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Introduction

Purpose:

The Comprehensive Plan guides policy decisions for future actions of Okanogan County. Adopted by County Commissioners, this plan presents a vision for the future, with long-range goals and Objectives over the next 20 years.

Executive statement:

In 2014 the Okanogan County Board of County Commissioners adopted a revised Comprehensive Plan. In 2017 the Board of County Commissioners ordered a review of the comprehensive plan with special attention directed to the issues raised in the appeals brought against the 2014 plan.

Commented [AH2]: We should identify those issues in the plan and prove throughout that we have addressed them.

The Board of County Commissioners finds that over 57% of the land in Okanogan County is owned by Federal and State Agencies. Over 20% of Okanogan County is within the boundaries of the Colville Indian Reservation and therefore outside of the direct planning and permitting authority of the County with the exception of deeded fee lands. Of the remaining less than 23% of the land mass, it is estimated that 5% is not suitable for development due to topography and other critical area features. The remaining land mass must provide the inventory of land necessary to provide for residential, industrial, and commercial needs both in and out of the incorporated cities and towns. This land also supports the agricultural and natural resource based activities that are important to the local economy. The land use designations used in the Comprehensive Plan must recognize these needs while avoiding incompatible uses.

Compliance with Washington State Statutes:

This Comprehensive Plan is being prepared in compliance with the Planning Enabling Act 36.70 RCW. "The purpose and intent of this chapter is to provide the authority for, and the procedures to be followed in, guiding and regulating the physical development of a county or region through correlating both public and private projects and coordinating their execution with respect all subject matters utilized in developing and servicing land, all to the end of assuring the highest standards of environment for living, and the operation of commerce, industry, agriculture, and recreation, and assuring maximum economies and conserving the highest degree of public health, safety, morals and welfare".

83 **Implementation of the Goals and Objectives:**

84 This plan is a policy document to guide future development of Okanogan County.
85 To implement the goals and Objectives of the Comprehensive plan the regulatory
86 documents including zoning, critical areas, land division codes are used to apply
87 the Objectives of this plan.

88 The goals and Objectives will help guide future policy decisions as new
89 development or changes occur to help maintain the rural character and lifestyle
90 that make Okanogan County a wonderful place to live, work and visit.

91 **Zoning and the Comprehensive Plan**

92 The zoning regulations describe what type of land use and specific activities are
93 permitted in each designation. The zoning also provides procedures for planned
94 developments and rezones. The zoning map and regulations must be consistent
95 with the Comprehensive Plan.

96 **Consistency between the Comprehensive Plan and Zoning**

97 The comprehensive plan is a policy document to guide future development
98 decisions. This document will inform changes to the zoning regulations to keep
99 consistency.

100 **Community Plans and Community Planning Areas**

101 Okanogan County has several diverse areas that have an individual sense of
102 community. It is recognized that these areas may benefit from a more focused
103 planning approach. This plan supports future creation and revision to sub-area
104 plans. Community Plans currently consist of the following:

- 105 • Methow Valley More Completely Planned Area
- 106 • Methow Valley More Completely Planned Area Sub Unit A

108 **Vision Statement:**

109 Okanogan County, with pride in our Native American heritage, and pioneer and
110 mining history, looks forward to bringing up another generation informed by
111 tradition. We share a love of a rural lifestyle surrounded by natural beauty, open
112 spaces, thriving fish and wildlife populations, abundant recreational opportunities
113 and nourished by clean air, clean water and a healthy environment.

116 Okanogan County is vast and beautiful. The diverse and rugged natural
117 environment has fostered a range of historic uses and distinct communities. This
118 plan supports the opportunity for the residents of geographically and culturally
119 distinct areas to develop sub-area plans that reflect their community values.

120 Okanogan County recognizes that wise stewardship of natural resources is
121 fundamental to our rural economy. Forests in the highlands provide timber,
122 grazing for our cattle industry and recreational opportunities. Rich valley soils
123 support our long standing agricultural heritage. Clean water provides the
124 lifeblood of agriculture in our orchards, vineyards, fields and verdant gardens.

125 Our vision for the future involves the following guiding principles:

- 126 • Sustaining agriculture, forestry, tourism and commerce that provides a
127 wide range of family-supporting employment opportunities.
- 128 • Honoring and supporting the many traditional uses and lifestyles while
129 accommodating orderly development.
- 130 • A broad range of housing options, supported by efficient public services.
- 131 • Wise and efficient use of water, to protect senior water rights and
132 ecosystems and allow for sustainable development.
- 133 • Recognize distinct communities in Okanogan County through sub-area
134 plans.

135 [Five Year Review](#)

136 The Board of County Commissioners shall order the review of the
137 Comprehensive Plan and Comprehensive Land Use Designation Map five years
138 from the date of the first approval and every five years thereafter. The Board of
139 County Commissioners will adopt by resolution a Scope of Work describing the
140 process for the five year review.

141 Nothing in this section shall be construed to require any future Board of County
142 Commissioners to review and revise every section of the Comprehensive Plan.
143 The level and areas of review will be identified in the Scope of Work adopted by
144 the Board of County Commissioners.

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Comprehensive Plan General Objectives

- The revised Okanogan County Comprehensive Plan will be consistent with the Vision Statement approved by the Board of County Commissioners.
- The County will develop and implement a public involvement strategy to ensure the opportunity for early and continuous citizen participation throughout the Comprehensive Plan update process.
- The County will actively consult the Colville Confederated Tribes as a recognized tribe with reservation land within the boundaries of the county when updating the County Comprehensive Plan. The County will establish a protocol for integrating the updated Plan with the Comprehensive Plan prepared by the Tribes for the Colville Reservation and Trust Lands as is necessary and appropriate.
- Okanogan County shall periodically review the Critical Areas Ordinance, Shorelines Master Program, Flood Management Programs, and Hazard Mitigation Plan as required by state law and/or at the discretion of the Board of County Commissioners to ensure compliance with the land use policies contained in this Comprehensive Plan.
- In partnership with the incorporated cities and towns, the County will establish City Expansion Areas that will provide adequate land to meet projected needs of the city or town.
- It is the intent of Okanogan County to adopt a Comprehensive Plan that contains the required elements in accordance with RCW 36.70 Planning Enabling Act. The Comprehensive Plan will be used as a tool to protect the customs, cultures, and economic stability of Okanogan County and as a guide to promote consistency amongst other adopted regulation whether mandated or elective.
- It is the expectation of Okanogan County that when State, Federal, or Regional agencies prepare, implement, and update plans and regulations, that they are consistent with the County's Comprehensive Plan and adopted regulation.

Background/Population Projections

Demographics:

Okanogan County is located in North Central Washington, bordered on the north by British Columbia, Canada, the Columbia River to the south, the Cascade Mountains to the west, and Ferry County to the east. The County covers 5,281 square miles, making it the largest county in Washington. Only 30% of the land within the county is in private ownership due to the amount of state and federal land. The Colville Indian Reservation, located in the southeast corner of the county, occupies approximately 700,000 acres of Okanogan County and is an integral part of the heritage of the county.¹

Agriculture and forestry are the major economic generators for the county and are the foundation for the region, which employs approximately 5,756 people. Government, retail trade, services, tribal enterprises, and manufacturing are a few of the major employers within the county. Omak, the regional center for services and trade, is experiencing a great deal of growth. There is also increasing development pressure in the area between the Canadian border and Oroville. The City of Coulee Dam is the location of Grand Coulee Dam, one of the largest concrete structures in the world, and largest electricity producer in the United States. The Dam also has a visitor's center with guided tours, background movies, and extensive information of the region.

The Colville Indian Reservation, located in the southeast corner of the county, occupies approximately 700,000 acres of Okanogan County and is an integral part of the heritage of the county. (Confederated Tribes of the Colville Indian Reservation 2012-2016 Community Economic Development Strategies) Lands are diverse with natural resources including timber, streams, rivers, minerals, native plants, and wildlife. There are many cultural events including the 4th of July Pow Wow, Sun Flower Festival, and an Indian Encampment is held the 2nd weekend in August during the Omak Stampede & World Famous Suicide Race in Omak. ² The Confederated Tribe of the Colville Reservation is one of the largest employers in Okanogan County employing from 800 to 1200 seasonal, part-time, and permanent positions. The 2010 census population is 7687 which includes Ferry and Okanogan Counties.

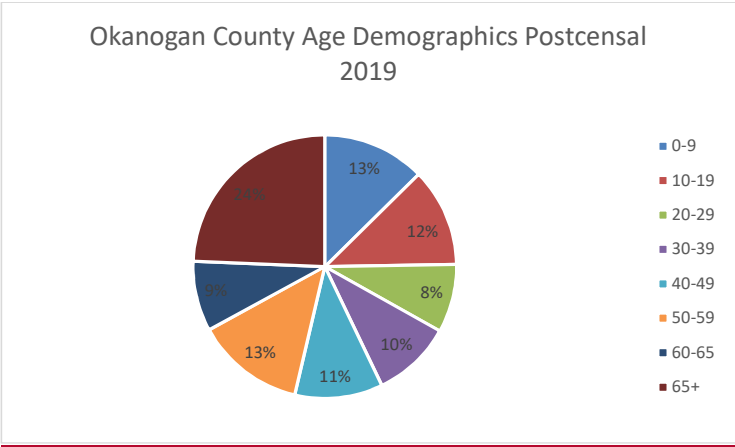
The North Okanogan has something for all outdoor enthusiasts. It includes the Many Lakes Region on the west side of the Okanogan River and the Okanogan Highlands on the east side. This area offers easily accessible lakes and trails, providing excellent fishing, hiking and camping. (Okanogan County tourism Guide)

The Methow and Valley, located in the western portion of the county, is quickly becoming a destination for outdoor lovers and enthusiasts and includes hundreds of square miles of cross-country ski trails, snowmobile parks, mountain biking, fishing, camping, hiking, and offers many

¹ Okanogan County Demographics webpage, www.okanogancounty.org/dgraph.html

² Okanogan County tourism guide

tourist accommodations and weekend get-a-ways, and a possible four seasons destination resort.



Population: Historic and Projected

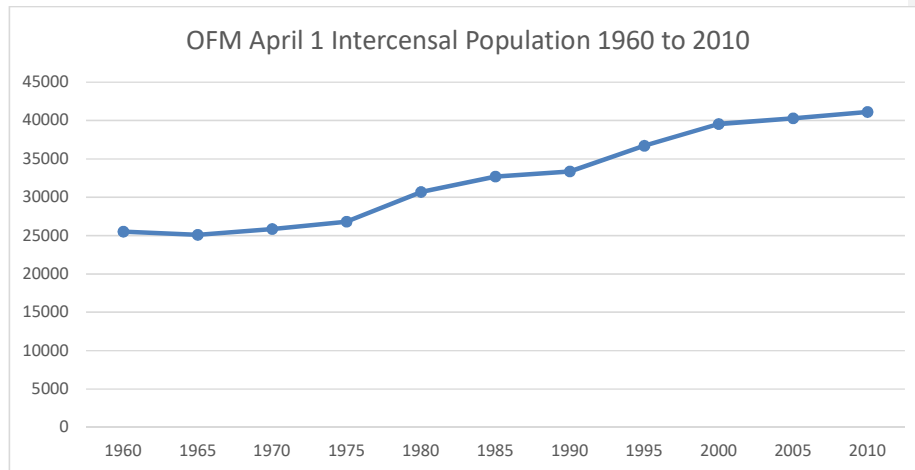
The current population according to U.S. Census in 2018 was 42,132.

Historic Population:

The tables and graphs below show the historic population trend from 1960 to 2000.

Table 1: HISTORICAL POPULATION OF OKANOGAN COMPARED TO WASHINGTON									
MEDIUM SERIES: HISTORY 1960 TO 2000									
	1960	1965	1970	1975	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000
State	2,853,214	3,065,000	3,413,250	3,567,890	4,132,353	4,415,785	4,866,663	5,4070,104	5,894,121
Okanogan	25,520	25,100	25,867	26,800	30,663	32,687	33,350	38,943	39,564
Note: Census totals may differ slightly from other publications due to use of corrected or uncorrected counts.									
Unrounded numbers not meant to imply accuracy.									

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226 Growth Management Population Forecast:

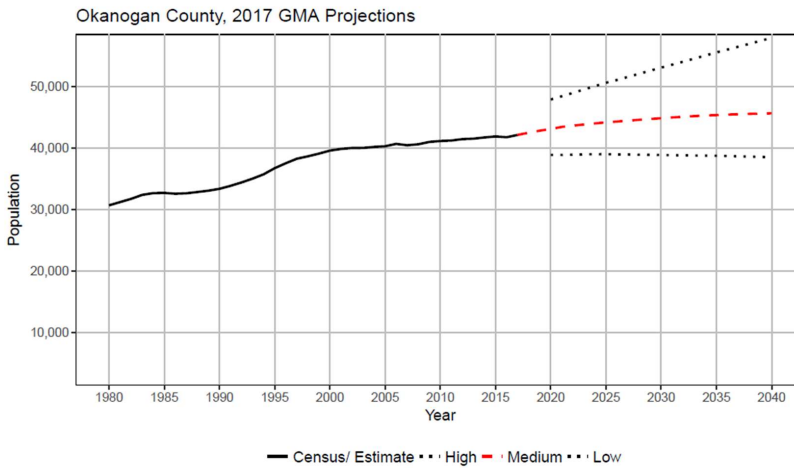
Table 2:							
Projections of the Total Resident Population for Growth Management							
2017 GMA Projections Medium Series: 2010 to 2040							
	Census	Estimate	Projections				
	2010	2017	2020	2025	2030	2035	2040
State	6,724,540	7,310,300	7,638,415	8,085,043	8,503,178	8,894,306	9,242,022
Okanogan	41,120	42,110	43,084	44,149	44,824	45,335	45,621
OFM/Forecasting and Research December 2017 ⁴							

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³ <https://www.ofm.wa.gov/washington-data-research/population-demographics/population-estimates/historical-estimates-april-1-population-and-housing-state-counties-and-cities>

⁴ <https://www.ofm.wa.gov/washington-data-research/population-demographics/population-forecasts-and-projections/growth-management-act-county-projections>

Figure 2: 2017 GMA population Projections



Natural Environment and Resources Element:

Introduction:

Okanogan County has a diverse and rugged landscape, plentiful natural resources and opportunities for outdoor recreation. The purpose of this plan is to promote resource compatible development by including goals and Objectives to protect and enhance the quality of the natural environment and the stewardship of the land for current and future generations while balancing the interest of property owners.

Okanogan County is blessed with wildlife abundance and diversity. Okanogan County contains the largest mule deer herd in Washington State migrating between winter and summer ranges. One of the states only populations of Sharp-tailed grouse lives within the shrub-steppe lands of the Tunk Valley and surrounding areas of central Okanogan valley. Many other species such as wolves, lynx, grizzly bear, big-horn sheep, Elk, and white-tailed deer to name just a few consider the valley home. This wildlife diversity occurs in unification with the rural agricultural character of Okanogan County.

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https://ofm.wa.gov/sites/default/files/public/dataresearch/pop/GMA/projections17/gma_2017_high_low_charts.pdf

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246 **Shoreline Management Act:**

247 The Shoreline Management Act RCW 90.58 requires Okanogan County to
248 develop and implement our Shoreline Master Program. The shoreline master
249 program governs lakes over 20 acres and streams and rivers with more than 20
250 cfs mean annual flow. Upland shorelands extend 200 feet from the ordinary high
251 water mark or the floodway if it has been delineated as well as associated
252 wetlands. Shorelines of statewide significance include lakes at least 1000 acres
253 and rivers flowing 200 cfs mean annual flow in Eastern Washington and
254 associated wetlands.

255 The Shoreline Management Act establishes preferred shoreline uses that are
256 consistent with preventing damage to the natural environment or are unique to or
257 dependent on the use of Washington's shorelines. Priority uses include single
258 family residences, shoreline recreation uses, water dependent industrial and
259 commercial developments, and other developments which provide public access.

260 Agriculture in Okanogan County largely exists on or near the shoreline due to
261 proximity to water rights and soil composition important to the types of agriculture
262 here. The Shoreline master program provisions are not intended to modify or
263 limit existing agricultural uses and activities occurring on agricultural lands.

264 Okanogan County's SMP was updated June 2018. The goals and policies
265 developed in that plan are adopted by reference into this Comprehensive Plan.

266 **Water Resource Inventory Areas:**

267 Okanogan County has 7 different Water Resource Inventory Areas (WRIA), of
268 which 5 are located partially within the county. WRIA 50 (Foster) and WRIA 52
269 (Sanpoil) are located partially within the boundary of the Colville reservation.
270 WRIA 51 (Nespelem) is located completely within the boundary of the Colville
271 reservation. WRIA 60 (Kettle) is located partially within Ferry County. WRIA 47
272 (Chelan) has a very small portion located within Okanogan County.

273 WRIA 48 has a watershed plan adopted in 2005. The watershed council is now
274 working on the implementation phase of the plan. WRIA 48 has an instream flow
275 rule that regulates water withdrawals.⁶⁶ Areas that are in hydraulic continuity with
276 closed surface waters are closed to further appropriation. Seven reaches have a
277 two cfs set aside for specific uses listed. Currently the county is working on a
278 well tracking system to monitor consumptive water usage against the 2 cfs set

⁶⁶ [WAC 173-548](#)

aside. WRIA 49 has a watershed plan that was developed in 2009. The legislature enacted Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill 6091, codified under 90.94 RCW which has required an addendum to this plan evaluating consumptive use of permit exempt wells and the offsets necessary for those uses including net ecological benefit.

Water-Resources:

Goal: Make a clear, conscious connection between watershed planning and land use planning in Okanogan County.

When land use, water use, and other community decisions are made they should be made with the full weight of all plans ensuring that the use is compatible in all plans. Strategies to accomplish this goal may include:

Objectives:

- Utilize existing and future information and best available science to identify areas where water is legally and physically available; use zoning to direct development to such areas to avoid over development elsewhere.
- Give substantial attention and weight to municipal water needs where it is demonstrated that water conservation is being practiced, where growth is planned and concentrated in the effort to control sprawl, and where utility and infrastructure planning and investments are evident.
- Acknowledge that agricultural lands will be converted to other uses. The conversion of agricultural land to other activities results in different demand on water supply. Options should be pursued to keep those lands that are not identified for such conversion in viable agricultural production.
- Acknowledge that climate change is reducing the water stored in snow packs and pursue mitigation strategies that avoid future water shortages.
- Continue to develop detailed data for water resources in all portions of the watershed to determine and address the impacts that may be posed by continued incremental growth in rural lands.
- Utilize zoning provisions to guide growth where it is appropriate, avoiding those areas for higher density subdivision where it is obvious that water is scarce and senior water rights may be affected.
- Participate in water planning activities in British Columbia where most of the flow in WRIA 49 originates.

312 Goal: Further study of aquifers in WRIA 48 and WRIA 49 and other applicable
313 water resource inventory areas

314 Due to the geology of Okanogan County, aquifers are in varying degrees of
315 hydraulic continuity with surface water bodies, and differ greatly in the amount of
316 water they can produce. While a number of studies have been conducted, no
317 definitive study in either WRIA 48 and/or 49 accurately measures or models the
318 carrying capacity of any aquifer nor does any study project the recharge rate of
319 groundwater aquifers from precipitation.

320 Objective:

- 321 • Okanogan County will seek funding made available to further study the
322 carrying capacity of groundwater aquifers and the rate at which they are
323 recharged by precipitation.

324 Goal: Protect the water supply for existing and future uses.

325 Objectives:

- 326 • Nothing in this section shall be construed in a manner that impairs an
327 existing legal right to withdraw groundwater or divert surface water for
328 beneficial use.
- 329 • To ensure consistency with this Comprehensive Plan, review of the Zone
330 Code and other development regulation should consider, increase and
331 improve the data that is available in terms of available water supplies in
332 any given area. This, coupled with considerations such as access to the
333 transportation and power grid, geologic hazard areas, frequently flooded
334 areas, proximity to services, etc., should inform the zone designations and
335 the intensity and type of development allowed into areas best able to
336 support it.
- 337 • Okanogan County recognizes the importance of groundwater supplies to
338 the economic well-being of the area. Every effort will be made to make
339 groundwater available for beneficial use within the constraints of the law.
- 340 • Okanogan County will consider opportunities to improve/create
341 environmentally responsible surface or groundwater storage of water
342 provided by periods of high water flow to enhance groundwater supplies
343 and to augment in-stream flow of surface waters during seasonal low
344 water periods.

- Okanogan County will support the formation of water banks in areas where feasible to mitigate for water uses from groundwater wells exempt from permitting in accordance with RCW 90.44.050 as well as creating the opportunity for those seeking to obtain a water supply of sufficient seniority to minimize the potential for interruption due to low in-stream flows or impairment of senior water rights.
- Okanogan County will continue to utilize data developed by various sources of consumptive water use.
- Okanogan County will actively participate with all agencies with jurisdiction in controlling the illegal diversion of surface water and illegal withdrawal of groundwater.

Goal; Protect water quality

Objectives:

- Use existing and future information and studies regarding aquifer recharge and other sensitive areas to inform future policy for example Methow Watershed Plan and Okanogan Watershed Plan.
- Implement development regulations to manage stormwater to protect water and habitat resources, protect private and public property and infrastructure, and protect public safety, health, and welfare.
- Okanogan County will support and when feasible sponsor water quality education programs which inform local citizens and visitors about water quality issues, and ramifications.

Water Rights

Okanogan County acknowledges that the State of Washington's responsible management of water resources includes issuing the right to use water put to beneficial use, as well as protecting instream resources. Okanogan County and Washington State adhere to western water law "first in time, first in right", which protects, in full senior water right holders. A water right put to a beneficial use, including a temporary dedication to in-stream flow, should be protected from relinquishment to the state. ⁷

⁷ 1917 Washington Water Law "Prior Appropriation Doctrine"

377 Okanogan County further recognizes that keeping the right to use water within
378 Okanogan County is critical to its economic health. Okanogan County
379 encourages water right holders to consider all other options to protect their water
380 right.

381 Goal: Protect water rights

382 Objectives:

- 383 • Okanogan County will attempt to create incentive based programs to
384 encourage the owner of water rights to keep them in the County. Such
385 programs might include:
- 386 a. Water banking.
 - 387 b. Density bonuses as adopted in a Performance Based Density
388 Bonus that promotes the use of water in the County or promotes
389 the transfer of water for use in the County.
 - 390 c. Seeking funding for the acquisition of water rights for use in the
391 County.
 - 392 d. Promote the re-issuance of water rights lost through relinquishment
393 within Okanogan County.
 - 394 e. Review and minimize the impacts caused by the transfer of water
395 outside of the County. This statement should not be construed in
396 any manner to imply any interference with the owner's right to sell
397 their water right to any buyer.

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Wildfire:

Wildfire is a serious problem in Okanogan County. The county is still recovering from the catastrophic 2014 Carlton Complex and 2015 Okanogan Complex fires. The Carlton Complex fire burned 256,108 acres. The complex destroyed 353 homes in Okanogan County. The Okanogan Complex burned over 304,782 acres forcing evacuations of numerous towns.

Goal: Protect life and property in rural Okanogan County from fire hazards.

Objectives:

- Promote best practices in structural fire resistance design for new construction.
- Encourage cluster developments to reduce the wildland urban interface areas.
- Review county road standards to require defensible ingress and egress roadways constructed to adequate standards to allow the passage of firefighting equipment and other emergency vehicles. After development of the road reviewed and accepted it is up to the landowner to maintain the road to that standard.
- Encourage where feasible the undergrounding of electrical utilities to reduce their exposure to fire.
- Encourage where feasible new developments in high-risk areas include secondary egress.
- Educate communities about the unique challenges of wildfire in the wildland urban interface.
- Update and Implement the Community Wildfire protection plan to reduce the risk of wildfire and mitigate the impacts if a fire occurs.
- Develop required plat note on new subdivision proposals stating "This property is in a high wildfire risk area. If there is not adequate ingress/egress and defensible space, fire fighter safety shall be prioritized over protection of property".
- Support programs available for firesafe communities' i.e firewise etc.
- Support increased forest resource management for fire resiliency.
- Support responsible shrub-steppe management for fire resiliency.
- Federal/state/ tribal /local forest owners shall have a fuel reduction plan.
- Promote post fire rehabilitation and flood mitigation.
- Okanogan County or closest qualified contractor resources shall be used for fire suppression activities first.
- Provide educational materials on fire safe construction and landscaping.
- Reference all hazard mitigation plan for development proposals.

Commented [AH3]: Pete suggested encouraging rural fire departments

Commented [AH4]: Move to all hazard

Commented [AH5]: Move to all hazard

Commented [AH6]: Move to All Hazard Mitigation Plan for Okanogan County. Talk to Emergency Management to see when their next update is.

Natural Resource Lands:

Agricultural Lands:

Agricultural land means land primarily devoted to the commercial production of horticultural, viticulture, floricultural, dairy, apiary, vegetable, or animal products or of berries, grain, hay, straw, turf, seed, Christmas trees not subject to the excise tax imposed by RCW 84.33.100 through 84.33.140, finfish in upland hatcheries, or livestock, and that has long-term commercial significance for agricultural production. Lands designated cannot be characterized by urban growth. The land must be capable of being used for agricultural production based on their physical and geographic characteristics.

Purpose

The intent of Okanogan County's Agricultural Resource land use category is to implement the Growth Management Act planning goal related to maintaining and enhancing natural resource-based industries, which includes productive agricultural industries. This category is intended to preserve, stabilize, and enhance the primary agricultural land base which is being used for, or offers the greatest potential for, continued production of agricultural products and harvesting. The Agricultural Resource land use category carries out this goal by establishing a variety of zones in which agriculture is a permitted use.

General Description

Agricultural Resource Lands are those lands primarily devoted to or important for the long-term commercial production of horticultural, viticultural, floricultural, dairy, apiary, vegetable, and livestock.

The location of agriculture has been strongly influenced by the construction of irrigation facilities. Cultivated agriculture and orchards in Okanogan County are heavily concentrated in and around the valley floors, while grazing lands are located along many of the hillsides. Many forested portions of the County that are mostly state and federal lands are leased out for summer pasture.

Designation Criteria:

Washington Administrative Code (WAC) 365-190-050 (1) states that in classifying and designating agricultural resource lands, counties must approach the effort as a county-wide or area-wide process. Counties should not review resource lands designations solely on a parcel-by-parcel process. Reviews on a county-wide or area-wide basis must meet the Agricultural Resource land mapping criteria which includes:

- 1) Generally meets criteria for agricultural resource lands of long-term commercial significance as defined by state laws and regulations.
 - a) May contain prime soils according to the Natural Resource Conservation Service.
 - b) May include "pockets" of non-agricultural land uses.

- c) May contain high-value crops; specifically, areas where tree fruits, vineyards, specialty field crops.
- d) May include a variety of residential uses related to agricultural activities including farm worker housing and family farm dwellings.
- e) May include compatible uses such as the marketing of regional agricultural products from one or more producers; the production, marketing and distribution of value added agricultural products; or packing and cold storage plants.
- f) May include non-agricultural accessory uses or activities as long as they are consistent with the size, scale and intensity of the existing agricultural use on a property.
- 2) Lands located within an irrigation district and receiving water, or
- 3) Lands where dryland farming, pasture or grazing outside of irrigation districts is predominant.
- 4) Lands enrolled in one of the current use assessment programs.
- 5) Lands located outside established city expansion areas.
- 6) Criteria for de-designating agricultural resource lands shall follow the "Agricultural Resource De-designation Analytical Process" found below. The agricultural resource de-designation criteria will be used for plan amendments and updates to change a land use from Agricultural Resource to another land use designation. The agricultural de-designation process shall not apply when re-designating agricultural resource lands to some other Resource Land designation.
- 7) Soils considered to be an Agricultural Resource of Long Term Commercial Significance are primarily those soils listed as 'Prime' in the WEB Soil Survey of Okanogan County dated September 7, 2017. This list of soils, however, does not include similar soils as those listed as Prime that are located on slopes with a gradient higher than 2 degrees. Slopes with a gradient up to and including 15 degrees are considered suitable for growing tree fruit and grapes based on good drainage and the ability for cold air to fall down gradient. The limiting factor for slopes is one of safety when operating machinery.

Tax Status

Tax Status indicates the current land use and tax rate being claimed by the property owner and reported by the Assessor. An inference can be made by looking at the current tax status as to the property owners' intent for the land. This intent alone cannot be considered when determining the appropriateness of the land for designation as Agricultural Land of Long-term Commercial Significance, but may be another indicator of the possibility of a more intense use of the land. When the majority of the parcels within the study area have a tax status other than Agriculture, then it is considered one factor for possible removal of the area from resource designation

Predominant Parcel Size

Larger parcels are thought to be more suitable for commercial agriculture. Areas with predominant parcel sizes of 5 acres or more that are in proximity to other lands that

meet other designation criteria; such as soils and current use tax classification, should be considered for inclusion in the agricultural resource designation.

Availability of Public Facilities

Of the list of various public facilities provided by the County and Cities, roads, sewer and water are the three whose presence could possibly add pressure to develop land at a higher use. These facilities can be mapped and evaluated for their proximity to agricultural lands and a determination as to the effect this proximity would have regarding pressure to develop. Water and sewer are normally confined to the city and its city expansion area although sewer and water systems do exist outside of incorporated cities and their expansion areas

Proximity to the City Expansion Area

Parcels should be evaluated for their distance from a City Expansion Area. The further away from the City Expansion Area the less influence it has on a parcel to develop at some higher use. No resource land should be designated within a city expansion area.

Land Use Settlement Patterns and Their Compatibility with Agricultural Practices and Intensity of Nearby Uses

Land Use Settlement Patterns and the Intensity of nearby uses provide similar information as Proximity to Urbanized Areas in that they show residential or other development that may represent prohibitive impacts to commercial agriculture. These developed areas outside of the city expansion areas require consideration for their potential impact to agriculture.

History of Land Development Permits Issued Nearby

The History of Development Permits Issued nearby may also serve as evidence of pressure to develop at some higher use. A history of permitting activity is a way of looking at nearby permitting patterns, which may give an indication of future development activities.

Final Determination

A final assessment of a particular area's eligibility as Agricultural Land of Long Term Commercial Significance is based on an analysis of the designation criteria, primarily soils and current use tax classification, along with surrounding lot sizes and densities and proximity to urban centers.

Zoning

Zone designations that support agricultural activities and encourage larger lot sizes should be considered for lands in the agricultural resource designation. Smaller lots

and/or higher densities may be allowed in subdivisions that utilize a clustering approach and that have a demonstrated legal and physical water supply.

Agricultural Resource De-designation Criteria:

WAC 190-365-050 clearly states that the Agricultural Resource mapping criteria is to be used on a county-wide or area-wide basis. Within the framework and guidelines established in WAC 190-365-050, the de-designation process will consider the following criteria for a site-specific determination of the suitability of the land remaining in the Agricultural resource designation. The criteria to be considered is as follows:

- a) Soils
- b) Relationship or proximity to the City Expansion Area
- c) Predominant parcel size
- d) Changing climate or soil conditions such that the land no longer holds long term commercial significance for agriculture
- e) Changing crop markets and growing requirements the land can no longer be devoted primarily to agriculture hence no longer holds long term commercial significance for agriculture
- f) Topographic limitations
- g) Physical availability of irrigation water

Agricultural Lands Goals and Objectives:

Goal:

Agricultural lands will be preserved to the greatest extent possible for the extensive contribution to the economic viability of Okanogan County.

Objectives:

- Okanogan County will protect agriculture from the impact of incompatible uses by utilizing appropriate land use designations and effective review processes
- Encourage the retention of agricultural lands and prevent haphazard growth into these areas.
- Encourage the maintenance and viability of agricultural land
- Encourage the use of agricultural value assessment, open space designations, and/or other tax benefits that help retain the economic viability of farming practices.
- Encourage farm-based businesses as accessory uses in agricultural areas that supplement farm income.
- Encourage home based occupations providing on farm income.
- Encourage agri-tourism accessory uses.
- Allow recreational activities and other commercial and/or industrial uses that can be conducted in a manner that results in no negative impacts to agricultural operations.

- Clustering of residential development may be carefully allowed in areas designated for agriculture, promoting a balance between future non-farm developments and protecting agricultural activities from incompatible uses.
- Encourage preservation of ag land during land acquisition and conservation easements by keeping all or a portion in ag production.
- Encourage enrollment in the Voluntary Stewardship Program.

Forest Lands:

Purpose

The intent of Okanogan County's Forest Resource land use category is to implement the Growth Management Act planning goal related to maintaining and enhancing natural resource-based industries, which includes productive timber industries. This category is intended to preserve, stabilize, and enhance the primary forest land base which is being used for, or offers the greatest potential for, continued production of forest products and harvesting. The Forest Resource Land Use Designation accomplishes this goal by establishing a productive minimum lot size (20 acres), and ensuring that residential use is secondary to commercial forestry. The category also protects productive forest lands from incompatible uses by limiting the variety of uses permitted under current zoning and encouraging parcel reconfiguration where appropriate.

The following description and the related criteria are designed to conserve productive forest lands and reduce conflicts between the forest industry and incompatible uses.

General Description

Forest Resource Lands are those areas primarily useful for growing trees for commercial purposes, including Christmas trees subject to the excise tax imposed under state law. In addition, stock grazing, farming, recreation and limited housing and commercial activities are accommodated as compatible uses. Forest Resource lands also provide important fish and wildlife habitat, recreational opportunities, and watershed and aquifer recharge areas.

Mapping Criteria:

WAC 365-190-060 states that in classifying and designating forest resource lands, counties must approach the effort as a county-wide or regional process. Counties should not review forest resource lands designations solely on a parcel-by-parcel basis. The WAC further states that lands should be designated as forest resource lands of long-term commercial significance based on three factors: 1) the land is not already characterized by urban growth, 2) the land is used or capable of being used for forestry production and 3) the land has long-term commercial significance. Those three factors are the basis for the Forest Resource Areas Mapping Criteria listed below.

- 1) Lands assessed as open space timber or forest land.

- 2) Lands located in an area where there is a predominance of the higher private forest land grades, as defined by the state Department of Revenue based on growing capacity, productivity, and soil composition.
- 3) Lands historically designated Forest Watershed.
- 4) Lands not located in or near the urban and suburban areas and rural settlements.
- 5) Lands with predominantly large (40 acres or greater) parcel sizes in the area.
- 6) Adjacent and nearby land use and settlement patterns and intensities are generally compatible with forest lands of long-term commercial significance.
- 7) Lands where public services and facilities conducive to the conversion of forest land are not available.
- 8) Lands that are not developing rapidly, as evidenced by few recent land development permits in the vicinity.

De-designation Criteria

- 1) Proximity to population areas and the possibility of more intense uses of the land as indicated by the availability of public facilities, tax status, the availability of public services, relationship or proximity to urban growth areas, predominant parcel size, land use settlement patterns and their compatibility with forest practices, intensity of nearby land uses, and the history of land development permits issued nearby.
- 2) Incompatibility of surrounding land uses with timber harvest activities
- 3) Error was made in designation
- 4) Due to changing climate or soil conditions the land no longer holds long term commercial significance for timber production
- 5) Due to changing markets and growing requirements the land can no longer be devoted primarily to ~~agriculture forest production~~ hence no longer holds long term commercial significance for timber production

Forest Lands Goals and Objectives:

Goal: Maintain and enhance natural resource based industries including timber industries.

Objectives:

- Land use activities within designated forest resource lands should minimize conflicts with forestry practices.

- Support the maintenance of forest lands in timber and current use property tax classifications consistent with RCW 84.33 and 84.34.
- Ensure forestry and related activities regulated by Okanogan County are conducted in a manner that will minimize their adverse impacts on water quality, habitat, and other environmentally sensitive areas pursuant to county and state regulations.
- Provide for resource use, particularly agricultural and timber uses, in rural, smallholding and remote areas.
- Encourage local and regional infrastructure and/or manufacturing facilities that use or support forest products in proximity to Forest Resource Lands.
- Encourage innovative tools, such as limited subdivision of clustered small lots and conservation easements that enable families to plan for succession of their resource-based business.

Goal: Recognize the public benefits of forest resource lands including environmental, recreational, scenic beauty, habitat protection, and quality of life.

Objectives:

- Accept multiple-use management of forestland to promote the primary use and provide for other compatible uses including but not limited to tourism, recreation, grazing, and preservation of open space.
- Work with state and federal agencies to improve recreational access on public lands.
- Consider impacts to the timber industry when reviewing proposed recreation facilities near Forest Resource Lands.
- Okanogan County will promote the responsible harvest of forest products and the protection of these lands from incompatible uses. Okanogan County will require coordination from the public land managers (USFS, BLM, DNR, etc) to create appropriate land use designations and effective management practices to further these goals.

Mineral Resource Lands

Purpose

The intent of Okanogan County's Mineral Resource Overlay land use category is to implement the Growth Management Act planning goal related to maintaining and enhancing natural resource-based industries, which includes commercially viable mineral resource industries. This category is intended to identify, preserve and protect the mineral resource land base which is intended to be used for, or offers the greatest potential for, the continued production of aggregate products such as concrete or asphalt, while allowing the underlying land use to provide interim land use direction until such time that mineral extraction is permitted. The Mineral Resource Overlay land use category carries out this goal by establishing a Mining zone.

which identifies review criteria, allowed uses, lot sizes, standards of operations and provisions for revisions.

Okanogan County's economic well-being depends upon the availability of mineral resource products specifically sand, gravel and bedrock materials. To keep pace with the market demand it is important for the residents and the economy of Okanogan County that at least a twenty-year supply of mineral resource areas be identified and protected with the Mineral Resource Overlay designation.

General Description

Mineral resource lands are those lands primarily devoted to or important for the long-term commercial production of mineral products. Areas designated as mineral resource lands comprise the Mineral Resource Overlay. The Mineral Resource Overlay is a land use designation that overlays an existing land use designation. The overlay designation provides protection from the encroachment of competing land uses by applying a buffer that places restrictions on adjacent properties. The existing or underlying land use designation is intended to remain in effect until such time that the area is rezoned to Mining in anticipation of pending mining operations.

Mapping Criteria:

The actual location (area of deposition) of the mineral resource is the primary factor in determining the future location of a mining site. Other factors that influence the location of a mineral resource area include: quality of the resource, volume of the resource, access suitability, the compatibility with existing or planned land uses, and the proximity to existing or planned market areas. The following designation/mapping criteria are based on Chapter 365-190-070 of the Washington Administrative Code – *Minimum Guidelines to Classify Agriculture, Forest and Mineral Resource Lands*.

1) Quality of the Mineral Resource

The quality and type of mineral resource at the potential site shall meet any of the following requirements.

a) The quality and type of the mineral resource must meet current and/or future project and/or project specifications.

b) The quality and type of mineral resource must satisfy the market's current and/or future demands.

c) The potential site must be within the DNR identified mineral resource lands.

2) Volume of the Resource

The volume of available mineral resource at the potential site shall meet the following requirements.

a) The volume of available mineral resource at the potential site, on single or contiguous parcels, should be feasibly marketable by a mining operation to supply the surrounding market demands.

3) Access Suitability

The potential mineral resource site must have access or potential access to public and/or private roads that are suitable for truck traffic and/or are capable of supporting the level of expected traffic.

Intent Statement – It is very important that there is access to adequate public and/or private roads to potentially lower the traffic related impacts to both the surrounding neighbors and the environment.

4) Compatibility with Present or Planned Land Use Patterns in the Area

General land use issues in the resource area to consider:

a) Surrounding parcel sizes and surrounding uses;

b) Subdivision or zoning for urban or small lots;

i) Designated mineral lands should not be located adjacent to any zoning district boundary that has a minimum lot size greater than 1 dwelling units per 5 acres, where doing so would create a non-conforming setback distance.

ii) Designated mineral resource lands should not be located in any zoning district that has a minimum lot size of 1 dwelling unit per 5 acres.

c) Sites located in or adjacent to City Expansion boundaries;

i) Mineral resource lands should not be designated in existing City Expansion Areas.

d) Proximity to essential public facilities (i.e. dams, bridges, etc.);

e) Sites located within inconsistent zoning districts;

f) Sites located within publicly owned lands;

g) Sites located within other natural resource designated areas.

The potential site must be able to mitigate impacts on and/or to adjacent existing land uses.

Intent Statement – It is very important that Okanogan County maintain a sufficient amount of designated mineral resource sites close to existing and planned market areas to ensure low cost and available supplies of construction aggregate.

Mineral Resource Areas De-designation Process

The de-designation of an area previously established as a mineral resource of long-term commercial significance should be considered when the resource has been exhausted and reclaimed in accordance with the reclamation plan approved by the State Department of Natural Resources; or in those limited situations where the County has obtained substantial evidence that the designated site is unsuitable for the mineral resource overlay designation. The re-classification of a land use designation underlying the Mineral Resource Overlay should be approved after it has been determined that the proposed new land use designation is compatible with and will not preclude the availability of the mineral resource.

Mapping

The Okanogan County Comprehensive Land Use Map identifies those areas designated as Resource Lands. The map designations are directed by the chosen criteria but have been reconciled to parcel boundary lines.

Mineral Lands Goals and Objectives:

Goal: Support local mineral lands as an important component of the County's economy.

Objective:

- *Maintain a sufficient amount of designated mineral resource sites close to existing and planned market areas to ensure low cost and available supplies of construction aggregate.*

Critical Areas:

The legislature of the state of Washington has in Chapter 36.70A RCW, mandated each county to designate critical areas and adopt development regulations that protect these areas pursuant to chapter 36.70A.170 RCW. The protection measures shall be consistent with this Comprehensive Plan adopted pursuant to chapter 36.70 RCW.

790 "Critical Areas" include the following:

791 **Wetlands:**

792 "Wetlands" are areas that are inundated or saturated by surface water or groundwater at a
793 frequency and duration sufficient to support, and that under normal circumstances do support,
794 a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions. Wetlands
795 generally include swamps, marshes, bogs, and similar areas. Wetlands do not include those
796 artificial wetlands intentionally created from nonwetland sites, grass-lined swales, canals,
797 detention facilities, wastewater treatment facilities, farm ponds, and landscape amenities, or
798 those wetlands created after July 1, 1990, that were unintentionally created as a result of the
799 construction of a road, street, or highway. However, wetlands may include those artificial
800 wetlands intentionally created from nonwetland areas to mitigate conversion of wetlands, if
801 permitted by the county or city.⁸

802 **Critical Aquifer Recharge Areas:**

803 "Critical aquifer recharge areas" are areas with a critical recharging effect on aquifers used for
804 potable water, including areas where an aquifer that is a source of drinking water is vulnerable
805 to contamination that would affect the potability of the water, or is susceptible to reduced
806 recharge.⁹

808 **Frequently Flooded Areas:**

809 "Frequently flooded areas" are lands in the flood plain subject to at least a one percent or
810 greater chance of flooding in any given year, or within areas subject to flooding due to high
811 groundwater. These areas include, but are not limited to, streams, rivers, lakes, coastal areas,
812 wetlands, and areas where high groundwater forms ponds on the ground surface.¹⁰

813 **Fish and Wildlife Conservation Areas:**

814 "Fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas" are areas that serve a critical role in sustaining
815 needed habitats and species for the functional integrity of the ecosystem, and which, if altered,
816 may reduce the likelihood that the species will persist over the long term. These areas may
817 include, but are not limited to, rare or vulnerable ecological systems, communities, and habitat
818 or habitat elements including seasonal ranges, breeding habitat, winter range, and movement
819 corridors; and areas with high relative population density or species richness. Counties and cities
820 may also designate locally important habitats and species.¹¹ Reference locally developed
821 existing habitat and species studies.

⁸ WAC 365-190-030(22)

⁹ WAC 365-190-030(3)

¹⁰ WAC 365-190-030(8)

¹¹ WAC 365-190-030(6)(a)

Geologically Hazardous Areas:

“Geologically hazardous areas” are areas that because of their susceptibility to erosion, sliding, earthquake, or other geological events, are not suited to siting commercial, residential, or industrial development consistent with public health or safety concerns. Projects will need additional engineering requirements and possibly studies.¹²

Critical Area Goals and Objectives:

Goal: Promote public health, safety and welfare, economic and environmental well being in the County for present and future citizens by identifying and protecting critical areas.

Objectives:

- In designating and protecting critical areas, include the best available science in developing Objectives and development regulations to protect the functions and values of critical areas.
- Provide technical assistance and education to applicants and interested parties on critical areas and applicable regulations.
- Prepare materials which enable citizens to clearly understand the location of critical areas on and adjacent to their property, what obligations, rights, and opportunities they have regarding those critical areas and how those critical areas affect future land use management practices and options.
- Provide methods to avoid , minimize, and mitigate, when addressing critical areas, including innovative techniques such as wetland banking, vegetation management, clustered development, planned unit development, replacement ratios, density limitations, and enhancement option.
- Reference WDFW Priority Habitat and Species data and maps for information on location of fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas.

Goal: Recognize the importance of fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas while at the same time working towards a balance between preservation of those lands and the continuation of agriculture, forestry, mining and managed growth.

Objectives:

- Balance the regulation of fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas with the needs of existing resource activities (agriculture, grazing, forestry, and mining).

¹² [WAC 365-190-030\(9\)](#)

- 854
- Support continued participation in the Voluntary Stewardship Program for protection and enhancement of critical areas and maintenance and promotion of agricultural viability
- 855
- Give special consideration to conservation or protection measures necessary to preserve or enhance anadromous fisheries.
- 856
- Support the purchase of conservation easements or fee simple purchase of land by private or public agencies where critical areas regulation has significantly reduced the value of the property and/or the ability of the landowner to lawfully use the property.
- 857
- 858
- 859
- 860
- 861
- 862

863

864 **Goal:** Utilize floodplain planning to protect human life and health as well as the riparian ecosystem in order to minimize public and private economic losses and expenditures related to flood control and to protect and preserve wildlife habitat.

865

866

867

868 **Objectives:**

- 869
- Reference Federal Emergency Management Agency's Flood Insurance Rate Maps for the 100 year floodplain and manage these areas through the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP).
- 870
- Utilize historical knowledge of areas outside Flood Insurance Rate Maps that have flooded in the past when designating frequently flooded areas.
- 871
- Reference the most current Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan as amended.
- 872
- 873
- 874

875 **Goal:** Reduce the threat posed to the health and safety of citizens that could occur when development is sited in areas of significant geologic hazard.

876

877

878 **Objective:**

- 879
- Implement development regulations that minimize risk to the public health safety, and welfare in areas of significant geologic hazard.
- 880

881 **Goal:** Ensure an adequate, safe water supply through the protection of both the quantity and quality of ground and surface water for a variety of beneficial uses such as public consumption, agriculture, industry, and habitat protection.

882

883

884

885 **Objective:**

- 886
- Implement development regulations to manage stormwater to protect water and habitat resources, protect private and public property and infrastructure, and protect public safety, health, and welfare.
- 887
- 888

- 889 • Okanogan County will support and when feasible sponsor water quality education
890 programs which inform local citizens and visitors about water quality issues, and
891 ramifications.

892 **Goal:** Protect aquifer recharge areas.

893

894 **Objective:**

- 895 • Implement development regulations to include siting requirements for land use which
896 assist in the protection of groundwater aquifer recharge and protection of existing and
897 future groundwater supplies.
898 • Limit impervious surfaces on lands that are classified as having a high or moderate
899 potential recharge and identify these areas in zoning overlay maps.

900

901 ~~Critical Area Goals and Policies:~~ Land Use Element: This section will change based on which
902 alternative the Planning commission chooses

903 Introduction:

904 The landuse element provides a framework for future development in Okanogan County.

905 Land Use and Growth

906 This plan in part develops strategies on how orderly new growth should occur to accommodate
907 population growth and protect the resources in Okanogan County.

908 Landuse Goals & Objectives:

909 Goal: Direct and manage development that is orderly and fiscally responsible.

910 Objectives:

- 911 • Guide future growth and development by defining appropriate land uses and densities.
912 • Land use designations within rural lands ~~must~~ must provide sufficient land for housing
913 and business activities suitable to the rural areas. These designations ~~must~~ be
914 compatible with available water supplies, capacity of the area for on-site septic, and the
915 ability to provide adequate levels of public services.

916

917 Goal: Support continuance of farming and ranching for the production of food, fiber and
918 minerals in rural areas.

919

920 Objectives:

Commented [AH7]: I feel like you as a Board need to have more conversation about this section. This section could have many different outcomes based on the alternative or mix of alternatives you decide to move forward with.

I started with a framework that needs to be expanded upon. For instance Alternative 2 has a large area devoted to Rural land category. The question may arise based on the comments you received should part of this be Rural Agriculture due to existing uses or just Rural. You might decide the areas close to infrastructure deserve a Rural Residential category which would need to be explained how that will happen. Or you could decide to just keep it broad and leave it as Rural. You could also decide to have density descriptions as well.

My thought is after you discuss the resource lands we can have some in depth conversations as to how the whole board wants to proceed regarding this section.

- Encourage enrollment in the Voluntary Stewardship program.
- Perform an Inventory of affordable housing to address the need for farmworker housing and allow farmworker housing as a permitted use in Agricultural and other appropriate zones.
- Okanogan County will protect agriculture from the impact of incompatible uses by utilizing appropriate land use designations and effective review processes.

Rural Lands:

History

Lands in the rural designation will contain the greatest mix of existing and potential uses because of the tremendous diversity of these lands. A wide range of compatible uses should be considered with reliance on the underlying zoning to ensure compatibility of proposed activities in regards to existing uses and historical characteristics of the neighboring area. Comprehensive review of land use proposals to identify probable impacts and to ensure compatibility with existing and/or planned activities will be necessary to prevent conflicts. The objective of zoning in the rural designation is to provide an effective mix of land uses such as residential, commercial, industrial, agricultural, tourist, and recreational opportunities.

Purpose

In the course of comprehensive planning, the County specifically identifies and designates city expansion areas and resource lands. Incorporated city limits are established by law and fall under the jurisdiction of the legislative bodies of those cities and towns. All other lands are designated rural.

The objective of the rural designation is to provide an adequate inventory of land for residential and other uses while avoiding unnecessary conflicts. Neighborhood commercial centers, in the form of unincorporated villages, exist throughout the county and will become more important as population increases. The existing mix of agricultural and resourced based activities, recreation, and tourism should be recognized for the diversity it provides to the economic base. A mix of residential densities should be allowed to provide an adequate inventory of housing sites for those seeking a rural lifestyle and to provide worker housing in proximity to employment providers.

Okanogan County is large in size and varied in topography and climate. For these reasons, lands in the rural designation will exhibit great differences in terms of its ability to support residential density and other land use activities. Underlying zoning and/or the review processes that support and implement this Plan must be established with consideration for the ability of the land to support the proposed land use activity.

The ability of lands in the rural designation to support density and permitted/conditional uses will be affected by other bodies of required regulation such as Critical Areas Ordinance and

957 Shoreline Master Program. This must be taken into account when the adequacy of land in the
958 rural designation is reviewed.

959

960 **Density**

961 Residential uses are consistent with the rural designation. Lot sizes, setbacks, height
962 restrictions, and other considerations will be specifically addressed in the underlying zone,
963 subdivision regulation, and other regulation as appropriate. The lot sizes and overall density
964 allowed in underlying zoning should consider the following criteria:

- 965 • Proximity to transportation system
- 966 • Proximity to city centers
- 967 • Availability of potable water supplies and water delivery systems
- 968 • Availability of fire protection, police, and other emergency services

969

970 Minimum lots should be sufficient in size to allow compliance with on-site sewage disposal and
971 the protection of potable water sources. Lots in areas served by a sanitary sewer system, and so
972 designated by the Board of County Commissioners, will be required to be served by the sewer
973 system.

974

975 **Compatible Uses**

976 The rural designation is consistent with a wide array of permitted and conditional uses. The
977 specific mix of permitted uses will be determined by the underlying zone.

978 The rural designation is suitable for agricultural activities until such time as increased
979 urbanization creates conflict between what can be incompatible land uses.

980

981

982 **Unincorporated Towns and Neighborhood Commercial Centers Land Use**

983 **Purpose**

984 Unincorporated towns are residential and commercial centers located in Okanogan County that
985 are not incorporated cities. The County recognizes the important role they play as service
986 centers and focal points for the surrounding neighborhoods. The area within the designation
987 should provide sufficient land to provide needed local goods and services. Future expansion of
988 the unincorporated towns and neighborhood commercial centers will be based upon the needs
989 of the residents and the ability of the area to provide services.

990 This Comprehensive Plan for Okanogan County recognizes the following unincorporated towns
991 and neighborhood commercial centers and establishes these Objectives for future planning and
992 development of them.

- 993 • Methow
- 994 • Carlton
- 995 • Malott
- 996 • Loomis
- 997 • Wauconda
- 998 • Chesaw
- 999 • Molson
- 1000 • Ellisforde
- 1001 • Mazama
- 1002 • Monse
- 1003 • Nighthawk
- 1004 • Havillah

1005

1006 **Designation Criteria**

1007 Unincorporated towns and neighborhood commercial centers will be designation and developed
1008 based on the following criteria:

- 1009 • Existence of services such as neighborhood retail, tourist retail, and government
1010 services.
- 1011 • Existence of more intense residential development than the surrounding areas.
- 1012 • Historical value as past settlement with existing tourist activities.
- 1013 • Ability to support more intense development.

1014 **Future Neighborhood Commercial Centers**

1015 Due to the vast size of Okanogan County, it is important to locate necessary services in proximity
1016 to the residents. Settlement patterns will be driven by expansion of agriculture, forestry, and
1017 mining in rural areas in addition to expansion of tourism. New service centers should be
1018 considered to minimize impacts to the transportation system brought about by longer trips to
1019 obtain basic services.

1020 The unincorporated towns and neighborhood commercial centers also serve as focal points for
1021 area residents providing for a sense of community. The demand for new neighborhood
1022 commercial centers will be created by the needs of the area residents and landowners.

1023 Proposals for new neighborhood commercial centers should be reviewed in accordance with the
1024 designation criteria and general planning objectives found previously stated in this section.

1025

1026

1027 **City Expansion Areas**

1028

1029 **History**

1030 Okanogan County and the cities and towns therein, recognize that a cooperative effort between
1031 local governments is needed to effectively and efficiently serve the needs of the citizens. The
1032 City Expansion Area designation is used to identify those lands into which the city or town
1033 intends to grow through a twenty year planning window. The Objectives and procedures
1034 contained in this Comprehensive Plan, supplemented by intergovernmental agreements as
1035 needed, are designed to give clear direction for the process to designate, review, and amend
1036 City Expansion Areas. Subsequent project review and land use decisions, while under the sole
1037 authority of the County until such times as the lands annex, are carried out in accordance with
1038 the agreed upon processes.

1039

1040 **Purpose**

1041 As stated above, a clear and cooperative approach to land use planning and decision making
1042 between the County and its cities and towns, is necessary to successfully conduct the business
1043 of the people. The adoption of agreed upon City Expansion Areas into the County
1044 Comprehensive Plan accomplishes two specific goals. Cities and towns have the ability to plan
1045 infrastructure and service requirements for a specific growth area. The city or town can propose
1046 pre-annexation designations to promote a predictable growth pattern, efficient extension of
1047 infrastructure, and to ensure sufficient inventory of land for residential, commercial, and other
1048 development. The County can incorporate into their Plan the city or town proposed use of the
1049 CEA. This allows the County to accurately analyze the inventory of land available for uses best
1050 suited to densely populated areas and to coordinate uses in the rural areas accordingly.

1051

1052

1053 **Designation Criteria**

1054

1055 Requests for specific City Expansion Areas, and any amendments thereto, will be processed by
1056 the Planning Commission as amendments to this Plan. Only the municipalities shall propose CEA
1057 boundaries. In reviewing proposals for CEA designation, the municipality should consider the
1058 following factors in considering a proposed map change:

- 1059
- Current inventory of developable land in the incorporated boundaries.

1060 • Inventory of land necessary to provide for projected growth including affordable
1061 housing.

1062 • Analysis of ability to provide sewer, water, and other public services to designated CEA.

1063 • Benefits and impacts to existing resource and recreational activities.

1064 **Amendment**

1065 Only the affected municipality may propose amendments to the designated City Expansion Area.
1066 Landowners in or adjoining the City Expansion Area must petition the affected municipality to
1067 present their request for amendment. Review of proposed amendments shall consider the
1068 criteria used in designating City Expansion Areas.

1069 **Zoning and Project Review**

1070 The County has the sole authority for land use and project review on lands within the CEA but
1071 outside the incorporated boundary. The County, in considering an application for land
1072 use/project in the CEA, shall consider the following:

1073 • Compatibility with any sub-designations by the municipality within the CEA.

1074 • Impact of the project or proposal on municipal services.

1075 • Compatibility with surrounding uses.

1076 • Impact of the project or proposal on the municipal transportation system.

1077

1078

Chapter Eight: More Completely Planned Areas

Purpose and Intent

It is the intent of the County to ensure the updated Comprehensive Plan remains responsive to the wide range of landscapes and demographics within the County's borders. To reflect these differences, the County may create and adopt

More Completely Planned Areas ("MCPA") to help inform development regulations such as Zoning and Subdivision Codes.

Since 1971, Okanogan County has utilized MCPA Plans to provide for land use planning at a sub-area scale, including the Methow Valley. It is the intent of the County to continue to utilize these MCPA Plans for the Methow Valley, and to consider the creation of new MCPAs in the future as deemed appropriate and necessary to most effectively reflect the desires of the communities which comprise Okanogan County.

The goals and policies developed within a MCPA Plan adopted by the County shall apply **only** to the geographic area of the MCPA as the Board of County Commissioners has defined its geographic boundaries at the time of MCPA Plan adoption. The content of MCPA Plans shall not be applied outside of the area for which it has been created and adopted.

Two existing MCPA's have been reviewed and revised along with the Comprehensive Plan. They are the Methow Valley More Completely Planned Area and the Methow Valley More Completely Planned Area Mazama Community Master Plan Sub Unit A. These MCPA's will be adopted following adoption of the comprehensive plan. Any modifications to planning or land use designations within the Methow Valley More completely Planned Area and the Methow Valley More completely Planned Area Mazama Community Master Plan Sub Unit A shall be compatible with the goals and policies of these plans.

Designation Criteria

1110 The geographic boundaries of a MCPA shall be determined by the Board of
1111 County Commissioners after consideration of the following:
1112
1113 • Logical natural and physical boundaries (highways, other MCPA planning area
1114 boundaries, watersheds, etc.);
1115 • Landowner interest;
1116 • Community identification within the MCPA;
1117 • Other factors as may be identified by the County and deemed important in providing for
1118 logical land use planning areas;
1119
1120 **Establishing Future More Completely Planned Areas**
1121
1122 Future MCPAs may be established by the County Commissioners.
1123 A diverse Advisory Committee of individuals owning property within the proposed MCPA shall
1124 lead MCPA planning efforts. The County Commissioners shall appoint Advisory Committee
1125 members after a publicly advertised recruitment period.
1126
1127 All future MCPA Plan development processes shall provide for properly advertised public
1128 meetings to be hosted by the Advisory Committee, in coordination with the Okanogan County
1129 Planning Department, to provide opportunities for general public participation.
1130
1131 Draft MCPA Plans shall be forwarded to the Planning Commission with a recommendation from
1132 the MCPA Advisory Committee and shall be processed in accordance with the County's process
1133 for Comprehensive Plan amendments. At a minimum, MCPA Plans shall include the elements
1134 required for Comprehensive Plans under RCW 36.70.330 but not exceed the requirements of the
1135 Planning Enabling Act or those portions of the Growth Management Act applicable to non-GMA
1136 counties.
1137

1138 **Transportation Element**

1139 **Introduction**

1140 Okanogan County has experienced modest growth activity in the past which is expected to
1141 continue in coming years. To effectively and efficiently accommodate this growth in an orderly
1142 fashion, Okanogan County, the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation, and the cities
1143 and towns in the county have recognized the need for a transportation plan that describes the
1144 transportation system as it exists today and addresses the transportation needs for the next 20
1145 years. This Transportation Element is the first to be prepared for Okanogan County and is an
1146 important milestone in achieving a coordinated transportation system which integrates the
1147 needs of each of the County's jurisdictions and the unincorporated rural areas, within the
1148 context of the larger North Central Washington Region.

1149 **Purpose of the Transportation Element**

1150 As the first countywide transportation element, this document serves several purposes. It serves
1151 as an investigation into how the County's transportation system and transportation usage is
1152 structured, and is an important resource for the County, its jurisdictions, its citizens, and the
1153 Okanogan Council of Governments acting as the Regional Transportation Planning Organization
1154 (RTPO). It examines the need to provide for different types and levels of transportation services,
1155 particularly in regard to the needs of urban versus rural areas.

1156 The countywide Transportation Element is a critical component of the County's overall
1157 Comprehensive Plan. The Transportation Element is intended to guide an ongoing planning and
1158 decision making process that shapes the transportation system and ensures that needs are
1159 addressed within the available resources between the public and private sectors.

1160 **The Planning Process**

1161 The process of developing the Okanogan County Transportation Element took place over a
1162 period of approximately 12 months and involved numerous citizens, staff from each of the cities
1163 within the County, County Staff, the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation, and
1164 Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) representation. The transportation
1165 planning process began with an assessment of existing conditions. This was followed by a
1166 discussion of future conditions through goal setting and forecasting. Anticipated future
1167 transportation system needs were analyzed and organized into an implementation plan.
1168 Outlined below are the steps that were taken in the development of the Transportation
1169 Element.

- 1170 • **Early and Continuous Public Participation-** Public participation was central to
1171 development of the Transportation Element. Opportunities for community involvement
1172 were provided in the form of Regional Transportation Advisory Group (RTAG) meetings
1173 that were open to the public, in addition to formal public hearings.

- 1174 • **Determine the Characteristics of the Current Transportation System**-An inventory and
 1175 description of the current transportation system was prepared to serve as the
 1176 foundation of the element. This information was supplemented with an inventory of
 1177 the existing demographic and land use conditions as well as recent development
 1178 patterns.
- 1179 • **Identify Issues: Constraints and Opportunities**- A series of community workshops were
 1180 held throughout Okanogan County to identify both real and perceived constraints
 1181 affecting the transportation system and opportunities for improvements.
- 1182 • **Establish Countywide Level Of Service Standards**- The Transportation Element
 1183 established countywide Level of Service standards, and also energy conservation and air
 1184 quality guidelines.
- 1185 • **Establish Transportation Goals, Objectives and Policies**- The Element contains
 1186 transportation goals, objectives, and policies resulting from discussions with
 1187 representation from each city, planning region, and planning department in the County.
- 1188 • **Forecast Future Transportation/Travel Demand**- Six-year and 20-year traffic forecasts
 1189 were completed based upon forecasted growth. Anticipated land use patterns were
 1190 also provided in this effort.
- 1191 • **Identify Future Deficiencies**- Based upon the forecasted travel demand, potential
 1192 system deficiencies were analyzed and alternative methods were identified.
- 1193 • **Identify Environmental Impacts**- The Transportation Element considered the
 1194 environmental impacts of proposed system improvements, in addition to appropriate
 1195 mitigation measures.
- 1196 • **Establish a Six-Year Financial Plan and Implementation Program**- The Transportation
 1197 Element references the county's six year Transportation Improvement Plan, which
 1198 identifies the necessary tasks, priorities, and identifies the agency(s) responsible for
 1199 implementation with consideration to the County's funding capacity.

1200 Transportation Planning In Washington

1201 In 1990, the Washington State Legislature enacted the Growth Management Act (GMA) which
 1202 set a new course for the development of transportation plans. Traditionally, Washington
 1203 communities have planned for land use and transportation independent of one another. Most
 1204 transportation system improvements were planned for in reaction to congestion or safety
 1205 concerns. The GMA asserts that land use and transportation system planning must be
 1206 coordinated to better provide for safe use. Furthermore, GMA requires that land use planning
 1207 and development approvals be linked with the provision of available transportation facilities
 1208 through the concurrency requirement.

1209 Although Okanogan County is not currently subject to the requirements of the GMA, these
1210 requirements have served as basic guidelines in the preparation of the Transportation Element.

1211 As part of the Growth Management Program, State Legislature authorized the formation of
1212 Regional Transportation Planning Organizations (RTPOs) whose purpose is to plan for the
1213 development and use of regional transportation facilities and services. Okanogan, Douglas, and
1214 Chelan Counties are the three counties located within the North Central RTPO. The North
1215 Central RTPO is a newer organization to be designated in Washington State (June of 1993) and
1216 has not yet completed its Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), which is a key function of the
1217 RTPO.

1218 This Transportation Element, along with those prepared/being prepared by Chelan and Douglas
1219 Counties, together will serve as important groundwork for the development of the North
1220 Central RTP.

1221 **The Transportation Element**

1222 The Okanogan County Transportation Element will be incorporated within the County
1223 Comprehensive Plan. Although the County is not subject to the requirements of GMA, and is
1224 preparing its Transportation Element independent of its Land Use Element, land use
1225 characteristics, both current and projected, have been carefully considered in the preparation of
1226 this document.

1227 **Land Use and Transportation**

1228 The Transportation Element establishes a vital link between land use and the transportation
1229 facilities and services needed to meet current system deficiencies and to support current
1230 growth. The anticipated types, intensity, and timing of land development in the County will
1231 largely determine the mode of transportation, provided its effectiveness in moving people, and
1232 the travel behavior of people using the land. In addition, land use decisions outside of the
1233 County impact the transportation system and as a result, attention must be given to the
1234 anticipated trends in these peripheral areas.

1235 The County's resources are limited; therefore the County must achieve a balance among the
1236 needs within each of the four regions, accommodate both rural and urban areas, and various
1237 modes of transportation to maximize person carrying capacity instead of vehicle-moving
1238 capacity. With large expanses of sparsely populated land, most travel in Okanogan County
1239 tends to be by private vehicle. However, even in a largely rural county, there are opportunities
1240 to accommodate transportation alternatives other than the single occupant vehicle. A clear
1241 understanding of land use development patterns will enable the County to effectively provide
1242 for these alternatives.

1243 In the preparation of this Element, the available existing land use information and future land
1244 use plans for cities and towns, the County, and the Confederated Tribes of the Colville

Reservation have been examined. Based on this information, modes of transportation alternatives have been developed and analyzed in terms of implications to meet future transportation needs.

Okanogan County Planning Regions

Okanogan County is divided into four (4) planning regions: North, Central, South, and Methow. By dividing the County into these four regions, the specific needs of each local jurisdictions and surrounding development in rural areas can be better addressed. Figure 1-1 identifies the boundaries of the planning regions. The transportation study for the Central Region was completed in May of 1994. The results of that study are incorporated into the Transportation Element.

Functional Classification System

Classification of streets and highways in the State of Washington is based upon guidelines prepared by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). Streets are classified based upon the degree to which they provide travel movement and land access functions. Specific criteria defining streets includes the following:

- Character and relative length of trips.
- Anticipated or projected traffic volume.
- The relationship of a street to the land use it serves.

Each local jurisdiction is responsible for defining its transportation system into the following functional classifications:

Principal Arterial: (01 Rural/Interstate)- Streets and highways which contain the greatest portion of movement or long-distance travel. Such facilities serve high-volume travel corridors that connect major generators of traffic. The selected routes provide an integrated system for complete circulation of traffic, including ties to the major rural highways entering urban area. Generally, principal arterials include high traffic volume streets.

Minor Arterial: (06 Rural/ Minor)- Streets and highways which connect with remaining arterial and collector roads that extend into the urban area. Minor arterial streets and highways serve less concentrated traffic-generating areas such as neighborhood shopping centers and schools. Minor arterial streets serve as boundaries to neighborhoods and collect traffic from collector streets. Although the predominant function of minor arterial streets is the movement of traffic, they also provide for considerable local traffic that originates or is destined to points along the corridor.

Major Collector: (07 Rural Major Collector - These routes should provide service to the county seat if not on an arterial route, to larger towns not directly served by the higher systems, and to

1279 other traffic generators of equivalent inter-county importance, such as consolidated schools,
1280 shipping points, county parks, important agricultural areas, etc. In addition, these routes should
1281 link larger towns and/or cities with routes of higher classification and should serve the more
1282 important inter-county travel corridors.

1283 **Minor Collector:** (08 Rural Minor Collector)- These routes should be spaced at intervals
1284 consistent with population density, collect traffic from local roads, and bring all developed areas
1285 within a reasonable distance of a collector road. In addition, these routes should provide service
1286 to the remaining smaller communities and link the locally important traffic generators with their
1287 rural counterparts.

1288 **Local Access:** (09 Rural Unclassified)- Streets not selected for inclusion in the arterial or
1289 collector classes. They allow access to individual homes, shops, and similar destinations. Direct
1290 access to abutting land is essential for all traffic originating from, or is destined to, abutting land.
1291 Through traffic should be discouraged by appropriate geometric design and/or traffic control
1292 devices.

1293 Functional classification of major roads and State Routes in Okanogan County are shown on
1294 Figure 1-2, and detailed in Appendix A-1 and A-2.

Essential Public Facilities

Airport Safety

The general aviation, non-general aviation, and private airstrips in Okanogan County provide a vital transportation link and are tangible assets to the economic base of the County. Air transportation provides important support to emergency services by enabling the rapid importation of vital supplies and the transportation of injured or ill people to larger or specialized medical facilities. The airports provide the opportunity to capitalize infrastructure for the siting of compatible industrial and commercial businesses.

The Comprehensive Plan creates policy designed to guide zoning and other development regulation to protect airports from incompatible land uses both on-site and on adjacent lands as required by the Revised Code of Washington and Federal Regulation.

Aviation facilities are mapped as terminals on the Transportation and Essential Public Facilities Map, Map 3, and may be adjusted as the size, shape, or number of facilities is modified.

Capital Facilities

The Okanogan County Capital Facilities Plan identifies the need for new capital facilities and major enhancements to existing facilities through a twenty year planning window. Proposed or anticipated funding and the critical timeline for implementation is identified for the first six years of the plan. The Capital Facilities Plan will be reviewed on an annual basis.

Coordination

Federal Agencies

Local government has the responsibility to protect the local tax base, value of private property, economic stability, and in general, the well-being of the local community. These critical functions are closely entangled with federal and state management decisions.

Congress has long recognized the importance of local governance to the effective management of the nation's resources. It has provided for the involvement of local authority in every federal land use statute passed in the past 35 years. In many of these statutes, Congress has mandated that the federal land use agencies "coordinate" their policies and management activities with local government.

Coordination means the federal agencies shall give prior notice to the local government of agency plans and management activities and also, among other criteria, requires agencies to make their policies and management activities consistent with local plans. Congress has directed federal agencies to coordinate with local government because they recognize local authority must be consulted and involved in the decision making process before the public input process.

The federal agencies, primarily the United States Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management manage a total of 1,571,208 acres in Okanogan County. This land is critical to the customs, culture, and economy of Okanogan County. The Federal Agencies claim a pre-emption of land use permitting authority on federal land. As such the comprehensive plan designates federal land by the agency that manages it and the resources located on the property. Forest land of long term commercial significance, agricultural land, and mineral lands are identified in an overlay on the comprehensive plan map. The federal agencies must try to make their land management decisions consistent with local plans and policies.

The land management decisions made by the federal agencies controls the economic activity on federal land. Their decisions have a direct impact on local revenue collected from timber harvest taxes and indirectly impacts other revenue sources generated through other natural resource jobs.

Because of the large amount of land in Okanogan County that is managed by the federal agencies payment in lieu of taxes and the secure rural schools and communities payments are important revenue sources for the county. Okanogan County believes the annual PILT and SRSC payments must be guaranteed by law at a fixed amount with an identified CPI index for annual increases.

Okanogan County will require the federal agencies to comply with federal law by notifying the Board of County Commissioners as early as possible in the formative stages of the formation of a proposed change in any land management policy or regulation or immediate upon receipt of an application or

proposal from any non-governmental organization or other agency. Notification shall take place prior to the issuance of any notice to the public.

Okanogan County expects the federal agencies to maximize the use of federal land for agricultural and tourist/recreation activities in absence of a compelling need to curtail such activities for protection of the sustainability of the resource.

State Agencies

The State Environmental Policy Act RCW 43.21C sets forth a consistent process for review of probable, significant, and adverse impacts brought about by land use decisions, both project specific and on a program level basis. The actions of State Agencies, with few specifically enumerated exemptions, are subject to review under SEPA. It is clear the intent of the Legislature was for State Agencies to coordinate closely with local government to ensure Agency decisions are consistent with local plans. As local government is charged with the responsibility for delivery of a wide array of critical services it is critical that State Agencies interact with counties in an effective and open manner. Okanogan County adopted OCC Section 18 Coordination, to identify clear protocols to inform Federal and State.

State agencies are required to comply with local zoning and other land use permits on the lands they manage. Land managed by the state agencies is not identified by ownership and bears the same land use designations, consistent with the applicable criteria, as privately owned land in Okanogan County.

Several state agencies own land in Okanogan County including Fish and Wildlife, State Parks, Department of Transportation, and Department of Natural Resources. It is the policy position of Okanogan County that state agencies should consolidate their land holdings by divesting land that contributes to a checkerboard ownership and the commensurate increase in land management difficulties. Conversely state agencies should obtain additional land only when doing so creates an ownership pattern conducive to more efficient management.