



Swati Rastogi <swati.rastogi@bonnercountyid.gov>

Fwd: [EXT SENDER] Comprehensive Plan Recommendations Natural Resources

Jake Gabell <jake.gabell@bonnercountyid.gov>
To: Swati Rastogi <swati.rastogi@bonnercountyid.gov>

Fri, Aug 12, 2022 at 1:29 PM

Comment on the comp plan update.

Jake Gabell, Director
Bonner County Planning Department
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Phone: 208-265-1458

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From: **Nancy Gilliam** <ngilliam@mfpp.org>
Date: Fri, Aug 12, 2022 at 10:07 AM
Subject: [EXT SENDER] Comprehensive Plan Recommendations Natural Resources
To: <planning@bonnercountyid.gov>

Dear Planning Commissioners,

Thank you for reviewing and considering our recommended changes to the Goal, Objectives, and Policies for the Natural Resources component of the Bonner County Comprehensive Plan. If you need a Word version of this document, please let me know.

We are grateful for your service to our region,

Kind regards,

Nancy Gilliam

Nancy Gilliam, Ph.D.

Model Forest Policy Program

Executive Director

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Bonner County Comprehensive Plan Recommendations Model Forest Policy Program 8 12 22.pdf
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Model Forest Policy Program

To Bonner County Idaho Planning Commission

Submitted via planning@bonnercountyid.gov

August 12, 2022

RE: Comments in response to the proposed updates to the Goals, Objectives and Policies of the existing Comprehensive Plan (Section 2.6 – Natural Resources)

Dear Bonner County Planning Commission,

The Model Forest Policy Program (MFPP) appreciates the opportunity to submit comments on the proposed update to the Bonner County Comprehensive Plan's Goals, Objectives and Policies, specifically those related to Section 2.6 – Natural Resources.

Headquartered in Bonner County, MFPP works nationwide with rural & tribal communities to advance climate adaptation and resilience planning and delivery. In our 12-year tenure, we have helped more than 50 communities strengthen their capacity to manage climate risks and adapt to the impacts of climate change. Idaho's Madison County is one such community.

Idaho's climate is changing and Bonner County residents recognize this. A 2021 poll conducted by the Yale Program on Climate Change Communication confirms that 66 percent of our residents believe climate change is happening – a jump of 8 percent in just 5 years.¹

Over the past hundred years, much of the state has warmed upwards of two degrees (F). Since the 1950s, Idaho's snowpack has been decreasing and it's melting earlier in the year². As the flow of meltwater into streams during the summer declines, streams continue to warm. This combination of lower flow and warmer waters jeopardizes Idaho's blue ribbon trout fisheries and the economic activities that depend on them. Public utilities, agriculture, tourism, and wildlife too depend on water flows from snowpack. Climate change also increases the risk of droughts and wildfires. Since 1984, an average of 1% of Idaho's land has burned annually, making Idaho the most heavily burned state in the nation³. More fires and drier conditions may stress wildlife and alter the County's habitats. Higher temperatures may also reduce agricultural yields and amplify threats to human health.

Under Idaho Code §67-6508, a comprehensive plan "shall consider previous and existing conditions, trends, compatibility of land uses, desirable goals and objectives, or desirable future situations for each planning component." To this end, **climate adaptation should be a clear community priority and climate change consideration should be reflected into the revised Comprehensive Plan policies.**

¹ <https://climatecommunication.yale.edu/visualizations-data/ycom-us/>

² [Climate Change Indicators in the United States | US EPA](#)

³ *Ibid*

MFPP RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SECTION 2.6 – NATURAL RESOURCES

We recommend the following changes and additions to **Section 2.6 – Natural Resources** goal, objectives and policies. The language in **red** is recommended as additions and the words in strike-through are proposed to be deleted.

GOALS:

Protect, enhance and maintain the County's natural resources such as air, water, **soils**, forest, minerals, plants, **and** animals for ~~long term~~ **sustainable social, environmental, and economic** benefits ~~to the public~~.

OBJECTIVES:

- Bonner County's system of lakes and waterways is one of its greatest assets, and Bonner County will strive to preserve both the quality and quantity of its **surface and subsurface** water resources.
- Bonner County values its productive agricultural lands and forests, its fisheries, wildlife and wetlands, and will provide measures to ~~protect and maintain~~ **identify, preserve, enhance and restore** these natural ~~features~~ **resources and their natural functions**.
- Bonner County will protect its water resources by requiring adequate sewer treatment systems based on soil, density, and intensity of use to reduce impacts to water resources.
- Bonner County ~~intends to consider~~ **will prioritize the protection of** wetlands and aquifer recharge areas in **decisions related to** the location and density of future development.
- **Bonner County will utilize the best available science, publicly available data, and the law to determine the local impacts of climate change on natural resources and identify and implement strategies and policies to adapt to and mitigate the effects of climate change.**

POLICIES:

- Best management practices for waterway setbacks and earth-moving activities and road construction should be instituted **and mandated** to reduce erosion and sedimentation into waterways.
- Development standards should be designed to encourage clustered development resulting in the preservation of open space and **natural** habitats.
- Bonner County will **identify** its critical ~~wildlife habitat~~ **ecological** habitats and create zoning districts and standards to protect these areas and mitigate development impacts ~~to~~ **in** these habitats.
- Protect water quality by creating standards for development in close proximity to ~~shoreline~~ **waterways, in particular those that provide holding capacity for stormwater and slow surface runoff such as wetlands and riparian corridors.**
- Productive farmland and timberland shall be identified and protected from adverse effects of adjoining developments.
- **Discourage growth or new development in areas that are currently vulnerable, or projected to become vulnerable, to flooding, wildfire, erosion, landslides, and other climate-related hazards. For development in more-vulnerable areas, the County will encourage or require the adoption of elements to mitigate site-specific hazards.**

- Enhance stormwater management and further control erosion by incorporating green infrastructure and low-impact development techniques and best management practices such as rain gardens, bio-swales, permeable pavement, green roofs, native tree plantings, and rainwater harvesting.

In closing, MFPP strongly encourages Bonner County to proactively address climate change through prevention and adaptation. We encourage the County to use regional climate change projections in combination with projected population demographics, transportation demand, and other relevant data, to understand where housing, transportation, businesses, services, and natural resources could be vulnerable to floods, wildfire, or drought.

In addition to incorporating climate change issues in the comprehensive plan, Bonner County should institutionalize climate change and adaptation into all plans and operations. Ultimately, by leveraging academic and institutional partnerships, and with support from local departments and state agencies, Bonner County can extend this climate lens beyond land use planning to include a broad range of goals such as economic development, sustainability, hazard mitigation planning, and renewable energy.

MFPP has been a recognized leader in helping communities build resilience at the local level and incorporate climate adaptation and resilience into their planning activities. We look forward to opportunities to work collaboratively with Bonner County to revise and implement plans that best protect the county's resources for current and future generations' quality of life.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit comments on revisions to the Bonner County Comprehensive Plan's Goals, Objectives and Policies. We look forward to providing input and feedback on revisions to the broader Comprehensive Plan. Please do not hesitate to contact us to provide further information.

Respectfully,



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Margaret W. Hall
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Priest Lake, Idaho
Former Bonner County P&Z Commissioner (District 2 (Priest Lake) / 2005-2016)

cc: Bonner County Commissioners