annexation Area, South Cody Industrial Area, Panorama View Expansion Area, West End Annexation Area, and Cooper Lane Area. While the availability

of water has been verified by the City as available at potential connection points, the extension of treated water infrastructure to serve these areas would be triggered and paid for by the parties developing these areas.<sup>v</sup>

**Powell.** The City of Powell provides water services to residents within its municipal boundaries. Powell has two overhead towers and one ground storage tank with a combined capacity of approximately 1.9 MG. The City's peak average daily usage is 1.11 MG, representing 22.4 percent of Powell's SMP allowance.<sup>vi</sup> Powell has historically encouraged but not required annexation as a condition of providing water service, but is exploring a change in policy due to challenges associated with cases where utilities were extended without requiring annexation.

**Meeteetse.** The Town of Meeteetse's water system is not served by the SMP and instead draws water from the Lower Sunshine Reservoir. Meeteetse has about 203 water taps available within Town limits and 12 outside of the boundary. The Town has a storage capacity of approximately 700,000 gallons, delivery capacity of about 576,000 gallons, and peak daily usage of about 120,000 gallons.<sup>vii</sup>

**Frannie.** The Town of Frannie's municipal boundary straddles the dividing line between Park County and Big Horn County. The Town's municipal water system was completely replaced in 2003—including all water distribution lines, valves, fire hydrants, and other appurtenances. As a component of the system upgrade, the original potable water distribution system was converted to a non-potable water distribution system that is intended to be primarily used as a source of irrigation water for public and private landscaping.<sup>viii</sup> This system is not in use at this time. The Town has a 250,000-gallon water storage capacity and a peak average daily usage of 0.08 MG. This represents 80 percent of the Town's SMP allowance.<sup>ix</sup>

## How reliable are individual wells in Park County?

Properties located outside of municipal boundaries and outside of the NRWD service area (or that do not meet criteria for NRWD service) are typically served by individual wells that rely on groundwater. The USGS notes that the availability of groundwater and viability of wells can vary greatly by the location and depth of wells, which makes some properties unable to access sufficient groundwater.<sup>x</sup> Individual wells are permitted by the Wyoming State Engineer's Office, Ground Water Division. While the location of wells is tracked, their productivity and the quality of water that is extracted over the life of the well are not. As a result, individual property owners must rely on their own due diligence to assess and validate the feasibility and long-term viability of new wells.

## What other options exist for future development in areas not covered by existing service providers?

Some developments in more remote areas of Park County operate small-scale water systems that serve the residents of that unincorporated area. An example of this is the Copperleaf Subdivision in the Wapiti area, which has its own water system to serve 155 properties because it is outside of the service area of other water providers. While not alone a water source, cisterns—fed by wells or SMP water that is trucked in—are used as a means to provide water to properties in some areas of Park County.

<sup>i</sup> Northwest Rural Water District Master Plan, Level 1 Study, Executive Summary, 2017. <http://library.wrds.uwyo.edu/wwdcrept/Northwest/Northwest-Rural-Water-District-Master-Plan-Executive-Summary-2017.pdf>

<sup>ii</sup> Northwest Rural Water District, 2022. <https://nrwdcodywy.com/>

<sup>iii</sup> Shoshone Municipal Pipeline Water Allowance and Usage (Million Gallons per Day), 2022. <http://www.shoshonemunicipalpipeline.org/>

<sup>iv</sup> Shoshone Municipal Pipeline Water Allowance and Usage (Million Gallons per Day), 2022.

<sup>v</sup> City of Cody Water Master Plan, Level 1 Study, Executive Summary, 2021.

[http://library.wrds.uwyo.edu/wwdcrept/Cody/Cody-City\\_of\\_Cody\\_Master\\_Plan\\_Level\\_1\\_Study-Executive\\_Summary-2021.html](http://library.wrds.uwyo.edu/wwdcrept/Cody/Cody-City_of_Cody_Master_Plan_Level_1_Study-Executive_Summary-2021.html)

<sup>vi</sup> Shoshone Municipal Pipeline Water Allowance and Usage (Million Gallons per Day), 2022.

<sup>vii</sup> Town of Meeteetse Master Plan, 2014. [http://www.townofmeeteetse.org/Meeteetse\\_Master\\_Plan\\_-\\_May\\_2014\\_-\\_Final\\_Version.pdf](http://www.townofmeeteetse.org/Meeteetse_Master_Plan_-_May_2014_-_Final_Version.pdf)

<sup>viii</sup> Town of Frannie Community Development Plan, 2005.

<https://library.wyo.gov/downloads/services/planning/docs/PD-FR-CD-2005.pdf>

<sup>ix</sup> Shoshone Municipal Pipeline Water Allowance and Usage (Million Gallons per Day), 2022.

<sup>x</sup> USGS. Hydrology of Park County, Wyoming, Exclusive of Yellowstone National Park. 1993.

<https://pubs.usgs.gov/wri/1993/4183/report.pdf>

## BIG GAME USE OVERLAY METHODOLOGY

Big Game Use Overlay polygons were created by Dr. Laura Gigliotti (Assistant Unit Leader, West Virginia Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit) under the direction of Dr. Arthur Middleton (Assistant Professor, Department of Environmental Science, Policy, and Management, University of California, Berkeley) using GPS data from elk (*Cervus canadensis*), mule deer (*Odocoileus hemionus*), and pronghorn (*Antilocapra americana*) that were previously collared for a variety of research and management purposes. Data from November 1 to April 30 were used to be consistent with the winter range dates used by Wyoming Game and Fish. For animals that were collared for more than one year, a single year of data was randomly selected to use in the analysis. As a first step in the analysis, the probability of use for individual animals was estimated using Brownian bridge movement models (Horne et al., 2007), which resulted in a raster with cell values ranging from 0 (no use) to 1 (high use). The individual use raster for all animals of the same species was then added and re-scaled the species-level raster with cell values ranging from 0-1. This procedure was repeated for all species. From there, the three species-level rasters were added together to create the multi-species use raster, which again is scaled from 0 to 1. High use areas were defined as raster values  $>0.75$ , medium use as raster values between 0.5-0.75, and low use as raster values  $<0.5$  (Sawyer et al., 2009). Based on these value thresholds, high, medium, and low use areas were translated into the final overlay polygons.

Additionally, areas of high, medium, and low use for mule deer were estimated using ground classification data collected by Wyoming Game and Fish during the winter. Using all sighting GPS locations, kernel density models were run with reference bandwidth selection (Calenge, 2006) to estimate a utilization distribution scaled from 0 (no use) to 1 (high use). The same cut-off values of 0.75 and 0.5 (as described above) were used to demarcate areas of high, medium, and low use.

Calenge, C. (2006) The package “adehabitat” for the R software: A tool for the analysis of space and habitat use by animals. *Ecological Modelling*, 197:516–519.

Horne, J.S., Garton, E.O., Krone, S.M. & Lewis, J.S. (2007) Analyzing animal movements using Brownian bridges. *Ecology*, 88, 2354–2363.

Sawyer, H., Kauffman, M.J., Nielson, R.M. & Horne, J.S. (2009) Identifying and prioritizing ungulate migration routes for landscape-level conservation. *Ecological Applications*, 19, 2016–2025, doi:10.1890/08-2034.1.

## CONSERVATION TOOLS AND CASE STUDIES

This section provides an overview of conservation tools/strategies that could be considered by Park County in the future as a supplement to the work of the many land trusts that assist with establishing and managing voluntary conservation easements in the County. Case studies from other rural counties are provided where applicable.

### EXPANDED ROLE IN EDUCATION AND FUNDING FOR LAND TRUSTS

Park County supports the efforts of local land trusts (as discussed in Chapter 2) by providing information to property owners who request it. The County does not contribute funding, staffing, or otherwise facilitate the provision or management of conservation easements. Moving forward, the County could consider expanding its role in securing funding for conservation easements and/or dedicating staff time to public education and outreach to increase property owner awareness. Possible sources of additional funding include donations and grants. (See also, County Funding and Financing, page X)

**Donations.** In order to generate interest and outside funding for preserving agricultural or open space lands, the County may facilitate fundraising from outside sources. For example, the County may actively seek donations or volunteer hours from organizations or individuals with an interest in agriculture and wildlife habitat. Funds or resources donated to these programs can then be used specifically to achieve the County's goals.

**Grants.** The County may also apply, or facilitate applications for grants to help support agricultural land preservation. Governments usually provide assistance through local matching funds. Both federal and state grants are available for these purposes.

The USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) administers the Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program, which offers grants to help purchase the development rights of ranch and farm properties to ensure they continued to be used for agricultural purposes. The NRCS also provides cost-share assistance to eligible entities to purchase agricultural easements, up to 50 percent of the fair market value of the easement. If there is a determination that grasslands of special environmental significance will be protected, up to 75 percent can be funded.

### PURCHASE OF DEVELOPMENT RIGHTS (PDR)

Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) programs are designed to facilitate the purchase of development rights and place a conservation easement (or other legal easement) on a property that restricts development on the property. The landowner retains ownership and can use the land for purposes specified in the easement (e.g., agriculture). Sometimes other public uses may be negotiated to be allowed on the property, but this is not required. Sometimes public access is specifically prohibited. The landowner retains the right to sell or transfer the land. PDR programs can be flexible since they can adapt the terms of the easement to the needs of the landowner and the easement holder. Easements are usually held by a non-profit entity, such as a land trust or conservation organization, but can also be held and managed by a local governmental entity.

PDR programs are tailored to the needs and values of individual communities. This is particularly important to garner support for funding measures to support acquisition of development rights and placing conservation easements. PDR programs often have combined goals of preserving natural areas, agricultural lands, and open space. Public funds are often used to purchase development rights in a PDR program. Funding can also be found through both local and national non-profit conservation organizations that work to preserve natural resources and farmlands.

## CASE STUDY: ROUTT COUNTY, COLORADO

**Background.** The Routt County PDR program was established in 1996 after the completion of the Routt County Open Lands Plan that addressed agricultural and ranching traditions as well as open space values. The program goals encourage the continuation of agriculture as a vital sector of the economy and to advocate for the protection of natural, open, and productive lands that contribute to Routt County's special landscape.

In 1996, voters approved a 1 mill increase in property tax to fund the PDR program and extended the program for 20 more years in 2005 (along with a 0.5 mill increase on property taxes).

Applications for the PDR program go through a two-tier review and scoring system. The first tier evaluates the following areas:

- Leverage of other resources;
- Quality of the land resource and economic viability/potential to stay in agriculture;
- Relationship to other community values such as natural areas, wildlife habitat or historic resources; and
- Circumstances affecting continued agricultural operation or maintenance of natural values and function.

The second tier applies only if the application is approved for funding after review in tier one. The second tier focuses on due diligence required for a real estate transaction and evaluates the legal and financial arrangements of the proposed easement acquisition.

To be considered for the program a landowner must apply to the program in conjunction with a qualified land conservation organization. The PDR Citizens' Advisory Board, appointed by the Routt County Commissioners, reviews all applications and makes recommendations to the Board.

**Results.** Since initiation of the PDR Program in 1997, the County has helped fund the purchase of conservation easements on 50,105 acres, at a cost of \$26.8 million dollars, including transaction costs. Six PDR projects covering an additional 7,209 acres, at a PDR funds cost of \$2,634,000, have also been approved for funding and are pending completion. Once these projects are completed, the program will have preserved a total of 57,311 acres at a cost of about \$29.4 million dollars. Completed PDR projects range in size from the 3,507-acre Dry Fork Ranch, north of Hayden, to the 13-acre Fournier property.

Additional information is available at: <https://www.co.routt.co.us/110/Purchase-of-Development-Rights-Board>.

## TRANSFER OF DEVELOPMENT RIGHTS (TDR)

Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) programs shift development rights from areas unsuitable for development (e.g., natural hazard areas) or areas where lower density or land conservation are desired (e.g., sensitive lands such as wetlands or agricultural lands) to areas where more growth or higher densities are desired, and infrastructure and services are available. These are often referred to as sending areas and receiving areas, respectively. TDR programs facilitate the sale of development rights in sending areas to developers in receiving areas who usually receive some additional development potential with the purchased development rights. A conservation easement may be placed on the property from which the development rights are transferred. TDR transactions are usually between private landowners and developers, although some communities maintain a "TDR bank" that buys development rights with public funds and "banks" the TDRs until there is a willing buyer in a receiving area. TDR programs are favored in many communities for creating a market-based system that leverages private sector resources to fund land preservation programs.



These programs also ensure that landowners in sending areas that may lose development potential realize the fair market value of their land. TDR programs work best where there is a demand for development that can only be achieved through the increase in density allowed by purchasing development rights.

Public funds are generally not used to finance TDR programs. Instead, the programs are intended to stimulate private sector participation by creating a market for development rights. In some cases, however, TDR banks are established, and public funds are used to purchase TDRs from willing sellers to be sold to buyers in receiving areas when there is a market for the TDRs.

### CASE STUDY: BOULDER COUNTY, COLORADO

**Background.** Boulder County established a TDR program in August 2008 to protect lands with productive agricultural value or environmentally sensitive areas such as wetlands, rare plantings, or wildlife habitat. The program also responds to the dramatic increase in median dwelling unit size in the last decade and the need to preserve the diversity of the housing stock in the county.

The TDR program is used alongside other land development tools such as the nonurban planned unit developments program, which started in 1978, and the majority of the county being limited to 35-acre minimum lot sizes. In conjunction with the TDR program, the County also requires a site plan review standard of compatibility—requiring that the size of dwelling units remain compatible with the surrounding neighborhood (area within 1,500 feet of the site, platted subdivisions of more than seven developed lots, or mapped townsites).

The TRD program mandates that all property owners in unincorporated areas purchase transferable development credits (TDC) if they want to build a home of more than 6,000 square feet. If a property owner has a vacant parcel or home smaller than 2,000 square feet in an unincorporated area, they may sell their TDC to a developer or homeowner seeking to build a larger home. This requires that the impacts of larger homes be offset through the preservation of either vacant land or smaller homes. There is no maximum house size limitation included in this program.

Sending sites for the TDR program, which must be in unincorporated Boulder County, are eligible to receive two units per 35 acres with an extra unit allowed per 35 acres if an undivided interest in water rights stays in use on the land and is deeded to the county. Potential receiving areas are not mapped by the County to avoid artificially raising or lowering property values through speculation. Rather, the County requires that any interested property owner show how their property meets the criteria for approval as a receiving area. Neighboring landowners are notified, and public hearings are held once a receiving area is proposed. The County has intergovernmental agreements with several of the communities within the county to act as sending and receiving areas, including the Boulder, Erie, Lafayette, Longmont, Louisville, and Superior. Unless there is an intergovernmental agreement that requires a higher percentage, 75 percent of the units transferred to the receiving site are required to come from a defined sub-area surrounding the site.

The sale, purchase, and exchange of TDCs are completed through a 3rd party clearing house that helps facilitate communication between buyers and sellers. Although the County has yet to purchase any TDCs, they may depend on market conditions. Once the owner agrees to restrict uses of the property in exchange for a TDC, their land is deeded with a conservation easement in perpetuity. Owners of TDCs can sell to developers for use wherever the County and a local municipality have agreed to allow greater density, or TDCs that owners can sell for use on properties where owners have received land use approval to exceed single-family residential size limits. These properties remain privately owned and are therefore not open to the public.

**Results.** Conservation easements on privately-owned land from the TDR program have preserved over 39,000 acres of land. The strength in the housing market in Boulder County provides a good incentive for people who want to develop on sensitive lands. The third-party marketplace is a transparent way for both buyers and sellers to see how much TDRs and TDCs are worth and helps match potential buyers and sellers. The program also allows more flexibility because there are no exact defined sending and receiving areas.

Additional information can be found at:

<https://www.bouldercounty.org/property-and-land/land-use/planning/transferable-development-rights-tdr/>.

## COUNTY FUNDING AND FINANCING

Potential funding and financing powers that can support conservation efforts were identified within the powers given to Park County. Counties in Wyoming operate under Dillon's Rule, which means they are extensions of the State of Wyoming and do not have power outside of what is specifically granted by state law. Counties in Wyoming typically have four primary types of revenue sources property taxes, sales taxes, intergovernmental revenues (stated and federal funding), and charges and fees. Within these four types are specific funding and financing tools that support programs and services.

**Property Tax.** Wyoming counties can impose a property tax rate of up to 12 mills to support their General Fund. Park County currently has a 12-mill rate. Wyoming counties can also enact (via voter approval) a 2 mill levy to fund building of county facilities. Counties can also create special districts, typically funded through a property mill levy, with voter approval to fund specific services in the county such as fire protection or hospital districts. Lastly, counties can impose a tax on commercial personal property of up to 3 percent of value of the property.

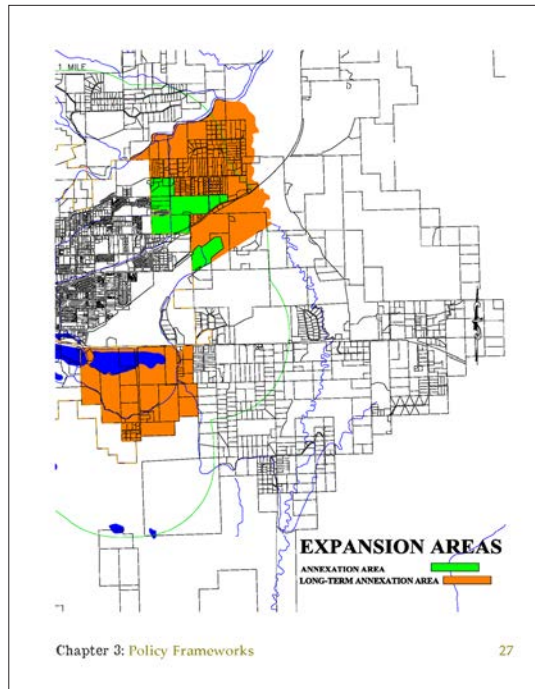
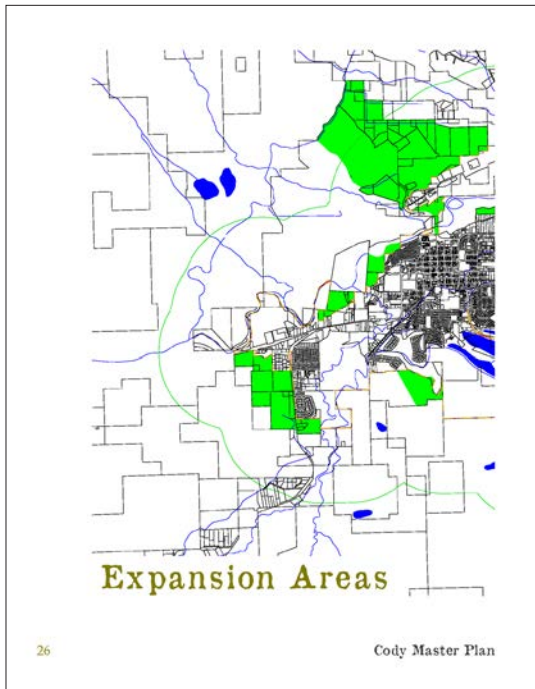
**Sales and Excise Taxes.** Wyoming counties can impose a local option sales tax for general, special, or economic development purposes. The local rate(s) cannot exceed three percent. Park County currently has no sales tax. In addition to traditional sales tax, counties can also impose an excise (i.e., use tax) on retail purchases outside of the county for use within the county. A common example is a tax on building materials used for construction. Use tax is limited to the same three percent cap and has more specific caps on the amount and use of funds. Lastly, counties can impose a lodging tax of up to four percent that can be used for travel or tourism.

Funding from the county for programs to support county priorities, such as agriculture preservation, open space, and recreation amenities, will have to come from one of the state's authorized sources. Programs, such as a purchase of development rights program, would require a county funding source to support them. Potential options the county can explore to fund programs identified in the land use plan include a specific purchase sales or use tax or a special district. Both funding tools will require support from voters, either countywide or by affected property owners, to enact.

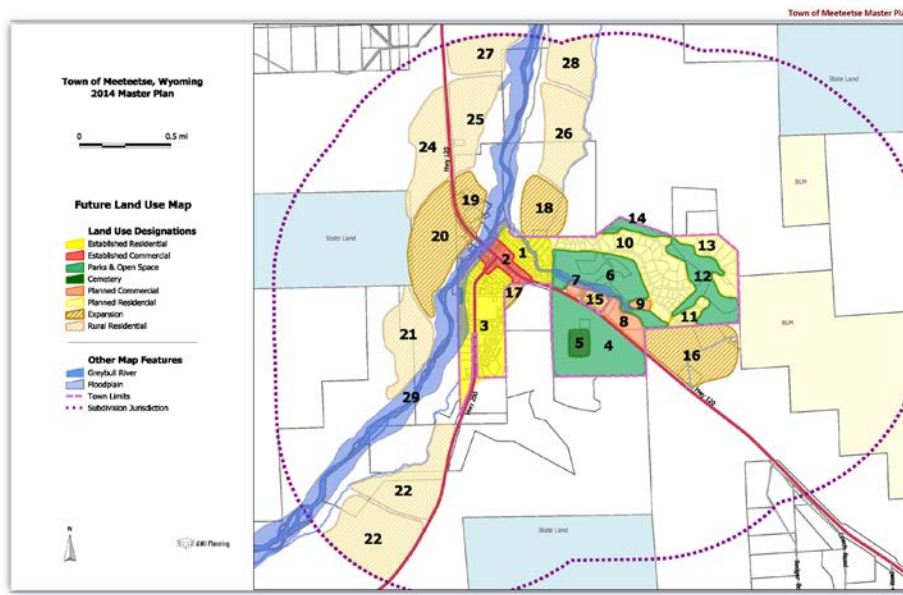
## RELATED MASTER PLANS

The following municipal master plans were used to inform the definition of the Coordinated Planning Area boundaries for the Cody Local Area, Sage Creek Area, Powell Local Area, and Meeteetse Rural, and the future land use categories and associated policies in each area. These plans served as a starting point for discussion with staff and elected officials from the City of Cody, City of Powell, Town of Meeteetse, Northwest Rural Water District, and irrigation districts about infrastructure and service capabilities. Relevant maps are provided where applicable. They reflect adopted municipal policy as of July 2023 and are subject to change.

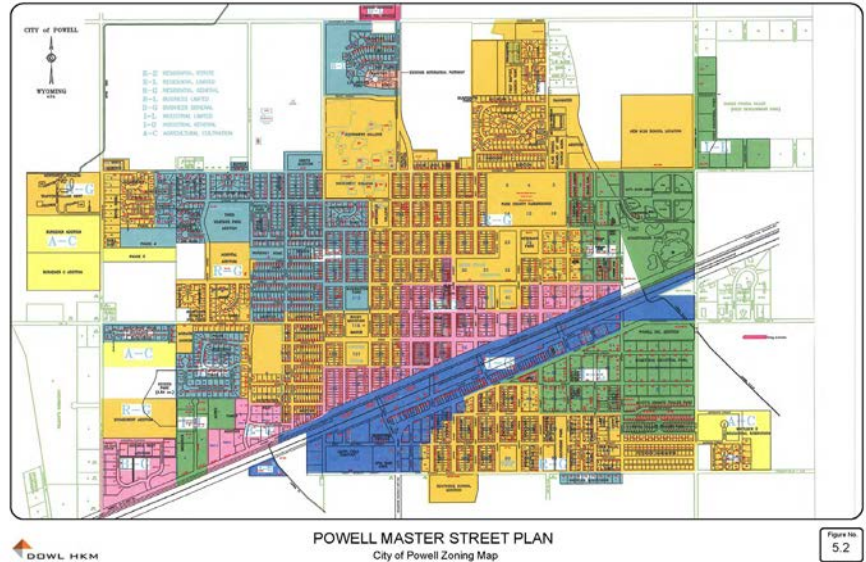
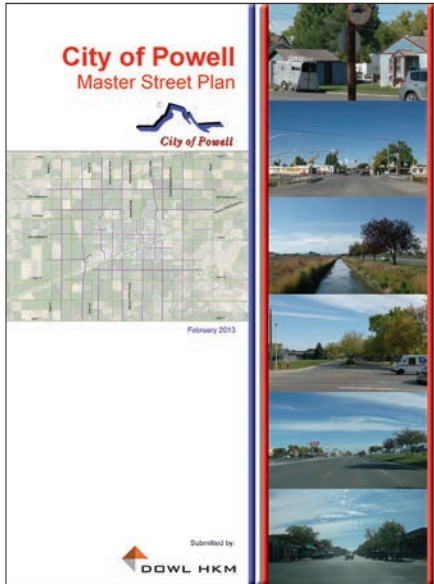
### [City of Cody Master Plan \(2013\)](#)



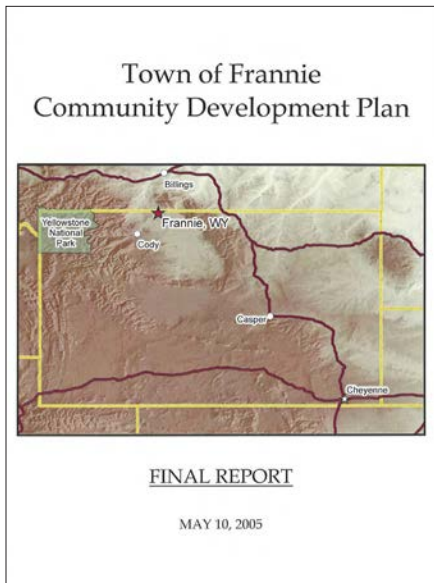
### [Town of Meeteetse Master Plan \(2014\)](#)



City of Powell Master Street Plan (2013). As of July 21, 2023, this plan is no longer available online. A copy is on file in the Planning and Zoning Office.



Town of Frannie Community Plan (2005). As of July 21, 2023, this plan is no longer available online.





## Appendix C: Public Input Summary

Links to each of the public input summaries prepared over the course of the Plan Park County process are provided below. They may also be accessed directly from the Plan Park County webpage at <https://parkcounty-wy.gov/planparkcounty/project-documents/>.

- [Kick-off Meeting Summary—March 2022](#)
- [Youth Engagement Summary—April 2022](#)
- [Vision and Values Survey: Results Summary—June 2022](#)
- [Preliminary Plan Framework Outreach Summary—August 2022](#)
- [Key Policy Choices Outreach Summary—November 2022](#)