

III. AGRICULTURAL LANDS

Summary: The preservation of productive agricultural lands is one of the most important planning goals of Wallowa County. Agriculture and timber-related industries are the backbone of the County's economic base.

The custom and culture associated with agricultural production in Wallowa County is necessary to the livelihood and well-being of its citizens.

The Comprehensive Land Use Plan provides for the protection of productive agricultural lands by including them in an Exclusive Farm Use classification that applies to both irrigable and non-irrigable croplands in the Wallowa Valley (approx 303,872 acres), on Grouse Flat (approx 6,784 acres), and in the Flora - Prardise area (approx 7,040 acres). Although this does not include all Class I through VI soils (see Appendix 3-3 for definitions) most of the balance of those soil classes are categorized as Timber Grazing and are afforded similar protection.

Agricultural Land is defined as all land - including that portion connected to or used for the purpose of obtaining a profit in money by the raising, harvesting, and selling of crops; the breeding, feeding, management, and sale of livestock, poultry, fur-bearing animals, or any other agricultural or horticultural use or animal husbandry or any other combination thereof. The Plan has provided for the presentation of such lands, except in areas designated for urban growth or for rural residential development, which have been minimized to the extent possible while still providing locations for that life style.

Goal: To preserve and maintain agricultural lands.

Findings: The findings below are the basis of decisions made with respect to the County's agricultural lands.

- (1) Wallowa County's economy relies heavily on agricultural activities.
- (2) A total of nearly 350,000 acres (18%) of County land is Class II through IV soils, which include the most productive agricultural lands.
- (3) Class V and VI soils play an important part in timber production and grazing, and consequently, should be

should be preserved in similar fashion to the irrigable and non-irrigable Classes II through IV soils.

- (4) Gross receipts from agricultural products totaled nearly \$14,000,000 of 1974 (Appendix 3-3).
- (5) Uncontrolled partitioning near rural residential areas diminishes the agricultural base of the County.
- (6) Public timbered and grazing lands contribute a significant portion to the agricultural base of the county.

Policies: The following statements of policy are related to satisfying the above goal.

1. Agricultural land use will be maintained through the zoning ordinances.
2. Capability classes II, III, IV, V, and VI be preserved where such land is suitable to be continued in agricultural uses (Appendix 3-1, 3-2, 3-4).
3. Conversion of agricultural land to residential or urban uses will be approved only after the following have been determined:
 - A. There is a need consistent with related plan objectives and policies.
 - B. That alternative locations suitable for the proposed uses are unavailable.
 - C. That physical, social, economic and environmental considerations have been taken into account.
 - D. That the resulting uses will not likely create undue interference with accepted farming practices in the area, and that accepted farming practices take precedence in any such disputes.
 - E. That the resulting uses will not create a burden on existing water rights and uses.
4. The rural character and open space activities of agricultural uses be protected to preserve the scenic attractiveness and living conditions desirable to farm families and other county residents.

5. Urban uses be separated from agricultural activities by a transition area where development is compatible with both urban and agricultural uses.
6. Services, such as water and sewer supplies, which extend into or pass through agricultural areas be appropriate only for the needs of agriculture, farm use and non-farm uses authorized under ORS 215.213.
7. Single family residential dwellings not provided in conjunction with farm use, as provided in ORS 215.284, may be established in areas zoned exclusive Farm Use as regulated through the zoning provisions.
8. All Parcels of 160 or more automatically qualify as a farm unit.
9. Farm or ranch dwellings may be provided in conjunction with farm use if the subject farm or ranch is currently employed for farm use.
10. Public lands be retained for multiple uses with an emphasis on the agricultural bases where compatible with other uses.
11. The private lands within the Hells Canyon national Recreation area be allowed to continue with their present usage.
12. Flood control practices will be continued to alleviate farm losses and soil erosion.
13. Wallowa County shall preserve the maximum amount of the limited supply of grazing lands, farm lands, and economic farm units in compliance with Goals 3 and 9.
14. All land uses adjacent to agricultural lands shall recognize the right to farm in the current custom and usage.
15. All State, Federal and non-profit organization activities shall be consistent with Goals 3 and 9.

16. Wallowa County shall coordinate with state and Federal agencies to develop an effective Section 8 process; as defined by the Public Rangelands Improvement Act of 1978.
17. The Board of Commissioners shall coordinate with agencies to ensure that adequate funding is provided by State, Federal and local governments to promote an adequate level of range improvement.