

# *Sweetwater County Comprehensive Plan*

County Goals, Objectives & Implementation Strategies

Spring 2002

*A Partnership Planning Effort  
for the Future of Sweetwater County  
8/6/02*

***Sweetwater County Planning Project  
Comprehensive Plan Preparation  
2001-2002***

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*The 2001-2002 Sweetwater County Planning Project and subsequent Sweetwater County Comprehensive Plan were "grassroot" planning efforts that actively involved County residents and communities throughout the process. Special thanks to Sweetwater County citizens and County/community officials, departments and organizations who participated in this project.*

*Sweetwater County Board of Commissioners  
Sweetwater County Planning Commission*

# SWEETWATER COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

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## **SWEETWATER COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2001-2002 County Planning Project**

### **Introduction**

The 2001-2002 Sweetwater County Planning Project and subsequent Sweetwater County Comprehensive Plan are efforts by County leaders and citizens to address the County's present and future land use needs and development objectives. The 2002 Plan updates and consolidates the 1977 Sweetwater County Land Use Plan and the policy elements of the 1996 Growth Area Management Plan. The updated Plan clarifies and reconfirms the County's land use and development objectives and identifies specific implementation strategies for pursuing County-selected priorities.

Wyoming state statutes provide for the development of county-level comprehensive plans under Title 9-8-301 and Title 18-5-202. As stated, locally-developed, adopted and implemented county plans apply to the unincorporated areas within the county and may address public health, safety, moral and general welfare issues. These statutes also highlight the expectation that County governments will coordinate their land use plans and planning efforts with incorporated communities and other local entities. In addition, through Title 18-5-208, Wyoming planning statutes encourage the coordination of county planning efforts with federal land and resource management agencies. The 2002 Sweetwater County Comprehensive Plan focuses on these issues as prioritized and discussed by County leaders and residents through an extensive public involvement and plan development process.

Primary benefits of the 2002 Comprehensive Plan are two-fold. First, the County now possesses a single document that establishes a consistent and clearly articulated foundation for future land use decisions and development guidelines. It is also anticipated that future County land use planning activities will proactively support and implement the Plan's goals and objectives as adopted. For the Plan to function and remain as a valuable planning and decision-making tool, it should be reviewed and amended as necessary to address emerging County issues and interests.

Second, the planning process itself has been a valuable learning experience for Sweetwater County citizens. A diverse group of over 300 County residents actively participated in various stages of the plan development process. These activities included issue identification, issue prioritization, objective clarification and alternative implementation strategy development. Through this process, County residents have truly planned for Sweetwater County's future. The County's Comprehensive Plan is the result of their combined expertise and experience. Public ownership of the Plan and familiarity with the accompanying objectives will be invaluable as County leaders adopt the document and begin Plan implementation. A list of project participants is on file with the County Planning Office.

As part of this planning project, a companion report entitled the *Sweetwater County Economic and Demographic Profile* was prepared. If consistently updated, this document will remain a

valuable resource for County officials, residents and businesses interested in Sweetwater County. A copy of the *Profile* is included as Attachment A.

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

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

By design, the 2001-2002 Sweetwater County planning project went beyond the level of public participation required by law and involved County residents and other interested parties throughout the process. The initial step was the identification of over 120 County opinion leaders and community stakeholders. This list represented all geographic areas of the County and included a mix of incorporated (community) and unincorporated areas. Careful attention was paid to ensure that a broad and diverse interest base had been identified. Over the course of four months, project consultants scheduled one-on-one interviews with over 85 of these individuals/interests. In addition, several community-based scoping meetings were held with smaller, outlying communities. This intimate and candid interaction with County residents provided project consultants with the background material necessary to begin developing a list of preliminary issues and objectives that, according to County residents, should be addressed in the County's updated plan.

Public education and notification efforts during the initial stages of the project also included more than a dozen radio shows and newspaper articles explaining the process and inviting citizens to actively participate. These additional outreach efforts received a fair response with most public comments reflecting a reserved optimism that County leaders were actively pursuing constructive solutions to some very challenging land use and development issues.

During this time, project consultants also reviewed the County's existing land use plans and development guidelines. These materials were further discussed with relevant County officials/departments and became the basis for a detailed County "policies and procedures" evaluation. The resulting report, incorporating comments gathered during the one-on-one public interviews, provided the Planning Commission and Board of County Commissioners with a candid assessment of existing County land use regulations and the application/effectiveness of these policies as perceived by the general public.

Based on the information gathered during the stakeholder interviews, community scoping meetings and County Commission/Planning Commission work sessions; project consultants prepared a preliminary summary of the County's land use and development objectives. Through a project newsletter, the *Draft Sweetwater County Land Use Goals and Objectives* were presented to the general public for comment. Specific topics addressed included: County and community cooperation, citizen and County relations, land use planning, infrastructure, natural resources and public lands. A copy of the newsletter is on file with the County Planning Office.

In an effort to contact all County residents/interests and invite them to comment on the *draft* objectives, the County mailed over 200 newsletters to specific project participants and distributed another 14,800 copies through the *Green River Star* newspaper and the *Star Guide* supplement. Additional copies were available on request from the County planning office and

at community libraries, post offices and schools. The newsletter and comment form were also posted on the County's web page.

The newsletter also invited Sweetwater residents to attend four County-sponsored work sessions designed to gather citizen comments on the *draft* objectives. Prior to these meetings, the local news media provided excellent notice/coverage including two live radio shows and a five-part series in the Rock Springs *Rocket Miner* newspaper. Comments taken at the community-based public meetings were summarized by project consultants and reviewed with the Planning Commission and County Commissioners.

Following the community work sessions, the Planning Commission and County Commissioners continued to work with project consultants to further refine the County's objectives and explore alternative implementation strategies. The results of these discussions are formally presented to the citizens of Sweetwater County in this document as Chapter 2, County Goals and Objectives; and Chapter 3, County-Prioritized 1-3 Year Implementation Strategies. As outlined in Wyoming state statute, the *draft* Plan is subject to public review and comment through an open Planning Commission and County Commission public hearing and adoption process.

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

Sweetwater County officials and citizens should be commended for their proactive commitment to planning and updated Comprehensive Plan. It is intended that the 2002 Plan will serve as a framework for County decision-makers as they consider future private and public land use and development decisions. The Plan is also designed to provide a policy foundation for improving County and community cooperation, fostering County (government) and citizen relations, coordinating infrastructure planning and pursuing economic development activities.

To successfully implement specific portions of the Comprehensive Plan, County leaders will need to take action beyond formal Plan adoption. In the 2002 Plan, recommended implementation strategies and actions accompany each prioritized County objective.

While this Plan, upon adoption, reflects the thoughtful direction of Sweetwater County in 2002, it is anticipated that the Plan will be updated and revised as circumstances change and new challenges arise. The process for amending the Plan, as outlined in Wyoming state statute and County regulations, requires adequately noticed public hearings and formal action by both the Sweetwater Planning Commission and Board of County Commissioners. It should also be noted that any interested person/party can propose a Plan amendment by filing a petition with the County Planning Office/Planning Commission.

## Sweetwater County Goals and Objectives

This section includes Sweetwater County Goals and Objectives as identified by County residents and approved by the Sweetwater Planning Commission and County Commissioners. The following statements are the County's direction in regards to the identified issues.

Goals and Objectives have been identified in the following areas of interest:

- County and Community Cooperation
- County Government and Citizen Relations
- Land Use
- Infrastructure
- Natural Resources
- Public Lands

Specific objectives bolded and italicized within each section are the County-identified objectives for the next 1-3 years. Specific implementation strategies have been developed for each of these statements and can be found in Chapter 3 by topic.

### County and Community Cooperation

Sweetwater County goals and objectives relating to improving County and community coordination, cooperation, consistency and communication include the following:

- ***Encourage County and community partnerships and coordination in planning and economic development activities. All such activities will comply with Wyoming state statutes.***
- ***Encourage County and community cooperation and coordination to more adequately and appropriately address issues created by community growth, e.g., utility expansions, compatible land uses, urban versus rural needs and fringe area development.***
- Encourage County/community (and community/community) partnerships to identify and pursue mutual objectives.
- Encourage community-based economic development activities that complement the efforts/interests of other Sweetwater communities.
- Encourage County-to-community assistance and funding to address community economic development, infrastructure (roads, water and sewer) and land use issues.
- Encourage County-to-community assistance for the development and implementation of community-specific land use plans.
- Incorporate community objectives/priorities in County planning efforts/activities.
- Improve community awareness of, and accessibility to, available County services and

resources.

- Improve community leader understanding of County prioritization and funding policies and procedures.
- Improve community/citizen accessibility to County elected officials and staff-level decision-makers.

## County Government and Citizen Relations

County-identified objectives relating to public participation in Sweetwater County government and decision-making processes include the following:

- ***Encourage public involvement and education activities as part of the County's land use planning and decision-making processes.***
- ***Improve customer relations and service (front desk and phone assistance).***
- Identify clear opportunities for the public to participate in County decision-making processes.
- Encourage coordination and communication among County staff, departments, advisory boards and elected officials to improve customer service.
- Conduct public outreach and education activities as part of the County's public hearing and decision-making processes.
- Utilize resident expertise through citizen advisory committees and task groups.
- Encourage representation from throughout the County on the planning commission and citizen advisory boards.
- Encourage the development (and coordination) of community-level planning commissions.
- Improve citizen access to County officials.
- Prepare publicly-distributed staff reports and materials in a "citizen-friendly", understandable format.
- Cooperate with the local news media to publicly distribute relevant background materials and information on County planning processes and land use decisions.

## **Land Use and Development**

Sweetwater County land use and development goals and objectives are as follows:

### **Growth and Development**

- ***Encourage growth and development to continue in an orderly manner and in locations that contribute to the economic and social well-being of County residents.***
- Maintain County land use plans and regulations that improve County/community character and complement other County objectives. Plans and regulations should be amended as necessary to address emerging issues and opportunities.
- Maintain County land use plans and regulations that reflect citizen preferences.
- Clarify the County's land use objectives and regulations within the study areas.
- Utilize accurate information and technology as an integral component in all planning and decision-making processes.
- Balance future growth and development with facility/service capacity (e.g. water, sewer, waste disposal, transportation and roads, law enforcement and emergency services). County-imposed infrastructure/service provision requirements will be in direct proportion to the anticipated/associated demands.
- Encourage infill development within existing communities and service areas.
- Encourage the separation of incompatible land uses.
- Implement appropriate impact mitigation measures between existing incompatible uses.
- Support the County's traditional land uses and interests.
- Encourage development patterns that create/maintain separate, distinct communities.
- Discourage unplanned development.

### **Land Use Regulations**

(Development, Interpretation and Enforcement)

- ***Maintain County land use regulations that are effective and efficient in accomplishing the County's land use and development objectives.***

- Ensure that these land use regulations provide for the greatest common good, for the greatest number of citizens, for the longest time.
- Develop, maintain and enforce reasonable land use guidelines and regulations to encourage appropriate land uses and ensure the protection of public health, safety and welfare. Simplify/streamline the development application and approval process.
- Tailor regulations and guidelines to address the unique situations and land uses of specific areas throughout the County. Regulations must be relevant to the area of application. "One glove does not fit all".
- Enforce all adopted land use regulations consistently.
- Maintain County land use regulations that are clearly articulated and internally consistent in their intent and direction. Maintain land use guidelines and regulations that are consistent with the County's Comprehensive Plan.
- Maintain an appropriate balance between private property rights and the general public interest. Protect private property rights as identified by the Constitution.
- Maintain County land use regulations that are consistent with citizen preferences and the law.
- As appropriate, simplify, coordinate and standardize County/community land use and development applications, permits and approval processes.
- Clarify the connection between County land use and development objectives and the County's land use regulations.

### **Residential Land Uses**

- Encourage residential development within or adjacent to existing communities.
- Encourage a sufficient housing stock and a variety of residential opportunities.
- Support a variety of housing options. Temporary housing would be allowed in appropriate areas.

### **Agricultural Land Uses**

- Clarify the County's agricultural land use objectives. Reconcile as necessary with property owner expectations.
- Encourage the preservation of agricultural lands and activities within the County.

Explore alternative agricultural land protection strategies.

- Encourage agriculturally-incompatible land uses and development to locate/relocate in non-ag zones.
- Recognize the unique and diverse agricultural areas within the County. Tailor agricultural land use regulations according to area-specific objectives and needs.

### **Industrial Land Uses**

- Clarify the County's industrial land use and development objectives.
- Identify and promote areas that are appropriately zoned and adequately serviced for industrial uses.
- Encourage new industrial development adjacent to existing industry.
- Encourage industrial development near available facilities, services and resources.
- As feasible, locate worker housing within existing communities where services are/can be provided.

### **Sensitive Areas and Resources**

Coordinate and cooperate with the appropriate federal, state and local organizations, governments and agencies to:

- Identify and protect the County's natural environment and resources.
- Recognize and protect the County's unique cultural, recreational, environmental and historical resources.
- Identify areas suitable/desirable for open space preservation. (These areas may include stream corridors, recreation areas and wildlife habitat.) Explore alternative preservation strategies.
- Consider the region's limited water resources as part of County land use and development decisions.
- Plan and implement water development.
- Participate in the State of Wyoming Water Resources Plan.
- Implement appropriate land use regulations and guidelines to mitigate natural and manmade hazards including, but not limited to, areas of mine subsidence, hazard waste

areas and abandoned mines.

- Identify areas potentially unsuitable for development. (These areas or physical characteristics may include flood plains, steep slopes, unstable soils and wildlife habitat.) Additional development standards may be required as necessary to mitigate adverse property and resource impacts.

### **Planning Coordination/Cooperation With Other Entities**

- *Encourage County and community cooperation and coordination in land use planning and development activities consistent with Wyoming state statutes.*
- Develop/maintain County land use plans and regulations that provide direction for unincorporated areas and complement community interests. Clarify the jurisdictional and enforcement issues within the 1 mile “buffer”.
- Coordinate County planning efforts with local and regional planning interests.
- Encourage joint County/community planning and cooperation for fringe areas. Ensure compatible uses. Support/encourage land uses within potential annexation areas that are consistent with adjacent community regulations.
- As applicable, adopt consistent/standardized land use application, approval and permitting procedures with partnering communities and interests.
- Coordinate County land use planning efforts with special service district activities.
- Support and participate in federal and state land use planning activities.
- Encourage County-sponsored land use planning activities that consider input from property owners and federal and state agencies (and include public as well as private lands).

## **Infrastructure (Roads, Sewer and Water)**

Sweetwater County goals and objectives related to infrastructure include the following:

- ***Encourage the proactive, coordinated planning and delivery of public utilities and infrastructure services.***
- Clarify the County's infrastructure and service provision objectives. Particular concerns are the County's Master Transportation Plan and water resources.
- Encourage additional growth and development within the area through proactive infrastructure needs assessment and planning.
- Encourage development in areas where services are available or readily expandable/upgradable.
- Determine/assess the impact of development on water resources as part of the approval process.
- Require developing interests to provide verification as to the adequacy and safety of water sources.
- Extend public services only to areas planned/scheduled for development.
- Require developer-funded/provided infrastructure improvements that are in proportion to the associated impact.
- Coordinate County land use and infrastructure planning efforts with special service districts and other service providers.

## Natural Resources

Sweetwater County natural resource goals and objectives include the following:

- ***Encourage and support environmentally responsible resource exploration/development within the region.*** This includes encouraging associated industries and businesses to locate within Sweetwater County communities.
- ***Anticipate and plan for resource development impacts. Proactively address associated infrastructure, housing and service needs.***
- Encourage a balance between resource development and environmental protection.
- Evaluate natural resource development proposals (and the associated land uses) for their effects on air, water and environmental quality.
- Encourage/support public land uses consistent with orderly development and efficient use of renewable and non-renewable resources.
- Encourage the location of associated worker housing within existing communities where services are/can be provided.
- Work with resource managers to ensure adequate access to natural resources.
- Work with property owners and lessees to preserve adequate public access.

## Public Lands and Resources

Sweetwater County goals and objectives relating to public lands and resources include the following:

- ***Encourage/support proactive County participation in relevant public land and resource planning and decision-making processes.***
- Include public lands (and public land management agencies) in the County's land use plan, the planning process and plan implementation activities.
- Encourage/support cooperative interaction between local, state and federal agencies and private land owners.
- Promote agency awareness of County issues and interests. These include, but are not limited to, natural resource exploration and development, multiple-use land and resource management practices, agriculture/ranching and recreation, and adequate public access to and across public lands.
- Continue County support for resource-based industries including mineral exploration/development and ranching.
- Promote local (private) concerns and interests as an integral part of public land management decisions. County officials and plans will provide the foundation to address/protect to private interests related to public lands and resources.
- Support, where appropriate, the transfer of suitable federal lands and resources to private interests.
- Encourage/support public land uses consistent with orderly development and efficient use of renewable and non-renewable resources.
- Prepare County policy positions for relevant federal and state land and resource issues.
- Conduct County plan "consistency and coordination" reviews for/on all relevant public land management agency plans and decisions.
- Develop/implement appropriate County/agency Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) and agreements.
- Coordinate with public land management agencies to exchange resource and mapping information/expertise.

## **County and Community Cooperation**

**County Objective:** *Encourage County and community partnerships in planning and economic development activities.*

### **Selected Implementation Strategies:**

#### **a) Organize a Council of Governments**

Sweetwater County will organize and facilitate regular meetings with mayors/city councils to discuss and coordinate matters of mutual interest. Topics discussed may include planning, community growth, economic development and public services.

#### **b) Establish a County/Community Liaison and Identify Community Contacts**

Sweetwater County will identify a County contact person or department to act as a community liaison. This will be the County's front line contact for addressing community/County issues. It is anticipated that participating communities will also provide a community contact point.

#### **c) Develop a Community/County Notification Network**

Sweetwater County will develop a local government communication network through which the County and participating communities may provide notice of pending actions and projects having the potential to impact other local entities. This relationship may be solidified through formal County/community agreements identifying the types of issues to be coordinated and appropriate notification procedures.

#### **d) Coordinate County/Community Planning Policies and Procedures**

Sweetwater County will work with interested communities to identify mutual land use and development interests/objectives that may benefit from coordinating/standardizing land use policies and development application/approval procedures. This coordinated approach may be particularly beneficial within the 1 mile buffer surrounding Green River and Rock Springs.

County-supported coordination activities related to land use planning/development include:

- Coordinating/standardizing County/community development applications, forms, permits and procedures as applicable;
- Developing a comprehensive notification and review procedure for mutual planning issues. (Notified interests shall include: affected communities; utility companies;

County/community police, fire, health and human service departments, property

owners, etc.); and

- Conducting joint County/community planning commission work sessions as necessary to address mutual interests.

**County Objective:** *Encourage County and community cooperation and coordination to more adequately and appropriately address issues created by community growth, e.g., utility expansions, compatible land uses, urban versus rural needs and fringe area development.*

**Selected Implementation Strategies:**

**a) Develop County/Community Annexation Agreements**

Sweetwater County will work with incorporated communities to develop County/community annexation agreements. This effort may include working with special service districts and utility interests to coordinate the expansion of services and service areas.

**b) Provide Community Planning Assistance/Training**

Sweetwater County will continue to provide technical planning assistance and training to communities on request.

**c) Coordinate Capital Facility Planning Efforts**

Sweetwater County will work with interested communities, special service districts and other service providers to coordinate the preparation of long-range capital facility plans. These documents will identify the anticipated needs and capital expenditure priorities of the County and identify the various funding strategies available to meet those needs.

**d) Coordinate Capital Improvement Projects**

Sweetwater County will work with interested communities, special service districts and other service providers to coordinate mutually beneficial capital improvement projects. This interaction may occur through the aforementioned Council of Governments.

## County Government and Citizen Relations

**County Objective:** *Encourage public involvement and education activities as part of the County's land use planning and decision-making processes.*

### **Selected Implementation Strategies:**

#### **a) Develop a Citizen/Public Notification Forum**

Sweetwater County will develop a citizen notification forum through which the County will post issues and information of public interest, e.g., County Commission and County Planning Commission meeting agendas and minutes, County-sponsored and conducted studies and plans and public meeting schedules. Suggested mediums include the County's website, a quarterly newsletter or a regularly scheduled radio show, etc..

#### **b) Develop Public Education and Training Programs**

In addition to ongoing County-sponsored training for citizen planners (planning commission members), Sweetwater County will provide education and training opportunities for the general public. The purpose of these efforts is to increase public understanding of County land use and planning issues and challenges. This objective may be accomplished through community- or issue-specific workshops or training sessions. It is anticipated that these activities will be spearheaded by the County's land use/planning officials and appointees.

Informal public education and training opportunities will continue through the local media and regular public meetings.

#### **c) Utilize Citizen Advisory Boards and Committees**

Sweetwater County officials and departments will utilize citizen advisory boards and committees to solicit general public input on specific issues. For example, the County may create an agricultural land use committee, made up of agricultural land owners and associated organizations and interests, to identify/discuss agricultural land preservation strategies.

#### **d) Involve Citizens in Policy Development Processes and Review Discussions**

Sweetwater County will involve citizens in policy development/review discussions through citizen committees, public hearings, neighborhood meetings and/or surveys.

**County Objective:** *Improve customer (public) relations and assistance.*

**Selected Implementation Strategies:**

**a) Conduct a Customer Service/Organizational Study**

Sweetwater County will conduct a biannual customer service study to evaluate the adequacy and effectiveness of physical office arrangement and organizational policies and procedures.

**b) Maintain a Well-trained, Knowledgeable and Adequately Staffed Planning Department**

Sweetwater County will invest the resources and personnel necessary to maintain a well-trained, knowledgeable and adequately staffed planning staff.

**c) Prepare and Maintain a Public-friendly “Applicant/Developer’s Guide”**

As part of their improved customer service and application streamlining process, the Sweetwater Planning Department will prepare and maintain a citizen-friendly “applicant/developer’s guide” or handbook. This information packet will identify and present relevant land use and development application and approval process and procedure requirements in a clear and concise manner.

## Land Use and Development

### County Growth and Development

**County Objective:** *Encourage growth and development to continue in an orderly manner and in locations that contribute to the economic and social well-being of County residents.*

#### **Selected Implementation Strategies:**

- a) Adopt, maintain and implement proactive County land use plans and supporting regulations.**

At a minimum, the Sweetwater County Planning Commission and County planning department will review/update the County's land use plan and development objectives every five (5) years. Specific sections of the County's land use plan and regulations will be reviewed/updated as necessary to address emerging needs or more closely reflect County land use and development objectives. Citizen and community involvement will be a key component of all County-sponsored planning processes.

Sweetwater County will maintain an adequately staffed and trained planning commission and planning department to ensure that plans and regulations adopted by the County are implemented/enforced in an appropriate manner and pursue the intended purposes.

- b) Review/update the County's zoning regulations.**

The County's zoning regulations and accompanying zoning map will be reviewed and updated as necessary to accomplish the County's land use and development objectives. (Please see the Land Use and Development Regulations section for additional recommendations.)

- c) Prepare and adopt development guidelines and performance standards as appropriate.**

Sweetwater County may determine that certain types of land uses, or development occurring within specifically identified areas/locations, should be regulated by additional guidelines and standards. Development guidelines or standards adopted by the County must pursue a legitimate government objective relating to public health, safety or welfare.

## **County Land Use Regulations**

**County Objective:** *Maintain County land use regulations that are effective and efficient in accomplishing the County's land use and development objectives.*

### **Selected Implementation Strategies:**

#### **a) Review/update the County's land use regulations.**

The County's zoning regulations will be reviewed and updated as necessary to accomplish the County's land use and development objectives. Specific objectives to be considered for the Phase II include:

- Streamlining the development application and approval processes,
- Clarifying the roles of responsibilities of the County Commission, County Planning Commission and County Planning Department in regards to land use planning issues and decision-making processes,
- Reviewing/clarifying the County's zoning classifications and zoning map,
- Ensuring that the County's land use regulations are consistent with the County's land use plan and development objectives, and
- Developing land use applications, forms and permits that can be tailored to fit local situations and circumstances.

## **Coordination with Other Entities**

**County Objective:** *Encourage County and community cooperation and coordination in land use planning and development activities.*

### **Selected Implementation Strategies:**

#### **a) Coordinate County/Community Planning Policies and Procedures**

Sweetwater County will work with interested communities to identify mutual land use and development interests/objectives that may benefit from coordinating/standardizing land use policies and development application/approval procedures. This coordinated approach may be particularly beneficial within the 1 mile buffer surrounding the County's incorporated communities.

County-supported coordination activities related to land use planning/development include:

- Coordinating/standardizing County and community application forms, permits and approval procedures as applicable and feasible;
- Developing a comprehensive notification and review procedure for mutual planning issues. (Notified interests shall include: affected communities; utility companies; County/community police, fire, health and human service departments; property owners, etc.);
- Clarifying jurisdictional and enforcement issues within the "1 mile" community buffers; and
- Conducting joint County/community planning commission work sessions as necessary to address mutual interests.

#### **b) Develop County/Community Annexation Agreements**

Sweetwater County will work with the communities of Green River and Rock Springs to develop County/community annexation agreements. This effort may include working with special service districts and utility interests to coordinate the expansion of services and service areas.

## **Infrastructure (Roads, Sewer and Water)**

**County Objective:** *Encourage proactive, coordinated planning and delivery of public utilities and infrastructure services.*

### **Selected Implementation Strategies:**

#### **a) Develop a Coordination and Notification Network Among Service Providers**

Sweetwater County will encourage the coordination and cooperation of communities, special service districts and other service providers through the development of a comprehensive notification and coordination network. Efforts in this direction include:

- Identifying likely partners and developing a contact list,
- Organizing and facilitating a work session with the above entities to determine the interest and commitment to pursuing this objective, and
- Establishing a quarterly coordination/briefing meeting to discuss ongoing and anticipated projects.

#### **b) Coordinate a County-wide Infrastructure/Capital Facilities Plan**

Sweetwater County will develop a comprehensive capital facilities plan addressing the County's current and anticipated transportation, sewer and water needs. This effort will involve local communities, special service districts, other public service providers and property owners. Specific objectives of this effort include:

- Articulating the County's infrastructure and service provision objectives (Particularly those related to transportation and water.);
- Clarifying the County's approach to providing services and covering service-provision costs. (Determining the appropriate balance between public funding and private obligations/dedications.);
- Establishing specific utility service areas, based upon the location of existing development and service lines;
- Identifying areas where new development will most likely occur due to the availability of existing services or the ease of extending existing service lines; and
- Developing a "services to be provided/improved" projects list, time line and placement plan.

## Natural Resources

**County Objective:** *Encourage and support environmentally responsible resource exploration/development within the region.*

### Selected Implementation Strategies:

Under direction of the County Commission, the County planning staff and members of the County Public Lands Committee may:

- a) **Schedule quarterly coordination meetings/briefings** with private industry, Federal and State land management agencies and County/regional economic development interests to discuss resource development issues and impacts.
- b) **Review agency and industry resource development data and reports.**  
Understanding this information will assist the County in identifying and prioritizing its natural resource development interests and objectives.
- c) **Advise the County Commissioners** concerning County-impacting resource use and development issues. The County Commissioners will submit the County's formal responses to the appropriate local and State-level public land and resource management agencies.
- d) **Review Federal and State resource management plans** in respect to resource stewardship and use. This includes ensuring that County resource availability and accessibility interests are preserved and maintained.

**County Objective:** *Anticipate and plan for resource development impacts. Proactively address associated infrastructure, housing and service needs.*

### Selected Implementation Strategies:

Under direction of the County Commission, the County planning department and staff will:

- a) **Coordinate with industry officials** to anticipate and prepare for the impacts associated with the “boom and bust” mineral development cycle.
- b) **Proactively anticipate and assist potentially impacted communities** in planning for land use, infrastructure and community services demands associated with natural resource development.
- c) **Develop performance standards and guidelines** for community growth and land uses associated with resource development including housing, infrastructure and community services.

## Public Lands and Resources

**County Objectives:** *Encourage/support proactive County participation in public land planning and decision-making processes. Promote agency awareness of County issues and interests.*

### Selected Implementation Strategies:

#### a) **Maintain a Federal Land and Resources Issues Calendar/Bulletin**

To better inform County departments and residents concerning public land and resource management issues, the County will maintain a public notification/information board. Materials posted may include public review materials as provided by the various resource management agencies, planning process time lines and schedules, and other relevant information. Specific opportunities for the County, private interests (including industry) and the public to participate in agency planning and decision-making processes may also be identified. It has been suggested that hard copies be made available at the County Offices in Green River and an electronic copy be posted on the County's website.

At a minimum, documents and resources gathered/reviewed by the County Planning Office include Resource Area Management Plan(s), Forest Plan(s), the Environmental Notification Bulletin Board (ENB), Forest Service quarterly planning schedule(s) and Corps of Engineers public notices.

#### b) **Develop Sweetwater County/Public Land Management Agency Memorandums-of-Understandings (MOU) and Agreements**

Sweetwater County officials will work with public land and resource management agencies to formalize existing working relationships through MOUs and other agreements. Developed cooperatively with public land managers, these agreements may identify specific agency and County roles and responsibilities relating to notification, coordination and data/information sharing.

#### c) **Organize a County-level Public Lands Committee**

Currently, Sweetwater County Commissioners organize ad-hoc citizen advisory committees to study important County issues. Relative to public lands, the Commission will formally organize a standing county-level public lands committee. *As requested and under the direction of* the Board of Commissioners, this committee will act as an advisory board to the County on public land and resource issues. This committee may also be used to distribute public land/resource use information to the general public.

Committee meetings will provide an opportunity to discuss natural resource/public land use issues in an open, positive manner. Where applicable and appropriate, this forum will be used to clarify issues and address public land and resource management

concerns at the local level. Through increased committee/agency interaction, County responses to agency-proposed plans and actions will be well developed and better prepared.

***Committee Structure -***

Formal committee structure will include a Commission-appointed chairperson. This individual will work closely with the County planning staff to review, prioritize and summarize for committee discussion, public land use information received or solicited by the County. The committee will also include, or have access to, competent legal assistance. This person will have a firm understanding of Federal public land use issues.

Sweetwater County has many residents who are interested in and directly impacted by public land management decisions. These individuals have a knowledge of agency planning processes and have established working relationships with public land and resource managers. This expertise can be tapped through committee membership and participation.

Public land agency personnel can also provide the committee with planning expertise, information and agency insight to public land issues. Agency representatives may be invited to participate in committee discussions as deemed necessary by the County and/or committee membership.

It is proposed that the Sweetwater County Public Lands Committee include representatives from all geographical areas of the County. Membership shall include, but not be limited to, the following areas of expertise or interest:

general County populace	recreation
agriculture and ranching	economic development
County/local officials	water
oil and gas	minerals/mining
sportsmen	wildlife
utilities	conservation
natural resources	tourism

Agencies and interests that may be asked to participate include, but are not limited to, the following:

U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM)	U.S. Forest Service (USFS)
Big Sandy Conservation District	Bureau of Reclamation (BOR)
Wyoming Department of Natural Resources	Wyoming State Lands
Wyoming Department of Fish and Game	Interest Groups/Organizations
universities and educational resources	media

***Committee Agenda -***

While it is the intent to have issues discussed by the entire committee, smaller task groups may be formed and "outside" specialists invited as needed. This process may include assigning individual committee members to study specific materials, gather additional data and report to the committee with preliminary recommendations. Relevant information will also be made available to the general public for their review and comments. Recommendations from the County's Public Lands Committee will be forwarded to the County Planning Office and County Commissioners for consideration as the County's official position.

The committee will refer to the Sweetwater County General Plan and other local ordinances and policies as they discuss issues and make recommendations. It is anticipated that the committee's recommendations will be consistent with the County's plan and interests.

As directed by the Commissioners, the committee may coordinate efforts with other agencies, organizations and interests. The committee may also propose revisions or additions to the County's General Plan Public Lands and Resource element.