

# Open Space Element Background - (Packet 1)

To: CAC Members and Alternates  
From: Staff  
Date: October 25, 2010  
Re: Open Space Element

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## **CAC ASSIGNMENT:**

Packet 1: Please review this background information in preparation of the 'Open Space' and 'Recreation' Elements, to be discussed at the December 2, 2010 CAC Meeting. If there are CAC suggestions for clarifications and/or additional information, please email comments to [bcaravona@flagstaffaz.gov](mailto:bcaravona@flagstaffaz.gov) by *November 16*.

Packet 2: the draft element with narrative, goals and policies will be emailed *November 19<sup>th</sup>*. CAC comments are to be returned to staff by *November 29<sup>th</sup> for preparation of the* December 2<sup>nd</sup> CAC meeting. Staff is preparing to discuss Open Space and Recreation at the December 2<sup>nd</sup> CAC meeting, pending CAC's completion of the Environment and Conservation Element.

**STATE STATUTES:** The following Arizona state statutes frame the requirements for the Regional Plan.

The **open space element** includes:

- (a) A comprehensive inventory of open space areas, recreational resources, and designations of access points to open space areas and resources.
- (b) An analysis of forecasted needs, policies for managing and protecting open space areas and resources and implementation strategies to acquire additional open space areas and further establish recreational resources.
- (c) Policies and implementation strategies designed to promote a regional system of integrated open space and recreation resources and a consideration of any existing regional open space plans.

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION AND TRENDS:** *The following introduces the open space element in the way of trends, maps, graphs, report summaries, expert and community opinion. .*

## **A. Public Open House**

- October 30, 2009; 7 to 9 a.m. at the Pulliam Airport;
- October 30, 2009; 12 to 2 p.m., at City Hall Lobby;
- November 4, 2009; 4 to 7 p.m. at Highlands Fire Department Kachina Village.

At the Open Houses, it was noted to the attending public that their comments would be presented for the CAC for consideration when drafting the Regional Plan. The comments received are posted on the regional plan website and previously presented to the CAC. For detailed Open Space, Parks & Recreation and Public Facilities Open House Comments please visit the following link. <http://www.flagstaffaz.gov/DocumentView.aspx?DID=11407> .

### Summary of public comments:

#### ***Why is Open Space important to the community?***

- Quality of life - #1 reason people choose to live here
- Conservation of environmental health, wildlife corridors and natural resources
- Preserve Viewsheds
- Education

## **B. Focus Group**

A Focus Group for “Open Space, Recreation and Public Facilities” was held November 19, 2009 at the Aquaplex facility with 32 people in attendance. The following items were outlined as priorities for Open Space:

### **Quality of Life**

- Number one reason people live here
- Existing open space means jobs (federal forest, biologists, researchers, forest management, etc.)
  - How does open space conservation equal economic development? Define.
- Rio de Flag – as open space / green space with a trail? Work with ‘Conservation’ goals & policies.
- Showcase unique features of landscape
- Large tracts of land – vs. – smaller parcels which benefit existing neighborhoods

### **Coconino Parks & Open Space Program (CPOS) and City of Flagstaff Open Space Acquisition**

- Process for acquiring / dedicating land for open space – clearly identify in Regional Plan
- Converge County and City open space GIS data onto ONE map
  - Collaborate with City & County Open Space for PLANNING and PURCHASING

### **Urban Trails & Open Space**

- Strengthen Relationship with Open Space and Parks
- Act as connections between open spaces (federal, state and local), parks and activities and other trails – USFS trails, AZ Trail, Loop Trail, etc.
- Equestrian trails considered from town equestrian areas to USFS
- Cognizant of when trails & open space is NOT compatible (2% of the time), example – important wildlife corridors. Pay more attention to wildlife in trail planning
- Marketing of trails: Health aspects; Save \$\$ by commuting by bicycle
- Use local volunteers to build and maintain trails – showcase these efforts

### **Environment**

- Educational opportunities explored at each ‘open space’ location
- Environmental Best Practices for open space designations
- Urban Hunting – what is allowed? What is appropriate? Work with AZ Game & Fish on this.

### **Planning**

- Bring together different perspectives (Open Space Commission, Parks & Recreation, Trail planning, transportation corridors, wildlife corridors, wetlands & watersheds, urban hunting, etc.) Understand these perspectives, how they can interact with each other; and where to respect different needs.
- Cultural / Archeological sites – important reasons to maintain open space
  - Native American historical sites
  - Railroad logging routes
  - Picture Canyon
- Arizona Preserve Initiative (API) – realistic? Reforms needed at State Trust level to make open space acquisition of these parcels realistic.
- Walnut Canyon – federal study results included in Regional Plan
- Greenway Corridors

### **Tools for acquisition**

- Public Funds for acquisitions – County & City
- Conservation Land System (CLS)
- Transfer of Development Rights (TDR)

### C. Open Space efforts in the Flagstaff Region

- **Coconino Parks and Open Space Program (CPOS):** In 2002, Coconino County residents approved a capital projects initiative to raise the County sales tax for County park improvements and open space acquisition. The tax raised approximately **\$33 million over a 10-year period** and cost the average county household a \$1.63 per month.

Of the \$33 million, CPOS earmarked \$19 million for acquisition of seven natural areas:

- wetlands and wildlife habitat at Rogers Lake and Kachina Village;
- open space on Observatory Mesa and adjacent to Fort Tuthill County Park; and,
- old growth forests near Naval Observatory west of Dry Lake, and
- Walnut Canyon (all of those underlined are State Trust Land parcels that are part of the ‘Arizona Preserve Initiative’ see below);

\$14 million was also earmarked for park development and improvement projects including:

- Pine Mountain Amphitheater at Fort Tuthill,
- Sawmill Multicultural & Nature County Park,
- Timberline Trail in Doney Park,
- Raymond County Park at Kachina Village, and
- Louise Yellowman County Park.

- **City of Flagstaff Open Space Acquisition:** In 2004, Flagstaff voters authorized spending up to **\$7.6 million** for “Neighborhood Open Space and FUTS Land Acquisition over a 10-year period”. It is the Open Space Commission’s responsibility to identify priority lands in which to recommend land acquisition to City Council. These lands have been identified in the “Open Space Acquisition Plan” submitted to City Council in 2008. To date, \$2.4 million has been allocated for land acquisition of Thorpe Pak and 20 acres surrounding Hoffman Tank.

- Criteria for Open Space Acquisition, as developed by Open Space Commission (2008):
  - Provide open space to a neighborhood that currently has relatively little access to open space.
  - FUTS contiguous or near parcel; parcel creates an opportunity to improve FUTS connection.
  - Provide special opportunities for people to view unique wildlife (prairie dogs, rare birds, etc.) or experience unique natural settings (rare plant communities).
  - Understand if parcel is more appropriate for urban infill or for open space (degraded land, surrounded by commercial uses).
  - Is the owner of the parcel willing to sell the land for open space?

- **Open Space Zone Districts**

In the City’s Zoning Code re-write (2010), two specific zoning designations are:

- **PF** – The Public Facility (PF) Zone applies to areas of the City held in ownership of public or quasi public agencies. The PF Zone is intended to preserve and encourage the establishment of public lands and to provide an area within the City for the location of parks, public open space, government buildings and facilities, schools and school grounds, quasi public buildings and facilities and related uses.
- **PLF** – The Public Lands Forest (PLF) Zone applies to areas of the City designated as U.S. Forest, state, county, and municipal permanent open space/preserve lands. This Zone is intended to promote the management and preservation of habitat types which are part of the unique environment characteristics of the City.

- **Implementation of the ‘Flagstaff Area Open Spaces and Greenways Plan’:**

The *Flagstaff Area Open Spaces and Greenways Plan* (OSGW) was adopted in 1998 as an interagency effort to provide guidance in protecting and preserving existing open spaces in the Flagstaff region. Participating agencies included the City of Flagstaff, Coconino County, Arizona State Land Department, Arizona Game and Fish Department, Coconino National Forest, and the National Park Service, as well as numerous citizens and local organizations interested in preserving the character of the community. Among other things, OSGW classifies open space into a hierarchy of five open space categories. The five categories are briefly summarized below.

**OSGW Open Space Categories:**

- 1. Primitive** – exhibits natural conditions with little evidence of current human activities; many unique and significant features, e.g. highest mountains, deepest canyons; helps define a sense of place; key wildlife habitat; restricted non-motorized access; very wild; wilderness areas.
- 2. Semi-primitive** – some evidence of past human activities, but substantially natural-appearing conditions; key or high quality wildlife habitat; restricted access/primitive roads & trails, high clearance vehicles; scenic vistas and prominent landscape features.
- 3. Multiple-use/Conservation** – appear natural but show some evidence of past human activities; forests & grasslands; high quality wildlife habitat; often accessible by two-wheel drive vehicles; economic uses include wood products, grazing, outfitting; variety of recreational uses; moderate to high levels of use.
- 4. Neighborwoods** – open spaces near residential areas; easily accessible for after-work recreational activities, e.g. hiking, biking, horseback riding; highly accessible; high level of use; many social trails; recreational use by default rather than planned management.
- 5. Cultural/Historical/Recreational** – highly modified by human facilities; developed recreation sites; combination of natural and modified landscapes; examples are Arizona Snowbowl and Fort Tuthill County Park; highly accessible to all modes of travel; high visitor use.

**Flagstaff Area Open Spaces and Greenways Plan, Implementation 1998 – 2010**

In the 12 years since the Flagstaff Area Open Spaces and Greenways Plan (OSGW) was adopted, there has been much progress in implementing the goals and recommendations of the plan, but much more remains to be done. Some of the high profile accomplishments include the expansion of Fort Tuthill County Park with an acquisition of State Trust Land; the preservation of the Dry Lake caldera and conveyance of the land to the Forest Service; the County acquisition and preservation of rare wetlands at Kachina Village; and most recently, the County acquisition of State Trust Lands at Rogers Lake. Significant progress has been made toward the preservation of Picture Canyon, and a joint Forest Service and Park Service study is underway to determine future management options for the greater Walnut Canyon area. The City and County have both developed funding mechanisms to support the acquisition and development of parks, trails, and open space projects. All of the agencies involved in developing the OSGW Plan, including the City of Flagstaff, Coconino County, Arizona State Land Department, Arizona Game and Fish, Coconino National Forest, and the National Park Service, continue to work together to accomplish the goals and objectives of the OSGW Plan.

To read the full plan, please see: [Flagstaff Area Open Spaces and Greenways Plan](#) (1998) and to review the OSGW [MAPS](#)

- **State Trust Lands:** State Trust Lands, by state charter, must sell parcels to the highest bidder which funds public education, whether that is for development or open land conservation. There are 25,000

acres of state lands located within the FMPO boundary; and the parcels within the City of Flagstaff are identified as Sections 6, 8, 18 (Observatory Mesa Area), 4 (Picture Canyon area), 8, 10, 24 (part), 20, 22, 28, 30 [Section T21NR8E, east side] (Walnut Canyon Area), 26 (part) and 30 [Section T21NR7E, west side]. Please see the Regional Plan 2001 Map for public ownership:

<http://www.flagstaff.az.gov/DocumentView.aspx?DID=222>

In 1996, the Arizona Preserve Initiative (API) began with the purpose to identify and designate State Trust Land parcels that are highly desirable for open space conservation within 3-10 miles of an urban area. Although these parcels must still be purchased, the designation helps in collaboration and grant writing to acquire these lands. The Arizona Preserve Initiative identified some of the State Land Trust lands as highly desirable are adjacent to Walnut Canyon and around Observatory Mesa. Sales must occur at a public auction. <http://www.land.state.az.us/programs/operations/api.htm>

- **Inventory partners:**

- The Nature Conservancy – mapping of ‘special areas’
- AZ Game and Fish – mapping of wildlife corridors
- The Audubon Society – mapping based upon species
  - An inventory leads to a potential ‘Conservation Land System’

- **Conservation Easements:**

- A tool to legally protect land from development; a conservation easement becomes part of the deed. A community could empower a land trust to hold conservation easements.
- There are a number of tax deductions and credits available through federal and state government for donating land for conservation easements:
  - Federal tax deductions:  
<http://www.conservationtaxcenter.org/?gclid=CLur07mUIKUCFYNI7AodhV9P MQ> ; and <http://www.privatelandownernetwork.org/plnlo/taxbenefits.asp>
  - State tax – Arizona Land and Water Trust:  
<http://www.alwt.org/landownerresources/conseasements.shtml#TaxPolicy>
- Please see the [‘Nature Conservancy’ website](#) for more details on Conservation Easements.

## OPEN SPACE DEFINITIONS:

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**Regional Plan 2001** – “any parcel or area of land or water essentially unimproved and set-aside, dedicated, designated, or reserved for public or private use or enjoyment, or for the use and enjoyment of owners and occupants of land adjoining or neighboring such open space. The term does not preclude low-impact recreational uses, such as hiking, fishing, or picnicking. Open Spaces include natural areas, greenways, trails, streetscapes, waterways, cemeteries, drainageways, floodplains, corridors, preserves, wildlife refuges, wetlands, and riparian areas. Open Space areas are used for passive recreation, and where specifically designated for other forms of recreation, such as bicycling, horseback riding, and fishing; agriculture; shaping the development of the city and other communities by limiting urban sprawl and containing growth; and spatial definition of urban areas. Open Space areas also may be preserved or restored for their aesthetic value, scenic areas and vistas, ecological value, archaeological and historic significance; and wildlife habitat and corridors. Open Space lands are a complex mosaic of natural systems with a wide variety of qualities, values, and purposes affecting all other elements of the Regional Plan. The policies and supporting maps provide the framework and direction for future, more issue-specific or site-specific planning as land uses are developed and implemented in balance with resource preservation.

The existing definition is extremely long and inconsistent with the zoning code as well as the Open Space Commission’s goals. The Open Space Commission has recommended that a succinct and clear definition be used, and be consistent with the Zoning Code definition of ‘Open Space’. Therefore, through two work sessions with the staff, the Open Space recommends the Open Space definition listed below:

**Proposed ‘Open Space’ definition (amended 2001 Regional Plan definition):**

“Any parcel or area of land or water identified for public or permitted private use as open space, and designated on the Zoning Map, conservation easements, or other official designation for such a purpose. Open Space areas are lands possessing aesthetic value; scenic areas; vistas; ecological value; archaeological and historic significance; wildlife habitat and corridors; natural areas; greenways; trails; streetscapes; waterways; cemeteries; drainageways; floodplains; wetlands and riparian areas; agriculture; as well as serving as the spatial definition of urban areas and promoting smart growth practices. Open Spaces may be designated for low-impact recreational uses where appropriate, such as walking trails, hiking, fishing, picnicking, bicycling, and horseback riding.”

## **D. Element Relationship**

The following briefly addresses the relationship of Open Space Element upon other elements.

### **STRONG RELATIONSHIP:**

*Land Use:* Helps identify lands to preserve, spatial definition of urban form, as well as contributes positively or negatively to environmental quality, and use/preservation of scarce resources and habitats.

*Growth Area:* Open Space is one of the main reasons people choose to live, work and relocate to the Flagstaff area. This may help utilize important development and preservation tools such as Transfer of Development Rights (TDR), Conservation Easements, Cluster Development, and delineating Urban Growth Boundaries.

*Recreation:* The City of Flagstaff's 'Parks, Recreation and Open Space Management Plan' will be completed in 2011. The Coconino County Parks & Recreation Masterplan was completed in 2009. The strong relationship between open space and recreation must promote connectivity, land management, and also coordinate with the State Land Department, US Forest Service, the National Park System, and AZ Game & Fish.

*Bicycle:* The Flagstaff Urban Trail System (FUTS), AZ Trail, Loop Trail and USFS Trails have the opportunity to connect Open Spaces with each other, parks, neighborhoods, and the US Forest, creating the 'green infrastructure' desired for eco-system health as well as quality of life.

*Conservation:* The protection of watersheds, water and air quality, wildlife corridors and overall eco-system health are all compatible and complimentary with open space conservation, and should be planned accordingly.

*Environment:* Preserving quality ecosystems may assist in identifying valuable lands to acquire and preserve.

*Safety:* Establishing and maintaining a healthy ecosystem prevents hazards such as forest fires and degradation of water quality.

### **MODERATE RELATIONSHIP**

*Neighborhood Preservation and Redevelopment:* Green open spaces within neighborhoods are more likely neighborhood parks, pocket parks, and community gardens.

*Energy:* Goals and policies may support and re-enforce sustainable energy practices and renewable energy sources.

*Circulation:* Open Space goals and policies contribute to promoting compact smart growth which leads to an efficient, multi-modal transportation system that decreases vehicle miles traveled and avoids potential conflict with wildlife. Certain 'Streetscapes' are also considered 'open space' such as naturally landscaped medians.

### **WEAK RELATIONSHIP**

*Public Facilities and service/buildings:* Open Spaces are primarily undeveloped, except for some basic amenities, such as a picnic ramada, and thus public facilities and buildings are seen as not compatible with open space goals.

*Housing:* Flagstaff's contiguous public lands limit the availability for land for development, thus affecting the supply and demand market ratios.

*Cost of Development:* Relationship to 'Urban Service Boundary' – see utilities.

**EXISTING GOALS AND POLICIES:** *Explores whether current plan and goals/policies are working or need ‘tweaking’ by:*

1. *List existing Goals and Policy.*
2. *Providing a critique and recommendation of the existing goal/policy;*
3. *Listing Suggested strategies*

The 2001 Regional Plan contained one goal and 7 policies under “Open Space, Parks, and Recreation & Trails”. The existing goals and policies for open space were reviewed by the County Parks, Recreation and Open Space Commission, as well as the City of Flagstaff Open Space Commission. The following reflects their recommendations.

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## GOAL OSPR1

The region will have a balanced system of open lands, natural areas, wildlife corridors and habitat areas, trails, greenways, parks and recreation facilities as guided by the *Greater Flagstaff Area Open Spaces and Greenways Plan*, the City of Flagstaff Urban Open Spaces Plan, the City’s *Long Range Master Plan for Parks, Recreation and Open Space*, and County Area Plans with have Open Space Objectives.

### **Policy OSPR1.1—Create the Appropriate Institutional Framework for Open Space Protection in the Plan Area**

*Open Space Committee (OSC) Comments – May/June 2010:*

*See upcoming ‘Parks, Recreation & Open Space Masterplan’. Will there be a specific ‘Open Space’ zoning designation in the new zoning code which designates eternal conservation and preservation? Please designate PRIVATELY OWNED ‘open space’ from PUBLICALLY OWNED ‘open space’; Prop 207 issues; see all ‘Open Space Acquisitions’ designated by both City Open Space Commission and County Parks & Open Space Program.*

- a. **Critique and recommendation:** Need to clearly define ‘Appropriate Institutional Framework’; can tools be used for both public and private lands?
- b. **Suggested Strategies:** Both City and County Open Space Masterplans are to contain the framework for open space protection, as well as delineating all of the tools legally available in Arizona to do so. The policy may be to use these masterplans framework and tools.

### **Policy OSPR1.2—Implement Urban and Rural Open Spaces Plans**

Continue to identify and inventory open spaces within the developed and developing areas of the region, that will be used to connect neighborhoods and developed areas to each other within the larger regional open space system. The inventory, criteria and objectives should be used as part of an open spaces management program to acquire, protect, and manage properties and their resources and values.

*Open Space Committee (OSC) Comments – May/June 2010:*

*Open Space Commission began 8 years ago to ‘inventory’ existing and potential open space. This has never been completed; staff then gave input into potential open space acquisitions, yet a holistic map was never completed. This is a wonderful policy, which should have been implemented a long time ago. A complete inventory, with existing information, will be completed 2010.*

- a. **Critique and recommendation:** This Regional Plan will identify and inventory existing open spaces, as well as coordinate State, County and City Open Space planning efforts. This Regional Plan will also identify accomplishments of the Open Spaces and Greenways Plan, as well as prioritize remaining strategies which the public process identifies.

- b. Suggested Strategies:** Regional Plan 2012 to clearly identify existing open spaces, both public and private, articulating priorities for acquisition through County and City Open Space Commissions. Policy wording may be to continue the work of coordination between the State, County and City, collaborating in planning and acquisition tools and funding.

**Policy OSPR1.3—Provide Non- Motorized Transportation Corridors to Connect Communities, Neighborhoods, Open Spaces and Recreational Areas**

Provide non-motorized transportation corridors between neighborhoods, communities, and between the city and outlying areas and regional and national facilities and sites. Non-motorized access shall be provided from new and redeveloped neighborhoods and should be required from existing neighborhoods to regional open space via easements, trails, and on-street facilities with open space connections between FUTS and USFS trails. Existing neighborhoods are encouraged to improve non-motorized access and connections to regional open space and incorporate open space connections between FUTS and USFS trails.

*Open Space Committee (OSC) Comments – May/June 2010:*

*This is being done very well, keep doing more. And this is working because it is someone’s job to make this happen (multi-modal planner Martin Ince).*

- a. Critique and recommendation:** Keep this policy, with potentially simpler and more succinct wording. This seems to be a transportation / bicycle policy.
- b. Suggested Strategies:** Goal of \_\_\_miles of FUTS trails by 2020, with \_\_\_access points to the National Forest.

**Policy OSPR1.4—Preserve Priority Open Lands**

Preserve U.S. Forest Service and State Trust lands as part of a comprehensive open space system. Protect the San Francisco Peaks, Buffalo Park, Walnut Canyon, and other significant natural landmarks, features, and areas.

*Open Space Committee (OSC) Comments – May/June 2010:*

*This will be part of the ‘Parks, Recreation and Open Space Masterplan’. Funding is \$7.2 million over 11 years with current tax revenues (City). County can collect \$33 million and is matching this with state open space preservation funds. Other mechanisms for funding can be explored, such as ‘impact fees’ or ‘development fees’ for development outside of the UGB1. Is this legal?*

- a. Critique and recommendation:** This should be clearly articulated in 1.2, and these would be more ‘open space acquisition and land management’ priorities – strategies.
- b. Suggested Strategies:** See above.

**Policy OSPR1.5—Protect “Neighborhoods”**

Protect “Neighborhoods” to the extent possible in order to create buffers between communities and to provide access to trails and other recreational opportunities for nearby residents. Should development occur in “Neighborhoods” areas, provisions shall be incorporated to ensure continued access to public lands?

*Open Space Committee (OSC) Comments – May/June 2010:*

*Difference between ‘undeveloped vacant land’ versus ‘open space’ designations needs to be very clear. Try to find examples that have worked and not worked, such as USFS easement, behind Elks Lodge and private property (University Heights). Need to inventory existing ‘neighborhoods’ (green space used by community members, whether private or not). As land is developed, public needs to be made aware of changes. Staff recommendation: also inventory neighborhoods which do not have any shared green space.*

- a. Critique and recommendation:** Agree with Open Space Committee comments. Also, need to coordinate the ‘Neighborhoods’ with Urban Growth Transition Zones and State Land Parcels (PRA’s).
- b. Suggested Strategies:** Sector Planning

**Policy OSPR1.6—Provide Parks, Open Space, and Recreation Facilities throughout the Region**

Integrate parks, open space, and recreational facilities when suitable with other public facilities. Recreational use of regional open space lands where it is consistent with the Land Use Plan and other policies. Active and passive recreational sites shall be located throughout the region to balance needs for recreational opportunities with growth and development. The location of recreational sites on the interface areas between the city and the county shall be used as a means to provide recreational uses to nearby city and county residents.

*Open Space Committee (OSC) Comments – May/June 2010:*

*Can there more TEETH into the ‘buffer zone’? Make sure UGB or ‘buffer zone’ stays? Staff Recommendation: 1) P&ROS Masterplan. 2) Zoning designation. 3) Regional Plan land use map?*

*We need to understand all possible tools to make this happen: purchasing, TDR, etc. for respecting UGB and strengthening ‘buffer zone’.*

- a. **Critique and recommendation:** Agree with OSC comments. Need to clearly map this – will be part of the Parks, Recreation and Open Space Masterplan – COORDINATE!
- b. **Suggested Strategies:** Clear mapping and work plan in County and City’s Parks, Recreation and Open Space Masterplans.

**Policy OSPR1.7—Preserve Rural Character and Natural Environment**

Open space shall be used as a means of preserving the rural character of the county and protecting significant natural and cultural resources, wildlife habitat, and scenic views.

*Open Space Committee (OSC) Comments – May/June 2010:*

*What is ‘rural character’? (Natural character of rocks, native trees, etc.). Where our built environment is very respectful of the natural environment – examples? We need to build to not clash with the natural environment, so that the natural environment remains the ‘character’ and not what is built. How is it preserved? Significant geological features should be preserved and respected, more dominate than man-made features.*

- a. **Critique and recommendation:** Regional Plan to provide visual and verbal examples. This could be a ‘community character’ policy.
- b. **Suggested Strategies:** Provide clear examples of HOW the ‘rural character’ is preserved and maintained (i.e. types of fencing, road sections, landscaping, how rural ‘compact growth’ might be possible to maintain more shared open space, etc. – see Coconino County Comprehensive Plan for more details).

## GOAL NCR1

High standards will be maintained for protection and improvement of the region’s natural and cultural, historic and archaeological resources to support the natural environment that sustains our quality of life.

**Policy NCR1.12—Plan based on an Ecosystem Framework to maintain and restore natural processes and systems**

Maintain and restore natural processes and systems, which will sustain, protect, and enhance our watersheds, airsheds, wildlife habitat, and the impacts that the built environment contributes when planning for the region.

*Open Space Committee (OSC) Comments – May/June 2010:*

*Strongly agree; make sure mention of water quality is coordinated with this.*

- a. **Critique and recommendation:** Policy NCR1.12 and 13 could be combined. These belong in Environmental Policies, yet must correlate.

**Policy NCR1.13—Maintain and Restore Natural Processes and Systems**

Maintain and restore natural processes and systems, which will sustain, protect, and enhance such systems like the Rio de Flag.

*Open Space Committee (OSC) Comments – May/June 2010:*

*Rio de Flag will be partially underground, according to the Army Corp of Engineers. Maybe OSC would like a Rio de Flag update periodically from the project manager. Examples of NCR1.13: Walnut Canyon watershed; old growth trees; wildlife corridors; neighborhoods. Is there teeth to ‘preserve natural processes’ based upon what? How do we make sure that development doe3s not override natural processes? What power does this give us? Please address in summary report. Cultural resources need to be mapped.*

*Public health and safety can be used as the tool to sustain natural processes*

- a. **Critique and recommendation:** Agree with OSC comments. Need to map and coordinate efforts with Army Corp of Engineer’s flood control project as much as feasibly possible. Environmental Policy.

**Policy NCR1.14—Promote Forest Restoration and Sustainable Management**

Preserve the ponderosa forest ecosystem processes by vegetation and fire management, recognizing fire as a natural and/or human-caused occurrence with certain benefits and risks to the ecosystem. The City and County shall strive towards balancing the natural processes of the ecosystem with development concerns.

*Open Space Committee (OSC) Comments – May/June 2010:*

*Thinning process with the Forest Service and FD have been working well.*

- a. **Critique and recommendation:** Environmental Policy – coordinate with Open Space planning.

**Policy NCR1.15—Protect Hillside and Ridgelines**

Protection of hillsides and ridgelines shall be carried out in a manner that, to the extent possible, avoids or minimizes both negative environmental consequences to the immediate and surrounding area and preserves the region’s scenic vistas.

*Open Space Committee (OSC) Comments – May/June 2010:*

*This is NOT working – hillsides, views and vistas have been seriously encroached upon, Flagstaff must protect our views. Staff recommendation – please review this item in the zoning code update draft.*

- a. **Critique and recommendation:** Community Character ‘Viewsheds’ policy – coordinate with Open Space planning.

**Policy NCR1.16—Identify Natural Hazardous Areas and Control Development**

Identify hazardous areas which present danger to life and property from flooding, unstable soils, seismic or subsidence problems, wild fires, steep slopes or similar conditions, and control or prohibit development in such areas.

*Open Space Committee (OSC) Comments – May/June 2010:*

*Identify all of these items on a map; identify how resource protection is addressed currently in the LDC and proposed zoning code update. Understand how all of these items are coordinated at the local, state and federal level. Potential clash – resource protection, hurting for space, FD mandates ‘clear 50’ around your building’ – this could be a huge battle. Coordinate with LDC update – quality not quantity.*

- a. **Critique and recommendation:** Public Safety ‘Natural Hazards’ policy – coordinate with Open Space planning.

**Policy NCR1.17—Address Flood Hazards**

Natural flood hazards in existing developed areas should be reduced through both structural and non-structural measures. New or re-development in natural floodplain areas shall be limited and floodplains should be restored to maintain the natural and beneficial functions of floodplains and natural washes.

*Open Space Committee (OSC) Comments – May/June 2010:*

*Coordinate ‘environment’ element and ‘green spaces’ map.*

- a. **Critique and recommendation:** Public Safety ‘Natural Hazards’ policy
- b. – coordinate with Open Space planning.
- c. **Suggested Strategies:** MAP

**Policy NCR1.18—Inventory, Eradicate or Control Noxious Weeds, and Restore Native Vegetation**

The City and County shall coordinate with other agencies, organizations, and land managers to inventory and eradicate or control state-regulated noxious weeds; prevent establishment of new infestations through public awareness and education; and restore disturbed areas (on public property?) with native species.

*Open Space Committee (OSC) Comments – May/June 2010:*

*Anything the City can do to limit ‘noxious weeds’ sales at local nurseries (may very well be a ‘flower’ in other locations)? Landscape code is being updated to promote more indigenous plants...incentives rather than limitations. Local community movement to limit noxious weeds – public education will be the main driving force.*

- a. **Critique and recommendation:** Environmental Policy (Noxious Weeds) – coordinate with Open Space planning.

*Other suggestions from OSC:*

1. *Bond acquisitions and/or properties designated as ‘Open Space’ (by various means) as a process to be rezoned at PLF or similar (stronger) zoning in updated zoning code at time of acquisition.*
2. *Discussion of State Land Use designations.*

**Proposed Additional Goals:**

1. Develop and implement a ‘Conservation Land System’ by integrating all of the existing planning agencies (federal, state, city and county) as a partnership.
2. Make CONNECTIVITY a priority: for people, animals and water.

*The following outline introduces the organization for the DRAFT Element.*

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## **Open Space Element**

### **Outline**

- 1. Introduction**
- 2. Rural Open Space**
  - a. Goal & Policies, strategies
- 3. Urban Open Space**
  - a. Goal & Policies, strategies
- 4. Stakeholders & Implementation**

DRAFT