



2023-2043 Comprehensive Plan Caribou County, Idaho

Photography by Scott Buxton

Table of Contents

Acknowledgments	4
Introduction	5
Public Involvement	6
Background.....	8
Figure 1 Vicinity Map.....	12
Chapter 1: Property Rights.....	13
Chapter 2: Population.....	14
Chapter 3: Economic Development	16
Chapter 4: Transportation & Airports.....	19
Figure 2 Transportation Map	23
Chapter 5: Housing.....	24
Chapter 6: Agriculture	27
Figure 3 Natural Resources Map	31
Chapter 7: Natural Resources.....	34
Chapter 8: Recreation	37
Chapter 9: Land Use.....	40
Figure 4 Future Land Use Map (FLUM).....	43
Chapter 10: Public Services.....	46
10.1: Emergency Response Services	46
10.2: Local Services	48
10.3: Schools	50
Figure 6 Public Facilities Map	53
Chapter 11: Implementation	56
References.....	66
APPENDIX A	68
APPENDIX B.....	142

FIGURES

- Figure 1 – Vicinity Map, page 12
- Figure 2 – Transportation Map, page 23
- Figure 3 – Natural Resources Map, page 31
- Figure 4 – Future Land Use Map (FLUM), page 43
- Figure 5 – Public Facilities Map, page 53

TABLES

- Table 2 New Residential Applications, page 13
- Table 2.1 Current Demographics, page 15
- Table 3.1 Top Employers, 2020, page 17
- Table 3.3 New Residential Applications, page 25
- Table 4.1 Crop Production, page 27
- Table 4.2 Livestock, Poultry, & Products Production, page 28
- Table 5 Caribou County Schools, page 51
- Table 8 - Year-Round Activities, page 38

APPENDIX

- A – Comprehensive Plan Public Involvement Summary, page 68
- B – Idaho Regulatory Takings Act Guidelines, page 142

Acknowledgments

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Introduction

A Comprehensive Plan is a guide for the future of the county. While the focus of a Comprehensive Plan is to guide planning and zoning decisions, the scope of the Plan is much broader, encompassing many issues that impact county residents including public services, natural resources, recreation, and transportation, among others. A Plan is prepared with the involvement of county residents, community groups and other public agencies, and must reflect their issues and concerns.

Idaho counties must prepare and maintain a current Comprehensive Plan in accordance with Idaho Code Section 67-6508. The Plan must consider “previous and existing conditions, trends, desirable goals and objectives, or desirable future situations” within numerous planning components (such as land use, population, hazardous areas etc.).

The Board of Caribou County Commissioners embarked on this planning process in summer 2021, initiating a consultant contract in September 2020, to update the Caribou County Comprehensive Plan to serve as a 10 to 20-year guiding document. The planning process objectives were to:

- Provide the public with complete, accurate and timely information regarding the process.
- Offer consistent and accessible opportunities for public participation and community conversations.
- Develop strategies that will support implementation of the Plan.

This plan includes 11 chapters comprising the required plan components stipulated in Idaho Code Section 67-6508, however several components have been merged. The School Facilities and Transportation component may be found in Public Services (Chapter 10). Chapter 7 (Natural Resources) addresses Special Areas or Sites and Hazardous Areas. Community Design was considered in Chapter 9 (Land Use). Public Airport Facilities are discussed in Chapter 4 (Transportation). No National Interest Electric Transmission Corridors occur in Caribou County.

Public Involvement

A Comprehensive Plan is not complete without the input from its citizens. Any successful plan must be supportive of the local culture and way of life. It is with this understanding that the County has sought to create a plan that is sound and balanced between the desires and needs of its citizens.



The public involvement process associated with the development of this plan included early, meaningful, continuous, and inclusive communication with stakeholders and interested parties. A Public Involvement Summary details (provided in **Appendix A**) how the County conducted public outreach and solicited public feedback throughout the comprehensive plan process.

These public involvement efforts provided public awareness, education and involvement, and reflected good stewardship from Caribou County to its community. Feedback from the public helped the planning team develop a comprehensive plan that addresses the character and future growth of the county.

Community Advisory Committee (CAC) Meetings

A Community Advisory Committee (CAC) was organized by the County to help facilitate information and input for the comprehensive plan update. The CAC met and discussed elements of the new Comprehensive Plan on several occasions from November 2021 to June 2022. See **Appendix A** for detail of those meetings.

Public Events

An in-person public event was held on April 13, 2022, at Tigert Middle School in Soda Springs. The event showcased information on the planning process, an issues map for commenting, and an interactive activity to solicit feedback on Goals, Objectives and Strategies for the plan. Approximately 50 community members attended the meeting. This event was advertised via press release/article in the Caribou County Sun, flyers hung up around town in key locations, social media/webpage posts and utility mailing notices.

County staff conducted similar meetings in Grace, Bancroft and Wayan in the following month. County staff also obtained a booth for the 4th of July event in Soda Springs, Pioneer Day Celebration in Bancroft, and County Fair in Grace. The booths included the Draft Future Land Use Map (FLUM), as well as handouts and comment cards.

County-Wide Mailer & Survey

The County included information in both semi-annual tax assessments to inform all property owners of the process and to encourage their participation. The first mailer (November 2021) described the purpose and use of Comprehensive Plans, the project timeline, and how to join the interested parties list. A link to a community survey regarding input needed for the updated plan, was also provided. The second mailer (June 2022) provided project updates, presented the summer public event details and other ways to engage in the process.

Webpage & Social Media Support

The county initiated and hosted a webpage with information on the planning process, outreach opportunities, and contact information for the public if they would like to give input or ask questions. The County managed all content, design and updates to the website.

Background

*Caribou County History*¹

In 1984, The Daughters of Utah Pioneers prepared the following of Caribou County:

Here, with their families, man of the Shoshone and Bannock tribes spent the bright summer seasons, enjoying the mineral-colored waters. Game and fish were plentiful; wild berries grew in abundance on nearby hills. Indian ponies fed in native grasses that grew “high as a horse's belly.”

The powdered formation built up by the action of the water around these springs was used by the Indian women as a cleaning agent for their robes, and as bleach for leather or anything else they wanted whitened. These native inhabitants believed that there were curative properties in the “medicine waters” and drank religiously of the queer not too pleasant tasting liquid.

No one knows with certainty what trapper or which explore was the first white men to wander in on this peaceful scene and look with amazement on the “sparkling waters” of “Tosoiba” country. It is known that as early as 1812 a party of white men under the direction of David Stuart (Stewart) who was in the employ of John Jacob Astor, was returning to St. Louis from Astoria, and passed through this Bear River country at a point near where Fort Conner was later established. These men were seeking a better route than the one they had previously used which took them over Teton Pass. Besides the more rugged and difficult terrain over this northern route, there were also greater numbers of Indians and they were less friendly. In the records of these men, it was indicated that at that time, buffalo and mountain goats were found in this part of “Tosoiba” country.

Long before trappers and explores had made their zigzag trails through a western wilderness...warriors had discovered a valley of enchantment. Lush green meadows spread out in every direction from the “Point” of the mountain where the friendly river kept ever so close to the hills rather than winding a lonely way across the valley. And everywhere there were springs, bubbling and boiling. The Indians called the valley “Tosoiba – Land of Sparking Waters.”

¹ (Pioneers, Daughters of Utah. 1984, Tosoiba “Sparkling Water”, page #1-2, 161,163,164, & 165)

In 1662 almost two hundred years before the covered wagons of Oregon home seekers and California gold miners started rolling over the Old Oregon trail through the land of Tosoiba, all of what is now southeast Idaho and a great deal more, was claimed by France. It is doubtful, though, if any Frenchman ever set foot, at that early period, on any Idaho soil.

From 1812 on, more and more hunters and trappers, hearing of this easier trail, followed the path of Stuart and his men. Before many years had passed, the trail became plainly marked and the campfires of the white men glowed bright and often at this "welcome oasis" along the way. And in time, tales of the wondrous fountains of "Tosoiba" country drifted back to the civilization of the East.

On January 11, 1919, E.D. Whitman of Soda Springs presented a bill in the House of Representatives proposing the creation of a county in Southeast Idaho with the county seat at Soda Springs. The boundaries of the proposed county with an approximate area of 1,300 square miles and \$5,000,000 valuation. Little interest was shown among the legislators, although Mr. Whitman made personal contacts with them to gain their needed support. Delegates from Pocatello went to Boise opposing the proposition. Also, delegations went from Grace and Bancroft in the interest of the new county, but with the suggestions that the county seat be at Grace or Bancroft.

The bill passed the House of Representatives February 11, 1919, Governor D.W. Davis signed the bill making Caribou the fourth county in Idaho. The First County Commissioners took oath of office Monday, 5th, 1919.

This newly formed county had a population of 2,121 and an area of 1,263 square miles, or nearly two persons to each square mile. At that time Caribou ranked twenty-fourth in area, thirty-third in wealth, and fortieth in population among the counties of Idaho.

The primary need of the county was a county building place to do business, have offices, and keep records. The Caribou County Courthouse was built in 1919 by C.K. Bocker.

Caribou County Setting

Caribou County is located in the southeastern part of Idaho. Our border counties are, to the east Bannock County, Idaho, to the north Bingham County and Bonneville County, Idaho, to the west Lincoln County, Wyoming, and the south Franklin County and Bear Lake County, Idaho. Caribou County encompasses 1,746 square miles, with three major rivers flowing through it.

The Portneuf River rises in western Caribou County, approximately 25 miles (40 km) east of Pocatello, along the eastern side of the Portneuf Range. It flows

initially south, passing westward around the southern end of the 60-mile range, and then turning north to flow between the Portneuf Range to the east and the Bannock Range to the west. It flows northwest through downtown Pocatello and enters the Snake at the southeast corner of American Falls Reservoir, approximately 10 miles (16 km) northwest of Pocatello. ²

The Blackfoot River is a tributary of the Snake River in the state of Idaho. Formed by the confluence of Diamond Creek and Lanes Creek, it flows 135 miles (217 km) to its mouth at the Snake River. The river is part of the Columbia River Basin. The Blackfoot River is formed by the joining of Diamond and Lanes Creeks, in the Caribou-Targhee National Forest in Caribou County near Soda Springs, Idaho. It flows northwest through the Blackfoot Reservoir, which is used for irrigation and flood control, then west to join the Snake River in Bingham County.³

The Bear River is the largest tributary of the Great Salt Lake, draining a mountainous area and farming valleys northeast of the lake and southeast of the Snake River Plain. It flows through southwestern Wyoming, southeastern Idaho, and northern Utah, in the United States. Approximately 350 miles (560 km) long it is the longest river in North America that does not ultimately reach the sea. At Soda Springs, near the north end of the Wasatch Range, the Bear River turns abruptly south, flowing past Preston in the broad Cache Valley that extends north from Logan, Utah. ⁴

For the past century, population has been concentrated in three towns – Soda Springs (the County Seat), Grace, and Bancroft. Some development has occurred along the principal roads that cross the County. Approximately 515,955 acres are privately owned, 530,423 acres are Federally owned (Incl. Tribal), 2,145 acres are Local Government owned, and 107,875 acres are owned by the State of Idaho (as depicted on Figure 1 below). ⁵ Even with the growth of population in southeastern Idaho, Caribou County's rural landscapes remain as scenic vistas of open space and farmland, dotted with homes, livestock, and wildlife.

² (Encyclopedia, Portneuf River (Idaho) facts for kids n.d.)

³ (Encyclopedia, Blackfoot River (Idaho) facts for kids n.d.)

⁴ (Encyclopedia, Bear River (Great Salt Lake) facts for kids n.d.)

⁵ (Cook, Aaron, Caribou County Assessor)

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Figure 1 Vicinity Map.

Chapter 1: Property Rights

Caribou County is committed to protecting private property rights and values. Idaho Code section 67-6508 states that a Comprehensive Plan should include a section on Property Rights, including “an analysis of provisions which may be necessary to ensure that land use policies, restrictions, conditions and fees do not violate private property rights, adversely impact values or create unnecessary technical limitations on the use of property.”

Developing regulations, ordinances, and other tools necessary to implement the plan will occur following its adoption and, as stipulated in the Idaho Code, in conformance with the Comprehensive Plan. To evaluate these broad regulatory actions or administrative action on specific property, the Office of the Attorney General of the State of Idaho has prepared a Checklist or guideline to follow provided in **Appendix B** of this Plan). Caribou County is committed to referring to the checklist and otherwise protecting fundamental property rights through land use decisions.

Chapter 2: Population

Existing Conditions:

To support this Comprehensive Plan process, data from Idaho Department of Labor was collected and the population analysis based on the most current census data available (2021). Future growth projections were developed using new residential construction building permits (2012-2022) and past trends, to facilitate development of this Plan.

Table 2 New Residential Applications

New Residential Application 2012 - 2022	
Year	Applications Submitted
2012	16
2013	12
2014	8
2015	7
2016	14
2017	9
2018	15
2019	17
2020	25
2021	33
2022	49

This section summarizes the essential information for both current demographics and projections.

Caribou County is home to roughly 7,111 people (2021), which is about 235 more people from 2010.⁶ If this population growth trend continues the estimated population will be approximately 7,611 people by 2031. With the projection of growth, it appears the County will grow 4.8% over the next ten (10) years, or about 352 persons.⁷

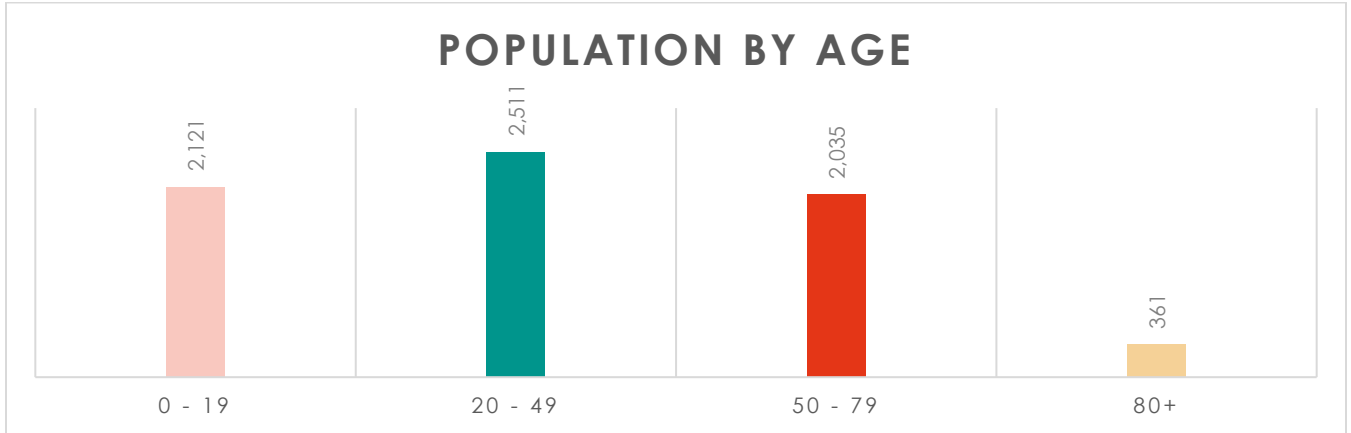
Given the changing development activity in southeast Idaho, an annual review of the number of permits issued and land use applications received, is also recommended.

⁶ (Caribou County Labor Force & Economic Profile, Idaho Department of Labor, January 2022)

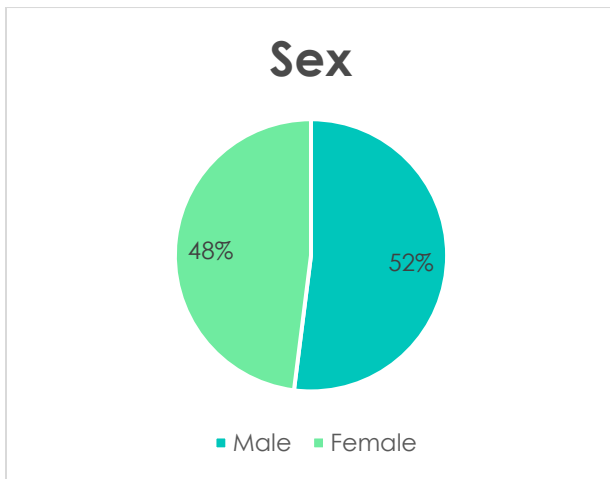
⁷ (Southeast Idaho Council of Governments, Community & Economic Development, Caribou County 10 Year Population Projections)

Table 2.1 Current Demographics

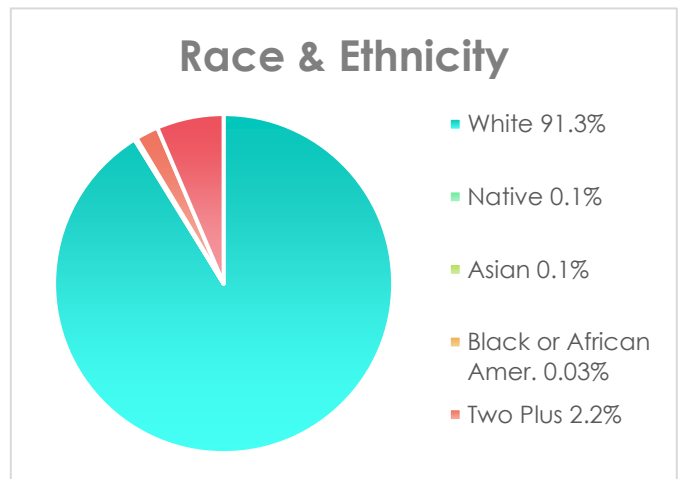
Population by age



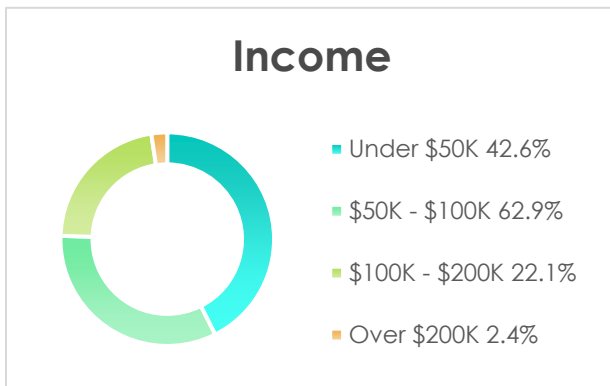
Sex



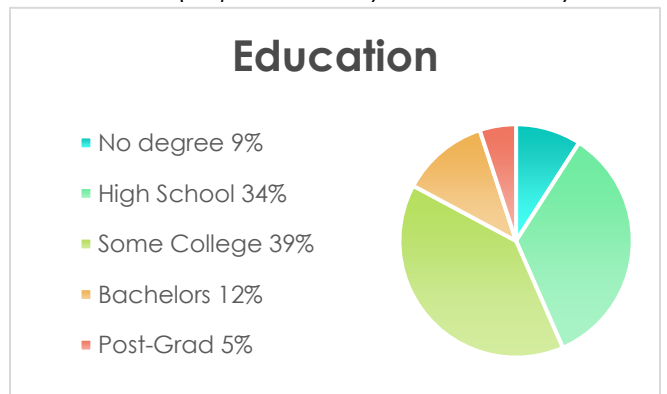
Race & Ethnicity



Income



Education (Population 25 years and over)



Chapter 3: Economic Development

“THE PEOPLE OF CARIBOU COUNTY HAVE HISTORICALLY AND TRADITIONALLY EARNED THEIR LIVELIHOOD FROM ACTIVITIES RELIANT UPON NATURAL RESOURCES. THE ECONOMY OF THE COUNTY HAS ALWAYS BEEN, AND IS TODAY, DEPENDENT UPON AGRICULTURE, MINING, MANUFACTURING, AND OTHER ACTIVITIES RELIANT UPON THE AVAILABILITY OF NATURAL RESOURCES AND REASONABLE ACCESSIBLE WATER SUPPLIES.”

-CARIBOU COUNTY LAND USE PLAN 2008

Existing Conditions:

Caribou County had an annual Gross Domestic Product value of \$453,673,000 as of December 8, 2021. The county's primary economic sectors are agriculture, mining and manufacturing, and construction. Other important sectors include healthcare, education, and government.

Agriculture: Principal commodities produced by farmers and ranchers are barley, beef cattle, potatoes, wheat, milk, and wool.⁸

Mining and Manufacturing: Our modern society uses phosphorus in thousands of ways, some essential, others for our convenience and enjoyment. Bayer and Itafos are two companies within the County that does phosphate mining and phosphorus manufacturing, uses phosphorus to develop crop protection products for farmers. Silica and lime mining are also industries important to the community. There are three new mines in various stages of proposal and approval to service this industry.

Construction: There is the commercial and residential component of construction within the county. Commercial construction supports many projects for the manufacturing and mine facilities in the county. Additionally, residential construction has increased exponentially and there is a high demand for residential contractors.

Employment:

- Increase of 451 jobs in the County from 2010-2020
- Unemployment rate 1.6% as of Dec 2021† is estimated that 1,996 workers lived and worked in Caribou County in 2019.

⁸ (Census of Agriculture, United States Department of Agriculture, 2017)

- Another 1,507 workers were employed in Caribou County but lived outside, while 1,109 workers commuted to other counties for work.⁹

Table 3.1 Top Employers, 2020

Top Employers, 2020	
Employer	Employee Range
G&Z Outsourcing	250-499
J R Simplot	100-249
Caribou Memorial Hospital	100-249
N A Degerstrom	100-249
Soda Springs School District	100-249
Grace School District	100-249
Caribou County	100-249
Broulim's Foodtown	50-99
Airgas	10-49
North Gem School District	10-49

NOTE: Only employers that have given the Department permission to release employment range data are listed. Source: Idaho Department of Labor.

Key Concerns:

- Preserve and protect agriculture and mining sectors
- Manage tourism activities to provide job opportunities for residents, while reducing conflicts between users
- Support commercial activities include retail, restaurant, and entertainment within local cities
- Ensure that information and communication technology is adequate to serve all county residents and visitors

Goals, Objectives, and Implementation Strategies

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOAL: Promote balanced economic growth to provide diverse work opportunities, sustainable business development and financial stability.

⁹ (Caribou County Labor Force & Economic Profile 2022)

Objective 1: Ensure County functions, policies and services support and stimulate regional economic growth.

- Strategy 1.1: Collaborate with cities on land use decisions in keeping with Area of City Impact agreements, to ensure consistent policies on major land use areas and economic sectors.
- Strategy 1.2: Maintain serviceability of communication systems including broadband internet, telephone, and cable.
- Strategy 1.3: Participate in regional efforts with local governments, representatives from key employers and sectors to implement joint economic development strategies including retention of existing economic sectors as well as diversification and incentives.
- Strategy 1.4: Coordinate housing programs and policies with the cities and towns in Caribou County, to ensure adequate rental and owner-occupied, single, and multifamily options.
- Strategy 1.5: Support partnerships for training and mentorship programs with local industries to encourage pairing of local job opportunities with residents.

Objective 2: Support County-wide efforts to encourage and manage tourism.

- Strategy 2.1: Develop a County-wide Parks and Open Space plan to address current and future needs, and identify strategies related to parks and recreation, natural and cultural resources, open space and waterways.
- Strategy 2.2: Collaborate with local cities to establish venues and businesses for local use of agriculture commodities, such as farmer's markets and community supported agriculture programs.
- Strategy 2.3: Assess existing zoning regulations to ensure that appropriate provisions exist for lodging opportunities without disrupting current residents and farming operations.
- Strategy 2.4: Evaluate promotional programs to attract visitors including documentation and marketing of County's natural and cultural resources.

Chapter 4: Transportation & Airports

“THE COUNTY SHOULD TAKE APPROPRIATE MEASURES TO PROVIDE AN ADEQUATE, SAFE, AND EFFECTIVE TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM TO...AVOID THE DISRUPTION OF PRIME AGRICULTURAL LAND, OTHER NATURAL RESOURCES AND HISTORICAL SITES IN THE DESIGN OF NEW HIGHWAYS AND OTHER TRANSPORTATION FACILITIES.”

- CARIBOU COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 1977

Existing Conditions:

Roads:

As depicted on (Figure 2 – Road Maintenance Map), the main mode of transportation in Caribou County is the automobile. The two major roadways running through the county are U.S. Route 30 and State Route 34. Route 30 enters the county southeast of Soda Springs and then heads directly west out of Soda Springs to meet with Interstate 15 (which leads to Pocatello). State Route 34 cuts across the northeast part of the county, heads directly south to Soda Springs where it merges with U.S. Route 30, branches off U.S. 30 west of Soda Springs, and heads south again, through Grace, and into Franklin County.

There are 875 miles non-winter season-maintained roads, 470 miles of the 875 miles are maintained year-round by Caribou County Road & Bridge Department. (See Figure 2, Road maintenance map).

The County has mutual aid maintenance agreements with the Forest Service, Bonneville, Bingham and Lincoln Counties, some of those are seasonal only. Approximately 10% of the County's Road & Bridge Department budget is supplied via County taxes; the remainder of the budget is supplied via the State of Idaho and Federal funds. 70% of roadways maintained by the County are in satisfactory condition, with the remaining 30% in need of repair or improvement in some form or another. 70% of the bridges under the County's jurisdiction are in satisfactory conditions with the remaining 30% needing repaired or replaced.

Public and Commercial Transportation: The only source of public transportation in the County is through Pocatello Regional Transit, which offers transportation by appointment. There are several commercial entities that provide transportation within and out of the county, mostly in the form of shipping.

Airports: Soda Springs and Bancroft have small public airports. Grace has a private airport. None offer any scheduled, commercial service; all business is

private and charter service. Caribou County residents drive to Pocatello Regional Airport for commercial flights or to Salt Lake City for a variety of domestic and international flights.

Key Concerns:

- Address conflicting uses of County highways
- Improve winter maintenance of roads
- Provide better non-motorized options for connecting communities
- Provide biking and walking paths around and between recreation areas

Goal, Objectives, and Implementation Strategies

TRANSPORTATION GOAL: Ensure that the transportation system supports mobility of a diverse group of users and enhances the County's health, safety, and welfare.

Objective 1: Ensure roadway systems meet current and future needs.

- Strategy 1.1: Design roadways to meet the safety and access needs of current and future traffic conditions.
- Strategy 1.2: Collaborate with relevant entities to improve maintenance of roadways, particularly during winter months.
- Strategy 1.3: Identify policies to address interactions between farming equipment, freight/industrial users, and commuter vehicles (established routes, regulations etc.).
- Strategy 1.4: Actively seek various types of transportation grant funding and other available sources to support roadway improvements.
- Strategy 1.5: Collaborate with railroad companies to address safety issues at County crossings.

Objective 2: Plan and construct transportation infrastructure that will increase accessibility.

- Strategy 2.1: Incorporate non-motorized options for connecting communities, including bicycle and pedestrian facilities, as part of roadway maintenance projects, development applications and capital projects whenever opportunities arise and are feasible.
- Strategy 2.2: Collaborate with neighboring jurisdictions, as well as public and private entities, to increase opportunities for varying transit options (commuter vans, Pocatello Regional Transit, airports, etc.).

- Strategy 2.3: Require developers to implement roadway improvements prior to construction.
- Strategy 2.4: Assess roadway construction policies to ensure that pedestrian amenities (Sidewalks, paths, etc.) are ADA compliant.

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Figure 2 Transportation Map

Chapter 5: Housing

“THE OBJECTIVE IN DESIGNING COMMUNITIES IN RURAL AREAS IS TO ESTABLISH RESIDENCES AROUND A MAIN SERVICE CENTER, PROVIDING EASY ACCESS TO NECESSARY GOODS AND SERVICES. AS COMMUNITIES REACH CAPACITY THROUGH INFILL AND THE NEED TO GROW OUTWARD FROM CITY CENTERS BECOMES APPARENT, RESIDENTIAL LOTS WILL IDEALLY BECOME LARGER AND LARGER AS THEY REACH OUT TOWARDS LARGE FARMS AND PUBLIC LANDS WHICH ARE SO PREVALENT IN THE COUNTY. PLANNING COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN THIS MANNER PRESERVES RURAL LIVING FOR THOSE WHO CHOOSE IT AND PROVIDES A CONCENTRATION OF SERVICES FOR THOSE WANTING OR NEEDING EASIER ACCESS.”

-CARIBOU COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 1997

Housing Existing Conditions:

Caribou County and the cities within the county have been experiencing a housing shortage for some time, which was most recently confirmed in the 2018 Economic Development Plan for Soda Springs. With the COVID-19 Pandemic, there was a nationwide trend towards remote work. Workers who previously were restricted to in-person employment, now had the opportunity to work remotely and relocate to areas with more affordable housing and lower cost of living, while retaining their higher employment wages.¹⁰ With the Counties population in the year 2021 at 7,111, there are approximately 3,125 housing units (79% of those units are occupied, with 21% being vacant). The designation of these units is; 81% Single-Unit, 13% Mobile Home, and 6% Multi-Unit.¹¹

Despite this apparent high demand for housing, the market has very little to offer currently. The Caribou County planning office has gathered information from local real estate agents and found there to be a limited number of houses available for sale or rent within the County in 2022.

In the calendar year 2022, there were 49 New Residential Building Applications submitted to the County Building Department. Which on average for the past 10 years ranged from 7 to 14 New Residential Building Applications annually.

¹⁰ (Pew Research Center, COVID-19 & the Economy, COVID-19 Pandemic Continues to Reshape Work in America, Feb. 16,2022)

¹¹ (Caribou County, ID, U.S. Census Bureau (2021))

Table 3.3 New Residential Applications



Key Concerns

- Ensure that residential development does not restrict or negatively impact agricultural uses
- Encourage cooperative relationship between mining and other land uses
- Support local cities to provide and serve diverse housing and employment opportunities
- Collaborate with local cities and unincorporated towns to support appropriate land use decisions

Goals, Objectives, and Implementation Strategies

HOUSING GOAL: Balance the need for adequate housing for Caribou County residents with the need to preserve agricultural lands and industries.

Objective 1: Support opportunities to create adequate and diverse housing products for the range of needs and income levels represented in the County

- Strategy 1.1 Coordinate housing programs and policies with the cities and towns in Caribou County, to ensure adequate rental and owner-occupied, single, and multifamily options.
- Strategy 1.2: Revise Zoning Code to reflect the Future Land Use map and support plan objectives related to rural residential development within and outside of Areas of City Impact.
- Strategy 1.3: Evaluate the Zoning Code for provisions regarding recreational vehicles, tiny homes, and other alternative, affordable housing types to ensure consistency.

Chapter 6: Agriculture

“PRIME AGRICULTURAL LAND SHOULD BE PRESERVED FOR AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION. HOUSES, INDUSTRIES, AND HIGHWAYS SHOULD NOT BE BUILT ON LAND THAT IS BEST SUITED FOR AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION”

- CARIBOU COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 1977.

Existing Conditions:

The United States Department of Agriculture Census states that we currently have 185,000 acres of Agricultural Land.

The four most predominant types of Agricultural Land are:¹²

- Irrigated Surface Water - 75,500 acres
- Irrigated Ground Water – 15,000 acres
- Irrigated Mixed Sources – 7,900 acres
- Non-Irrigated – 86,600 acres

The Non-Irrigated acres include:

- Dryland Agricultural
- Irrigation without a Water-Right

Caribou County is a high-altitude county with elevations ranging from 5,000 feet to 9,151 feet. The climate is characterized by long, cold winters, warm short summers, with moderate to low precipitation and humidity. The annual average rainfall in Caribou County is 17.44 inches and snowfall are 61.75 inches of snow.¹³ Most of the annual precipitation occurs in the form of snow during winter months with the least amount occurring during the months of July, August, and September.¹⁴ Soil in farming areas of the county is generally underlain by lava rock formations. Soil above the lava beds ranges from 0 to 30 feet deep. (See Figure 3 General Soils Map).

The majority of the County's agricultural land is located in the Gem Valley (north of Chesterfield to the furthest southern region of the Thatcher-Cleveland area). This is a broad rolling valley with elevations ranging from 5,000 feet to approximately 5,600 feet.

¹² (Census of Agriculture, United States Department of Agriculture, 2017)

¹³ (World Media Group, LLC, Caribou County Weather)

¹⁴ (Census of Agriculture, United States Department of Agriculture, 2017)

The Blackfoot Lava Field, which is located in the eastern part of Caribou County, provide an additional area for agricultural production. This valley is surrounded by high mountains and are generally utilized for summer grazing due to the unlaid lava rock. The elevation is approximately 6,000 feet.

The 2017 Census of Agriculture Report, provided by the National Agricultural Statistics Service, shows that of the market value of agricultural products sold from Caribou County, 62% of sales were from crops, totaling \$56,207,000 and 38% of sales were from livestock, poultry and products totaling \$34,113,000. This accounts for approximately 20% of the County's entire Gross Domestic Product.

Table 4.1 Crop Production

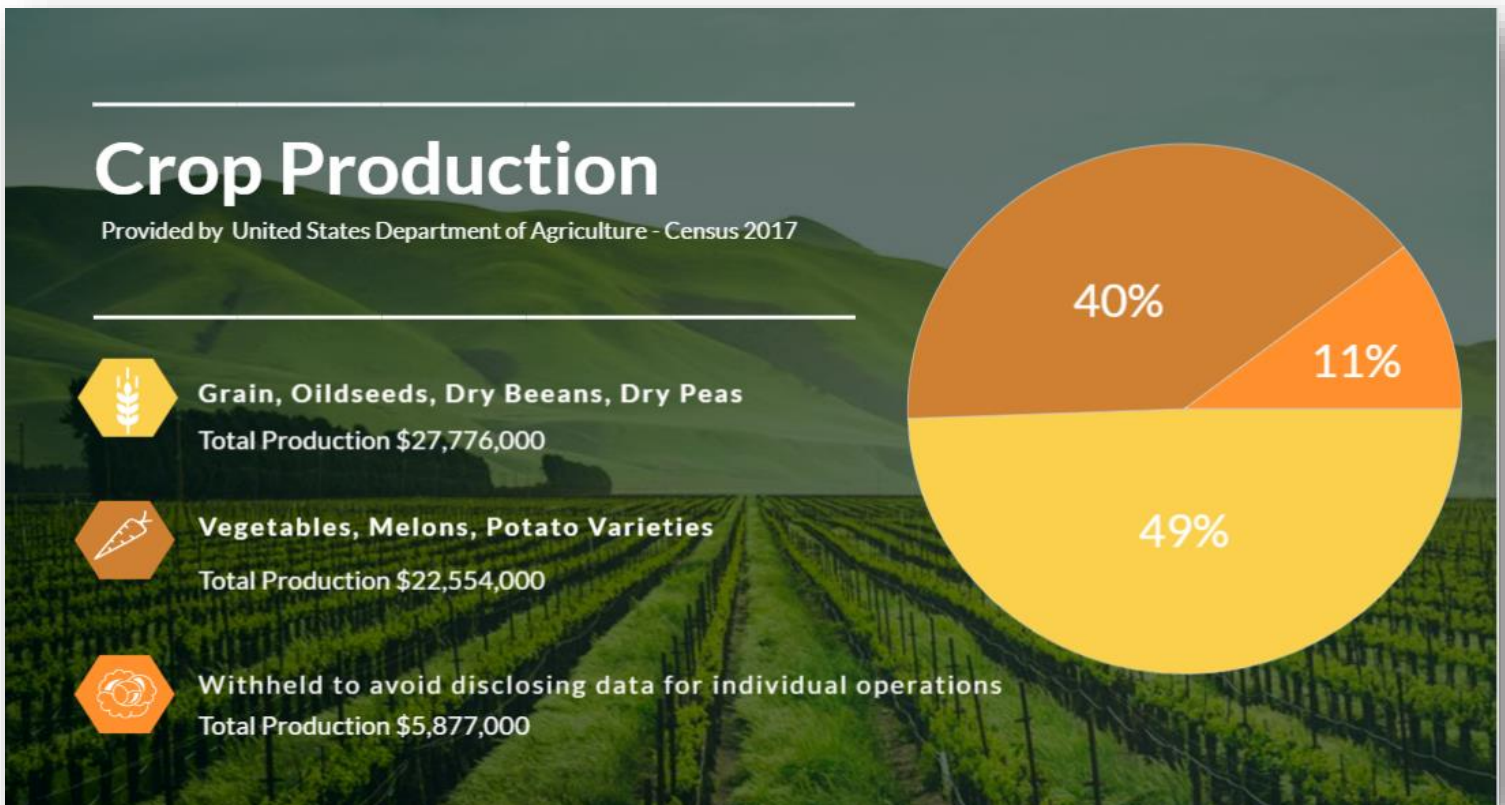
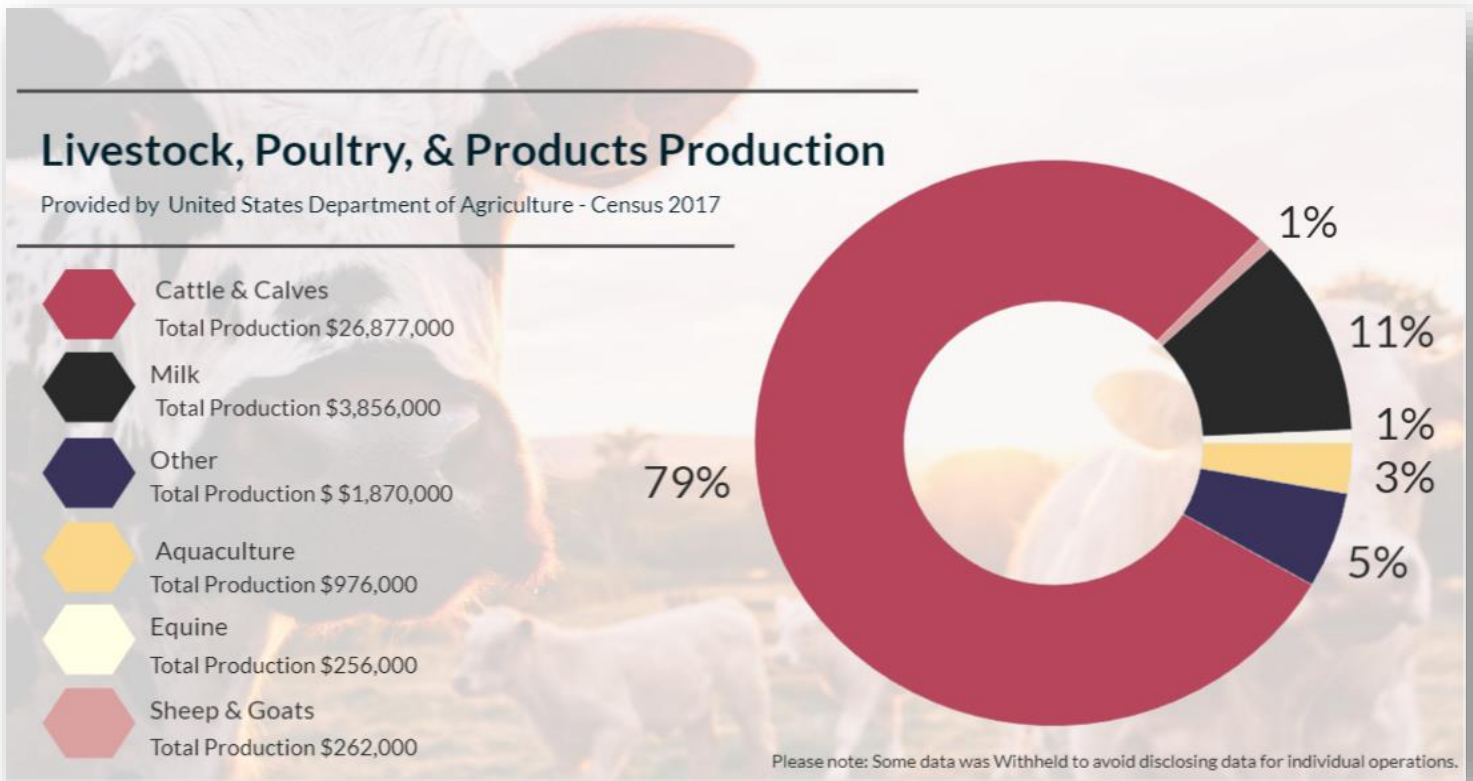


Table 4.2 Livestock, Poultry, & Products Production



Caribou County's community and culture is greatly centered around agricultural and a rural way-of-life. From 2010-2020, Caribou County consistently had 11.7% of workers in the County employed in the agricultural industry. In 2017, there were 1,411 farms in Caribou County representing a range of sizes. Agriculture is a core element to the way of life in Caribou County and contributes significantly to the Gross Domestic Product of the County.

As of 2017 there are 411 active farms. These farms provide a wide range of crops and livestock. The information listed below was provided to the County by the Department of Agriculture. The data below shows the variety of farm sizes within the County.¹⁵

- 17% of Farm Land is irrigated or 61,146 Acres
- 28% of Farms are 49 acres or smaller
- 34% of Farms are 50-499 acres
- 38% of Farms are over 500 acres

¹⁵ (Census of Agriculture, United States Department of Agriculture, 2017)

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Figure 3 Natural Resources Map

Key Concerns

- Ensure that agricultural lands are protected from encroachment by smaller residential lots.
- Consider impacts to groundwater and water quality with development that is not on city services.
- Address transportation impacts for farming equipment and operations.
- Preserve rural landscapes, including farmsteads and barns.

Goals, Objectives, and Implementation Strategies

AGRICULTURE GOAL: Preserve and maintain a viable and diverse agricultural industry within the county.

Objective 1: Maintain large parcel sizes for agricultural purposes in keeping with current development patterns.

- Strategy 1.1: Implement the Future Land Use Map by amending the zoning ordinance and map where needed.
- Strategy 1.2: Review design and development standards to ensure that there are adequate yard requirements between developable parcels.
- Strategy 1.3: Initiate efforts to identify incentives to ensure conservation of large acreages (such as conservation easements, working land trusts, and land banks).
- Strategy 1.4: Support educational and economic development initiatives so new and existing farmers can continue to innovate and improve their operations.
- Strategy 1.5: Consider a code amendment to create an additional agricultural district to accommodate large lot sizes.

Objective 2: Avoid the conversion of agricultural lands to residential or nonagricultural commercial uses.

- Strategy 2.1: Implement the Future Land Use Map by amending the zoning ordinance and map where needed.
- Strategy 2.2: Explore the use of a Transfer of Development Rights program as a tool to preserve agricultural or areas of environmental concern by transferring development rights to areas more suitable for residential development.

- Strategy 2.3: Consider provisions for rural residential Planned Unit Developments (PUDs) that do not reduce the permitted density but allow for smaller lots to be clustered within the developable area, while maintaining large areas for agricultural uses and designing the smaller acreages to meet physical site characteristics (such as topography, soils, water, vegetation, surrounding properties, building location, site improvements, water and waste disposal systems).

Objective 3: Allow farmers to manage their operations in an efficient, economic manner with minimal conflict with nonagricultural uses.

- Strategy 3.1: Explore zoning provisions to facilitate agricultural production by allowing agriculture related support uses, such as processing, storage, packaging, and agricultural support services, to be conveniently located to agricultural operations.
- Strategy 3.2: Support efficient management of local agricultural production activities by permitting development of adequate amounts of farm worker and farm family housing in agricultural areas.
- Strategy 3.3: Limit the number of small lots in any one area to avoid the potential conflicts associated with residential intrusion on agricultural operations.
- Strategy 3.4: Consider County Heritage Farm program, to honor and celebrate historic farms.
- Strategy 3.5: Collaborate with local cities to establish venues and businesses for local use of agriculture commodities, such as farmer's markets and community supported agriculture programs.
- Strategy 3.6: Support educational and economic development initiatives so new and existing farmers can continue to innovate and improve their operations.

Chapter 7: Natural Resources

"NATURAL RESOURCES ARE THE FOUNDATION ON WHICH ECONOMIC ACTIVITY RESTS IN CARIBOU COUNTY. THE IMPORTANCE OF UNDERSTANDING AN AREA'S ENVIRONMENT AND RESPECTING THE LIMITATIONS IT IMPOSES IS DIFFICULT TO OVERSTATE."

-CARIBOU COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 1997

Existing Conditions:

The County is rich with natural resources such as forests, wildlife, phosphate, lime, riparian area, sagebrush hills, vast rivers, reservoirs, historical farms, rural landscapes, open spaces, and many other natural resources. These natural resources are managed by a U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, canal companies, power companies, and other local entities.

Our County has three major reservoirs within our borders.

- Alexander Reservoir lies adjacent to Soda Springs along Highway 30 and is about 4.5 miles in length and 1 mile wide. It is a scenic fishing area, with two boat access ramps. PacifiCorp manages the water and the majority of the land surrounding the Reservoir.
- Blackfoot Reservoir used to irrigate lands on the Fort Hall Indian Reservation and other lands in the vicinity. It covers 18,000 surface acres when full, the second largest reservoir in southeastern Idaho. Bureau of Indian Affairs manages the water and the majority of the land surrounding the Reservoir.
- Chesterfield Reservoir is located north of Bancroft, near the Chesterfield Historic Town Site. It is roughly 5 miles long and spans at it widest near 1 mile and offers fishing, non-motorized boating, and camping. Downey Canal Company manages the Reservoir.

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has several locations within Caribou County they manage. Some of these areas include:¹⁶

- Petticoat Peak Wilderness Study Area encompasses 11,000 acres of public lands within the Fish Creek Mountain Range.
- California National Historic Trail
- Caribou National Forest
- Sheep Rock Interpretive Site

¹⁶ Bureau of Land Management "blm.gov"

The Grays Lake National Wildlife Refuge is located about 30 miles north of Soda Springs and is managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). The large expansive wetland habitats within this montane marsh attract numerous bird species, including waterfowl, shorebirds, and wading birds, including the largest breeding concentration of Sandhill cranes in North America. The USFWS has documented almost 250 species of birds on the Refuge, of which approximately 100 species known to nest within its boundaries. The Refuge provides opportunities for wildlife-dependent recreation including wildlife observation and photography.¹⁷

Potential hazards in Caribou County may result from seismic activity, such as landslides or mudslides, avalanche, and flooding related winter conditions. The threat of wildfire is also a potential hazard, as Caribou County is home to elk, mule, deer, moose, bear, and wolves.¹⁸

Key Concerns

- Conserve our fields, forests, sagebrush hills, riparian areas, and wildlife.
- Public access to natural resource areas.
- Conservation of open space, rural landscapes, cultural resources including historic farms
- Address water concerns (quality, safety, and availability)

Goals, Objectives, and Implementation Strategies

NATURAL RESOURCES/HAZARDOUS/SPECIAL AREAS GOAL: Conserve the County's natural and cultural resources (fields, forests, sagebrush hills, riparian areas, wildlife).

Objective 1: Ensure citizens are informed and engaged about decisions related to natural and cultural resources.

- Strategy 1.1: Ensure that new development, with a potential to impact the natural environment and resources of the County, provide required public noticing prior to integration into the County.
- Strategy 1.2: Collaborate with soil conservation districts, Idaho Department of Agriculture, U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and Extension Services to educate the public regarding Best Management Practices.

¹⁷ U.S. Fish & Wildlife Services "Grays Lake National Wildlife Refuge"

¹⁸ (Service, Forest. 2022, Soda Springs Wildlife Viewing)

- Strategy 1.3: Coordinate with Idaho Fish and Game (IDFG) and other appropriate agencies and organizations to manage hunting and fishing activities, to protect wildlife migration corridors and habitat.
- Strategy 1.4: Explore Certified Local Government (with Idaho State Historic Preservation Office) to enable establishment of a local preservation commission.

Objective 2: Support programs to ensure water quality, availability, and safety.

- Strategy 2.1: Implement measures to assist in preventing and minimizing potential contamination to surface waters from septic systems.
- Strategy 2.2: Add zoning provision requiring developers/builders to provide improvements to assist in the protection of surface waters as a condition of development within applicable areas.
- Strategy 2.3: Preserve major surface waters by establishing and maintaining stabilized access points for waterways within the County.
- Strategy 2.4 Collaborate with Idaho Department of Environment Quality (IDEQ) on all developments in the county to ensure best practices will be utilized.

Objective 3: Protect County residents from both natural and human-induced hazards.

- Strategy 3.1: Identify potential County-wide hazards, collaborate to prepare appropriate plans that identify methods to prepare, respond and recover.
- Strategy 3.2: Collaborate with federal and state agencies to protect and preserve environmentally sensitive areas.
- Strategy 3.3: Ensure that appropriate measures are implemented for development in areas with canals, steep slopes, high wildfire potential, and air quality concerns.

Chapter 8: Recreation

“THE COUNTY APPEALS BASICALLY TO THE SPORTSMAN AND NOT TO THE SCENIC TRAVELER. BIG GAME HUNTING AREAS ATTRACT PEOPLE FROM NEIGHBORING IDAHO COUNTIES. THE PORTNEUF AND BLACKFOOT RESERVOIRS ARE NOTED FOR THE CANADIAN GOOSE HUNTING, AND THE RIVERS ALSO OFFER EXCELLENT CAMPING AND FISHING. CARIBOU COUNTY’S RELATIVE REMOTENESS HAS ENABLED IT TO MAINTAIN GOOD HUNTING AND FISHING IN THE PAST, ALTHOUGH THE AREA IS SUBJECT TO INCREASING USE.”

CARIBOU COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 1977

Existing Conditions:

Caribou County has many attractions including a wide range of historical sites, beautiful landscapes, waterways, trails, and so much more.

An icon of American history, the Oregon Trail spans more than 2,000 miles and crosses six states including Idaho. The Trail makes its way from the state line of Wyoming and Idaho passing through Caribou County. The Pioneer Historic Byway has marked 15 locations within our County. These locations are: ¹⁹

- Niter Ice Cave
- Black Canyon Gorge
- Last Chance Canal
- Sheep Rock-Oregon Trail
- Chesterfield Townsite
- Geyser Park and Visitor Center
- Formation Springs Preserve
- Hooper Springs
- China Hat Geological Site
- Henry-Chester's County Store
- Grays Lake National Wildlife Refuge
- Lander Trail
- Cariboo Mountain
- Tincup Canyon

Our Caribou-Targhee National Forest is managed cooperatively by the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) and the BLM, with trails, campsites, waterways for the public to utilize throughout the year Campgrounds include: Diamond Creek, Gravel Creek, Mill Canyon, Pine Bar, Tincup, and the Blackfoot Reservoir. There

¹⁹ Pioneer Historic Byway <https://idahohighcountry.org/cat/pioneer-historic-byway/>

are many other private campgrounds in Caribou County. Table Depicts the many activities that caribou County visitors enjoy year-round

Table 8 - Year-Round Activities

Summer Activities	
Fishing	Hunting
Horse Riding	Nature Viewing
Picnicking	Rock & Minerals
Scenic Driving	UTV/ATV
Water Sports	Hiking Day/Overnight
Winter Activities	
Snowmobiling	Snow Biking
Cross Country Skiing	Snowshoeing
Ice Fishing	Sledding

The County owns and maintains two recreational parks, the Oregon Trail Marina on the Alexander Reservoir and the Sucker Trap Campground located on Blackfoot River Road.

Key Concerns

- Conserve our fields, forests, sagebrush hills, riparian areas, and wildlife
- Public access to public lands natural resource areas
- Conservation of cultural resources including historic farms
- Better maintenance of County Parks

Goals, Objectives, and Implementation Strategies

RECREATION GOAL: Support the development of new public parks and trails, facilities, amenities and activities, as well as the enhancement of existing recreational areas and activities.

Objective 1: Promote a sustainable county-wide parks and recreation, open space, and waterways system.

- Strategy 1.1: Develop a County-wide Parks and Open Space plan to address current and future needs, and identify strategies related to parks and recreation, natural and cultural resources, open space, and waterways.

- Strategy 1.2: Explore formation of a Recreation District to fund recommendations of the Parks and Open Space plan and provide ongoing recreation management.
- Strategy 1.3: Provide incentives to encourage landowners and/or developers to dedicate public easements or right-of-way, expand existing parks and open space opportunities and create new connections for trails and pathways.
- Strategy 1.4: Support new programs for County youth, such as agricultural education, in collaboration with other community groups and local schools.
- Strategy 1.5: Actively seek various types of grant funding and other available sources to support recreation and conservation programs

Objective 2: Ensure public land access and opportunities to recreate year-round.

- Strategy 2.1: Collaborate with Federal and State agencies (IDFG, BLM, US Fish & Wildlife Service) and Tribes to coordinate public recreational use activities, as well as opportunities for enhanced habitat and wildlife preservation.
- Strategy 2.2: As part of County-wide parks and open space planning, identify recreational opportunities (trails, picnic areas etc.) and programs (winter sports activities, nature hikes, etc.) that enhance use of public lands.
- Strategy 2.3: Collaborate with recreational users to determine appropriate regulations for trail use (motorized v. non-motorized, size of ATVs, etc.).

Objective 3: Protect County waterways for habitat and wildlife preservation and as crucial recreational areas.

- Strategy 3.1: Collaborate with appropriate agencies to identify opportunities for enhanced habitat and wildlife preservation and recreational opportunities.
- Strategy 3.2: As part of County-wide parks and open space planning, assess potential to improve access to county reservoirs, provide appropriate regulations regarding RV, camping and boat usage and address public concerns.

Chapter 9: Land Use

Existing Conditions:

Caribou County is responsible for planning outside of the incorporated cities of Bancroft, Grace, and the Soda Springs Area of City Impact (City of Soda Springs comprehensive plan applies within their city and impact area). The County has Area of Impact Agreements in effect with all three cities, these agreements specify how the area of impacts are governed and what zone designations are in effect on maps and in narrative. The impact areas include lands surrounding each urban area to allow for future growth and service by that city as services become available. In the area of impact, all applications are submitted to the County Planning and Zoning for approval. Before the application is approved, the County shares the application with the affected City for their comments.

The County's Future Land Use Map (FLUM) as provided in Figure 4, depicts a series of designations or types, based on the current and intended future use of land. The FLUM is the foundation for development regulations, such as zoning, as well as further planning efforts. The following provides a brief description of the land use designations depicted on the FLUM:

Special Lands: Located beyond irrigated agricultural areas and include forests, rangelands owned and managed in large part by Federal, State, and Tribal entities. These areas would permit a wide range of agricultural and natural resource pursuits, and other compatible uses.

Agriculture: Intended for areas where farming, grazing and agricultural support specific uses are best suited in the County. These areas would focus on retention of agricultural use. Single family residences along with a wide range of agricultural pursuits would be principally permitted, while more intense agricultural uses would be considered under a special permit.

Residential: Allows for low-density and high-density residential zoning districts with varying housing densities. This designation is applied to existing subdivisions within the County, not near larger communities. The application of this to existing subdivisions, however, does not support the expansion of subdivisions around these areas when another FLUM designation has been applied to the surrounding area or when such designations are not within a city area of impact. Some commercial uses may be appropriate in these residential areas and considerations for zone

amendments for such uses should be determined on a case-by-case basis.

Commercial: Applies to areas where commercial uses can support the economy in the County and have transportation access and proximity to support the local communities. This includes retail stores and services and is primarily situated in and around existing communities and within the Area of Impacts.

Industrial: Includes light and heavy industrial uses as defined in the zoning code, to address a variety of manufacturing, processing, and storage uses, including existing industrial operations. This designation is intended to avoid conflict with residential uses.

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Figure 4 Future Land Use Map (FLUM

Key Concerns

- Ensure that residential development does not restrict or negatively impact agricultural uses.
- Encourage cooperative relationship between mining and other land uses.
- Support local cities to provide and serve diverse housing and employment opportunities.
- Collaborate with local cities and unincorporated towns to support appropriate land use decisions.
- Preserve and enhance open space, rural landscape, and recreational areas.

Goals, Objectives, and Implementation Strategies

LAND USE GOAL: Balance new growth and development with maintaining a rural lifestyle

Objective 1: Enhance the County's rural environment and retain diverse agricultural uses and resource extraction industries

- Strategy 1.1: Implement the Future Land Use Map (FLUM) by amending the zoning ordinance and map where needed.
- Strategy 1.2: Evaluate the Zoning Code to reduce fragmentation of important agricultural lands and to direct residential development to Areas of City Impact
- Strategy 1.3: Update the Zoning Code and Map to implement the FLUM allowing appropriate land uses outside of the Areas of City Impact.
- Strategy 1.4: Review design and development standards to ensure that there are adequate yard requirements between developable parcels.
- Strategy 1.5: Collaborate with Tribes and public land agencies on issues and concerns related to tribal and public lands.

Objective 2: Collaborate with cities to encourage industrial and commercial uses and residential subdivisions inside the Areas of City Impact.

- Strategy 2.1: Update the Zoning Code to ensure a hierarchy of residential lot sizes, with the smaller lots and subdivisions permitted within Areas of City Impact.
- Strategy 2.2: Provide subdivision standards that allow for the future platting of larger lot subdivisions (within Areas of City Impact) to accommodate city sewer and water, as city limits expand.

- Strategy 2.3: Monitor growth and extension of urban services within Areas of City Impact to ensure that boundaries are appropriate.
- Strategy 2.4: Collaborate with economic development efforts to identify and support industrial parks and other large employment centers.

Objective 3: Evaluate County regulations and policies to ensure fair and equitable provisions

- Strategy 3.1 Enforce all zoning ordinances particularly those related to property maintenance, health, and safety.
- Strategy 3.2: Ensure that all Areas of City Impact agreements are current by establishing regular coordination meetings with City Councils and County Commissioners.
- Strategy 3.3: Evaluate the Zoning Code for consistent provisions regarding recreational vehicles and other alternative lodging types, including short term rentals.

Chapter 10: Public Services

Maintaining and improving public services are of paramount importance to County residents and each of the incorporated area community and will become even more important as demand for services increase.

Existing Conditions:

10.1: Emergency Response Services

Fire: The Caribou County Fire Station is located in Soda Springs and covers all unincorporated areas of Caribou County. In order to better cover the unincorporated areas, the County has established Mutual Aid Agreements with the Fire Departments of Bancroft, Grace, and Soda Springs. The Bailey Creek Fire District provides services for the Bailey Creek Subdivision. Freedom area is provided fire services through the Freedom Fire District, which contracts with the city of Thayne, Wyoming to provide this service.

The County Fire Department has thirteen (13) volunteer fire fighters, two (2) engines for structural fires, seven (7) wildland response vehicles and two (2) water transport apparatuses which respectively hold 2,000 and 4,000 gallons of water. The average age of the equipment is 30 years old. Average age of personal protective equipment is 15 years old.

Emergency Medical Services (EMS): There are three ambulance stations in the County located in Bancroft, Grace, and Soda Springs. These three stations provide EMS for the entirety of the County. There is a mutual aid agreement with Star Valley EMS to administer services to the Crow Creek, Auburn and Freedom areas of the County.

The County has six response ambulances and one rescue truck which includes an extrication unit. There are thirty-two (32) volunteer EMTs. The average age of the ambulance is ten (10) years and they are replaced through the State of Idaho's grant program. These emergency services are provided by trained and certified citizen volunteers in the County.

There is a lack of volunteers to meet the demands of these emergency services within the County. Presently these volunteer positions have been at half-staff for 14 years. The average age of the volunteers in Caribou County is sixty-four (64) years old. If the County is unable to maintain adequate volunteers the County may be forced to higher employed responders, which will result in a significant

increase in the tax levy rate to provide these services, potentially a 3,000% increase.

Due to not having rural stations results in higher International Organization for Standards (ISO) ratings, as a result most of the County has an ISO rating of ten (10), which directly affect the insurance rates for residents. This further results in longer response times for fires. Caribou County is presently only one of two counties in the State of Idaho which do not have emergency district to provide an avenue of tax revenue to pay for the services. Currently these services are paid for through the County's general fund which supports many of the County's departments, as a result, these funds are greatly limited and budgeted very strictly. This causes the budget for fire and EMS services to be notably lower than those of surrounding counties that provide comparable services as those counties have emergency response districts in order to budget for the required costs. As result of this budget restriction, the County is unable to provide National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) rated equipment to the firefighters. In addition, the EMS services are unable to provide higher level of services as it cannot afford the required upgraded equipment.

Law Enforcement: The Caribou County Sheriff's Office has primary law enforcement responsibilities within Caribou County. This includes approximately 1800 square miles of land mass and thirty-five (35) square miles of water ways. This area also includes three incorporated cities, two that do not have any organized law enforcement and one that does (Soda Springs). A portion of the Fort Hall Indian Reservation is located in the County as well as several Bureau of Indian Affairs properties that are separate from the reservation. The Sheriff's Office provides service to non-tribal members on those properties and assists the Tribal Government upon their request. Due to the size and geographical features of the County, it sometimes requires a deputy to travel over eighty (80) miles or 1 hour and 45 minutes to respond for calls of service (depending on road conditions). The Sheriff's Office provides 24-hour law enforcement patrol coverage, and occasionally receives assistance from the Soda Springs Police Department upon request.

Support from State law enforcement includes a State Police Trooper assigned (with responsibilities in other counties and is available only when on duty or in the area). The Department of Fish and Game also has assigned a Conservation Officer (who is a certified law enforcement officer) to Caribou County and will assist upon request.

The Sheriff's Office has a mutual aid agreement with all of our surrounding counties and several others through the Tri-County Sheriff's organization (a

group of 17 south east Idaho Sheriff's). The Sheriff's field operations division consists of seven patrol deputies and one detective. In addition, there is one reserve deputy who is capable of assisting on a volunteer basis. When up to full staff, there are one to two deputies working at any given time.

In addition to regular patrol duties, six deputies are certified Marine (water patrol) Deputies, with the majority of them dive certified for water rescue and recovery activities. This allows for law enforcement coverage on the three reservoirs and various rivers within the County. The Sheriff's Office also contracts with the BLM and the USFS to provide law enforcement coverage. The Sheriff is also a certified law enforcement officer and assists in patrolling and handling calls.

Other programs of the Caribou County Sheriff include:

- **Emergency Communications (911):** operates the "Public Safety Answering Point" (PSAP), a law enforcement dispatch and communication center. staffed 24-hours to answer all incoming EMS and law enforcement non-emergency and 911 calls. PSAP covers the entire County and also receives calls and dispatches for the City of Soda Springs Police, and occasionally other counties as needed. Caribou County Sheriff also acts as a server hub for Bear Lake and Oneida Counties PSAP centers.
- **Detention Facility:** operates a 49-bed detention facility, as required by Idaho State law. Certified annually by the Idaho Sheriff's Association and is federally certified as being PREA (Prison Rape Elimination Act) compliant, there are eleven detention deputies assigned to the facility. They are required to accept all arrested individuals presented to them by law enforcement agencies. The Sheriff also contracts with the Bear Lake and Oneida Counties Sheriff's to house their inmates. Low risk inmates from the Idaho Department of Corrections may also be housed at this facility
- **Search and Rescue:** oversees a volunteer search and rescue organization made up of community volunteers with various applicable skills and resources.

10.2: Local Services

Caribou County. The County serves the public through the following departments: Assessor, Building, Planning and Zoning, County Clerk, County Treasurer, Emergency Services, GIS, Magistrate and District Court, Road and Bridge, Sheriff, Solid Waste, and the Weed Department.

Communication. Communication systems may be limited in certain areas, due to the rural nature of the county. Century Link and Silver Star Communication are the main internet providers. Verizon and ATT&T are the most utilized cell phone services.

Historical Society. The Caribou Historical Society, located in Soda Springs, Idaho, is a local organization dedicated to studying and preserving local history.

Hospital & Medical Services. Caribou Medical Services offers a variety of services and is located in Soda Springs, Idaho. These services include; ER, Surgical Services, Inpatient Care, Clinical Laboratory, Diagnostic Imaging, Obstetrics, Outpatient Services, Anesthesia, Chemotherapy, Wound Care, Sleep Studies, OB/GYN, Primary Care, Orthopedics, Sports Medicine, Radiology, Podiatry, Urology, Dermatology, and Centrum Hearing.

Public Library. A Public Library is located in Soda Springs, Idaho.

Postal Services. There are three U.S. post offices (Bancroft, Grace, and Soda Springs).

Senior Center: The Caribou County Senior Center is located in Soda Springs offering home-cooked meals, served Wednesday and Fridays at noon to the general public. This center has a thrift store and activities planned throughout the week for all ages.

Sewer Systems. The cities Bancroft, Grace, and Soda Springs each have their own community systems that are maintained by the city. Certain subdivisions that lie outside City Limits have their own community systems. Individuals who reside outside city limits or those subdivisions typically use individual septic systems.

Solid Waste Facilities. Caribou County has a solid waste transfer facility, located in Grace, Idaho. This facility provides an effective way to dispose of waste material. This facility is open to the public and accepts materials such as; construction and demolition, asphalt, concrete, food waste, tires (truck, tractor, auto), etc.

Southeastern Idaho Public Health District. The District has a main office in Pocatello and a local branch in Soda Springs. They provided clinical services, community and environmental health, Women Infant Children (WIC), and administration for eight (8) counties, and approximately 176,000 people.

Voting. There are currently nine (9) Voting Precincts within Caribou County. Bancroft, Grace 1, Grace 2, Soda Springs 1, Soda Springs 2, Soda Springs 3, Wayan, and Freedom.

Water: The cities Bancroft, Grace, and Soda Springs each have their own community systems that are maintained by the city. Certain subdivisions that lie outside City Limits have their own community systems. Individuals who reside outside city limits or those subdivisions typically use individual wells.

10.3: Schools

There are three school districts in Caribou County: North Gem School District #149, Grace School District #148, and Soda Springs District #150. All school listed in Table 5 have a school bus programs in place.

Table 5 – Caribou County Schools

District/Provider	School	Location
North Gem District #149 (K-12 Campus)		
	North Gem Elementary, Middle, and High School	360 South Main Street, Bancroft
Grace School District #148		
	Black Canyon Elementary	605 South 4 th West, Grace
	Jr./Sr. High School	704 South Main, Grace
Soda Springs School District #150		
	Thirkill Elementary	60 East 4 th South, Soda Springs
	Tigert Middle School	250 East 2 nd South, Soda Springs
	Soda Springs High School	300 East 1 st North, Soda Springs

Caribou County is served by a wide variety of post-secondary institutions, located outside of the County. These institutions are within a within a two-hour drive of Soda Springs and include Idaho State University (Pocatello), ITEC (Idaho Falls), Brigham Young University-Idaho (Rexburg), Utah State University (Logan, UT) and Weber State (Ogden, UT).

Although the school districts have experienced enrollment decline, the growth projections associated with the Plan indicate population increases across the County through 2031. Public schools provide vital support to families; with

Caribou County's poverty rate of 7.7%, future investment in schools may be considered.

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Figure 6 Public Facilities Map

Key Concerns

- Outdated education facilities.
- Address outdated schools
- Providing consolidation for high school students in Caribou County.

Goals, Objectives, and Implementation Strategies

PUBLIC SERVICES, FACILITIES, UTILITIES, SCHOOLS GOAL: Provide efficient and reliable services and facilities, in collaboration with other public entities, to support county residents and visitors.

Objective 1: Support public services to meet the needs of a growing population.

- Strategy 1.1: Evaluate impact of population growth on landfill, potential recycling programs and other appropriate measures to address capacity and environmental considerations.
- Strategy 1.2: Maintain serviceability of communication systems including broadband internet, telephone, and cable.
- Strategy 1.3: Ensure National Interest Electric Transmission Corridors (NIETC), as well as power and gas transmission corridors, are considered in land use planning decisions, and minimize the adverse impacts of transmission corridors in the County.
- Strategy 1.4: Encourage best practices for accessibility in public buildings and County facilities.

Objective 2: Coordinate with public utility and service districts, as well as emergency services (i.e., sheriff, fire/ambulance districts, police) for future growth to enhance access and safety.

- Strategy 2.1: Evaluate public safety (police, fire/EMT) service to remote areas of the County and assess levels of service for areas experiencing population growths.
- Strategy 2.2: Engage and invest in planning and maintenance of emergency preparedness and disaster response systems.
- Strategy 2.3: Collaborate with cities and special districts to consider efficiencies in consolidating services and jurisdictions.
- Strategy 2.4: Facilitate public and private partnerships, to address safety concerns related to canals, wildfire, and other natural resource related issues

- Strategy 2.5: Add zoning provision to require adequate emergency vehicle access to new developments.

Objective 3: Support the needs of County's youth through collaboration with school districts.

- Strategy 3.1: Coordinate with the school districts on population projections and potential land expansion needs, and the potential for school district consolidation.
- Strategy 3.2: Analyze the needs of districts' students for safe routes to school, in coordination with County cities and school districts, to examine and support opportunities for expansion of bicycle and pedestrian paths that support students school access
- Strategy 3.3: Encourage best practices for accessibility in public schools.

Chapter 11: Implementation

Implementation is an important part of our County's Comprehensive Plan. After evaluating each Goal, Objective, and Strategy the Planning and Zoning Department identified what item was a low, medium, or high priority.

In order to complete these objectives and strategies the County Planning and Zoning Department needs assistance from other entities. These entities include; other County departments, local cities, developers, Idaho Department of Fish & Game, Idaho Department of Environmental Quality, U.S. Fish & Game, local tribes, State and Federal government, power & gas companies, local emergency services, and school districts.

Goal	Objective	Strategies	Priority	County Partners
3.1 Economic Development	Objective 1: Ensure County functions, policies and services support and stimulate regional economic growth.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaborate with cities on land use decisions in keeping with Area of City Impact agreements, to ensure consistent policies on major land use areas and economic sectors. Maintain serviceability of communication systems including broadband internet, telephone, and cable. Participate in regional efforts with local governments, representatives from key employers and sectors to implement joint economic development strategies including retention of existing economic sectors as well as diversification and incentives. Coordinate housing programs and policies with the cities and towns in Caribou County, to ensure adequate rental and owner-occupied, single, and multifamily options. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Medium (5-10 years) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planning Staff P&Z County Commissioners Cities

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support partnerships for training and mentorship programs with local industries to encourage pairing of local job opportunities with residents. 		
3.1 Economic Development	Objective 2: Support County-wide efforts to encourage and manage tourism.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a County-wide Parks and Open Space plan to address current and future needs, and identify strategies related to parks and recreation, natural and cultural resources, open space and waterways. • Collaborate with local cities to establish venues and businesses for local use of agriculture commodities, such as farmer's markets and community supported agriculture programs. • Assess existing zoning regulations to ensure that appropriate provisions exist for lodging opportunities without disrupting current residents and farming operations. • Evaluate promotional programs to attract visitors including documentation and marketing of County's natural and cultural resources. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low (10-20 years) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning Staff • P&Z • County Commissioners • Cities
3.2 Transportation	Objective 1: Ensure roadway systems meet current and future needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design roadways to meet the safety and access needs of current and future traffic conditions. • Collaborate with relevant entities to improve maintenance of roadways, particularly during winter months. • Identify policies to address interactions between farming equipment, freight/industrial users, and commuter vehicles (established routes, regulations etc.). • Actively seek various types of transportation grant funding and other available sources to support roadway improvements. • Collaborate with railroad companies to address safety issues at County crossings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High (0-5 years) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning Staff • P&Z • Road & Bridge • County Commissioners • Rail Road
3.2 Transportation	Objective 2: Plan and construct	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incorporate non-motorized options for connecting communities, including bicycle and pedestrian facilities, as part of roadway 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low (10-20 years) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning Staff • P&Z • Road & Bridge

	transportation infrastructure that will increase accessibility.	<p>maintenance projects, development applications and capital projects whenever opportunities arise and are feasible.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborate with neighboring jurisdictions, as well as public and private entities, to increase opportunities for varying transit options (commuter vans, Pocatello Regional Transit, airports, etc.). • Require developers to implement roadway improvements prior to construction. • Assess roadway construction policies to ensure that pedestrian amenities (Sidewalks, paths, etc.) are ADA compliant. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • County Commissioners • Developers
3.3 House & Growth	Objective 1: Support opportunities to create adequate and diverse housing products for the range of needs and income levels represented in the County	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate housing programs and policies with the cities and towns in Caribou County, to ensure adequate rental and owner-occupied, single, and multifamily options. • Revise Zoning Code to reflect the Future Land Use map and support plan objectives related to rural residential development within and outside of Areas of City Impact. • Evaluate the Zoning Code for provisions regarding recreational vehicles, tiny homes, and other alternative, affordable housing types to ensure consistency. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medium (5-10 years) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning Staff • P&Z • County Commissioners • Cities
4.1 Agriculture	Objective 1: Maintain large parcel sizes for agricultural purposes in keeping with current development patterns.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement the Future Land Use Map by amending the zoning ordinance and map where needed. • Review design and development standards to ensure that there are adequate yard requirements between developable parcels. • Initiate efforts to identify incentives to ensure conservation of large acreages (such as conservation easements, working land trusts, and land banks). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High (0-5 years) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning Staff • P&Z • County Commissioners

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support educational and economic development initiatives so new and existing farmers can continue to innovate and improve their operations. • Consider a code amendment to create an additional agricultural district to accommodate large lot sizes. 		
4.1 Agriculture	Objective 2: Avoid the conversion of agricultural lands to residential or nonagricultural commercial uses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement the Future Land Use Map by amending the zoning ordinance and map where needed. • Explore the use of a Transfer of Development Rights program as a tool to preserve agricultural or areas of environmental concern by transferring development rights to areas more suitable for residential development. • Consider provisions for rural residential Planned Unit Developments (PUDs) that do not reduce the permitted density but allow for smaller lots to be clustered within the developable area, while maintaining large areas for agricultural uses and designing the smaller acreages to meet physical site characteristics (such as topography, soils, water, vegetation, surrounding properties, building location, site improvements, water and waste disposal systems). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medium (5-10 years) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning Staff • P&Z • County Commissioners
4.1 Agriculture	Objective 3: Allow farmers to manage their operations in an efficient, economic manner with minimal conflict with nonagricultural uses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore zoning provisions to facilitate agricultural production by allowing agriculture related support uses, such as processing, storage, packaging, and agricultural support services, to be conveniently located to agricultural operations. • Support efficient management of local agricultural production activities by permitting development of adequate amounts of farm worker and farm family housing in agricultural areas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High (0-5 years) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning Staff • P&Z • County Commissioners • Cities

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limit the number of small lots in any one area to avoid the potential conflicts associated with residential intrusion on agricultural operations. • Consider County Heritage Farm program, to honor and celebrate historic farms. • Collaborate with local cities to establish venues and businesses for local use of agriculture commodities, such as farmer's markets and community supported agriculture programs. • Support educational and economic development initiatives so new and existing farmers can continue to innovate and improve their operations. 		
4.2 Natural Resources/Special Lands:	Objective 1: Ensure citizens are informed and engaged about decisions related to natural and cultural resources.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that new development, with a potential to impact the natural environment and resources of the County, provide required public noticing prior to integration into the County. • Collaborate with soil conservation districts, Idaho Department of Agriculture, U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and Extension Services to educate the public regarding Best Management Practices. • Coordinate with Idaho Fish and Game (IDFG) and other appropriate agencies and organizations to manage hunting and fishing activities, to protect wildlife migration corridors and habitat. • Explore Certified Local Government (with Idaho State Historic Preservation Office) to enable establishment of a local preservation commission. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low (10-20 years) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning Staff • P&Z • County Commissioners • USDA • IDFG
4.2 Natural Resources/Special Lands:	Objective 2: Support programs to ensure water quality, availability, and safety.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement measures to assist in preventing and minimizing potential contamination to surface waters from septic systems. • Add zoning provision requiring developers/builders to provide improvements to assist in the protection of surface waters as a 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High (0-5 years) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning Staff • P&Z • County Commissioners • IDEQ

		<p>condition of development within applicable areas.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preserve major surface waters by establishing and maintaining stabilized access points for waterways within the County. • Collaborate with Idaho Department of Environment Quality (IDEQ) on all developments in the county to ensure best practices will be utilized. 		
4.2 Natural Resources/Special Lands:	Objective 3: Protect County residents from both natural and human-induced hazards.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify potential County-wide hazards, collaborate to prepare appropriate plans that identify methods to prepare, respond and recover. • Collaborate with federal and state agencies to protect and preserve environmentally sensitive areas. • Ensure that appropriate measures are implemented for development in areas with canals, steep slopes, high wildfire potential, and air quality concerns. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low (10-20 years) 	
4.2 Recreation:	Objective 1: Promote a sustainable county-wide parks and recreation, open space, and waterways system.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a County-wide Parks and Open Space plan to address current and future needs, and identify strategies related to parks and recreation, natural and cultural resources, open space, and waterways. • Explore formation of a Recreation District to fund recommendations of the Parks and Open Space plan and provide ongoing recreation management. • Provide incentives to encourage landowners and/or developers to dedicate public easements or right-of-way, expand existing parks and open space opportunities and create new connections for trails and pathways. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low (10-20 years) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning Staff • P&Z • County Commissioners

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support new programs for County youth, such as agricultural education, in collaboration with other community groups and local schools. • Actively seek various types of grant funding and other available sources to support recreation and conservation programs. 		
4.2 Recreation:	Objective 2: Ensure public land access and opportunities to recreate year-round.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborate with Federal and State agencies (IDFG, BLM, US Fish & Wildlife Service) and Tribes to coordinate public recreational use activities, as well as opportunities for enhanced habitat and wildlife preservation. • As part of County-wide parks and open space planning, identify recreational opportunities (trails, picnic areas etc.) and programs (winter sports activities, nature hikes etc.) that enhance use of public lands. • Collaborate with recreational users to determine appropriate regulations for trail use (motorized v. non-motorized, size of ATVs etc.). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low (10-20 years) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning Staff • P&Z • County Commissioners • IDFG • BLM • US Fish & Wildlife • Citizens
4.2 Recreation:	Objective 3: Protect County waterways for habitat and wildlife preservation and as crucial recreational areas.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborate with appropriate agencies to identify opportunities for enhanced habitat and wildlife preservation and recreational opportunities. • As part of County-wide parks and open space planning, assess potential to improve access to county reservoirs, provide appropriate regulations regarding RV, camping and boat usage and address public concerns. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low (10-20 years) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning Staff • P&Z • County Commissioners • US Fish & Wildlife
4.3 Land Use:	Objective 1: Enhance the County's rural environment and retain diverse agricultural uses and	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement the Future Land Use Map (FLUM) by amending the zoning ordinance and map where needed. • Evaluate the Zoning Code to reduce fragmentation of important agricultural lands and to direct residential development to Areas of City Impact 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High (0-5 years) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning Staff • P&Z • County Commissioners • Tribes • Public Lands

	resource extraction industries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update the Zoning Code and Map to implement the FLUM allowing appropriate land uses outside of the Areas of City Impact. • Review design and development standards to ensure that there are adequate yard requirements between developable parcels. • Collaborate with Tribes and public land agencies on issues and concerns related to tribal and public lands. 		
4.3 Land Use:	Objective 2: Collaborate with cities to encourage industrial and commercial uses and residential subdivisions inside the Areas of City Impact.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update the Zoning Code to ensure a hierarchy of residential lot sizes, with the smaller lots and subdivisions permitted within Areas of City Impact. • Provide subdivision standards that allow for the future platting of larger lot subdivisions (within Areas of City Impact) to accommodate city sewer and water, as city limits expand. • Monitor growth and extension of urban services within Areas of City Impact to ensure that boundaries are appropriate. • Collaborate with economic development efforts to identify and support industrial parks and other large employment centers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High (0-5 years) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning Staff • P&Z • County Commissioners • Planning Staff • P&Z • County Commissioners • Cities
4.3 Land Use:	Objective 3: Evaluate County regulations and policies to ensure fair and equitable provisions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enforce all zoning ordinances particularly those related to property maintenance, health, and safety. • Ensure that all Areas of City Impact agreements are current by establishing regular coordination meetings with City Councils and County Commissioners. • Evaluate the Zoning Code for consistent provisions regarding recreational vehicles and other alternative lodging types, including short term rentals. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High (0-5 years) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning Staff • P&Z • County Commissioners • Cities

5 Public Services, Facilities, Utilities, & Schools:	Objective 1: Support public services to meet the needs of a growing population.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate impact of population growth on landfill, potential recycling programs and other appropriate measures to address capacity and environmental considerations. • Maintain serviceability of communication systems including broadband internet, telephone, and cable. • Ensure National Interest Electric Transmission Corridors (NIETC), as well as power and gas transmission corridors, are considered in land use planning decisions, and minimize the adverse impacts of transmission corridors in the County. • Encourage best practices for accessibility in public buildings and County facilities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low (10-20 years) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning Staff • P&Z • County Commissioners • NIETC
5 Public Services, Facilities, Utilities, & Schools:	Objective 2: Coordinate with public utility and service districts, as well as emergency services (i.e., sheriff, fire/ambulance districts, police) for future growth to enhance access and safety.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate public safety (police, fire/EMT) service to remote areas of the County and assess levels of service for areas experiencing population growths. • Engage and invest in planning and maintenance of emergency preparedness and disaster response systems. • Collaborate with cities and special districts to consider efficiencies in consolidating services and jurisdictions. • Facilitate public and private partnerships, to address safety concerns related to canals, wildfire, and other natural resource related issues. • Add zoning provision to require adequate emergency vehicle access to new developments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low (10-20 years) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning Staff • P&Z • County Commissioners • EMS (Police, Fire, & EMT) • Cities
5 Public Services, Facilities, Utilities, & Schools:	Objective 3: Support the needs of County's youth through collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate with the school districts on population projections and potential land expansion needs, and the potential for school district consolidation. • Analyze the needs of districts' students for safe routes to school, in coordination with County cities and school districts, to examine and support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low (10-20 years) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning Staff • P&Z • County Commissioners • School Districts

	with school districts.	opportunities for expansion of bicycle and pedestrian paths that support students school access <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Encourage best practices for accessibility in public schools.		
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APPENDIX A

Public Involvement Summary



Caribou County

2023 -2043 Comprehensive Plan

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APPENDIX B

Idaho Regulatory Takings Act Guidelines



Caribou County
2023 -2043 Comprehensive Plan

