

## **Rural Pitkin County- preserve and protect our natural environment**

### **Benefits of conservation**

In order to maintain the economic viability of rural Pitkin County we need to continue to conserve land; provide leases for farmers and ranchers, preserve wildlife habitat and ensure public access to parks and wilderness.

Rural land provides essential ecological services, fosters interconnected economies like farming and ranching, and protects and preserves rural spaces - essential to our mountain lifestyle and economy. Rural equates to life supporting resources, valued water sources, open pastures and calving land. Rural respects hay cultivation and farming, gardens, and open space.

### **Access**

Public access to trails, wilderness and nature. Provide trail easements for horseback, cycling, hiking, and ice climbing. Record and document public fishing access points. Our largest valley land managers are the USFS and BLM. The county needs to continue provide public access to these incredible lands. Through leases and trail easements we can couple environmental protection for wilderness with recreational needs.

The land use code balances the needs of the rural resort economy, seasonal closures in conjunction with the Bureau of Land Management and the US Forest Service, with the protection of our wilderness. Less dense rural areas balances the dense economies and land use patterns found in the rural resort municipalities.

### **Updates to Land Use Code**

We managed to update the large lot exemption for Growth Management Quota System, to benefit and preserve rural Colorado and Pitkin County. We need to continue to update the land use code and add protection for scenic view corridors, like we do for scenic highways and byways in the county and add protection for scenic trail preservation.

### **Rural and Remote protected**

Could TDR's and conservation easements effectively counter the potential harm from "overdevelopment in the rural valley," (Bob Child, [My life as a child](#), p. 92)?

Incentives are in place to conserve large parcels intact and engage in land use planning. Conservation easements to and public ownership, ensure minimal disturbance, define allowable uses and keeps large areas of land undeveloped. Pitkin County's established land use code fosters transfers of square footage from rural, unserviced areas to more urban developed land. Transferable Development Rights's protect the scenic beauty of our valley. TDR's ensure growth patterns favored by caucuses and the larger community- reducing county sprawl.

*Draft:*

Jeffrey Woodruff  
Snowmass, CO  
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jeffrey h. woodruff

pitkin county