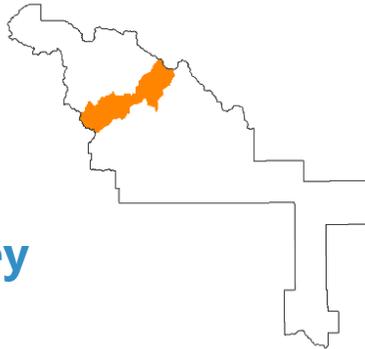




Triumph Barn at Sunset: Photo credit – Carol Waller



Mid Valley

Location and Context

The Mid Valley Subarea spans the center of the Wood River Valley from Gimlet Subdivision on the north to Deer Creek Road on the south, including the side canyons of East Fork, Greenhorn, Ohio Gulch and Deer Creek. Each of these scenic dead-end side canyons leads to federally managed land with well-used recreational access points into both the Pioneer and Smoky mountain ranges.

This subarea includes more privately owned parcels of land than any other subarea. The majority are in platted subdivisions, and many are riverfront or

stream-front properties situated along the Big Wood River, the East Fork of the Big Wood, or smaller tributaries such as Deer Creek and Greenhorn Creek.

The unincorporated village of Triumph, lying in the long canyon of the East Fork of the Big Wood, was the location of an active mine well into the 20th century. The community is now home to about 50 people.

The Big Wood River, State Highway 75 and the Wood River Trail are proximate to each other and divide the subarea roughly in half. County roads provide access to the side canyons, transitioning to roads managed by the US Forest Service as public lands are reached.

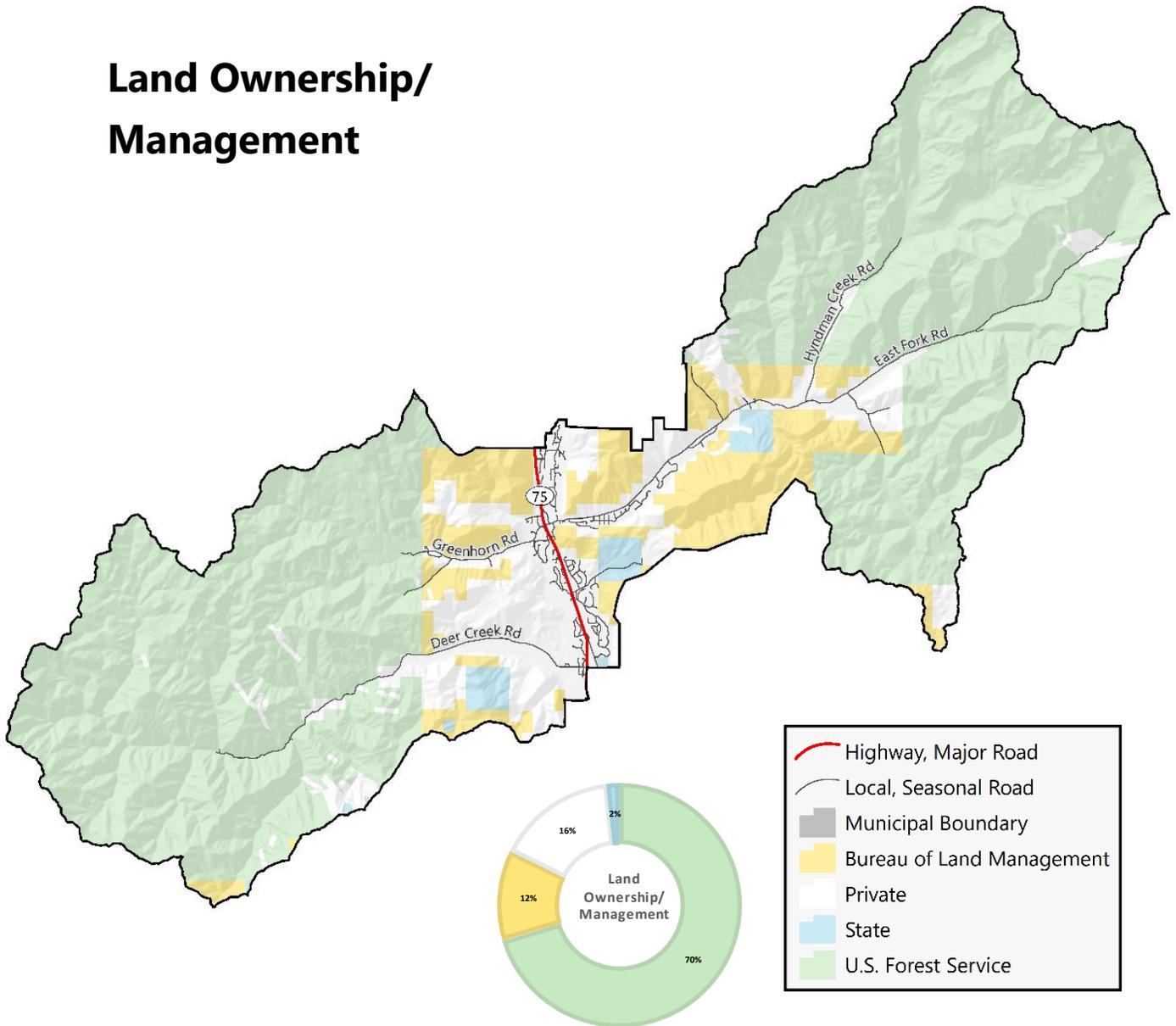
Land Use Characteristics

Ownership/Management

Approximately 82% of the land is federally managed, primarily by the US Forest Service (USFS) managing 82,438 acres (70%), and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) managing 14,145 acres (12%) closer to the valley center. Nearly 2,000 acres are managed by the Idaho Department of Lands (1.7%).

There are approximately 1,245 privately held parcels, comprising just over 18,700 acres. Of these, 25 are mining claims (approximately 1,080 acres). There are more privately held parcels in this subarea than any other in Blaine County.

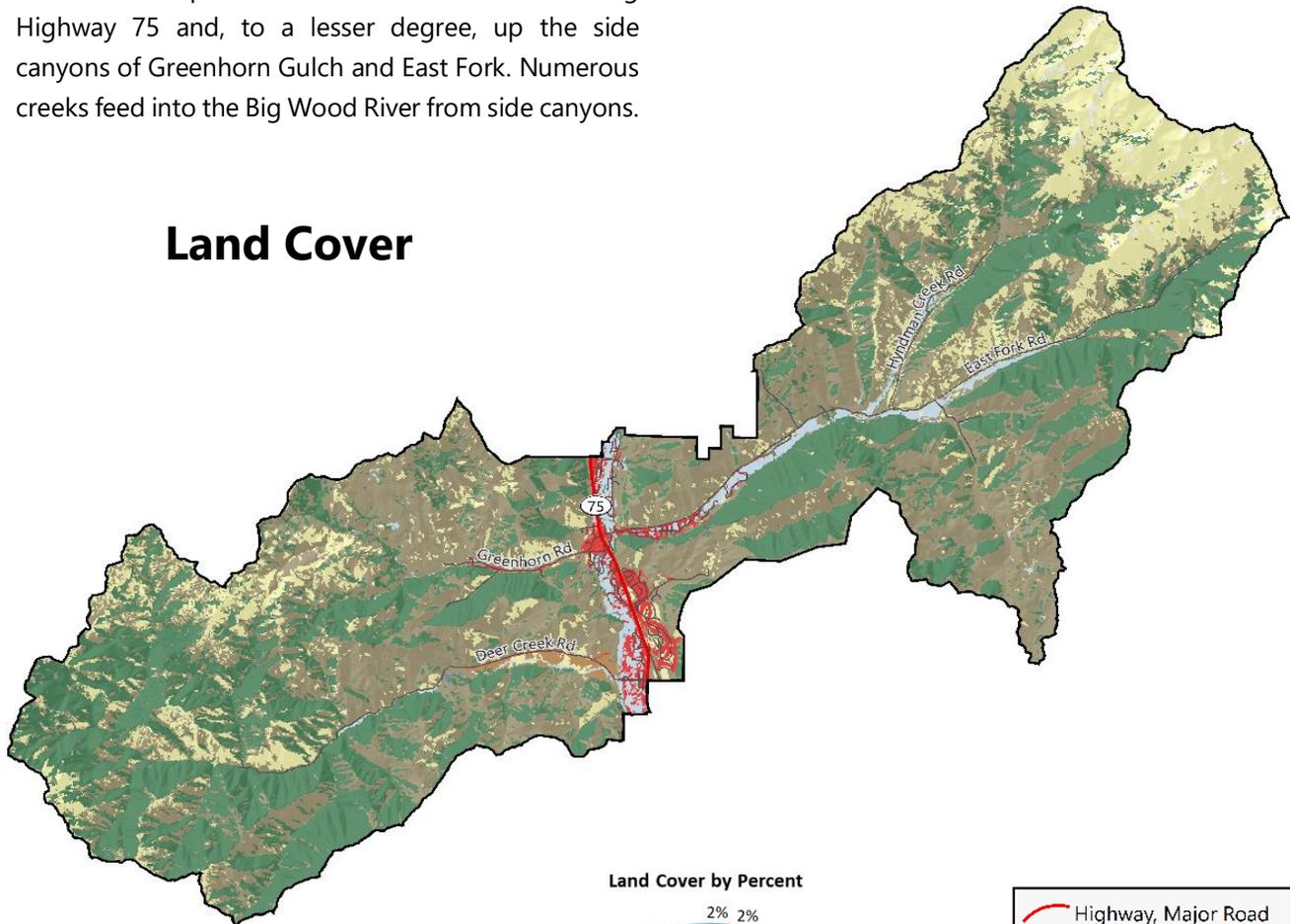
Land Ownership/Management



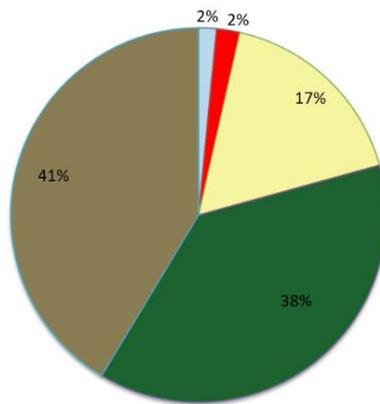
Land Cover

As shown on this Land Cover map, the majority of the Mid Valley Subarea is either forested, grassland or shrub. Developed areas are concentrated along Highway 75 and, to a lesser degree, up the side canyons of Greenhorn Gulch and East Fork. Numerous creeks feed into the Big Wood River from side canyons.

Land Cover



Land Cover by Percent



Source: USGS, National Land Cover Database, 2011

Existing Land Uses

Residential

Residential uses are the most predominant developed land use in the subarea. Lot sizes are generally one acre and greater, with the exception of smaller platted lots in some older subdivisions along Highway 75 and in East Fork. Many of the neighborhoods described below are accessed via dead-end side canyons off of Highway 75, with steep public lands at the end of each canyon. The following primary neighborhoods exist:

Gimlet and Aspen Hollow

The Gimlet subdivisions contain a total of about 150 lots located on both sides of the Big Wood River and east of the Wood River Trail. The lots vary in size but generally two acres or more. The neighboring Aspen Hollow subdivisions contain 36 mostly one-acre lots lying between the Wood River Trail and the highway. All are accessed off of Highway 75 and serviced entirely by private roads.

Greenhorn Gulch

The Greenhorn area contains the developed subdivision of Golden Eagle, platted in two phases in 1997 and 2001. This large-lot subdivision contains 74 lots. Past Golden Eagle to the west, the Greenhorn subdivision contains 34 lots and is accessed along the private road for about 2 ½ miles up to Forest Service lands. The Timberview Terrace Subdivision (5 lots) and Valley View Subdivision (7 lots), are also accessed via Greenhorn Road and provide another access point to public land via Timber Gulch.



Golden Eagle Path; Photo credit – Carol Waller

Draft recommended by P&Z

East Fork

East Fork Canyon is the most developed side canyon in the Wood River Valley. The narrow canyon runs for a length of approximately six miles served by a County road - East Fork Road - and several minor side roads on the south side of East Fork Road. Nearly 300 primary dwellings exist out East Fork Canyon, on a variety of platted and unplatted lots, including a few homes on Hyndman Creek Road and Cove Creek Road adjacent to US Forest Service land. The village of Triumph, located out East Fork about 5 ½ miles from Highway 75, is a residential neighborhood of approximately fifty residents, tightly clustered in what was the original town site for the Triumph mine. Triumph has a unique history - described below.



Photo credit – The Community Library
Center for Regional History

Triumph

The Triumph Mine was a lead and silver mine, in active production from 1882 to 1957, producing silver, zinc and lead. The mine, in its heyday around World War 2, employed over 200 men working 24 hours per day, holding the world record for zinc production. After the mine closed, Triumph was considered a mine waste site. The site includes three mines connected by a mine tunnel and tailings with over 1 million cubic yards of black sand, which constituted a health hazard. Approximately one-third of the site is owned by the Idaho Department of Lands.

In 1988 the Idaho Department of Environmental Quality (IDEQ) found elevated levels of arsenic, zinc and manganese in surface water in the vicinity, with the primary issue being fugitive dust from non-smeltered lead. In 1993 the EPA proposed adding the 60-acre site to the national superfund list to assist with cleanup. The measure was opposed by citizens and County officials for a variety of reasons: long-term impacts of a “stigma” associated with this designation; impacts to property values and the length of time the clean-up would take under the superfund process, and the fact that the Triumph mine did not use smelting to process ore, and therefore did not create the same risks as smeltered lead mines. The cleanup was then taken over by the IDEQ. When the Asarco Mining Company filed for bankruptcy in 2005, the company agreed to pay IDEQ \$1.7 million towards cleanup efforts. Piles were flattened in the late 1990’s, covered with soil and seeded with native plants. Existing wetlands were utilized to filter contaminants.

The Idaho Conservation League filed a lawsuit in 2018, citing surface and ground water impacts under the Clean Water Act. As of the date of this Plan, the State of Idaho is earmarking \$68 million towards cleanup efforts. Drinking water tests have been and remain at normal levels.

Heatherlands and Sundance Subdivisions

The Heatherlands is an older subdivision, platted in 1979 and consisting of 115 single family and duplex lots, generally 1-acre in size. The subdivision contains large open space parcels along the highway and a clubhouse, pool and tennis/pickle ball courts for resident use. The Sundance Subdivision, to the northeast of Heatherlands, contains 13 lots and two open space parcels. All lots in these subdivisions access via Ohio Gulch Road.

Starweather/Hidden Hollow/River Bend

These three subdivisions are located across the highway west of the Heatherlands and fronting the Big Wood River. Starweather consists of 54 lots and multiple non-residential parcels. The River Bend Subdivision has 16 lots and the Hidden Hollow neighborhood contains 22 platted and unplatted lots.

Alturas Area

Alturas Vista and Cook subdivisions, with 45 lots, make up a small neighborhood surrounded by Starweather and Hidden Hollow. They are accessed via private lanes just west of Highway 75. Nearly all of these lots are nonconforming in size at less than the two acre minimum for the R-2 zoning district.

Valley Club

The Valley Club, accessed off of both Ohio Gulch and Buttercup Roads, is a golf course Planned Unit Development subdivision with 99 lots and multiple

golf course and other recreational and common parcels. Lot sizes average just under two acres. As of 2020, the subdivision is approximately 60% built-out. Streamside at Valley Club, also a Planned Unit Development, includes an additional 43 small lots within about 20 acres of common area, adjacent to the Valley Club "West Nine" and just west of the tennis courts. The homes utilize a shared septic system.

Zinc Spur Ranch

The three Zinc Spur Ranch subdivisions were platted pre-zoning, between 1972 and 1977. The three "units" contain a total of 45 lots, lying west of the Valley Club, between the Big Wood River and Highway 75.

Deer Creek Canyon

Deer Creek is a long canyon leading to a large area of accessible public land. Several small subdivisions, with a total of approximately 60 lots, lie within a quarter of a mile of Highway 75. Most of these lots are about one acre in size. Eight much larger lots lie between these smaller platted lots and the Big Wood River. To the west of the river, the majority of the private land is in one large ranch ownership. This property is known as Deer Creek Ranch. Just west of Deer Creek Ranch is the now defunct Clarendon Hot Springs. An old (1975) subdivision with 45 small platted lots exists for this private land. None of these small lots have been developed. Past Clarendon, federally-managed forest service lands begin.



Photo courtesy of Valley Club

Draft recommended by P&Z

Public and Semi-Public Uses

Greenhorn Station

The Greenhorn Gulch Fire Station is located on the east side of this intersection. It has two apparatus bays with six Ketchum Rural Fire District live-in housing units integrated into the site.

Sawtooth Botanical Garden

The Sawtooth Botanical Garden, including Visitor Center and Greenhouse, operates under a Conditional Use Permit on 5 acres at the corner of Highway 75 and Gimlet Road. The Garden is open to the public, and showcases native and cultivated high-altitude plants. The Garden offers a variety of public and private programming events and education related to high altitude gardening, landscaping and ecological principals, and sees over 15,000 unique visitors annually.



Sawtooth Botanical Garden. Photo credit – Candice Stark

Light on the Mountains

The Light on the Mountains Center for Spiritual Living operates under a Conditional Use Permit on 1.4 acres north of the Botanical Garden.

East Fork Park and Ride

The parking lot on the northeast corner of Highway 75 and East Fork Road is used by both commuters and recreationists. The site is owned by the Idaho Transportation Department but maintained by the Blaine County Recreation District. The parking lot can accommodate approximately 20 cars.

Ohio Gulch Nonresidential Uses

Ohio Gulch Transfer Station

Southern Idaho Solid Waste has operated a 130-acre transfer station on County-owned land at the end of Ohio Gulch Road since the mid 1990's. Trash and municipal waste are deposited at this transfer station and then transferred by truck to the landfill at Milner Butte, about 100 miles from Blaine County. Other materials stored at the Transfer Station include inert materials, construction wood waste and scrap metal, yard and landscaping waste, and clean wood.

Blaine County Recycle Center

The Blaine County Recycle Center was built in 2004 at the Transfer Station. The County operates a "multi-stream" recycling program. In addition to recyclables, the Recycle Center holds household hazardous waste and glass.

Compost Facility

A private enterprise offering composting services, including drop-off of compostable items and purchase of finished compost, operates on approximately seven and a half acres of leased Idaho Department of Lands (IDL) property.

Gravel Extraction

The largest use operating on the 640-acre IDL property are several gravel extraction and soil/rock/fill material stockpiling activities on roughly 50 acres on the north side of Ohio Gulch Road.

Hurtig Shooting Range - See Recreation below

Recreation

This subarea supports four-season recreational activities including walking, hiking, biking, cross-country skiing, fishing, hunting, shooting, horseback riding, camping and picnicking. The majority of recreational amenities are on public lands. Natural trails are managed by land management agencies, and the Wood River Trail multi-use path is managed by the Blaine County Recreation District (BCRD). The County's role in the development and management of these amenities is indirect; generally, as a project partner. The County has a direct role in providing for access to the river or to public lands through the subdivision process.

Recreational opportunities include:

Hurtig Shooting Range

The Hurtig Shooting Range has a lease on 23 acres of the 640-acre IDL property, one mile from the highway out Ohio Gulch Road. The range serves members and the general public. Shooting activities include Sporting Shotguns, Pistol and Precision Rifles. Instruction, equipment rentals and a Pro Shop and year-round competitions are available at the facility.

Greenhorn Area Trails

Just past the Greenhorn Guard Station (now used for Forest Service housing) is the Greenhorn Trailhead, at the terminus of Greenhorn Road. This popular major trailhead serves hikers, bikers, motorcycles and equestrian users, accessing a wide network of trails.

In 2017, the Idaho Department of Fish and Game accepted a donated parcel (785 acres) at the mouth of Timber Gulch. The Department now manages the Timber Gulch Wildlife Habitat Area to provide quality habitat for all wildlife and to offer wildlife-based public recreation opportunities. [The public has non-motorized access for activities including hunting, trapping, and wildlife watching.](#)

East Fork Trails

The two spurs of East Fork Canyon provide access to the Pioneer Mountains and various popular trailheads and dispersed designated campsites via Hyndman

Creek Road, Cove Creek Road and the eastern terminus of East Fork Road. The Sawmill Gulch and Federal Gulch campgrounds are located on US Forest Service land on East Fork Road.

Deer Creek Trails

The trailhead at the end of Deer Creek Road is a major access point for hikers, bikers, motorcycles and equestrian users. The trailhead was redeveloped as part of the Beaver Creek Fire restoration project, described below in this chapter. Dispersed designated campsites are also available along Deer Creek Road.

Fishing/Waterway Access points

This subarea contains over ten access points for access to the Big Wood River. The majority of these access points are within developed subdivisions. These access points are noted on the BCRD Wood River Valley River Access Map. Hyndman Creek and the East Fork of the Big Wood can also be accessed in several locations, mostly within public land but a few in platted subdivisions.

The Valley Club

The Valley Club is a full-service private membership 18-hole golf course, with clubhouse and restaurant and other member recreational amenities.

Infrastructure

State Highway 75 is the primary spine, with one signalized intersection (East Fork/Greenhorn) and unsignalized intersections at Ohio Gulch, Deer Creek, Buttercup and numerous smaller spur roads. The signalized East Fork/Greenhorn intersection has a park and ride lot on the east side of the highway and an underpass for bicycle/pedestrian access connecting Greenhorn Gulch to the Wood River Trail.

Blaine County maintains several collector roads in the subarea, most notably Ohio Gulch Road, East Fork Road, Deer Creek Road, all roads in the Heatherlands and Zinc Spur Subdivisions, and a portion of Buttercup Road (the majority of which is in the Hailey/Bellevue Canyons Subarea). See issues and opportunities for further discussion of local roads, intersections, and bike/pedestrian corridors.

Draft recommended by P&Z

Regulations

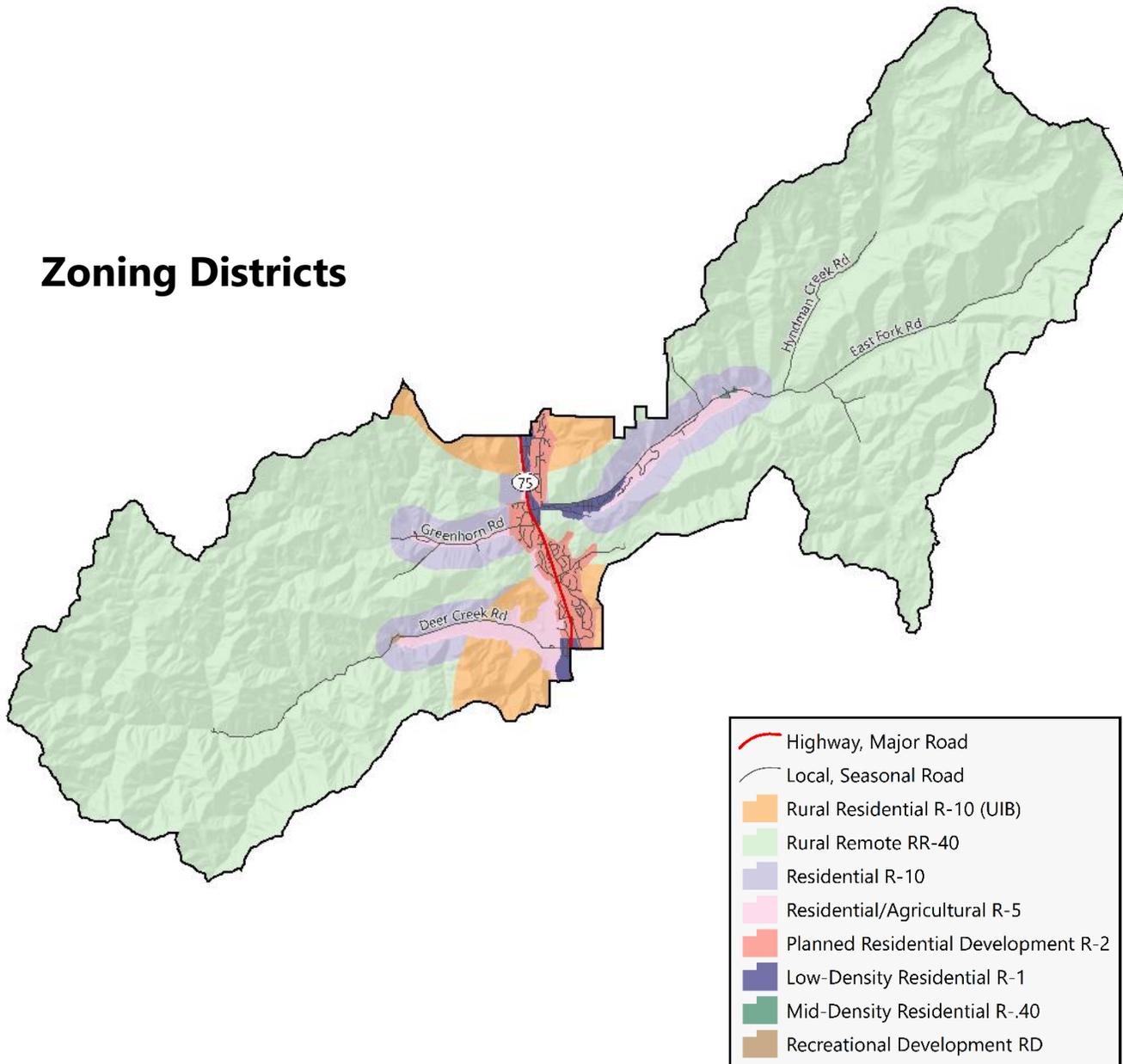
Blaine County Regulations

The 1995 Comprehensive Plan Land Use Map shows this area as primarily Residential on the valley floors and with the Agriculture/Rural/Remote designation on hillsides and covering the public land. There are two areas with the Recreation land use designation: one out Deer Creek at the Clarendon Hot Springs, and one out Ohio Gulch in the area of the transfer station.

There is currently a variety of residential zoning districts on the valley floors including R-1, R-2, R-5. The highest density zoning is R-4 in the village of Triumph. The hillsides and public lands are zoned Rural Residential (R-10) and Rural Remote (RR-40). One small area of Recreation Development zoning exists out Deer Creek, encompassing the geothermal areas of Clarendon Hot Springs.

The zoning classifications are shown on the Zoning Districts map on this page.

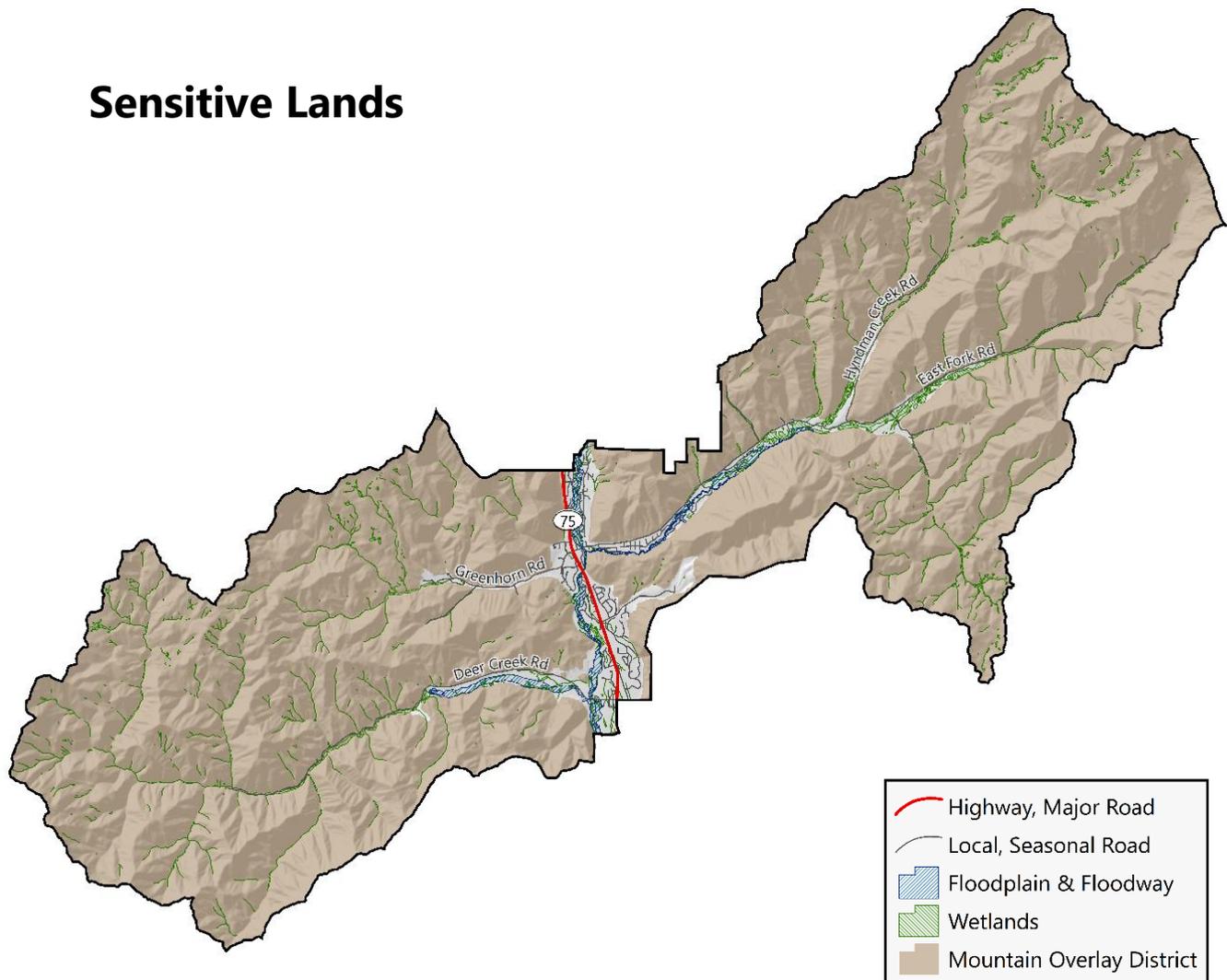
Zoning Districts



The majority of the land in the subarea is within the Mountain Overlay District (MOD), which reduces the developable density to one unit per 160 acres. All private development within the MOD, floodplain and wetlands is regulated, as is development in avalanche hazard areas (identified by site-specific mapping).

The Sensitive Lands overlays are identified on this page.

Sensitive Lands



Draft recommended by P&Z

Buildout Analysis

To create this analysis, the GIS Department utilized zoning and other informational layers. The greatest constraint on development is the Mountain Overlay District and the reduction in allowable density to one unit per 40 or one per 160 acres. Development in the MOD is often also constrained by the absence of fire apparatus access roads.

Density in mapped floodplain is decreased in R-1, R-2 and RD districts (to one unit per 5 acres). A few conservation easements exist, which reduce potential units by more than 50.

It is likely that further subdivision is prohibited in some existing subdivisions, but this subarea contains too many subdivisions to analyze such constraints.

The subarea's buildout analysis is shown below:

Mid Valley Study Parcels*

Zone	Acres	Divider	Units	25% Slope Decrease Units	Floodplain Decrease Units	Conservation Easement Decrease Units	Buildout Potential Units	Existing Units	Remaining Potential Units
R-.40	25.1	0.4	63	1	0	0	62	22	40
R-1	658.8	1.0	659	36	61	30	532	307	225
R-10	2,396.7	10.0	240	186	0	0	54	4	50
R-10(UIB)	1,987.1	10.0	199	118	0	0	81	4	77
R-2	1,769.6	2.0	885	11	66	20	788	506	282
R-5	2,128.2	5.0	426	28	0	5	393	94	299
RD	19.0	0.25	76	18	4	0	54	0	54
RR-40	6,161.5	40.0	154	80	0	1	73	14	59
Totals	15,146.1		2,700	478	131	56	2,035	951	1,084

* Does not include public lands.

Land Use Map

The proposed land use classification map includes Residential on most of valley floor, with the Rural and Remote designation east of Triumph (as well as on mining claims). Triumph itself is classified as a Community Townsite. A small area of Recreation is designated at Clarendon Hot Springs. Public lands are classified as Resource Conservation. These land use designations align very closely with the current zoning in this subarea. The map is on the following page.

Land Use Map – ledger size map on this page

Draft recommended by P&Z

Issues and Opportunities

Community Input

A kickoff stakeholder meeting was held in September 2019, comprised of a number of area residents. This meeting helped to inform the discussion topics for the online survey and the community meeting. The online survey was launched on September 4, 2019, and remained open until November 20, 2019. The community meeting (open house format) was conducted on October 30, 2019, at the Mountain Humane community meeting room. Approximately 15 citizens participated – a mix of full-time, part-time and business owners.

The complete online survey results are found in the appendix, and certain key results are noted in the Issues and Opportunities sections below. The vast majority (69%) of the 153 survey-takers live full time in the subarea and have done so for at least 5 years. Respondents said that they most valued access to out of doors, the moderate growth in the area, neighborhood pride in ownership and view of open space. Changes in their neighborhood that respondents were most proud of included common area and fire-wise improvements. Changes that concerned them the most included issues related to the Idaho Power redundant transmission line, Highway 75 traffic and the Ohio Gulch/Highway 75 intersection safety concerns

Both the online survey results and input at the community meeting are reflected in the issues and opportunities listed below.

Land Use Development and Housing

Housing

The Mid Valley subarea has a large number of residential subdivisions and a very broad range of housing types - from deed-restricted affordable homes to very large and expensive homes in such areas as Golden Eagle and The Valley Club. Many residents are nearly equidistant from Hailey and Ketchum. Several survey respondents indicated this is

a benefit of living in the subarea. Housing is well-located for workers in the employment centers of Hailey/Bellevue and Ketchum/Sun Valley. Over 60% of survey respondents somewhat favored or strongly favored increasing opportunities for accessory dwelling units. Nearly 47% somewhat favored or strongly favored pocket areas of smaller lots.

The survey results indicated the most important considerations for development in the side canyons include wildfire, water availability and rural character.

Deer Creek Ranch

Deer Creek Ranch is one of the largest remaining primarily undeveloped ranches in the Wood River Valley, totaling several thousand acres. It spans Deer Creek Canyon as far as Clarendon Hot Springs and Forest Service lands to the west, as well as lands outside the canyon -- north to Greenhorn Gulch Road and south to Croy Creek Road. The ranch includes a main home site, and two other sites with dwellings, outbuildings and ranch office, all along Deer Creek Road adjacent to the farmed fields. Citizens value the beauty of the ranch and have expressed a desire to maintain its agricultural uses, hillsides and open space.

Nonconforming properties

A two-acre property at 12449 Highway 75 contains a nonconforming light industrial use. As of 2020 a landscape business has operated there for several years. This business or a similar light industrial use may continue here but not expand.

Two old subdivisions - Alturas Vista along Highway 75 (1962), and Willowood in East Fork (1970) - pre-date County zoning regulations and contain mostly nonconforming lots in terms of size for the zoning district. Most lots are significantly under South Central Public Health District's one-acre policy for individual wells and septic systems. Complying with County zoning setbacks and health district regulations is challenging on lots smaller than one acre.

Inholdings

The subarea includes twenty-five patented mining claim tax parcels totaling approximately 1,080 acres. Of those, roughly 640 acres are clustered just north of Triumph. There is a very small number of other (non-mining claim) inholding parcels surrounded by public land. While the lack of fire apparatus access roads, Mountain Overlay District and other regulations limit the development potential on these parcels, constructing a cabin of up to 1200 square feet is generally possible. Limited access creates challenges for emergency service delivery, building inspections, and other necessary services.

Recreation

Trails and Access

Popular trailheads in this subarea, such as the Greenhorn Trailhead and trailheads out Deer Creek and Hyndman Creek, are on US Forest Service lands. Vehicular access to these trailheads is along county roads until federal land is reached. Adequate maintenance of these roads is important for recreation.

Citizens have indicated the desire for better signage for river access points as well as adequate parking. Access to some lesser known gulches including Timber Gulch and Milligan Gulch (by Triumph) was noted as desirable and should be maintained, along with identified parking. Local residents have pointed out that the winter recreation public parking area along Hyndman Creek Road is too small and needs to be expanded.



Greenhorn Gulch Hiker - Carol Waller

Camping

Campgrounds including Recreational Vehicle camping in the vicinity of the incorporated cities has been identified as a recreational need. A survey question regarding citizen ideas for future campground opportunities noted these possible locations:

- Deer Creek Road
- Greenhorn Trailhead
- Cove Creek
- Ohio Gulch
- Triumph
- Intersection of Highway 75 and East Fork

However, most survey-takers did not support the development of new campgrounds in this subarea.

Geothermal Resources

The 300-acre Clarendon Hot Springs property once included a functioning hot springs, with geothermal pools. Dating back to 1881, Clarendon Hot Springs flourished briefly in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The hotel on the site was closed after World War II. The concrete pool remained accessible to the public until the late 1970s, after which it was used privately by the owners. A 1975 subdivision plat with 45 very small lots is still of record, although development as platted is unlikely due to lot sizes, density, and hillside lot locations. The hot springs are a unique feature and citizens have noted the value of these as a potential recreational resource to the community. Next to heating homes, survey respondents indicated recreation as the highest priority for geothermal use. Due to its location five miles out Deer Creek, proposed development would require careful planning and sensitivity to the open space values of that canyon.

Draft recommended by P&Z

Infrastructure and Service Provision

Transportation

East Fork Road

East Fork Road is heavily used by bicyclists and pedestrians, despite its lack of bike/ped infrastructure. The 2014 Blaine County Community Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan identifies this infrastructure need, identifying the project as a medium-high priority, but noting the difficulty in implementation. The County Road and Bridge Department has noted that the East Fork improvements called for in the Bike/Ped Master Plan could be very difficult due to the terrain and would need careful engineering. Funding is currently not available.

The BCRD maintains a park and ride lot at this intersection. A portable restroom serves this location; neither the BCRD nor Mountain Rides have any immediate plans to create a permanent restroom.



East Fork Road – Carol Waller

Ohio Gulch Road Intersection

The County Sheriff and citizens have noted the safety issue at Highway 75 and Ohio Gulch Road. Traffic, including significant truck traffic, continues to increase due to additional residences and use by the public of the transfer station and other uses up Ohio Gulch. The survey indicated that this intersection was the highest priority for safety measures. A traffic signal and a roundabout have been suggested by citizens as possible safety improvements. As of 2020,

however, ITD has stated that this intersection is not a high priority for statewide safety projects.

The Ohio Gulch pullout area is part of the ITD right of way and is typically used for staging, parking snowplows and other equipment, and occasionally as a weigh station. This right of way could be formalized as parking to access the Wood River Trail via a temporary encroachment permit. A permanent, formalized parking area in this location is unlikely, as the 2008 Highway 75 Environmental Impact Statement did not study this land use.

Valley Club Drive

Citizens have noted an increase in vehicular traffic - particularly trucks - associated with multiple uses out Ohio Gulch cutting through the Valley Club on Valley Club Drive, apparently in an effort to avoid a left hand turn onto the highway. Blaine County plows snow from Valley Club Drive but the Valley Club HOA handles all other road maintenance within the subdivision, so the solution to this issue may be a private one.

Deer Creek Road and Wood River Trail

The 2014 Blaine County Community Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan noted the need for an underpass to connect Deer Creek Road across State Highway 75 to the Wood River Trail. No plans are underway at this time for that improvement. Development of the property known as Peregrine Ranch would be an opportunity to formalize non-motorized access across it.

Wildlife-Highway and Highway 75

The stretch of Highway 75 between Buttercup Road and Hailey is a well-known elk and deer crossing area, with the McKercher Boulevard to Zinc Spur stretch measuring the highest wildlife fatalities along Highway 75 in 2010 and 2012. The Blaine County Regional Transportation Committee established a Wildlife Crossings Committee in 2012. The purpose of the Wildlife Crossings Committee is to identify, analyze and recommend to the Blaine County Regional Transportation Committee ways to alleviate vehicle/animal collisions in the County. Their work

resulted in a lowering of nighttime speed limits to 45 mph on this stretch of the Highway in 2013, and working with the state for eye-catching wildlife warning signage installation in 2015. The Committee has also explored additional “detection zone” devices, although funding has not yet been allocated.

Cell service

Citizens have noted that small booster towers for 4G service, which are less visually obtrusive than other tower types, could help with the limited cell phone service out in the side canyons of this subarea. Lack of service has caused unforeseen consequences such as roadside erosion along East Fork Road near the location where cellular service ends, where motorists stop to make or continue a call.

Natural Environment

Wildfire

Wildfire has been and continues to be a significant risk in this subarea due to the proximity of many neighborhoods to standing timber and the single exit canyons of Deer Creek, Greenhorn and East Fork. (There is no ability to create a second exit from Deer Creek and Greenhorn Canyons, and East Fork would require significant improvements.)

Two “Type 1” incidents have affected the western portion of this subarea since the last Comprehensive Plan. The 2007 Castle Rock fire and the 2013 Beaver Creek fire burned significant acreage out Deer Creek



Canyon and Greenhorn Gulch. Federal land managers estimate that 69% of the Deer Creek drainage and 40% of the Greenhorn drainage were burned. One home was lost in Greenhorn, and dozens were threatened but remained undamaged due to firefighter efforts. Subsequent rain events triggered debris flows that damaged Deer Creek Road, Greenhorn Road, homes in Greenhorn Gulch, and trails.

East Fork Canyon has not experienced a significant fire in the past two decades and has high fire hazard.¹

Firewise efforts have increased as a result of the fires, including education on defensible space and urging property owners to replace dangerous wood shake roofs.

Post-Fire Rehabilitation

The 5B Restoration Coalition was formed to address rehabilitation after the Beaver Creek Fire. This group includes a broad representation of stakeholders including conservation organizations, government entities, recreation groups and businesses, and individual community members. Their flagship project has been the Deer Creek drainage rehabilitation. The restoration package included \$319,000 from the Land Water and Wildlife Levy Program, and \$1.9 million from the National Forest Foundation and private funds. Goals of the project included reducing sediment loading in Deer Creek, reconnecting side channels, restoring healthy fish and wildlife habitat, relocating public access out of the floodplain, revegetating damaged hillsides, removing noxious weeds and reconstructing trails and bridges. The 5B Restoration Coalition also worked to restore trails and construct a pavilion in Greenhorn Gulch.

¹ Idaho Department of Lands “Blaine County Fire Hazard Map” - July 2019

Draft recommended by P&Z

Flooding

The Big Wood River historically occupied a much more expansive channel migration zone which included braided sections of channel, wide spanning floodplains and robust riparian vegetation. Through this reach in particular, development including bridges, levees, subdivisions, and water diversions have constricted the main channel over time. A more restricted river channel results in disconnection from its adjacent floodplains which serve a critical role in filtering sediment, dispersing and slowing flood waters, and cycling nutrients back into the system. During flooding events, including major floods that occurred in 1983, 2006, 2017, the now constricted Big Wood River severely erodes adjacent property, threatening homes and critical infrastructure. This has resulted in an increased need to halt further erosion by placing rock riprap during flood events. Unfortunately, these emergency actions are continuing to exacerbate the flooding and erosion issues. The County is now focusing on river management that protects the remaining functioning floodplains while also preventing further property loss and flood damage.



Photo -Blaine County

Avalanche

This subarea also has areas of avalanche hazard, affecting many residential areas, particularly in the relatively highly populated East Fork Canyon. Site-specific avalanche studies identify moderate and high-risk zones. Several subdivision plats in East Fork have delineated such zones. The County often requires new site-specific studies utilizing more modern modeling software if plats are older, if changes in vegetation have occurred, or where no zones have been previously identified (in very old plats or in unplatted areas).



Photo -Blaine County



Sawtooth Botanical Garden. Photo credit – Candice Stark

Desired Outcomes

Policy Statements:

- MV-1 Land use decisions should generally reinforce and be compatible with the rural and residential planning that has created the existing neighborhoods.
- MV-2 Planning for the Deer Creek Ranch and Clarendon Hot Springs areas shall be conducted with care and consideration for open space, public benefit, provision of public services, and protection of the natural environment.
- MV-3 Develop and strengthen County input into Idaho Department of Lands lease permits and auctions.

Draft recommended by P&Z

- MV-4 Address workforce housing issues, expanding opportunities for employees to rent Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) by working with South Central Public Health District to increase circumstances in which they might be built and by exploring incentives to encourage long term versus short term ADU rental.
- MV-5 Consider amendments to zoning setback regulations for small nonconforming lots in existing subdivisions.
- MV-6 Take steps to maintain and improve public access points to rivers and public lands, including clear signage and parking.
- MV-7 Work with the Forest Service and adjacent landowners to expand the existing winter recreation public parking area along Hyndman Creek Road that is adjacent to private land.
- MV-8 Implement with priority the East Fork Road bike/pedestrian improvements called for in the 2014 Blaine County Community Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan.
- MV-9 Work with ITD to encourage development of a permanent parking lot and restroom at the East Fork park and ride lot in accordance with the Blaine County Community Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan.
- MV-10 Other elements of the 2014 Blaine County Community Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan, such as the Deer Creek underpass, should be considered as opportunities arise.
- MV-11 As a high priority, work with ITD on traffic control measures to improve the safety of the Ohio Gulch/Highway 75 intersection, including exploring a roundabout or a traffic signal.
- MV-12 Support the work of the Blaine Regional Transportation Committee and Subcommittee to reduce wildlife crossing accidents in this subarea.
- MV-13 Work with providers to facilitate expansion of improved cell service in the side canyons, including small, unobtrusive cell boosters or similar technology, consistent with the goals of this Plan.
- MV-14 Continue regular Firewise outreach efforts and other methods that are consistent with the Mountain Overlay District and riparian regulations to improve fire safety.
- MV-15 Support future post-fire restoration projects modeled on the multi-agency effort in Deer Creek and Greenhorn Gulch following the Beaver Creek.
- MV-16 With the US Forest Service, explore the possibility of a dirt road connecting Triumph Gulch to Independence Gulch for the purpose of emergency evacuation for East Fork Road residents.
- MV-17 Continue to focus on river management that protects the remaining functioning floodplains in this reach.