

# Synoptic History of Black Forest Preservation Plan

based on Black Forest Land Use Committee Records  
and Black Forest News Archives (1971-2019)  
Compiled by Dr. Judith von Ahlefeldt October 9, 2019

Here is a short, but engaging synopsis of the history of the *Black Forest Preservation Plan*. These are documented items from the Archives of the *Black Forest News* (1960-2017) and records of the Black Forest Land Use Committee (1974-present).

The modern history of Black Forest began after WWII, when some churches, the volunteer Fire Department, Art Guild, Boy Scouts and other organizations began in the Forest. Electricity came in 1948.

Some of the buildings predate World War II including the Old Log School, built in 1923 (now on the State and National Historic Registers), the BF Community Hall and what was the Black Forest Store were built in 1929, and the Old Log Church (1942 - also on the State Historic Register). The Black Forest Community Club, which manages the Hall is still active today dates back to 1929.

The population was mainly in the SW part of the Forest, and there were large working ranches up until at least the 1970s. The USAFA was a local employer and many workers chose to live in Black Forest.

The Men's Civic Association was organized in April of 1960. Then main zoning came in September, 1965 when most of the area was zoned to 5 or 35 ac lots. By this time there were already many non-conforming subdivisions.

Shortly after the zoning action Citizens formed a "Black Forest Planning Board" and by June 7, 1966 had produced the "Master Development Plan 1966-1970-/71 in and for the Black Forest Community, El Paso County, Colorado." This was done with the assistance of Mr. Bud Isham of the County Planning Office.

The Goals and Objectives included:

- To be free on control and the individual master of his own land
  - To live and let live
  - Maintain solitude, privacy and community dignity
  - Establish commercial zoning for orderly business growth, and protect existing business owners
  - Improve health conditions
  - Develop a transportation system that does not unnecessarily disrupt existing properties
- Business were inventoried and actions were pro-

posed.

By the early 1970s the Pikes Peak Area Council of Governments had been formed, and in 1971 it became the agency to prepare the **1990 Transportation Plan and Map**. Federal Funding for Highways was now available, funneled through PPACG, and PPACG was tasked to work with its members to develop a Regional Transportation Plan.

This became the infamous **1990 Transportaiton Plan**. It was far-reaching and controversial in many parts of the County - but especially so in Black Forest, where a 1 mile grid of N/S and E/W arterial roads were planned, fragmenting the Forest into 1-mile squares, and Vollmer Road was planned to be an I-25 bypass connected to Marksheffel Road. It would have a 330-foot ROW. There was also the Powers Expressway which was planned to cut through the Forest and join an extension of Swan Road west of Roller-Coaster Road.

The October 28, 1971 issue of the *Black Forest News* carried the Headline "Public meeting for Black Forest on Controversial Road Proposals and urged everyone to show up ... "not just token objection from a handful of women from the Black Forest area." By the time this was in print, a public meeting had been held in Colorado Springs with a capacity crowd and the road plans had been tabled by PPACG."

The November 4, 1971 issue was a reminder for the meeting that night. The meeting was reported on November 11 as a capacity crowd at Hardesty Hall in the basement of the Black Forest Community Church.

Hundreds attended and were addressed by PPACG Director, Bud Owsley, County Planning Director, Gary Boettcher, County Commissioner Jack Mitchell and Fred Sondermann, a Colorado College Professor and founder of Citizens' Lobby for Sensible Growth. The article reported that tempers flared, and the meeting threatened to end in chaos. "The meeting ended with no satisfactory conclusions determined as to what the County would do, or what the Back Forest Residents would be able to do to prevent the roads from being constructed."

Read on to see twat residents of Black Forest did when they met just 5 days later on November, 1971!



# The Black Forest News

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## Community Announcements

**NOTICE**  
Unless more ladies bring their pre-schoolers to the Well Baby Clinic for their shots we will have to discontinue this service. The clinic is held the last Wednesday of each month at the Community Church from 9:00 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.

**CUB SCOUT Pack Meeting** will be Friday night, 7:30 p.m., Hardesty Hall. Stoney and his dog King will give a demonstration for the Pack.

We are still taking old newspapers, if you bring them to Hardesty Hall on Friday evening during the hours of the Cub Scout Pack Meeting. (No magazines Please!).

## CONTINUING EDUCATION CLASSES GOING

The EOF-sponsored Continuing Education Classes in the Black Forest have been going for five weeks now and are, from all reports, a source of pleasure and satisfaction to those enrolled. The

## SOCIAL SECURITY OFFICE IS MOVED

On Monday, November 15 the Colorado Springs Social Security Office moves to 225 South Academy Boulevard.

Need for more adequate parking space for patrons was a prime factor in the decision to leave the 15 South Weber location it has occupied for the past 12 years, according to Sumner Dodge, district manager. "We feel this move will make it easier for our beneficiaries of all ages to get to our office. They can avoid the congestion of traffic and one-way streets and drive right to our door. There are just a few steps from the parking lot into the building," said Dodge.

Another factor in the decision to move was the need for more telephone lines - impossible to install in the concrete in the present location. Nationwide, social security has been emphasizing "Teleservice" - service by telephone. People can inquire about Medicare, file claims for benefits, change address, get gen-



READY FOR ACTION... Bruce Hansen and Ken Rickard (standing) and Mrs. Betty Griffin and Pat Stoll (sitting) are ready to start work as the newly elected steering committee for an organization to preserve the Forest. With much work ahead of them, they face many uphill battles.... but with the enthusiasm shown by the residents of Black Forest at the last public meeting, they will not lack for support.

## GROUP HOLDS MEETING TO ORGANIZE REPRESENTATIVE PROTECTION

Tuesday night, November 16th, a group of fifteen men and women gathered

to devote themselves to one interest...preservation of the Black Forest.

The general consensus of the meeting was that time was short, and action had to be taken.

The photo above shows the leaders of the Committee to Preserve the Black Forest, chosen by the fifteen citizens who attended the Nov 16 meeting. They soon organized sub-committees which began meeting regularly and with local experts and County Planners. They nagged the BoCC about creating a Comprehensive Plan for Black Forest. 1972 happened to be the year that the State of Colorado passed the Local Planning baton to Counties by Statute changes. A year later on October 5th, 1972 the **Black Forest News** headlined:





PLANS FOR BLACK FOREST IN PREPARATION STAGES.....

The Committee to Preserve the Black Forest was asked by the El Paso County Planning Department to assist in preparation of a plan for the Black Forest. The Committee Chairman, Pat Stoll, said,

“Rather than having a plan by outsiders forced on us, we agreed to take on the whole job. We Foresters, who have taken on the task, want to make the plan with the assistance of the County Planners. That way a plan made in the Forest by Foresters will eventually be submitted to the County Government for approval. We now have a chance to be revising our own plan to protect the Forest, rather than be always fighting bureaucracy to save the trees.”

resident and owner of Forest land. They want to get a wide spectrum of opinion for basis of the plan. The first questionnaire is to identify the people who want their opinions to be considered.

The initial questions are:  
1. Are you interested in preservation of the rural atmosphere of the Black Forest area?

2. The present 5 acres per dwelling unit is: a- ok; b- too small; c- too big.

3. Would you favor holding to a minimum the number of paved roads in the area?

4. For temporary planning purposes the boundary lines for the Black Forest area have been set as follows: On the west-Highway 83; on the east-Eastonville Road (Highway 217); on the north-County Line Road; on the south- a line from I-25 Exit 70 east to Falcon. If you live outside, do you wish to be included in our plan?

5. What shopping facilities do you want in the area:

a. Convenience Shopping only?

b. Shopping centers within the Forest?

c. Shopping centers at the edges of the Forest?

6. Would you attend future meetings to assist in our plan?

ANNUAL MAKE IT YOURSELF WITH WOOL COMPETITION

Once again it is time to start preparing for the annual MAKE IT YOURSELF WITH WOOL Competition.

MIYWW is a competition for contestants ages 10-21 years of age who sew or knit garments of 100% American loomed wool. These garments will be judged on fashion and sewing.

The competition will be held at the Dublin House on North Academy Blvd. October 28, 1972 with registration at 8:00 A.M. Contestants will be judged on over all appearance and how the garments fit the individual, the clothes are then turned inside out and judged on sewing. It is a tough job for the two panels of judges.

Lunch will be served to the contestants before the public style show which starts at 2:00 P.M. Mrs. Glen Smiley will be our commentator and announce the winners. Five contestants will be chosen

The plan will be comprehensive, covering land use, community services, community facilities, government, forestry practices, streets, parking, mass transit, and other elements. The purpose of the plan is to preserve the Black Forest in the face of forces that threaten it.

The Committee met on September 12th and 25th with the County Planners. At the last meeting representatives of the U.S. Forestry Service, the Colorado Forestry Service and the U.S. Soil Conservation Service attended to offer their assistance to the Committee. Mr. Stan Broome, Senior District Forester reported that the Forest now has about 3,000 trees infested with the Mountain Pine

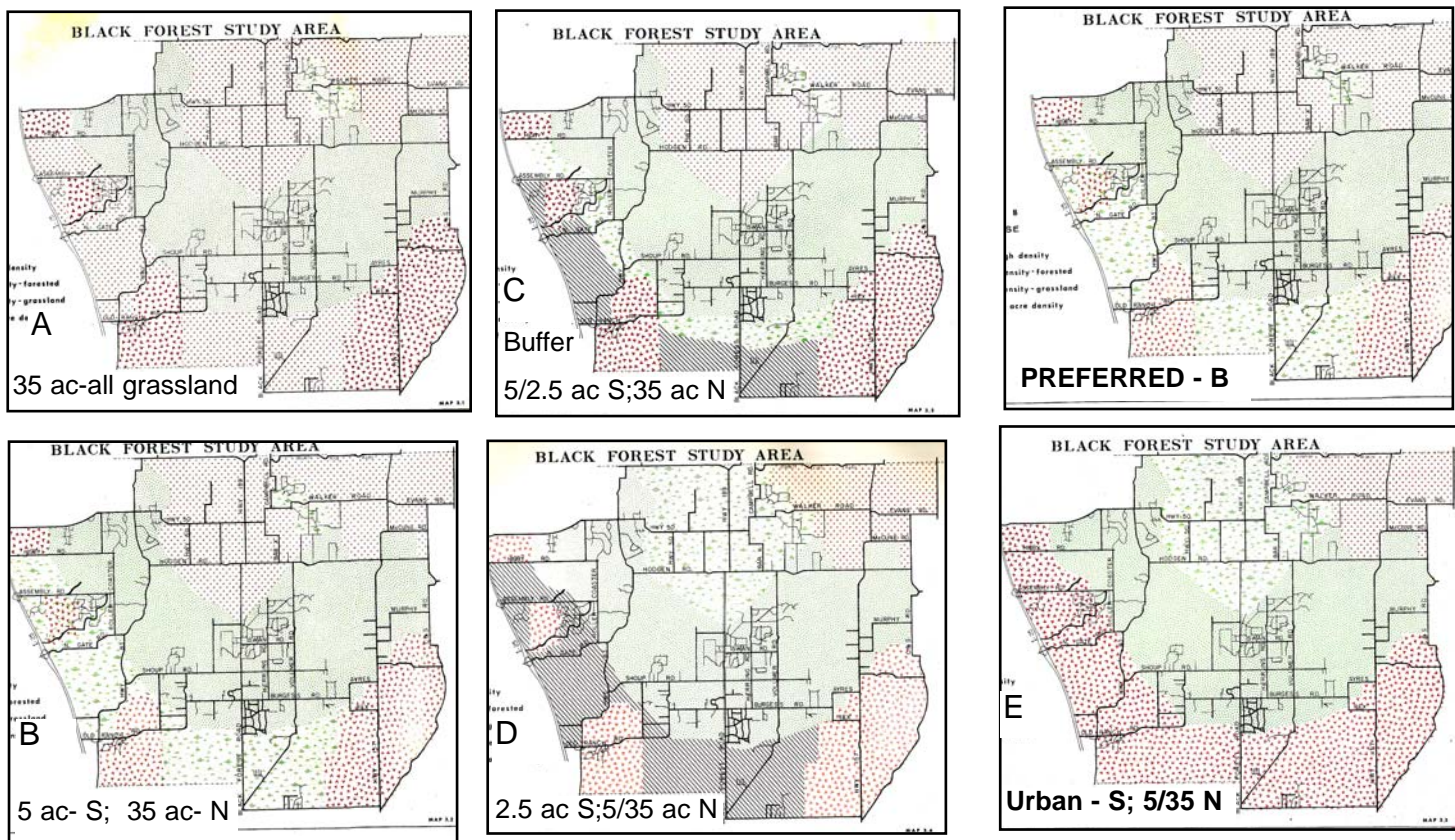


The result was the first citizen-based land use plan in Colorado under the new Land Use Regulations which remain basically the same today including the overall framework, procedures including formation of a Planning Commission, the beginning of building and lot division standards, Planning Commission and Board of Commissioners responsibilities, and PUD zoning.

The *Black Forest Preservation Plan* was adopted by the El Paso County Planning Commission in August of 1974. It had eight Critical Issue topics developed from a statistically proper mailed survey and inventory data cooperatively written with County Planners. Goals, Policies and Actions were developed for Land Use, Economy, Community Facilities and Services, Government, Education, Transportation, Water and Sewerage and Natural Resources. The 1974 Plan was the foundation the 1987 Updated *Black Forest Preservation Plan*.

The 1974 Plan created five Planning Area-wide scenarios which assumed urban nodes at Woodmoor, Gleneagle, and Falcon. **All scenarios assumed the Timbered area would remain 5 acre density, and the northeast corner would remain in 35 ac density.** Alternatives A, B and C also assumed 35 acre density in the grasslands north of the trees. Alternatives D, and E assumed 5 acre density in these north grasslands. Alternate A showed urban nodes separated by 35 acre tracts, Alternative B showed urban nodes separated by 5 acre tracts, Alternative C showed urban nodes separated by 2.5 ac tracts closer to Woodmen Road with a buffer of 5 ac tracts in the grasslands to the south of the trees. Alternative D showed a wider band of 2.5 ac tracts between urban nodes and no buffer of 5 acre grassland tracts, and Alternative E most accurately predicted what appears to be happening in 2019 the south. Alternative E was the least desirable Alternative, and Alternative B was the Preferred Alternative.

The 1974 plan notes on page 30 **“The data indicate the full development (urban) under present conditions will undoubtedly be dependent on the importation of water.”**



Much of the Plan B scenario has been followed for 46 years with exceptions around the edges. It should be noted that the 1974 Plan was prior to the Briargate and Northgate annexations and extended west to I-25 (in the County), and the southern border extend to Woodmen Road on the south east of Black Forest Road.. In 1974 major 5 acre subdivision were happening in Black Forest, but there was little activity in either the southern or northern grasslands. Most urban subdivision activity was in the City of Colorado Springs.

In the early 1980's most of the area south and west of Black Forest and south of Shoup Road was annexed (Briargate and Wolf Ranch). Northgate area had contentious discontinuous annexation in the mid-1980s. The County began planning major thoroughfares with the Major Thoroughfares Task Force (MTTF) in 1985 and 1987. Powers Boulevard alignment was determined. PPACG continued to do Regional Transportation Planning about every five years to meet requirements for Federal High Funds. By the end of the 1980s the 1990 Transportation Plan had been superseded by several other editions.

Subdivisions in and around Black Forest in the 1970s and 80s conformed with the Black Forest Preservation Plan guidelines. After 1974, the Committee to Preserve the Black Forest watched over the **Black Forest Preservation Plan** area. Most proposals were cooperative with the Plan vision. By the early 1980s the group had become the Black Forest Land Use Committee and was a committee within the Black Forest Community Club. The Committee regularly reviewed all subdivision plans, and was active in opposing the leapfrog annexation of the Northgate Parcels in the mid-1980s.

Also in the early 1980s Black Forest residents were alarmed at the impending annexations of Briargate and Wolf Ranch. The 1981 Input Meetings were held by the Land Use Committee to articulate the Vision for the BFPP by asking citizens what they liked about Black Forest and wanted to **Keep**, what they did not like and wanted to **Change**, and also to list Land use Issues of **Concern**.

These were published as the 1981 Input Meetings Report, and were useful to the Update of the *Black Forest Preservation Plan* which began 1985 and culminated in the 1987 adoption of the Updated Plan by the El Paso County Planning Commission.

Boundaries had changed because of City annexations, and the development of the first editions of Small Area Plans for Tri-Lakes and Falcon.

It was during the 1980s that friction and disconnects began between the *Black Forest Preservation Plan*, and major transportation corridor planning by the County. There were further disagreements when the 1987 MTTF Plan was updated to the first MTCF in 2004, again in 2010, 2016, and 2018. This disconnect continues to the present.

In 1998, after a four year effort, a local consulting company (Gruen Associates) worked with a large group of citizens and local and government planners

to create the El Paso County Policy Plan.

In the County, Topical items (Major Transportation Corridors Plan (2004), El Paso County Water Report (2002), Parks Master Plan, Drainage and Stormwater Plan and other elements of present El Paso County Master Plan were developed or updated.

In 1999 citizen initiative resulted in the Black Forest Trails Addendum, creating ways for citizens to work with County Parks and County DOT to create Neighborhood Trails and to support County Regional trails, as well as to assist the County in trail maintenance and monitoring. Over the past 20 years many improvements have been made to the neighborhood trail system which utilizes gravel roads, private easements, utility corridors and similar measures to connect neighborhoods to each other, and to Regional Trails.

"Connect Our Community" was the rallying slogan.

During the first decade of the 2000's the County began work on regulations for the Land Development Code and the Engineering Criteria Manual. While these regulations created enforcement capability of some issues in the County, they sometimes conflicted with Small Area Plans goals, vision policy or actions. The Regulations also created a tradition in the subdivision process where the minimum criteria of the Regulations, became the standard for subdivisions. The minimum Criteria standard also often conflicted with the vision, goals, policies and actions of the Small Area Plans or definitions were vague.

Although the nine Small Area Plans all called for regular updates, just as the County was doing for its Topical Plans, the regular review and update that should have happened was not done after 2008. Some of the plans were long-overdue for updates by 2008.

The perceived disparity between the SAP's and the topical plans, LDC and ECM grew worse, resulting in the issues which are occurring in the Master Planning Process of 2019-2021.

The Small Area Plans had a lot of good planning and excellent public process, but the implementation of these Advisory Plans of these plans is problematic.

To address the finer scales of livability and community vision within established unincorporated communities in the County the Visions, Goals, Policies and Actions of the Small Area Plans need to be updated by the citizens who live in those areas, and included in a meaningful way in the new County Master Plan.