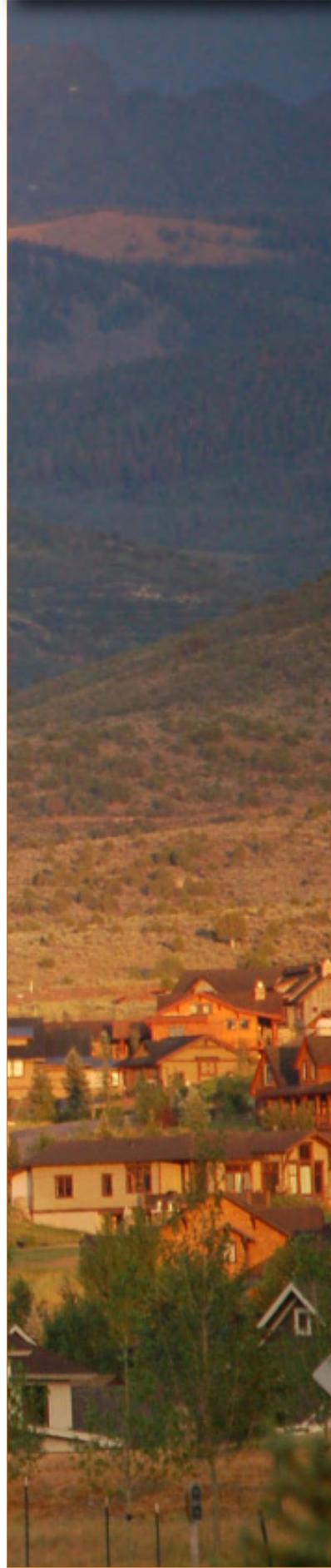


**CHAPTER 8:
Natural, Scenic and
Environmentally Sensitive
Areas**



Natural, Scenic and Environmentally Sensitive Areas

The purpose of this Chapter is to state clearly the objectives of the community as they pertain to the rich natural environmental and wildlife assets in the Town of Eagle Planning Area. Future growth should be developed in a manner that protects the natural, scenic, wildlife and environmental goals of this plan while providing for the needs of local residents and businesses.

An Outstanding Natural Environment

The natural environment within the Eagle Planning Area is of the highest quality, and represents a critical asset related to lifestyles and the local economy that should be preserved and protected. To facilitate responsible stewardship of the area's air, water, wildlife and environmentally sensitive lands, the community must understand how people and business activities affect natural areas and natural systems. The Town of Eagle and Eagle County should work collaboratively to provide information that fosters and encourages good stewardship of all natural attributes within the Eagle Planning Area by adhering to the following guidelines:

1) Use natural resources efficiently.

The Town and County should work together to assure the efficient utilization of natural resources within the planning area. Where appropriate rock, sand and gravel should be extracted from the ground in advance of development. Timber harvesting may be found to be an effective and profitable resource management strategy on public lands. The treatment and distribution of domestic water should balance agricultural needs, community needs and the benefits of maintaining healthy flows in local streams and rivers. As active stewards of the land, citizens and businesses should support and promote the efficient use of natural resources. Development review processes should require applicants to demonstrate proposed efficiencies like the reduction of solid waste, the use of green building practices, the use of renewable energy, and/or the minimization of carbon footprints.

2) Maintain and enhance air quality.

Air quality is essential to the quality of life in Eagle, especially when one considers the importance of outdoor recreation and scenic views to local residents and businesses. The Town and County should work to reduce air pollution from existing sources such as wood burning

fireplaces, construction sites and areas of traffic congestion. Energy efficient green building should be encouraged to reduce carbon dioxide emissions from homes and commercial, industrial and institutional buildings. Disturbed areas should be promptly revegetated, and dust control measures should be enforced at construction sites and gravel pits. The approval process for asphalt batch plants should ensure adherence to current state emission standards, and should require consideration of local air flow dynamics when determining plant locations and operating procedures.

3) Maintain and enhance water quality and quantity.

High quality water is an expectation in communities like Eagle that are located in the Colorado high country. The clear waters of local streams and rivers minimize the need for extensive domestic water treatment, and support high quality recreational activities like fishing, camping and wildlife viewing. Stream flows in Brush Creek, Eby Creek and the Eagle River are important to the Town and will be protected by the Town to the greatest extent possible. Brush Creek has a minimum stream flow standard, and the Town has stream management plans that can be utilized to maintain adequate flows during



Stabilizing river banks aids in erosion control.

dry years.

The requirements for waste water treatment, erosion control and storm water management are elevated within the Eagle Planning Area in order to maintain high water quality standards. The Town and County should work to identify and reduce impacts from point source and



Improvements to Brush Creek provide shade, cooler water and better fish habitat.

non-point source pollution, including urban runoff from streets and parking lots. If not properly managed, agricultural uses can increase sediment and nutrient loads in Brush Creek at certain times of the year. The Town and County should continue to support policies and action items from the Eagle River Watershed Plan, particularly with regard to protection of riparian vegetation, in-stream flows, revegetation of riparian habitat and sedimentation control. Future efforts might include the development of a water budget and implementation of water conservation tools throughout the planning area.

4) Avoid natural hazards and protect environmentally sensitive areas.

Development in flood plains, high wildfire hazard areas and areas subject to rock falls, debris flows or other significant geologic hazards within the planning area should be avoided. Development on sensitive lands, which include wetlands, riparian habitats, critical wildlife habitats, and areas supporting unique vegetative communities or rare or endangered plants or animals, should also be avoided. In the event that development on sensitive lands is found to be necessary, the impacts of development should be fully mitigated. Applications for changes in land use should include site specific analysis of any hazards or envi-

ronmentally sensitive lands that exist on the property, and should propose and implement mitigation strategies consistent with those recommended through the Town's and County's application referral process.



Open space (Hernage Creek shown above) preserves view and protects environmentally sensitive areas.

5) Protect wildlife habitat and wildlife movement corridors.

Wildlife is an important component of the natural, scenic, environmental and economic systems of the region. Feedback from the community shows that residents are concerned about the future of the region's wildlife. Development and related activity within wildlife habitat and movement corridors directly and in-

directly impacts the ability of the area to support healthy populations, and increases the possibility for conflicts between wildlife and humans. A healthy wildlife population also provides great economic benefit. Hunting, fishing, and wildlife viewing bring visitors to the area and build economic strength through non-resort based activities. Businesses such as guiding and outfitting are created for, and depend upon, wildlife-centered activities.

County by hunters and fishermen totaled \$32.2 million annually. The overall gain to the County's economy as those direct dollars circulate through the community was estimated to be \$57.8 million annually. In addition, the report concluded that \$940 million is spent in Colorado each year by residents and visitors pursuing other related activities including wildlife viewing, wildlife photography, etc. Given the rich wildlife resources in Eagle County, it is reasonable to assume that such "watchable wildlife"



Elk graze in open space next to homes in Eagle Ranch.

A 2002 report commissioned by the Colorado Division of Wildlife and prepared by BBC Research and Consulting found that direct expenditures in Eagle

uses contribute millions of dollars to Eagle County's economy. The report also provided an estimate that 20,000 jobs are generated statewide as a result of

wildlife resources and activities (no county by county jobs data was provided). Lands that support critical wildlife habitat or movement corridors within the Eagle Planning Area should therefore be protected and/or enhanced to ensure their ability to sustain wildlife in perpetuity.

Wildlife mapping in the development review process was an implementing action set forth in the 1996 Eagle Area Community Plan and has been accomplished. At the writing of this plan, critical wildlife habitat of relevance includes elk production areas, elk migration corridors, elk severe winter range, deer migration corridors, deer winter range, deer severe winter range, elk and deer winter concentration areas, blue heron rookeries, raptor nesting areas, riparian areas and areas critical to the support of rare or endangered species.

Wildlife habitat in Eagle County is dynamic, and future wildlife impacts and mitigation strategies should be determined on a case-by-case basis by the Colorado Division of Wildlife. It is generally agreed that minimizing development of a sprawling nature in the Brush Creek, Castle Peak, Eastern Gateway and Western Gateway Character Areas will benefit local wildlife populations. It is also generally agreed that several wildlife movement corridors and deer and elk winter ranges should be identified and preserved as open space across the floor

of the Brush Creek valley south of the Town of Eagle.

The Town and County should continue to coordinate with local land and resource management agencies to maintain and enhance the health of local wildlife populations. Coordinated land planning will better ensure the maintenance of high quality, non-fragmented wildlife habitat in the Eagle Planning Area.

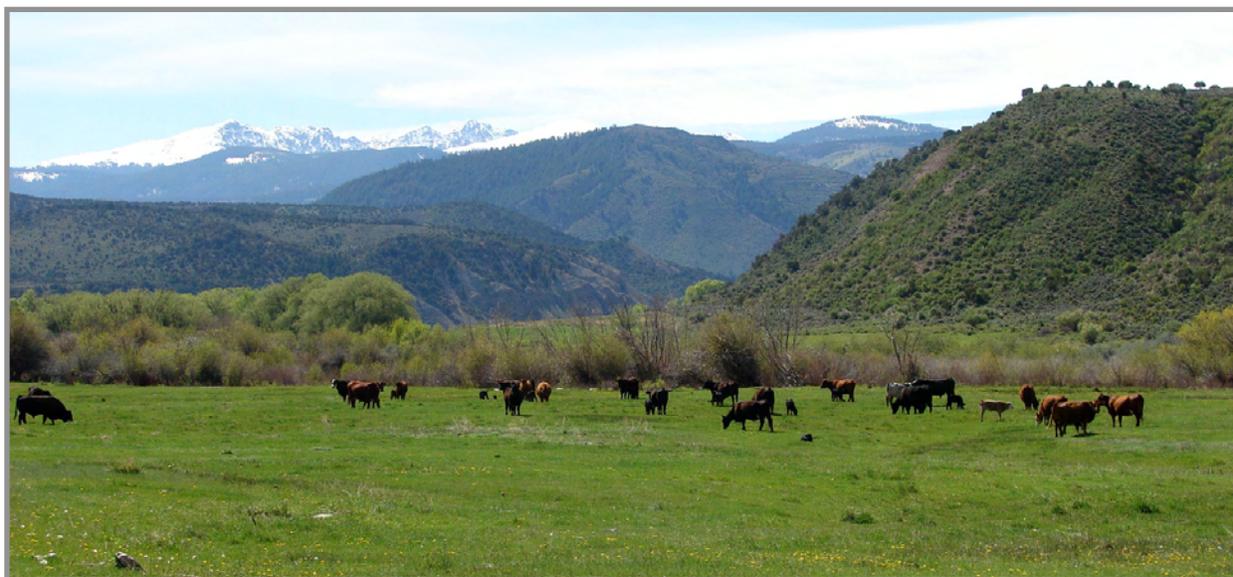
Potential funding sources for the protection of wildlife include but are not limited to the Colorado Division of Wildlife, the Natural Resources Conservation Service, Great Outdoors Colorado, the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, the Mule Deer Foundation, The Wild Turkey Foundation and Ducks Unlimited. Locally, the Eagle Ranch Wildlife Trust continues to contribute to wildlife habitat enhancement projects.

6) Enhance visual quality and protect view corridors.

The scenic quality of the Eagle Planning Area exemplifies the natural beauty and spirit of the Rocky Mountain west, and is vital to its character and sense of place. Views of surrounding rural lands from locations within the town contribute strongly to its small-town feel and western character. The panoramic views of mountains, ridges, valleys and stream corridors from travel routes surrounding the community are assets that add

greatly to the quality of life enjoyed by local residents, the attraction of the area to visitors, and the success of local businesses. Castle Peak, the Sawatch Range, Hardscrabble Mountain and the Seven Hermits, Red Canyon, and the riparian corridors of Eby Creek, Brush Creek and the Eagle River are especially significant natural features. These combine with the built form of the commu-

footprint, implementing strategies for open space acquisition and preserving existing agricultural uses can be emphasized as a means to protect the visual quality of the area. Setbacks from rivers and streams, and development restrictions on steep slopes and ridgelines should be enforced. Agricultural uses and large-lot zoning should be maintained by Eagle County within the com-



Outstanding views contribute strongly to the desirability of the Eagle area.

nity and agricultural buildings, fences, fields and pastures that surround it to create the visual palette that defines the Eagle Planning Area as a special and unique destination.

As future development occurs, the visual quality of natural and built environments should be preserved or enhanced. Structures should be strategically positioned with natural viewsheds in mind. Maintaining a compact development

community buffer areas east and west of Town, and in the Eby Creek and Brush Creek drainages to the north and south. Maintaining high visual quality should be of particular importance in areas considered gateways to the community, or gateways to recreation areas on surrounding public lands.

The development of additional design standards and special planning area principles can help the Town provide

guidance for viewshed protection during the development review process. Where they do not currently exist, design guidelines can be used to encourage the use of street orientations, building forms, architectural treatments and landscaping to enhance viewsheds and visual quality. Large existing vegetation stands, riparian areas and other sensitive lands should be determinants in locating open spaces, parks and trail corridors within new neighborhoods. In this manner, new development can be better integrated with the existing scenic landscape patterns.

- 7) Provide opportunities for education and involvement.

The Town of Eagle and Eagle County should lead and contribute to environ-

mental sustainability by providing information and encouraging sustainable practices among residents and visitors. Local governments can set positive examples by increasing the sustainability of their own buildings and operations. Public information on resource efficiency, including energy and water conservation, air quality, water quality and quantity, building practices, waste management, greenhouse gas production and other relevant topics should be distributed through the Town and County's website, brochures, and events. Incentives could include reduced permitting fees and rebates. The Town and County are currently working to reduce their consumption of energy and production of solid waste. These efforts should be publicized to provide positive examples of sustainability and awareness to residents and visitors.



The Town and County can set positive examples and provide public information about resource efficiency.

Natural Resources Goal #1: *Natural Resources in the Eagle Planning Area are appropriately and efficiently utilized, and the quality and function of the natural environment and natural systems is preserved.*

POLICIES	RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES
<p>Natural Resources Policy 1.1</p> <p>Support and demonstrate the efficient use of natural resources.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Coordinate with the County’s regional waste management plan to reduce solid waste by maintaining and improving local recycling facilities and services. B. Encourage all construction efforts to utilize green building practices. C. Evaluate the feasibility of utilizing local renewable energy resources, including wind, solar, micro-hydro, biomass and geothermal. D. Encourage energy conservation and energy efficient lifestyles by implementing relevant strategies listed in Chapter 6 under Community Design Goal #2. E. Identify and work to correct energy inefficiencies in public buildings and government services.
<p>Natural Resources Policy 1.2</p> <p>Support measures to maintain and/or improve air quality.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Prohibit traditional wood burning fireplace installations, allowing instead only EPA approved gas stoves and wood pellet fireplace appliances (Consult Town and County ordinances and land use regulations for further information). B. Encourage site designs and alternative transit incentives that reduce the demand for automobile trips in the area. C. Implement and enforce regulations for excavation, mining and construction-related dust suppression. D. Implement best management practices to minimize impacts to local air quality from asphalt, concrete and gravel mining operations. E. Implement best management practices to minimize impacts to local air quality from unpaved roads in the area and from the sanding of roads through winter months.character and sense of place.

<i>POLICIES</i>	<i>RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES</i>
<p>Natural Resources</p> <p>Policy 1.3</p> <p>Support measures to maintain and/or improve water quality and water quantities in the area.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Work collaboratively with all stakeholders to assure that master plans, land use regulations, resource management plans and forest plans adequately address water quality and water quantity concerns. B. Implement applicable policies and action items from the Eagle River Watershed Plan, including but not limited to education and conservation programs, enforcing stream setbacks, maintaining optimum stream flows, preventing and controlling erosion, managing storm water runoff, improving riparian habitat, and protecting ground water recharge areas. C. Work with USGS to monitor water quantity and quality by utilizing the Eagle River Watershed Retrospective Assessment Program. D. Maintain and enhance in-stream flows in rivers, creeks, and streams within the Eagle Planning Area. E. Utilize “Best Management Practices” to minimize impacts from point source and non-point source runoff. F. Implement a Source Water Education and Protection Plan to increase community awareness about potential risks to water quality. G. Work with public land and other involved management and service agencies to ensure high quality potable water at the Town’s water treatment plants by reducing wildfire potential in source water areas. H. Promote water conservation in the Eagle area by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Requiring the use of water saving household appliances. 2) Creating and implementing regulations related water efficient landscaping, to include incentives/requirements to install water efficient irrigation systems, reduce the use of water-consumptive ground covers and increase the use of native and/or drought tolerant plants. 3) Encouraging the use of water efficient irrigation methods on agricultural properties.

<i>POLICIES</i>	<i>RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES</i>
<p>Natural Resources</p> <p>Policy 1.4</p> <p>Development should avoid natural hazards and impacts on environmentally sensitive areas.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Utilize the most current resource analysis tools to identify natural hazards and environmentally sensitive lands. Address avoidance and the mitigation of impacts through the development review process. B. Enforce a setback from streams, rivers, wetlands and riparian vegetation based on site-specific analysis that is sufficient to protect surface and ground water quality, wildlife habitat, regional ecosystem integrity, viewsheds and dispersed recreational opportunities, as applicable. Use a minimum setback standard of 75 feet from the high water mark. C. Educate and assist landowners in the protection of river/stream corridors and wetlands. D. Provide incentives including tax relief, flexibility in site development and Transfer of Development Rights programs to preserve environmentally sensitive lands. E. Implement vegetation and tree protection standards which require developers to document the extent and type of high quality vegetative cover on a site, and implement strategies to protect and preserve such cover to the greatest degree practicable. F. Require appropriate and timely revegetation of graded and excavated areas. G. Avoid and/or severely restrict development on steep slopes, areas subject to geologic hazards (including areas harboring unstable or erosive soils), flood plains and wildfire hazard areas. H. Ensure that development does not create or exacerbate exposure to natural hazards on adjacent properties.

<i>POLICIES</i>	<i>RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES</i>
<p>Natural Resources Policy 1.5</p> <p>Protect and enhance wildlife habitats and movement corridors in the Eagle Planning Area.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Coordinate with state, national and local agencies, as well as interested citizens and organizations to maintain non-fragmented wildlife habitat. B. Utilize the most current analysis tools and mapping to identify critical wildlife habitats and movement corridors. C. Identify and establish strategies to protect critical habitats and movement corridors defined by the Colorado Division of Wildlife. Work additionally to identify and protect habitats and movement corridors on lands not inventoried by the Colorado Division of Wildlife (i.e. productive agricultural properties) throughout the Eagle Planning Area. D. Utilize wildlife habitat information to identify open space priorities. Require the inclusion of critical wildlife habitats and ecosystem connections within open space areas created through the development approval process. E. Work with landowners to remove unnecessary fencing. Where fencing is necessary, require wildlife friendly fencing according to CDOW standards. F. Work with the Division of Wildlife to identify and create safe highway crossing areas for wildlife in the area. G. Secure and expand funding sources for the protection of wildlife from agencies like the Colorado Division of Wildlife, the Natural Resources Conservation Service, Great Outdoors Colorado, the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, the Mule Deer Foundation, and the Eagle Ranch Wildlife Trust.

<i>POLICIES</i>	<i>RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES</i>
<p>Natural Resources Policy 1.6</p> <p>Maintain and work to enhance the quality of valued viewsheds and view corridors in the Eagle Planning Area.</p>	<p>A. Utilize public input to identify and map visually sensitive areas and iconic viewsheds and view corridors.</p> <p>B. Create visual quality and viewshed protection design standards for the Eagle Planning Area. (both Town and County) to assure the protection and/or enhancement of visual quality and view corridors through the development review process.</p> <p>C. Protect the area’s dark skies using the International Dark Sky Association standards as a guide to prepare local codes and design guidelines.</p>
<p>Natural Resources Policy 1.7</p> <p>Work to promote an understanding of local initiatives to reduce greenhouse gas production within the Eagle Planning Area.</p>	<p>A. Inventory the existing greenhouse gas footprint for the Town.</p> <p>B. Review the Town of Eagle and Eagle County Building Codes and revise where appropriate to reduce greenhouse production using an appropriate per unit basis.</p> <p>C. Create an educational program to inform residents of greenhouse gas reductions that can be achieved at the household and individual lifestyle level.</p> <p>D. Work to achieve a community design that encourages walking, bicycle and public transit usage.</p>