

**Lower Valley Advisory Group  
(LVAG)  
Planning Meeting**

**March 20, 2008 5:00 – 8:00 pm  
Methow Cafe**

**Present:** Beverly Zwar, Gloria Royse, Keith and Kevin Stennes, Betty Hagenbuch, Al Hymer, Gail Howe (Pateros Mayor), Ken Orford, Karen Luft

**Absent:** Arlan Ruf, Kathie Windle, Alex Kerr, Bill Tackman, Isabelle Spohn

**Agenda**

**I. Housekeeping**

**A. Announcements:**

Perry Huston/Development Agreements in Twisp Saturday March 22 at the Local March 24 Planning Commission meeting re: Comp Plan amendment package  
Water Rights Workshop April ?? Flyer at Methow, Pateros Post offices

**B. BOCC Letter/Approach**

The letter has been circulated, reviewed and approved by the whole group. Beverly and Betty agreed to take the lead on getting on the BOCC agenda and submitting the letter, as signed by LVAG.

**C. Last Meeting Notes**

Approved as amended (misidentification of Gail Howe –sorry!)

**II. Critical Areas**

**A. Maps**

Maps were posted identifying Critical Areas within the planning area, specifically floodplains, steep slopes, priority habitat, and wetlands. The group discussed the fact that most of the planning area falls within a Critical Area, Shoreline or Critical Habitat area. Each of these have (or will have) separate laws and Plans related to their management, but this group can help define things such as allowed densities, allowed uses, performance standards and other preferences for specially designated areas.

Questions about Who administers/enforces rules about placing riprap along the Methow.  
Request for Gail Howe to provide the Critical Areas Ordinance for Pateros.  
Request for a “top to bottom” review of the planning area, in order to locate possible areas for special designation.

**B. Goals/Policies**

The group reviewed Goals and Policies regarding Critical Areas from the pre-holiday compilation. **They are attached, with modifications as suggested by the group.**  
*Suggested follow up at an upcoming meeting: review Critical Areas by designation (steep slopes, habitat, etc) to capture additional recommendations specific to those areas.  
Conduct “top to bottom” review if time.*

### **C. Recommendations**

Included in Goals/Policies. Additions:

- Work needed to address the simultaneous support of the cattle/grazing industry (local) and the desire to limit the impacts of grazing practices on Critical Areas, particularly riparian areas, critical songbird habitat and private land/open range issues.
- Add Fertilizers/lawn chemicals to the list of substances to restrict adjacent to floodplains, shorelines, wetlands.

### **III. Resource Lands**

**A. Definitions** – Criteria for Ag Lands of Long Term Commercial Significance

#### **1. Existing definitions**

The following 6 criteria were pulled from language developed during an earlier attempt by the county to establish definitions for these lands. According to the document, to be considered for Ag Resource Land status, a parcel must meet at least FOUR of the six:

- Land is currently in agricultural use
- Land has one or more of the following improvements in place:
  - Irrigation facilities (public or private)
  - Drainage facilities (public or private)
  - Fencing, stock watering, or other physical improvements that enhance the land's suitability for commercial ag production
- Land is enrolled in Agricultural Open Space taxation program
- \*\*Land is surrounded by lands primarily in agricultural use with few non-farm commercial, industrial or residential uses and is not located in areas with clear potential for more intense uses of land
- Land is not located within areas identified for urban or suburban growth (or similar designation) in official city, town or county comprehensive plans
- \*\*\*Land is not located within an area served by domestic sewer or domestic water service districts.

Feedback on these designations - Generally agreed, except:

\*\* “not located within areas with clear potential for more intense uses of land” should be left out of rural areas as clear potential exists for more intense development of so much open land..

\*\*\* “except LAMIRDS” may be included for Methow LAMIRD, as agricultural use adjacent to the unincorporated town may be practical.

#### **2. Recommendations**

- Add indicators of “Growing Climate,” e.g. degree days, length of growing season, local growing climate (aspect, soil, etc) conducive to long term commercial ag.
- Consider adding Soil Type – though a later glance at the soil maps indicates that NCW farmers have been growing good food on substandard soil for a long time..Growing climate may be a better criterion.

### **V. Next Steps, Next Meeting**

Next Steps: Review the notes and prepare any additional feedback for the next meeting on April 6. We will spend more time on specific local Ag Resource land designation, Work on Forest Resource lands definitions, add details to the Critical Areas Allowed Uses, and review updated land use/density maps with Kurt.

Homework: Stay Tuned! I might send some Resource Lands –related Goals/Policies for your pre-meeting feedback to save time.

**Meeting Adjourned at 7:20pm**