



County Resource Management Planning

program overview

County planning efforts need to be strengthened in three key areas:

- 1) Planning for growth;
- 2) Inter-jurisdictional Coordination, and;
- 3) Planning relative to public lands uses, access, resources, and land management agency plans.

In order for local objectives and desires to be appropriately considered in Federal decision making processes, the county's general plan must be very specific and articulate in addressing the issues that are pertinent to Federal land agency planning and decision making.

County Resource Management Planning Program

Except for a few notable exceptions, county governments in rural Utah are generally not at the level they need to be with regards to their general plans and their on-going planning activities. County governments occupy a critical place in rural planning because of their role in coordinating with cities and other governmental jurisdictions within county boundaries, and because of their inescapable social and economic connections to Federal and state public lands — and thus with Federal and State lands management agencies. Counties governments also play a leading role in economic development activities, which inevitably affect, and are affected by, land use planning objectives.

In contemplating the planning needs of rural counties, it appears that county planning efforts need to be strengthened in three key areas: 1) Planning for growth; 2) Inter-jurisdictional Coordination, and; 3) Planning relative to public lands uses, access, resources, and land management agency plans.

One of the most cost effective ways to strengthen county planning efforts in these areas would be to develop, and make available, a planning “tool kit” which would provide information, ideas, contacts, examples, self-assessments and other resources that could assist and support county planning efforts. With the tool kit resources in hand, and with the involvement of the regional Circuit Rider Planners, counties will be able to significantly strengthen their general plans and better position themselves to deal with the challenges of a rapidly changing world.

The tool kit would provide planning tools that are specific to the three key areas:

Planning for growth

This would include aides for the development of policies and ordinances that address such issues as land use planning and zoning, lot size & density, critical lands preservation, and the cost effective provision of services and infrastructure for development that takes place outside of municipal boundaries.

Inter-jurisdictional Coordination

This section would identify the various entities and jurisdictions that should be included in effective planning processes, and would identify forums and mechanisms that can facilitate inter-local coordination. It would also provide information pertaining to such things as inter-jurisdictional sharing of services and infrastructure costs, and the legal vehicles for coordination

and cooperation – such as Special Service Districts, MOUs, Associations of Government, ordinances, etc.

Public Lands Planning

The basis for local planning relative to Department of Interior lands is found in the Federal Lands Policy Management Act (FLPMA), Section 202, paragraph C9: *“Land use plans of the Secretary under this section shall be consistent with State and local plans to the maximum extent he finds consistent with Federal law and the purposes of this Act.”*

The US Forest Service has similar guidelines respecting consistency with local plans.

At the same time, the State of Utah has an obligation to ensure consistency with local plans as it responds to proposed Federal plans and actions through its consistency review process.

These provisions create a strong incentive for county governments to develop appropriate local plans and planning processes as a means for addressing public lands related issues.

In order for local objectives and desires to be appropriately considered in Federal decision making processes, the county’s general plan must be very specific and articulate in addressing the issues that are pertinent to Federal land agency planning and decision making. It is important that these plan elements be identified, and that appropriate tools and language be developed to assist counties in strengthening their plans and ordinances in ways that are meaningful and impactful in the eyes of the Federal land management agencies.

The following are examples of the kinds of elements that could be considered for a public lands planning tool kit:

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| Watershed Protection / Management | Recreation Activities |
| Fire Suppression / Fire Preparedness Plans | Cultural & Historic Activities, Sites, Structures and Landscapes |
| Critical Lands and Critical Habitat | Economic Development (Extractive industries, agriculture and ranching, economic analyses, etc.) |
| Transportation (this would include access, maintenance, and 2477 issues) | Participation in Federal planning processes (Cooperating Agency Status, etc.) |
| Tourism (including visitor management, facilities, interpretation, permitting, guide & outfitter businesses, signing, etc.) | Water Issues |
| Public Safety (Search & rescue, law enforcement, ambulance & medical services, communications, etc.) | Wilderness Designations |
| | Valid Existing Rights |