

Natural Resources & Hazardous Areas

Introduction

The natural resources of New Meadows include the area's climate, wildlife, geology, open spaces, vegetation, water, and air quality. Residents value the beauty of their surroundings: the mountains, valley, forests, water, and clean air.

Hazardous areas include floodplains and earthquakes. The purpose of this component of the Comprehensive Plan is to bring a balance between management and development of these resources without deteriorating the "quality of life" that is valued by the residents of New Meadows.

Existing Conditions

Natural Resources

Geography

The community of New Meadows is located in the northeastern part of Adams County. Little Goose Creek, to the south and west, feeds into the headwaters of the Little Salmon River. To the east is the West Branch of Goose Creek, which also flows into the Little Salmon River. The city sits at an average elevation of 3,868 feet.

Geology / Soils

The soils of New Meadows can generally be classified as alluvial deposits comprised of fine-grained clay and silt loams. These soils range in depth from two to three feet below ground line, with sandy silts typically occurring at greater depths.

Vegetation

The native vegetation found in and around New Meadows includes mountain brome, Idaho fescue, bluegrass, and bunchgrass.

Climate

U.S. Weather Bureau records show an annual average temperature for New Meadows of 41.3 degrees Fahrenheit (F). The extremes in temperatures are a high of 104 degrees to a low of -50 degrees F. The average number of frost-free days is 71.

Air Quality

The high valley of New Meadows provides the perfect setting for what is commonly known as mountain fresh air. Clear, clean, and crisp to the senses, this should be considered one of the most valuable resources for the community. In the winter, air inversions occasionally. The standard definition of inversion is: reversal of the usual order or natural order of the weather pattern. In the spring and fall, controlled burns of underbrush by the U.S. Forest Service in surrounding hills can have an effect on local air quality. In the summer, the air can become heavy with dust caused by the dry unpaved roads in the city.

Water

■ Surface Water

A stretch of Little Goose Creek lies within the southern portion of the New Meadows City Limits. This waterway and the other creeks that surround the city are a prime habitat for wildlife and should be considered a valuable resource for the community.

■ Groundwater

Presently, the city is providing potable water to all residents within the city limits. The source of the water is an aquifer that is located about 600 feet below the surface.

The city currently has two wells that provide it with water. These wells combined pump over 750 gallons of water per minute. The current peak usage is 350 gallons per minute, allowing about 400 gallons per minute for future development.

In the fall of 1996, the city completed a \$795,000 upgrade to the water system. The project included the drilling of a new well and the replacement of the old water mains and services off these new lines.

A few private wells within the city are used for irrigation. Residents outside the city have their own private wells. These wells range from 50 to 60 feet in depth.

■ **Wastewater**

In 1988, the wastewater treatment plan was upgraded. Currently, the wastewater treatment plant is operating at peak performance. With an extraction rate of about 90 percent, this plan was rated number one in the state in 1995 for operational efficiency. In the fall of 2001, the city completed a sewer system upgrade that consisted of replacing 85 percent of the collection lines, installing a rotomat screen to remove nondegradable materials, and adding aeration to the last pond of the lagoon system to help with odor control. The lines were also enlarged and deepened to allow for future expansion to the system.

In ... (land app info)

Wildlife

Located along the southwest edge of Meadows Valley, the city of New Meadows is surrounded with a variety of wildlife

habitat. Animals such as elk, deer, **birds**, and fox can be found roaming the valley floor. The watershed supports a collection of fish and waterfowl. All of this is an asset to the quality of life in New Meadows.

Hazardous Areas

Floodplains

According to the official flood insurance maps from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) in November 2002, the portion of Little Goose Creek that lies within the New Meadows city limits is classified as Zone "A." There also is a portion of the northwest corner of the city that is classified as Zone "A." These are noted as areas within the 100-year flood; base flood elevations and flood hazard factors were not determined. FEMA maps may be viewed at the city offices.

Infiltration

In the springtime, the groundwater table can be as shallow as 6 inches to 2 feet below the surface. The recent sewer system upgrade took care of the high water table infiltration into the wastewater system.

Erosion

No soils identified as susceptible to slippage are found within the city of New Meadows.

Stormwater

Stormwater runoff is a problem anywhere it occurs. The city is currently improving the maintenance of the existing system with noticeable results.

With the completion of recent water and sewer upgrades, the city is now ready to address the issue of stormwater and is continuously seeking grants for improvements on its stormwater collection system and treatment process.

Earthquakes

There are no recorded faults in New Meadows at this time. However, within the past few years, faults have been found near Council and McCall. The Council fault is being termed “clearly active” and the McCall fault as “probably active.” The area is known for being very active with tremblers (small recorded amounts of movement of the earth.) This means that there is modest potential for an earthquake in the New Meadows area within the next 50 years.

Noise

Often overlooked as a form of pollution, noise can be most disruptive in a small town. Sources for high-volume noise can be found in loud music, heavy traffic, and some industries.

Future Needs Analysis

Meadows Valley provides an excellent natural resource base and environment for the city. Maintaining this environment is the key to retaining the quality of life that the community now enjoys.

There are several ways to accomplish this end:

- Continue to reduce costly operating expenses through the continued improvement and maintenance of existing city infrastructure.
- Develop and maintain land-use planning, ordinances, and guidelines.

Natural Resource Goal Statement

To manage the area’s natural resources through the development of policies that respects the area’s important natural resources.

1 General Policies

- 1.1 The city should recognize that its interest in preserving the quality of natural resources extends beyond the city limits.
- 1.2 The city should consider land-development policies that will protect existing natural resources.
- 1.3 The city should encourage and support mutual cooperation and communication between the city and Adams County regarding management of the area’s natural resources.
- 1.4 New development that has high impact on natural resources and requires substantial infrastructure within the New Meadows Area of City Impact should be located close to existing urban development in the city.

Through careful administration of its Area of City Impact, New Meadows can zone land outside of the city limits to avoid improper timing of development. Land farther away from the city limits should remain zoned for agricultural and rural use, while only land close to existing urban development should be zoned for higher intensity uses or for smooth transition to urban development. As development moves outward, additional lands would be zoned for urban uses as needed. (See Land Use, Area of Impact.)

Because soil conditions in much of the area around New Meadows make septic systems unacceptable except in the case of large parcels, sewer service is needed for any

concentrated development. By limiting the length of extension of water and sewer services into undeveloped land, New Meadows can more effectively direct development and maintain the concentrated nature of the community. (See Public Services, Facilities and Utilities.)

2 Air Quality Policies

- 2.1 The city should consider a policy that would minimize particulate pollution in the air from such sources as unpaved streets and wood burning stoves.
- 2.2 The city should work with the U.S. Forest Service to reduce the impacts of seasonal burning.

3 Water Quality Policies

- 3.1 The city should develop programs for local conservation and utilization of water resources.
- 3.2 The city should adopt a source water management plan to go along with the wellhead protection policy that was adopted in 1996.
- 3.3 The city should continue to look at improving the wastewater infrastructure.
- 3.4 The city should consider adopting a stormwater management policy.
- 3.5 New Meadows city sewer and water services will not be extended beyond the city limits, except in cases where the failure of existing systems has caused a public health and safety hazard, and where users so served agree to fully bear all costs of such service and not to oppose future annexation.

- 3.6 The city should discourage development of multi-user sewer systems in the Area of City Impact. Where individual private systems are proposed in new subdivisions, assure that environmentally sound and functional sewage systems can be developed for all parcels without undue off-site impact. Nutrient-pathogen studies may be required.

- 3.7 The city's wellhead protection overlay district should be considered to minimize pollution to the city's water source.

4 Wildlife / Vegetation Policies

- 4.1 The city should encourage the preservation of wildlife habitat.
- 4.2 The city should encourage new development to protect and utilize native vegetation.
- 4.3 The city should encourage timely free disposal of refuse to help mitigate fire & safety issues.

5 Noise Policies

- 5.1 The city should consider noise mitigation actions in all land-use decisions.

Hazardous Areas Goal Statement

To protect the public safety, health, and welfare from hazardous areas and conditions.

6 Hazardous Areas Policies

- 6.1 The city should promote continued improvements to the maintenance of the stormwater drainage system.

- 6.2 The city should limit development activity in the floodplain.
- 6.3 The city should look at retention of the floodplain for future open space and parkland.
- 6.4 The city should promote awareness of potentially hazardous materials and their impact on the environment.
- 6.5 The city should promote education of citizens about area earthquake potential.