

BLACK FOREST COMMUNITY INPUT FOR COMMUNITY PLANNING 1981 and 2019



This document was prepared October 7, 2019 to compare citizen vision of and for the Black Forest Planning Area from data collected and summarized in May, 1981 (left columns) with data collected in July, 2019 (right columns). The four meetings in May, 1981 came a decade after planning began for the 1974 *Black Forest Preservation Plan*, and was six years before the 1987 update of that Plan was adopted by the Planning Commission. The Major Annexation of Briargate/Wolf Ranch was looming in 1981 and by 1987 Banning Lewis Ranch was also added to the City of Colorado Springs. Now in 2019 more annexations are imminent, urbanization within the County continues, and El Paso County is redoing its Master Plan, which currently includes Black Forest as a Small Area Plan element. Read on to see how times have, (or have not) changed, and what citizens, who had the opportunity to speak, had to say in 1981 and 2019.

BLACK FOREST PRESERVATION PLAN REVISION

INPUT MEETINGS REPORT MAY - JUNE 1981

PREPARED BY THE LAND USE COMMITTEE
BLACK FOREST COMMUNITY CLUB

INTRODUCTION

This document is a synthesis of ideas gathered from Black Forest residents during four publically announced open meetings held in May and June, 1981. The meetings were sponsored by the Land Use Committee of the Black Forest Community Club to define and delineate those qualities of lifestyle and environment which residents of the Black Forest area value and do not wish to see destroyed or lost as land uses along the Front Range of Northern El Paso County inexorably change.

The meetings were conducted openly to encourage people to think freely and express their views. Each participant recorded his responses in writing to each of three questions, and his ideas with the group.

The three questions were:

1. **What are the characteristics of Black Forest that you like and want to keep?**
2. **What are the characteristics of Black Forest that you do not like and wish to change?**
3. **What are ten land use issues that concern you?**

1987 Black Forest Preservation Plan and 1999 Trails Addendum Supplemental Input Meetings Report July 7 - July 18, 2019

Prepared by Judith von Ahlefeldt
Black Forest Citizen and Advocate

INTRODUCTION

The 2019 Citizen Input meetings in July, 2019 were held after Consultant, HLA of Chicago, IL held a suite of official Citizen Outreach meetings for the El Paso County Master Plan May 13-16, 2019. For that effort, Black Forest had one meeting (3-4:30 pm on Monday May 13, 2019) with 45 citizens in attendance to respond to questions on Issues and Opportunities.

The July, 2019 citizen-initiated Input Meetings asked citizens exactly the same three questions that were posed in 1981. (See the three questions in the column to the left)

The 73 participants (total) at the seven meetings also wrote down their answers first, and they expressed them orally where they were recorded on a flip chart. Each of the meetings lasted at least two hours, providing ample time to express ideas and have discussions. The written ideas were also collected at the end of the meeting.

What you will read below is the synthesis of these ideas from the words of the citizens. The data from flip charts and worksheets were committed to spreadsheets, and the data was manually grouped, summarized and is reported here.

Participants in the meetings were all provided a working copy of the *1987 Black Forest Preservation Plan* prior to the meetings.

The purpose of doing this is threefold:

1. It is a necessary first step in the revision of the Black Forest Preservation Plan of 1974, aimed at defining the present community in 1981 and what it wants to be like in the future. This information is essential for concerned Planners and Public Officials.
2. It should provide a basis for discussion, however controversial, out of which reasonable solutions to problems may arise.
3. It should serve as an encouragement to development acceptable to the Black Forest Community and discourage development incongruent to what the people want who already live in the area.

The *Black Forest Preservation Plan* of 1974 was the first citizen-based land use plan of its type in Colorado. The strengthening and continuation of the validity of the entire County-level planning process is at the heart of this effort. Meaningful communication among residents, developers, and elected officials responsible for permitting land use changes must be established. Although technical expertise has been abundant and computer modeling is being used, there is generally inadequate opportunity for residents in El Paso County to participate in overall conceptual planning, to participate at an early enough stage in new proposals to make a meaningful contribution, or to have the assurance that a well-discussed and comprehensive land use plan will continue to protect them. With the increased development activity in northern El Paso County in 1981, it is imperative that the present residents decide what they want their area to be like and insist that their elected officials help them achieve that goal.

SUMMARY

Black Forest residents generally see their community as a rural alternative to the urban lifestyles offered in Colorado Springs. They want to keep the area that way and see the retention of 5-acre minimum zoning as the best way to maintain a low populations density. Nearly all other environmental qualities such as privacy, solitude the preservation of native vegetation and wildlife, the continued use of private wells, the perpetuation of unpaved toads, the ability to keep and raise live-

The purposes of holding the July citizen meetings included:

1. Providing additional opportunity for Black Forest Area citizens to provide input into specifically the Black Forest Preservation Plan Small Area Plan portion of the overall County Master Plan Planning Process, using a local meeting venue.
2. Using the same questions that were asked of citizens in 1981 per the previous plan (which had Eight Critical Issue Topics) compared to Ten topics in the current (1987) Plan.
3. The meetings provide additional Outreach data to Planning and Community Development and the Consultant regarding the status of what current residents see as important to them to keep as attributes of the Black Forest Planning Area, what might be addressed by Planning, Zoning, and other Regulations, where Issues have improved since 1981, and where they haven't, and also provides an enlarged group of involved citizens.

The *Black Forest Preservation Plan* update of 1987 was prepared (as the 1983 BFPP) by County Planning Staff. Staff was assisted by a 10 member Citizen Advisory Committee and contributions from five Black Forest organizations, the State Department of Wildlife, El Paso County Public Works, and individual citizens.

“The intent of this Update is to reaffirm the essential goals and objectives found in the original Plan. This has been accomplished primarily through a process of refinement rather than one of significant departure. Over the past 13 years, circumstances and planning approaches have changed in some cases, **but not the overall goal of maintaining the unique natural and residential character of the Black Forest Planning Area**” (p. 1 - Overview of 1987 *Black Forest Preservation Plan*).

The 1987 BFPP is map-based, with a large Executive Summary Concept Map that details ten subareas, based on physiographic attributes, suitability for specific land uses congruent with the Plan intent, and expected development patterns with respect to planned Major Transportation Corridors, expansion of existing population nodes. and limiting factors. There are Land Use Scenarios for each Subarea, a Goals, Policies and Actions list, A Visual Units map and attribute matrix, eight critical issues and definitions of terms for the document as integrated elements of The Plan.

stock and the presence of the rural community atmosphere are dependent on the maintenance of a low population density.

Residents are fearful of annexation by Colorado Springs, of encroaching urbanization from the south and the west, and of the loss of the beauty of naturalness of Black Forest. They are distrustful of the Planning Process and do not feel that their opinions are either solicited or heeded by government officials or developers prior to major land use decisions.

Their wish is to see a strong, protective, updated *Black Forest Preservation Plan* which will protect their property rights and lifestyle, and maintain the Black forest as a unique, rural community for all time.

INPUT MEETING SYNTHESIS

I. WHAT ARE THE CHARACTERISTICS OF BLACK FOREST THAT YOU LIKE AND WANT TO KEEP?

The responses to this question fall into three general categories: Personal Environment, Social Environment and Physical Environment.

1. Personal Environment

Strong feelings about personal environment were expressed frequently by words such as “privacy, seclusion, quiet, solitude, space, independence and freedom”. These are qualities which most participants feel are abundant in Black Forest but not in the urbanized setting of Colorado Springs. Factors which create this personal environment include visual separation from neighbors, low noise levels obtained by distance and the screening effect of trees, the low populations density due to 5 acre or larger tracts and the presence of unpaved roads.

This personal environment affords a certain measure of freedom to do as one pleases, an opportunity for self-development, and a chance to build inner reserves not found in an urban setting. Residents like the feeling of being responsible for something of great value, not limited to the monetary worth of their property.

SUMMARY

2019 is 32 years after 1987, but the input from citizens at the July, 2019 Input meetings mirrors Summary from the 1981 meetings to the left.

The 2019 input meetings reaffirmed the desire to keep the Planning Area under County jurisdiction as a large-lot, non-urban alternative to what had developed in Falcon, Colorado Springs and in the Tri-Lakes area. Citizens cited the need for planning and implementation coordination with the neighboring municipalities to provide meaningful urban-rural transition areas with wide, functional buffers, trails, connected natural open space systems, better traffic planning and management, less light pollution, and effective provision of habitat for wildlife.

Continued use of connected Metro Districts which supply urban services in the Planning Area, based on mining of deep aquifer ground water, and transportation issues, were of primary concern.

INPUT MEETING SYNTHESIS

I. WHAT ARE THE CHARACTERISTICS OF BLACK FOREST THAT YOU LIKE AND WANT TO KEEP?

Here is a data summary based on the citizens’ words and written input from the 2019 July Input meetings. Please compare this information with the 1981 narrative to the left.

1. Personal Environment

Quiet	Privacy
Seclusion	Peacefulness
Quiet nights and days	Slower pace of life
Tolerance	Sense of Respect
Leave-alone attitude	Keeping animals
Friendly common sense people	
Safety - low crime	Non-conforming uses
Quiet, Privacy, Keeping Animals, and Safety-low crime were duplicated among most meetings.	

Like/Keep - 1981

2. Social Environment

The Social Environment currently has a delightful rural community flavor. One of the major elements of this is the physical separation from one's neighbors yet the assurance that the neighbors are helpful, caring, friendly and share common interests. Many people mentioned that they liked "belonging to a community, enjoying small community friendliness, waving at people on the road, meeting friends at the store, and valuing community cooperation in times of emergency or personal tragedy.

Unquestionably the churches, Fire District, Art Guild, horse clubs and other organizations contribute greatly toward this attitude as many people belong to several of these organizations. Another aspect of the rural community atmosphere is the satisfaction of playing a useful role in community service.

An additional feature of the social environment is the benefit of rural living for child rearing. This includes the presence of good schools, the ability to raise livestock, keep horses, and the absence of questionable urban activities readily available to urban children.

Another strong favorable aspect of the social environment is that the Black Forest Community has a core of long-term residents. Most people are property owners and keep their homes for long periods of time.

In spite of the obvious distance to major commercial districts, most participants feel that adequate nearby local services are available in Black Forest, for example plumbing, hairdressing, and electrical work. For most people the lack of major commercial facilities in the Forest is considered a plus for the lifestyle here and the inconvenience of distance to town simply calls for better planning.

Old fashioned values of sharing, trust and community cooperation, an undeveloped economy, respect for private ownership and private property rights and a minimum of government visibility were cited as attributes of the social environment that make Black Forest a special place to live.

Like/Keep - 2019

2. Social Environment

Strong sense of Community
Community spirit
Active community leadership
Local Events, activities and services
Festival, churches, Scout troops, Slash/Mulch, 4-H
Small town atmosphere
Rural Aspects
Low Density – 5 ac minimum
Neighbors far enough away
Local businesses
Small, local commercial
City close enough
Good fire and emergency services
Like having Coop -(Electric Mountain View)
Low taxes
No City laws
Lack of government interference
Not incorporated
Effort to route traffic around the Timbered Area
Few HOAs

3. Physical Environment

Trees that are not in the mountains
Mix of trees and meadows
Natural Ecosystems
Preservation of Visual Character
Parks
Open Space
Trails
Wildlife
Coexist with wildlife
Dark Skies – low light pollution
Well Water - plentiful - clean water
Clean fresh air
Cool climate
More precipitation
Snow
Mix with agriculture
Mix rural/semi-rural
Dirt Roads

II. WHAT ARE CHARACTERISTICS OF BLACK FOREST THAT YOU DO NOT LIKE AND WISH TO CHANGE?

Attributes that citizens did not like about Black Forest and wanted to change were wide-ranging, and with few exceptions, were aligned with
4
Critical Issues.

Like/Keep - 1981

The Black Forest lifestyle provides insulation from the the fast pace of modern urbanized life. This is an extremely important and unique value. Old buildings and dirt roads impart the feeling of an unhurried pace and nostalgia for simpler times.

3. **Physical Environment** The physical environment is dominated by Ponderosa Pines in various stages of growth, health, disease and decay. These beautiful trees, much prized by the residents provide privacy, deaden noise, attenuate the wind and provide a pleasant piney odor.

Residents also prize the presence of wildlife and wildlife sounds. Habitat preservation, views and the wide open spaces surrounding the Black Forest provide visual satisfaction. The native vegetation, prairie, meadow, forest and creek bottoms provide alternatives to plastic, steel and concrete.

Other aspects of the physical environment liked by residents include the low level of pollution, the opportunity to have their own untreated water from wells, and even the capricious weather.

Appreciation of a desire to preserve old buildings, or sort of western wood motif exemplified by the Black Forest Store, the Log School and the Community Hall was strongly expressed. The lack of modern high-rise buildings and low incidence of steel and concrete buildings is considered positive.

In summer, most of the characteristics of life in Black Forest hinge on the maintenance of a low populations density with attendant low traffic volumes, minimal machine noise, lack of congestion, personal space, native plants and animals, lack of artificial light at night and the opportunity to maintain an area truly different than those created by the usual forces of commercial enterprise.

The second and third questions asked participants to consider the negative aspects of living in Black Forest – from individual annoyances and pet peeves, to the very broadest land use issues affecting everyone. Many of the answers are the antithesis to the positives features, reinforcing the message from the the first questions.

Don't Like/Change - 2019

Many were very similar to the issues identified in the 1981 and 1987 BFPP editions, but a few new categories emerged, specifically issues with water mining and export which stimulates urbanization in RR-5-zoned areas, and dated telecommunications.

Growth and Land Use

Urban encroachment
Black Forest is now in fast developing area
Incompatible zoning with Rural Residential Vision
Overlot grading
Zoning easily changed
Stress of living in fear of adjacent zone changes & higher density
Overdevelopment of Open Space
Higher density pushing against established RR-5 lots
Disappearing ecosystems and wildlife
Displaced wildlife
Housing density affects many other factors

Water Use

Mining and Export of Water – “water theft”
Water companies mining, selling, exporting water
Use of non-renewable aquifers as commodity for for urban development
Proliferation of Metro Districts in non-sustainable water resource
Golf Course in Black Forest in trees on well water
Lack of well level monitoring
Dated slow communications

Natural Resources

Growth without thoughtful preservation

Government

Lack of City-County Coordination/cooperation
No buffer to city
City annexation
Citizens not heard by government
Citizens treated with annoyance and disrespect by County officials
3 minute limit for citizen testimony at hearings
County govt is unresponsive
BFPP Squashed
BoCC does not support adopted plans
BoCC always approves higher densities
BoCC arrogance regarding their land use “discretion”
Citizens are apathetic
Citizens are frustrated
Lack of support of adopted plans by County

Like/Keep - 1981

Black Forest residents have an astute, if somewhat cynical awareness of how government will, or will not, work to carry out the will of the people and they exhibit a certain lack of confidence in the planning and decision-making processes at the County Level because of inconsistent decisions of elected officials, lack of adherence to prior approved plans, and what they see as the yielding of government to business and political forces. Residents have a clear recognition of the forces of change and they have a stubborn determination to preserve the elements of the community that make Black Forest a special place to live.

II. WHAT ARE CHARACTERISTICS OF BLACK FOREST THAT YOU DO NOT LIKE AND WISH TO CHANGE?

The responses to this question do not fall into clearly defined categories. However, most are related to law enforcement, zoning decisions, activities of the County Department of Transportation, and certain deficiencies in the social environment. Other dislikes are related to activities that damage the physical environment.

Law enforcement issues frequently mentioned include theft of personal property, living trees and firewood; vandalism, trespass, lack of traffic speed enforcement and a general indifference and lack of knowledge by the public of the law. One the positive size, residents feel that the Sheriff's office is doing a respectable job considering its manpower level. Many expressed the desire for more deputies to be assigned to Black Forest.

The County Dept. of Transportation was criticized sharply by nearly everyone. In general, further paving of roads was opposed because of the generation of fast traffic. Widening of dirt roads, such as Meridian, was criticized for the same reason. Most participants feel that the roads currently paved are adequate and they want better speed control, realistic speed limits and better road maintenance, including pothole repair, striping and road shoulders.

The policy of requiring that residential subdivision roads be built to 35 mph specifications was highly criticized. Residents prefer narrower

Don't Like/Change -2019

Everything goes" mentality
County's inconsistent treatment of land use issues
Not being incorporated

Transportation

Traffic volumes and speed on SH-83
High volume and high speed traffic - most arteria
l and collector roads
Increasing traffic
Above ground power lines
Substandard roads (shoulders, maintenance
potholes)
Little speed enforcement
Dangerous drivers not punished
Increasing roadkill and road noise
Too much construction traffic
Cutting of big legacy trees
Arterial Road improvements behind schedule
Commercial vehicles invading in residential areas
due to special uses/variances
Bicycle safety on arterials/collectors
Cut-thru commuters
No 4-lane roads in timbered areas; 3-lane roads
best on minor arterials

Economics

Retirement living option not protected
Taxes getting too high
Affordable and accessory housing issues
Pre-fire/Post fire division
Gentrification

Code and Code Enforcement

Code of the West
Code Issues - Unnecessary, some ridiculous
LDC - hard to use
Private driveway erode onto roadways
Manure management - dispose in wetlands

Environmental Management

Too many deer
Absentee landowners not removing dead trees
(or cutting overcrowded ones)
Environmental insensitivity on fire recovery
Unmanaged forest

FEAR:

Losing rural values and lifestyle
Developers changing character of BF with large,
expensive homes
Risk of another big fire
Retirement living options not protected

Don't Like/Change - 1981

roads, necessitating the cutting of fewer trees, slow traffic and producing less dust. One suggestion is to build roads off center to provide space on one side for recreational trails, and another idea is to thin trees on the south side of east-west roads to permit the sun to remove ice and snow in the winter. Nearly everyone was concerned with the use of roads by pedestrians and equestrians because of safety.

The proliferation of roads in 5-acre tract subdivisions is a concern and some did not like the graveling requirements. Most participants believed that dirt roads were safer than paved roads in the winter. The unpaved roads are considered by very important to the rural lifestyle.

On a more personal level, noise from motor bikes, barking dogs, chainsaws, airplanes and stereos were mentioned as annoyances. Loose dogs and abandoned animals are also a problem as are too many fences, - especially old, dilapidated fences on absentee owned land.

Some negative aspects of services mentioned include poor telephone service, slow response time the Volunteer Fire District, lack of a permanent emergency medical facility, lack of public transportation to Colorado Springs, especially for young people on weekends, poor delivery service to Black Forest by Colorado Springs businesses, inadequate child day care and services for the elderly, and inadequate basic commercial services such as grocery or gasoline for outlying areas on the northeast and east sides of the Forest.

Despite these complaints, most participants gracefully accepted these inconveniences in the tradeoff for freedom and space.

Lack of pride on neatness of personal property was cited. Residences with junk cars or other untidy materials on the premises create problems and distasteful visual impact. Some participants want the County to help solve this problem. Some people object to mobile homes in Black Forest while others think they are acceptable if neatly kept. The lack of protection from building inconsistencies was mentioned.

Negative aspects of the social environment

Don't Like/Change - 2019

Decreasing quality of most public services and infrastructure

Fear reduction of lot size in burned area

Above ground power lines

Slash site open to Colorado Springs – crowded

Increasing roadkill and road noise

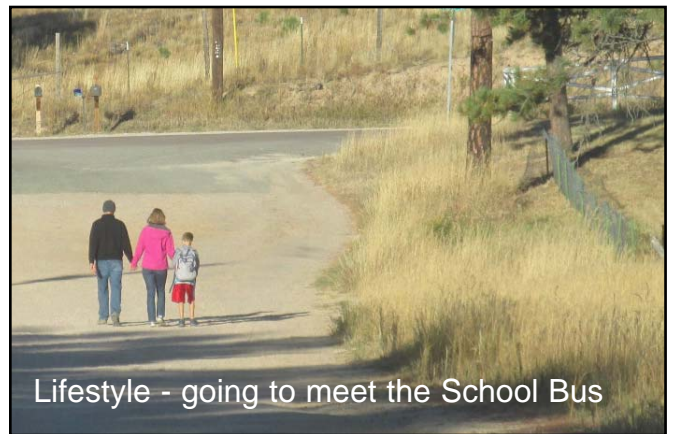
Cutting of big legacy trees

Light Pollution

Not enough multi-use trails

Above ground power lines

Slash site open to Colorado Springs - crowding and overload



Lifestyle - going to meet the School Bus

In order to provide the kind of lifestyle that Black Forest residents value, whether in the Timbered area (burned or not), or the grasslands to the north, south and east, large lots are essential. While not a perfect solution to keeping nature close to home, having large lots provides the open space within lots (not paved, built-on or landscaped) to allow important structure and functions of native ecosystems to continue.

Having wide buffers between existing rural residential areas assists this and provides larger scale connectivity. In places, patches of vacant timbered areas or grassland, ranches or other large properties the naturalness of the ecosystems provides essential elements of the "Forest lifestyle".

The fundamental land use pattern for the Black Forest Planning Area was established by the 5 ac minimum lot size in 1965, and modified a few years later to allow overall 5 ac density with smaller (min 2.5 ac) lots in tradeoff for open space.

Land Use Issues - 1981

include the lack of neighborhood associations to deal with local problems, the lack of continuity of covenants among subdivisions and within a subdivision over a period of time, lack of communication within the community and within neighborhoods, lack of community control over land use issues, lack of knowledge of the procedures used by the County in making zoning decisions that affect the community and lack of notification by the County of impending issues.

III. WHAT ARE TEN LAND USE ISSUES THAT CONCERN YOU?

This question elicited responses that had great breadth and depth of thought. Residents have a keen sense of the delicacy of the natural balances that make Black Forest a special physical environment and a strong fear that this balance will be destroyed by people that have money and power but do not understand the area and its environmental limitations, or care about it.

A central concern was about water – the lack of accurate information as to how much water is available in the different aquifers that underlie Black Forest and the surrounding prairie, the recharge rate of the aquifers, the possibility that State Water right law and well permit issuance may have little relationship to the actual amount of water in the ground, the manipulation of these well permits and water rights by developers, and the overuse of ground water uses recently proposed to Ford Aerospace and Gary Construction.

Most participants felt that large residential lots are compatible with the environment and water supply, but fear that higher densities will destroy the character of the area and deplete water.

Related to this is the concern over the lack of integrated land planning which takes into account all factors. Residents feel that flaring mockery of Master Plans has been made in areas within the City of Colorado Springs and in other parts of the County. They fear lack of credible restraint on development and they fear that future land use decisions in and surrounding Black Forest will be made primarily on economic factors or power/money struggles

For over four decades, residents within the Black Forest Planning Area have been striving to live in the area's varied ecosystems with minimum damage or disruption - low impact uses.

Much remains to be learned about how best to do this and where the boundaries are between too much management and too little. This is, however, well outside the boundary of clearcutting, overlot grading, paving, curb and gutter, water and sewer which all cause ecosystem destruction. These are not low impact.

II. WHAT ARE TEN LAND USE ISSUES THAT CONCERN YOU? 2019

Many land use concerns fall into the same Critical Issue Categories as the Physical Environment above. These were expressed as problems, questions or suggested actions.

It is fair to say that many of these concerns were expressed in 1981 but in 2019 their frequency, scale and intensity has dramatically increased.

With the rate of new subdivision proposals, especially those which do not match the vision for the Black Forest Planning Area and its subareas, orderly development is difficult to obtain.

The *Black Forest Preservation Plan*, either its 1974 or 1987 editions, has never been anti-development. Rather, it is a Visionary approach to guide cooperative development over time and initially depended on Developer Cooperation and Commissioner Discretion, not just Regulatory minimums. The public process used for the 1974 and 1987 plans both queried the desires of the existing community, and created a plan based on an integrated vision embodying those desires, which developers and elected officials were expected to respect and implement.

Black Forest Timbered Area, and much of its surrounding grassland and shrubland ecosystems is an outstanding Rural Residential Option in 2019 in El Paso County largely because of the foresight and hard work of people who understood that land is a limited resource and not all land has Manifest Destiny to be overlot graded and urbanized. Reservation of a connected and functional open space system which includes buffers and transitions in the rural-urban interface is a very high priority and an excellent opportunity for Intergovernmental cooperation.

Land Use Issues - 1981

rather than on solid, factual planing that considers the environment and existing community.

This is part of a pervasive fear that local government fails to consider the well being of the private citizen ahead of commercial desires.

Fear of annexation by Colorado Springs is considered to be one of the most serious threats to the integrity of Black Forest, especially since the City need not abide by the *Black Forest Preservation Plan*.

There was criticism that some of the regulations in the El Paso County Land Use Code are inappropriate for Black Forest, creating unnecessary expense for taxpayers and developers alike, and contributing to problems such as erosion. A strong land use concern is over tax structure which encourage the development of suburbia at the expense of rural patterns.

Another concern is the placement of land use decision making power in the hands of the County Planning Staff where the process is nearly inaccessible to citizens. People strongly felt that land use decision making power should rest with informed elected officials and hearing procedures should be strictly adhered to.

Citizens desired more information on, and more participation in the entire planning and decision-making process.

Zone changes are a land use concern and residents worried about the types of development that might be permitted on land already zoned for commercial or industrial uses. Strong negative opinions were expressed on the tendency of the County to approve zone changes in advance of need and the imminent intent to develop the property. Negativism toward zoning as a tool for land speculation was expressed very strongly.

Areas of untreated pine beetle and mistletoe infestation, overgrazing, poor land management in general, and the expansion of mining on the southern border of the Forest were land uses related directly to the physical environment.

Many residents feel that the responsibilities of absentee owners needs to be defined and there should be stricter enforcement of pine beetle control.

Land Use Issues of Concern 2019

SH83 – should be scenic byway
Put roundabouts on BF and Vollmer to slow traffic
Briargate-Stapleton completion?
Better diversion of traffic around BF needed.

Land Use and Zoning

Allowing high traffic business use in residential zoned areas - dangerous
Larger parcels in Timbered Area– sale and fate?
Zoning decisions – process questionable

Keep commercial for neighborhood use
Ban Multifamily in BF Area
Re-evaluate potential commercial nodes on SH83
Define limits and use of PUD
Do not use PUD for urban density in RR-5 transition areas

City-County Transition

Annexation by Colorado Springs
Transitions with City need a logical approach
City development – ruins vistas and wildlife areas
Buffers – more and wider needed, lack of any buffer with City, or too narrow (50')
Define limits and use of PUD
Using PUD for urban density in RR-5
Leapfrog development – Metro Districts
Cluster development with open space a good option

County Government Procedures/Processes

County Planning and Development Dept exists only to facilitate growth (subdiv approval)
Obscure and poorly documented rezoning process – minimums
Limited mechanisms for citizen awareness, review and comment
Developer influence on County Elected officials
Corrupt politicians allow development proposals to violate BFPP

Water

Unknown Aquifer capacities
Water mining and export
Keep 300-year Rule
Increasing number of deep wells
Developers need to prove water and services at beginning of the development process

Land Use Issues - 1981

The lack of self-knowledge by the community ranks high as a major problem.

In the last decade many new people have moved to Black Forest with little understanding of the community or the environment.

The lack of a formal, unified body to speak for the Black Forest Community and defend its values is a very serious problem.

Residents are concerned about the preservation of open space, realizing fully that much of what is considered open space is privately owned and subject to development. Concern was expressed for the preservation of old buildings and the need for publically owned parkland that could be used for horseback riding or group activities. They appreciate the Regional Park, but desire other, smaller public areas.

Most land use concerns, including the reason ableness of maintaining the *status quo*, are based in the following conflicts:

- 1. Rural lifestyle vs economic pressure to urbanize**
- 2. The rights of money and large tract ownership vs the collective rights of the smaller landowners.**
- 3. Controlled activity vs freedom of choice**

Residents have learned that land use plans, however good or however long in existence, have been altered or discarded in favor of economic expediency. Now is the time for unique, one-time opportunity to keep the area northeast of Colorado Springs different and desirable.

This must include:

1. Restricting lot sizes to 5 acre minimum
2. Establishing commercial nodes and permitting no others
3. Defining the geographical and political boundaries of Black Forest and influencing land use in adjacent areas
4. Periodically reviewing and enforcing the Black Forest Preservation Plan.
5. Having the Plan adopted by the City of Colorado Springs.

Land Use Issues 2019

Water Sufficiency too late in subdivision process
- most decisions are made before water sufficiency
No more aquifer-fed features like Golf Courses, and community landscaping

Open Space

What is County Definition of Open Space?

Increase developer requirements for Open Space
- LDC - PUD

Find ways to fund, preserve, maintain Open Space

Protect natural springs and wetlands

Bad policy - State requiring "illegal ponds" to be removed - especially spring-fed ponds high in a watershed - no water for wildlife

Blocking of animal migrations

Land Management

How to better integrate/manage burned and unburned area

Need some minimum fire mitigation (fuel reduction) – balance with forest ecology

Uncontrolled noxious weeds

Unmanaged forests – wildfire hazard"

Uncontrolled noxious weeds

What is vision for burned area's future

Miscellaneous

No lots < 2.5 ac in BF Planning Area

Aging in place

Limits of large animals on 2.5, 1 and .5 ac lots

Fencing of trails

Preserve agriculture

Need local emergency response plans – citizen awareness and involvement

Pressure to change Black Forest cultural and environment/ lifestyle

Corrupt politicians allow development proposals to violate the *Black Forest Preservation Plan*.

Unknowns

Climate warming effects on ecosystems/ fires/ restoration

There is a sense that technology does not need to overwhelm the individual, and his sense of independence, for steel, concrete, plastic and the other forces which homogenize urban America.

Perhaps Black Forest can be a place where a strong “No thank you” will be emphatically stated and enforced against the ideas which alter the present character of the area where people are generally living within the limits of the natural environment without destroying its essence.

Compiled and Edited in September 1981
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Chairman of the Black Forest Land Use
Committee
Based on four Black Forest Input Meetings held in
May-June 1981

The seven Citizen Input meetings in Black Forest during July, 2017 provided a robust and timely reality check on the current thoughts of the Black Forest Community about likes, dislikes and Land Use Concerns. Together with other information gathered in the Master Planning Process it encourages conversation and public process and helps define to scope of problems to be addressed.

Many of the “old” problems are still with us and better solutions to wisely using the resources of land and space must be pursued.

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by Judy von Ahlefeldt
Based on seven Black Forest Input Meetings held
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