

# Appendix A: Existing Conditions

This section identifies existing conditions on Wright's Mesa that influenced the planning process and future directions for this Plan.

## Wright's Mesa General Description and Planning Area

Wright's Mesa is located in north central San Miguel County, abutting the Montrose County border. It covers almost 59 square miles. The small Town of Norwood is the heart of economic activity and accounts for just over half of the residents of the area. (See Map 1: Wright's Mesa Planning Area.) Norwood is 33 miles away from Telluride, the San Miguel County seat (approximately an hour drive through the San Miguel River canyon along State Highway 145). The small community of Redvale is nine miles to the northwest. Montrose is the largest service center near the Mesa, located 66 miles from Norwood (approximately an hour and a half drive time).

Wright's Mesa is still remote even by most western community standards, but the area is being discovered for its friendly small-town and rural atmosphere, temperate climate, scenic landscape with access to public lands, and housing affordability (relative to Telluride and Mountain Village).

## A Brief History of Wright's Mesa

Howard Greager is a local western historian and author who has written several books about the Wright's Mesa region. The historical account below summarizes his work and article published in the *Norwood Post* during Pioneer Days in 2005.

The Ute Indians first settled Wright's Mesa—camping, fishing, hunting, and gathering for thousands of years in the area.



*Lone Cone Mountain as seen from Wright's Mesa to the south along CR 44 and from Hwy. 145A.*

The current occupants on the mesa have a much more current settlement history. According to legends, in 1877, two placer miners working their way down the San Miguel River climbed to the mesa and discovered the vast grassland on top. After they reported their discovery back at the camps, word spread. Soon after, F.E. Wright came up on the mesa and staked his claim to land there. The Hayden Survey in 1876 had marked the area into townships and sections, so Wright chose the parcels in the middle of the mesa and on the southern edge at the site of a steady flowing spring. Edwin Joseph bought the land with the spring from Wright. At that time

only a few people lived on the mesa (the Goshorn family and the Tozers). They maintained saddle horses for the mail carriers.

Because of its isolated location surrounded by canyons and mesas, Norwood settled more slowly than neighboring towns (i.e., Telluride, Ouray, Naturita). Paradox Valley, to the northwest, was settled and thriving long before Norwood.

By 1889, Wright’s Mesa had an operational canal system, making farming and ranching viable. That is about the time the State of Colorado started advertising this area. Albert Filmore bought the land that would eventually become the town. The Wheelers were an early family to live on the mesa. They owned Naturita Cattle and Land Company and Naturita Ditch & Reservoir. Wheeler surveyed the town. Henry Coop and family, in 1886 came to the area from Norwood, Missouri, filed on the surveyed land and decided to name it Norwood, Colorado. A road that followed the river to the top of the mesa was completed in 1888. Then people poured in and the colorful history of the town began.

693 people. A total of 1,131 people resided on the Mesa, including Town of Norwood residents, (with the unincorporated area accounting for 61% of the population).

Since then, the county has approved 44 single-family residential building permits. Assuming 2.25 people residing in each home with 70% occupancy rate, this brings the total number of people living in the unincorporated area in 2005 to 762. The pace of development has been increasing over the past six years. In 2001 and 2002, the county issued three and two permits, respectively. In 2006, the county issued 11 permits. Since the time of the 1998 Plan, a number of lots on Wright’s Mesa have subdivided.

## Population and Growth

### Population and Households

#### Wright’s Mesa

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, the Wright’s Mesa unincorporated population in that year was



*Representative rural residential development (the Lake at Lone Cone) – 35 acre lots where most houses and lots are not visible.*

**Table A-1: Population and Households—Wright’s Mesa**

	2000		2006	
	People	Housing Units*	People	Housing Units
Wright's Mesa Unincorporated	693	411	762	455
Town of Norwood	438	260	497	295
Wright's Mesa	1,131	670	1,245	741

\* Includes Vacant and Occupied Units, with 75% occupancy rate. Assumes 2.25 people per unit.

## Town of Norwood

The Town of Norwood has experienced a modest and steady amount of growth in recent years. In 2004, the Colorado Department of Local Affairs (DOLA), estimated the town had 483 people living in 285 housing units (with a 75% occupancy rate and 2.25 people in each occupied unit). According to DOLA, Norwood grew about 1% between 2003 and 2004. According to the San Miguel County Assessor, from January 2004 to June 2006, the town grew by ten new single family residences—totaling 295 housing units and 497 people.



*Representative town residential development--new and old (with curb and gutter and smaller lots).*

## Land Use and Growth

### Existing Land Use

#### Wright's Mesa

Most development that has occurred on Wright's Mesa is single-family residential; although some non-residential uses (such as stables, construction staging, light industry, and manufacturing businesses) have also occurred outside Norwood. The San Miguel County GIS information shows where non-residential development has occurred on the Mesa and which parcels are vacant. (See Map 2: Existing Land Use.) Map 3 shows the parcels that are vacant, partially developed, or developed and agricultural. The partially developed parcels are the ones that have at least one building unit now, but where the parcel is large enough to have potential for further subdivision under current zoning (i.e., where it is at least one acre in Norwood Planning Boundary or at least 70 acres outside). (See Map 3: Development Status – Vacant Lands.)

#### Town of Norwood

The incorporated Town of Norwood encompasses almost 170 acres, most of which is developed land containing a variety of housing, commercial, industrial, civic, and recreational/open space uses. This figure also includes public lands and road rights-of-way. The Wright's Mesa Master Plan will not analyze nor provide direction for what should happen inside the town incorporated area.



*Town of Norwood - Downtown*

## Norwood Future Land Use Plan Boundary

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The area inside the Norwood Future Land Use Plan boundary (Proposed 2007) is of joint concern, because it is unincorporated county but the town is planning for growth and development within the boundary. The 2007 proposed plan identifies potential residential, industrial, and commercial growth, which covers several hundred acres outside the incorporated town. The town and county do not have intergovernmental agreements (IGAs) in place for this area. (See Map 4: Norwood Future Land Use Plan (1996).)

## Development Status - Vacant Lands

### Wright's Mesa

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According to San Miguel County GIS data, about 45% (12,439 acres) of the private land on Wright's Mesa is vacant—or containing no built structures. Another 5,355 acres has potential for additional subdivision or development. (See Map 3.) This figure includes parcels that have been subdivided but that do not contain buildings, but it excludes active agricultural operations.

### Town of Norwood Planning Area

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According to County GIS data, within the Norwood 1996 Boundary, 62 acres of land are vacant and 322 acres are partially developed—or have potential for further subdivision and development. (See Table 2: Development Status—Private Lands.)

## Growth Forecasts for Wright's Mesa

According to Colorado Department of Local Government, State Demography Office, the forecast is for San Miguel County to grow at "average annual percent change rate"

ranging between 1.9% and 3% between 2000 and 2030. This means Wright's Mesa could see an additional 1,448 people, for a total of 2,693 people by the year 2030. This equates to 858 new housing units for Wright's Mesa (including the Town of Norwood and the Future Land Use area). The State Demography forecasts do not predict whether new growth will go into towns or rural areas.

## General Land Ownership

### Public and Private Lands

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Wright's Mesa, like most counties in the American West, encompasses a mix of Federal and State lands as well as privately owned property. The mesa is fringed with Federal lands along the Naturia Creek (BLM and Uncompahgre National Forest), Beaver Creek, and San Miguel River canyon (BLM). According to county GIS data, Wright's Mesa includes 27,135 acres of private land (90%+)—up to the edge of the public lands along the canyons, and 2,600 acres+ public lands that are interspersed within the private parcels on Wright's Mesa. Tens of thousands of acres of public lands surround Wright's Mesa. (See Map 5: General Ownership.)

### Parcel Sizes

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Of the private held land on Wright's Mesa, seventy percent of the privately-owned parcels are 35 acres or smaller in size. Only 34 parcels are larger than 150 acres, and only four of those are 640 acres or larger. However, the parcels that are larger than 150 acres account for 42% of the land on Wright's Mesa. Most of the land (12,500+ acres), is divided into parcels that range between 35 and 150 acres in size, as Table 3 shows below. (See Map 6: Parcel Sizes.)

## Lands

**Table A-2: Development Status – Private**

	Outside Norwood and Planning Area	In 1996 Norwood Planning Area	Norwood Incorporated	Total Wright's Mesa
<b>Developed and/or Agriculture</b>	9,254.2	10.1	76.4	9,340.7
<b>Partially Developed (with Potential)</b>	5,033.0	322.2		5,355.2
<b>Vacant</b>	12,338.0	61.9	39.7	12,439.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>26,625.2</b>	<b>394.2</b>	<b>116.1</b>	<b>27,135.5</b>

Source: County GIS, Clarion, 2007.

**Table A-3: Private Lands – Parcel Sizes**

Parcel Size	Acres	% of land	Parcels	% of parcels
Less than 35 acres	3,161	12%	695	71%
35 - 150 acres	12,530	46%	251	26%
150 - 640 acres	7,463	28%	30	3%
640 and greater	3,981	15%	4	<1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>27,135</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>980</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: County GIS, Clarion, 2007.

## 2007 Zoning

Generally, the entire mesa, except for a few small parcels, is classified as Wright's Mesa (WM) Zone District. The intent of the WM District is to discourage a large-lot pattern of sprawl and discourage strip commercial development. Depending on the lot size, a landowner is eligible for a single-family dwelling, a home occupation, and agriculture and ranching, plus a second "Principal Use" or "Second Unit" on each lot. Prior to this plan update, the WM Zone District does not provide any direction on appropriate "town" uses in areas closer to Norwood or within the town's plan boundary. (See Map 7: Existing Zoning.)

The Wright's Mesa Special Use Permit approach (i.e., case-by-case "good neighbor" strategy proposed in 1998 Plan) to managing land use and development is proving difficult to administer because the Land Use Code does not provide clear criteria or standards regarding land use.

To the west of Wright's Mesa Zone District is the West End (WE) Zone District. The West End district has fewer land use controls and restrictions on uses and subdivisions. South and east of Wright's Mesa is the Forestry/Agricultural

(F) District, which has different uses and different review standards than WM.

Directly north of Wright's Mesa is Montrose County, where land is zoned "General Agriculture," but where the Montrose County Master Plan anticipates a certain amount of rural residential development (including "major subdivision" (like Deer Mesa)). It is not certain how much development could occur just across the line. Subdivision is constrained primarily by water or lack thereof. Montrose County has subdivision standards that apply to all new subdivisions dividing into parcels smaller than 35 acres.

## Development Potential / Existing Zoning

### Wright's Mesa – Outside Norwood Master Plan Area

Given current zoning on Wright's Mesa, vacant and underdeveloped lands—outside of the Norwood 1996 Master Plan Area—could accommodate approximately 970 new residential units on 35-acre lots with a secondary unit for each 35-acre lot.

## Town of Norwood and Future Land Use Plan Boundary

Vacant and underdeveloped lands in the town and in the 1996 Master Plan Area could support almost 770 new residential units, assuming a density of 4 units per acre with 60% of land used for residential.

## Total Potential Expanded 2007 Boundary

Vacant and underdeveloped lands on Wright's Mesa could support approximately new residential units.

## Housing and Affordability

Sale prices of housing on Wright's Mesa have been increasing. The average home sale price in Norwood in 2004 was \$192,470—a 16.8% increase over the previous year. By comparison, the average sale price in the Telluride area for 2004 was \$650,810, a decrease over the previous year. (Source: Region 10 Review 2005.) With house prices higher in of the eastern part of the county, not surprisingly, Wright's Mesa is experiencing pressure for affordable housing to serve Telluride and Mountain Village area workers.

## Economic Development

### General

As new housing expands on Wright's Mesa and in the Town of Norwood, residents will likely demand more services, such as grocery stores, day care, shopping, and light industry and jobs. The 1998 Plan recognized the Town of Norwood as the "vital commercial center" of Wright's Mesa, discourages strip commercial development, and recommends mitigating impacts associated with commercial and industrial uses that would be in conflict with agricultural activities. To its credit, the 1998 Plan has effectively limited further strip commercial development along Highway 145. This is also a goal in the proposed 2007 Town of Norwood

Master Plan, which establishes Grand Avenue Commercial District from the San Miguel County Fairgrounds to CR 43 to the east.



"Welcome to Norwood"



Recent business in Norwood.

The Town of Norwood appears to be on the cusp of change toward a more economically viable future. While a number of businesses in town have closed or are for sale, a few new businesses have appeared recently. In addition, town leaders are activity supporting development of new public/private civic facilities, such as the Livery Building (events center) and proposed Town Center Park.

### Retail Sales Indicators

According to Region 10 data, Norwood had just over \$23,200 in per capita retail sales in 2004. This is lower than the county average of

\$29,832, but on par with the Region (including adjacent counties) and State (\$21,496 and \$24,560 respectively). It represents about half of Telluride per capital sales of \$47,248. The 2004 Norwood figure represents a 16% increase over the previous year.

### **Agriculture and Irrigated Agriculture**

The U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis reports that sales of livestock and crops by county farmers increased from 2002 to 2003 (the last year reported). Conversely, crop cash receipts decreased that year. Agricultural information aggregated to the Wright's Mesa level does not appear to be available.



*Landscape Near Gurley Reservoir (Winter).*



*Landscape Near Gurley Reservoir (Spring).*

### **Irrigated Agriculture**

Wright's Mesa does contain a number of irrigated agricultural fields on the north end (flatter areas), according to aerial photos and land coverage data. The irrigated agriculture will be most viable future agriculture activity on the Mesa, because it also has associated water rights.



*Agriculture on Wright's Mesa*



*Irrigation on Wright's Mesa.*

### **Oil and Natural Gas**

Oil and natural gas development around the American West has been steadily growing in recent years. This appears to be the case in San Miguel County, where the Oil and Gas assessment category increased by over 200% from 2003 to 2004. Compare this with residential land, which increased modestly (by

4.4%). While leasing on Wright's Mesa has increased, development for oil and gas extraction has not occurred yet. According to County GIS data, 6,600+ acres have oil and gas leases. These parcels are located primarily south of Oak Hill and near Gurley Reservoir. (See Map 8: Oil and Gas Leases.) Because of the potential pressure for development all around the county, the county recently adopted comprehensive oil and gas regulations.

### Mitigation Measures of Comprehensive Oil and Gas Regulations

The oil and gas regulations split oil and gas development into two major classes; major and minor. Minor class development includes wells, construction staging areas less than one-acre and geophysical (seismic) exploration. The major class development would include compressor stations and construction staging more than one-acre.

## Natural Features

### Topography and Vegetation

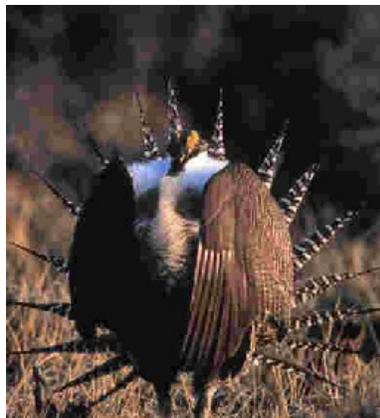
Wright's Mesa is fringed to the east and west by Naturita Canyon and San Miguel River/Beaver Creek Canyons, respectively. These canyons are quite steep, with slopes in excess of 33%, and forested. The north end of Wright's Mesa around the Town of Norwood is relatively flat with gentle sloping terrain. It consists of open fields and meadows and sporadic tree cover. The south end of the mesa becomes more sloped around Oak Hill. Here, the mesa is forested—containing mixed shrub forest and evergreens such as juniper and pine. A shrub and sagebrush landscape is prevalent south of Gurley Reservoir. The forest and shrub landscapes are prone to wildfires. The mesa is ringed by the San Juan mountain range, with Lone Cone peak a predominant feature to the south



*San Miguel River Canyon from Hwy. 145 (Source: Clarion)*

### Wildlife and Birds

Wright's Mesa is home to a variety of wildlife species and it serves as winter range for a number of them. For instance, Wild Turkey occupy the mesa as overall range and production area and occupy winter range near the San Miguel River, Bald eagle occupy the area in the winter, as do Mule deer. Elk winter concentration areas occur near the canyons and sage brush around Gurley Reservoir. (See Map 9: Vegetation and Wildlife Habitat.)



*Gunnison Sage-Grouse (Source: Photo by Louis Swift, Western State College)*

Of particular importance are the Gunnison Sage-Grouse<sup>1</sup> habitat areas south of Gurley Reservoir. Gunnison Sage-Grouse are “indicator species” for shrub-steppe habitat (dominated by sagebrush), meaning that they provide an indication of ecosystem health. They serve that purpose because of their unique life history and strong reliance to multiple ecosystem areas. The *BLM has a local Gunnison Sage-Grouse Rangeland Conservation Plan (1997)* that identifies specific conservation goals and objectives to restore habitat and population numbers of the Gunnison Sage-Grouse and includes over 50 conservation actions. Gunnison Sage Grouse Conservation Program is a program that the Gunnison community and surrounding areas have set up to help preserve the natural habitat of the Gunnison Sage-Grouse. Goals and objectives were put into place to guide the community in preserving the Gunnison Sage-Grouse. The goals are:

- Aid in the preservation of the Gunnison Sage-Grouse environment.
- Minimize the disruption of the species through careful development and planning.
- Help educate the surrounding public about the Gunnison Sage-Grouse.
- Put forth a strategy and program for the Gunnison Sage-Grouse Community to help protect and preserve the species and their environment.



*Wright's Mesa has elk winter concentration areas.*

## Norwood Schools

Norwood R-2J District administers the Norwood elementary and middle/ high school located at 1225 W. Summit. There is the one public school that serves PK-Grade 12 children of the area. The Norwood Elementary School (Pre-K-Grade 5) has 133 students and receives a “high” rating from the Colorado Department of Education. The Norwood High School (Grades 6-12) has an enrollment of 159 students. Its ratings are “average” for academic performance.

Norwood school enrollment dropped for several years but then rose slightly last year in middle and high school grades. The school has capacity for 360 students, so it could handle almost 70 more students than it has now. However, the school may need to add additional classrooms if student enrollment in certain grade-levels exceeds that which can be accommodated by the current facility, which can provide one room per grade.

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<sup>1</sup> Recently, the USFWS removed the species from any protection under the ESA with a [listing determination](#). However, the World Conservation Union recognizes the [Gunnison Grouse \(or Gunnison Sage Grouse\) as a red-listed](#) or globally endangered species according to the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (Storch 2000). In 2006, the Audubon Society listed the Gunnison Grouse as one of the [10 most endangered birds](#) in North America. (Source: Western State College, Young, 2006.)



Norwood School.

## Utilities and Services

### Water

#### Water Distribution and Treatment

Norwood Water Commission (NWC) operates the Water System and Water Treatment Plant (WTP), which currently supplies water to 720 to 730 taps within the town and adjacent rural areas of San Miguel and Montrose Counties (i.e., half urban/half rural). Customers use the water for drinking, personal sanitation, lawn irrigation, and fire protection (in the town).

The existing water service area boundary encompasses the northern part of Wright's Mesa and portions of Montrose County. The main system water line currently extends for 85 miles from the Water Treatment Plant (WTP) near CR Y45 and CR44Z S, to three miles northwest of Redvale (in Montrose County), to areas south of town (e.g., Fitts Subdivision), and north of Norwood to Deer Mesa subdivision (in Montrose County). The "Reed" boost pressurized system serves Zone 0 to the south, where water pumps are required. Elevations range from 7,600 to 6,260 feet. The area served is determined by available water pressure and housing density. (See Map 10: Norwood Water Service Area and Source Water Protection.)

In 2006, the Norwood Water Commission commissioned an update to its 1994 Water

System Master Plan. The 2006 Water System Master Plan identifies a number of priority actions and capital expenditures (totaling \$6.7 million) to improve water quality and maintain consistency of water system performance. Water quality issues have been an on-going concern. A \$650,000 grant will help resolve some of the immediate water quality issues at the Water Treatment Plant, bringing it into compliance with federal and state regulations.

NWC has experienced relatively steady growth in the water service area, primarily within the Town of Norwood but also in rural areas. The 2006 Water System Master Plan identifies 80 new homes since 1994.

The current fee for water taps is \$12,000 per ¾-inch tap, which will serve a single family residence.

#### Estimated Water Usage at Buildout

In 1994, the ultimate buildout was based on 2 dwelling units per 40 acre parcel in rural areas, and Norwood's Master Plan (total of 1,357 dwelling units). Total buildout assumption was 2,459 dwelling units. The Water System Master Plan looks at other buildout factors too, such as winter water demands, day demands, and peak hour demands. Water in the Gurley ditch drops off significantly in winter, meaning capacity is curbed then

The water system has some raw water storage capacity limitations also. According to the 2006 Water System Master Plan, the NWD currently has rights and access to sufficient raw water and adequate storage facilities for "existing and future populations for nominal growth but will eventually need to construct new reservoirs (#3 and 4). In addition, a third treatment train will ultimately be necessary to provide service to build out population projections. It is estimated that the number of taps can double before additional finished water storage is necessary.

The district has capacity to serve more customers at lower elevations, in locations near the existing 10-inch main, if the pressure does not drop in the higher elevations south of town. The gridded system means the water system could probably

expand to serve an additional 400 residential taps near town, but additional engineering studies may be necessary to determine the ultimate capacity. In addition, water conservation measures would be necessary. The system's largest problem, and most expensive to remedy, is deficient water lines and pressure. In particular, the main 10-inch water line needs to be replaced.



*Water storage south of Norwood.*

## Ditches and Raw Water: Source Water Protection

The county GIS data identifies a mapped Source Water Protection area along the Gurley ditch and around San Miguel River. To date, this Source Water Protection area has not been addressed through an overlay zone or other criteria to set forth mechanisms for water protection. (See Map 10.)

## Sanitary Sewer

### Sanitation District – Existing System

Norwood Sanitation District operates the sewer system, providing service for 384 customers in an area generally consistent with the Norwood town limits. The sanitation collection system—disposal pond—abuts the town's northern boundary. The system is in need of basic 10-year maintenance. The Sanitation District recently received a grant to purchase equipment and do just that—to

dredge sludge in the lagoons and improve effluence related to sludge.

The Sanitation District is concerned that additional ammonia standards could create new costs for the district. Right now, the costs to existing customers are reasonable. New sanitation taps (4-inch) cost \$1,500 per tap. Additional fees are required for larger taps.

## Potential Sanitary Sewer Expansion - Buildout

Once the lagoon clean-up takes place, the sanitation system has capacity for new customers. The system is generally operating at about 50% capacity, based on BGD (biochemical demand) and number of gallons of sewage processed per day, meaning it could potentially as many new customers as it has now (approx. 384). Additional engineering studies would be necessary to confirm buildout potential.

## Wells and Septic Systems and Agricultural Water

Outside of the water and sanitation districts, developments in rural areas rely on well and septic systems for water and wastewater treatment. Availability of adequate groundwater varies depending on the location on the mesa. Some of the properties to the south experience wells with very low pressure.

## Norwood Fire Protection District

Norwood Fire Protection District (NFPD) provides for protection out of their station at 1605 Summit in Norwood. The NFPD is planning to move this firehouse to a location at the east end of town near the vet clinic. The firehouse in Redvale serves portions of the district in Montrose County. Currently the NFPD district covers 68 square miles, including all of north Wright's Mesa. The southern boundary is currently around County Rd. 44, meaning that Oak Hill and Gurley Lake portions of Wright's Mesa are not served by the NFPD district. (See Map 11: 2007 Fire Protection Districts.) San Miguel Sheriff Office

serves these lands south of County Rd. V44E. However, the NFPD is planning to expand south to the county line and U.S.F.S. boundary, so it will soon serve all of Wright's Mesa.

NFPD is an all volunteer department with 35 firefighters- and EMS-trained personnel. The department has some paid administrative staff and it contracts out for ambulance services. Because it is all-volunteer, there are concerns about availability of personnel during the day, when most volunteers commute to work off Wright's Mesa.

Other planning related issues: The NFPD would like a developer to donate one acre of land for a fire station near Gurley Reservoir, to be able to serve the south end of the district and improve response times there. NFPD would like to have water tenders—trucks with 1,000 gallon+ tanks—at a new station at the top of the hill. These trucks move slowly up the hill, making for slower response times than if trucks could be stationed nearby Gurley Reservoir.

### **Wildfire Hazards**

Vegetative types and steep slopes contribute to mostly low to medium potential fire hazard areas on Wright's Mesa, according to the San Miguel County Fire Hazard Map. (See Map 12: San Miguel County Fire Hazard Map.) The BLM Wildfire Risk Assessment Map shows a combination of environmental factors and facilities that, when in concert, create high potential risk to facilities. The high risk assessment areas are scattered around Wright's Mesa, but they generally follow the power transmission lines and the edges of the canyons. (See Map 13: BLM Wildfire Risk Assessment Map.)

The fire code has not been updated since 1980, but homes in remote forested areas with forest fire hazard potential are required to have cisterns and water reserves in case of fire. The county may need to look at additional standards to mitigate fire risk.



*Norwood Fire Station*

### **Norwood Library**

The Norwood Library is a tax supported library in the R2J District of San Miguel County Colorado. The library offers reference services, fax and copy services, computer work stations and internet connectivity. It contains 11,000+ volumes, 800+ video and DVD items, and 400+ audio books. Magazine and newspaper subscriptions are also available for public use. The courteous staff includes the director and a clerk.

### **San Miguel County Fairgrounds and Regional Park**

The San Miguel County Fairgrounds and Regional Park is the site of the rodeo and other town events. San Miguel County Open Space and Recreation Program administers the fairgrounds and governs use of the fairgrounds for commercial or private enterprises, displays, entertainment, livestock shows, horse racing, sports events, or special events. A number of equine events happen regularly and annually at the Fairgrounds, including roping, dressage, open riding, horse races, Wild West Festival, and the July rodeo.

The county is concerned about what type of development happens next to the Fairgrounds in the future because of noise and odors associated with such a venue. Future coordination and

discussions will be necessary with the town to ensure compatibility of land uses over time.

## Transportation and Trails

### Highways and Roads

State Route 145A is the main highway serving Wright's Mesa, providing transportation to and from other major destinations, including Telluride/Mountain Village and Montrose. Highway 145A experiences peak rush hour traffic corresponding to commuter patterns. The main north-to-south county road on the Mesa is CR 44Z (also known as Vet Road). A fairly extensive grid of county roads serves the north end of the Mesa. CDOT has a Transportation Department Highway Maintenance building on Highway 145 in Norwood, CO.



*County Rd. 44 Z passes through the mesa from north to south and continues to Lone Cone Mountain (seen in background).*

### Trails and Growing Equestrian Uses

The Town of Norwood and Wright's Mesa do not currently have a public trails system. No mapping exists for trail connections to public lands (including equestrian trails) or trails connecting to Town of Norwood.

### Transit (Galloping Goose)

The Town of Telluride/San Miguel County Galloping Goose Transit offers two shuttle buses to and from Norwood per day—Monday through Friday during commuting hours. On weekends, the shuttle runs once a day. The bus stops at Courthouse, High School, Lawson Hill (on request), Placerville, and Norwood. Fares are one dollar per ride.

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# Appendix B. Options for Farm and Ranch Land Conservation

(Note: The American Farmland Trust, Julia Freedgood and Jennifer Dempsey, assisted in overview and providing suggestions to this “Options for Farm and Ranch Land Conservation white paper of October 2007. This appendix replaces that paper.)

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## Overview

Wright’s Mesa farms and ranches and irrigated lands are valuable places because they play a role in providing resources for food and fiber. The farmers and ranchers, with their land, also provide indirect benefits for Wright’s Mesa that the community appreciates, such as provision of wildlife habitat and “rural character.”

Farmers and ranchers in San Miguel County and around the West face pressures to sell or convert land to other uses. Because of its proximity to Telluride and escalating real estate prices, Wright’s Mesa is seeing some development pressures and opportunities and

potential transfer of water rights from farming to other uses, such as municipal water.

On the other hand, some farmers have found new opportunities in small-scale organic farming and producing and marketing value-added products in local markets and are recognizing opportunities related to a changing bio-economy, where plant products are playing increasing roles in producing renewable energy as well as food.

Many landowners would like to have access to a wide range of options and incentives to make their business sustainable. Those who have participated in the planning process have not been interested in regulatory approaches to conserving land, nor have many owners expressed interest in other economic development programs or approaches at this time.

The Wright’s Mesa Master Plan is generally supportive of sustaining farming and ranching, but also aims to balance the farmland conservation objective with rural land livability, environmental quality, and needs of the Town of Norwood for orderly and sustainable growth.

A range of tools and incentives for landowners will be the key to achieving a balance of objectives. This paper explores a mix of options for farmers and ranchers on Wright’s Mesa. Some of the options are available now; some will require action on the part of the county or other entities to put them into place.



## What Tools can Help Landowners Sustain Farms and Conserve Land?

A wide range of resources are available to assist both landowners and counties with moving forward with sustainable agriculture programs and land conservation. Many of the resources and work done contain much higher levels of detail than this appendix provides. However, it identifies programs that are achievable in San Miguel County and in Colorado – given State legislation and market and landscape realities.



As with any program or goal, a range of tools works best to sustain agriculture and conserve land. Tools for farm and ranch support and protection vary from regulatory to voluntary and landowner-initiated.

As stated earlier, landowners on Wright's Mesa who have participated in the planning effort have not expressed interest in regulatory programs (e.g., Agricultural Protection Zoning),

so this research targets voluntary and incentive-based programs.

## Sustainable Agriculture Planning and Strategy

To be able to truly respond to challenges and opportunities facing local agriculture on Wright's Mesa, local farmers and ranchers could voluntarily pursue strategic economic development planning. American Farmland Trust assisted with outlining additional steps to pursue—either with the county or independently. These might include:

1. Outline threats, challenges, and opportunities facing farmers and ranchers on Wright's Mesa (e.g., topics such as zoning, water, development pressures and conflicts, costs of doing business such as energy prices, distribution issues, and potential bio-based economy).
2. Recommend localized strategies to address each issue—with or without public agency support.
3. Identify additional rural economic development strategies, including extension programs, and Colorado Value-Added programs to identify ways to diversify, add value, encourage leadership, and ensure representation in the planning process. Agriculture cluster economic strategies might include topics such as:
  - Ensure representation.
  - Promote programs that educate and encourage urban residents and businesses on the importance of buying local produce.
  - Continue support for Harvest Celebration.
  - Provide business planning assistance (e.g., small farm expo, agriculture education programs, agri-tourism, organic livestock production, "Cultivating Success" programs, model businesses plans, marketing and branding).

- Agriculture-related and home-based business regulations (remove potential obstacles to getting these done).

In addition, the county could form partnerships to explore additional business assistance--should landowners express interest in such programs.

## Voluntary Agriculture Commissions and/or Districts

### How Do the Tools Work?

An agricultural commission could be appointed to represent the ranching community—to encourage agriculture, promote agricultural economic development, and protect farmlands and farm businesses. Through a commission, farmers and ranchers become part of the problem-solving team. A commission can:

- Serve as an advocate for farm and ranch interests,
- Review regulatory proposals that affect rangeland,
- Provide marketing coordination,
- Work with the town and county regarding issues that affect agriculture,
- Help resolve farm related problems or conflicts between neighbors or providing referrals, and
- Protect farmland and natural resources.

Voluntary Agricultural Districts allow farmers and ranchers to self-direct and form a specially designated geographic area to promote commercial agriculture. The districts stabilize the land base and support farming by providing farmers with incentives. Typically, programs are authorized by state law and implemented at the local level. However, Colorado does not have an Agriculture District program, but the concept could be implemented by packaging benefits that might be useful to Wright's Mesa, such as an enterprise zone or overlay district. (More information is available at [www.farmlandinfo.org](http://www.farmlandinfo.org) and [www.massagcom.org](http://www.massagcom.org).)

### How are they Relevant for Wright's Mesa?

The commission could gain some traction on Wright's Mesa, but with a small number of landowners it may be difficult to keep a commission active. An advisory group to review proposed changes to the Wright's Mesa Zone District might be another option.

While the district option does not currently appear to have a lot of traction on Wright's Mesa, landowners could voluntarily establish such a district. Establishing a district could elevate the importance of farms and ranches and make individual landowners more eligible for grants and funding.

## Publicly Sponsored Land Management/Conservation-Related Solutions

Outside of the Norwood planning area, Wright's Mesa has a zoning district in place that is generally conducive to farming and ranching. Therefore, one of the county's best options to support agriculture is to carefully restrict rezonings on the Mesa to limit widespread expansion of low density rural residential throughout Wright's Mesa, while providing flexibility for landowners to continue agricultural activities and transfer development or density to suitable locations (e.g., in or near the Town of Norwood).

This Plan proposes broadening the allowable range of agriculture support uses that farmers and ranchers can pursue, while tightening non-compatible industrial uses and limiting spread of town-level residential and commercial development around the mesa. This section discusses the following:

- Purchase of Development Rights(PDR),
- Transfer of Development Rights and Density Transfers,
- Right to Farm Legislation,
- Rural Land Use Center (Technical Assistance), and

- Rural Economic Uses.

## Purchase of Development Rights (PDRs)

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### How Does the Tool Work?

Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) programs compensate property owners for restricting the future developable uses of their land—they are sometimes funded by a governmental organization or a non-profit organization, as in the case of San Miguel County's program aimed at conserving open lands rather than agriculture.

Landowners have a bundle of different rights, including the right to use land, lease, sell it, build on it, or mine it (subject to reasonable local regulations). Some or all of these rights may be sold or transferred, including development rights. (See AFT information on Purchase of Agricultural Conservation Easements (PACE) Programs and funding sources.)

**Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program is a public source of funding**  
(<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/frp/p/>)

Administered by USDA, provides matching funds to help purchase agricultural conservation easements on productive farm and ranch lands.



Landowners must work with state and local governments or non-profit organizations to secure a pending offer with funding at least equal to 50 percent of the land's fair market easement value. Only parcels large enough to sustain agricultural production are eligible.

### Benefits of PDRs:

- ✓ PDR programs protect land permanently, while keeping it in private ownership.
- ✓ Participation is voluntary.

- ✓ PDR provides farmers and ranchers with a financial alternative to development.

### Potential Drawbacks:

- ✓ PDR programs may not be able to keep up with landowner demand to sell easements.

### How is it Relevant for Wright's Mesa?

Lands on Wright's Mesa may not rank highly with the county's Open Lands Selection Criteria and PDR program because of the land cost. The PDR program has been focusing on west-end properties with lower price-per-acre.

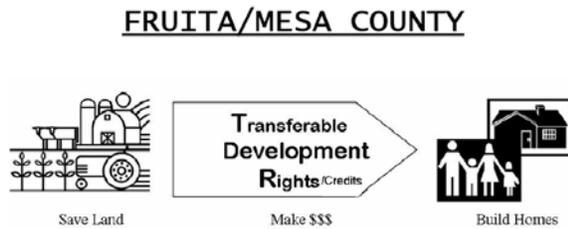
This Master Plan does make a case for the importance of agricultural lands on Wright's Mesa, but it will take some reworking of the county's criteria for mesa properties to rank higher for county funding.

## Transfer of Development Rights (TDRs) and Density Transfers

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### How do TDRs Work?

TDRs conserve land by transferring the rights to develop the property from one conservation location to another more appropriate for development (e.g., near town). "Sending Areas" or criteria define where development rights can be removed and "Receiving Areas," define where development rights can go (i.e., where higher intensity development is appropriate, usually near services or roads). Colorado state laws enable TDRs, and many counties have put such programs in place. For example, Boulder County has a TDR program that has been in place for over 30 years. Mesa County has a newer, simpler program to transfer density to Fruita. ([www.mesacounty.us/planning/tdr\\_programs.aspx](http://www.mesacounty.us/planning/tdr_programs.aspx).)



### Benefits of TDRs:

- ✓ Landowners receive financial benefits without developing.
- ✓ Land stays in private ownership.
- ✓ Community conserves land without the higher costs of purchasing it.

### Potential Drawbacks:

- ✓ TDRs tend to be complex and administratively challenging, especially if more than one jurisdiction is involved (e.g., Norwood and San Miguel County).
- ✓ They require strong political commitment to operating the program and educating landowners about it.
- ✓ Landowners do not appear to be interested in pursuing it.

### How Might TDRs be Relevant for Wright's Mesa?

The concept of Transfer of Development Rights for Wright's Mesa is likely too complex; however, the summary of the discussion by planning team and Citizen Advisory Committee is in the attachment, should the topic resurface in the future.

## Density Transfer

### A Simpler Option...

A simpler approach than a full-blown TDR program is to allow for density transfer within one large property or between two or more properties (including non-contiguous properties). This Plan recommends using this approach and describes it in Chapter 4. This approach also provides for the assemblage of development units from two or more

nonadjacent parcels of land. The residential units attached to one parcel(s) are transferred to one or more other parcels, with the aim to protect specific agricultural, environmental, source water areas, or open space resources.

Landowners can opt to use the approach on a parcel-by-parcel basis. It will not require the establishment of a county-wide or Wright's Mesa Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) program but will require some modifications to the Wright's Mesa Zone District to allow it.

## Private Conservation Options

### Conservation Easements / Land Trusts

#### How Does the Tool Work?

Similar to PDRs, conservation easements are voluntary. They are agreements that a property owner enters into with a qualified conservation organization to donate development rights (e.g., with the Nature Conservancy or Colorado Cattlemen's Land Trust). The landowner agrees to limit the future development of the land—retaining it for farming or ranching. Conservation easements can be either temporary or in perpetuity and can help achieve ranching objectives as well as broader benefits, such as retaining scenic views, protecting water quality, or maintaining habitat for wildlife/game. Most property owners will want to work with an estate planning attorney and accountant to determine if donating an easement will lead to tax benefits and will help retain family lands.

The Colorado Conservation Easement Tax Credit Program allows a tax credit to be taken against state income taxes by an individual or entity donating a conservation easement.

**Benefits Include:**

- ✓ Conservation easements are voluntary and keep land in private ownership.
- ✓ Landowners may be eligible for income, estate, and property tax benefits.
- ✓ Easements retain natural areas without the higher costs to government or non-profits of purchasing the land.

**Potential Drawbacks:**

- ✓ The easements tend to be complex and administratively challenging to set up and monitor.
- ✓ Most farmers and ranchers are not able to capture the tax benefits because incomes are not high enough.
- ✓ They require strong commitment to ongoing agricultural operations to meet the terms of the agreement.

**How are Easements Relevant for Wright's Mesa?**

Several organizations hold conservation easements in San Miguel County on Wright's Mesa, including the Nature Conservancy, the San Miguel Conservation Foundation, the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, Colorado Cattlemen's Agricultural Land Trust (CCALT), Colorado Wildlife Heritage Foundation, American Farmland Trust, and the Valley Land Conservancy. CCALT has developed a partnership with several long time ranchers and helped establish the San Miguel County PDR program. CCALT has protected more than 2,500 acres on Wright's Mesa, Hamilton Mesa, and near Miramonte Reservoir, with an additional 500+ scheduled for 2007. The Land Trust Alliance and Partnership of Rangeland Trusts are also good general sources of information about land trusts and how they operate.

**Estate Planning****What is this Tool?**

Many agricultural operators are nearing retirement age and are considering how to plan for their transferring and management of the agricultural operation. A good estate plan goes beyond a will and accomplishes:

- Transferring ownership and management of the agricultural operation, land, and other assets;
- Avoiding unnecessary income, gift, and estate taxes;
- Ensuring financial security and peace of mind for all generations; and
- Developing the next generation's management capacity.

(Source: American Farmland Trust. For More information contact Fat's Farmland Information Center or See Your Land is Your Legacy: A Guide to Planning for the Future of Your Farm).

Successful estate planning is an effort that requires effective communication with legal, financial, and tax advisors.

**How Is Estate Planning Relevant?**

If landowners on Wright's Mesa are interested in getting more information on this option, landowners could work with CSU extension and other partners such as Colorado Cattlemen's Land Trust to set up programs. Generally estate planning is a private responsibility.

**Rural Land Use Center Provides Technical Assistance****How Does this Tool Work?**

Current state law gives landowners the right to subdivide land into 35 acre parcels without any county land use review. Larimer County has a Rural Land Use Center that gives landowners an alternative approach for developing the land

without going through full subdivision review and assists them with the process. The program is voluntary, user friendly, and flexible. Much like San Miguel County's Open Land Protection (OLP) subdivision process, the Rural Land Use Process does not change zoning, nor does it take away the ability to do 35-acre development. Instead, the process gives incentives to encourage alternative development (e.g., clusters) and help retain rural and agricultural lands. Rather than rules, the process uses guidelines which allow the flexibility to tailor requirements to each unique piece of land, so compared to other development processes it is less restrictive, faster, and more predictable in the outcome and gives landowners the option to subdivide land and sell parcels but does not obligate them to develop. The program in Larimer County is separate from the planning department and reports directly to the county manager.

### **Benefits and Drawbacks:**

Larimer County has not had tremendous success in retaining viable agricultural lands overall because of development pressure on the Front Range, but this program has enabled some landowners the ability to continue to work the land while selling off small lots. The program has conserved over 10,000 acres of land, but the land is scattered throughout the county, so as an overall approach for agriculture conservation, it should not be viewed as the best or only solution.

### **How is it Relevant for Wright's Mesa?**

The County could consider providing technical assistance to landowners, such as what the Rural Land Use Center provides. In addition, as this Plan recommends, the OLP could be re-tooled to refined its purpose and intent (to conserve farms and ranches) and to provide incentives for farmers and ranchers.

## **Reducing Costs and Complexities of Doing Business**

### **Right to Farm**

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#### **How Does this Tool Work?**

Right-to-farm legislation protects agricultural rights and discourages nuisance lawsuits against agricultural operations. Non-agricultural landowners are notified of these rights when they purchase land. The State of Colorado has such legislation.

#### **How is it Relevant for Wright's Mesa?**

The County's Open Lands Plan recommended adopting Right to Farm legislation. San Miguel County does not have such legislation in place for the whole county. The West End district contains explicit language allowing landowners the "right to farm and ranch."

### **Agriculture Support Uses Allowed**

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#### **How Does this Tool Work?**

A rural economic strategy, can include a component of making it easier for farmers and ranchers to make a living on their farms with supporting activities. This plan recommends broadening allowable agriculture support uses.

In another example, King County, Washington approved code changes (2006) to make it easier for farmers and to get home-businesses approved in rural areas. The King County Program's mission is to advance the long term economic viability of the rural areas, with an emphasis on local farming. Some of the smaller local-scale aspects of the program (in addition to code reform) include a rural permit coordinator (position dedicated to assisting rural residents and businesses to understand and proceed through the county permitting process.) and rural strategy (addressed earlier).

### **How is it Relevant for Wright's Mesa?**

One of the topics of discussion during the Wright's Mesa Plan has been the concept of expanding the list of allowable agriculture support uses, making it easier for farmers and ranchers to engage in development or other activities by right.

### **Differential Tax Assessment**

Almost every state, including Colorado, provides some tax relief to farmers and ranchers by directing local governments to assess agricultural land at its value for agriculture, instead of its fair market value for developed uses. The State of Colorado regulates how San Miguel County assesses land and structures. According to the Assessor's Office, agricultural assessment for Wright's Mesa is a significant savings over commercial or residential assessment. Rates are based on 10-year income and the type of farming or ranching.

### **Grants and Funding**

Available federal and state tax incentives are convincing some practical ranchers to apply for funds to help protect their land from development and make ranching more sustainable. The list that follows is by no means exhaustive, but includes some of the well-known popular grant and funding programs: Federal and State of Colorado. (See also, "Rocky Mountain Agricultural Landowners Guide to Conservation and Sustainability," by American Farmland Trust for a longer list.)

Grants can provide a little funding to pay for new facilities, programs (e.g., weed eradication), or research to share with other farmers and ranchers. Grants are competitive and usually require matching funds or in-kind service, and are not always easy to receive. Some also require a government or non-profit partner to apply.

## **Federal USDA-Supported Programs for Sustainable Agriculture**

### **What is Available?**

The U.S. Department of Agriculture supports three major programs that offer sustainable agriculture information and assistance. Information and a description of each program are provided below.

### **Alternative Farming Systems Information Center (AFSIC)**

Collects, organizes and distributes information on alternative agriculture and provides high-level searching and reference services from the National Agricultural Library's vast collection and world-wide databases.

### **Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE)**

Provides grant opportunities; maintains diverse portfolio of research projects; synthesizes research results & on-farm experiences to develop books, introductory bulletins, and educator guides. Producer Grants: Producers apply for grants that typically run between \$1,000 and \$15,000 to conduct research, marketing and demonstration projects and share the results with other farmers and ranchers. Farmer and Rancher and producer grants applications are typically due at the end of the year.

### **Appropriate Technology Transfer for Rural Areas (ATTRA)**

National sustainable agriculture information service answers questions about specific farming practices and innovative marketing approaches, including organic production.

## Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)

The Natural Resources Conservation Service administers several grants, including:

### **Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (WHIP).**

WHIP is a voluntary program for landowners who want to develop and improve wildlife habitat. NRCS provides technical and cost-share assistance to establishing and improve fish and wildlife habitat. The program has proven to be highly effective and accepted. In 2008, NRCS in Colorado will focus WHIP on larger scale habitat projects. (see: [www.co.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/whip](http://www.co.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/whip).)

### **Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)**

Provides a voluntary conservation program for farmers and ranchers that promotes agricultural production and environmental quality as compatible goals. EQIP offers financial and technical assistance to install or implement structural and management practices on eligible land. Funding is targeted for control of invasive plant species in watersheds. Wright's Mesa is part of the San Juan River Basin Watershed. Six projects were completed in 2006 in the San Miguel Basin Conservation District.

### **Grassland Reserve Program**

The purpose is to protect grasslands and range management. Landowners with eligible property may receive compensation.

### **Habitat Stamp and Colorado Species Conservation Partnership**

These two programs are administered through Colorado Division of Wildlife, and GOCO. On lands with Gunnison Sage Grouse habitat, landowners may be eligible for matching grants and tax credits for doing easements through the Colorado Species Conservation Partnership. The Habitat Stamp program makes landowners

with elk winter range habitat eligible for matching funds for conserving habitat.

(For more information regarding this or other landowner programs offered through the Division of Wildlife, phone 303-291-7404 or see [www.wildlife.state.co.us/LandWater/](http://www.wildlife.state.co.us/LandWater/).)

## Colorado Programs

### **Agriculture Value-Added Development Fund Program**

This program is aimed to facilitate the processing of agricultural products and commodities to further stimulate the economy and employment in rural Colorado and be a resource for the industry.

## Helpful Information Sources

- Colorado Cattlemen's Agricultural Land Trust ([www.ccalt.org](http://www.ccalt.org))
- Colorado Department of Agriculture, Colorado State Conservation Board ([www.colorado.gov/cs](http://www.colorado.gov/cs))
- Colorado State University, Cooperative Extension (Agriculture and Resource Policy Reports). ([www.ext.colostate.edu/menug.html](http://www.ext.colostate.edu/menug.html)) and San Miguel and W. Montrose County information ([www.coopext.colostate.edu/](http://www.coopext.colostate.edu/))
- Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) ([www.sare.org/](http://www.sare.org/))
- Western Region Sustainable Agriculture ([www.wsare.usu.edu](http://www.wsare.usu.edu))
- American Farmland Trust ([www.farmland.org](http://www.farmland.org))
- New Rules Org ([www.newrules.org](http://www.newrules.org)), information for the Agriculture Sector
- Intermountain CHP Center (Center for Heat and Power)

The American Farmland Trust (AFT) and USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service have partnered to form the Farmland Information Center (FIC)--a clearinghouse for

information about farmland protection and stewardship).

Another good source is: "The Rocky Mountain Agricultural Landowner's Guide to Conservation and Sustainability," collaboration between AFT and Coleman Natural Foods, which identifies many options for landowners, including grants and other non development-oriented programs. We have not listed all the grants and programs here.

## Supplement: Would a TDR Program Work for Wright's Mesa?

In a TDR program, a community identifies an area which it would like to conserve (the "Sending Area") and another area where the community desires more town-style development (the "Receiving Area").

Landowners in the sending area are allocated a number of development credits which can be sold to developers that wish to build in the receiving area. In return for selling their development credits, the landowner in the sending area agrees to place a permanent conservation easement on their land.

Meanwhile, the purchaser of the development credits can apply them to develop at a higher density than otherwise allowed on property within the receiving area.

On Wright's Mesa, a TDR program could be used to conserve agricultural lands that are desired to remain in production or sensitive resources, and land that is within the Town of Norwood's boundary but not yet annexed and zoned could serve as a receiving area. However, for this approach to be used, the following would have to be put into place:

- Define Sending Area – the community would have to define the extent of areas to be conserved. To make the program fair, criteria should be established (such as the criteria used by the county for its Land Heritage Program).
- Establish Receiving Area – a receiving area would have to be defined and agreed to by both the town and county, as an area where future growth would occur at town-level densities. The receiving areas would remain under County jurisdiction, and the Town would agree not to annex the receiving areas before the County approves the receiving area development, securing the preservation of sending areas in the process.
- Bank or Sell Development Rights – for a property owner within the Town's planning boundary to develop at densities higher than current zoning allows within the Wright's Mesa Zoning District, they would need to purchase development rights from a property owner in the Sending Area or from a bank. The seller of the development rights would need to record a deed restriction as part of the transaction, to document the agreed-to restrictions on future development of all or part of the property. The value for these rights would be determined by the market; however, the county would likely need to establish a basis for the number of rights needed for density increases in the Receiving Area. It might also be appropriate to set a minimum density for projects within the Town's growth area, to ensure that land is used efficiently in areas where services are available.
- Develop Property, Then Annex to the Town When Eligible – As part of the agreement between the town and county for a TDR program, property would need to annex to the town as soon as it is eligible.
- Incorporate Other Objectives – Because objectives are sometimes competing (e.g., land conservation and affordable housing), it is possible to waive requirements for purchasing development rights in a Receiving Area if a developer proposes to meet other objectives, such as providing a certain percentage of affordable housing units.

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# Appendix C. Public Participation Summary

## Overview

Broad community involvement was essential to updating the Wright's Mesa Master Plan—to make it a plan that reflects citizens' values. Through the planning effort, residents of the area from diverse locations and backgrounds had many opportunities to contribute meaningfully to the plan update. The planning team undertook specific actions itemized under the two categories below: (1) Targeted Outreach, and (2) Broad-Based Outreach.

## Targeted Outreach

### *Wright's Mesa Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC)*

The Wright's Mesa CAC was a sounding board for the plan update. The CAC worked closely with the planning team (staff and consultants) throughout the project. Before beginning the planning, the County advertised and solicited diverse participation for Advisory Committee membership, and intentionally appointed members to reflect the geographic diversity and variety of interests of Wright's Mesa citizens and businesses.

The CAC met seven times:

- Meeting #1: February 22, 2007 – Introductions, Work Plan, and Issues Discussion
- Meeting #2: April 4, 2007 – Existing Conditions Report, Vision and Goals, Discussion with Town Planning Committee
- Meeting #3: May 23, 2007 – Growth Choices, Discussion with Town Planning Committee

- Meeting #4: June 27, 2007 – Growth Choices, continued.
- Meeting #5: August 7, 2007 – Draft Concept Plan and Implementation
- Meeting #6: October 30, 2007 – Preliminary Draft Plan and Options for Landowners
- Meeting #7: December 11, 2007 – Draft Master Plan

## *Technical Advisors*

The planning team (staff and consultants) worked informally (via email and direct contact) with technical advisors from the County, Town of Norwood, and other agencies throughout the duration of the project—to ensure coordination between the County and other service providers to ensure efficiency during the planning process.

## *Joint Meeting(s) with Norwood Master Planning Committee*

The CAC periodically met with members of the Norwood Master Planning Committee and discussed mutual goals and differences between the plans, and how to address planning issues that cross jurisdictional boundaries—particularly the Town's Future Land Use Plan Boundary and land uses within. The planning team representatives from Norwood Master Planning Committee to participate in the March and April CAC meetings as well as August and October meetings.

## *Focus Groups and Individuals*

The planning team contacted ranchers and large landowners to set up meetings and had several conversations. A number of landowners have participated in the later CAC meetings or have

provided written comments and have voiced opinions that have been factored into this Plan.

## County Officials – Study Sessions

At several points in the planning process, the planning team briefed the Planning Commission and Board of County Commissioners. Formal study sessions began in December 2007.

## Broad-Based Outreach

### Workshops/Open Houses

Public events with opportunities for citizens to discuss issues and ideas occurred multiple times during the project. Three meetings were set up as welcoming and social atmosphere (e.g., involving food, design workshops) as well as to be productive and meaningful. The planning team also “piggy-backed” onto other community events to get the word out and allow broader participation.

The county hosted the following events:

- BBQ at the Community Center (May 22, 2007). About 30 people attended the event. Participants provided a good cross-section of values and geographic representation.
- Public Workshop at the Livery (August 6, 2007). About 20 people attended, mostly new participants after the May meeting.
- Open House and Meeting (December 11, 2007).

The planning team provided display materials, posters, and comment forms for:

- The Horse Race in early June (2<sup>nd</sup>) at the Fairgrounds, and
- The Fair and Rodeo in July (15<sup>th</sup>-22<sup>nd</sup>) at the Fairgrounds.

## San Miguel County Web Site

Throughout the plan process, work products and meeting summaries from the Citizen Advisory Committee meetings were posted on the San Miguel county website, [www.sanmiguelcounty.org/wrights\\_mesa\\_citizen\\_advisory\\_committee.htm](http://www.sanmiguelcounty.org/wrights_mesa_citizen_advisory_committee.htm).

## Media: Norwood Post

The planning team prepared press releases and talking points to get the word out and trigger discussion in the community. Elected officials also prepared editorial pieces for the newspaper to solicit participation and input in the plan development. The Post has published articles:

- Article(s) soliciting Citizen Advisory Committee membership in December and January.
- “Wright’s Mesa Master Plan update off to good start.” Wednesday, May 8, 2007.
- “Citizen Advisory Committee meeting agenda for May 23” front page article. Wednesday, May 23, 2007.
- “P&Z Recommends Master Plan to Trustees,” on September 26, 2007 regarding the Town Master Plan and its relationship to the Wright’s Mesa Master Plan.

## Promotional Materials

The project team prepared promotional materials including posters and flyers to advertise meetings and access to web materials.

# Appendix D. Definitions

This section includes definitions for terms used in the Wright's Mesa Master Plan. Where relevant, it uses the same terminology as the county's Land Use Code to avoid confusion and duplicative terms.

## **Agricultural Support Use:**

A use that provides services that directly support agriculture on the same property or on adjacent agricultural lands such as: production, storage and sales of seeds, feed, and other produce, processing, repair of farming equipment, and the like.

## **Agriculture:**

Farmland and/or rangeland used for the production of food, feed, and domestic animal grazing. The Agricultural District also allows agricultural support uses.

## **Cluster Development (Open Lands Protection Subdivision):**

Development that conserves open land on a parcel and clusters lots on another portion of the parcel. Cluster development is sometimes referred to as the "Open Land Protection (OLP)" process. A cluster development maximizes open space conservation without reducing overall building density. Generally half or more of the buildable land area is designated as undivided, permanent open lands.

## **Commercial**

See Future land Use Plan chapter for definitions and uses.

## **Density:**

The number of dwelling units per acre of land. Each zone district has prescribed uses and a specified density.

## **Develop, Development:**

To divide land for purposes other than agriculture; to prepare land for division, building, or improvements, including grading, fencing for planned residential lots, road building, or utility placement, or to place structures or utilities or fencing (other than for agriculture), or roads. Includes change of existing structure or land.

## **Ditch:**

Man-made irrigation system (e.g., Gurley Ditch).

## **Home Occupation:**

An occupational use within a home or dwelling, employing the occupants and no more than one additional person.

## **Homeowner's Association:**

An association of homeowners and lot owners having responsibilities for the management and upkeep of common property and improvements in a specific subdivision. Such associations may also be formed to include a specific area or combination of subdivisions.

## **Incorporated Area/Town Limits:**

Lands within Norwood jurisdiction.

## **Industry (light and heavy):**

See Future land Use Plan chapter for definitions and uses.

## **Lot:**

The contiguous land in the same ownership which is not divided by a public road right of way.

## **Norwood Master Plan Area:**

The boundary delineating existing and planned town growth areas. The area in which town services will be provided and outside of which such urban services will not be extended.

**Norwood Water Commission:**

Norwood Water Commission operates the water system and water treatment plan which supplies water within the town and in rural areas of San Miguel and Montrose counties.

**Norwood Sanitation District:**

Norwood Sanitation operates the sewer system, providing service in and around the town.

**Open Lands:**

Land and water, including agricultural and forestry land, that is in its underdeveloped, natural state or has been protected, developed only to the extent consistent with, or is restored to be consistent with the following:

- water quality protection for rivers, streams, lakes and wetlands,
- protection of riparian buffers and other areas that serve as natural habitat and corridors for plant and animal species,
- scenic protection,
- protection of archaeological and historic resources,
- provision of recreational outdoor activities, and
- connection of existing or planned areas contributing to these goals.

**Open Space:**

Private land restricted from development.

**Open Lands Protection Subdivision (Cluster Development):**

A division of land which produces individual lots and reserves a specified amount of the original area in perpetually undeveloped or unchanged condition.

**Overlay District:**

A separate set of zoning requirements and incentives that is over and above the requirements in traditional zone districts, for a specific geographic area. The intent of a scenic highway corridor overlay district is to maintain visual quality.

**Parcel:**

A unit of land as described by the County Assessor's office.

**Planned Unit Development (PUD):**

A development of land which is under unified control and is planned and developed as a whole in a single development operation or programmed series of stages of development. Underlying densities are calculated for the entire development, allowing trade off between clustering of housing and provision of open space. The PUD may include some non-residential development.

**Road (or Street):**

A public or private thoroughfare which affords principal means of access to abutting property.

**Setback:**

The minimum distance between a structure or improvement and a lot line or feature from which setback is prescribed.

**Septic, Community:**

A sewage or effluent pre-treatment facility serving more than one structure, and owned privately or in common by other than a governmental entity.

**Sewer, Norwood:**

A system of sewer lines and treatment facilities to deliver and treat sewage, developed, serviced, and managed by Norwood Sanitation District.

**Slope:**

The variation of terrain from the horizontal rise or fall to the vertical, expressed as a percentage. Slopes greater than 30 percent in San Miguel county have specific standards that apply.

**Source Water Protection Area:**

The area around the Gurley Ditch and San Miguel River designated on the Wright's Mesa Future Land Use Plan. It is critical to protect from pollution and development that could affect water quality.

**Town Development:**

Development of or relating to the town that is closely tied to the density (i.e., greater than one unit per acre) and the nature of the services required for that development. Specifically water and sewer, an extensive road network, and other town-type services, such as parks.

**Transfer of Development Rights (TDRs):**

The transfer of development rights is a mechanism by which significant properties (e.g., farms, significant buildings, scenic views, or hillsides) may be protected in perpetuity through the sale of "development rights." Typically, owners of land in development-restricted areas called "sending" districts transfer the development rights from their property and sell those rights to property owners in specified "receiving" districts.

**Water Service Area:**

Existing water service boundary that is determined by available water pressure and housing density according to the Norwood Water Commission. The general Water Service Area is shown on the Future Land Use Plan for illustrative purposes.

**Wetland:**

Those areas that are inundated or saturated by surface or ground water at a frequency and duration sufficient to support, and that under normal circumstances do support, a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions. Defined by the Army Corps of Engineers.

**Wildfire:**

Uncontrolled fire spreading through vegetative fuels, exposing and possibly consuming structures.

**Wildlife Habitat or Corridor:**

Areas for the daily or seasonal migration patterns of native animal species. Lands where wildlife breed, feed, migrate, or seek shelter, determined by Colorado Division of Wildlife mapping and the county's adopted Wildlife Resource Information system.

**Zone District:**

Land delineated by the Official Zoning Map in which requirements for the use of land and building and development standards are prescribed by the San Miguel County Land Use Code.