Hazards

The protection of the environment, property and life should be considered in the planning and land development review process. All three factors need to be examined to properly locate residential and commercial development, and Colorado law requires counties and municipalities to control land development in areas where existing hazards have been identified.

The intent of the policies in this section is to identify hazards in the Central Mountain Area which should be mitigated or eliminated prior to development, and to identify the governmental entities with the authority to safeguard people, property and the environment from injury or damage caused by hazardous conditions and events.

Goals

1. Protect life, property, and the environment from the adverse impacts of natural and man-made hazards.
4. Ensure that both existing and proposed land uses are managed to decrease wildfire hazards by:
- **a.** encouraging existing developments to implement necessary mitigation measures, and
- **b.** requiring proposed developments to implement necessary mitigation measures.

14. Ensure that emergency evacuation and response plans are prepared to anticipate any disaster.
16. Revise the Mountain Site Design Criteria and other County requirements to incorporate these goals and policies.

Policies

C. Wildfire Hazards

Wildfire is a constant threat faced by mountain area residents. As development and related human activity continues to increase in the Central Mountain area, the risk of wildfire will increase. Therefore, it will be important to reduce the risk of wildfire through maintenance, education, thinning defensible adequate access for fire protection equipment and water supplies.

The dead wood which is accumulating at an increasing rate on public and private land heightens the potential for wildfires. Intergovernmental cooperation is needed since wildfires often cross jurisdictional boundaries.

Key to wildfire management are several forest fuel types which warrant special attention. These fuel types may present serious problems for fire protection on any slope. Often, it is not possible for fire fighters and their equipment to protect property and lives where these fuel types are present. Such fuels include, but are not limited to: Gambel Oak, Lodgepole Pine, Douglas Fir and Ponderosa Pine.

1. Proper forest land management should be used to reduce all severe wildfire hazard areas to a low or moderate rating.
2. Development proposals in areas where severe or moderate wildfire hazards are present should continue to be referred to the Colorado State Forest Service and to local fire protection districts to assess the severity of the wildfire hazard, and to determine the risk reduction techniques which will be needed. State and County wildfire maps should be used to determine hazard levels, and confirmed by site inspections.

General fire protection policies are in the *Public Facilities, Services & Utilities* section of this Plan and additional wildfire hazard information is included in the *Appendix*.
3. Residential lot sizes should be restricted in severe (high) and moderate wildfire hazard areas.
- **a.** When the hazard can be adequately reduced to a moderate or low hazard level and can be maintained

over time to ensure the hazard remains low or moderate, there should be no lot size restriction based on wildfire hazard other than those other policies as referenced.

b. Development should not be allowed in high hazard areas without adequate risk reduction.

c. Thirty-five acres should be the minimum lot size if no mitigation is done in moderate hazard areas. For the safety of the homeowner, defensible space around the homesite should be completed as well as thinning along roadways and driveways.

d. Water districts should be encouraged to expand their network of fire hydrants to areas not presently served.

Implementation

Wildfire Areas

1. Amend the County legal authorities, as necessary, to implement these goals and policies.

2. Jefferson County and the State Forest Service should use the same standards for the rating of wildfire hazards.

3. Jefferson, Clear Creek, Gilpin, and Boulder counties, and the City and County of Denver, should work with the Colorado Forest Service to develop and implement a program to reduce the hazard of wildfire. This program should include:

a. a hazard overlay map showing the presence, absence, and degree of wildfire hazard, i.e., severe, moderate and low;

b. developing an emergency evacuation plan for wildfires. This plan should include identifying areas to go to for assistance, households with persons of special needs, etc.

c. a standard procedure to ensure the completion and longterm maintenance of fuel hazard risk reduction for all existing and new development;

d. a procedure to ensure the completion and the long-term maintenance of fuel hazard mitigation for existing development;

e. a description of fuel hazard mitigation practices, e.g., forest thinning, fuelbreaks to protect structures and access, fire retardant building materials, onsite water supplies, and access requirements for fire protection equipment, clearly visible road signs and house numbers, etc.;

f. an educational program for public and private landowners, residents, business people and developers, to inform them about wildfire hazards and mitigation techniques for both forests and grasslands;

g. an active, environmentally safe pest management program for use on both public and private land;

h. a designated management structure to oversee program implementation such as a coordinated fire district and/or mutual aid agreements;

i. an implementation schedule;

j. a funding mechanism to pay for the program; and

k. a program to encourage landowners to cooperate in providing adequate fire protection. This could include onsite water, hydrants and/or cisterns.

4. When the program described in Policy 2. above has been developed, Jefferson County should take appropriate action to adopt the resolutions, regulations and work programs necessary to implement the recommendations of the program.

5. Until the program in Policy 2. above has been developed, Jefferson County should create and adopt a wildfire hazard overlay map to be used as an indicator of the presence or absence of wildfire hazard areas and follow the provisions of Section 44: W-H Wildfire Hazard Overlay District of the Jefferson County Zoning Resolution. Jefferson County should implement the recommendations in Policy 2.a. through i., to the maximum extent possible.