

## **The Wyoming Rural Development Council**

The Wyoming Rural Development Council is a collaborative public/private partnership that brings together six partner groups: local/regional government, state government, federal government, tribal government, non-profit organizations, and private sector individuals and organizations.

WRDC is governed by a Board of Directors representing the six partner groups. The Board as well as the Council membership have established the following goals for the WRDC:

- ❑ Assist rural communities in visioning and strategic planning
- ❑ Serve as a resource for assisting communities in finding and obtaining grants for rural projects
- ❑ Serve and be recognized as a neutral forum for identification and resolution of multi-jurisdictional issues.
- ❑ Promote, through education, the understanding of the needs, values and contributions of rural communities.

The Council seeks to assist rural Wyoming communities with their needs and development efforts by matching the technical and financial resources of federal, state and local governments and the private sector with local development efforts.

If you would like more information about the Wyoming Rural Development Council and how you may benefit as a member, contact:

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307-777-6430  
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www.wyomingbusiness.org

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## **Process for the Development of this Report**

The Wyoming Rural Development Council (WRDC) has provided a resource team to assist the Town of Bear River, Wyoming in evaluating the community's assets and liabilities and in developing suggestions for improving the environment, social and economic future of Bear River.

The Town of Bear River requested a community assessment from the Wyoming Rural Development Council as a follow up to their assessment completed in October, 2001. Councilman Jerry Sage and Clerk/Treasurer Barb Couture served as the community contacts and worked with the Bear River community assessment team leaders in agenda development, logistics, and publicity in town for the assessment. Resource team members were selected to visit Bear River; interview citizens and community leaders; and develop a plan of recommended actions for the town.

The Resource Team visited Bear River over a two-day period on June 13 & 14, 2011. Our visit began at the Legal Tender restaurant with the planning team and afterwards a tour of the town and surrounding area in the most unusual transportation we have ever had!!!. The turnout for the assessment was very small so we talked to about 15 people and had 1 phone interview. Each person was asked to respond to 3 questions:

- What do you think are the major problems and challenges in Bear River?
- What do you think are the major strengths and assets in Bear River?
- What projects would you like to see completed in two, five, ten, and twenty years in Bear River?

A summary of the assessment was presented to the Mayor of Bear River on June 21, 2011 for his use with the Council of Governments.

## **Summary of Assessment Presented to Mayor Robin Rhodes**

The Bear River follow up assessment was held June 15 and 16, 2011 at the Town of Bear River. We had 14 individuals attend listening sessions and 1 phone in interview. The Town cat, “Bear” participated in all listening sessions.

The Resource team included: Mary Randolph (Team Leader), Director of the Wyoming Rural Development Council; Brandon Cammarata, City of Cheyenne Planning Department; Nancy Hoffer of the Ruckelshaus Institute of Environment and Natural Resources; Ryan Whitehead and Chris Weiland of the Wyoming Business Council. Elaina Zempel, Regional Director of the Wyoming Business Council also attended the tour and listening sessions.

The town tour conducted by Jerry Sage, Councilman and Mayor Rhodes included a good over view of the community. Due to the time of year, we were able to see impacted flood areas. Areas toured included: parklands, easements, fire hall, communication towers, water plant, open space areas, and housing sub-divisions.

The original community assessment was held October 2-3, 2001, shortly after Bear River was incorporated. The major priorities from that assessment included:

- Road improvements
- Water
- Fire protection
- Sewer

All but road improvements had been dealt with by the community so the council felt it was time to re-do the assessment.

Responses during June 15-16, 2011 assessment:

Problems and Challenges

- Funding and finding resources for projects
- Code and ordinance enforcement
- Law enforcement and availability of law officials
- Apathy of community – things are going well so why be involved as a citizen
- Road maintenance

Strengths and Assets

- Mayor and Town Council (everyone listed this as an asset and what a great leadership was doing for the community)
- Open land and spaces

- Water
- Fiscal responsibility of the Town leadership
- Fire department

Projects

- Law enforcement and code/ordinance enforcement
- Parks and recreation areas developed with access
- Roads up to code (cost effective road construction and maintenance)

After the listening sessions, the team prepared “major themes” and determined what will be addressed in the final report, which will be presented to the community in about 4-6 weeks.

Major Themes:

- Roads
  - Re-building
  - Maintenance
- Recreation area
  - Stabilization
  - Parking
- Ordinance enforcement
- Community involvement
  - Leadership succession

**Conclusions:** It was the conclusion of the team, that Bear River residents are happy and satisfied with the direction town leadership is taking them at this time. Typically when we do not get a large showing of individuals to the assessment, it means things are going well. People highly praised the leadership, which was different than the first assessment. They are happy with the water out come, which was the major concern in the first assessment. We found the town to be very creative and innovative in getting things done and people in the community do appreciate their fiscal responsibility. Ordinance enforcement and roads are the two major priorities for the community at this time.

# Resource Team Members

Follow-Up Community Assessment  
Bear River, Wyoming  
June 15 & 16, 2011



**Team Leader**

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**Community Contact:**

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Town of Bear River  
81 Elk Drive  
Bear River, WY 82930  
307-799-586/ 307-789-2800  
[jerrys@NGLconnection.net](mailto:jerrys@NGLconnection.net)

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Town of Bear River  
Bear River, WY 82930  
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[bearriver@nglconnection.net](mailto:bearriver@nglconnection.net)

**TOWN OF BEAR RIVER**

**Resource Team Agenda**

**Bear River, WY, Uinta County**

<b>Wednesday June 15, 2011</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Location</b>
<b>1:00pm to 2:00pm</b>	<b>Lunch w/ Community Resource Team Planners</b>	<b>Dunmar</b>
<b>2:30 to 3:45pm</b>	<b>Tour of Community</b>	
<b>4:00pm to 5:00pm</b>	<b>Listening Session</b>	<b>Town Hall</b>
<b>5:30pm to 7:00pm</b>	<b>Resource Team Working Supper</b>	<b>Dunmar</b>

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<b>Thursday June 16, 2011</b>	<b>Event</b>	<b>Location</b>
<b>7:30am to 8:30am</b>	<b>Breakfast</b>	<b>Dunmar</b>
<b>9:00am to 9:50am</b>	<b>Listening Session</b>	<b>Town Hall</b>
<b>10:00am to 10:50am</b>	<b>Listening Session with Seniors</b>	<b>Town Hall</b>
<b>11:00am to 11:50am</b>	<b>Listening Session</b>	<b>Town Hall</b>
<b>12:00 to 1:30pm</b>	<b>Lunch</b>	<b>Town Hall</b>
<b>2:00pm to 2:50pm</b>	<b>Listening Session with Youth</b>	<b>Town Hall</b>
<b>3:00pm to 5:00pm</b>	<b>Team Meeting and Prepare for Town Meeting</b>	<b>Town Hall</b>
<b>5:30pm to 6:30pm</b>	<b>Town Meeting-Resource Team presents oral reports</b>	<b>Town Hall</b>
<b>7:00pm to 8:30pm</b>	<b>Dinner</b>	<b>Dunmar</b>

## Bear River – Major Themes

### Roads

- Re-building
- Maintenance

### Recreation area

- Stabilization
- Parking

### Ordinance enforcement

### Community involvement

- Leadership succession

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*Please note new email address*

**Introduction:** I would very much like to thank Bear River and especially Jerry, Robin and Barb for all the hospitality shown to us while we were in Bear River. I knew it would be another memorable experience for me, and it was when we were shown to the “tour van.” Thank you for keeping life fun for us! You all worked so hard to advertise and plan the assessment, and I know you were disappointed in the turn out. However, I believe we didn’t see many folks because people are very happy with the progress you have made and what has all been happening in your community. The best thing we can say is keep it up!!! Your leadership is well thought of by the citizens, and they certainly appreciate all your efforts.

**Miscellaneous:** Before I get into the major themes, I would offer a few suggestions that did not fall within the major themes but are still some ideas and resources for you.

**#1. Grant writing** – many of the ideas presented in the team member reports will require grant writing. I know that you have written many grants, but if you are ever in need of a grant writer for the Town or for any organization, Wyoming Rural Development Council (WRDC) offers grant writing assistance. Contact Jo Ferguson at our office for assistance. 307-777-5812 or [jo.ferguson@wyo.gov](mailto:jo.ferguson@wyo.gov).

In addition, WRDC offers an annual grant writing course and a grants management course. We offer scholarships to the course. The next course is October 17-21 in Cheyenne, WY. Jo Ferguson again is the contact for that course. 307-777-5812 or [jo.ferguson@wyo.gov](mailto:jo.ferguson@wyo.gov).

**#2.** One of the assets someone brought up was your newsletter and town council notes. They remarked that the newsletter included expenditures for the town and their idea was also to include revenues.

**#3.** Down the road you might consider developing a town web site. You could possibly find a student that could design it for you and keep in maintained. On a web site you could post council notes as well as your town ordinances.

**Theme: Roads**

**Challenge:** This was the one carryover theme from the first assessment. Even though many improvements have been made, it is obvious that roads will continue to be a challenge and always need improvement.

**Solution: USDA Community Facilities Grant Program**

The Department of Agriculture (USDA) provides grants to communities with less than 20,000 residents to construct, renovate and improve roads. Eligible applicants include municipalities, counties, tribal government agencies and nonprofit organizations. Up to 75 percent of the project costs can be financed by grant funds. Grant amounts are determined by the community's income and population levels; areas with the lowest levels will receive higher financial considerations.

Housing and Community Facilities Programs National Office  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Room 5014 South Building  
14th Street and Independence Avenue SW  
Washington, DC 20250  
202-720-9619  
[rurdev.usda.gov](http://rurdev.usda.gov)

**Theme: Community Involvement (Leadership succession)**

**Challenge #1:** When things are going so well in a community, it is difficult for citizens to get involved and in the future you will need a change in leadership. Your challenge is to find individuals that are willing to move into leadership positions.

**Solution #1:** A very simple, low cost suggestion might be to begin taking 1 or 2 individuals from the community who you feel have good leadership skills and a willingness to move into leadership to the WAM conventions. Hopefully they can become inspired and have some motivation to run for office.

**Challenge #2:** Community involvement – you talked to us about how hard it is to get people involved in community events or community functions.

**Solution #2:** I only have advice to offer – hang in there and keep having those events. You are a very unique community, and I don't think some folks still feel they live in a "town". For those that do, keep bringing folks together.

**Chris Weiland**

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[chris.weiland@wyo.gov](mailto:chris.weiland@wyo.gov)

I want to first thank the town of Bear River for their great hospitality and sense of pride for the community in which they live. Community members were candid and honest during the listening sessions and showed that they cared about the future of Bear River. The town is making great strides while being so newly incorporated. A fire department, town hall, recreation parks, and a new water system add to the beautiful location of the hardworking town. By utilizing this report, Bear River will have the resources to excel in areas that are underdeveloped.

**Theme: COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT**

**Challenge:** How to get community members involved with one another?

**Solutions:**

-Bear River has several opportunities to enhance their community involvement. The first way would be to have a welcoming committee for new residents. Ideally, the committee would offer a welcome kit to the new residents which would include: information about who lives in their community, its assets and amenities, local organizations, and community events.

-The town does offer a newsletter to its residents and that is helping build relationships in the town. From what I heard, they are delivered in the mailboxes. One way to increase town involvement and create a sense of unity would be to deliver the newsletter in person. I realize this may be a feat during the winter time so in that case, there could be a monthly date when the newsletter would be released, and citizens could pick up their copy at the town hall where they could also interact with other members and talk about the latest issue.

-To go one step further with the newsletter, each copy could highlight a town person and give background of what that person does (hobbies, work, and residency period). It would allow people to get to know each other even if they prefer to be by themselves.

-Have a community project. One issue that was brought up during a listening session was to enclose two sides of the picnic table structure. This would be a simple and inexpensive project that the whole community could participate in. Combine this with a barbeque event during the work process and allow the kids to paint a mural on the outside walls to allow for maximum community involvement.

If you prefer to have someone do a mural, get in contact with the Wyoming Arts Council because they offer grants (3).

Another option for the actual structural costs would be the 15.916 Outdoor Recreation Acquisition, Development and Planning (Land and Water Conservation Fund Grants). Its objectives are “to provide financial assistance to the States and their political subdivisions for the preparation of Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plans (SCORPs) and acquisition and development of outdoor recreation areas and facilities for the general public, to meet current and future needs.”

The uses and use restrictions are as follows: “acquisition and development grants may be used for a wide range of outdoor recreation projects, such as picnic areas, inner city parks, campgrounds, tennis courts, boat launching ramps, bike trails, outdoor swimming pools, and support facilities such as roads, water supply, etc. Facilities must be open to the general public and not limited to special groups. Development of basic rather than elaborate facilities is favored. Fund monies are not available for the operation and maintenance of facilities.”

**Applicant Eligibility:** “For planning grants, only the State agency formally designated by the Governor or State law as responsible for the preparation and maintenance of the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan is eligible to apply. For acquisition and development grants, the above designated agency may apply for assistance for itself, or on behalf of other State agencies or political subdivisions, such as cities, counties, and park districts.” The State agency that is formally designated for this program is the Wyoming Department of State Parks and Cultural Resources.”

**Formula and Matching Requirements:** “The Land and Water Conservation Fund Act specifies that not more than 50 percent of the project cost may be federally financed.” That means that you must find fifty percent in matching funds; however, they do accept in-kind donations to count for that. It is a pass-through grant, meaning that some years they have funds to dispense, and some years they do not (4).

Lastly, you can try for a Community Enhancement grant through the Wyoming Business Council. Community Enhancement is for \$250,000 max with a 50% match. It has been used in several ways: signs, visitor's center, major clean-up project. Contact Elaina Zempel (5) for more details.

-The town seems to have a separation based on geographical location and basic principles. I see it as the “hill residents” and the “river residents.” By having more involvement and compromise on basic issues, the whole community could see an increase in cooperativeness and involvement. Have an open mind to new ideas and it may have a positive outcome in the future for both sides.

**Resources:**

**1-Portland's Community Connect Newsletter**

communityconnect@ci.portland.or.us

503.823.4092

[www.portlandonline.com/oni/index.cfm?a=167952&c=45393](http://www.portlandonline.com/oni/index.cfm?a=167952&c=45393)

**2-Center for Rural Affairs**

info@cfra.org

402.687.2100

[www.cfra.org/newsletter/2011/01/community-involvement-spurs-new-ideas](http://www.cfra.org/newsletter/2011/01/community-involvement-spurs-new-ideas)

**3-Wyoming Arts Council**

Karen Merklin

307.777.7743

[www.wyoarts.state.wy.us/Grants/Index.aspx](http://www.wyoarts.state.wy.us/Grants/Index.aspx)

**4- Wyoming Department of State Parks & Cultural Resources**

Tracy Williams

tracy.william.wyo.gov

307.777.8681

2301 Central Avenue, Barrett Building Cheyenne, WY 82002

www.wyospcr.state.wy.us

**5-Community Enhancement Grant**

Elaina Zempel

Southwest Regional Director

Wyoming Business Council

e.z@wyo.gov

307.877.2203

**Nancy Hoffer**

Ruckelshaus Institute and Haub School of Environment and Natural Resources,  
and Wyoming Conservation Corps (*also known as ENR Programs*)

Bim Kendall House

804 Fremont St.

Laramie, WY 82072

Phone: 307-766-5058

Fax: 307-766-5099

E-mail: [nhoffer@uwyo.edu](mailto:nhoffer@uwyo.edu)

Website: <http://www.uwyo.edu/enr/index.html>

I thoroughly enjoyed my time in the Town of Bear River, Wyoming. Thank you for your hospitality and friendliness. The Town of Bear River has many great assets, and one of the greatest is the pride and enthusiasm that the community leaders have, along with their innovative ideas for accomplishing the community's needs and goals. Another great asset is the community's pride and support of the mayor and town council. The bus tour was an enlightening and enjoyable experience.

**Theme: Recreation Area**

**Challenge #1: Stabilization of the bank of the Bear River near recreation areas.**

**Challenge #2: Parking lots within the recreation areas.**

**Solution/Contacts for Challenge #1:** Although spring flooding washed away the willows that had been planted in an effort to stabilize the riverbank near your recreation areas, your community may do this again. One resource (who can tell what successfully worked for them), would be to contact Tony Hoch of the Laramie River Conservation District. (While visiting with Tony, I learned that the success of their project was assured by adding "shot rock" to help hold it together. This is mentioned in their newsletter, Summer 2010 edition, available on their website <http://www.lrcd.net>.) Tony said he would enjoy the opportunity to visit about this or any other questions you might have.

Tony Hoch, Director/Water Quality Specialist

Laramie River Conservation District

Phone: 307-721-0072

[Tony.hoch@wy.nacdnet.net](mailto:Tony.hoch@wy.nacdnet.net)

**Solution/Contacts for Challenge #1:** Some of these suggestions, including the next several, might require that the Town of Bear River establish a nonprofit organization that can solicit grant through nonprofit/foundation channels helping with the development of the town, and for projects such as these.

**Solution/Contacts for Challenge #1:** As stated on its website, the purpose of The Wyoming Wildlife & Natural Resources Trust is "to enhance and conserve wildlife habitat and natural resource values throughout the state. Any project designed to improve wildlife habitat or natural resource values is eligible for funding, including the improvement and maintenance of aquatic habitats, including wetland creation or enhancement, stream restoration, water management or other methods." One funded project for the Laramie River included "reducing or eliminating the threat of erosion."

Check out their website for project applications (**application deadlines for projects are March 1 and September 1 annually**), as well as quick grants, funds up to \$2,500 allocated for small local projects. Quick grants may be awarded any time throughout the year.

Wyoming Wildlife & Natural Resources Trust  
Bob Budd, Executive Director  
500 E. Fremont  
Riverton, WY 82501  
Phone: 307-856-4665  
Website: <http://wwrnt.state.wy.us>

**Solution/Contacts for Challenge #1:** Another resource for funding and/or volunteer help is the Upper Bear River Chapter of Trout Unlimited. As their mission, they are “committed to the work of promoting the conservation of fish, water and habitat, as well as the enhancement of the sport of fishing.”

Upper Bear River Trout Unlimited Chapter #567  
PO Box 947  
Evanston, WY 82931  
E-Mail: [info@upperbearrivertu.org](mailto:info@upperbearrivertu.org)  
Website: <http://upperbearrivertu.org>

**Solution/Contacts for Challenge #1:** Another possible help would be the Wyoming Water Development Commission.

Wyoming Water Development Commission  
Michael K. Purcell, Director  
6920 Yellowtail Rd, Cheyenne, WY 82002  
Phone: 307-777-7626  
Website: <http://wwdc.state.wy.us/>

**Solution/Contacts for Challenge #2:** The Wyoming Department of Transportation would be one resource to contact for parking lots within the recreation areas.

Wyoming Highway Department  
555 County Road  
Evanston, WY 82930-2190

**Solution/Contacts for either or both Challenge #1 and #2:** The Wyoming Conservation Corps, which is a part of ENR Programs at University of Wyoming, does projects throughout the State of Wyoming from the end of May through mid August. Most of these projects are funded by state agencies or organizations and have included trail building and maintenance, reroofing shelters, clearing brush, building fences, planting trees, historic property restoration, campground cleanup, painting, constructing trails and walking paths, and much more. This year they began doing at least one unfunded project per year for a community or organization. Any requests for help must be received in early fall in order to be considered for inclusion in their work schedule for the next spring/summer.

**Resource;**

Kendall Peacock, Assistant Director  
Wyoming Conservation Corps  
Bim Kendall House  
804 Fremont St.  
Laramie, WY 82072  
Phone: 307-766-6436  
E-mail: [wcc@uwyo.edu](mailto:wcc@uwyo.edu)  
Kendall's e-mail address is: [talbot19@uwyo.edu](mailto:talbot19@uwyo.edu)  
Website: <http://www.uwyo.edu/enr/wcc/>

**Solution/Contacts for either or both Challenge #1 and #2:** Another great resource for volunteer help is ServeWyoming/Americorps. (They also provide funding for the Wyoming Conservation Corps.) Not only could ServeWyoming/Americorps provide the volunteers to do the labor, they also can provide help with grant writing.

As stated on the website, Americorps members “recruit, train, and supervise community volunteers, tutor and mentor youth, build affordable housing, teach computer skills, clean parks and streams, run after-school programs, help communities respond to disasters, ...”

Serve Wyoming  
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Executive Director  
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[serveyinfo@serveyoming.org](mailto:serveyinfo@serveyoming.org)  
Website: <http://serveyoming.org/>

**Solution/Contacts for either or both Challenge #1 and #2:** Two serviced organizations that might be able to help, either with funding or volunteer help, on these projects:

Evanston (District 5440) Rotary Club  
1601 Harrison Dr.  
P.O. Box 400  
Evanston, WY 82930  
Phone: 307-679-3228  
E-mail : [Evanston.WY.Rotary@gmail.com](mailto:Evanston.WY.Rotary@gmail.com)

Kiwanis Club of Evanston  
Phone: 847-475-4544  
E-mail : [info@evanstonkiwanis.org](mailto:info@evanstonkiwanis.org)  
Website: [www.evanstonkiwanis.org](http://www.evanstonkiwanis.org)

**Solution/Contacts for either or both Challenge #1 and #2:** Encana Corporation has a “community investment” initiative. This would be a good opportunity for the Town of Bear River to develop a relationship with someone at Encana that administers money to the Uinta area. The following is their website address which provides information on this initiative, and how to apply for funding.

<http://www.encana.com/responsibility/investment/>

## **Theme: Community Involvement**

**Challenge: Getting more people in the community involved.**

**Solution/Contacts:** Serve Wyoming (information about it is listed above in the previous section) could be a resource for training community volunteers who could help with various projects.

As stated on the website, Americorps members “recruit, train, and supervise community volunteers, tutor and mentor youth, build affordable housing, teach computer skills, clean parks and streams, run after-school programs, help communities respond to disasters, ...”

Serve Wyoming  
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229 E. 2nd Street, Suite 203  
PO Box #1271  
Casper, WY 82601  
Phone: 866-737-8304  
E-mail: [rachel@serveyoming.org](mailto:rachel@serveyoming.org)  
[serveyinfo@serveyoming.org](mailto:serveyinfo@serveyoming.org)  
Website: <http://serveyoming.org/>

**Solution/Contacts:** Recycling bins close to the Town Hall offices might provide an opportunity for more people to visit with town officials and get more involved with the community. Either a recycling center could provide the bins and pick up regularly, or someone from the community could volunteer to take the recycling to Evanston on a regular basis. Volunteers might provide refreshments that day for people who drop off their recycling, and provide information on opportunities to volunteer or become more involved in community events and projects.

## **Bear River, Wyoming**

Assessment Date: June 15-16, 2011

### **Brandon Cammarata, AICP**

Urban Planning Director

City of Cheyenne

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Roads – Maintenance of existing roads was identified as a challenge in Bear River. Roads provide access to properties and safely move cars, trucks, bicycles and pedestrians throughout a community. With all of those functions held equal, choosing a road design that will maximize maintenance dollars over an extended period of time is usually a priority. In the case of Bear River there are options to work with gravel road sections or paved rural road sections. Generally roads with higher traffic will call for paved sections to maximize maintenance dollars.



Traffic volumes are often measured by vehicles per day and they are counted by laying a counter “hose” across the road which electronically counts the cars. In the context of vehicles per day, many communities around Cheyenne decide to go with paved sections when a road starts to carry over 250 cars per day. Certainly that takes into account growth and other community goals and expectations as well. If you have more trucks then that number also will increase maintenance.

Thus the first step may be to get some technical assistance. The Wyoming Technology Transfer Center, <http://www.eng.uwyo.edu/wyt2> and George Huntington P.E. - [georgeh@uwyo.edu](mailto:georgeh@uwyo.edu) would be a good place to start with approaching the analysis, getting the counts done and the final decision making process as well. Coordination may also be possible with the Uinta County since most counties are taking regular count of roads across the county.

Roads exist for a long time. As such when designing and constructing roads the future use of the road should also be considered. Bear River has grown over the last decade and I am sure the use of the roads has grown proportionately. Over the upcoming decades growth should also be expected and planned for. The existence of public water and proximity to Evanston would lead to a logical expectation of continued growth in Bear River and the surrounding area and in either case will impact your community. Relating to growth, a plan prepares a community with at least some documented foundations and principles to guide decision makers when the growth comes. Does Bear River want to grow or not? In either case the community needs to communicate those expectations. And articulate how growth should be handled to preserve and enhance what the community deems important.

Related to looking at the future uses, roads also carry bicycles and pedestrians, to that extent the design of your roads may include getting people to your open space areas on bicycle or walking (or horse) which can be accommodated with wider shoulders on either gravel or paved roads. In addition, roads may be designed to provide on-street parking for access to the open space areas as well (i.e. parallel, diagonal or perpendicular parking located in the right of way).

### Recreation Area

One asset and responsibility the community has is management and stewardship of the river. Some foresight has already been used with the preservation of access easements and open spaces along the river itself. During our visit there did not seem to be a clear idea of what to do with the access easements or the areas themselves. These basic goals need to be formalized a little more before time and money is expended.

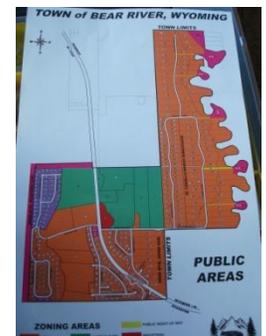
**Planning.** A logical place to articulate a long term goal such as the river would be in a town master plan or comprehensive plan. Documenting a community's goals and directions is a good way to stay on course for long term project that may overlap numerous governing bodies. The plan also creates a level of consensus relating to the goals or at least fairness in that there is a process involved to arrive at the goals. A good plan is also needed for effective implementation which for the river will likely involve grant moneys and a good plan provides a good foundation for applying for grants which is something to be cognizant of when deciding what will be in your plan and how it is presented.



Since the river will be a major emphasis of a plan then the group you hire should have expertise with riparian areas in rural communities to help you formulate realistic goals and sift through complicated water issues. Roads were mentioned earlier, and you may want to have the road designs include the purpose of helping to address parking for the open space areas. Using the right of way to install diagonal or perpendicular parking area in the right of way as well as design roads to accommodate bicycles with wider shoulders could reduce the parking burden as well.

**Resource.** The Wyoming Business Council provides grant funding for planning efforts. Certainly your planning effort would likely emphasize the river area. The Wyoming Business Council has planning grants available up to \$50,000 with a 20% match. Most planning efforts in small communities range from \$20k to \$40 to produce.

This planning effort would also be helpful for your community to clarify growth expectations. Without a doubt, the existence of water infrastructure and proximity to Evanston will continue growth pressures on Bear River and the surrounding area



**Resources:** <http://www.wyomingbusiness.org/program/planning-and-technical-assistance-grants/3302>

Contact **Julie Kozlowski**, [julie.kozlowski@wybusiness.org](mailto:julie.kozlowski@wybusiness.org) Community Development Block Grant Program Manager at 307.777.2812.

### Ordinance Enforcement

Enforcement of animal control and nuisance ordinances was identified as a challenge and on occasion traffic issues as well. Based on what we heard, continuing to try to get on the same page as the sheriff is an ongoing effort and is certainly appropriate. As is continuing to look at creative cost sharing operations with surrounding

communities which it appears Bear River is particularly adept at. Identifying a constant funding stream to fund general enforcement is also an obvious component.

In addition to these efforts enforcement can also be helped with better communication to constituents. Make sure everyone knows what the rules are and what is allowed and how those allowances can be achieved. In some cases, emphasizing the affirmatives as opposed to restrictions also helps folks feel better about complying with regulation. The additional and ongoing communication may also highlight any deficiencies with the regulation itself or where enforcement efforts need to focus. For example a regulation may sometimes have unintended consequences that can be identified and amended and ultimately make people more accepting of the regulations.

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**Introduction:** The week spent in Bear River as a member of the Community Assessment team gave me the opportunity to appreciate what you have in the community, why your pride shows so well, and why you choose to live in this unique part of Wyoming.

The town of Bear River is situated in a beautiful valley that was carved by the Bear River. The rural atmosphere is evident, and I can tell that community members enjoy the peaceful nature of the valley.

I thank the mayor, the members of city council, and the community citizens as our host for the assessment. It is evident that the citizens have a passion for the community and are eager for improvement and prosperity.

**Theme: Ordinance Enforcement**

**Challenge:** During the assessment, several residents expressed concerns about community ordinance enforcement. Specifically, there is lack of law enforcement and limited help or support from the sheriff department. Examples of nuances consist of dog control, speeding, waste disposal, and abandoned vehicles in yards.

**Solution:**

Without local police force, ordinance enforcement is a justifiable challenge. If the community is unable to secure a local police officer, the town council and residents need to rely on the town council and mayor.

In speaking with the residents of Bear River, many expressed that the sheriff will respond to calls; however, support is limited as it is not the sheriff's role to enforce town ordinances.

A suggestion for the town council of Bear River is to define all town ordinances and communicate these to the residents. This can be done by publishing the ordinances and distributing them in a monthly newsletter to the residents. Another suggestion is to include an ordinance of the month with the water bill.

Members of the town council could also arrange a meeting with the county commissioners to establish a clear understanding on what laws the county sheriff can and cannot enforce. After understanding the sheriff's role, the town council should meet with the sheriff to establish an agreement. The town may also consider making an office available for the sheriff in the town.

A final suggestion is for the town council to contact the National Sheriff's Association (NSA). The (NSA) is a web-based resource center for law enforcement. Law enforcement executives and small town government officials can access this database. The directory of consultants can offer policy guidance and can conduct needs assessments. The following is the website for this service:

<http://www.sheriffs.org/programs/ContractLawEnforcementServices.asp>

**Theme: Community Involvement**

**Challenge:** Certain residents exhibit the lack of interest or concern in participating in the community.

**Solution: Farmers Market**

The development of a Farmers Market in Bear River will give the opportunity for residence to mingle and get to know each other. Farmers Markets are a great place to buy locally grown products from produce, meat, eggs and other value added food products. For more information, please visit the following website.

<http://www.wyomingbusiness.org/program/farmers-markets/1302>

Contact:

Kim Porter, Farmers Market & Education Program Manager  
Phone: 307-777-6319

## **WHAT WAS SAID IN THE INTERVIEWS**

The Resource Team spent two days interviewing the local residents to hear what they had to say. Those being interviewed were directed to answer three questions:

- ✓ What are the major problems/challenges in the community?
- ✓ What are the major strengths/assets of the community?
- ✓ What projects would you like to see implemented in your community in the next two, five, ten, or twenty years?

Listed below, without comment, is what was heard from those who volunteered to be interviewed.

### **Problems and Challenges**

- Roads - need improvement
- Apathy – people don't want to get involved
- Funding
- Roads – not built to any standards, just bulldozed paths, those down by river will have to be re-built (about \$4M to accomplish)
- Community involvement
- ditto
- Roads are too good, so people wreck them
- Getting people involved so they know what is going on not just assume
- Enforcement , code and law (nuances ordinances) – don't want a Barney, just some enforcements i.e. speeding tickets
- Ditto – no mechanism to enforce laws or ordinances
- Sherriff does not support us (being worked on)
- Last month's legislation
- Abandoned vehicles in yards
- Older generations are at times resistant to change
- Population growth – left LA to get away from high population, if it grows more, I will move
- Roads
- Ditto
- Flooding
- Someone can shoot a person's dog on their property – lack of animal control
- Ditto
- Ditto
- Misdelivered packages
- Speeding

- Roads
- Dog control
- Speeders
- Funding
- Problem with easements on the park
- Young people using 4 wheelers – OK with it as long as they don't tear up the road
- Some of the people that live here
- No law enforcement
- Animal control is common sense – some neighbors don't go with the flow and will turn their dogs loose
- Funding for projects
- Lack of clarity of access to river and easements
- Lack of law enforcement and not much help or support of sheriff department, however they will respond when called

### **Strengths and Assets**

- Small and everyone knows everyone
- Wind power
- Water
- Great leadership (Mayor, Council and workforce)
- Ditto
- Mayor has made so many improvements
- Good water
- Town Council and Mayor – work so hard for the community
- Ditto
- Council is fiscally responsible, we have done so much with so little
- Open land and spaces
- Fiscal responsibility
- Structure of town, location, sizes of lots, parks access for recreation
- 80% of population are satisfied and don't have high expectations, ok with roads, ok with dust – their expectations are realistic
- Fire Department
- Ditto
- Ditto
- Fire department is the best
- Relationship we have developed with state, county and other communities
- Evanston
- Water sewer district created
- Town Council – they are around always; they answer your calls and will help you

- Town Clerk very helpful
- Satisfied with leadership of community
- Roads – are maintained within our budget
- Beautiful area
- Snow
- Love the weather
- Fire department
- Ditto
- We like our town like it is – we moved so we can stay rural
- Very little crime
- Roads are much better
- Town has come 200%
- Leadership in this community
- Town is going on the right path
- Fire station
- EMT
- Town is wonderful – great to live out here
- Wide open spaces
- EMT services
- Helpful people when people are in crisis
- Becoming a “Town”
- People chip in when you need help
- People in Wyoming are the nicest and giving people that I have ever seen
- Town float for parades
- We are self sufficient
- I have seen things greatly improve here
- Water
- Town has worked hard to better the community and get things done
- Roads are in good condition and did put in culverts
- Water – my wife doesn’t complain on wash day anymore
- Windmill was a good idea
- Town has been very good at getting grants
- Council and employees

### **Projects**

- 2 years – more law enforcement
- 20 years whole community on sewer system
- 2 years – code enforcement, law enforcement

- 2 years – start roads
- 2 years law enforcement
- 5 years, rebuild roads
- Sewer telemetry finished
- Ditto
- 10 years – roads up to code
- Ditto
- Internally have equipment to maintain roads
- 10 years Parks and easements that we can effectively use them and where we want them to be
- Pet cemetery
- 10 years – a place to scatter my ashes
- 10 years – develop parks
- 10 years – develop parks, river walk way, bank stabilization
- 20 years – central sewer system
- 20 years – natural gas
- Animal control
- Paved roads (don't understand why we can't have paved roads)
- Cost effective road construction and maintenance
- Our own zip code
- A way to have larger packages delivered to community
- Newsletter – would like to see money that comes into community (it does post expenditures, would like to see revenues)
- Ditto
- Law enforcement – would like to see the Sheriff do his job
- Block off the south and west side of the park so more people can use it (wind protection)
- Down on the river, would like to see a parking lot so we can go fishing and parking
- Animal control
- Funding so we can do more projects
- Access to the river and the parks
- ATV area for riders to play
- Something for ages 12-15 to do
- River access or river walk
- County nurse – come down once a month use town hall to check blood pressure, etc.
- Potentially a renewable energy project, maybe another windmill

## 20 CLUES TO RURAL COMMUNITY SURVIVAL

### **1. Evidence of Community Pride:**

Successful communities are often showplaces of care, attention, history and heritage.

### **2. Emphasis on Quality in Business and Community Life:**

People believe that something worth doing is worth doing right.

### **3. Willingness to Invest in the Future:**

In addition to the brick-and-mortar investments, all decisions are made with an outlook on the future.

### **4. Participatory Approach to Community Decision Making:**

Even the most powerful of opinion leaders seem to work toward building consensus.

### **5. Cooperative Community Spirit:**

The stress is on working together toward a common goal, and the focus is on positive results.

### **6. Realistic Appraisal of Future Opportunities:**

Successful communities have learned how to build on strengths and minimize weaknesses.

### **7. Awareness of Competitive Positioning:**

Local loyalty is emphasized, but thriving communities know who their competitors are and position themselves accordingly.

### **8. Knowledge of the Physical Environment:**

Relative location and available natural resources underscore decision-making.

### **9. Active Economic Development Program:**

There is an organized, public/private approach to economic development.

### **10. Deliberate Transition of Power to a Younger Generation of Leaders:**

People under 40 regularly hold key positions in civic and business affairs.

### **11. Acceptance of Women in Leadership Roles:**

Women are elected officials, plant managers, and entrepreneurial developers.

### **12. Strong Belief in and Support for Education:**

Good schools are the norm and centers of community activity.

### **13. Problem-Solving Approach to Providing Health Care:**

Health care is considered essential, and smart strategies are in place for diverse methods of delivery.

### **14. Strong Multi-Generational Family Orientation:**

The definition of family is broad, and activities include younger as well as older generations.

### **15. Strong Presence of Traditional Institutions that are Integral to Community Life:**

Churches, schools and service clubs are strong influences on community development and social activities.

### **16. Sound and Well-Maintained Infrastructure:**

Leaders work hard to maintain and improve streets, sidewalks, water systems, and sewage facilities.

### **17. Careful Use of Fiscal Resources:**

Frugality is a way of life and expenditures are considered investments in the future.

### **18. Sophisticated Use of Information Resources:**

Leaders access information that is beyond the knowledge base available in the community.

### **19. Willingness to Seek Help from the Outside:**

People seek outside help for community needs, and many compete for government grants and contracts for economic and social programs.

### **20. Conviction that, in the Long Run, You Have to Do It Yourself:**

Thriving rural communities believe their destiny is in their own hands. Making their communities good places is a pro-active assignment, and they willingly accept it.

*\*Reprinted from Heartland Center Leadership Development, Spring 2002 Visions Newsletter.*