

Bear Lake County, Idaho Comprehensive Plan 2025



March , 2002

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March 1, 2002

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Bear Lake County, Idaho
Comprehensive Plan 2025
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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Bear Lake County Board of Commissioners and Bear Lake County Planning and Zoning Commission would like to thank all of the people who contributed to the creation of this plan.

Introduction

This is the Bear Lake County Comprehensive Plan. This plan is for the purpose of promoting the multiple use of Bear Lake and other important natural resources in the county. The plan is also for the purpose of promoting the health, safety, and general welfare of the people of Bear Lake County and, specifically, to assure that future land development meets reasonable quality expectations. Those expectations are expressed in this plan and subsequent ordinances implementing the plan.



Authority

This comprehensive plan is adopted under the authority of Idaho's Local Planning Act, which requires counties to prepare comprehensive plans and regulate land development and land use in the public interest (see I.C. 67-6501, et seq.). The Local Planning Act further requires that all comprehensive plans include certain components or a specific statement explaining why a particular component is not needed (see I.C. 67-6508). Table I shows how the components of the Bear Lake County Comprehensive Plan fulfill the requirements of the Local Planning Act.

Past Plans

The first comprehensive plan for Bear Lake County (Land Use Guide) was adopted in 1979. That plan is superseded by this comprehensive plan; however the Natural Resource Planning Process initially developed in the Land Use Guide, has been updated and incorporated into this new plan.

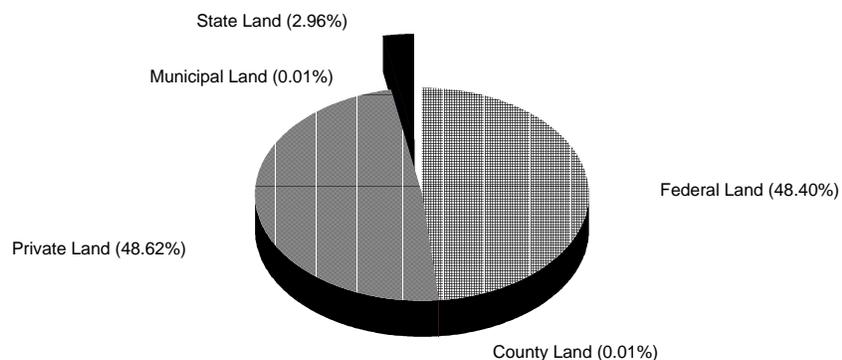
Background

The Setting

Bear Lake County is located in the extreme southeast corner of the state of Idaho and is bordered by Utah on the south and Wyoming on the east. The county encompasses approximately 628,000 acres. Private land is 48.6% or about 305,000 acres. Topography of the county varies greatly from the high mountains of the Bear River Range which runs along the west side of the county to the valley floor where Bear Lake and the Bear River are located. Land-forms vary from the steep slopes of the mountains to the relatively level valley floor. The

Percent of Land Ownership

By: Type



elevation ranges from more than 9,500 feet at Meads Peak to 5,800 at the north end of the county where the Bear River flows into Caribou County.

The Bear River enters Bear Lake County at Border in the southeast corner of the county and then flows in a southwesterly direction to Pegram. The river then turns and flows in a northwesterly direction to Soda Springs in Caribou County.

Bear Lake is located in the southern end of the county and extends into Utah. It is approximately 20 miles long and 8 miles wide, with about half of its area in Bear Lake County.

The Bear River Valley and Nounan Valley comprise a large portion of the west central segment of the county. Thomas Fork Valley, a fairly narrow elongated valley, occupies the extreme eastern section of the county.

The climate of Bear Lake County is very comfortable in the summer with high temperatures averaging in the 80's and low temperatures near 50. Extreme highs can reach into the 90's and lows into the 30's.

Winters on the other hand are cold with low temperatures in the 30's or lower most of the time. The average annual precipitation ranges from 9.5 inches at Bear Lake to 13.5 inches near Montpelier in the center of the county.

Agriculture is Bear Lake County's largest industry, but due to the high altitude and short growing season, the crops in Bear Lake County are somewhat limited to wheat, barley, oats, alfalfa, and wild hay. Cattle and dairy operations also play a large role in the agricultural economy of Bear Lake County.

Bear Lake County has a relatively low population with 6,411 residents in the 2000 census. The majority of Bear Lake County's population is centered in Montpelier.

Overall, Bear Lake County is an enjoyable place to live except that the winters are longer than some areas of Idaho, which does influence the quality of life in the county.

History

The Bear Lake area was first visited in the winter of 1811-12 by a small group of trappers who had separated from the Wilson Price Hunt Expedition. These trappers discovered and named the river and lake Miller after Joseph Miller, their leader and guide, who was probably the first white man to explore the Bear Lake Valley. Six years later Donald McKenzie and his party came to this valley and renamed the river and lake after many black bears they had discovered.

In 1826, Jim Bridger, with the Ashley party, followed Bear River to the Great Salt Lake. This expedition was of such merit to later cause the naming of Bear Lake and the surrounding areas "Bridgerland."

Thomas L. Smith, known as "Peg Leg Smith," was the first settler in the Bear Lake Valley. He operated a cattle business, trading post, and horse exchange on an island in the Bear River near what is now Dingle, Idaho.

Under the direction of Brigham Young, hundreds of Mormon pioneers seeking homes helped to settle the Bear Lake Valley. In 1863, Apostle Charles C. Rich led an exploration party into the valley to select a permanent town site. They chose the westside of the valley at North Twin Creek, which was later named Paris Creek. The settlement they created is named Paris.

Politically and geographically it was not definitely known whether the Bear Lake settlements were all in Utah Territory or partly in Idaho. The people followed their hopes and desires by accepting the jurisdiction of the Utah government. The whole of the Bear Lake Valley remained under the government of Utah until after the federal surveyor, Daniel G. Mayor, determined that the forty-second parallel cut the valley in two, running almost exactly through the middle of the lake(1871-72). Thus, in 1872 the Idaho portion automatically became part of Oneida County and remained so until 1875, when it became the tenth county in the state. Consequently, Paris became the county seat and Montpelier has become the largest population center and houses approximately half of the county's populace. Other communities include Bennington, Bern, Georgetown, Bloomington, Ovid, Fish Haven, Liberty, St. Charles, Pegram, Geneva, Raymond and Dingle.



The principal crops of Bear Lake County are wheat, oats, barley, alfalfa, meadow hay, and several kinds of garden vegetables. Farther south in the Bear Lake region, raspberries are grown. The wide ranges are excellent areas for the raising of livestock.

The census of 1910 stated the population of Bear Lake County to be 7,729, while the most current census of 2000 shows a population of 6,411.

Bear Lake, from which the county derives its name, is one of the most attractive scenic areas of Idaho. It is 20 miles long by 8 miles wide, its elevation is 5,924 feet above sea level, and it abounds in fish of many kinds, such as several varieties including Bonneville cisco, Sculpin, Utah sucker, and Cutthroat trout.

There are other scenic points in the county. Northwest of the lake is St. Charles Canyon and Minnetonka Cave. To the northwest is Bloomington Canyon, at the summit of which is Bloomington Lake, nestled below huge cliffs. Northwest of Paris is Canyon Basin, in which is found an ice cave of limestone and ice formations. Big game abound in the forests, and fishing in the streams and lakes is excellent.

Tradition supports the existence of the Bear Lake Monster which has been sighted periodically since the days when indians roamed freely in the valley.

Property Rights

Land use planning and its implementation by local units of government are required under state laws. Its function is to balance what is good and needed for the community's well being with the importance of property rights established by the federal and state constitutions.

Bear Lake County does recognize the importance of the property rights. One purpose of this plan, as authorized by I.C. 67-6502 (a), is to protect property rights. The citizens of Bear Lake County recognize that major changes in the use of property inevitably affect the entire community. The making of good land use decisions occurs when land owners accept the responsibility for the consequences of their actions, and avoid or mitigate adverse impacts. This plan and the accompanying ordinances provide guidance for land owners seeking to fulfill that responsibility.

The 1995 state legislature amended Idaho's Local Planning Act to require that a property rights element be added to local comprehensive plans. The legislature also expanded the states regulatory takings statute to cover local governments. The following strategies respond to the property rights element.

- The county will actively encourage citizen participation in the planning process.
- The county will maintain this comprehensive plan with regular updates and amendments that reflect the learning process of plan administration, as well as changing conditions and state laws
- One purpose of this plan is to protect property rights, therefore Bear Lake County Planning and Zoning Commission and the Bear Lake County Board of Commissioners will consider the potential impact of this plan and subsequent ordinances implementing the plan on property rights. In doing so they will use the guidelines prepared by the Idaho Attorney General.
- In its land use decisions the county will follow the State Open Meetings Law and the Notice and Hearing procedures required by State Law (I.C. 67-6509).

Population

The population picture of Bear Lake County is not as clear cut as some counties in Idaho. In addition to the resident population, Bear Lake County has a nonresident population that includes recreational/second home occupants. The goal of the county in relation to population is to: Encourage and prepare for a diversified population.

Resident Population

The following table provides an historic perspective of the full time resident population and its distribution and age groups. The county population peaked in 1982 with 7,385 people. The historic high was in 1910 with 7,729 people. During the mid to late 1980's the county lost population, but has started to increase slightly during the 1990's. Since 1986 Bear Lake County's population has grown slower than that of the state and the nation.

POPULATION TABLE	1970	1980	1990	2000
Incorporated areas	4026	4781	4181	4366
County totals	5801	6931	6084	6411
Persons per sq. mile	5.9	7.0	6.3	6.6
Age groups	1970	1980	1990	2000
Under 18 years (%)	39.0	37.5	37.4	32.9
18 to 64 years (%)	48.2	50.4	47.5	18+ years 67.1
65 + years (%)	12.8	12.0	15.0	
Median age (years)	29.9	26.3	30.9	N/A
Persons per household	3.24	3.12	3.01	N/A
		1970 to 1980	1980 to 1990	1990 to 2000
Population change (%)		19.5	-12.2	5.4
Percent migration		5.6	-24.0	Estimated 3.6

The population of Bear Lake County between 1990 and 2000 census experienced a loss of youth under 18 of 7.2% and an increase of people over the age of 18 of 12.9%. This aging trend is brought out in the school enrollment numbers.

A look at the enrollment in the schools in Bear Lake County gives additional understanding of the population trends of the county. The information shown below has been provided by Bear Lake School District #33. The district enrollment figures cover a majority of the county except for the extreme northwestern corner of the county, known as the Bailey Creek, who attend school in Caribou County. The school enrollment figures also do not include children that are home schooled. But these figures give excellent trend information.

BEAR LAKE SCHOOL DISTRICT #33 - STUDENT ENROLLMENT HISTORY

	1990	1995	2000
Elementary Schools (K-5)	865	765	628
Middle School (6-8)	405	485	388
High School (9-12)	455	577	531
Total Enrollment -including Preschool	1744	1869	1574

School enrollment during the time period since 1990 peaked in 1995 with 1,869 students. Every year since 1995 student enrollment has declined. Enrollment for 2001 school year is also expected to be slightly less than the 2000 school year.

The median age along with the school enrollment show a trend of Bear Lake County's population is one of increasing age.

Population projections for Bear Lake County are presented below. Readers and users of this plan and information are reminded that the projections are planning tools intended to illustrate consequences of projected trends. The accuracy of the projections can be assessed only after many years. The historical data is also subject to revision. The projection's current value lies in its ability to stimulate discussion on the county's future and impacts on quality of life and public facilities and services. It is also important to note that these projections are for resident population and do not include recreation and second home users.

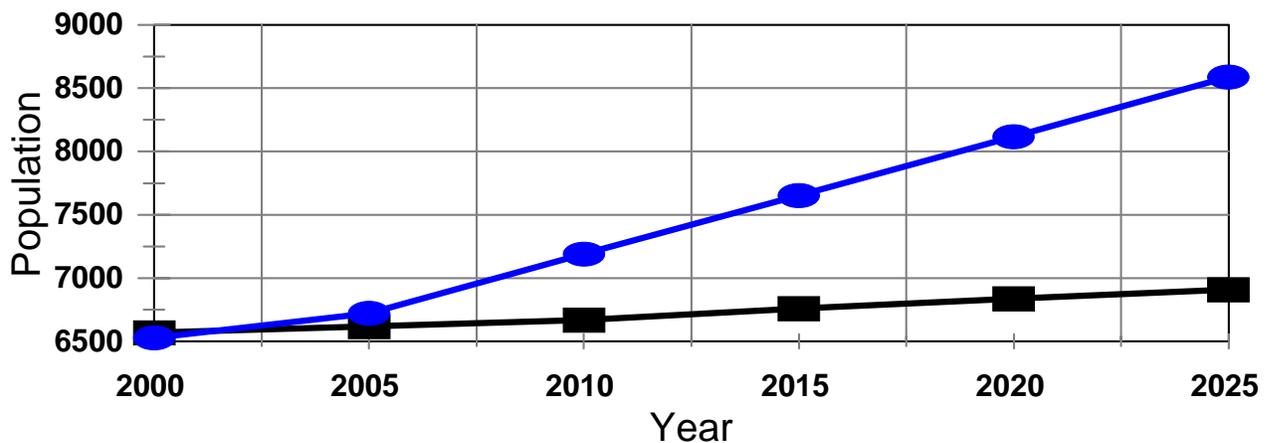
Two population projections are shown here. One is by Idaho Power Corporation Economic Forecast. This projection is more aggressive and shows large increases in population for the county. The second projection is one authored by Woods & Poole Economics of Washington, D.C. This projection is one of slower growth and is a better fit for projecting the county population, especially in view of the school enrollment trends.

The following table and graph present the two population projections.

POPULATION PROJECTIONS	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025
IDAHO POWER	6,530	6,723	7,190	7,652	8,119	8,591
WOODS & POOLE	6,570	6,620	6,670	6,760	6,840	6,910

Bear Lake County

Population Projections - 2000-2025



■ WOODS & POOLE ● IDAHO POWER

Nonresident Population

Bear Lake, along with the mountains and other natural attractions, has been discovered by residents of surrounding areas, especially the urban area of northern Utah. Bear Lake County currently has a large inventory of existing subdivision lots. There are 2,500 existing lots, the majority of which are in the area around the lake. At the end of the year 2000 there are approximately 610 lots out of the 2,500 that have dwellings on them. Obviously a large opportunity for growth exists within existing developments. The number of lots with dwellings increased from 500 to 610 over the last two years.

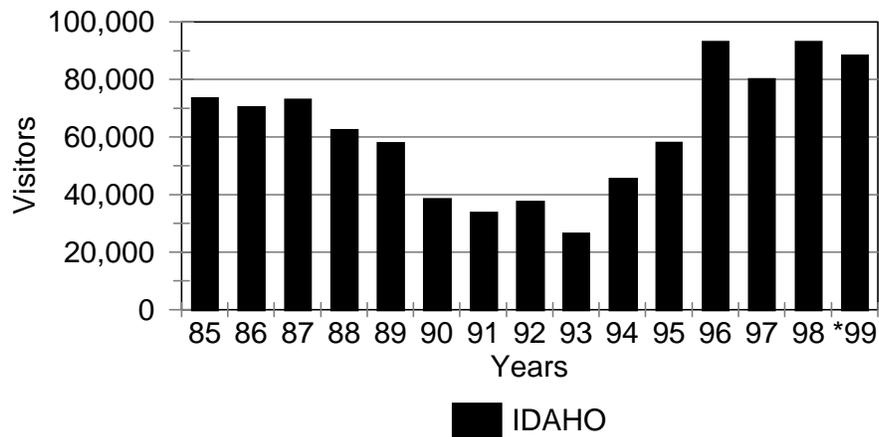
In the 1990 census Bear Lake County had 2934 housing units of which 929 were classified as vacant, seasonal, and migratory housing units. The majority of these units are in the area around the lake. No information on the occupancy or condition of second homes in Bear Lake County is available. The only comprehensive national study of second homes and recreational land development is the Council on Environmental Quality's Subdividing Rural America, 1976. That study suggested that the average second home will actually be occupied about 50 days per year.

In looking at the historical use of the dwellings in the Bear Lake area about 85% have a second home use. The use of a second home has other aspects than a first home, namely, family, extended family and guests staying over a few days are much more common, and these types of groups seem to be larger in numbers.

In conclusion it is difficult to actually place a number on the seasonal inhabitants of Bear Lake , but when compared to the year round population it constitutes a major element of the population picture of the county.

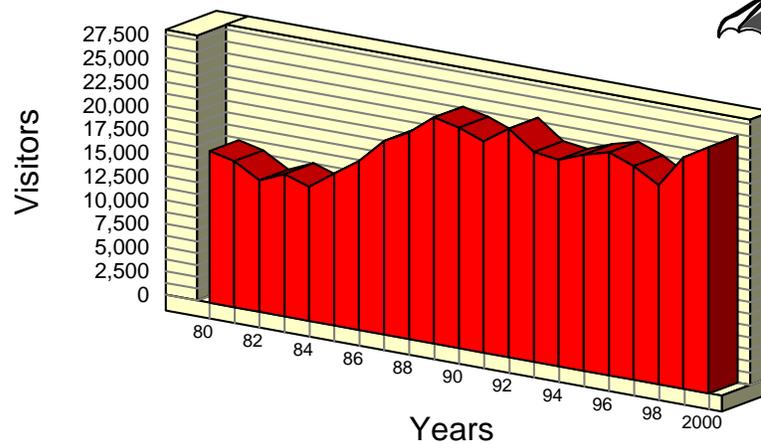
In addition to the seasonal inhabitants of the county, there is a segment of short term inhabitants that have come to visit the lake or camp in the canyons. This group is also very difficult to count. The following graphs present information on use around the public parks and beach of Bear Lake and of Minnetonka Cave, a major visitor attraction in the county.

Bear Lake State Park Visitation Idaho Area Only 1985 - 1999



MINNETONKA CAVE VISITATION

1980-2000



Economy

An Economic Profile was prepared as a background study for the comprehensive plan. The profile was completed in March of 2000. The following are the summary findings of the profile that relate to the economy of Bear Lake County.

Jobs

- From 1970 to 1997 (the latest year available) Bear Lake County added 575 new jobs. The fastest growing sectors, in terms of job creation, were services and professional (45% of new jobs), and government (38% of new jobs). The number of jobs in the farm sector declined since 1970, with a loss of 69 jobs. Other losses since 1970, include mining with 16 jobs lost, and transportation and public utilities with 70 lost jobs.
- Within the overall category called services and professional, several subcategories are growing the fastest: Retail trade is the single largest sector, accounting for 25 percent of new jobs and 20 percent of total employment in 1997. Services (health, legal, business, engineering and management, etc.) is the second largest sector, accounting for 17 percent of new jobs in the last 27 years and 15 percent of total jobs in 1997.
- From 1970 to 1997 the majority of job growth (56% of new jobs) has been in wage and salary employment (people who work for someone else). Non-farm proprietors (self-employed) account for the remaining job growth (46% of new jobs). Farm proprietors decreased by three percent.
- Employment growth in Bear Lake County lags behind that of the state and the nation.
- The majority of the growth in government employment has been in state and local government.

Business Establishments

- The majority of new businesses established in Bear Lake County from 1985 to 1995 have been large, with 3 companies of 100 to 249 employees. During that time 21 small businesses (49 employees or fewer) were lost.

Unemployment

- In 1998 the unemployment rate in Bear Lake County was 4.4 percent (5.7 % for the state). Unemployment has been declining steadily since 1994 when it peaked at almost six percent.

Income

- From 1970 to 1997 Bear Lake County added \$26 million in new personal income, in real terms. During that time the fastest growing components of personal income, in real terms, were non-labor income sources, such as transfer payments and dividends, interest and rent (65 percent of growth, or \$17 million new dollars) and government (20 percent of growth, or \$5 million new dollars).
- Growth in earnings by government employees was led by state and local government which experienced an increase from \$4.9 million in 1970 to \$10.7 million in 1997. Federal government income slightly decreased from \$2.1 million in 1970 to \$1.5 million in 1997 and military income remained level at \$300,000.
- The services and professional category is a mix of industries that witnessed an overall decline from 22 million in 1978 to 14 million in 1991. From 1992 to 1997 the services and professional category saw steady growth from 14 million to 19 million. Wholesale trade constituted 4% of new income growth (one million) from 1970 to 1997 and finance and insurance real estate made up 3 percent of the new growth (\$300,000).
- Per capita income in Bear Lake County, in real terms, increased from \$11,301 in 1970, to \$14,638 in 1980. By 1990 per capita income had decreased to \$13,012 but has since increased to \$14,039 in 1997.
- Non-labor income sources constituted 38 percent of total personal income in 1997 up from 28 percent in 1970. During 1997, dividends, interest and rent (money earned from past investments) accounted for 14 percent of total personal income, while transfer payments (largely related to an aging population) accounted for 25 percent of total personal income.

Average Earnings

- Adjusted for inflation, average earnings in Bear Lake County have fallen steadily, from \$20,786 in the early 1970s to \$14,553 in 1997. That same year average earnings per job in Idaho were \$24,480, while in the nation it was \$30,842.

Non-Labor Income Sources

- In 1997 75 percent of transfer payments were from age-related sources (retirement, disability, and Medicare). In 1997 retirement and disability insurance payments to individuals were \$13.8 million. By comparison, this is more than 5 times the income from farm and agricultural

services (\$3 million), and larger than all income earned in the government sector (\$12.4 million).

- In 1997, welfare represented six percent of transfer payments, and 1.4 percent of total personal income. This is up slightly from 1980 (4 percent of tp) and 1970 (2 percent of tp).
- The fastest growing component of non-labor income is from transfer payments (primarily retirement related, i.e., pension, medicare etc.).
- Over the last 27 years non-labor income sources have had somewhat of a stabilizing effect compared to the frequent fluctuations of labor income sources.

Agriculture

- Total net income from farming and ranching in Bear Lake County, in real terms, declined from over \$10 million in 1970, to \$5.7 million in 1980, and to \$1.7 million in 1997. Gross agricultural income in the county totaled over \$ 21 million in 1997
- In 1970 65 percent of gross farm income was from livestock, while 17 percent was from crops. In 1997 these numbers had changed just slightly to 67 percent of gross income from livestock, and 15 percent from crops. Income from government payments remained virtually the same with just a .3% increase from 1970 to 1997; however, over those 27 years government payments were as low as 1.3% in 1974 and as high as 15.8% in 1988.

Inflow Earnings

- From 1970 to 1997 gross earnings from inflow (in-commuters) consistently outpaced gross earnings from an outflow (outflow = money earned by people who work in the county but live elsewhere). By 1997 inflows reached \$26.9 million whereas outflows were at \$4.9 million.
- In general, there is an increasing trend for people to commute outside the county for work. Gross earnings inflow (\$26.9 million) represents 29 percent of total personal income (\$92 million in the county).

Housing

This section provides a brief description of Bear Lake County's housing stock. The data presented are from the census up through 1990. The 2000 Housing Census data is not available.

The following table summarizes housing for the three censuses of 1970, 1980, 1990 and what data is available from the 2000 census.

Housing Units	1970	1980	1990	2000
TOTAL	2,173	2,792	2,934	3,268
Mobile Homes or Trailers	55	205	285	N.A.
Overcrowded Units (1.5+ persons per room)	40	22	15	N.A.
Units Lacking some or all plumbing	105	52	82	N.A.
Total Vacant Units (Including Seasonal & Migratory)	382	581	929	1,009
	1970	1980	1990	2000
Household Composition (Household size by %)				
1 to 2 Persons	48.5	48.4	54.7	N.A.
3 to 5 Persons	37.6	40.6	33.4	N.A.
6 + Persons	13.9	11	11.9	N.A.
Tenure				
Owner Occupied Units	1,512	1,811	1,668	1,878
Renter Occupied Units	279	400	337	381
Value				
Median Housing Value	\$10,300	\$37,500	\$38,700	N.A.
Median Rent	\$58	\$149	\$175	N.A.
Plumbing Facilities				
Units on Public Sewer	1,107	1,517	2,000	N.A.
Units on Public or Private Water System	1,598	2,125	2,188	N.A.

Nearly 1/3 of the total housing stock in Bear Lake County is listed as vacant. This large percentage includes those houses that are second or recreational homes, with the majority in the Bear Lake area.

The age of the housing stock in Bear Lake County through the year April 2000 has 63% built since 1940 with the remaining 37% built during or before 1939. See table.

Age of Housing Stock - Year Structures Built	Units
Number Built April 1990 to April 2000	334
Number Built 1989 to March 1990	26
Number Built 1985 to 1988	91
Number Built 1980 to 1984	240
Number Built 1970 to 1979	565
Number Built 1960 to 1969	241
Number Built 1950 to 1959	340
Number Built 1940 to 1949	203
Number Built 1939 or earlier	1,228



Bear Lake - Fall time

Public Services and Facilities

A wide range of public services is available to the residents of Bear Lake County. This section includes a wide variety of topics covering the major services available to county residents.

Water Systems

The majority of communities in Bear Lake County are dependent on springs and individual wells for their water sources. Community sources are as follows:

- Bennington:** Sources are spring and flowing well 1 ½ miles east of town, a well inside town, and another well ¾ mile north of town. They have a water storage reservoir.
- Bern:** All homes served by individual wells.
- Bloomington:** Source is Fred's Spring located three miles west of town. They have a water holding tank.
- Dingle:** All homes served by individual wells.
- Fish Haven:** Water is provided by a private water users association and individual wells.
- Geneva:** Individual wells.
- Georgetown:** Source is Little Right-hand Spring, located four miles west of town. An additional well will be in operation the summer of 2001. They have a water holding tank.
- Montpelier:** Four wells within the city and a water holding tank.
- Ovid:** All homes served by individual wells.
- Paris:** Source is a spring located five miles west of town in Paris Canyon.
- Raymond:** Individual wells.
- St. Charles:** Source is St. Charles Spring located four miles west of town. They have a water holding tank and purifier system.
- Liberty:** All homes served by individual wells.
- Pegram:** All homes served by individual wells.
- Nouan:** All homes served by individual wells.

Sewer Systems

- Bennington:** Served by individual septic tanks.
- Bern:** Served by septic tanks.
- Bloomington:** Community sewerage system.
- Dingle:** Septic tanks.
- Fish Haven:** Recreational sewer system with more than 400 hook ups. They share lagoons with St. Charles City. There is land for expansion of the treatment facility. Areas outside of the sewer district are on individual systems.
- Geneva:** Septic tanks and drainage fields.
- Georgetown:** Community sewerage system.
- Montpelier:** Community sewerage system.
- Ovid:** Septic tanks and drainage fields.
- Paris:** Community sewerage system.
- Raymond:** Septic tanks and drainage fields.
- St. Charles:** Community sewerage system.
- Liberty:** Septic Tanks

Pegram: Septic Tanks
Nounan: Septic Tanks

Solid Waste Landfill

Bear Lake County operates a solid waste landfill located two miles east of Montpelier in Montpelier Canyon. The site was originally a phosphate mine owned and operated by Stauffer Chemical Company. In 1971 the property was deeded to the Idaho Fish and Game Dept. which retained ownership until May 30, 1997. During Idaho Fish and Game's ownership, the City of Montpelier opened a landfill on the site. Idaho Fish And Game later transferred ownership to Bear Lake County.

The U.S. Resource Conservation and Recovery Act and the Idaho Solid Waste Facilities Act require site certification and identification of funds for closing the landfill. The county was given until October 9, 1997 to be in full compliance with the law. On January 23, 1996, the county received contingent site certification from the Idaho Dept. of Environmental Quality. The certification was contingent upon the transfer of ownership from Idaho Fish and Game to Bear Lake County. Ownership transferred May 30, 1997 bringing the landfill into partial compliance with the law.

In planning for eventual closing of the existing site and expansion into adjacent cells the county contracted Cascade Earth Science to perform engineering and environmental studies for operation of the landfill. They determined that the existing site had a remaining life of eight years in 1995. The existing cell with projections of approximately 12 tons of solid waste per day, has an estimated life to 2003. Closing the cell in 2003 will cost \$289,189 in 1995 dollars. The county has recognized the closing liability and has identified funds to cover the closure and post closure costs. In addition to closure costs of \$289,200 the annual post closure costs of maintenance and monitoring will be an estimated \$26,485 annually for 30 years totaling \$794,550. The total liability closure and post closure for 30 years is estimated at \$1,083,750 in constant 1995 dollars.

Plans for future use are to operate the existing facility for its projected years of life remaining until at least 2003. The county would then dig a 400 x 600 foot cell as a lateral expansion at an estimated cost of \$614,819, including \$289,189 to close the existing site. This would extend the life to 22 years.

In planning for the eventual expansion and closure of existing cells in the landfill the county has raised the use fee by one dollar per month and intends to establish a separate fund to cover these costs.

The solid waste pick up service is owned and operated by the county. They also pick up solid waste within all the incorporated cities. Use fees are collected in conjunction with the property taxes. Rates in 2001 are: single family residential \$60 per year for once a week pick up. Commercial or other can have dumpster pick up at a cost of \$180 per year per dumpster for once a week pick up or twice a week pick up at \$360 per year.

Library System

The following excerpt from the “History of the Bear Lake County Library” by Pat Wilde gives us insight into the local importance of libraries.

“Library needs were felt early in the Bear Lake Valley and to a large extent they were met by one method or another. Just exactly when the first library developed is not definitely known. By 1958, the groundwork for a county wide library system was established. Clyde Whitman headed a committee to establish a library district. The commissioners were petitioned and an election was held September 1959. The election successfully passed 270-174 and a district encompassing all of Bear Lake County began. The district included the existing Montpelier City Library and the Paris City Library. In exchange, two branch libraries developed, one in Paris and one in Montpelier. All cataloguing, book ordering, and processing are done by the Montpelier Branch.

The Bear Lake County Library System today has the same two branches to serve all the residents of the county. The Montpelier Branch building is now named “Whitman Thiel” Branch. It has seen the most change over time.

The Montpelier facility has approximately 10,000 square feet and approximately 50,000 materials. It was remodeled in the summer of 1998 with the addition of a new children’s library in 2000. The library provides many services and materials to the residents of Bear Lake County including popular fiction and nonfiction collections, reference and large print materials, books on tape, inter-library loan, local newspapers on microfilm, videos, public access computers with Internet and one of the finest children’s collections in Idaho. A weekly story hour and a summer reading program are also provided.

Law Enforcement

The residents of Bear Lake County enjoy reasonable safety from crime. The local crime rate of 916 per 100,000 inhabitants was 13% of the State of Idaho crime rate in 1999. Of the 44 counties in Idaho, 40 had higher crime rates than Bear Lake. This crime rate is based on “Group A” offenses that include major crimes against persons, property and society.

The primary responsibility for law enforcement in Bear Lake County rests with the Sheriff’s Department, but it should be noted that the City of Montpelier provides police protection for their citizens and that an officer of the Idaho State Police is stationed in Bear Lake County.

Sheriff’s Department Bear Lake County Sheriff’s Office in Paris has four (4) Deputies that have their own unit. There are eleven (11) full time employees and one (1) part time employee. Five (5) employees are available for patrol. Summer is the busiest time for law enforcement as a result of the recreational opportunities around Bear Lake. A K-9 unit has just recently been added to the department to aid in drug enforcement.

Search & Rescue Bear Lake County Search and Rescue has forty (40) members. Members are all volunteers. Some of the volunteers have special training in diving, and rappelling. The unit has some equipment for searches.

Jail In a very unique situation Bear Lake County contracts with the City of Montpelier for local jail facilities. This jail is limited to 7 adult male prisoners. All other prisoners are transported out of the county and housed mainly in Bannock County jail.

Law Enforcement in Our Area Around the Lake Bear Lake County has a local law enforcement compact with Rich County, Utah, whose jurisdiction includes the other half of Bear Lake, so that in need, law enforcement assistance can be obtained from Rich County.

Bear Lake County also has an agreement with Idaho State Parks for boating and snowmobile law enforcement.

Sheriff Bunn listed additional patrol deputies as the current need.

Health Care

Bear Lake County, with great people involved in local health care, has not been a part of the trend of declining availability of health care for rural communities. Doctors in Montpelier include four (4) family doctors, one (1) internal medicine, and one (1) obstetrician. Dental procedures are provided by two full care dental offices.

Hospital Bear Lake Memorial Hospital is a county operated facility, with a board of directors appointed by the county commissioners. The hospital was recently remodeled in 1999. In addition to the local doctors, visiting specialists in ear/nose and throat, orthopedics, urology, and nephrology/arthritis see patients at the hospital monthly. Tests such as CT scans, MRI and mammograms are also available. The hospital has fifteen beds including two coronary intensive care units and a labor and delivery suite. The remodeling also added waiting room space, and an updated kitchen area. Other facilities include two emergency rooms and two operating rooms.

Transporting of patients is done by local ambulance or the hospital has a landing area for helicopters from Pocatello, Idaho Falls, or Northern Utah. Fixed wing transport would be available at the County Airport about 8 miles from the hospital.

Medical staffing at the hospital is aided by awarding monetary scholarships to people working to obtain and enhance their education in the medical fields.

Home Health Care is available from both the hospital and Southeastern Idaho District Health Dept.

Public Health Service Bear Lake County is one of the (7) counties served by Southeastern Idaho District (6) Health Dept. The department is funded by the counties, state appropriations, federal grants, contracts, and user fees. It provides health education, physical health clinics, home health care nursing, and environmental health services throughout eastern Idaho. The district is headquartered in Pocatello, but has a Montpelier office staffed by a public health nurse and an environmental health specialist and a Women's, Infant's and Children Program Counselor. The department reviews proposed subdivisions to assure that their residents have access to safe drinking water and acceptable means of disposing of sewage and solid wastes. The Department also issues permits for on-site sewage disposal facilities and monitors private drinking water supply systems.

Emergency Medical Services Bear Lake County provides emergency medical services through a system of approximately forty(40) volunteer Emergency Medical Technicians (EMT's). These EMT's serve at least twenty-four (24) hours per month in four (4) hour shifts. Their training includes basic response, defibrillation, extraction and advance capabilities (IV, intubation, and glucose monitoring).

Four (4) ambulances, some with 4 wheel drive capability and one quick response unit with heavy extrication equipment for vehicle accidents are all located in Montpelier adjacent to the hospital.

A project to build a new ambulance garage and EMT Training Facility is in the planning stages. Future needs may include an ambulance unit in the Bear Lake area.

Fire Protection

Bear Lake County is covered by two fire districts, Bailey Creek and Bear Lake. The Bailey Creek Fire District covers about 5 square miles and is split with half in Bear Lake County and half in Caribou County. It is located in the extreme northwest corner of the county. The district has a three-member board. The district contracts its fire protection service from Caribou County. The approximate response time is 15 minutes. The district plans to continue this contract arrangement as long as Caribou County is willing.

The Bear Lake County Fire District covers the remainder of the county about 1,000 square miles. Management is by three commissioners. There are no employees but the district has 100 volunteers.

There are 10 stations operated by the district at the following locations: Paris, Dingle, Ovid, Georgetown, Pegram, Geneva, Fish Haven, St. Charles, Bennington, and Nounan. In addition to these stations, one tanker truck is parked on the eastside of Bear Lake. Each of the stations house a pumper truck. Estimated response time is 15 minutes. Many areas do not have hydrants. If hydrants are available, they are used. Otherwise, the average tanker holds over 3,000 gallons of water and is the immediate source of water. Portable lagoons, quick dumps and if available, year round water sources are also put to use.

Dispatch services are through the Bear Lake County Dispatch center in Montpelier. The center radios all volunteers simultaneously. Training of volunteers is ongoing and difficult to provide because most of them are holding down full time jobs.

Improvements needed are to upgrade the fire trucks as funding becomes available. Areas of the county needing better protection are Fish Haven and the eastside of Bear Lake. Elements involved in the improvement include more volunteers, water sources, and equipment.

An overall need is additional funding.

Senior Citizen Services

A new Senior Citizens Center was constructed in Montpelier just a few years ago. It includes a kitchen, dining /multipurpose area and game room. Two vans are available for transporting seniors to the Center on Wednesday and Friday. Vans are also used to deliver meals to the homebound. A third van is owned in partnership with the Bear Lake Memorial Hospital. This van is available to the community to rent for trips within or outside of the county. The average attendance in the summer is about 80 people, the rest of the year about 30 people.

Outreach programs need additional volunteers to educate seniors on programs available to them such as delivering meals, tax form preparation, assistance programs for heat and power bills or assistance with other individual needs. A water softener is needed in the Center's kitchen.

Utilities

Electric Power Power service is provided by Pacificorp (Utah Power & Light) A line crew and other support personnel are stationed in Montpelier and Bear Lake operations personnel are stationed at the lake.

Phone Service Two companies provide phone service, which includes call waiting, caller ID, call forwarding, conference calling and Internet to the county. Most of the westside of the county including the Bear Lake area are serviced by Direct Communications, a small company headquartered in Rockland, Idaho. Direct Communications has been a very progressive company installing fiber optic cable from Rockland, Idaho to Paris, Idaho. Installation of fiber optics is also occurring in the Liberty and Sharon areas of Bear Lake County. Montpelier and the rest of the county are served by Qwest, a larger western states company. Cell phone service is provided by two companies, U.S. Cellular and Verizon Wireless. A third company is looking at servicing the area.

Natural Gas Service Intermountain Gas Company provides natural gas service to a limited area of the county around Montpelier, Bern and Georgetown. Propane gas is provided by several vendors throughout the county.

Utility Corridors A natural gas pipeline, owned and operated by Northwest Pipeline Company, runs through the county entering from Utah about six miles east of Bear Lake, then to the Pegram area and generally following the river to Dingle, then north to Montpelier and Georgetown, then following US Highway 30 to Soda Springs. There are major power transmission lines entering the county from Wyoming in the southeastern corner of Bear Lake County and cutting diagonally across the county leaving in the area of North Canyon to Franklin County. There are other lines that go across the north beach of the lake and go west over Paris Canyon. There are also lines that run from Wyoming entering the southeastern corner of the county and running north past Montpelier and Georgetown and over the Georgetown summit. There are also several communication towers and signal repeater facilities on or near Georgetown Summit. Other communication towers are in the Bern hills, near Montpelier, and in Bloomington. In general, utility corridors follow U. S. Highway 30 and the Bear River in the county.

Mass Communication Service

Bear Lake County has a local newspaper, The News-Examiner, which is published weekly. Its offices are in Montpelier and the printing is done in Preston, Idaho. The county also has a local radio station, KVSI 1450 AM. Its normal hours of operation are from 6:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. daily. The station does have backup power for broadcasting during power outages/ emergencies. Its range goes beyond Bear Lake County. There are no commercial television stations in the county. There is a station for education purposes operated by the high school students and teachers. It has a limited broadcast schedule. Commercial television service is provided by TV translator districts, cable and satellite companies. Television stations from Pocatello, Idaho Falls and Salt Lake City along with national broadcasters and public education stations can also be received.

Schools

Education is provided in Bear Lake County by Bear Lake School District #33 and has the same boundaries as the County; however, the children in the Northwestern portion of the district attend school in Caribou County. The information presented in this section does not include home schooled children.

Enrollment

In the past 15 years the average number of students in all grades attending Bear Lake District Schools has been 1,722. The lowest enrollment year was 2000 with 1574 students. The school year 2001 is projected to be about 50 students lower. The highest enrollment was 1995 with 1869 students. In general school enrollment increased during the period 1988 to 1995. The last five years to 2000 the district enrollment has decreased.

The enrollment data by grades as of April 2001 are:

Kindergarten - 5th grade	609
6th grade - 8th grade	384
9th grade - 12th grade	521
Life Skills & Preschool	44

Student profile (Ethnicity) per cent 1999-2000

Race	Male	Female	Total
White	50.98%	45.43%	96.41%
Black	0.06%	0.06%	0.12%
Hispanic	1.32%	1.26%	2.58%
Native American	0.25%	0.38%	0.63%
Asian	0.13%	0.13%	0.26%
Total	52.74%	47.26%	100%

School Sites

There are four elementary schools. They are located in Georgetown, Geneva, Montpelier, and Paris. The smallest is in Geneva that houses grades K through 3rd totaling 11 students. The largest is in Montpelier, A.J. Winters Elementary where K through 5th grades have 313 students. No building capacity was listed for elementary schools in the district, but they have in the past had as high as 990 students. Comparing that number to the April 2001 enrollment of 609 there is space in the elementary schools for additional students. However, which school they attend needs to be factored into the growth potential.

Two secondary school sites are in the district and they are both in Montpelier, the Bear Lake Middle School and the Bear Lake High School. The middle school has an estimated capacity of 400 students with April 2001 enrollment at 384. In 1991 the middle school had 454 students. The high school has a capacity of 500 students with April 2001 enrollment at 521 students. In 1996 the high school had 611 students.

The district continues to improve plant facilities with a plant facilities levy that was passed in 1999. This past summer and fall an addition to Bear Lake High School was completed. The addition gave the high school a new weight room, wrestling room, and additional dressing rooms. It also provided an area for activities and future classrooms, if it becomes necessary, and the expansion of the cafeteria and kitchen area.

The district is now building an addition to A.J. Winters Elementary School. The addition includes a full-size gym with a stage, and seating for activities in the gym or on the stage. It will be a welcome addition to the school after the many years of working in a very undersized cafeteria/activity area. There is also an addition to the media center and computer lab.

A new rubberized running track was completed at Bear Lake High School. It was funded by the school district, community fund-raisers and donations.

Staff

District personnel including full and part time employees are as follows:

Certified Staff	-	111
Classified Staff	-	<u>102</u>
Total employees	-	213

Financial Information 1999-2000

<i>Revenues:</i>	<i>M & O Fund</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>All funds</i>	<i>%</i>
Local Taxes	\$814,445	10.75%	\$1,230,579	13.93%
Other Sources	130,029	1.72%	245,752	2.78%
State	6,582,818	86.94%	6,804,973	77.04%
Federal	44,325	0.59%	552,001	6.25%
Total	\$7,571,617	100.00%	\$8,833,305	100.00%

Expenditures	Total	%
M & O Instruction	\$4,415,061	59.81%
M & O Support Programs	2,945,469	39.90%
M & O Other	21,732	0.29%
Total All Funds	\$8,840,343	100.00%

Student Transportation

The district owns and operates its own fleet of 26 buses. The transportation program has the following: (18) morning routes, (7) midday routes, and (18) afternoon routes. The total number of students who ride the buses to or from school daily is 688. The transportation program also buses students to many destinations for school activities.

Transportation

Roads

Bear Lake County's main transportation link with the rest of Idaho and the nation is by state and federal highways. U.S. 30 is a major truck route connecting I-80 at Little America in western Wyoming to I-15 at McCammon, Idaho. A corridor management plan has recently been prepared for this highway by the Idaho Transportation Department. Approximately 29% of the traffic is semi truck. A portion of this highway is a state designated scenic byway, from Montpelier to Soda Springs and has a prepared scenic byway management plan. This route also serves as the major route for the employees, living in Bear Lake County, of the phosphate mining industry in Caribou County.

U.S. 89 passes from the Utah state line at Bear Lake to Paris through Montpelier and exiting the county at Geneva near the Wyoming border. This route carries traffic associated with recreation travel of Bear Lake and the National Parks of Yellowstone and the Grand Tetons. It also connects the communities of Fish Haven, St. Charles, Bloomington, Paris, Ovid, Montpelier, and Geneva. It is also a link to Logan, Utah. The section of the highway from the Utah state line to Montpelier is a state designated scenic byway and has a byway management plan.

Idaho 36 starts at U.S. 89 in Ovid and runs westerly to the Preston area. This road connects the communities of Ovid, Liberty and Sharon. It is also used as a route to get to Logan, Utah, via Preston, Idaho. The approximate 100 miles of federal and state highways in Bear Lake County are maintained by the Idaho Transportation Department.

Public Lands Roads The US Forest Service has national forest system roads in the county and has them in various classifications according to their system. Roads in the national forest system play an important role in both the economy and the recreation opportunities of the county. There are 7 miles of paved roads, ninety-six miles of road useable by passenger car, and 224 miles of roads accessible with high ground clearance vehicles. The BLM does not have any roads in the county that they maintain. Any roads that cross BLM lands that are maintained are either done by the county or the user.

County Road System Bear Lake County has 381.6 miles of road on the road system. Figure 1 shows the roads. The road system includes 1.8 miles of primitive road, 63.3 miles of unimproved road, 2.8 miles of graded and drained earth roads, 231.7 miles of graded and drained gravel road and 82.1 miles of paved roads. The county road shop is about one and a half miles north of Montpelier on U.S. Hwy. 30.

Projects in progress for the county include replacement of bridges over Bear River west of Georgetown and over Bear Lake Outlet Canal east of Paris and pavement rehabilitation on North Beach Road.

During the last three months of 2000 and first three months of 2001 public input meetings were held and the public identified issues for all roads. The following is a summary of the major ones:

- Stop light at 4th street and Washington in Montpelier
- Keeping and marking public access roads to public lands especially from U.S. 89
- safety issue on U.S. 89 at Ovid corner
- Control access to roads
- Pave the road to the Airport

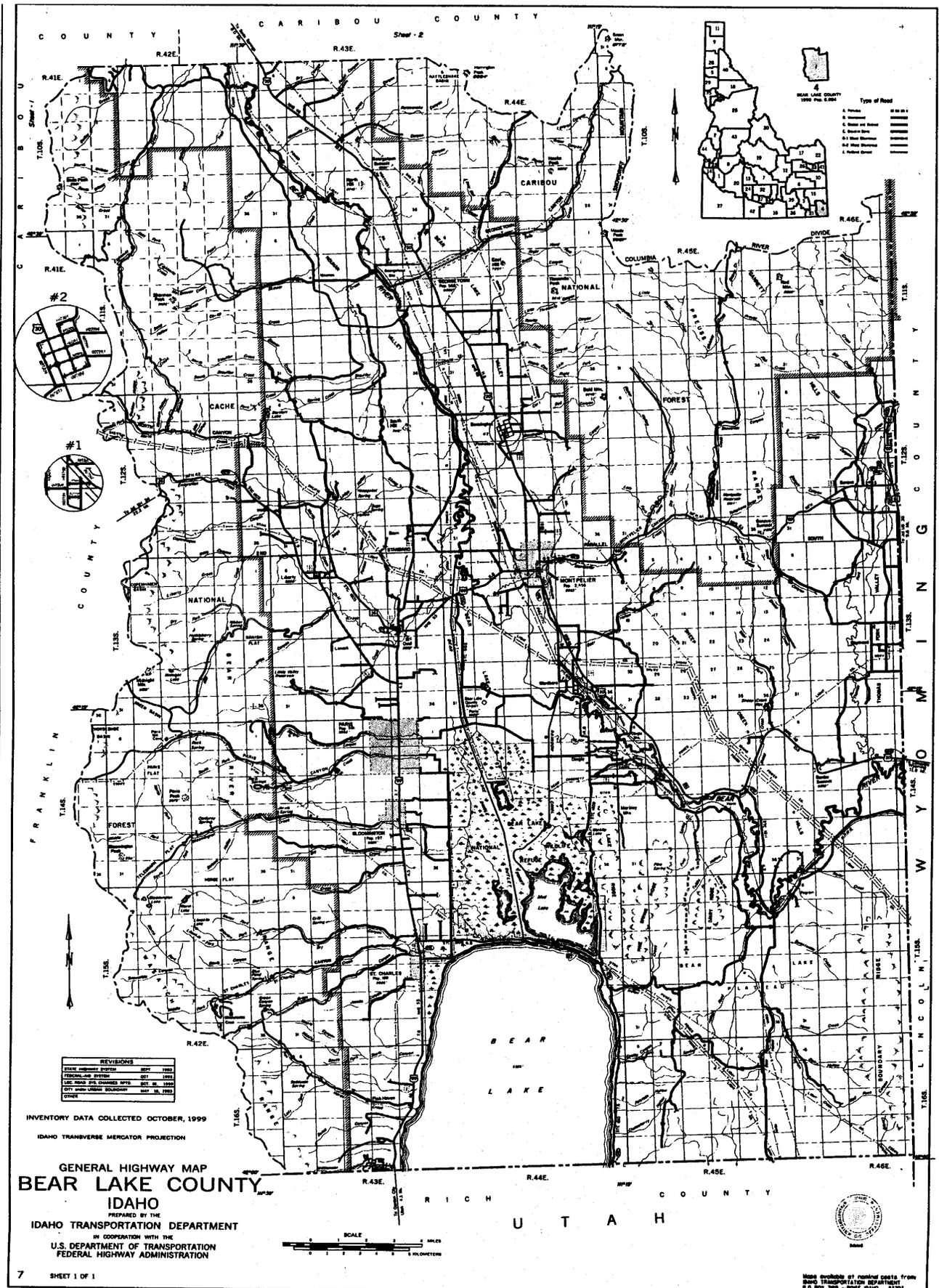


Figure 1 General Highway Map - Bear Lake County

- Pave the road from Dingle to Bear Lake
- Bicycle path around Bear Lake
- Resurface Pegram Road
- County snow removal service policies need to be reviewed
- U.S. 30 bypass of Georgetown
- Vertical road alignment on Hwy. 36
- Secure additional Right of Way on Fish Haven Canyon Road

The county is embarking on an overall study of the road system to identify needs, priorities, and road standards. When this is done, it should be incorporated into this comprehensive plan at the appropriate level.

Air Transportation

Bear Lake County Airport is located about 4 miles in an easterly direction from Paris. Access to the facility is over gravel roads. The county-owned airport currently has no commercial air service, but does receive good use from general aviation with 400-450 aircraft per year. There are 5 single-engine aircraft based at the airport. There are 16 tie down spaces and 100 low lead fuel is available. The airport is lighted and small jet aircraft land on numerous occasions.

The main runway 10/28 is asphalt surface 5,730' long and 75' wide. The secondary runway is 16/34 is 4,590' long and 60' wide. It is not lighted.

The future needs include seal-coat and marking of runway 16/34. Long term needs include an overlay on runway 10/28.

Recreation

Bear Lake County abounds in outdoor recreation opportunities, which is a factor in the quality of life available to residents. It is also a key factor in the local tourism industry. This section will present information on outdoor recreation facilities currently available in the unincorporated area of the county and those facilities owned or under the direction of the county for their operation.

Bear Lake County

The county fair and rodeo grounds are used by many not only for the county fair & rodeo but by rodeo clubs, roping groups and others. One of the buildings on the grounds is available for meetings, dinners, parties etc. This does see a good amount of use.

The fair grounds are under the direction of the Bear Lake County Fair Board. They oversee improvements and the day to day operation. The fair grounds are located adjacent to the north boundary of Montpelier.

Allinger Park

This park was built on a mined- out gravel pit, and initially started with the school district, but over time has come under the county's operations.

The facility includes the following:

- Restroom
- Playground
- Large picnic shelter and bbq area
- Multipurpose play field
- A four-plex baseball field (baseball, softball)
- Three of the baseball diamonds have lights
- Concessions stand
- Beginnings of skateboard/rollerblade area

This park receives a lot of use by the residents of the county. It is located just south of and adjacent to the fair & rodeo grounds. It is also adjacent to the high school track and football field and the Montpelier City Golf Course.

Winter Recreation Trails

Bear Lake County includes several winter recreation trails that are maintained through a partnership with other public entities. The snowmobile trails are groomed through funds generated by sales of snowmobile registrations. Montpelier and Soda Springs Ranger Districts of the Forest Service and the Bear Lake State Park participate in the management and signing of snowmobile trails. The Bureau of Land Management is beginning to be involved in the project. There are about 500 miles groomed in this three-county area of Bear Lake, Caribou and Franklin Counties.

National Forest Recreation

There are approximately 230,000 acres of National Forest lands in Bear Lake County. The Montpelier Ranger District of the Caribou-Targhee National Forest operates directly or contracts private concessionaires to operate the outdoor recreation facilities listed in the table below.

Recreation Site Information

Name	Season of Use	Number of Units	Group Units
Summit View Campground	June - September	23	2
Cold Springs Campground	June - October	3	
Eightmile Campground	June - September	7	
Emigration Campground	July - September	28	2
Elbow	May - October		
Montpelier Canyon Campground	May - October	13	
Montpelier Canyon Picnic area	May - October	4	1
Paris Spring Campground	June - September	13	3
Saint Charles Campground	June - September	6	
Davis Canyon	June - October		
Porcupine Campground	June - September	12	
Cloverleaf Campground	June - September	20	
Big Creek	June - October		
Beaver Campground	July - September	5	

There are 18 trail heads throughout the county on the national forest lands. There are also many points of interest within the national forest such as Meade Peak, Montpelier Reservoir, Paris Ice Caves, Bloomington Lake, Shoshone Indian Trail, and Crow Creek Road.

Minnetonka Cave, one of the premier attractions on the forest, has an average visitation of 23,000 visitors per year. The Cave is approximately ½ mile long in a limestone formation. It is currently operated by a concessionaire. Access to the cave is by way of a paved road up St. Charles Canyon on the west side of the county

Idaho State Parks

Idaho operates Bear Lake State Park, which includes two units. North Beach, which is leased land, is a day use area only with picnic facilities, boat ramps and restrooms. This beach is 2 miles long. East Beach, owned by the state, is 1 ½ miles long. It includes a campground, dump station, boat ramp, three group picnic shelters, beach volleyball area and restrooms. This park has from 50,000 to 80,000 visitors per year. The office location is in Montpelier.

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Bear Lake National Wildlife Refuge encompasses what is locally referred to as Dingle Marsh. The 18,000 acre refuge and surrounding area have always provided excellent goose nesting habitats. Management originally emphasized Canada geese. Today, priorities have shifted to four other species: Redhead and Canvasback duck, Trumpeter swans and White-faced ibis. The refuge harbors one of the largest nesting colonies of White-faced ibis in the United States. The refuge is day use only and welcomes visitors the year-round. Activities include wildlife observation and photography, hiking, cross-country skiing and snowshoeing, boating, hunting and driving the observation route.

Oregon Trail - Bear Lake Scenic Byway

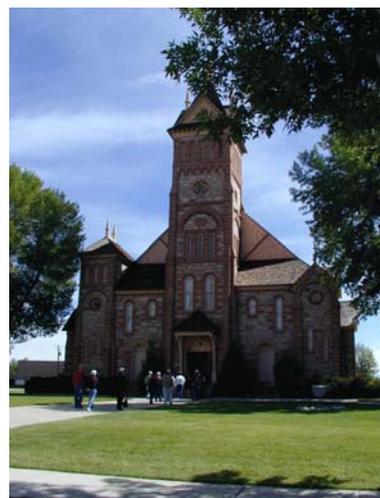
Beginning at the Idaho/Utah state line, the byway travels nearly 54 miles to Soda Springs. U.S. Highway 89 passes 10 miles along the west side of pristine Bear Lake, continuing north through Bear Lake Valley, and connecting Fish Haven, St. Charles, Paris, Ovid, and Montpelier. At Montpelier the byway turns northward to U.S. 30 and encounters the towns of Georgetown, and Soda Springs. Besides the unforgettable Bear Lake, the bucolic byway drive offers outstanding views of Caribou/Targhee National Forest and Cache National Forest, Bear River, Georgetown Canyon and vistas of early immigrant trails. Hiking, biking, birding, cross-country skiing, snowmobiling, fishing, hunting, golfing, picnicking, and camping opportunities are plentiful.

Equally alluring along the byway are the many historic sites that highlight the region's role in the Oregon Trail migration and early Mormon settlement. The National Oregon/California Trail Center, Big Hill, Sulphur Springs and the century-old Paris Latter-day Saints (LDS) Tabernacle provide unhurried, peaceful opportunities to relive the remarkable accomplishments of early western U.S. settlement.

Although the byway's primary theme is "scenic," the Oregon Trail-Bear Lake Scenic Byway has equally important secondary themes. Historic and recreational attractions abound in the area as well.

Twelve key sites have been identified along the byway and they are:

1. Bear Lake Overlook
2. Gutzon Borglum Monument
3. Bear Lake State Park
4. Minnetonka Cave
5. Bear Lake National Wildlife Refuge
6. Paris Tabernacle and Historic District
7. The National Oregon-California Trail Center
and Montpelier Historic District
8. Big Hill Oregon Trail Site
9. Georgetown Relief Society Hall
10. Bear River Overlook (Caribou County)
11. Sulphur Springs (Caribou County)
12. Soda Springs (Caribou County)



Natural Resource and Hazardous Areas Inventory

This section includes information on natural resources, hazardous areas, and special areas or sites.

Geology

The geology map (Figure 2) was taken from a thesis prepared by George C. Robinson VI entitled "Surficial Deposits and Geologic History Northern Bear Lake Valley, Idaho," The major structural elements of the region are Paleozoic and Mesozoic rock formations of the Bear River Range that were thrust faulted and strongly folded, and similar bedrock units in Bear Lake Plateau and Pruess Range that were thrust faulted, tightly folded and overturned.

The area also has faulted and slightly folded alluvial and lacustrine sediments of tertiary age and also underlain by faulted alluvial and Lacustrine Quaternary sediments. Table 1 lists the geologic time scale to add in reading the geology narrative.

The Paleozoic rocks are mainly limestone and dolomite, and are probably the most reliable aquifers in the area.

The Wasatch and Salt Lake groups are both largely conglomerate, with some clay beds, but the Wasatch has more limestone. Both formations are aquifers, but are conglomerates and are not regarded as having good potential for groundwater development.

Both consolidated and unconsolidated materials are subject to failure and slippage on slopes. When man disturbs natural hillside slopes, he promotes instability. The Tertiary Wasatch Formation and Brigham Quartzite seem to be most susceptible to mass movement.

The Bear Lake Valley appears not to be a typical basin and range structure with a major fault along one side, but a graben bounded on both sides by active faults. Both faults shown are presumed to be active by the Berry and Popelak study. North of Bear Lake an active fault is indicated by a sharp 15 foot high scarps just east of Bloomington and Paris. The Bear Lake fault on the east side of the lake is a major feature running north a considerable distance and large amount of offset along part of its length. The Bear Lake Fault is not a single plane, but a zone in which movement takes place in many planes. The whole eastern shoreline west of the road should be regarded as lying within its zone of movement. Many hazards can arise from movements along active faults in the county. Care should be taken in developing on or near these faults. The general location is shown on the map. Earthquakes, of course, affect a more generalized area.

The information presented in this section is prepared from existing data obtained in many sources for other purposes. In view of the above comments the information presented here must be regarded as tentative.

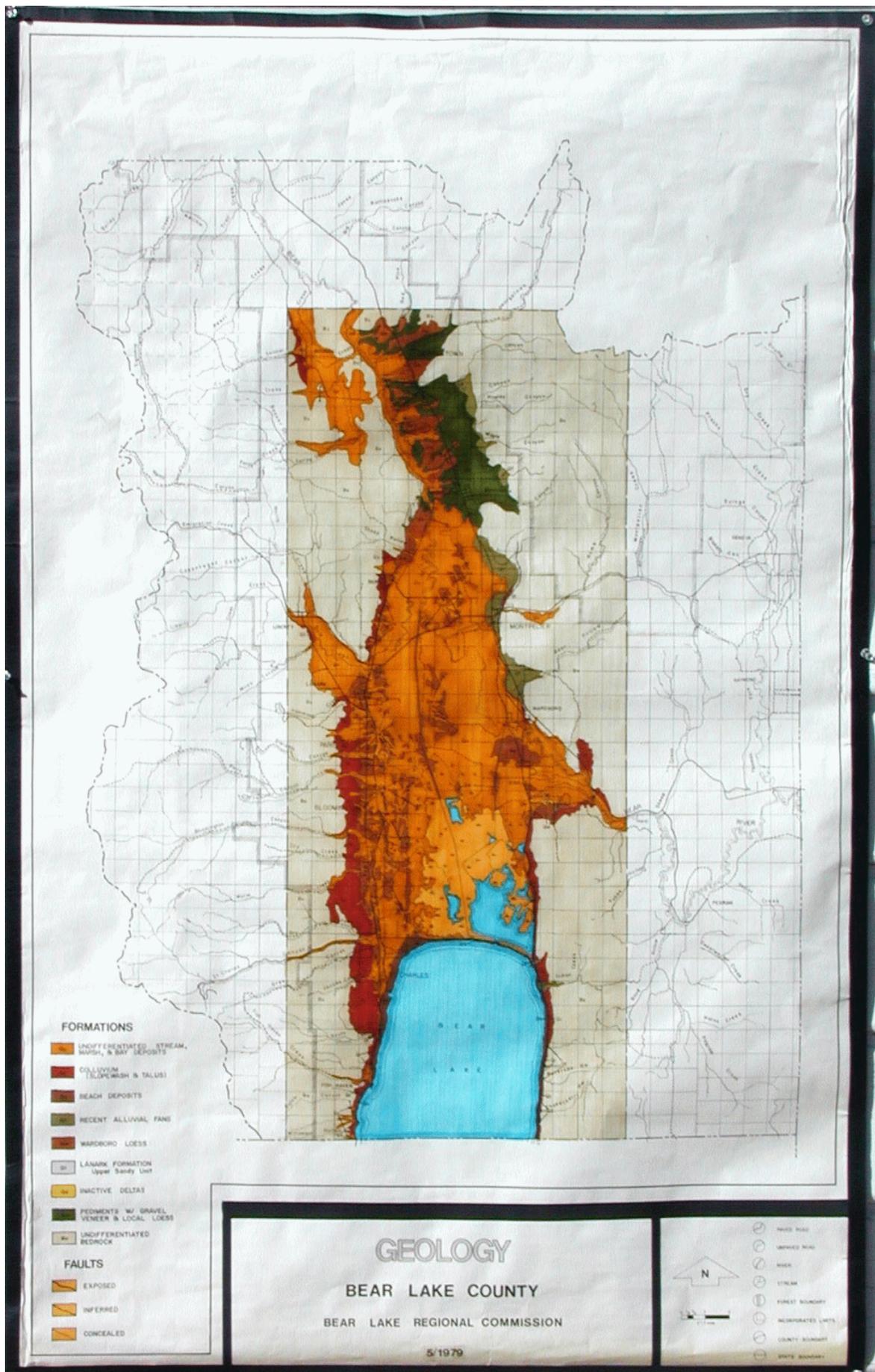


Figure 2 Geology

**TABLE #1
GEOLOGIC TIME SCALE**

ERA	PERIOD	YEARS BEFORE THE PRESENT
Cenozoic	Quaternary	11,000 - 2,000,000
	Tertiary	63,000,000
Mesozoic	Cretaceous	135,000,000
	Jurassic	180,000,000
	Triassic	230,000,000
Paleozoic	Permian	280,000,000
	Pennsylvanian	310,000,000
	Mississippian	345,000,000
	Devonian	405,000,000
	Silurian	425,000,000
	Ordovician	500,000,000
	Cambrian	600,000,000
	Precambrian	

Hydrology

The hydrology data presented consists of flood plain, precipitation, water source and wetlands (Figure 3).

Quantity, timing, and type of precipitation vary over the county. Mean annual precipitation ranges from less than 10 inches (in portions of the Bear Lake Valley) to more than 40 inches on some of the higher mountains of the Bear River Range. Increased precipitation at higher elevations is considerably greater in winter than summer. Less than half of the precipitation falls from April through September. Much of the precipitation from October to March falls as snow. Snow has been observed in higher areas as deep as seven feet. These snow accumulations will last until the middle of June. On lower areas snow usually starts in December and is gone by April.

Groundwater is contained in alluvium of Quaternary age, the Wasatch formation, bedrock and Salt Lake formation.

Wells in the Thomas Fork and Bear Lake areas are in alluvium which is 200-300 feet deep. Depth to water in the lower lands is about 20 feet except in the Bear Lake Valley where water levels are about 5 feet below the surface.

Development has been minimal in the Salt Lake formation. The Wasatch formation has not produced any successful wells although numerous springs occur along the margins of the formation.

Surface streams, direct precipitation, irrigation, and canal leakage recharges the alluvial aquifer in Bear Lake County.

The Bear River, Bear Lake and Mud Lake make up the major surface water elements with major tributaries to Bear River of Thomas Fork, Montpelier Creek, Eightmile Creek, Georgetown Creek and Liberty Creek. The major tributaries to Bear Lake in Idaho are Fish Haven Creek, a portion of St. Charles Creek and Indian Creek. Mud Lake has as tributaries St. Charles, Bloomington Creek and Paris Creek. A man-made canal system connects Bear Lake and Mud Lake with the Bear River and is operated by Utah Power and Light for hydro power and irrigation.

Wetlands are a major feature of the valley floor and especially along the Bear River. These areas support a high diversity of wildlife species. The largest wetland feature is the Dingle Marsh located just north of Bear Lake. Practically all runoff is associated with snow melt, and some high water usually results, but flooding is seldom serious. The flood plains presented on the hydrology maps have two sources. First, the flood plain associated with Bear River was defined by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers based on a ten-year frequency storm the May-June 1971 flood. Second, the flood plain around Bear Lake and Dingle Swamp is the 100-year flood plain and was prepared by U.S. Geological Survey.

Municipal water sources were located by observation or correspondence from local officials. The Idaho Department of Water Resources' Bear River Groundwater Management Area, recently formed, controls the future groundwater development of culinary and irrigation water in the County.



Figure 3 Hydrology

Slopes

One of the first items looked at when trying to determine what can and cannot be done with a particular piece of land is its slope. The steepness of a slope to a large extent controls the possible uses to which the land can be utilized.

The slope is measured in percent and defined as the rise in elevation divided by horizontal distance.

$$\% \text{ of Slope} = (\text{Rise} / \text{Run}) \times 100$$

For example, if there is a 10-foot rise vertically for a 10 foot run horizontally, the slope is 100% - $\frac{10}{10} = 1 = 100\%$ and forms a 45° angle with the horizontal.

The magnitude of all slopes in the study was determined (in 10%) directly from topographic maps as they were assembled and reduced to 1":1 mile scale. The slope is inversely proportional to the distance between contour lines with a given contour interval. Measurement is made at right angles to the run of the contours. These slope determinations were made with a template made specially for this project.

In land classification, line-drawing is a difficult process. Since it must be done, however, natural, logical divisions were sought, but few guidelines were available. (See Figure 4)

A slope of 30% was selected as the upper limit for unrestricted development because it is approximately equal to the average "angle of repose." Development on slopes of 21% to 30% can be feasible, but special techniques must be used to compensate for the hazards and problems associated with steep slopes. The next category is 11% to 20%; development here can occur without too many problems but caution is still needed especially when it concerns road layout construction. The last category is 0% to 10%. This is the range considered as most suitable for extensive development.

Soils of Bear Lake County

The initial soil survey was done in the 1940*s by the U.S. Soil Conservation Service. In meeting with soil scientists of the service, we were advised that this survey would probably not provide us with any consistency in the type and level of information we were seeking. They subsequently referred us to the Idaho Water Resource Board*s "Special Soil Survey-Bear Lake County, October 1968 Report #13" prepared by J.C. Chugg, W.G. Perrin and M.A. Fosberg. The Soil Conservation Service also helped in preparing a rating system so that the materials in report #13 could be evaluated according to development.

The data and map presented here were prepared for temporary use until the new soils survey which is underway is completed.

The general soils map (Figure 5) presents 29 mapping units which were combined from 85 mapping units presented in the original report.

The mixed alluvium on alluvial fans, stream terraces, pediments and glacial till are associated with the Wasatch formation consisting largely of a conglomerate of Eocene age, alluvial deposits of Recent age, Salt Lake formation and associated strata of Pliocene and Pleistocene ages. The general land forms are nearly level to sloping. Elevations range from 5,900 to 6,600 feet. These areas are represented by soil mapping units of A, B, N and U.

The mixed alluvium on alluvial fans, pediments and loess-covered limestone hills is associated with the alluvial deposits of Recent age and Jurassic and Triassic sedimentary rocks of their



Figure 4 Slope

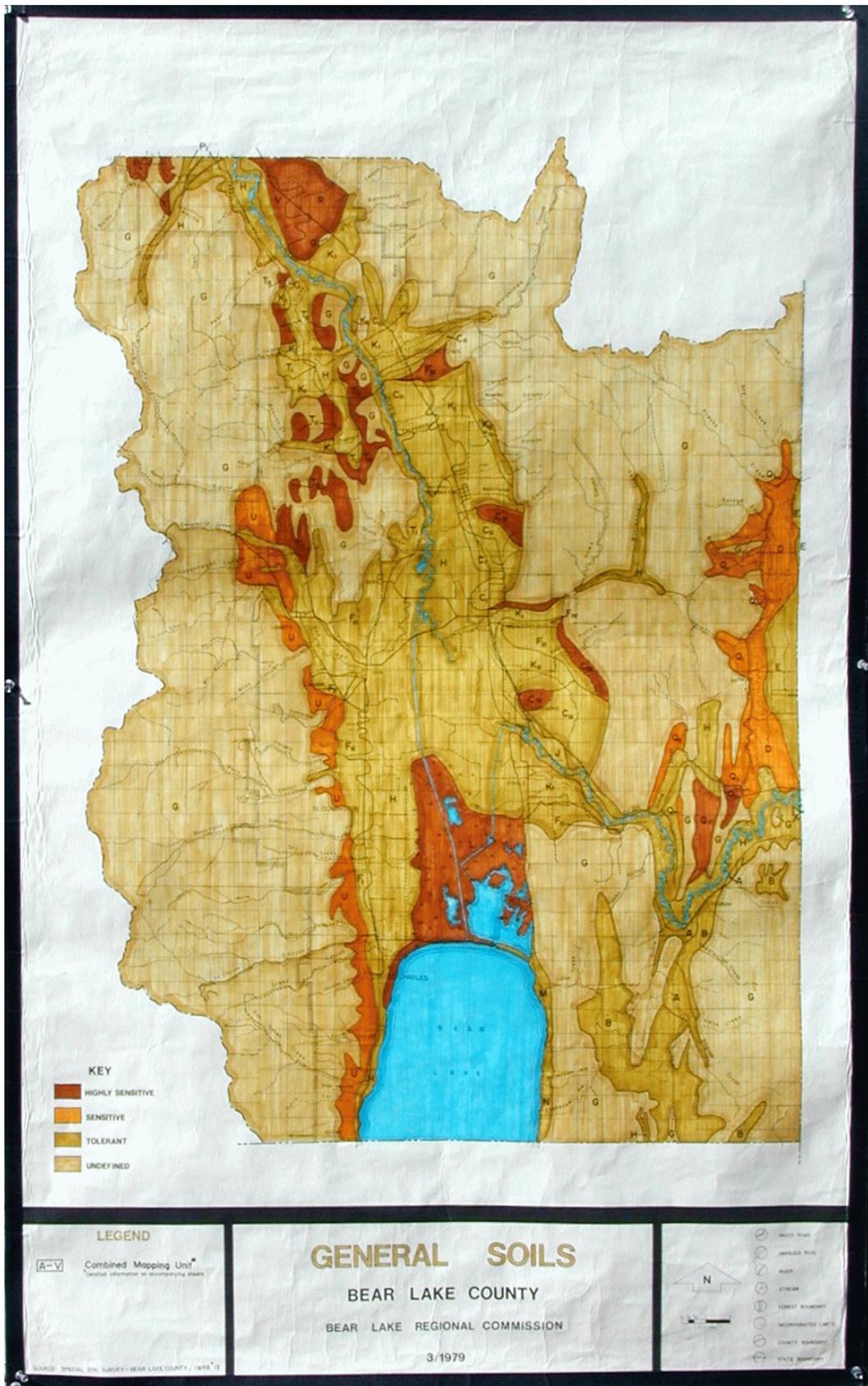


Figure 5 Soils

respective ages. The sedimentary rocks have a thin to thick cover of beds. The general land form is gently sloping to sloping. Elevations range from 5,900 to 6,200 feet. This area is represented by soil mapping unit M.

The mixed sedimentary rocks in the hills and mountains are associated with Cambrian, Ordovician and Carboniferous sedimentary rocks with inclusions of other undifferentiated Paleozoic rocks and minor inclusions of recent alluvial deposits and late lake sediments. Other rocks widely represented are Jurassic, Triassic and Cretaceous sedimentary rocks. A large area of the Wasatch formation is located in the southeastern part of the county. These formations are generally represented largely by limestone and sandstone with schistose, quartzite, shale, argillaceous and associated volcanics. The general land forms are mostly steep to very steep. Elevations range from about 6,000 to 9,500 feet. These areas are represented by soil mapping unit G.

The lacustrine sediments of lake bottoms are associated with Recent age sediments at the north end of Bear Lake. The area is locally known as Dingle Swamp. High organic matter, soils, and high water tables prevail. The general land form is relatively flat. Elevation is about 5,950 feet. This area is represented by soil mapping unit L.

The loess-covered alluvial fans, lava plains and mixed alluvium on alluvial fans are associated largely with Pleistocene and Recent age alluvial deposits along the east side of the Bear River Valley. A small area of basalt associated with the Salt Lake formation is located in the north end of the valley. A thin to a thick loess mantle occurs over part of the areas. The general land forms are nearly level to very steep. Elevations range from 5,800 to 6,300 feet. These areas are represented by soil mapping units C and R. The loess-covered lake terraces are associated with the Salt Lake formation and associated strata of Pliocene and Pleistocene age. A relatively thick loess mantle occurs on this land form. The general land forms are nearly level to very steep. Elevations range from 6,000 to 6,500 feet. These areas are represented by soil mapping unit F.

The loess-covered alluvial fans are associated with alluvial deposits of Recent age along the western side of the Bear River Valley. A thin to relatively thick loess mantle covers the sediments. The general land forms are gently sloping to steep. Elevations range from 5,700 to 6,600 feet. These areas are represented by soil mapping units P and T.

The loess-covered limestone hills, basalt hills and alluvial fans are associated with Paleozoic sedimentary rocks, Salt Lake formation and related strata and Recent alluvial deposits. A thin to relatively thick loess mantle covers most of the area. The elevations range from 5,900 to 6,600 feet. The general land forms are gently sloping to steep. The areas are represented by soil mapping units Q and V. (Table 2)

**TABLE #2
SOIL MAPPING UNITS
GROUPING**

COMBINED UNIT MAP	Original Mapping Units in IWRB Report #13
A	A1, A2, A3
B	B1, B2, B3, B4
CI	C7, C8
CII	C1, C2, C3, C6, C11
CIII	C4, C5, C9
CIV	C10
D	D
E	E
FI	F4
FII	F1, F2, F3, F5, F8, F9
FIII	F6
FIV	F7
G	G
H	H1, H2, H3
J	J
KI	K1, K3, K4, K5, K6, K7, K8, K10, K12
KII	K2, K9, K11
M	M
N	N
PI	P3, P4
PII	P1, P2, P5
QI	Q1, Q2, Q3, Q4, Q5, Q6, Q7, Q8
QII	Q9, Q10
R	R
TI	T4, T6, T9
TII	T1, T2, T3, T4, T5, T7, T8, T10, T11, T12
U	U1, U2, U3, U4, U5, U6, U7

The soil mapping units were then evaluated and rated in the following areas: an erosion hazard, shrink and swell potential, permeability, depth to bedrock, depth to watertable and limitation for the following: dwellings, roads and septic tank absorption field. Each of the soil types in the mapping units was evaluated through a complicated formula. A copy of the formula used, results developed and access to the Special Soils Survey IWRB Report #13 is available at the Bear Lake Regional Commission.

The general soils map also shows overall sensitivity rating See Table 3.

In using the general soils map and related information, it is important to recognize its advantages and limitations. First, it is necessary to keep in mind that the general soils map is as the name implies, general. It provides the user with a general overall view of soils on a large scale and as such should be used as a general guide to soils and soil characteristics which exist in a large area. The general soils map should not be used to determine soil suitability for a specific activity for a particular site. For help In making the best decision concerning specific sites and activities, site specific data should be obtained through detailed surveys from the Natural Resource and Conservation Service or on-site analysis.

Soils data should be used for many land use planning and development activities including subdivision design, road design and layout, utility plans and on-site sewage disposal sites. As the new soils survey is completed it should be incorporated into the planning process. As presented here the soils data will be used as general indicators of capabilities.

Due to the general level of the soils information, it was determined to show both highly sensitive and sensitive classified soil groups as sensitive on the land capabilities maps.

**TABLE #3
OVERALL SOIL SENSITIVITY RATING**

MAPPING UNIT	RATING
A	T
B	T
CI	T
CII	T
CIII	HS
CIV	HS
D	D
E	T
FI	T
FII	T
FIII	HS
FIV	HS
H	T
J	T

MAPPING UNIT	RATING
KI	T
KII	T
L	HS
M	T
N	T
PI	T
PII	HS
Q1	S
Q11	HS
R	T
TI	T
TII	HS
U	S
V	HS

Note: Key

T = Tolerant

S = Sensitivity*

HS = Highly Sensitive*

* Show as Sensitive on land capabilities map

Wildlife

Bear Lake County provides habitats for numerous wildlife species. A set of three maps has been prepared to display data relating to the major wildlife species present in the county. Wildlife population now found in Bear Lake County is the result of natural habitat, human activities and habitat manipulation of land use practices. The future of these wildlife populations can be assured only through the application of sound management programs and the preservation of their habitat.

The wildlife map 1 (Figure 6) presents the big game information. Bear Lake County contains portions of Idaho State Fish and Game Management Units 75 and 76 and all of unit 78. Important big game species are deer, elk, and moose. Bear and cougar are present in limited numbers.

The major limiting factor for big game populations is the amount of winter range according to Fish and Game authorities. Winter range is a function of elevation, snow depth, vegetation and animal behavior, especially deer and elk, who have traditional wintering areas. Because of its high elevation and topography Bear Lake County has a limited amount of winter range. The winter ranges are used for about four months on an average, starting in mid-December to mid-April.

Alteration of/or encroachment on these winter ranges by human activities (such as snow machines and dogs) will eventually cause a reduction in the total big game populations of the county. Toward the end of the winter when snow depths are at their maximum, and the big game is in their poorest physical condition, their movement is confined. Therefore harassment at this stage would have a major effect on the survival rates.

The migration routes depicted on the map show the documented movement of the big game, especially deer and elk, by the Idaho Department of Fish and Game. The movement generally starts in November, depending on snow depths, and ends by mid-December. Besides the movement south along the west side of the lake, there is also movement to lower elevations.

The Wildlife 2 map (Figure 7) presents information on some of the upland game birds of the county, mainly sage grouse, and sharp-tailed grouse. Sage grouse can be found in isolated pockets scattered throughout the county. The relic populations were at one time large populations but through loss of habitat have now been reduced.

The sage grouse is not a very adaptive bird to human activities, especially when it relates to winter range, nesting, strutting areas, and summer habitat. If any of these areas are changed or impacted by human activity a loss in sage grouse is inevitable. The map shows first the general habitat of the sage grouse. Because of the scattered nature of the pockets of sage grouse, a general level habitat was mapped. Therefore on-site investigations are needed to see if there are any relic populations on a specific site. The sage grouse is tied to the sagebrush as its main food source. Therefore, even their summer range is in sagebrush, but it does not have to be as dense a sagebrush cover as winter range.

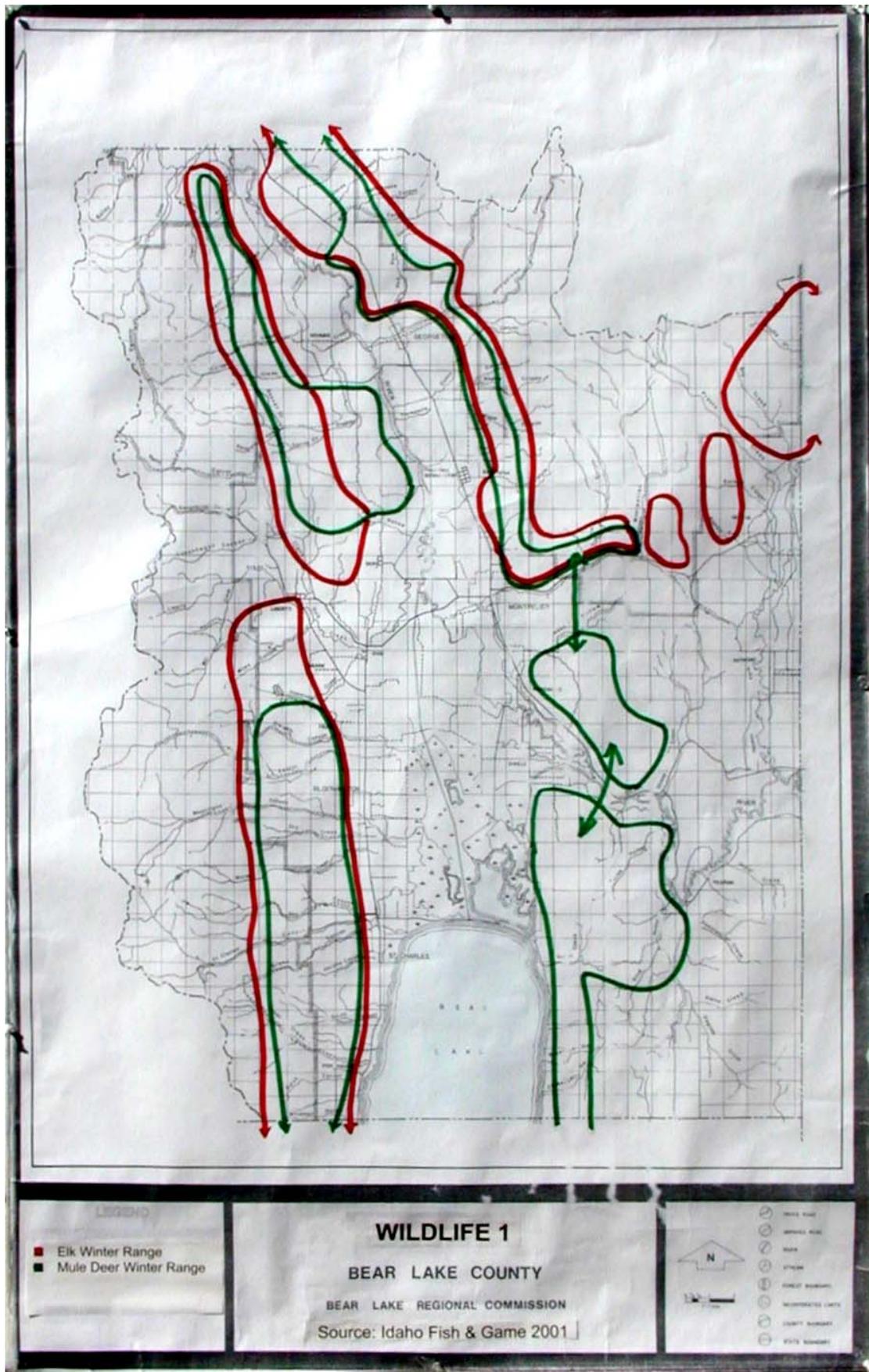


Figure 6 Wildlife 1

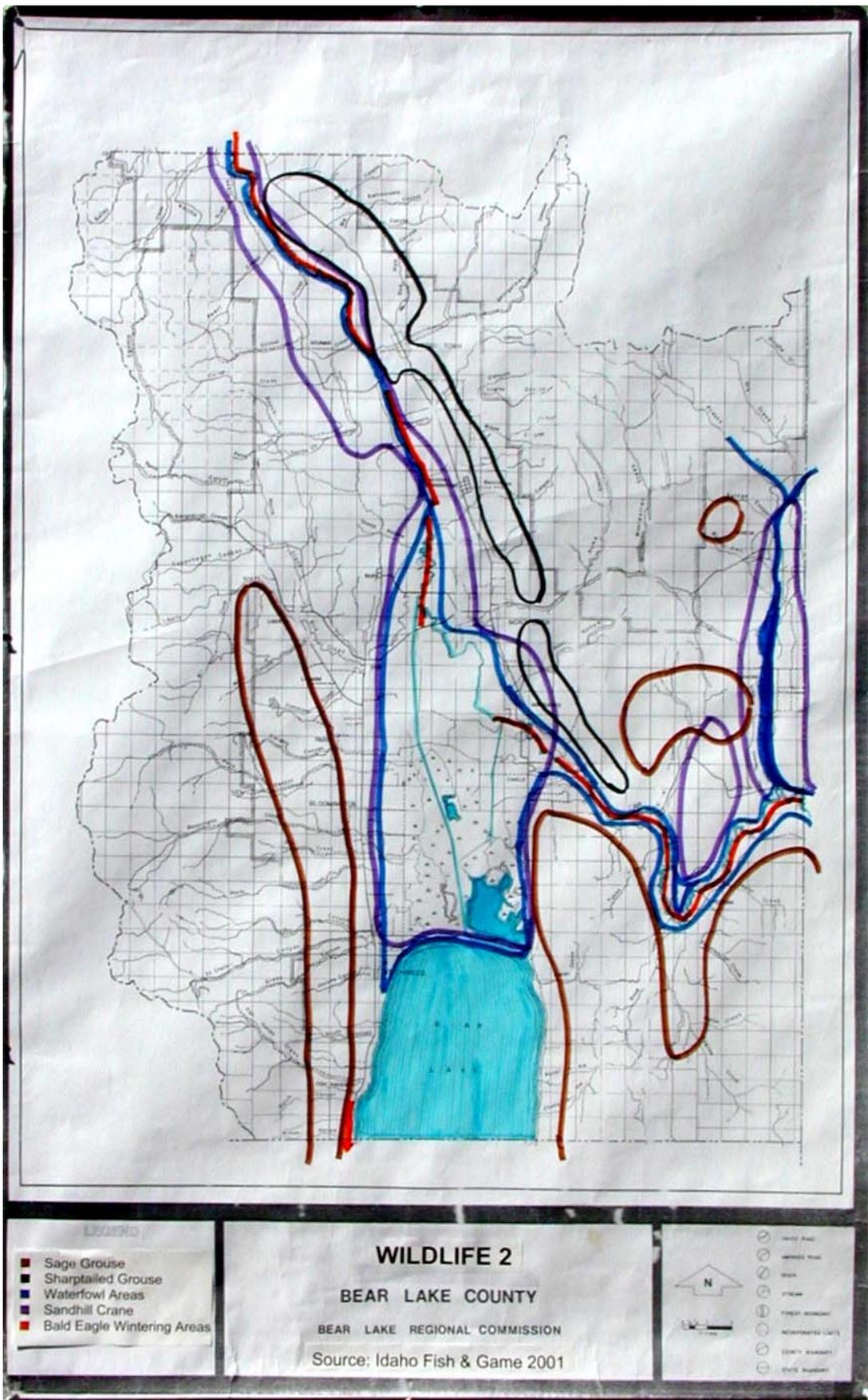


Figure 7 Wildlife 2

Waterfowl

Southeastern Idaho has historically been noted for its high waterfowl densities. The most notable waterfowl producing area in the county is the Dingle Marsh.(Figure 8) In 1968, a major portion of marsh was set aside as the Bear Lake National Wildlife Refuge. Twenty species of waterfowl are known to occur on the refuge as nesters or migratory species. In addition, 34 species of water-birds and shore birds are also dependent on the marsh and open waters of the refuge and adjacent Bear Lake. All of these are sensitive to human activities, especially their nesting areas. The Bear River also provides habitat for waterfowl but at a lower level because of water availability and fluctuations, available cover for nesting, brooding and adequate food supply. Raptors are also found in portions of this area, it being their hunting territory. The Ferrugin Hawk and Bald Eagle and other hawk species nest in the rocks and hills along the east side of Bear Lake.

This general area is also historical and an area of occurrence for Sandhill Crane.

Stream Classification

The stream classification developed by the Idaho Department of Fish and Game and prepared in 1968 is also present on figure 8 but only class 1 and 2 streams.

The stream classification was designed to establish general fishery values for stream sections within the State of Idaho. Its intended use is to be a guideline for department personnel and other interested agencies associated with water resource management. It should not be considered a 'fishing map' highlighting best fishing areas since a fisherman's success in a class 4 stream could be as good as or better than a class 1 stream.

An undesirable aspect of classifying relative stream values is the danger of de-emphasizing the importance of small localized stream fisheries. A basic philosophy of the Idaho Fish and Game Department is that ALL streams are important in view of the continual loss and deterioration of stream habitat, and every effort will be made to protect, perpetuate, and enhance these fisheries.

Four classes of streams (1-4) were develop based on rating factors for aesthetics, availability, use, productivity and size. Special consideration was given to unique or endangered species, anadromous fish's vital spawning areas, stream potentials, and enhancement possibilities.

Bear Lake

Bear Lake is a very important resource to the quality of life enjoyed in the county. It has a multiple use background and base including agriculture, recreation, fish & wildlife, power generation and flood control. These uses bring about water level changes.

The lake is known for its unique color and water quality. Developments in the lake watershed should address impacts to the lake's water quality.

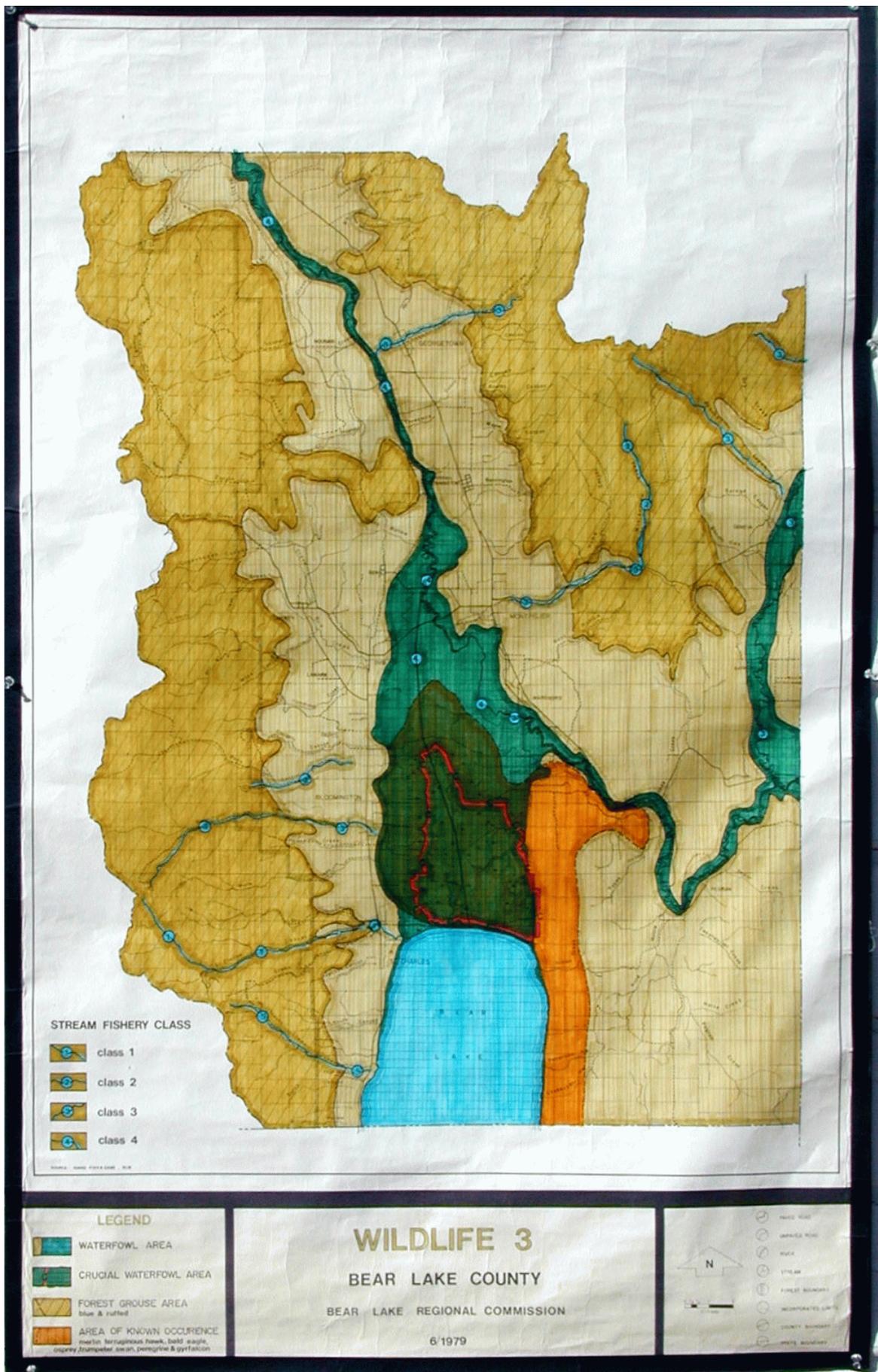


Figure 8 Wildlife 3

Historic and Scenic Areas

The historic sites of Bear Lake County were mapped for the purpose of identifying them so that when land use changed on or near the sites, appropriate action might be taken to maintain the historic value and integrity of the site (Figure 9). The following is a list of historic sites on the National Register of Historic Places and was obtained from the State of Idaho's Historical Society. They are in most cases within city limits:

- Ream, William and Nora, House
Dingle Road S. of Ream Crockett Canal - Dingle, ID
- Scofield, Anna Nielsen, House
2788 U.S. Highway 89 - Fish Haven, ID

A complete historic survey of Bear Lake County has yet to be done. Therefore, there are additional sites yet to be identified, located and nominated to the register. Likely to be included among future nominations are portions of the Oregon Trail.

The Oregon Trail Route The Oregon Trail Route enters Idaho in the scenic, pastoral Thomas Fork Valley. When the emigrants reached this point, they had traveled 1,100 miles from Missouri across the present states of Kansas, Nebraska, and Wyoming. They were slightly more than half-way in their six month journey to the Willamette Valley in Oregon.

The primary Oregon Trail route is defined as that route which is thought by qualified historians to have received the most use as a wagon road by Willamette Valley bound emigrants during the period 1841 to 1848, inclusive. There are two areas where the primary route consists of two major alternate routes for reasons of nearly equal use or historic significance. The route is essentially a corridor. In many sections, visible evidence has been lost and the exact trail location is not known. Some segments of the route contain two or more sets of parallel wagon ruts.

Wagon ruts left by the emigrants' wagons are still visible across many miles of southern Idaho's unplowed rangeland. For the most part, the route remains undeveloped as a public recreation source. Some historic sites have received interpretive development while many have not. The trail roughly follows the route of U.S.30 from Montpelier to Soda Springs. East of Soda Springs, the trail swings northwest to the Chesterfield Reservoir and then continues on across the Fort Hall Indian Reservation.

Historical Background Few emigrant wagon roads can compare with the Oregon Trail. In length and in heavy use, this overland route across the United States far surpassed any other such road in the nation. In addition to Oregon bound immigrants, the first half or more of the Oregon Trail was also used by travelers to California over the California Trail. The tracks the immigrants left on the land can still be seen in many places, and the impact of their movement can still be felt in the development of the West. As part of a great national epic of western expansion the story of the Oregon Trail has gained a well-deserved prominence in a diverse national heritage.

Before the discovery of gold in California in 1849, most of the Oregon Trail migrants were farmers hoping to stake a claim in the fertile valleys of Oregon.

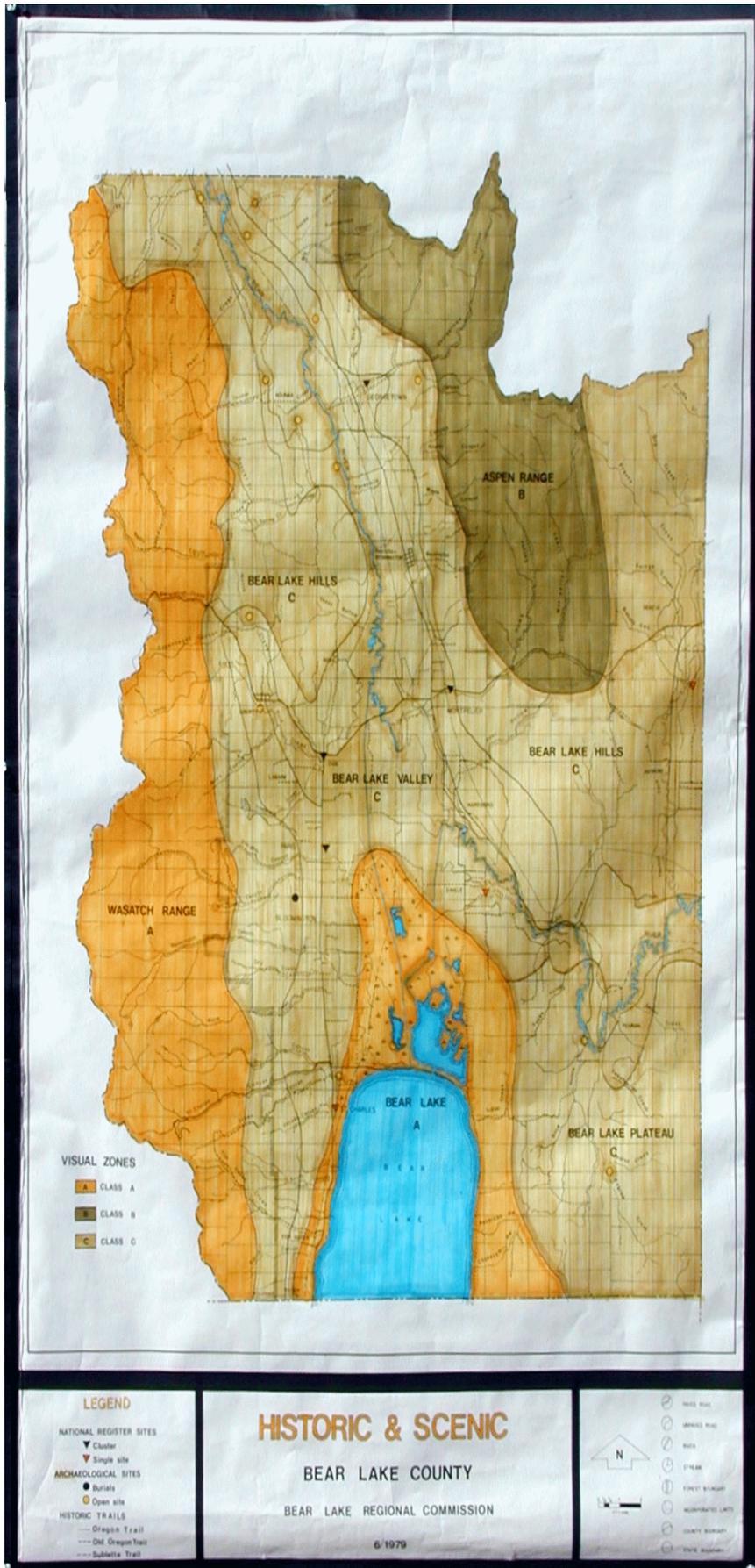


Figure 9 Historic & Scenic

Travel by emigrant wagons along the Oregon Trail began in 1841 and continued until replaced by the automobile in the early 1900*s. Estimates of traffic volume range up to a quarter of a million people. There was actually more than one route in places, with the favored route at any given time being dictated by such factors as the location of the best grass and water for livestock. Cutoff and alternate routes were established to speed travel.

Archaeology

Bear Lake County lacks any extensive inventory of archaeological resources. Only 17 sites have been recorded in the county. Most of these sites were discovered during the course of one archaeology survey for the Bear River Power Project and the study was performed by the University of Utah in 1968. Until a completed survey of the county is done, all areas near water or lithic (stone) resources are anticipated to contain archaeological sites. The sites that have been recorded include some of the most common types of sites found throughout Idaho, burial sites, open campsites, and quarry sites.

An Indian burial site was located beneath a rock overhang in Sleight Canyon, but unfortunately, the burial had been badly disturbed and listed as destroyed. Open sites were found east of St. Charles to Lifton, near Ovid, Bern, Bennington, Bloomington, Nounan Valley, Bear Lake Hot Springs, and Indian Creek.

Scenic Classification

The scenic classifications shown were based on a study conducted by the Bureau of Land Management. Bear Lake County was divided into seven (7) scenery units based on similarity of topography and vegetative types. The key factors of land, form, color, water, vegetation, scanty and cultural modification were applied to each unit separately to determine the visual rating. The 'A', 'B', or 'C' rating represents an overall impression of the scenic quality derived by a series of ratings conducted at various locations throughout the individual unit. The rating system was intended to evaluate the scenic value of any given landscape as objectively as possible. However, visual quality is an elusive entity to quantify, and subjective interpretations are bound to have had some impact on the ratings.

Wasatch Range. This unit is located along the forest boundary in Bear Lake County. Land form is extremely varied ranging from rolling hills to mountain meadow, high ridges and peaks. The water resources are not a predominant feature. They provide variety and serenity to the landscape. A wide variety of vegetation cover exists in this unit. Other than Highway 36 and a transmission line, cultural modifications are not evident.

The lands in this unit were judged to be very interesting and more diverse and dynamic than most mountain ranges, therefore class 'A' was assigned.

Bear River Valley This unit contains roughly 116,000 acres. Established public and private roads provide vehicular access to nearly all of the unit.

Topography includes flat bottom lands, gently rolling hills on the east and west sides of the valley, and mountainous lands in the Preuss Range and Bear Lake Plateau. The Bear River winds placidly through the middle of the valley providing water to the extensive agricultural development running from the north end of the unit to the more mountainous terrain at the southern end. Native vegetation varies from riparian willows and cottonwoods to steppe vegetation in the foothills and mountains. Several small towns line U.S. Highways 30 North and 89 including Georgetown,

Bennington, Montpelier, Wardboro, Ovid, Paris, Bloomington, St. Charles and Fish Haven. Residential, agricultural and community development and the supporting transportation systems and utility lines occur throughout the unit, but they are concentrated primarily along the Bear River and Highway 30 North through the middle of the valley. The extensive man-made intrusions (including material sites, utility lines, fences, buildings, roads, etc.) certainly detract from the visual resource, but scenic qualities are not developed or contain only by agricultural development (especially those lands along the northwestern portion of the valley and the mountainous terrain to the south.). The scenery class is 'C' for this unit.

Aspen Range Most of this unit is within the southern portion of Caribou National Forest. Access is provided primarily by U.S. Highway 89. Secondary access is provided by graveled roads running up Home Canyon, Georgetown and Crow Creek.

Physical features are similar to those lands described in the Wasatch Range unit, however, not as dynamic in land form and vegetative color contrast. The scenery class is 'B'.

Bear Lake This unit contains approximately 58,000 acres surrounding the north end of Bear Lake and the Bear Lake National Wildlife Refuge. Approximately 33,000 surface acres of Bear Lake are located in Idaho. Access through the unit is provided by U.S. Highway 89, the North Beach road and the Eastshore Road.

Bear Lake is the predominant visual feature in this unit. Changing weather conditions and varying depths in the lake often produce a spectacular variety of water colors, ranging from deep blue to turquoise. The lake is bordered on the east and west by steep, mountainous terrain, which rises rapidly from the 5924* lake elevation to ridges on the west side more than 9200*. The western ridge supports a rich, complex vegetative community while the ridge along the east side is in stark contrast with a grass/sagebrush vegetative community. Most of the 17,600 acre wildlife refuge along the north edge of the lake is a wetland plant community providing another visual contrast. Intrusions in the form of residential development along the west side of the lake, a pumping station, and several sets of power lines intrude upon the unit, but do not prevent the unit from receiving an 'A' rating.

Bear Lake Hills The unit is located on both the east and west flanks of the Bear Lake Valley and incorporates 180,000 acres. The unit is bound on both the east and west by US Forest Service managed lands and is enhanced by those public lands.

The land form of the unit is composed of rolling foothills and alluvial fans from the contiguous mountains. The vegetative cover is dominated by sage, grasses and small clones of aspens. Although water is nearly nonexistent in the unit, the erosional pattern created by intermittent flows has created an interesting drainage pattern.

The hillside slopes have been marked by occasional off road vehicle (ORV) trails and scattered material and mining pits especially along the east side of Bear Lake Valley. Additionally, a series of transmission corridors runs along the base of the Aspen Range and other across the southeastern portion of Bear Lake Hills. Resident operations have reduced the quality of Montpelier Creek*s streambanks and riparian vegetation creating turbid water conditions and silted stream bottoms. The scenery class assigned is 'C'.

Bear Lake Plateau The plateau lies above and east of Bear Lake and extends to the Wyoming state border and includes about 68,000 acres of land.

The unit is similar to Bear Lake Hills. However, changes in land form composition warrant their discussion as separate units. Additionally, the plateau unit is influenced by the dynamic color changes of Bear Lake.

Cultural modifications constitute a significant impact to the fault face of the plateau. Mining and material removal in the form of quarrying makes up the most intrusive visual impact. ORV roadways and recreation development pose other visual problems to the unit. The scenery class assigned is 'C'.



Thomas Fork Valley The area is composed of a long, narrow, flat floor valley and is bounded on three sides by rolling hills and on the west by the steep cliff face of Sublette Range. Vegetation composition is mainly agriculturally oriented with domesticated plants providing seasonal color to the area. Native riparian vegetation still exists along the Thomas Fork River. However, heavy pressure has reduced its dominance and disrupted normal stream bank erosion patterns causing bank eroding, sediment deposition along the stream bottom and turbid water conditions. The scenery class is 'C'.

Land Sensitivity and Capabilities

The procedure for establishing land sensitivity categories and the land capabilities is a four-step process. The systematic classification of land for various purposes is not new. For the purposes of this process, land tolerance to impacts from change and areas of land having hazardous elements for development is used as the principal measure of capability

First, the inventory of the natural resources of the county, including special areas or sites, and hazardous areas needs to be completed. This inventory is present in the preceding Natural Resources and Hazardous Area section of the plan. The information gathered in the aforementioned section is a combination of numerous sources of data.

Second, obtaining public input into what the citizens of the county feel are important elements to the quality of life in Bear Lake County. This was accomplished by using several public participation activities, including display and input opportunities at the county fair, visioning workshop, open house events at various communities throughout the county, and questionnaires for comments.

As a result of this public input, the land capabilities process used in the 1976 County Land Use Guide was modified.

The results were two classes: highly sensitive, and sensitive, which incorporates the results of the public input and the results of the resource inventory.

This evaluation step resulted in the development of the definition of the scenario for each of two sensitivity classifications and their subsequent resource elements.

Third, is the evaluation of the lands within the county in respect to the sensitivity classes by the mapping of the scenario resource elements.

The final step in the process, is the combining of the highly sensitive and sensitive areas onto a land capabilities map (Figure 12). This map is developed as a result of an overlay process where the highest sensitivity rating takes precedence over lower ratings.

Highly Sensitive Lands (Figure 10)

These are areas of the county that have natural resource conditions that are hazardous or natural resource elements that are of great importance to the public and the quality of life in the county. Development, if proposed on these areas, will need to take steps that will include mitigation measures that address the negative impacts on the lands. Some natural resource elements(*) may not allow any development.

Natural Resource Elements in this Category:

- Flood Prone Areas
- Wetlands*
- Deer Winter Range
- Elk Winter Range
- Sage Grouse Habitat
- Community Water Source
- Fish Spawning Areas (Bear Lake, Fish Haven Creek, St. Charles Creek, Indian Creek, Bloomington Creek and Ovid Creek)
- Archaeological Sites*
- Fault Lines
- Slope 31% or greater

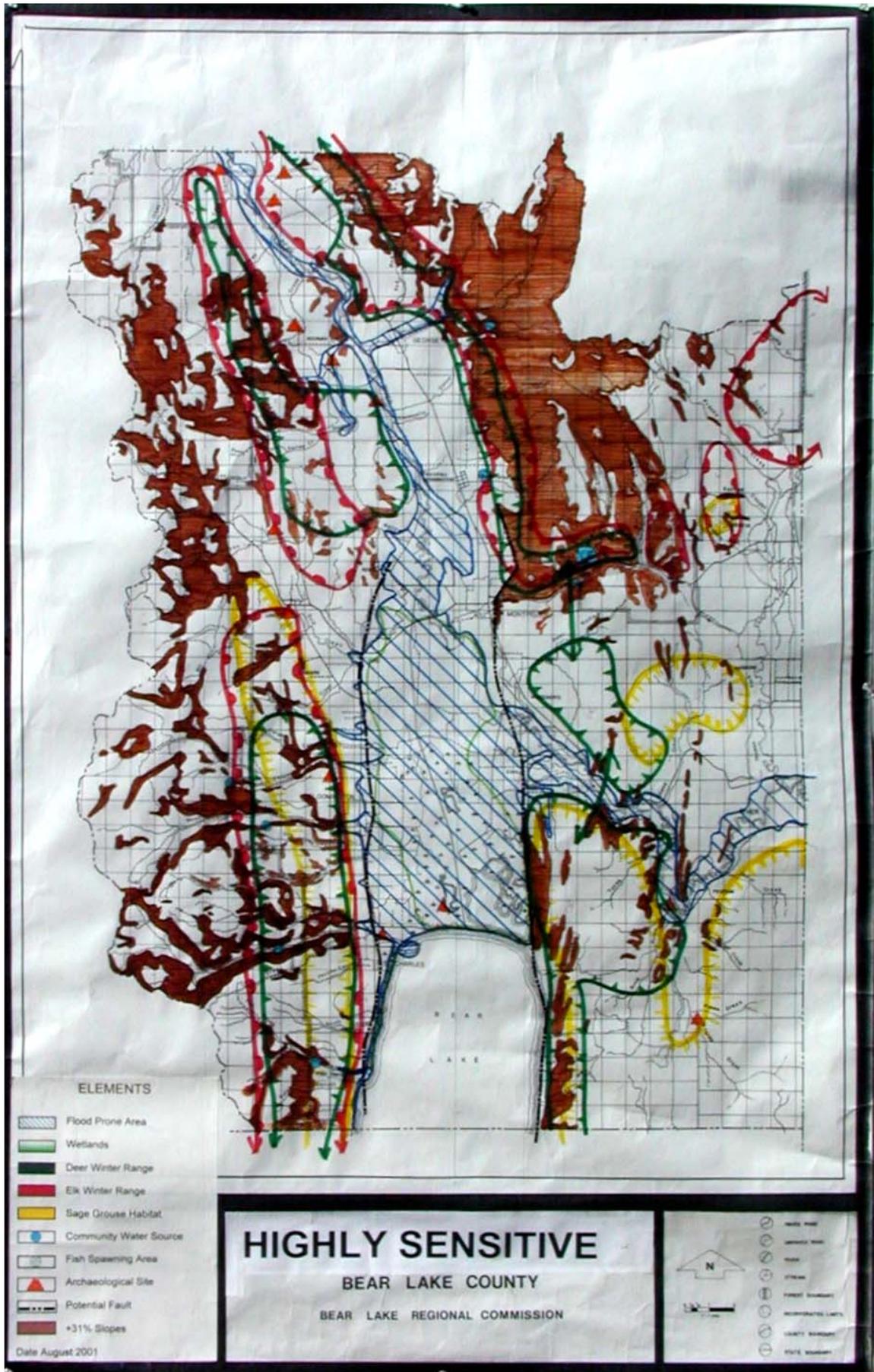


Figure 10

Sensitive Lands (Figure 11)

These are areas of the county that have natural resource elements that are somewhat more tolerant to development impacts than the highly sensitive lands. Development activities conducted in these areas must be planned to address the impacts.

Natural Resource Elements in this Category:

- Slopes 21 - 30%
- Water fowl Areas
- Class A Visual Zone
- Class 1 and 2 Streams
- Sensitive and Highly Sensitive Soils

The final step in the process, is the combining of the highly sensitive and sensitive areas onto a land capabilities map (Figure 12). This map is developed as a result of an overlay process where the highest sensitivity rating takes precedence over lower ratings.

The information in both the natural resources and hazardous areas section and this section is compiled from a number of sources and agencies. Due to the nature of the data including such things as methods used to collect the data, how long ago the data was collected and data evaluation procedures, the information presented does not contain all of the details and is in some cases only summarized. Mapping was done at a scale of 1 inch equals 1 mile and these maps are available for public review and use.

Users of this information should be cautioned that because of the nature of original data and the map scale, the data cannot be considered as site specific. Should you need site specific information you should seek guidance from the county or associated Bear Lake Regional Commission.

These sections fulfill two purposes: First, provide information on the pattern and distribution of general physical characteristics and resource elements to be used in development of land use regulations.

Secondly, the information, while not site specific, is nonetheless an appropriate indicator to developers, planners and public officials of the characteristics which could be reasonably expected to exist on a particular parcel of ground.

In that regard, the information here should serve as a “red flag” to alert those individuals of possible issues and concerns which may need additional investigation and/or special development controls or site restrictions to address the issue or concern.

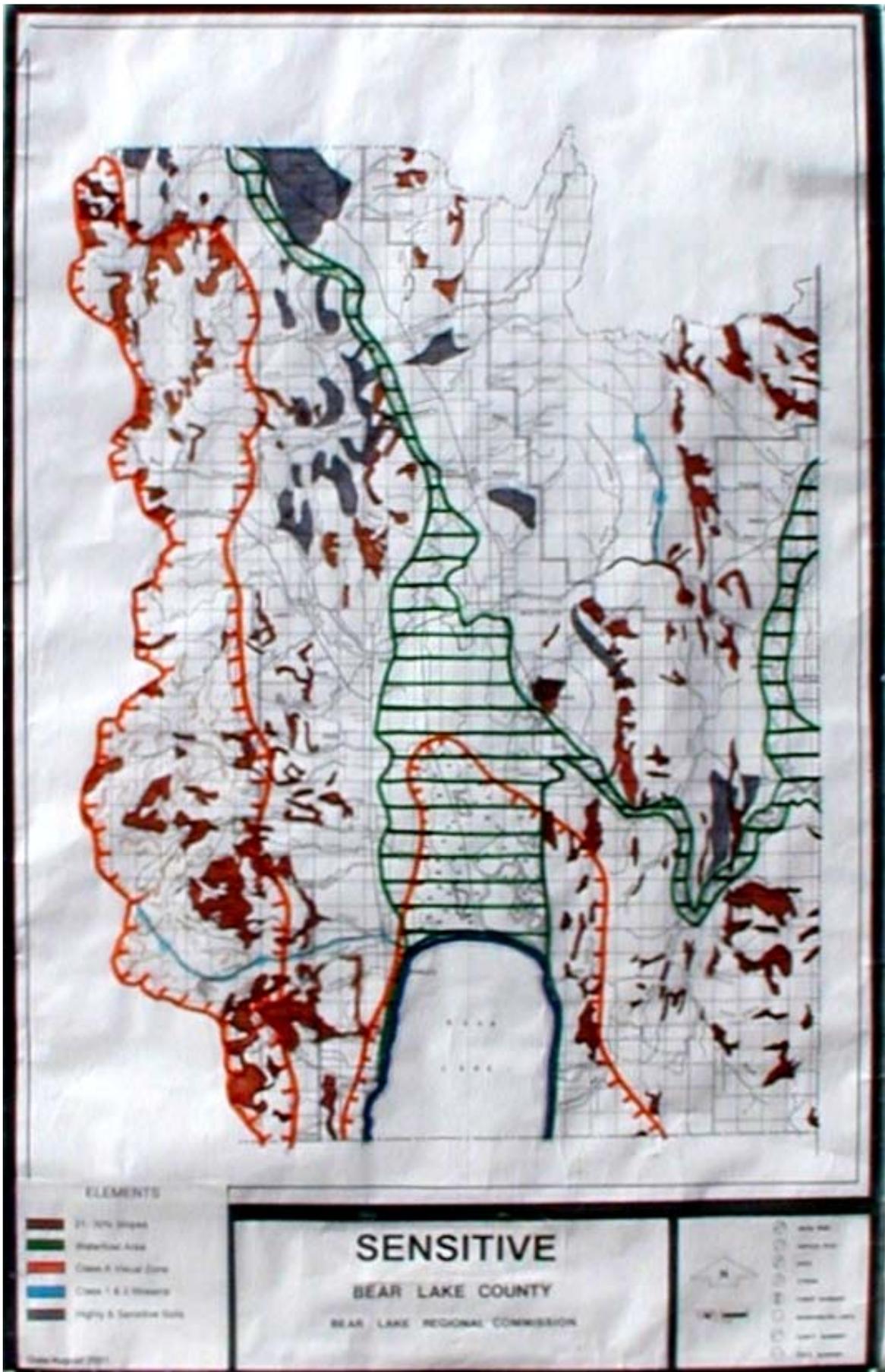


Figure 11

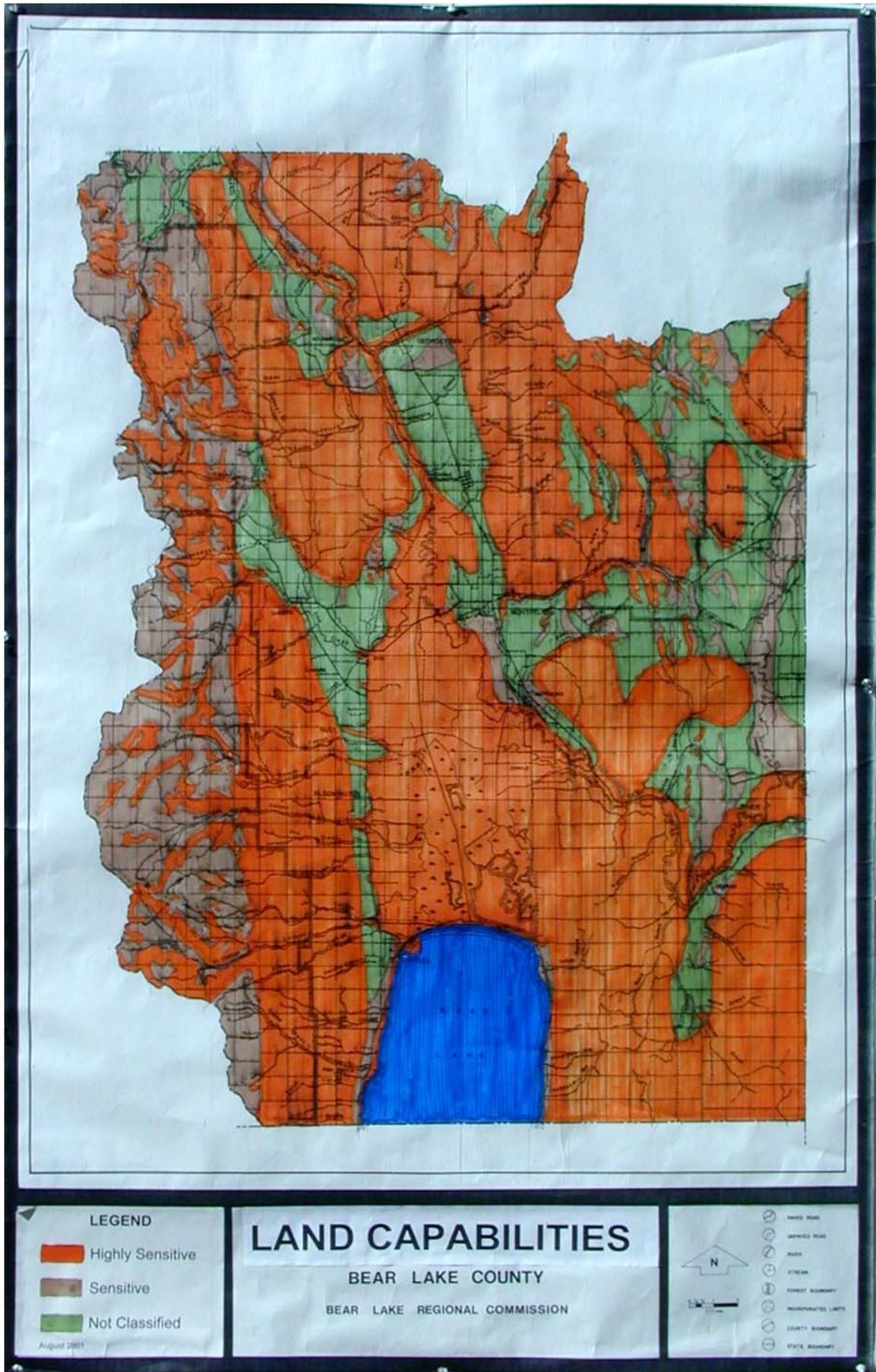


Figure 12

Use of The Land Capabilities Process

Except as a general planning guide, users of this document and maps should refer to more detailed information if it exists. Sources are so noted in the bibliography.

To aid the user in the use of this section and related sections of this document the following example is included.

Situation: Mr. Jones has a 200-acre parcel which he is considering subdividing.

Step 1: He gets a description of the land as to the land's capabilities.

Step 2: He now finds that some of the land is classified as highly sensitive and the rest as sensitive.

Step 3: He then refers to the highly sensitive map and finds which resources are placing limitations on the property and what these limitations are.

Step 4: He can then look at the resource maps and obtain additional details and final sources to site specific information.

Step 5: The developer then needs to refer to the maps which deal with sensitive land.

Step 6: Due to the scale and level of detail available in this guide compared to site specific information, Mr. Jones then needs to prepare a site specific evaluation using the site specific data he has obtained.

Step 7: The site evaluation is then used to develop the plan for the development.

Step 8: The evaluation study and proposed subdivision are then presented to the county for approval which in turn employs the use of the Comprehensive Plan in reviewing, analyzing and approving Mr. Jones' project along with his study and field work.

The need for and level of information presented in the evaluation study will be dependent upon the size of the project and the number and extent of conflicts identified by the Land Use Guide. Each parcel of land in the county has its own characteristics, and therefore, needs to be handled as such.

Land Use

Two features of Bear Lake County's land use pattern are (1.) Public lands make up just over half of the county's total land area, and (2.) The substantial amount of private lands that have been subdivided, with the majority of it on the shore of Bear Lake and in the mountainous areas on the western side of the county.

Land Ownership

Bear Lake County encompasses approximately 628,000 acres. Private land is 48.6 % or about 305,000 acres. (See Table 1 below) The remaining land is under public ownership as shown in Table 2 below and Figure 13.

TABLE 1

Private Land		
Assessor's Records 2001		
	Acres	
Irrigated Agriculture	35,661	
Irrigated Pasture	3,149	
non irrigated Agriculture	45,369	
Meadow	45,998	
Dry Grazing	149,736	
Subtotal	279,913	
Mineral Land	3,390	
Rural Homesite	283	
Rural Residential	1,531	
Rural Commercial	203	
Rural Industrial	68	
Rural Subdivision Lots	541	
Other Rural Land	8,950	
Waste Land	3,980	
Other Land within Cities	6,400	Est.
Subtotal	25,346	
Total Private Land	305,259	

Table 2

Land Ownership	Acres
Federal Land	
National Forests	229,978
Bureau of Land Management	55,893
U S Fish & Wildlife Service	18,060
Total	303,931
State Land	
Endowment Lands	15,368
Fish & Game	2,261
Parks & Recreation	966
Total	18,595
Private Land	305,259
County Land	45
Municipal Land	78
Total Land	627,908*

Land Cover

Land Cover Statistics (USGS-GIRAS-1977-80) for Bear Lake County, Idaho

DESCRIPTION	AREA (acres)
Residential	1,637
Industrial	472
Transportation, etc.	1,037
Mixed Urban	225
Other Urban	220
Cropland and Pasture	128,247
Other Agricultural Land	85
Herbaceous Rangeland	5,024
Shrub and Brush Rangeland	271,797
Mixed Rangeland	20,328
Deciduous Forest	8,131
Evergreen Forest	74,053
Mixed Forest	77,177
Lake	39,876
Reservoir	224
Forested Wetland	2,290
Non-forested Wetland	38,553
Bare exposed Rock	102
Strip Mines, Gravel Pits, etc.	750
Transitional Areas	736
TOTAL of all areas	670,961*

This land cover classification system is satellite generated image-based data. The water category and the rounding and estimating can usually result in slightly higher numbers than the actual land ownership data.

* In gathering land area data no two independent sources gave the same total area for the county.



Figure 13 Ownership

Subdivisions

The history of land developments in the county started in 1913 in the Bear Lake area with the platting of 80 lots on 12 acres. Since that through the year 2000, approximately 2500 lots have been created in the county, 74% of them in the Bear Lake area.

Subdivisions occupy about 10,900 acres or 17 square miles, which is about 4% of the private land area. Roughly 20% of all subdivision lots have been developed with a home or other improvements. The highest level of development has been in the Bear Lake West subdivisions. Impacts from this development have resulted in the construction of a central sewerage system serving the west side of Bear Lake including Fish Haven and St. Charles. The pattern of scattered rural residential development increases the costs of such services as fire protection, law enforcement, roads and garbage pick-up.

Depending on their location, existing rural subdivisions present other problems, including exposure to wildfire hazards, conflict with adjacent agricultural operations, loss of wildlife habitat and land title disputes.

The county's most recent subdivision ordinance was adopted in 1976 and amended several times, the latest being in 2000.

Even though the peak of the subdivision platting in Bear Lake County occurred during the 1970's and 1980's, about 2000 lots remain undeveloped. This number of vacant lots and the experience the county has had with rural subdivisions provide a basis for updating the Comprehensive Plan and providing sound policies for guiding future subdivision activity.

Future Land Use

The following are descriptions of general land use categories used in outlining the general future land use for Bear Lake County. These categories are not to be specific land use zones for the county zoning ordinance but to serve as guidance for zones and their included uses. The accompanying map titled "Future Land Use Concept" (Figure 14) and associated detail maps (Figures 14A - 14G) are a part of this Bear Lake County Comprehensive Plan - 2025.

Agricultural Lands Appropriate lands of Bear Lake County for agricultural uses such as crop lands, range lands, etc. This does not include agricultural related commercial operations such as large feed lots and hog raising facilities that should require special permits. These areas will allow residential uses associated with farm operations with a very low density. cluster lot subdivisions or planned unit developments could be allowed with a percentage increase in the total number of dwelling units per acre allowed. These types of developments must take into account, impact on adjacent agricultural lands, wildlife, and other natural resources, and also public services and facilities.

Incorporated Communities These lands are under the control of the cities and they also include the area of city impact of Montpelier. Because all planning and zoning authority has been release to the city for the impact area.



Figure 14 Future Land Use

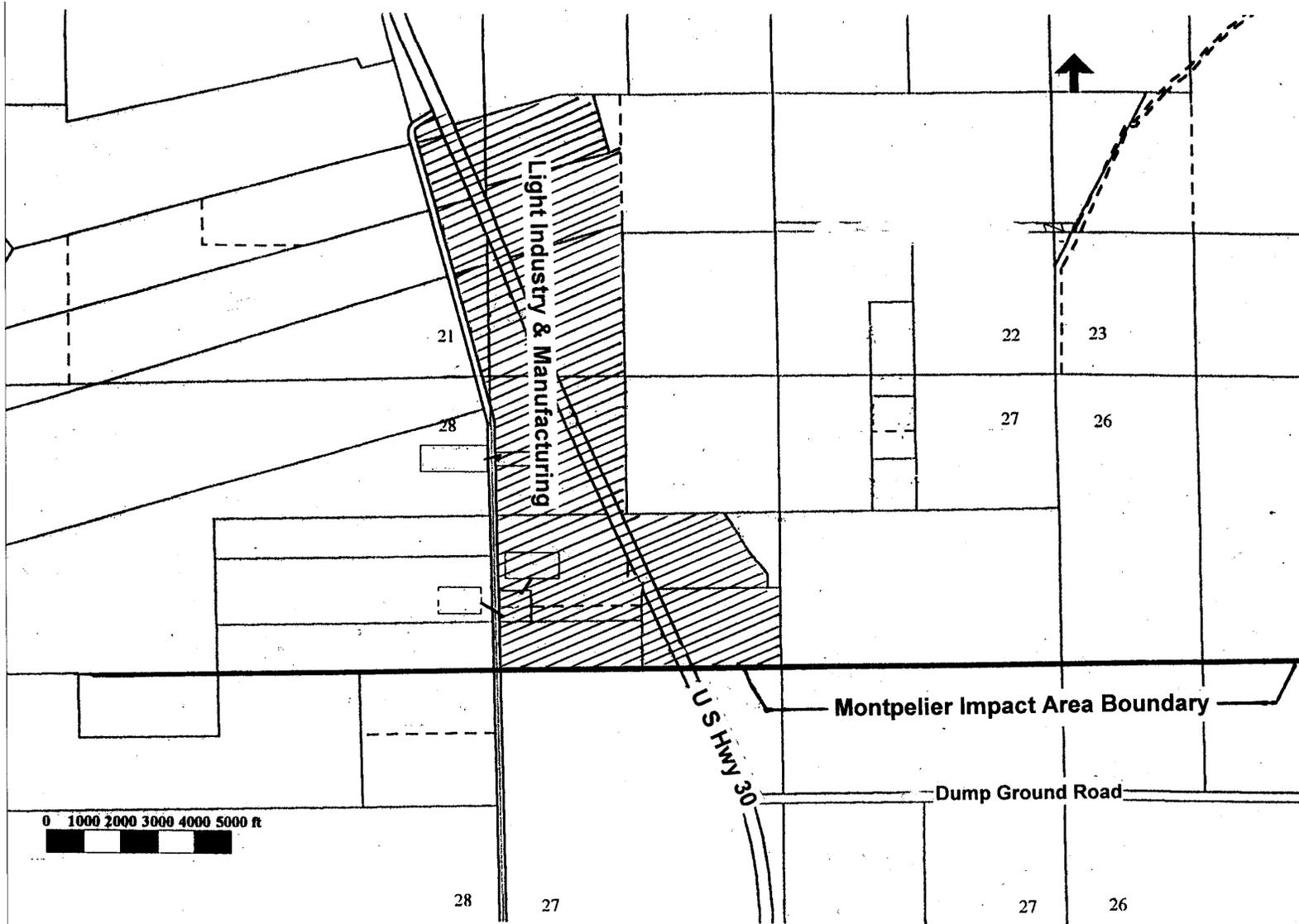


Figure 14A Future Land Use - North of Montpelier

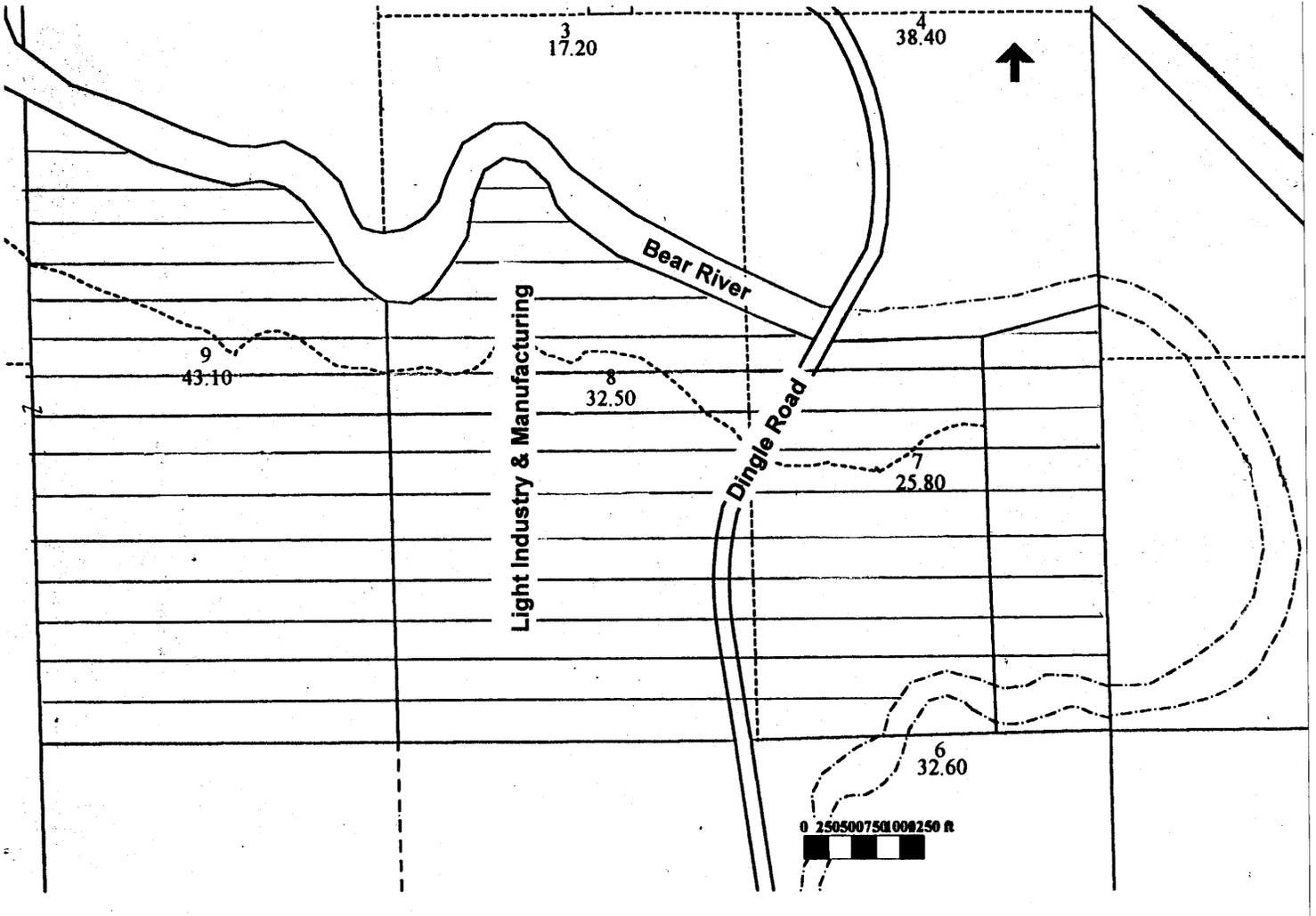


Figure 14B Future Land Use - Dingle Area near Bear River

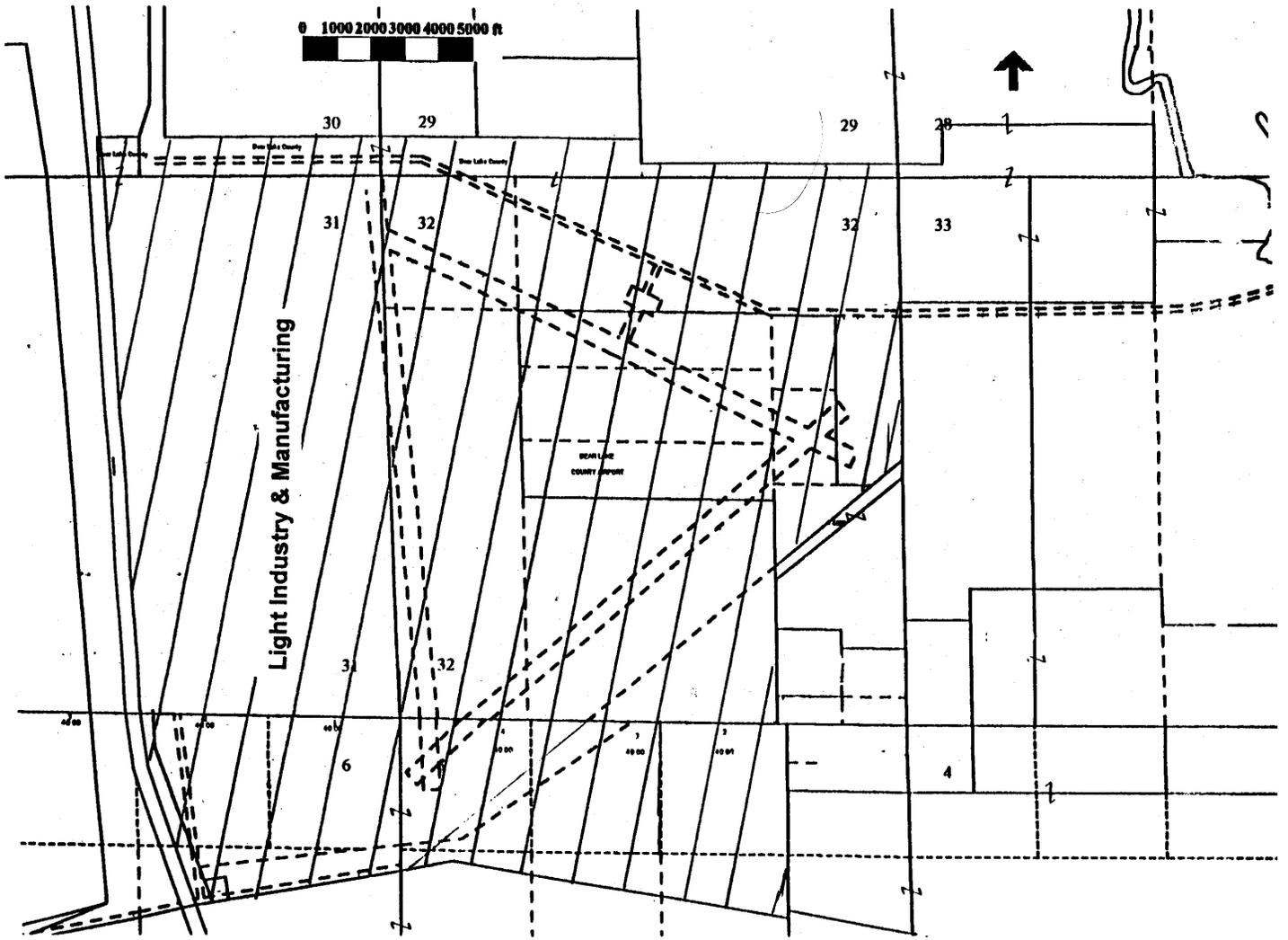


Figure 14C Future Land Use - Bear Lake County Airport

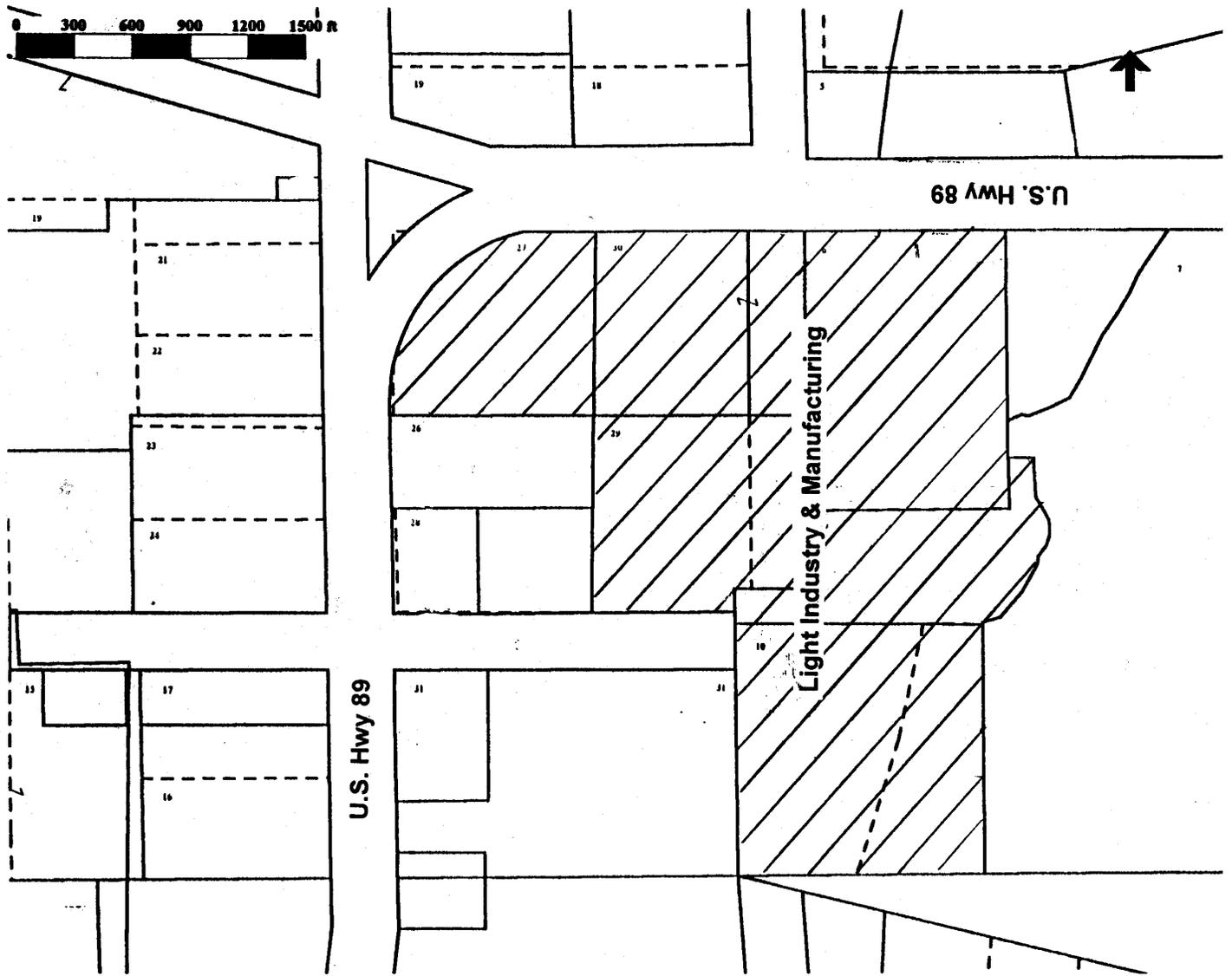


Figure 14D Future Land Use - Ovid Area

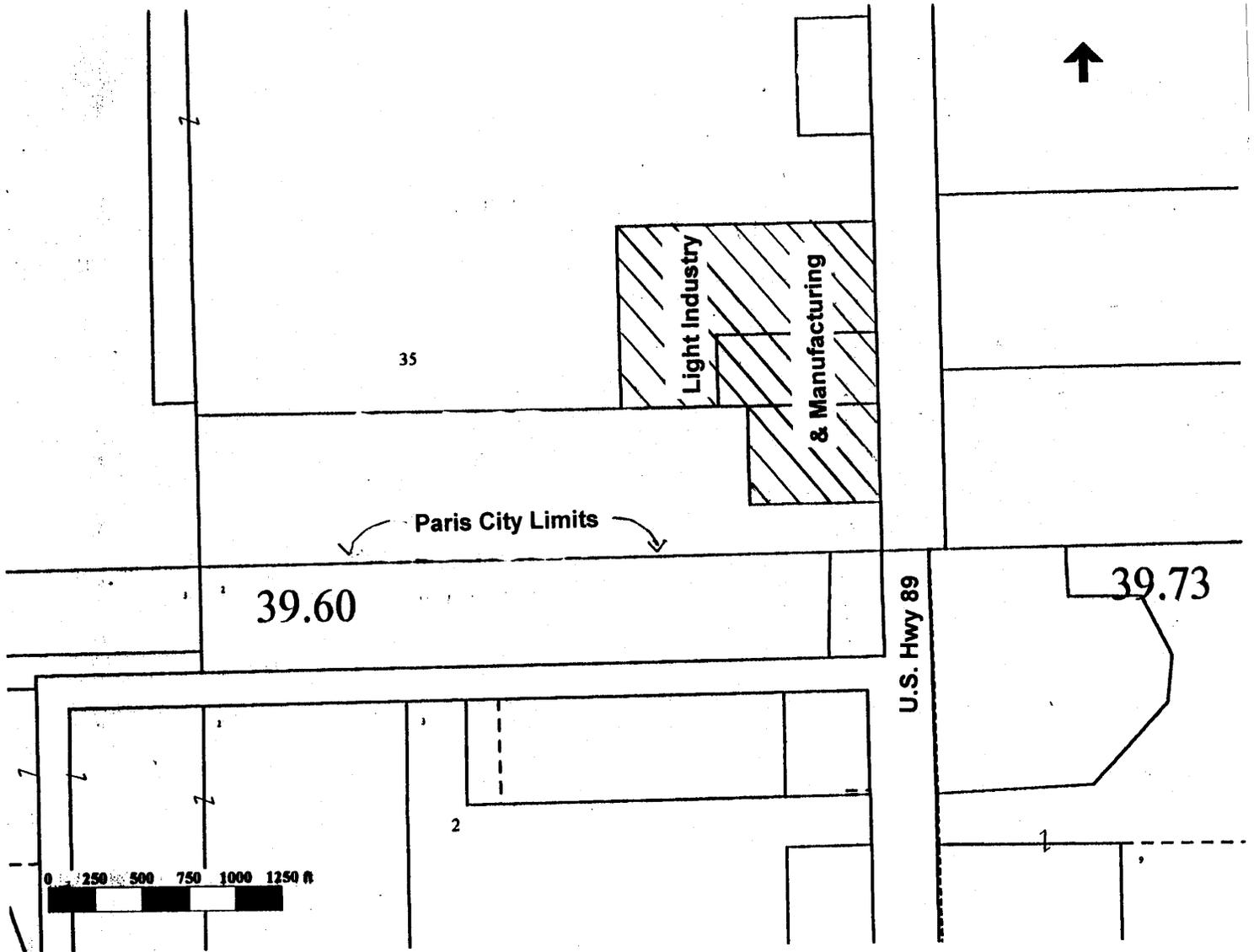


Figure 14E Future Land Use - North of Paris

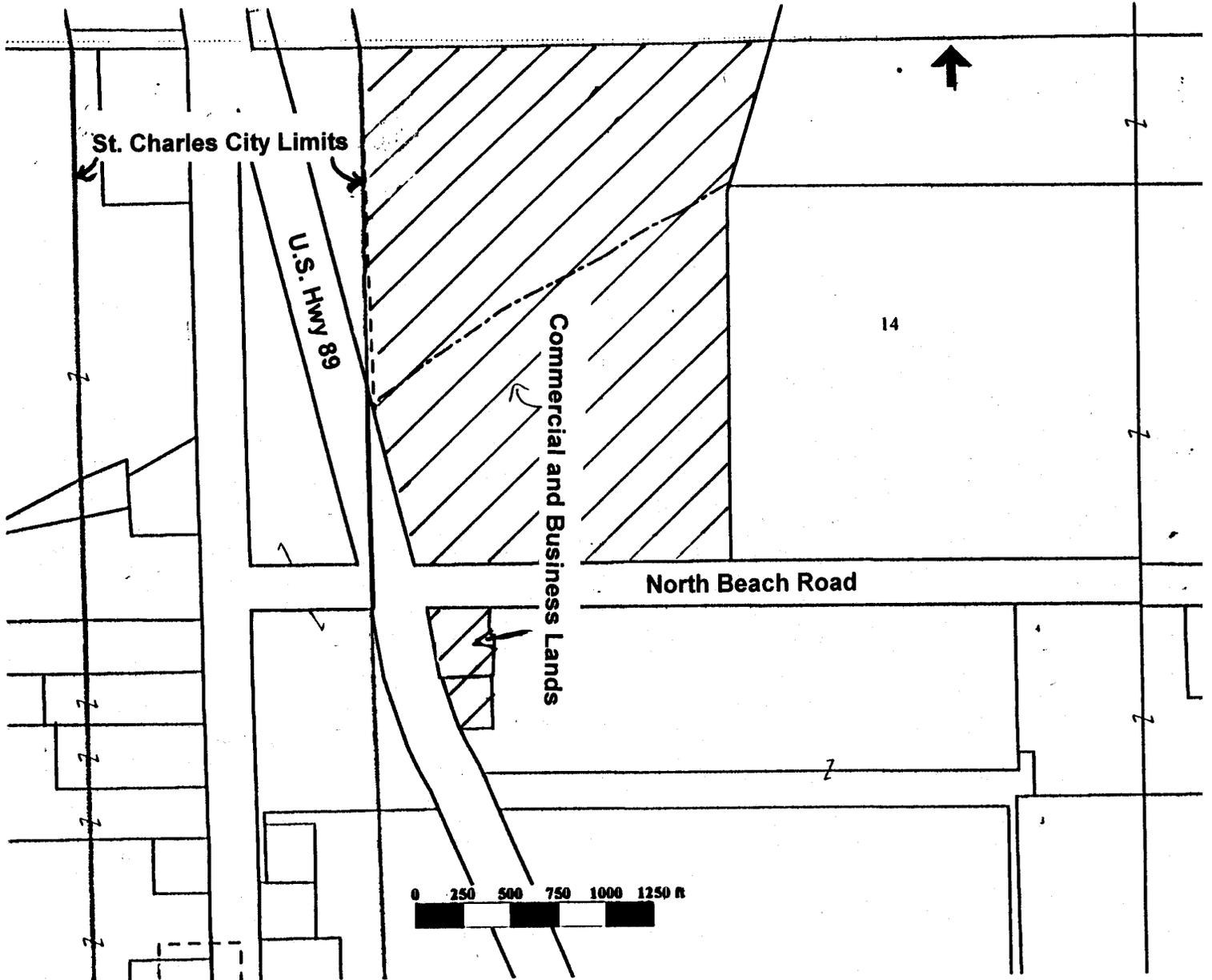


Figure 14F Future Land Use - North Beach Road near St. Charles

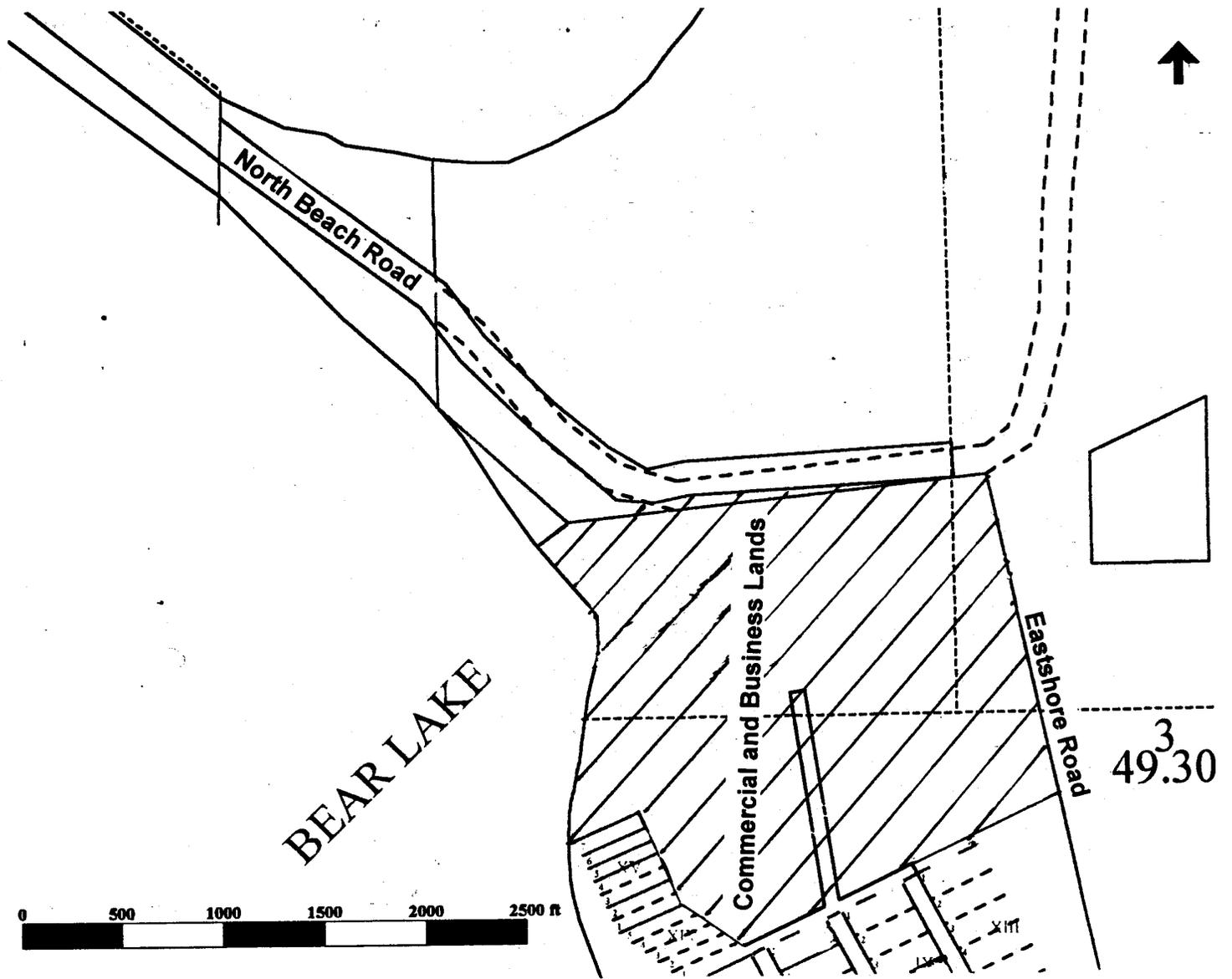


Figure 14G Future Land Use - Bear Lake Hot Springs

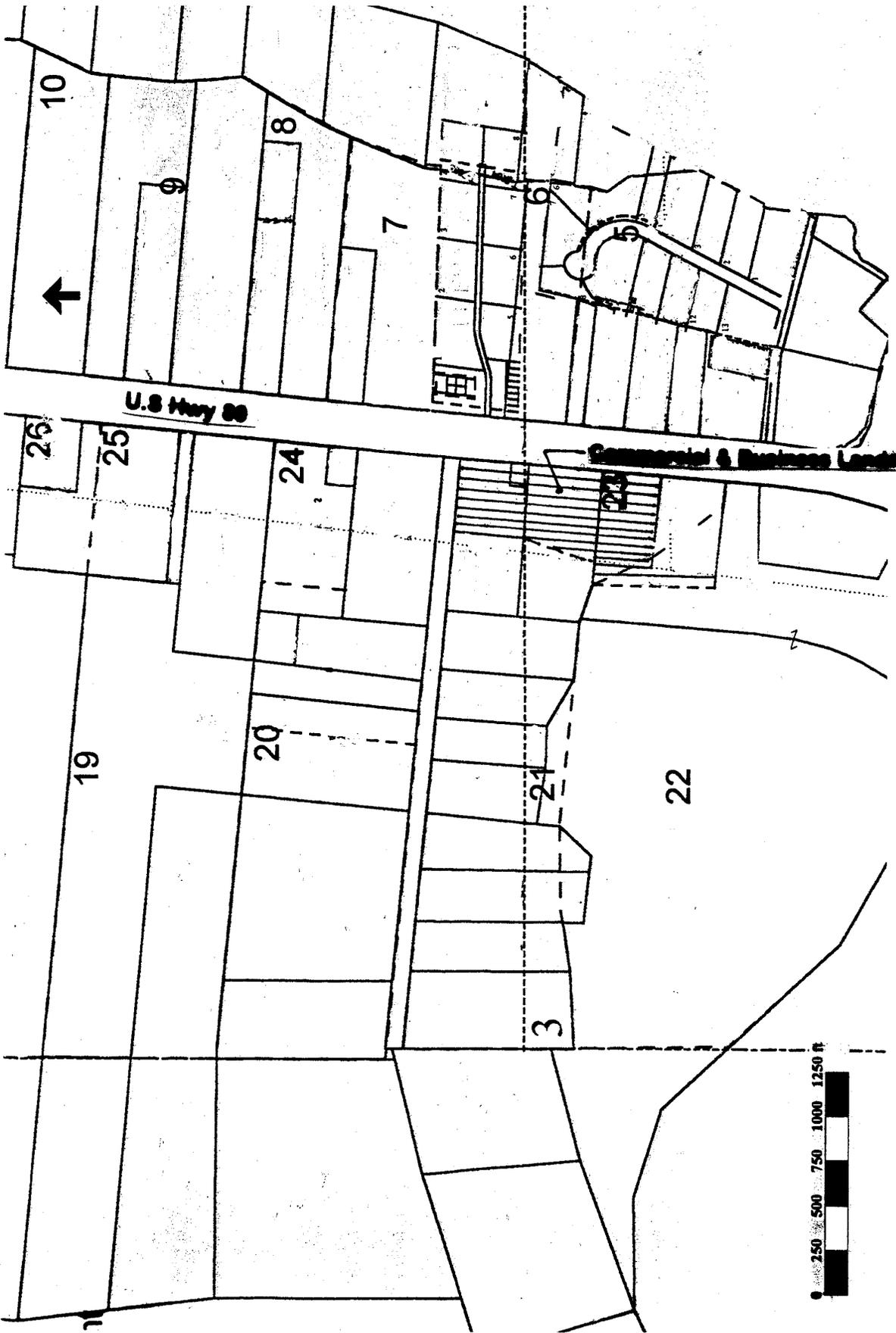


Figure 14h(1) Future Land Use - Fish Haven Area Detail

(A)

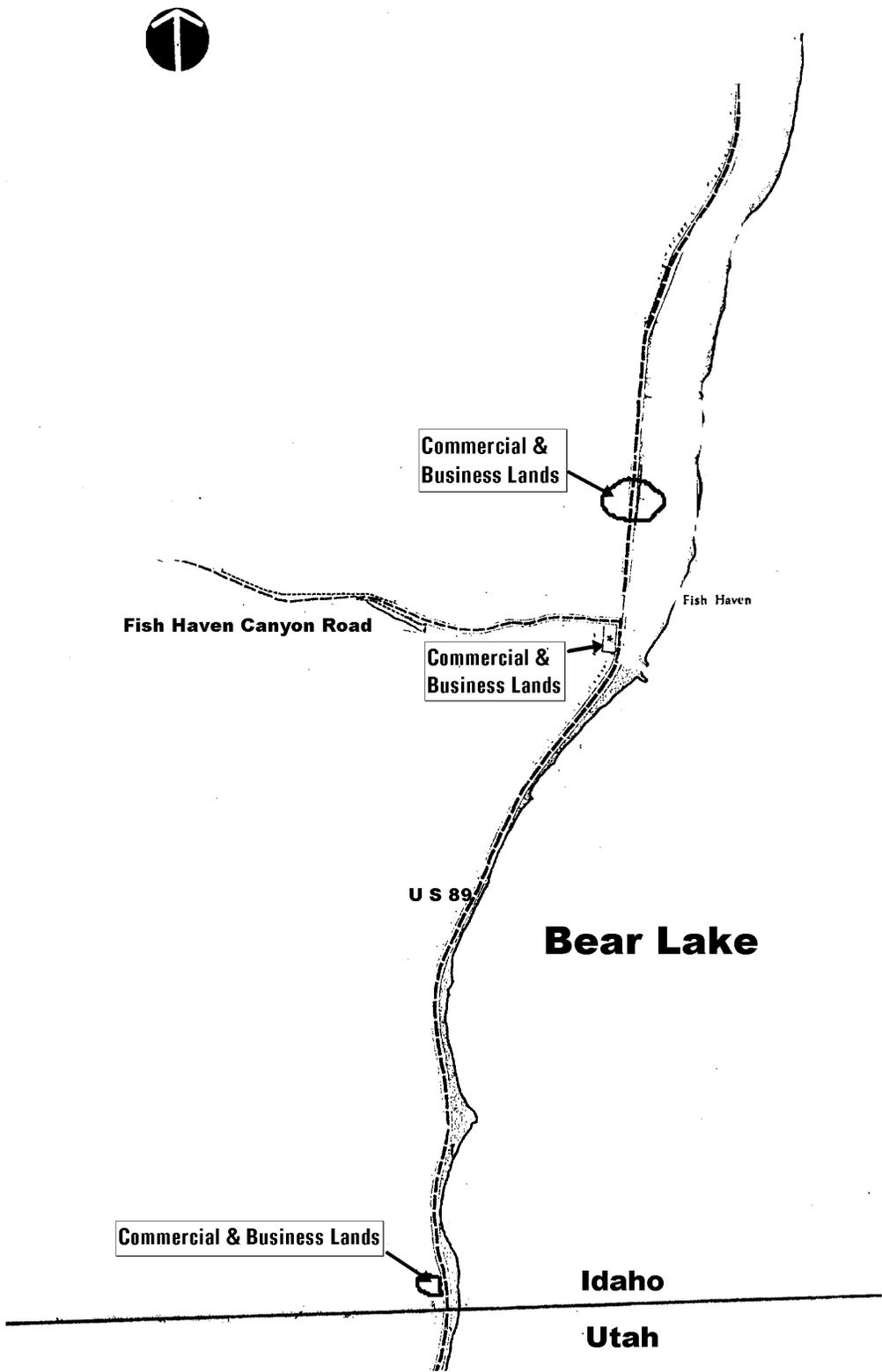


Figure 14H(2) Future Land Use - Fish Haven Area

(B)

Community Expansion Lands These are lands adjacent to incorporated communities, and designated as area of city impact.

Types of uses allowed would also need city approval. It is expected that these areas would eventually be annexed into the cities.

Uses could include:

- Agriculture
- Residential
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Others

Residential densities would be at a rural community level.

Multiple Use Lands These are lands in public ownership such as U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, and State Lands in large blocks including Bear Lake as a multiple use resource. Uses are determined through other government actions. It is the intent that these areas continue as multiple use lands such as grazing, recreation, logging, mining, etc.

Rural Community Lands These are lands in the immediate vicinity area of rural non-incorporated communities such as Bern, Ovid, Geneva, etc. A set of mixed uses could occur such as residential, small commercial, light industrial, and agriculture.

Buffers between types of uses to reduce impacts should be provided between uses.

Cluster lot type subdivisions or planned unit development could occur in these areas.

Light Industry & Manufacturing Lands to provide a location for light manufacturing, which is clean, quiet and free of objectionable levels of noise, odors, smoke, etc. Also, provide for wholesale business and warehouses to supply the business sector. Access to transportation routes and airports is important.

Commercial & Business Lands These are lands to provide a location for commercial enterprise to serve the needs for consumers throughout the county - larger than neighborhood convenience shopping. Also provide for business, i.e., professional, telecommunication office space, etc.

Recreational & Housing Lands These are lands around Bear Lake or in close proximity to the lake. These lands will receive the greatest development pressure in the county. It is important that as these lands develop, the natural resource values that they want to come to the area to enjoy are not destroyed by the development.

Uses that could occur include recreational residential, commercial, that would be related to the lake and mountain setting.

Planned Unit Developments and Cluster Lot Subdivisions

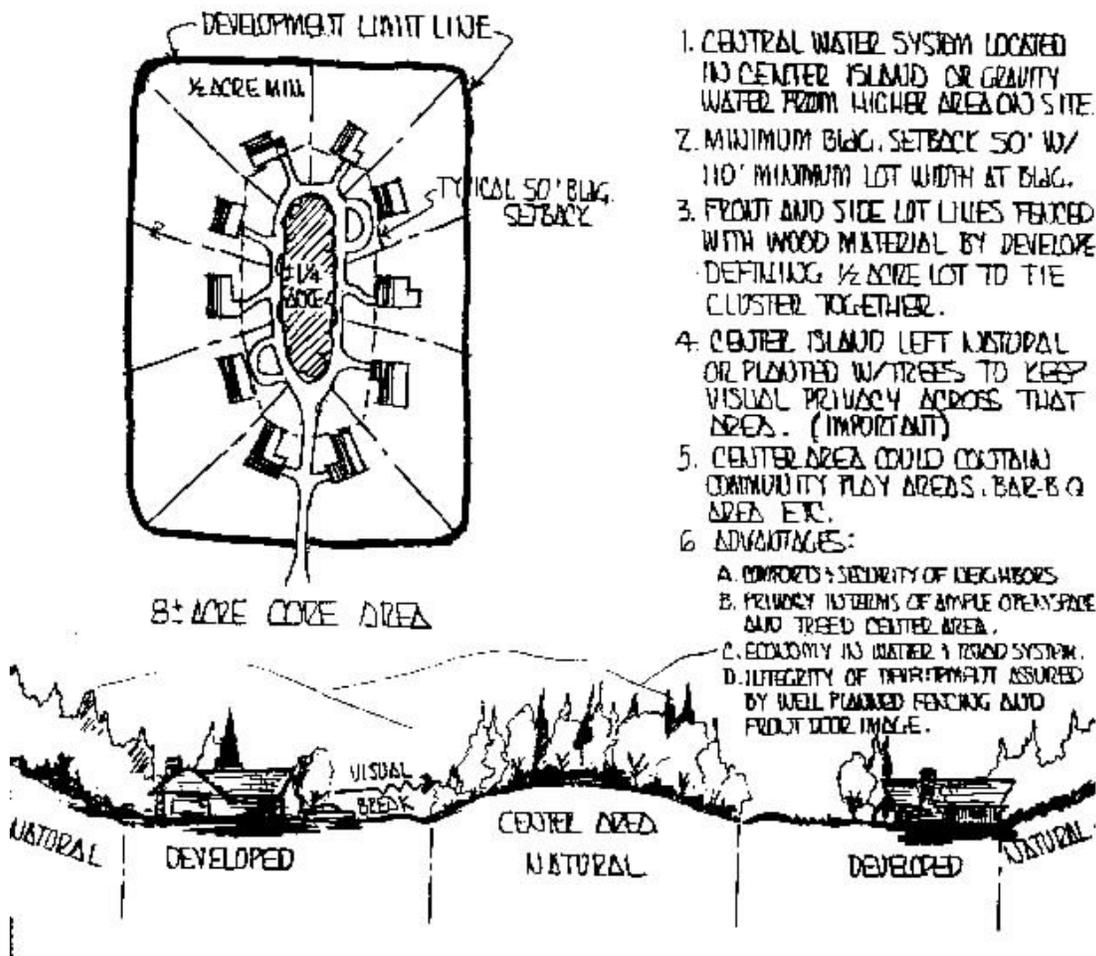
Planned unit developments and cluster lot subdivisions that address natural resource needs, i.e., wildlife, water quality, etc. could occur. Functional 'open space' is very important for these lands.

Public services and utilities such as roads, water and sewer, electric power, etc., both within the development and outside the development must be addressed. Density of development should be kept flexible.

Planned Unit Development A development under single ownership or control designed to provide as a unit, a combination of uses, i.e., residential, commercial, light industrial, with open space and buffers between uses, and adjacent lands.

Cluster Development

A lot design that defines the building area on a lot which is smaller than the lot and the remainder of the lot is in open space and clusters the building areas to reduce road and utility costs or clusters smaller lots together with open space around them. See example illustration.



Community Design

The unincorporated area of the county where community design elements are found is centered around the Oregon Trail - Bear Lake Scenic Byway, which includes U.S. Highway 89 and 30. A detailed background study has recently been completed and is referenced in this plan.

Other community design needs include: sand, gravel and rock quarries, road side advertising signs, recycling & salvage operations, and housing structures on the ridge lines.

Implementation

The following goals and objectives developed through public input serves as the implementation element of this plan. A formal time schedule is not being set up as a part of this plan so that maximum flexibility is allowed in implementation without the need for amendments to time schedules.

Resources and Hazardous Areas

Bear Lake County is to maintain and enhance the rural character and natural assets of the county, including the multiple use values of the public lands and Bear Lake by implementing the following:

- Continue to employ the use of the Natural Resource Planning Process designed and implemented in the 1976 County Comprehensive Plan, as a means of identifying critical areas such as steep slopes, wetlands, wildlife corridors and habitat, critical water recharge areas, flood plain and other hazardous areas to guide development away from or to mitigate for impacts to these areas
- Encourage the use of cluster development to avoid the critical areas identified
- Establish stream setbacks and provide for ways to reduce the number of stream crossings for roads and driveways to protect the water quality, aquatic life and stream habitat
- Review the existing Bear Lake Shoreline Ordinance for revisions, or incorporate into new land use ordinances or possible repeal
- Restrict building on top of ridges and impose regulations on signs to reduce visual impacts
- Provide means through county ordinance to control the development densities so that they are compatible with the environmental quality, the capacity of local public facilities and services and the county's rural character
- Adopt design guidelines and subdivision standards to address critical areas and prevent air or water pollution
- Consider having developers prepare studies of their development's effect on aquifer and surface water
- Bear Lake County should explore the opportunity to participate in the National Flood Insurance Program
- Groundwater is the primary source for drinking water for communities and individual domestic water users in the county. Major concerns exist about the quality and quantity of the groundwater especially in the area around Bear Lake. The county should have a ground water assessment conducted to answer the quality and quantity questions and implement its findings through management tools and ordinance revisions.

Population

- Encourage and prepare for a diversified population.

Property Rights And Citizen Participation

- The county will actively encourage citizen participation in the planning process.
- The county will maintain this Comprehensive Plan with regular updates and amendments that reflect the learning process of plan administration, as well as changing conditions and public values.
- One purpose of this plan is to protect property rights. Therefore Bear Lake County Planning and Zoning Commission and the Bear Lake County Board of Commissioners will consider the potential impact of this plan and subsequent ordinances implementing the plan on property rights. In doing so they will use the guidelines prepared by the Idaho Attorney General.

Land Use

- Encourage the protection of prime agricultural and forestry lands for the production of food and fiber as important components of the county's economy by:
 - Allowing cluster type subdivision in the agricultural zone
 - Require an easement on residential developments in favor of the continuation of normal farm operations on adjacent lands.
 - Involve potentially affected irrigators in commenting on proposed subdivision and the state statute dealing with irrigation water. I.C. 31-3805.
- Encourage and direct urban growth to vacant areas within and lands contiguous to existing communities in Bear Lake County by:
 - Have established areas of city impact with all cities
 - Have compatible zoning regulations on lands adjacent to city zoned lands.
 - Require city water and sewer services in city impact areas where the city has the capability to provide the service at the developer's expense
- Large agricultural businesses (dairies, feedlots, animal waste composting, handling of agricultural chemicals, etc.) can have significant impact on nearby lands and land uses. All new Confined Animal Feeding Operations(CAFO's) should comply with state regulations. Existing agricultural businesses should be grand fathered at their present location.
- Performance standards should be developed to address sand, gravel and rock quarries.
- Performance standards should be developed to address recycling and salvage yards.
- Performance standards should be developed to address new cell towers and the county should encourage co-locating on existing towers.

Housing

- Encourage and permit a variety of housing types in suitable locations to meet individual needs. The County should follow the framework provided in state law for manufactured housing.
- Consider adoption of a building code that reflects local concerns and provides inspection services that are paid by building permit fees. A local building code should not apply to agricultural structures. The county should seek opportunities to combine this service with other local jurisdictions to reduce overhead costs and share in the costs.

Transportation

- Utilize existing transportation systems and provide a means to assess the impact of development on the county road system
- Protect the public investment in the county airport and the safety of air travelers by enforcing the Bear Lake County Airport Hazards Ordinance
- Complete the transportation plan for the county
- Urge the completion of the U S Highway 89 corridor plan by the Idaho Department of Transportation
- Support the recommendations of the U S Highway 30 corridor management plan and also the need to eventually have this highway be a four-lane design
- Review existing road design standards and make needed updates including private driveway access and need for controlled access on to vital county roads
- Promote and coordinate collector roads of adjacent developments around Bear Lake
- Provide for existing access to public lands and explore additional protection for access to and through public lands
- Evaluate the potential use of a “Future Acquisitions Map” as a means to get additional right of way along county roads needing wider rights of way due to current and future traffic use levels

Economic Development

- Offer increased opportunities for agricultural, commercial and industrial development throughout the county in a manner that is sensitive to the natural environment and the development needs of the communities of Bear Lake County. Adopting and enforcing design performance standards for commercial and industrial uses should be considered.
- Implement appropriate recommendations from the Corridor Management Plan for the “Oregon Trail - Bear Lake Scenic Byway”

Public Services, Facilities and Utilities

- Assure provisions of adequate on-site facilities in all new developments to protect the general taxpayer and future occupants of the developments by requiring that safe and adequate roads and other essential facilities be provided by, and at the expense of, the developer
- Provide for review of the public facilities needs generated by large development proposals and where necessary, to require that the developer bear the cost by providing additional on or off site facilities to accommodate the project.
- Bear Lake County will provide a central landfill that is in compliance with district, state and federal requirements
- Developments in the rural foothills and mountainous areas of Bear Lake County are vulnerable to wildfires. The county should in its land use ordinances have provisions for lot vegetation management (fire breaks) and encourage adequate water supply for fire fighting.
- Evaluate the use of impact fees as a means of obtaining additional revenue to off set the costs of the new demands that developments place on public services and facilities
- The county should encourage Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation to consider obtaining and developing public access to the lake along the west side.

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Questionnaires & Interviews

Cooperation of the following departments, agencies and businesses listed here is gratefully acknowledged:

Bear Lake County Clerk's Office
Bear Lake County Sheriff's Office
Bear Lake County Assessor's Office
Idaho Department of Parks & Recreation, Bear Lake State Park
Transtrum Enterprises - Minnetonka Cave
Cities of Georgetown, Montpelier, Paris, Bloomington & St. Charles
Bear Lake County Library
Bear Lake Memorial Hospital
Southeastern Idaho District Health Department.
Bailey Creek Fire District
Bear Lake County Fire District
Bear Lake County Ambulance Service
Bear Lake School District #33
Bear Lake County Airport
U.S. Forest Service - Montpelier Ranger District
U.S. Bureau of Land Management, Pocatello, Idaho
Bear Lake County Residents