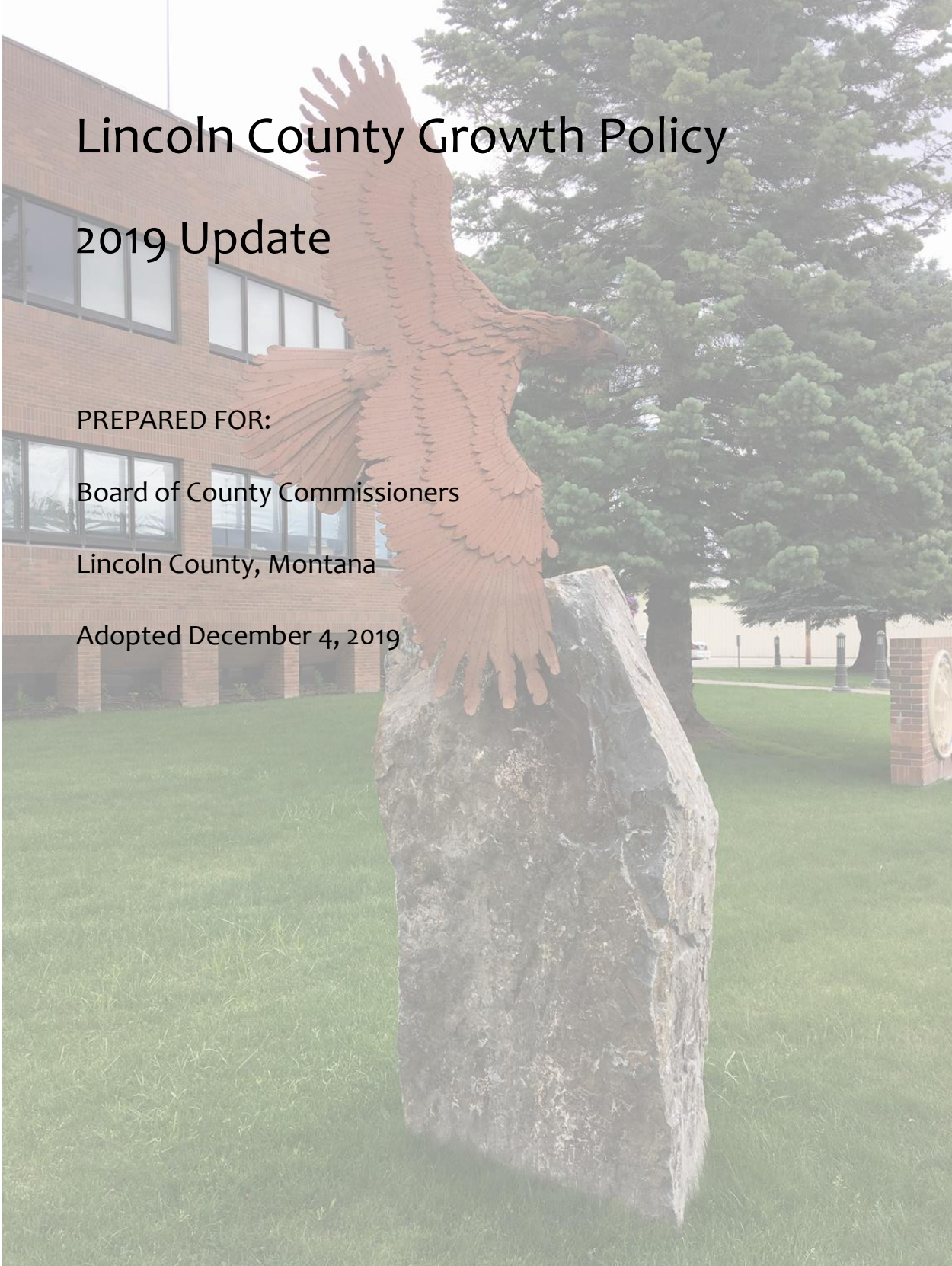




Lincoln County Growth Policy

2019 Update

PREPARED FOR:

Board of County Commissioners

Lincoln County, Montana

Adopted December 4, 2019

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This document has been prepared by Land Solutions, LLC and KMR Consulting, LLC with the help of the following individuals and groups:

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Mark Peck

Jerry Bennet

Josh Letcher

LINCOLN COUNTY STAFF

Jake Mertes, Planning

Darren Coldwell, County Administrator

Marc McCully, Road District #1

Brent Teske, County Deputy DES Director

Kathi Hooper, Health Department

Jennifer Nelson, County Forester

LINCOLN COUNTY PLANNING BOARD

Michael Hobbs, Chair

Kenny Rayome

Scott Mattheis

Kate Arpin

Laura Garner

Ernie Anderson

John Damon

Robert Haidle

Tracy McNew

CEDS STEERING COMMITTEE

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Chris Bache, Noble Industries
Clint Oster, retired economics professor
Craig Barringer, Libby School Superintendent
Dave Friss, Owner, Alpine Precision
Jackson Garrison, First Montana Bank
Jacob Francom, Troy Schools
Jason Moothart, Interbel Telephone Cooperative
Johnette Watkins, Manager of Job Service Libby

Kevin Peck, Glacier Insurance owner
LeeAnn Schermerhorn, Eureka Mayor
Melissa Brandon, Lincoln Electric Cooperative
Nate Gassmann, Ranger, Libby District of FS
Shawna Kelsey, Community Development Troy
Ted Werner, Civic leader and local businessman
Tina Oliphant, Kootenai River Development Council
Jim Mephram, Eureka Public Schools

MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

This project was made possible through a Community Development Block Grant.

THE PEOPLE OF LINCOLN COUNTY

The contents within this plan are a result of the time, efforts and ideas of the residents of Lincoln County who participated in the planning process by attending meetings, submitting comments and completing surveys.

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CHAPTER I—INTRODUCTION

As the last county to be given its numeric code, at number 56, Lincoln County anchors Montana’s far northwestern corner where it borders Canada and Idaho. It is the 10th most populated county with its communities established as agricultural and logging centers over a century ago. With 76% of its land mass in public ownership, Lincoln County represents the “wild” of the western ethos. Its people are hardy, resourceful, and neighborly. Its economy has boomed and busted on federal infrastructure projects (dams, railroads, highways), logging and mining. Over the past 15 years, the County has been positioning itself to face the challenges and embrace the opportunities of a changing world.

A GROWTH POLICY—IN BRIEF

A growth policy is a non-regulatory, long-range plan that identifies and seeks to address key social, physical, environmental, economic, and land use issues. At its roots, a growth policy attempts to answer the following three questions:

1. Where are we today?
2. Where do we want to be tomorrow?
3. How do we get there?

The answers to the last two questions reflect the aspirations of Lincoln County residents and are the heart of this document. At its core, a growth policy identifies policies that will assist the County Commissioners and other officials in making decisions about how to manage resources. It lays out measurable goals with specific actions to achieve the goals. A growth policy should be results-oriented and include an implementation section describing actions, timelines, and partners who will help carry out the actions.

ORGANIZATION

This growth policy is a plan for addressing the major issues facing Lincoln County. The plan’s organization reflects that intent. This chapter sets the stage for how to use the document and describes how this plan was developed. Chapter II explores the key focus areas that Lincoln County residents identified as being especially important during the growth policy development process. Chapter III provides background information and projections related to population demographics, economic conditions, natural resources, public facilities and a host of other community indicators. Chapter IV covers additional growth policy requirements under state law. Chapter V provides a growth policy implementation plan. Appendix A includes a summary of the public survey results.

USING THE GROWTH POLICY

Although a growth policy is a non-regulatory document used to identify the priorities of a community, its intended purpose is to give weight when making decisions about those priorities – articulating a county’s strategy for moving forward. Given what we know today and where we want to be in the future, the growth policy establishes steps for how to get there: goals, policy statements, and actions. It is important to understand the difference between these when using the growth policy.

Goals are statements describing a desired future condition. Goals should be attainable and measurable. They represent a big-picture statement of what Lincoln County is trying to achieve.

The County may adopt specific **policies** to support the goals. Policies are statements to assist and provide direction in decision making over time. We’ve all heard the term “it’s a matter of public policy.” This is where some of those policies are written down.

Actions are specific steps the County and its partners intend to carry out to achieve the larger goals.

When making decisions regarding the County’s future, decision makers should look to this document for guidance. For example, decisions about staffing levels, funding for programs, or setting yearly work plans should consider how the decisions will relate to the direction set forth in the growth policy. Will the decision move the County toward or away from achieving the goals? State law specifically requires that some decisions consider the general policy set forth in this plan.



Lake Koocanusa

Due to shortcomings in financial and human capacity, implementing the growth policy (i.e., taking specific actions) will require close coordination and strategic cooperation between the County and community partners.

OVERVIEW OF THE 2009 GROWTH POLICY

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The success of a growth policy is measured by how the document was implemented following adoption. Several areas of the 2009 plan have been fulfilled. Of note:

1. The 2009 growth policy effectively guided decisions regarding the 2010 Lincoln County Subdivision Regulations update and is being used within the allowances of state law in the subdivision review process.
2. The growth policy has also been effectively used to support grant applications for important projects and guide public education and outreach efforts.
3. The County invested in marketing efforts in order to promote the County as a destination and support local tourism efforts
4. The County facilitated the creation of a neighborhood plan for the Thompson Chain of Lakes area.
5. The County received high praise from the state Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC) for its wildfire protection regulations and fire risk assessment program during the subdivision review process.
6. The County reviewed and updated its lakeshore protection regulations
7. The County was successful in getting the Swamp Creek section of US Highway 2 upgraded and reconstructed, which is being completed as of this writing.

While the 2009 Lincoln County Growth Policy was comprehensive and successfully guided the County in several key arenas, its robust yet generalized action plan has proven to be a bit unwieldy and challenging to track. This update seeks to be more specific and measurable with its implementation.

NEED TO UPDATE

Pursuant to 76-1-601 (3)(f)(iii) MCA, a growth policy must be reviewed once every five years and revised if necessary. The 2009 Growth Policy specifically identified a 10-year planning horizon, which puts this process right on track. Several circumstances have also contributed to the need for an update:

- The County began to recover from the Great Recession;
- Data used in the existing conditions analysis in the 2009 Growth Policy is out of date;
- Since 2009, the state law which specifies what a growth policy must address was amended, requiring an evaluation of the wildland urban interface and discussion of sand and gravel resources; and
- Some of the implementation actions in the 2009 Growth Policy have been accomplished or need to be revised.

The Planning Board requested the Board of County Commissioners pursue an update to the growth policy considering all the above. The County Commissioners agreed and pursued funding to assist in the preparation of an update using a planning consultant.

However, there are several items identified in the 2009 plan that continue to be relevant and have been identified as needing to be addressed through this update process. These are:

- Increase workforce/affordable housing;
- Increase broadband capacity in South Lincoln County;
- Improve wireless and cell communications;
- Improve Infrastructure at Kootenai Business Park and Tobacco Valley Business Park;
- Support local tourism efforts to promote Montana's great northwest as a destination convention and resort area;
- Craft development standards that continue residential and commercial patterns such as density and style to maintain the character of Lincoln County's rural areas and to protect fish and wildlife habitat and water resources;
- Plan for efficiency, safety, and beautification improvements along highway corridors;
- Evaluate adoption of development/building permit regulations; and
- Improve intergovernmental coordination.

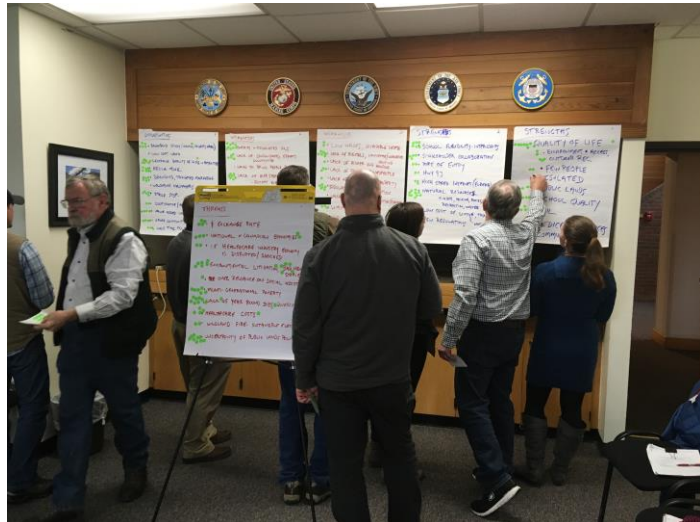
PUBLIC PROCESS – DEVELOPING THE GROWTH POLICY

The development of this growth policy followed a community-based planning approach. Community-based planning relies on people who live in the community to set the course for their community's future. It incorporates citizen participation into the issue identification, drafting, and vetting process in order to develop a bottoms-up approach to issues important to the citizenry. To encourage public participation, the planning consultants provided different types of opportunities for involvement to reach people in different ways and in different places. Below is a description of the outreach steps and how they relate to the development of the growth policy.

ISSUE IDENTIFICATION

To identify areas of focus for the growth policy update, the planning consultants initially interviewed the County Commissioners and other local government officials, economic development professionals, community members, and the Lincoln County Planning Board, which under Montana law plays a leading role in the development and adoption of a growth policy.

This growth policy was developed alongside an update of the County's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). Much like the leadership role a planning board plays in development of a growth policy, a CEDS is guided by a steering committee. The Lincoln County CEDS Steering Committee was made up of individuals representing a broad range of interests including local and federal government, education, health care, banking, telecommunications, workforce development, and other industries and organizations with knowledge of Lincoln County's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. These efforts helped to identify issues related to five key focus areas, and to develop and vet goals, policies, and actions for addressing them. The key focus areas are:



SWOT Analysis with the CEDS Steering Committee

- Economy
- Land Use & Development
- Intergovernmental Coordination
- Wildland Urban Interface
- Road Funding

While the growth policy will take a comprehensive view of Lincoln County and its future, the key focus areas will serve to guide this plan by providing direction on the most pressing issues facing the County.

After identifying the key focus areas, the consulting team developed a series of draft goals and actions aimed at addressing each issue. The consultants presented the draft goals and actions to the Lincoln County Planning Board in April and made revisions based on the board's feedback. The planning consultants then posted the goals and actions for public review on the project website – www.planlincolncounty.com and sent notice of their availability and a request for comments to a list of stakeholders.

OPEN HOUSES AND PUBLIC WORKSHOPS – MAY 2019

In order to discuss the key focus areas with the public, and to evaluate the first draft of the goals and actions, the planning consultants and county staff held open houses / workshops in Troy, Eureka, and Libby. Participants provided individual feedback on the focus areas, goals, and actions by indicating preferences and providing comments on a series of displays, submitting more detailed written comments to explain their thoughts, and talking directly with the planners. Following the meetings, the goals, policies, and actions were amended to reflect the public input.

ONLINE SURVEY – MAY 2019

In an effort to get additional public input on the draft goals and actions, the consulting team also distributed a public survey. Planners selected an online format in order to diversify outreach methods. The online format allowed members of the public to participate in the development of the growth policy at their convenience and from the comfort of their own homes. The online format allowed people to participate who might not typically, or could not, attend a public meeting.

The public survey provided an opportunity for Lincoln County residents to indicate their support or opposition for a select number of the draft actions, to prioritize different activities, and to provide additional feedback on the direction of the growth policy and CEDS updates. Recognizing that including all 53 draft actions would make the survey too time consuming to complete (likely resulting in a lower response rate), the consultants chose to only include a select few proposed actions that were likely to generate more community interest. The intent was to use the results to give the Lincoln County Planning Board and Commissioners guidance, through the growth policy and CEDS updates, on how to address some of these issues. A summary of the survey results is presented in Appendix A.

The consultants developed the survey in late April 2019 and published it on the project website with hard copies available at the Lincoln County annexes in Libby and Eureka and the Town Offices of Troy and Eureka. County staff posted availability of the survey on the County's Facebook page several times, which seemed to inspire participation. The Western News also ran an article about the community meetings and survey. The survey closed on Monday, June 3rd with 373 responses. Below are several key findings from the survey. It is important to note the results of the survey are not 'statistically significant' so do not necessarily reflect the opinions of all Lincoln County residents. However, the results can provide general direction and guidance.

KEY FINDINGS

1. Survey respondents generally support exploring regulations to address land use issues.

A majority of survey respondents were either "supportive" or "very supportive" of developing land use regulations to address particular issues including RVs in residential subdivisions, the appearance of highway corridors, and building codes. There was also a sizeable number of "neutral" responses to the questions dealing with land use regulations. Under no land use regulation question did the number of "unsupportive" or "very unsupportive" responses exceed 30% of total responses.

Responses to the land use regulation questions varied by where respondents were from. When asked about using development regulations to improve the appearance of highway corridors leading into established communities, 75% of Libby respondents either were "very supportive" or "supportive," compared to 57% for Eureka and 53% for Troy. In terms of support for regulations aimed at minimizing impacts associated with RVs in residential areas, 66% of Eureka respondents were either "very supportive" or "supportive" compared with 55% for Libby and 61% for Troy.

Overall, the responses suggest there is interest among Lincoln County residents to explore addressing certain land use issues through a regulatory framework.

2. A substantial majority of survey respondents are in favor of the County actively supporting economic development.

75% of survey respondents indicated they were “very supportive” or “supportive” of Lincoln County providing financial incentives for economic development, while 60% of respondents indicated supporting economic development organizations should be a high priority of the County.

3. Survey respondents recognize the need to address future funding for road maintenance.

77% of survey respondents stated that “identifying a stable road maintenance funding source” should be either the “highest” or a “high” priority for Lincoln County. Additionally, 58% of respondents indicated they would support a county-wide assessment for road maintenance.

4. Most survey respondents are open to land use regulations aimed at protecting grizzly bear migration corridors.

When asked about support for regulations that either steer development away from grizzly bear migration corridors or limit the density and intensity of development in these corridors, 57% of respondents indicated they would support some form of regulations. For Eureka respondents that figure rose to 67% compared with 57% for Libby and 53% for Troy.

5. Reducing wildfire risk was identified as a high priority across Lincoln County.

59% of survey respondents indicated wildfire risk reduction should be a high priority. In Eureka and Troy these figures were 67% and 62% respectively.

PLANNING BOARD MEETINGS – SUMMER 2019

In July of 2019 the Lincoln County Planning Board and planning consultants held a work session to discuss the initial draft growth policy and to discuss potential amendments. After updating the initial draft, in August the Planning Board held a public hearing to solicit comments. After considering the written and verbal comments, on September 17, 2019 the Planning Board adopted Resolution No. 2019-01 recommending the Board of County Commissioners adopt the updated Growth Policy as amended.

COMMISSIONER MEETINGS

The Board of Lincoln County Commissioners adopted a resolution of intent to adopt the Planning Board’s recommended growth policy on October 23, 2019, which opened a public comment period. The Commissioner met again on November 1st to discuss the document and make changes. On

December 4, 2019 the Commissioners considered all the written and verbal comments and adopted a final resolution to adopt this Lincoln County Growth Policy update.

CHAPTER II—KEY FOCUS AREAS

KEY FOCUS AREA: ECONOMY

Historically, Lincoln County's economy has been anchored by natural resource extraction, primarily mining and the harvesting and manufacturing of forest products. At the same time the government sector has also been a traditional source of steady employment in Lincoln County. Together, these industry sectors have contributed to direct and indirect employment in other important industry sectors in the County, notably healthcare, construction, and retail.

Over the last several decades, however, there have been several local and national factors that have contributed to significant changes in the economic landscape of Lincoln County. Decreasing timber harvests, coupled with the corresponding closures and destruction of wood products mills, have resulted in steady declines in forestry and manufacturing employment. There are currently no large-scale dimensional lumber mills operating in Lincoln County, although many local workers, haulers, and contractors work to support mill operations in Flathead County and Idaho and elsewhere.

The trend of more large timber sales (on USFS land) and fewer small sales that local contractors can take on has had a negative impact on the local jobs realized through timber. Smaller sales would be beneficial for local employment, as would more post and pole sales for local producers. Most importantly, a steady, long-term supply of wood is needed for the timber industry to regain its status as a major economic driver in Lincoln County.

The 2015 closure of the Troy Mine, and the ongoing process to get the Rock Creek and Montanore mines operational, have resulted in a substantial loss of mining jobs and growing uncertainty about when (if ever) they may return. One staggering outcome of these events is that since 1990 Lincoln County has continually had high unemployment relative to the State of Montana. Lastly, with the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) cleanup effort of the Libby Asbestos Superfund Site ending, the number of jobs has decreased as well. The departure of the EPA is anticipated to have rippling effects on the south Lincoln County economy as the direct economic impact resulting from the EPA cleanup efforts was estimated to be around \$9,000,000 a year.

Despite the above noted downward employment trends, it is not all doom and gloom. There are many smart and motivated business owners and several organizations actively working to stimulate the growth of living wage jobs throughout the County including the Kootenai River Development Council and the Tobacco Valley Industrial District. Lincoln County is also increasingly being recognized as one of the last undiscovered areas in Montana for high quality outdoor experiences without the crowds. This in turn can help stimulate people and businesses moving to the County.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

KOOTENAI BUSINESS PARK

Acquired after Stimson Lumber Company ceased activity on the property in 2002, the Kootenai Business Park (KBP) is a 400-acre site owned and operated by the Lincoln County Port Authority (LCPA) for commercial and industrial development. The site lies immediately adjacent to the City of Libby but is in the jurisdiction of Lincoln County. The site has direct access to U.S. Highway 2 and borders the mainline of the Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) rail line. Recently the KBP rehabilitated spur access to the BNSF mainline, with capacity for over 200, 82-foot rail cars.

In terms of infrastructure, the KBP has electrical, water for fire suppression, and a wastewater distribution system. A major strategy of the KBP is the continued investment in infrastructure on the site to attract and support business development. One major infrastructure deficiency needed to attract additional commercial and industrial development is KBP's water system. Existing water mains can only accommodate existing development and they are nearing capacity. In order to accommodate new development KBP needs to extend its water mains to connect to the City of Libby's water system. Additionally, while KBP has a wastewater distribution system, it is nearing capacity and cannot accommodate a significant amount of additional development. As a result, the site will also need to connect to the City of Libby's sewer system in order to expand development opportunities. To aid in the



Post and Pole Operation at Kootenai Business Park

funding of infrastructure, in 2014 the Lincoln County Commissioners approved the creation of a targeted economic development district (TEDD) at the site, a tool that reinvests tax base increases in the district.

One hurdle for the KBP is the fact that it has two Superfund designations. The first is due to groundwater contamination from an historic wood products facility; and the second is due to Libby Amphibole Asbestos contamination. While groundwater contamination persists and has ongoing monitoring, remediation of the asbestos was completed in 2012 and the LCPA is in process of removing that second Superfund designation from the site – making it eligible for EPA's Brownfields Redevelopment Funds.

TOBACCO VALLEY INDUSTRIAL DISTRICT

The Tobacco Valley Industrial District Business Park (TVID) is located on 22 acres outside of Eureka in the jurisdiction of Lincoln County. The district is broken up into 12 lots of varying sizes with lease and sale options for businesses. One of the cornerstones of the district is the business incubation facility which provides warehouse and manufacturing sites tied to office spaces. The incubator program is intended to provide a physical location for start-up growth that will reduce companies' overhead and operational start-up costs for one to four years. The property has 3-phase power and high-speed fiber internet. Space is offered at below-market rates, and classes are provided in marketing, financing, management, and other business skills. When businesses graduate from the program, as determined by periodic reviews, they can choose to lease or buy one of the lots. The focus of the business incubator facility is on wood based businesses, though all types of manufacturing, technology, and industrial business are eligible. The TVID needs additional wastewater and water capacity in order to support additional commercial development. The site is served by individual septic systems and two wells which do not produce high flow rates.

OPPORTUNITIES AT THE BORDER

Lincoln County's proximity to Canada provides an opportunity for the Eureka area to capitalize on that proximity to stimulate the local economy. One such potential opportunity is through the creation a foreign trade zone (FTZ). Administered by the U.S. Department of Commerce, FTZs are a vehicle intended to assist American companies in competing internationally. They are defined areas exempt from traditional U.S. Customs and Border Protection restrictions which allow companies to save money on import duties and processing fees. Companies in an FTZ can import materials without being subject to international duties or local taxes and then process those materials into a finished product to be shipped globally without being subject to export duties. There are over 250 FTZs in the United States and the only one in Montana is in Butte. Eureka's proximity to the Roosville Port of Entry presents a unique opportunity for establishing an FTZ in the north end of Lincoln County.

RECREATION

With over 75% of the County in public ownership, Lincoln County is an outdoor enthusiast's dream. Fishing, hunting, snowmobiling, ATV riding, skiing, hiking, rafting, and mountain biking are all available to residents and visitors. Figure 1 displays the myriad recreation sites and amenities in Lincoln County.

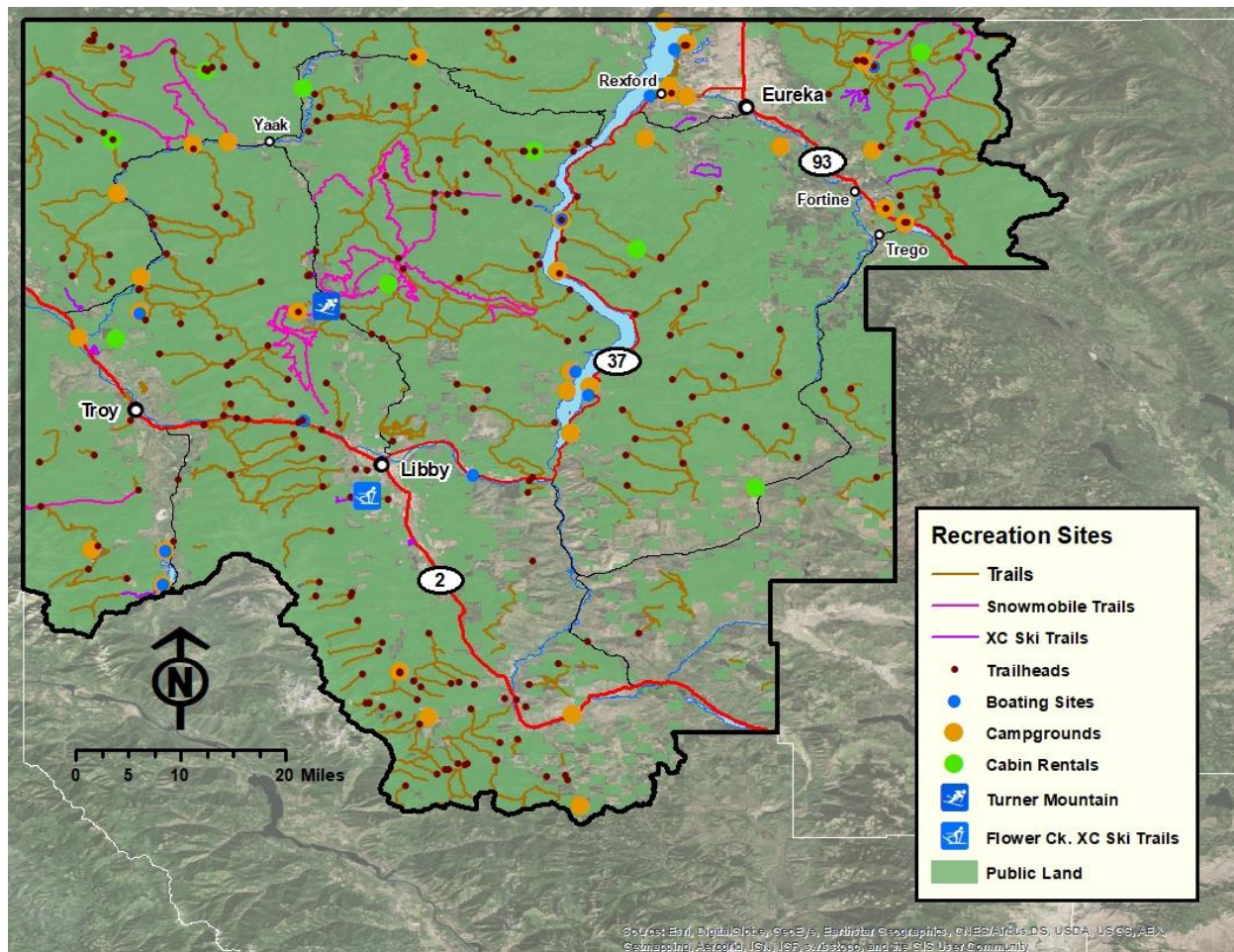


Figure 1 Recreation Sites

In summer the recreation opportunities are nearly limitless. The Kootenai National Forest boasts some of the greatest opportunities in the state for seeking solitude on a day hike, backpack, or hunt. For water sports, including fishing and boating, the County has Lake Koocanusa and the Tobacco and Kootenai Rivers. In recent years Lincoln County has started to become a destination for both road and mountain biking. The annual Scenic Tour of the Kootenai River (STOKR) is in its 25th year and brings hundreds of cyclists to the county who patronize local businesses. In terms of mountain biking, the County has been actively working with state and federal partners to develop trails on public lands. With the rise of bicycle tourism in Montana, there are opportunities for attracting these visitors to Lincoln County, visitors who are increasingly seeking small inviting downtowns with open expanses of trails and scenic roads.

For winter sports Lincoln County is home to the downhill ski area Turner Mountain, one of the only ski areas in the country available for private rental. There are also a multitude of opportunities for snowmobiling on groomed trails and forest service roads. Eureka is centrally located between skiing destinations in Whitefish, Kimberly, and Fernie, B.C. Lastly, local cross-country ski groups have been active in developing groomed trails in both the south and north ends of the County, the most notable being the South Flower Creek cross-country ski area outside of Libby.

Lincoln County's unparalleled access to public lands and their recreational amenities is an asset that not only benefits existing residents, but which can be harnessed as one piece of the economic development puzzle. Increasingly younger generations are choosing where to live based not necessarily on the availability of jobs, but on quality of life amenities such as recreational opportunities like parks, trails, rivers, and access to open spaces. An increasing number of young adults are choosing to relocate from urban areas to rural communities based on these quality of life factors. These new residents have the potential to become future entrepreneurs in places like Lincoln County. Additionally, the internet has enabled many people to work remotely from the places they choose to live.

VALUE ADDED AGRICULTURE

While agriculture plays a limited role in Lincoln, there are still opportunities in value added agriculture and specialty agriculture products. Value added agriculture generally refers to the



Irrigated Field Near Eureka

processing of agricultural commodities into a finished value-added product. For instance, turning strawberries into strawberry jam, milk into cheese, or apples into cider. Value added agricultural products have the potential to generate higher return for producers and allow them to reach different niche markets. However, one limiting factor for small producers throughout Montana is the cost of developing adequate processing facilities when the actual amount of processing

may be quite limited for each producer. One potential option to address this is through the creation of a food incubator which would have a shared commercial kitchen and processing space for producers to utilize in processing and packaging their products. Potential locations for a food incubator include Eureka, where the longer growing season allows small farms to grow a wider variety of specialty crops such as grapes, or Troy where there has been recent cultivation of small fruit tree orchards.

OUTLOOK

At some point a large mine, substantial and ongoing federal timber sales, or a large new industry may come to the area. If that happens, local workers, their families, and businesses will benefit, housing demand and construction will increase, and public services may need to expand to serve a growing population. Planning for a boom (and potential bust) is difficult, given the uncertainty of it even happening in the first place. Instead, this growth policy assumes economic conditions will continue in a similar manner as the recent past, with slow and moderate gains in employment and

wages, a few new businesses opening to meet emerging needs, and others closing as they become obsolete or tastes change.

Given this slow-but-steady approach, how can Lincoln County retain existing businesses and industries to attract new residents and industries that will diversify the County's economic base and provide living wage jobs? Rural communities throughout the west are wrestling with this same question and there is no one 'silver bullet' solution. The process of economic recovery and growth is slow, with small successes building on one another over a period of years. Successful communities have developed and maintained a coordinated approach with open communication and energetic, thoughtful, and creative citizens. They have also built on and nurtured their assets, including human and natural resources. Lincoln County officials and their partners intend to implement this sort of coordinated economic development strategy to avert economic decline.

KEY FOCUS AREA: COORDINATION

COORDINATION WITH FEDERAL AND STATE AGENCIES

Effective coordination with public and private entities is critical to being able to achieve a variety of the County's goals. From Lincoln County's perspective, coordination is broken into three categories – federal and state agencies, local governments, and large private land holders. In a County with over three-quarters of its landmass in public ownership (73% federal, 3% state) coordination with state and federal agencies is imperative, as many of the management decisions on these lands are not made at the local level but do have local impacts. There are many examples of this in Lincoln County. Federal forest management policies and decisions have impacted timber harvests and the development of recreation assets in the County. In particular, the management of grizzly bears in the Cabinet-Yaak grizzly bear recovery zone has wide ranging impacts on land uses and management. However, there are several opportunities for the County to work collaboratively with the Forest Service (and other state and federal agencies) to find mutually beneficial solutions for the management and use of public lands.

COLUMBIA RIVER TREATY

This international agreement between Canada and the United States for the cooperative development and operation of the water resources of the Columbia River Basin to provide for flood control and power is in the process of being renegotiated ahead of its 2024 renewal or termination date. The U.S. Corps of Engineer's



Libby Dam

Libby Dam holds the Koocanusa Reservoir and supplies power to the Bonneville Power Administration's northwest grid. The reservoir was created in the 1960s and resulted in the flooding of a fertile, populated river valley of the Kootenai. Officials from Lincoln County and the State of Montana are seeking to ensure that the County's interests are represented in future actions as they believe that the current agreement fails to fulfill some of its commitments and that the County residents were not adequately compensated for their losses.

LIBBY SUPERFUND SITES

Libby is home to two EPA designated Superfund sites that have impacted economic and land use development.

LIBBY GROUNDWATER SITE

The Libby Ground Water Site resulted from decades of treating timbers with wood preservatives at the mill site. Although the treatment plant shut down in 1969 the chemicals leached into the groundwater and in 1983 the Libby Ground Water Site was placed on EPA's "Superfund" list.

International Paper Company is the current owner and inherited the responsibility for cleaning up the site, paying for all costs related to the site per the signed Consent Decree in 1988 by the previous owner, Champion International. They have paid to connect residential well users to the municipal water supply and paid for well owners to have metered water. Facilities to treat soil and ground water are in place and all activities related to the investigation and remediation of the site has been conducted under the oversight of EPA and MT DEQ. On-going remedial activities include soil treatment by land farming and groundwater treatment via ex-situ (off site) and in-situ (on site) processes, as well as institutional controls (legal and administrative methods to minimize human exposure). EPA conducts five-year reviews for the site and there is a current proposal to adopt a Controlled Water Area for the greater Libby area to continue to ensure public health and safety.

LIBBY ASBESTOS SITE

In 1999, the U.S. EPA sent an Emergency Response Team to Libby in response to local health concerns and related national news articles about asbestos-contaminated vermiculite that was used extensively throughout the City. The EPA assessed public health risk and began taking actions to reduce that risk. In 2002, the EPA added Libby Asbestos to the national priorities list as a superfund cleanup site.

After 15 years, the EPA wrapped up its cleanup efforts in 2018 on more than 2,600 properties, having removed and replaced over one million cubic yards of soil. The investigation and cleanup at area schools was completed early, and large publicly accessed properties including Riverfront Park along the Kootenai River and Cabinet View Golf Course were also cleaned. The Montana Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) will now manage the project. The County is closely involved with ensuring that there is no burden to future property owners for any remediation.

Lincoln County and EPA cooperatively created the Lincoln County Asbestos Resource Program, which regularly monitors outdoor ambient air in the Libby and Troy area to ensure that the EPA's cleanup efforts remain effective at protecting the health of the community. In addition, data collected by the EPA indicates that the amount of asbestos in the outdoor ambient air in Libby is comparable to that in other cities in northwest Montana (e.g., Eureka and Helena)

COORDINATION WITH LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

Given that cities and counties often have differing visions, needs, and priorities it is not uncommon for these levels of government to struggle with coordination. However, the need to coordinate at

the local level is as imperative if Lincoln County hopes to achieve long term economic recovery and develop in a manner that sustains the quality of life residents enjoy. Lincoln County and its communities are simply too interconnected, small, and geographically isolated to take a go-it-alone approach. In the absence of a solid foundation of local coordination the best laid plans and strategies are unlikely to bear fruit. In rural communities throughout the west the adage rings true – “the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.”

Coordination between Lincoln County and the incorporated communities of Troy, Libby, and Eureka does exist. However, communication is sometimes inconsistent and not strategic in terms of working collectively to find solutions to common issues. Effective coordination will require give and take and on both sides; but without it, Lincoln County will have an uphill battle regarding being able to fully implement many of the goals and policies outlined in this plan. In order to bring about greater levels of coordination Lincoln County officials will need to develop a proactive approach for improving the level of communication with local communities, namely Troy, Libby, and Eureka, as discussed in the implementation section of this growth policy (Chapter V).

COORDINATION WITH LARGE PRIVATE LAND HOLDERS

Most private land in Lincoln County is owned by two large companies – Stimson Lumber and Weyerhaeuser. Stimson Lumber is based out of Portland, OR and owns over 118,000 acres of land around Troy and Libby. Weyerhaeuser is wood products and land management company based out of Federal Way, WA and owns nearly 185,000 acres of land primarily in the southeastern portion of the County. Given the sizable acreage owned by both companies, coordination is needed so that the County can get an idea of any plans for the use or sale of these lands. Stimson Lumber has been relatively engaged locally and has recently shown an interest in getting a wood processing facility back in the Libby area if they can be assured a stable source of timber. Weyerhaeuser has been less engaged at the local level. While engaging large corporations on local issues is certainly a challenge, the sheer acreage of land owned by Weyerhaeuser and Stimson makes it imperative that the County attempt to develop and maintain some level of dialogue and coordination.

KEY FOCUS AREA: ROAD FUNDING

Because of its large amount of untaxable federal lands, Lincoln County receives federal dollars from the Payment In Lieu of Taxes (PILT) program. In 2000, due to uncertainty surrounding the sustainability of PILT funds, the federal government created a new pot of money in the form of the Secure Rural Schools (SRS) program. Over the years Lincoln County has managed these funds well for road maintenance purposes. As of 2019 the County's road department has been able to use these monies to fix most County roads. Under normal conditions, the County's road system should not need major repairs for another 10-15 years.

Ideally, the road department would be on a shorter (five year) maintenance cycle, where they would do smaller maintenance projects that would preserve the life of the road network and increase the time between larger repair projects. Over time this would save money. Unfortunately, there is not adequate budget in the near term to fund a shorter maintenance cycle and there is growing uncertainty with the longevity of both PILT and SRS funding. As a result, the County can no longer rely on these sources for long-term maintenance funding, presenting an immediate issue that must be addressed. With Lincoln County being one of only two counties in Montana that do not have a tax for road maintenance, currently the County is lacking a stable funding source for future road maintenance.



[Snow clearing with County equipment](#)

Several strategies exist in order to decrease the uncertainty surrounding the future of Lincoln County's road fund and based on the survey results there is support for implementing an assessment for maintenance.

KEY FOCUS AREA: LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT

Despite being the 10th most populous county in the state, Lincoln County is still relatively rural and sparsely populated. Over 76% of the County's population resides outside of the three incorporated communities of Troy, Libby, and Eureka. Over the last 20 years, development and subdivision activity in Lincoln County has trended toward larger lots outside of established communities.

During the mid-2000s Lincoln County experienced a high rate of subdivision and development activity, much of that taking place in the Tobacco Valley, influenced by Canadian investment. While development and subdivision activity cooled with the national recession, development that has occurred since then has again tended to be on larger lots outside of established communities.

With recent growth in the state and national economy, Lincoln County is again seeing an uptick in development and subdivision activity. Many people move to, or choose to develop in, Lincoln County to live remotely on a large lot where they can enjoy the views and their piece of Montana. However, this scattered pattern of development comes with impacts of which Lincoln County residents and decision makers must be aware. Some of the resulting impacts from this development pattern include:

- Increased cost of road maintenance;
- Loss of agricultural land and open space;
- Greater demand on emergency service providers;
- Development in areas potentially at risk to wildfire;
- Impacts to wildlife migration corridors and winter habitat;
- Conflicting neighboring land uses; and
- Haphazard commercial development along highway corridors leading into established communities.

While identifying key issues to address in this growth policy with residents, business leaders, and County officials, the issue of housing affordability and availability came up as a concern. One factor contributing to this is due to the costs of land, materials, and labor, the cost to build a house is too high to be able to sell it at a price point that is typically affordable for lower- and middle-income households.



Remodeling effort in Troy

Of the relatively few development regulations in place in Lincoln County, the DEQ water and sanitation rules have perhaps the greatest impact on development patterns. Most new divisions of land are reviewed by DEQ to ensure adequate water supply and wastewater treatment. The DEQ

rules typically require about one acre of land for a lot with an individual well and septic system. This establishes a de-facto minimum lot size of one acre for most single-family homes not connected to public water and sewer systems. If public water and public sewer systems are available there is no minimum lot size.

One concern voiced during this process was the lack of smaller buildable lots adjacent to Libby, Eureka, and Troy, which, if available, could help provide an avenue for the development of affordable housing. Lincoln County's strategy for addressing land use issues needs to be flexible and responsive to changing communities and economies, while at the same time respecting the private property rights of individuals and businesses. By taking a more proactive approach to addressing some of these issues, Lincoln County will be better positioned to take control of its own destiny. In the end, some issues will need to be addressed locally, at the neighborhood or community scale, and others comprehensively at the county scale. Being flexible with the tools in the toolbox will allow the County to respond to issues quickly and appropriately.

POLICY DIRECTION

- Encourage a variety of lot sizes within new subdivisions
- Large lots should be far from services while smaller lots, apartments, and infill should be encouraged where services are closer
- Encourage area/neighborhood plans

ZONING RESOLUTIONS

The State of Montana has enabled counties to adopt zoning through two mechanisms: Part I Zoning, which is administered through a Planning and Zoning Commission; and Part II Zoning, also known as County Zoning. By law, Part II Zoning must be guided by and consider the general policy and pattern of development set out in the growth policy. Currently, the only area zoned pursuant to Part II is the Port Authority's Kootenai Business Park in Libby. Just as the 2009 Growth Policy considered these tools for future planning, so too does this document in its recognition of their importance in the pattern and quality of development.

KEY FOCUS AREA: WILDLAND FIRE

With Lincoln County characterized by large expanses of heavily forested areas, wildland fires are a fact of life for County residents. Each passing summer brings the potential for large wildland fires which can threaten established communities. With the desire of people to live in forested areas, the associated risk to life and property also increases along with the cost of fighting fires and protecting structures. With fire seasons becoming increasingly long and active, the need to mitigate wildland fire risk and adapt to living with fire is more crucial than ever. This fact is not lost on Lincoln County residents, with 59% of respondents to the growth policy survey indicating that wildfire risk reduction should be a high priority of the County. In Eureka and Troy these figures jumped 67% and 62% respectively. While there are challenges to addressing wildland fire risk reduction, tools are available to assist Lincoln County and its residents in addressing this issue. One of Lincoln County's primary approaches is to continue to work to provide public outreach and education to landowners on ways to make their properties more resilient to wildfire.

LINCOLN COUNTY'S WILDLAND-URBAN INTERFACE

Lincoln County's 2013 Community Wildfire Protection Plan defines the wildland-urban interface (WUI) as *"The zone where structures and other human development meet and intermingle with undeveloped wildland and vegetative fuels."* The WUI boundary in Lincoln County currently extends two miles beyond clusters of private, non-corporate land with known structures – see Figure 2. It is important to note that this WUI boundary is generalized, essentially encompassing all private lands.

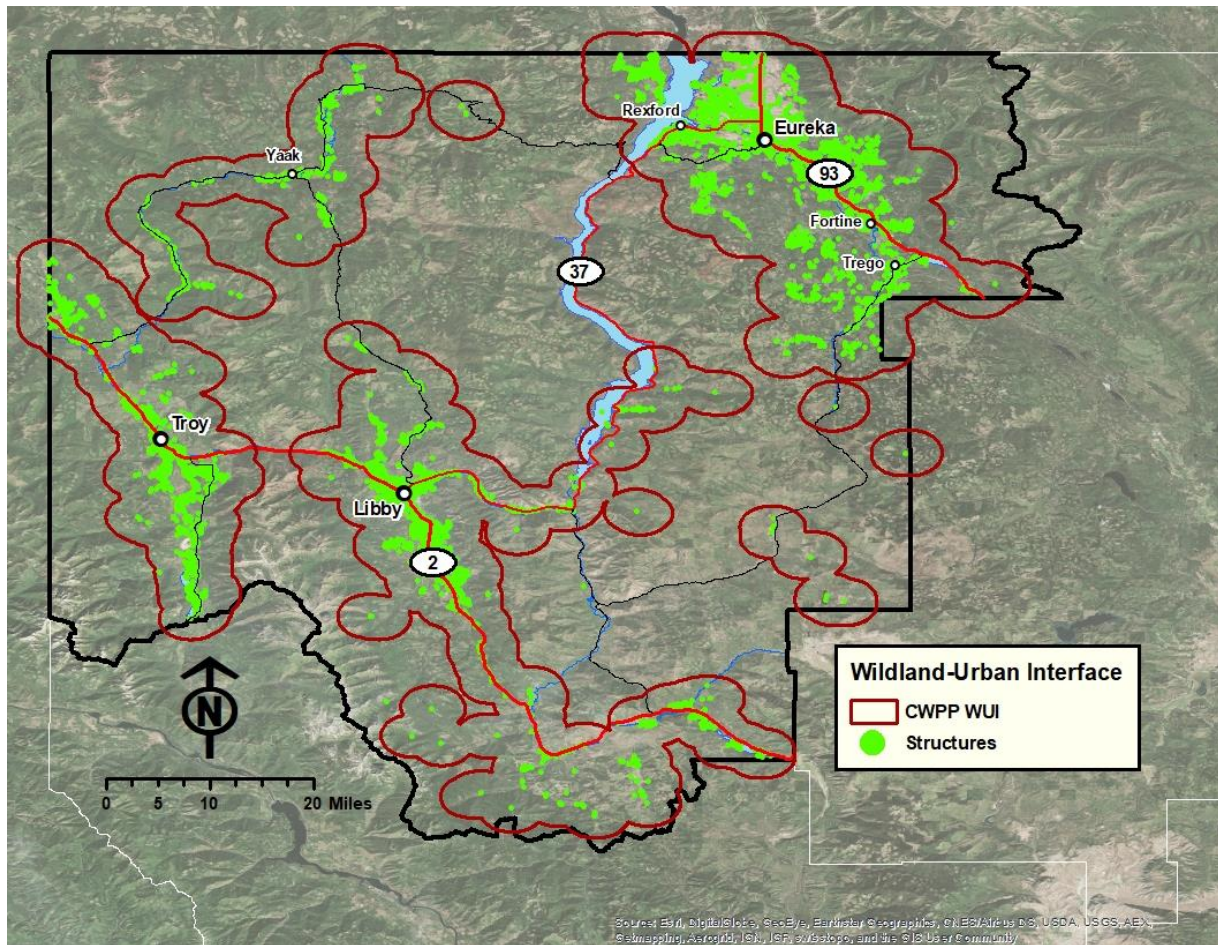


Figure 2 Generalized Wildland-Urban Interface Map

FIRE HISTORY

Perhaps the most well-known wildland fire in Lincoln County's past is the Big Burn of 1910, which burned three million acres in Idaho and Montana, over 380,000 acres of which were in Lincoln County. The aftermath of the 1910 fire brought about changes in the way the United States managed wildfire, resulting in policies for aggressive fire suppression.

Figure 3 displays Lincoln County's fire history from 1910 to 1990, showing the scale of the 1910 fire as well as occurrences of large and small fires throughout the period. During this 80-year period roughly 640,000 acres burned in Lincoln County, with the vast majority (83%) of those fires taking place between 1910 and 1930. Between 1931 and 1990 only about 105,000 of Lincoln County's 2,352,000 acres burned, with most of those fires being less than 1,000 acres in size. This suggests that active forestry can be used to manage the scale and severity of wildfires.

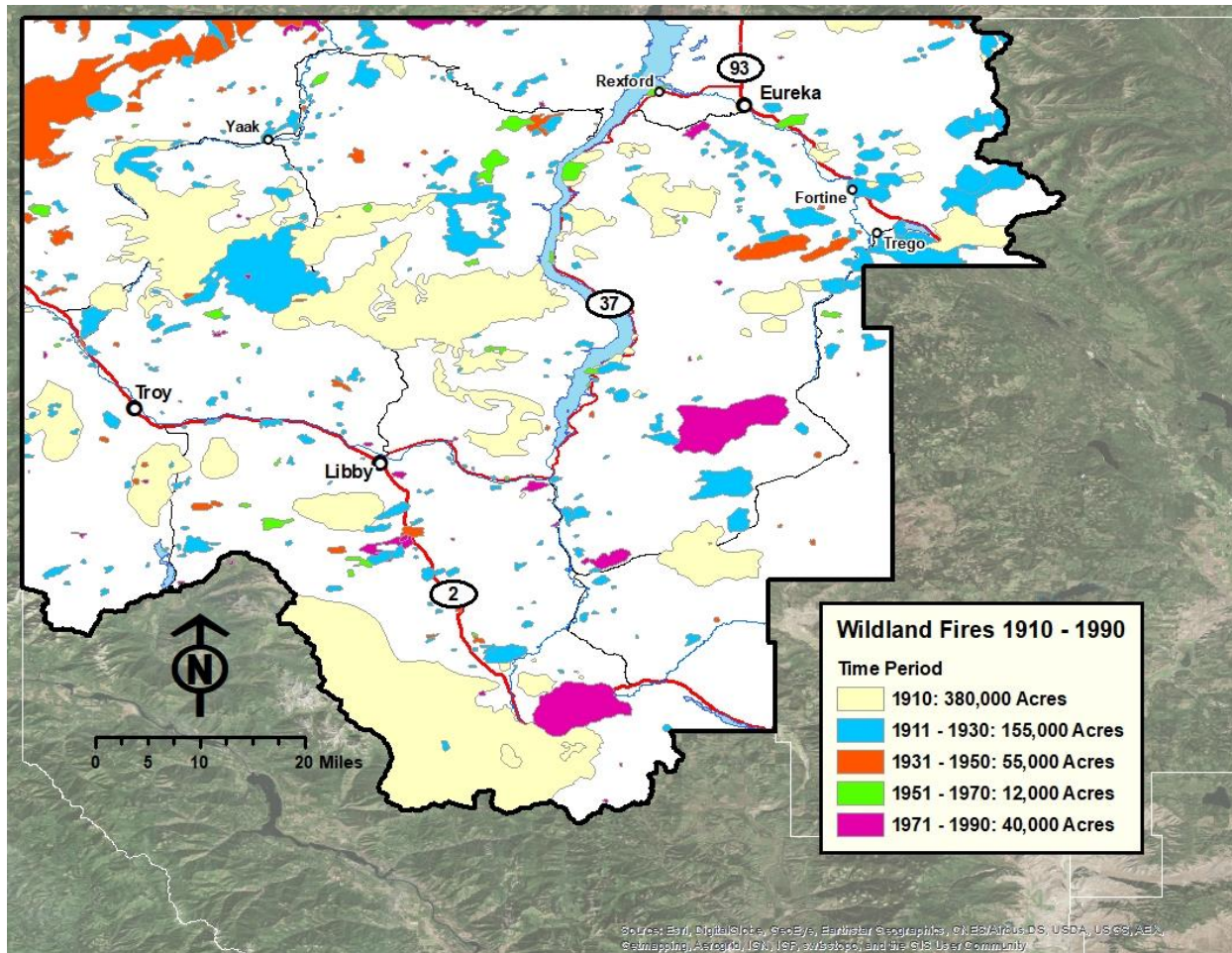


Figure 3 Wildland Fire History 1910 - 1990

Over the latter half 20th century, the absence of large-scale wildfires in Lincoln County resulted in built-up fuels in forested areas. Coupled with disease and bug kill trees, this has resulted in an increased risk of large stand replacement fires. Due in part to these factors, the occurrence of large fires (over 1,000 acres) has increased in Lincoln County. From 1991 to 2018, wildland fires burned roughly 223,000 acres in Lincoln County, with approximately 195,562 of those acres having burned in fires greater than 1,000 acres. As Figure 4 shows, the occurrence of large fires has been pronounced in recent years with 2017 being an active year for wildland fires in the County. During that year the Caribou Fire burned 11 homes and numerous other structures in the community of West Kootenai, while numerous other fires threatened communities, prompting evacuations throughout the County.

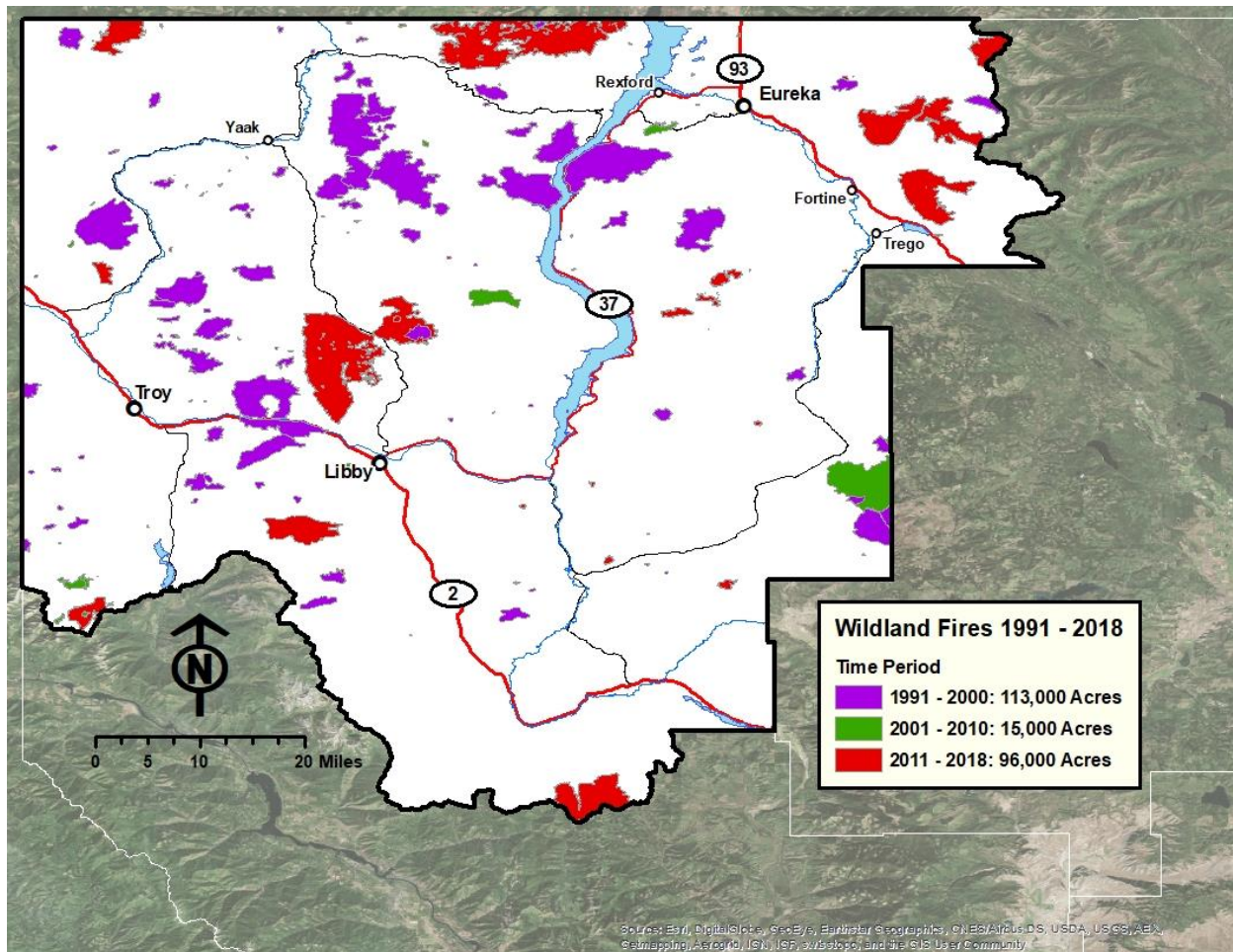
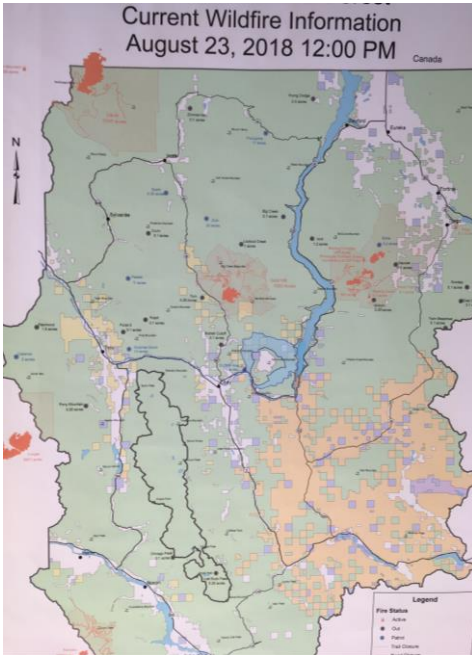


Figure 4 Wildland Fires 1991 - 2018

STRUCTURAL FIRE PROTECTION RESOURCES

Community fire protection in Lincoln County is provided by a mixture of fire districts, fire service areas, and rural fire departments:

Libby Rural Fire Department	McCormick Rural Fire District	Troy Rural Fire District
Bull Lake Rural Fire District	Trego	Yaak Fire Service Area
Eureka Fire Service Area	Fortine	West Kootenai Fire Protection Company
Fisher River Valley Fire/Rescue	Stryker Fire Service Area	



Wildfire Update August 2018

All fire districts in Lincoln County are part of a mutual aid agreement and will respond to calls for assistance from other districts. The State Fire Marshall office in Kalispell assists with commercial inspections, training, and inspections of suspicious fires. There are limited portions of the County that are without structure fire protection, primarily due to distance from a rural fire department.

Fire districts in Lincoln County have struggled to recruit and maintain enough staffing. This is a result of a number of factors, including a small population pool from which to draw volunteers, an aging population, and working residents who are unable to commit to being a volunteer fire fighter. This issue will likely persist as Lincoln County's population is projected to have an increasing share of individuals over the age of 65. As such, Lincoln County will need to work with rural fire districts on developing targeted campaigns to recruit volunteers for not only firefighting duties but also for outreach and education tasks as well. On public forest lands in Lincoln County fire

suppression is the responsibility of the Kootenai National Forest and DNRC.

CURRENT RESOURCES FOR ADDRESSING WILDFIRE RISK

LINCOLN COUNTY SUBDIVISION REGULATIONS

Other than DEQ water and wastewater treatment regulations, Lincoln County's subdivision regulations are the primary means for regulating development in the County. Subdivision regulations address the creation of new subdivisions and are not retroactive. In addressing risks associated with wildfire, the fire protection section of the subdivision regulations requires that all subdivisions be "planned, designed, constructed, and maintained so as to minimize the risk of fire." To address this requirement, the design and improvement standards state that measures must include:



Fisher River Fire Hall

1. The design of subdivisions in cooperation with the jurisdictional fire protection entity.
2. Fire protection covenants.
3. Adequate water supply or approved mitigation.

Going further, the regulations also require that subdivision applications in unincorporated areas of the County provide a fire risk assessment (FRA), and if required by the FRA, a vegetation management plan. The vegetation management plan is intended to provide a strategy for reducing wildland fire risk through fuels reduction, ongoing maintenance, and ensuring safe access for firefighting resources. No additional regulations requiring defensible space around structures, access for firefighting, or water supplies are planned in the near future, although this will be evaluated over time as part of the growth policy implementation plan.

COMMUNITY WILDFIRE PROTECTION PLAN

Lincoln County's Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) is a guide for Lincoln County in planning for wildfire and minimizing its impacts to communities. The CWPP documents wildland fire risks as well as the accomplishments and future direction of Firewise-type programs. The CWPP culminates with an action plan laying out a series of goals and actions for minimizing wildland fire risk in Lincoln County.

LINCOLN COUNTY FIRESAFE COUNCIL

Lincoln County's FireSafe Council is made up of a diverse group of participants representing the County, Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation, local fire departments, U.S. Forest Service, and local emergency management. The FireSafe Council meets regularly to identify ways to improve wildfire preparedness of and reduce wildfire risk in Lincoln County.

FIRE ADAPTED COMMUNITIES

The National Wildfire Coordinating Group defines a fire-adapted community as "A human community consisting of informed and prepared citizens collaboratively planning and taking action to safely coexist with wildland fire."

More fully, fire adapted communities are knowledgeable, engaged communities where actions of residents and agencies in relation to infrastructure, buildings, landscaping and the surrounding ecosystem lessen the need for extensive protection actions and enable the communities to safely accept fire as part of the surrounding landscape." An important component of being a fire-adapted community is the Firewise Program which teaches communities how to adapt to wildfire and take actions to



Firewise Booth at Logger Days Event

reduce risk. While not available at the county level, becoming a designated Firewise Community requires a multi-step process that includes: 1.) obtaining a wildfire risk assessment, 2.) forming a board or committee, 3.) developing an action plan, 4) holding an educational outreach event, and

5.) making an investment in risk reduction projects. Lincoln County has several Firewise Communities including Libby, Em Kayan Village subdivision, and McCormick. The County's Firewise Communities program is administered by the Lincoln County Forester and is planned to continue to support the County's multi-pronged approach to addressing wildland fire safety.

FINANCIAL RESOURCES

COST SHARE GRANTS

Cost-share grants to reduce wildfire risk on private lands are provided by the US Forest Service, State and Private Forestry, and delivered to local cooperating organizations by Montana DNRC. In Lincoln County cost-share grants are administered by the County. To qualify, landowners must obtain a home assessment and an approved prescription for hazardous fuels reduction work. After the work has been completed to meet the prescription, the landowner is reimbursed for a portion of the value of work. Typically cost share grants are split 50/50 with the landowner but to encourage broad participation in the program, Lincoln County offers a split of 75/25, with the landowner responsible for 25% of the cost of the mitigation work. In the past it was difficult to get landowners to participate in the cost share program but recently landowners have been more receptive, with all the County's grant money having been spent as of spring 2019.

TITLE III FUNDING

Title III is part of Secure Rural Schools funding distributed to Lincoln County. Title III money can be used for wildfire related education or assisting homeowners with fuels reduction on their property. Lincoln County has utilized the County's Title III money to fund a variety of education, outreach, and private land fuels reduction efforts. Continued Title III money would provide a sustainable source of funding for fuels mitigation projects in Lincoln County. The lack of dedicated funding creates uncertainty about how private lands fuel reduction work will be funded in the future and can hamper the County's abilities to effectively coordinate with state and federal agencies on reducing wildfire risk in Lincoln County.

CHALLENGES

Much of Lincoln County's population is located in rural areas, with over 76% of the County's population residing outside of the three incorporated communities of Troy, Libby, and Eureka. In many of these areas, homes are in the WUI and lack sufficient defensible space, ingress and egress, and water supplies. The scattered nature of development in Lincoln County makes outreach and coordinated risk reduction efforts a challenge. Additionally, outside of subdivision regulations, Lincoln County lacks a regulatory framework in which to address wildland fire risk such as zoning and building codes. As such it is not uncommon to see log or wood frame homes in the WUI with large open decks surrounded by dense vegetation. Finally, because the vast majority of land in Lincoln County is owned and managed by the federal and state governments and private industry, coordinating fuels reduction projects is imperative to provide for efficient use of resources and public safety. _____

CHAPTER III—CONDITIONS, TRENDS, AND PROJECTIONS

POPULATION

Data for the tables and graphs included in this chapter come from the U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey; the Montana Department of Labor and Industry, and MT Census and Economic Information Center.

POPULATION CHANGE

Since 1990 Lincoln County's population has grown steadily, with minor fluctuations corresponding with changes in local and national economic conditions – see Figure 5. As of 2017 the population of Lincoln County was estimated at 19,440. Corresponding with the last national recession, Lincoln County's population has declined slightly from the 2010 high of 19,683 but has shown signs of growth in recent years. Going forward the County's population is projected to increase slightly over the next decade and then begin to level off by 2030.

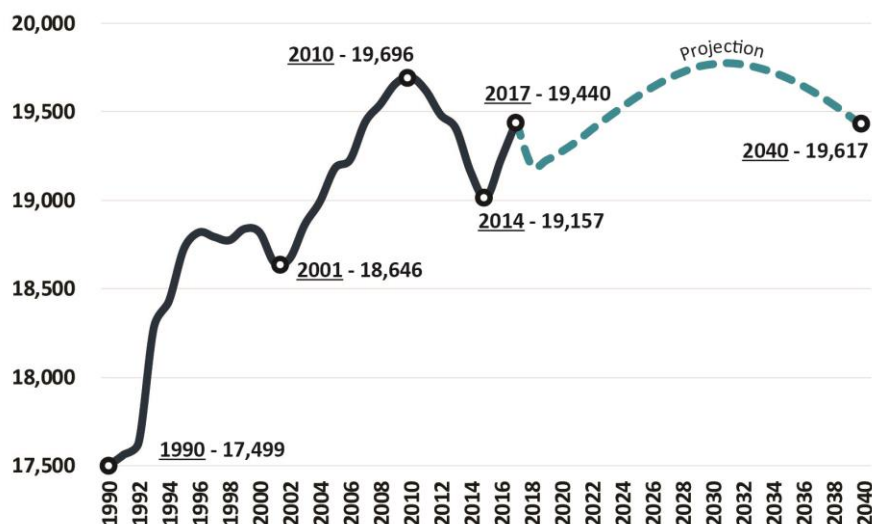


Figure 5 Population Change and Projections

Over the last 15 years, population growth in Lincoln County has been driven largely by migration as opposed to natural change (births and deaths). The most recent population increase has been fueled by spikes in net migration which have offset declines in natural change – see Figure 6. As noted in the age distribution section below, much of the recent in-migration has come from retirees moving to the County.

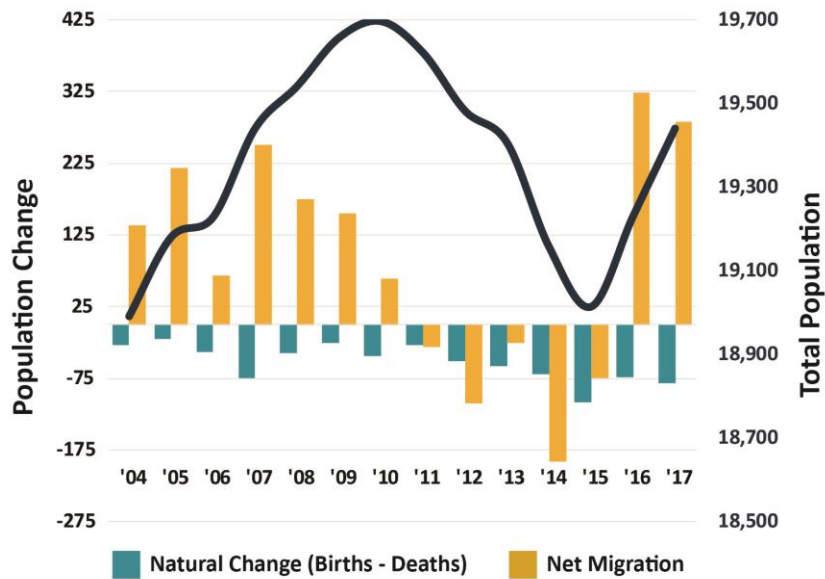


Figure 6 Population Change, Natural Change vs. Net Migration

AGE DISTRIBUTION

As of 2017, the 45-64 age group made up the largest share of Lincoln County's population at 31%, followed by 65+ (28%), 18-44 (23%) and under 18 (18%). As shown in Figure 7, these figures are representative of an aging trend in Lincoln County, with the 65+ age group being the only age group to experience a population increase since 2010. During this same time period, the median age in Lincoln County increased from 48.4 to 52.1. Comparatively, the median age of Montana in 2010 was 39.7 and 39.8 in 2017.

Taken together, these figures point to a population that is growing older with a decreasing share of school-aged children. This trend is notable because an aging population will likely have different needs in terms of housing, mobility, and healthcare and possibly different priorities at the ballot box.

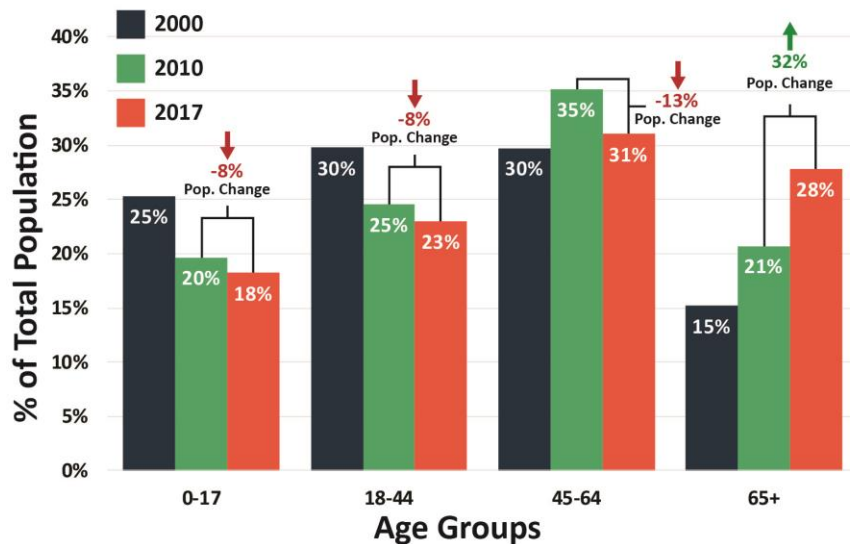


Figure 7 Age Groups

ECONOMY

EMPLOYMENT

As of 2017, total employment in Lincoln County was estimated at 8,749. The industries employing the greatest number of people in 2017 were government, healthcare, and retail – see Figure 8. However, the number of government jobs in the County will likely decline slightly in the future with the EPA having completed its cleanup role of the Libby Asbestos Superfund Site.

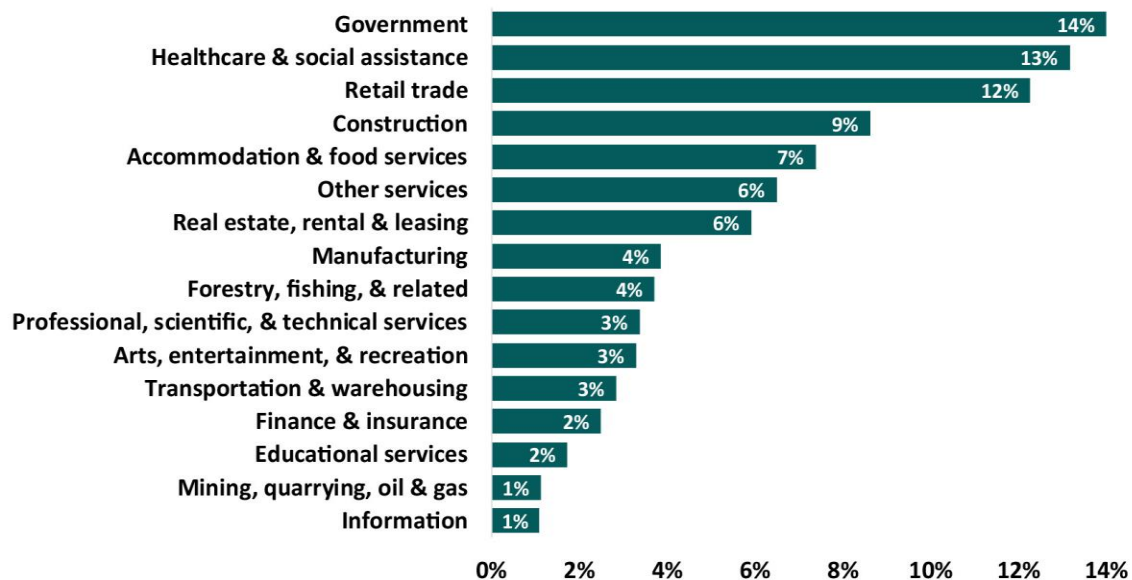


Figure 8 Employment by Industry Sector

Since the turn of the century, Lincoln County has experienced ups and downs in employment, brought on by the impacts of the national recession and fluctuations in local employment opportunities – see Figure 9. At its peak in 2007, total employment stood at 9,579. At its low in 2014, total employment was at 8,563, an 11% decrease. During this time period nearly every industry sector saw employment decreases, with the largest total decreases being in forestry, government, construction, and mining – see Figure 10.

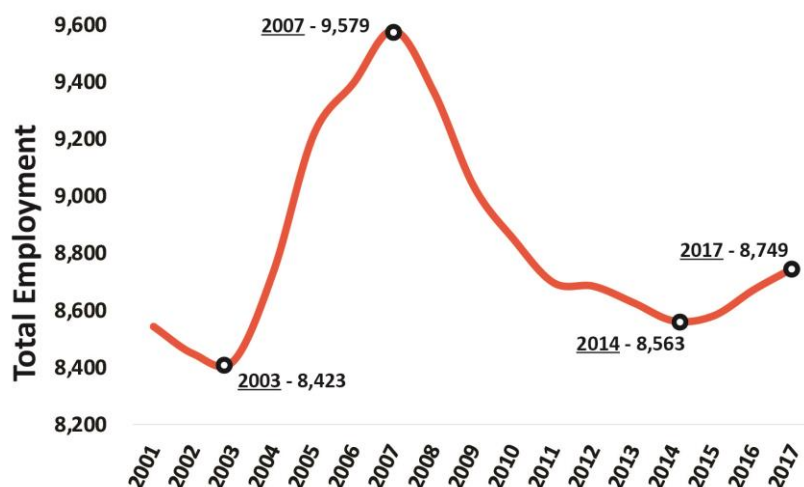


Figure 9 Total Employment 2001-2017

However, since 2014 Lincoln County has seen a slight uptick in total employment, with employment increases in 10 of 18 industry sectors analyzed. The largest employment increases were seen in accommodations and food services, health care and social assistance, and government. Despite this recent increase in employment several industry sectors, which have traditionally provided living wage jobs in the County, have continued to see declines in employment, notably mining and construction.

UNEMPLOYMENT

As Lincoln County's economy has ebbed and flowed, the unemployment rate over the last roughly 30 years has been traditionally high relative to the rest of the state – see Figure 11. During the 2007 high in employment, Lincoln County still had the state's second highest unemployment rate at 7.5%, more than double the state's unemployment rate of 3.6%.

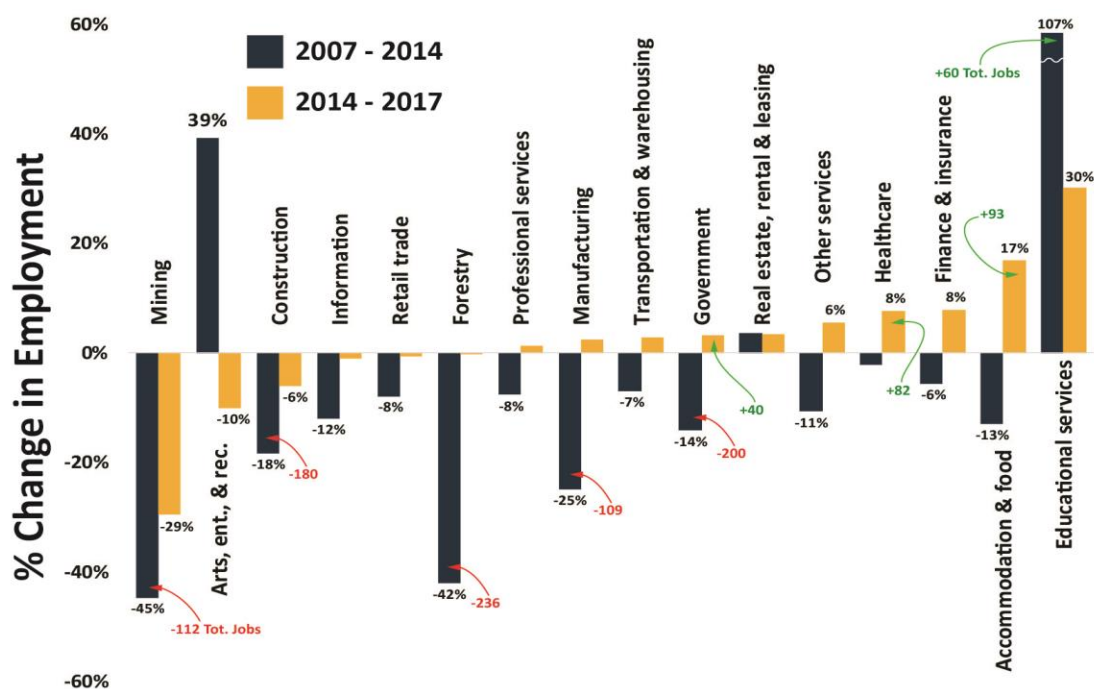


Figure 10 Change in Employment by Industry

During the recession years the unemployment rate in Lincoln County climbed to 15% in 2010, again more than double the state's rate of 7.3%. While the unemployment rate in the County dropped to 7.4% as of 2018, Lincoln County still lags behind the state, where the unemployment rate stood at 3.7% in 2018.

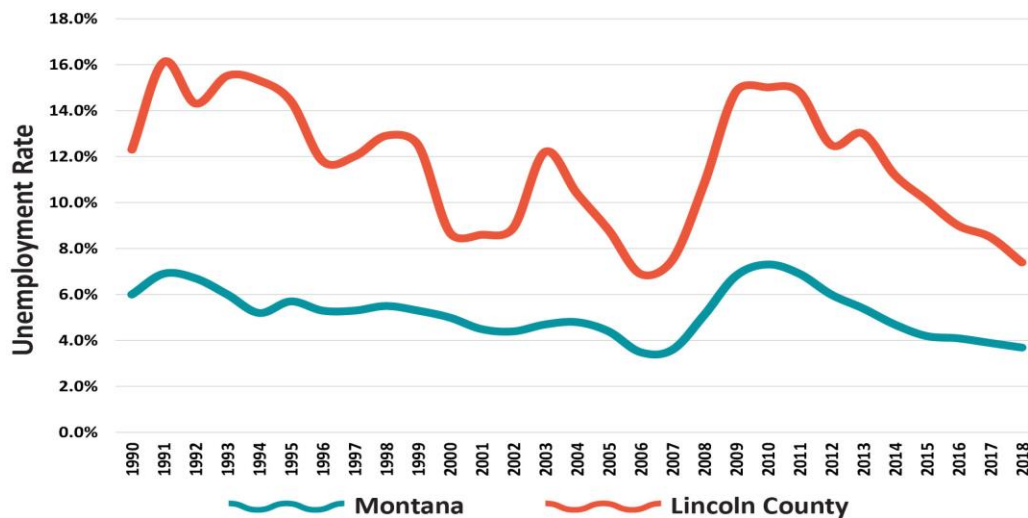


Figure 11 Lincoln County and Montana Unemployment Rates

Unemployment in Lincoln County is not spread equally across age groups. Younger generations in Lincoln County are experiencing higher levels of unemployment compared to older age groups – see Figure 12. In developing this growth policy several theories emerged to explain this phenomenon: The lack of good entry level opportunities, prevalence of seasonal jobs, generational poverty/low expectations, wanting to work outside of the formal economy, and the lack of a strong work ethic have all been suggested, but the true causes are unclear. What is clear is the lack of job opportunities for young adults makes it difficult for the County to retain younger generations and attract young families to Lincoln County. Additionally, the high unemployment rate for the 45-54 age group is also notable as this age group is traditionally made up of people who are in the middle of their careers and who may not be able to easily transition to new career opportunities.

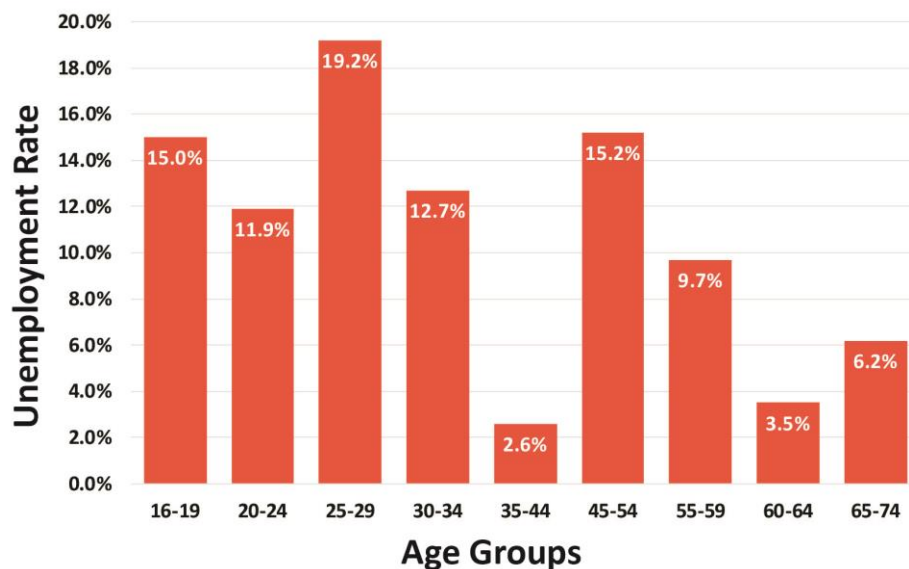


Figure 12 Unemployment By Age Group, 2017

One reason for a lack of job opportunities for younger generations is the local and national trend of older workers staying in the labor force longer and retiring later. As Figure 13 shows, the labor force participation rate among workers over the age of 65 more than doubled between 2009 and 2017.

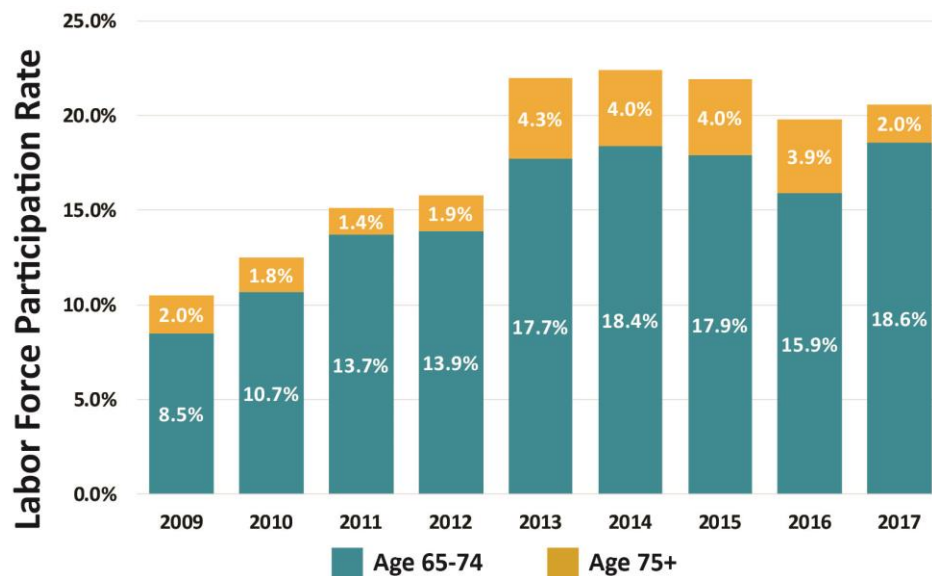


Figure 13 Labor Force Participation Rate for Older Workers

EARNINGS

As of 2017 average annual earnings in Lincoln County stood at \$34,438 compared with \$44,470 for the State of Montana. While earnings in Lincoln County have increased since 2001 at an average annual rate of 3%, that growth has not kept pace with the state as a whole, where the average annual growth rate in earnings was 4% between 2001 and 2017 – see Figure 14.

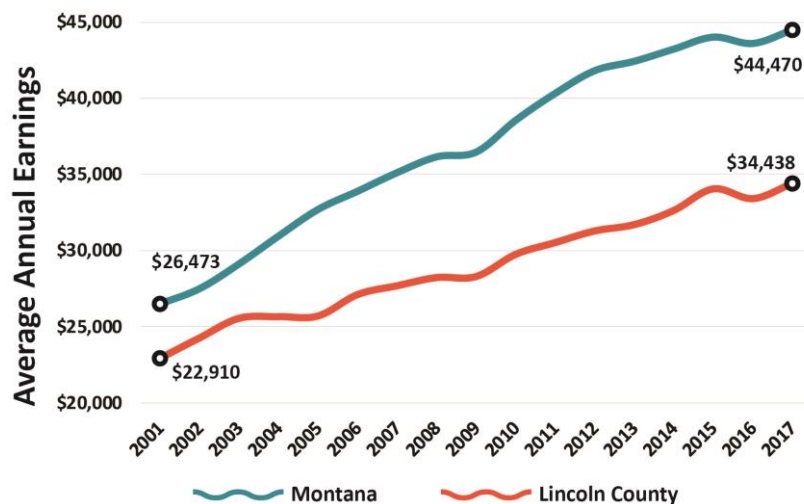


Figure 14 Average Annual Earnings

Unsurprisingly, earnings in Lincoln County vary by industry. As of 2017 average annual earnings were highest in the government, information services, transportation and warehousing, construction, and healthcare – see Figure 15. Over the previous decade the level of increase (or decrease) in average annual earnings has varied by industry, with the largest percentage increases experienced in arts, entertainment, and recreation;

construction; and education – see Figure 16. Between 2007 and 2017, 14 of the 16 industry sectors analyzed saw increases in average annual earnings, while the mining and manufacturing industries saw decreases.

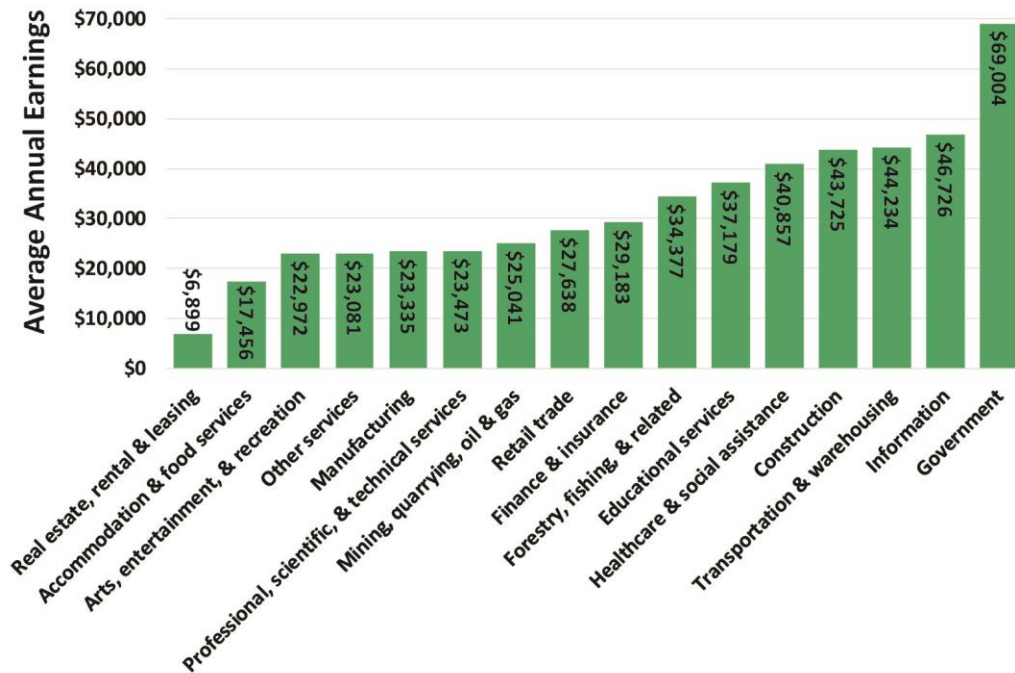


Figure 15 Average Annual Earnings By Industry Sector

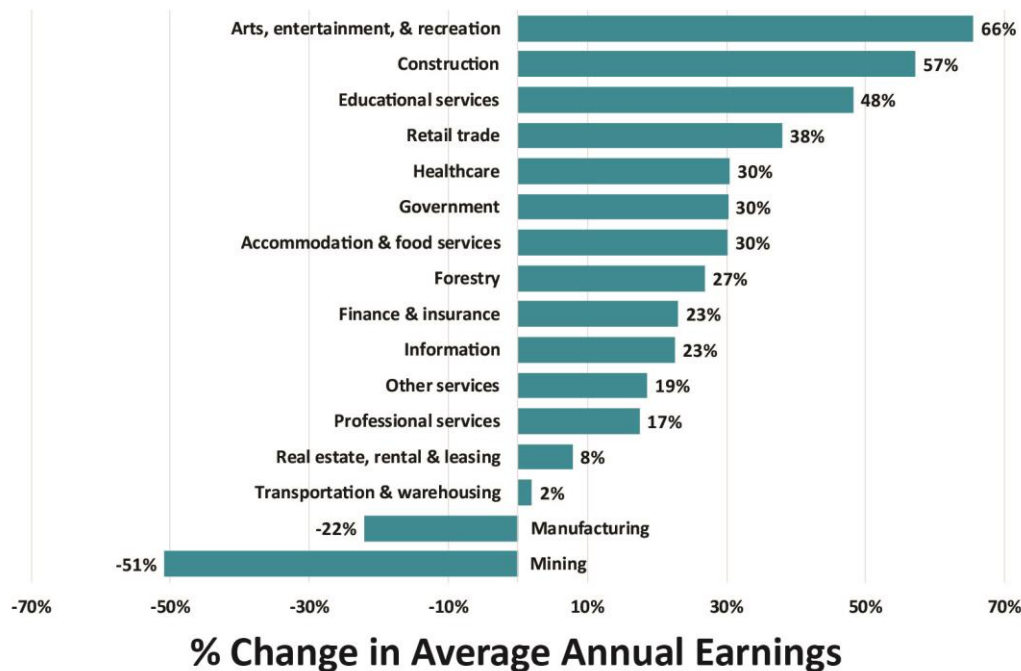


Figure 16 Percent Change in Average Annual Earnings

INCOME

As of 2017, per capita income in Lincoln County stood at \$34,299 compared with \$45,385 for the State of Montana. Unlike earnings, since 2001, increases in per capita income in Lincoln County have kept pace with the state as a whole, growing at an annual average growth rate of 5% - see Figure 17 – and appears likely to continue in that direction.

As Figure 18 shows, the growth in per capita income is largely a result of increases in non-labor income as opposed to increases in labor earnings. In looking at the components of non-labor income, it becomes clear that the increase in non-labor income is being driven by increases transfer payments, notably age-related transfer payments,

which include social security and Medicare – see Figure 19. The increases in age-related transfer payments make sense in light of increases in the senior population and are likely to continue as the population ages.

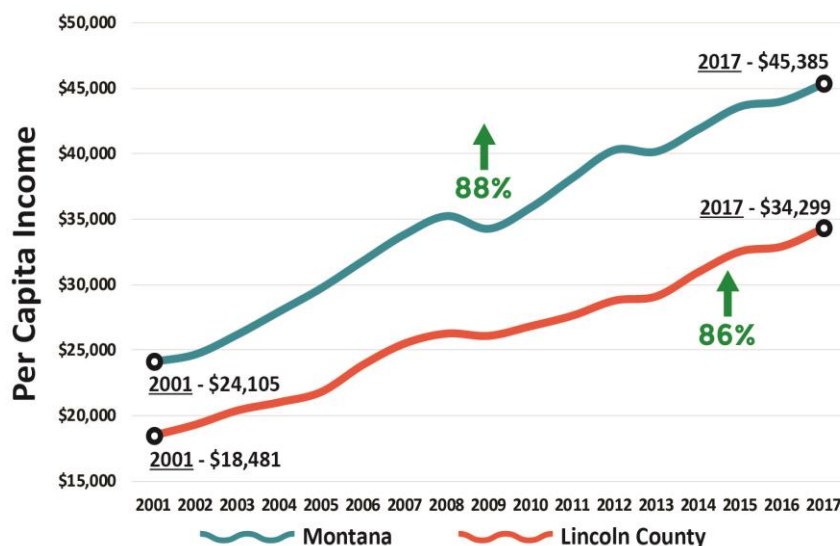


Figure 17 Per Capita Income

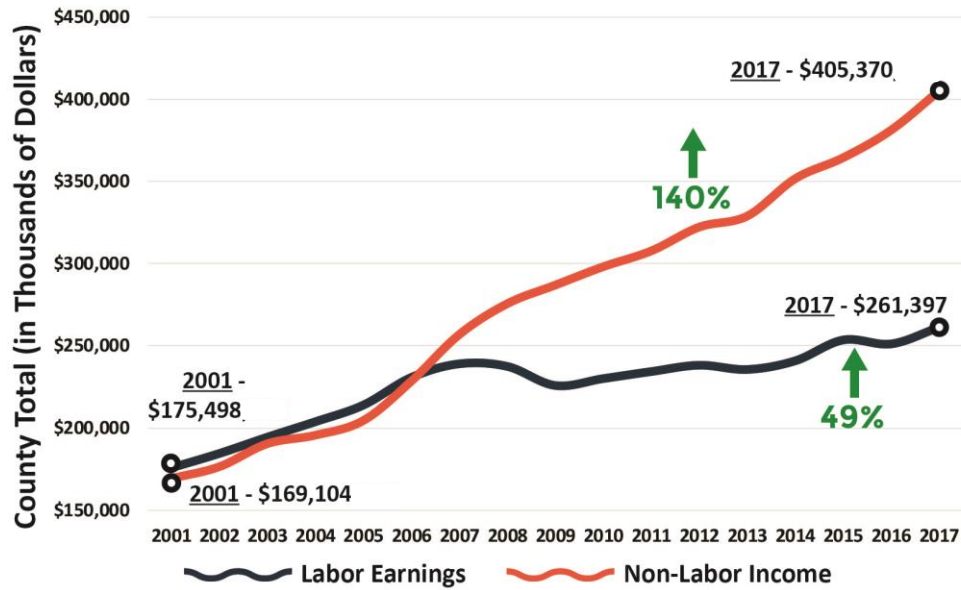


Figure 18 Income from Labor and Non-labor Sources

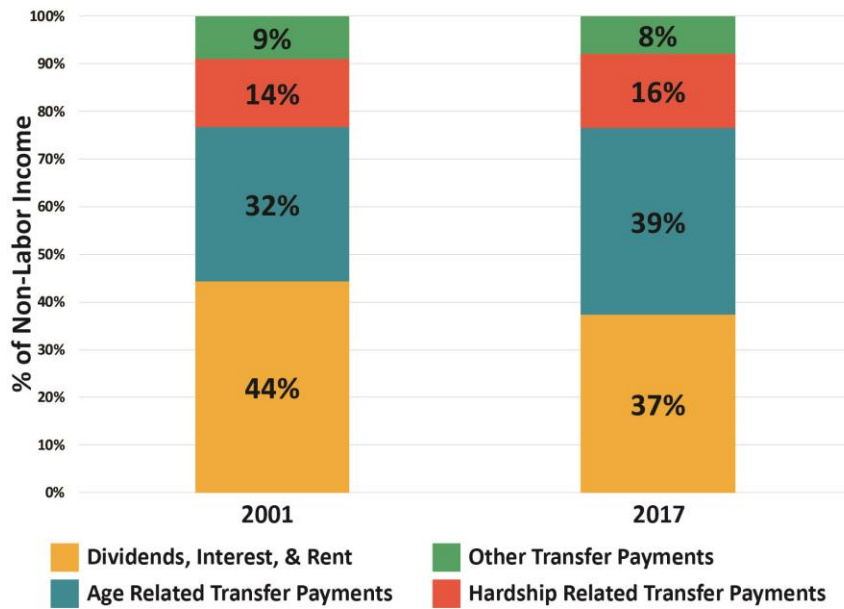


Figure 19 Sources of Non-Labor Income

HOUSING

As of 2017, there were an estimated 11,649 housing units in Lincoln County, an increase since 2010. The housing landscape in Lincoln County is dominated by single-family housing (77% of all housing units) followed by mobile homes (17%), and multi-family housing (6%) – see Table 1.

Table 1 – Housing Unit Indicators	2010	2017
Housing Units	11,044	11,649
Single Family	76%	77%
Multi-Family	6%	6%
Mobile	18%	17%
Occupied Units	84%	71%
Owner Occupied	76%	79%
Renter Occupied	24%	21%
Vacant Units	16%	29%
Vacant - 2nd Homes	71%	62%
For Sale Vacancy Rate	2.6	3.7
Rental Vacancy Rate	8.7	15

Of the occupied housing units in Lincoln County, 79% were owner occupied and 21% were renter-occupied, highlighting an increase in the share of owner-occupied housing since 2010. This trend is further highlighted by the fact that the rental vacancy rate between 2000 and 2014 increased from 8.7% to 15%, while the for-sale vacancy rate increased by just slightly from 2.6% to 3.7%.

One notable trend is the increase in the share of vacant housing, which has increased from 16% of all housing units in 2010 to 29% in 2017. Interestingly, 62% of all vacant housing units in Lincoln County are for seasonal, recreational, or occasional use – i.e., second homes. While the percent share of second homes decreased by nine percentage points between 2010 and 2017, the actual number of second homes increased by 66%.

While data is incomplete for the last two years, home sales have accelerated, and vacancy rates appear to have dropped dramatically in the Libby area, with several new construction projects underway.

HOUSING COSTS

The median housing value as of 2017 in Lincoln County was \$175,500, which is lower than the median housing value for Montana as a whole, which was \$209,100 in 2017. In terms of rent, the median rent in Lincoln County in 2017 was \$654, which represents a 35% increase since 2010.

In order to get a better understanding of housing affordability and housing cost burden it is helpful to analyze housing costs as a percent of household income. The United States Department of Housing and Urban Development defines housing cost burden as paying more than 30% of household income on housing. In 2017 an estimated 50% of renters in Lincoln County had a housing cost burden, which is slightly lower than the state as a whole, but a 15-percentage point increase since 2010 - see Figure 20. The rental housing cost burden is especially pronounced in Eureka and Troy where, as of 2017, an estimated 73% and 81% of respective renters spent more than 30% of their income on rent. While the figure is slightly better for owner occupied housing, still 26% of homeowners in Lincoln County were estimated to have a housing cost burden in 2017 compared to 22% for the state as a whole. While it is unclear how much more than 30% renters and homeowners spend on housing, the number warrants policy considerations identified in the Land Use and Development section related to addressing affordable housing before it becomes urgent.

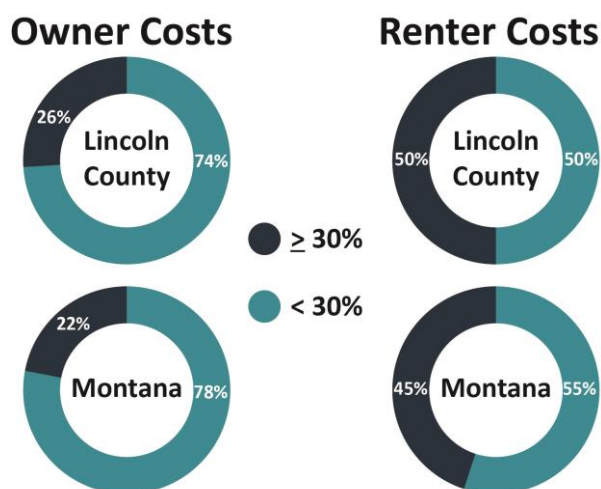


Figure 20 Housing Cost Burden, 2017

HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION

As of 2017 there were an estimated 8,244 households in Lincoln County, an 11% decrease from 2010 when there were 9,237 households. During this period, household composition shifted with the number of family households decreasing by 18% and non-family households increasing by 3%. At the same time the number of households with children under the age of 18 decreased by 29% and the number of households with an individual over the age of 65 increased by 22%. Soon, more one and two person households are expected due to the aging population.

Similar patterns emerged during this period when looking at household size. Between 2010 and 2017 the share of one- and two-person households in Lincoln County increased by five and two percentage points, respectively, while the share of three and four or more person households decreased by six and two percentage points, respectively. Despite the shift to more one- and two-person households, the average household size in Lincoln County increased between 2010 and 2017 from 2.08 to 2.31. While these data may seem contradictory, the discrepancies are likely explained by the increase in average family size from 2.54 to 2.95 between 2010 and 2017.

LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT

Lincoln County encompasses approximately 3,600 square miles and is largely characterized by mountainous, forested terrain and narrow river valleys. The exception to this is the northeastern portion of the County near Eureka, which is characterized by larger expanses of open grasslands.

LAND OWNERSHIP

Over 75% of land in Lincoln County is under public ownership, the majority of which is national forest land – see Table 2. Additionally, Stimson Lumber and Weyerhaeuser together account for 12% of all land in the County. Non-corporate private land accounts for just over 8% of land, the majority of which is concentrated in the northeastern portion of the County – see Figure 21.

Table 2 – Land Ownership	Acres	% of Total
Federal Govt.	1,726,100	73.4%
Weyerhaeuser	207,272	8.8%
General Private	199,734	8.5%
Stimson Lumber	94,674	4.0%
State Govt.	75,115	3.2%
Unclassified	44,852	1.9%
Local Govt.	3,064	0.1%

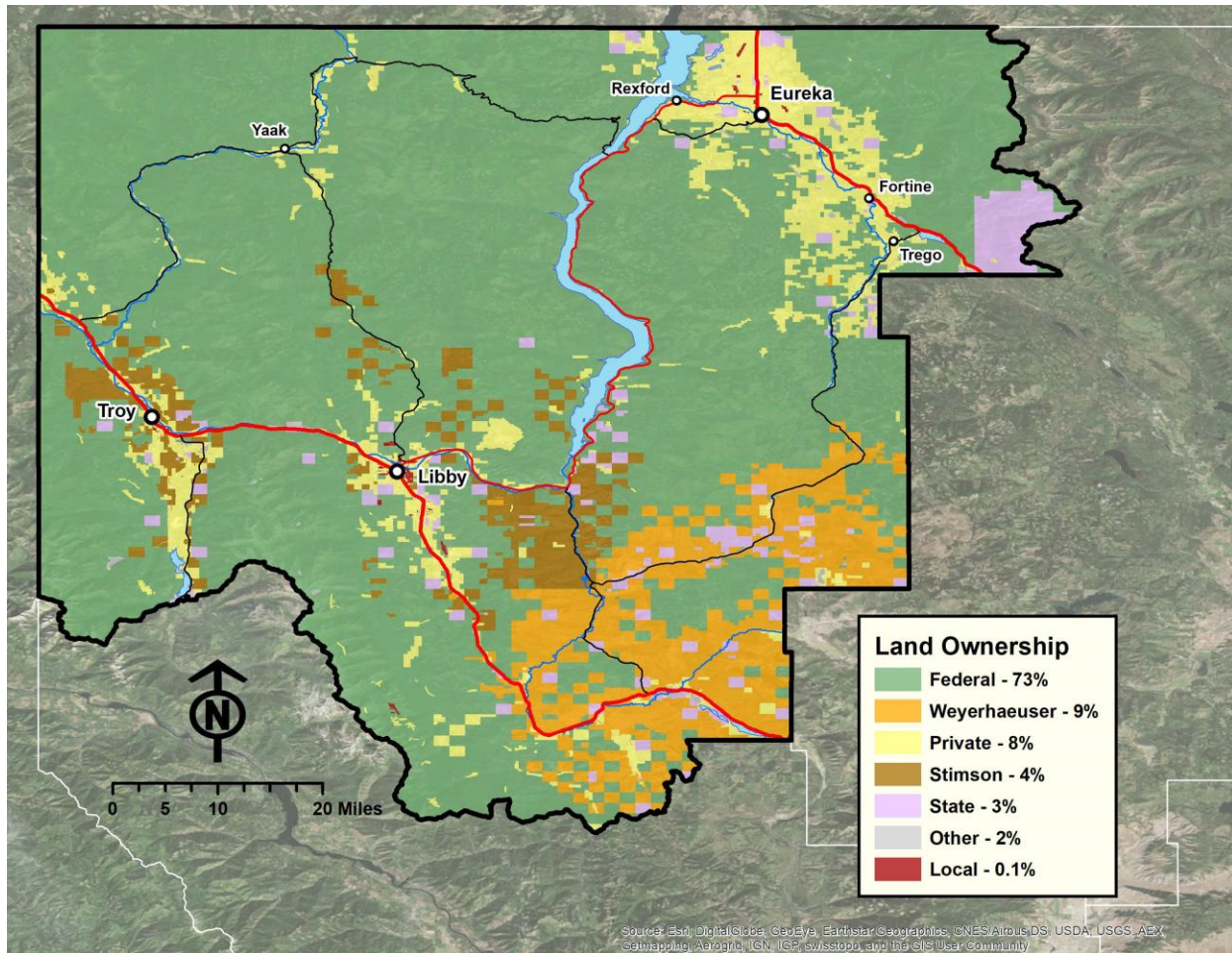


Figure 21 Land Ownership

Public lands benefit Lincoln County by providing for scenic beauty and economic opportunities in recreation, hunting and fishing, restoration work, forestry, and tourism. However, the high percentage of public lands in Lincoln County results in a small tax base as non-corporate private lands make up only a small share of the total land area. In addition, while there are federal programs that assist communities with large tracts of nontaxable federal lands (Payment in Lieu of Taxes and Secure Rural Schools) there is constant uncertainty as to the future amount and sustainability of these funds.

This pattern of land ownership and the corresponding implications to the local economy and the County's tax base are major issues for Lincoln County. The federal management policies and priorities of these lands can at times differ from priorities at the local scale. Additionally, the presence of the Cabinet-Yaak Grizzly Bear recovery zone presents unique challenges for access, the development of recreation amenities, and what uses may be allowed on public lands.

DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS

Despite being the 10th most populous county in the state, Lincoln County is predominantly rural and sparsely populated. In the southern portion of the County development is constrained by topography and a limited supply of private developable land. Development in this portion of the County is centered around the Cities of Libby and Troy – see Figure 22. In this area, development outside of these incorporated cities extends south of Troy along Bull Lake Road and south of Libby along U.S. Highway 2.

In the northern portion of the County development is largely concentrated in the Tobacco River Valley primarily around the Town of Eureka. As can be seen in Figure 22, development patterns near Eureka are more spread out, resulting from fewer topographic development constraints and greater presence of private developable land. The Yaak Valley is also home to a limited amount of rural and remote development as is the Happy's Inn area at the Thompson Chain of Lakes – the only area governed by a neighborhood plan.

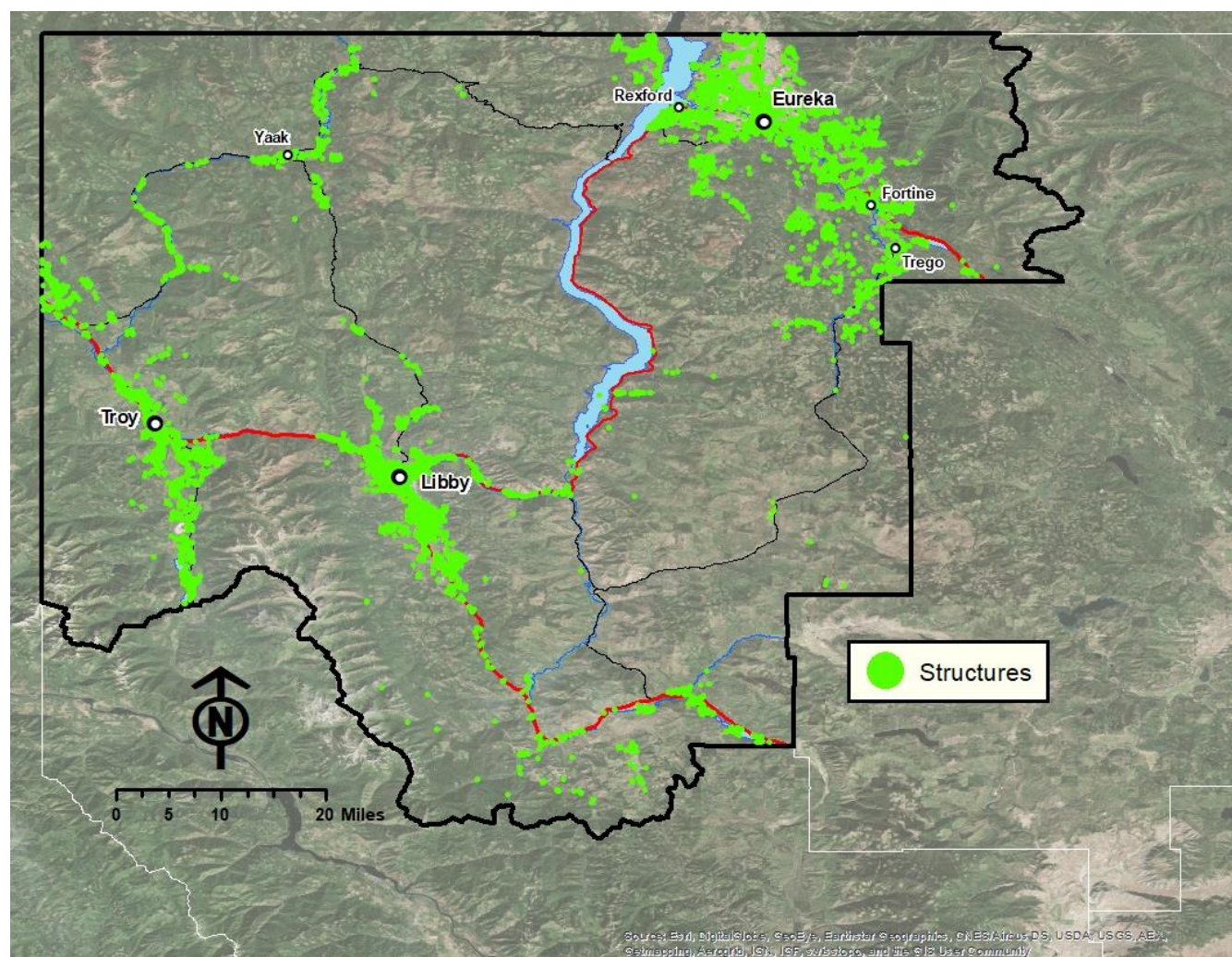


Figure 22 Structural Development Pattern

RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

Throughout much of the 20th century, residential growth was concentrated in, or very near, the established communities of Troy, Libby, and Eureka. In more recent years, much of the new growth has occurred outside of cities and towns in rural landscapes, particularly in the Tobacco River Valley.

While the population of Lincoln County grew by 10% between 1990 and 2000, the number of new single-family homes built increased by 73%, with 93% of these built outside of incorporated cities. Due primarily to the lack of community water and sewer facilities, much of this development is taking place on larger lots. To illustrate, between 1990 and 2016, 72% of new homes were built on lots larger than 10 acres. In total, 44,640 acres in Lincoln County were converted to single-family housing between 1990 and 2016. Residential growth slowed significantly during the most recent national recession, but construction is now on the upswing once again, although it is too soon to know if future growth rates will reflect those of the recent past.

AGRICULTURE

Agriculture in Lincoln County is limited due to mountainous terrain and narrow valleys. The only considerable body of open land for agricultural purposes is in the Tobacco Valley near Eureka. Accordingly, less than 5% of the land in Lincoln County is classified as rangeland or agriculture.

LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS

While some land use and development regulations can increase building costs, overall, they work to maintain economic stability and protect property values. The Lincoln County Subdivision Regulations are one of the primary tools employed by the County to review development proposals. The subdivision review process is focused on ensuring that the design of a subdivision does not have negative impacts on public health and safety as well as other review criteria. The subdivision review process does not typically influence the location or type of development, and rarely impacts the density of a development. The only zoning regulations that exist within unincorporated areas of the County govern the airports and the Kootenai Business Park in Libby. The City of Libby is the only community with municipal zoning.

Lincoln County also has Lakeshore Protection Regulations which require a permit for construction and development activities conducted within 20 horizontal feet of the mean annual high-water elevation on lakes no smaller than 20 acres in size. The purpose of the permitting process is to conserve and protect County lakes due to their high scenic and resource value to residents and visitors. In general, the regulations are designed to allow landowners to develop their properties while minimizing erosion and protecting water quality; the visual environment; and the physical, chemical, and biological integrity of the lakes.

WATER RIGHTS

The Montana DNRC manages water rights throughout Montana. Montana law currently allows the development of small water appropriations, through wells and other sources, without having to go through a water right permitting process. Water appropriations that draw 35 gallons per minute (GPM) or less and not exceeding 10 acre-feet (AF) per year are exempt from permitting requirements. Two or more groundwater appropriations that are a combined appropriation cannot exceed 10 AF a year, with each appropriation using up to 35 GPM. “Groundwater developments need not be physically connected nor have a common distribution system to be considered a combined appropriation. They can be separate developed springs or wells to separate parts of a project or development.” (Montana DNRC Combined Appropriation Guidance). This rule can limit the feasibility of larger development projects in rural areas due to the time, money and uncertainty of obtaining a water right.

There are no closed basins in Lincoln County. However, the Tobacco River, in northern Lincoln County near Eureka, is over appropriated, meaning that legal water right demands are greater than the physical availability. This is due in part to both agricultural and residential water users but primarily to the Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks claims to protect the Tobacco River fishery. Any new water rights permit application in the area would not meet the criteria for legal water availability. This applies to groundwater sources connected to the river as well as surface waters. What this means is that only appropriations that draw 35 GPM or less and not more than 10 AF a year will be allowed. The over appropriation of the Tobacco River will impact medium and large-scale developments. Smaller developments will likely be exempt from permitting requirements as the typical residential homesite draws between 1.5 to 2.5 AF of water per year.

PUBLIC FACILITIES

TRANSPORTATION

ROADS

Lincoln County’s road network is made up of county roads, city streets (Troy, Libby, Eureka), state highways, and Forest Service roads. The main highway corridors through the County are U.S. Highway 2 (connecting Libby and Troy with Kalispell and Idaho), U.S. Highway 93 (connecting Eureka with Canada and Whitefish), and Highway 37 (connecting Libby and Eureka).

Lincoln County is divided into three road districts – District #1 Libby, District #2 Troy, and District #3 Eureka. The Libby District maintains approximately 180 miles of County roads, 25 miles of gravel Forest Service roads, and 19 bridges. The Troy District maintains approximately 130 miles of paved County roads, 11 miles of gravel roads, and 12 bridges. The Eureka District maintains approximately 300 miles of chip-sealed roads and 10 miles of gravel roads.

The roads districts plow roads during winter months and repair and repave roads in the summer. In addition to their ongoing road maintenance, the districts are also responsible for street sweeping,

clearing ditches and culverts, repairing culverts, placing and maintaining road signs, and maintaining bridges.

Most Lincoln County roads are old and built to standards that are not current. Lincoln County does not build roads, only maintains them. New roads built to serve subdivisions are generally the responsibility of a homeowner's association – the County has not taken on a new road since 1993. Lincoln County's goal is to surface coat each road every five years and to continue to fix problem areas and raise road standards. Currently, snow plowing creates a significant funding problem in all road districts. Additionally, traffic related to new subdivision growth in the Tobacco valley is a major budgeting issue facing the Eureka District.

Lincoln County's relatively low population means that congestion is rarely an issue. However, there are times when congestion at the Canadian border north of Eureka can result in long backups and safety issues on Highway 93. This can make it difficult for Lincoln County residents to access their homes when they must deal with border traffic.



In addition to state, county and city roads, there are also thousands of miles of Forest Service roads in Lincoln County. These roads are essential for managing the forest for fire protection, timber harvest, access to mines, and recreation. Currently many roads are closed seasonally or permanently for motorized access. Forest Service road maintenance budgets do not adequately cover the costs of maintaining all these roads to public standards.

[Lincoln County Courthouse in Libby](#)

PARA-TRANSIT

Lincoln County Transportation Service provides demand-response transit service for Lincoln County seniors and individuals with a disability. Drivers and vehicles are based in Troy, Libby, and Eureka to best meet the needs of Lincoln County residents. Lincoln County Transportation Service transports people for a variety of purposes including medical appointments, recreation, shopping, and work.

LINCOLN COUNTY ANNEX

In addition to the Courthouse and Annex in downtown Libby, Lincoln County maintains an annex facility in Eureka to provide access to services such as paying bills, renewing registrations, health nurse, and meeting with the district commissioner for residents in the north part of the County. The geographical and sparsely populated distance of 70 miles makes this a much-valued resource.

RAIL

Both passenger and freight rail service are available in south Lincoln County. Amtrak's Empire Builder passenger train departs daily from the unstaffed Libby station traveling west to Seattle and Portland in the morning and the east to Chicago in the evening. It traverses the Hi-Line in Montana and makes available public transportation completely across the northern tier. The Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) line in south Lincoln County provides an important freight rail connection for the County. The rail spur at the Kootenai Business Park provides access to the BNSF mainline, creating opportunities for manufacturing and industrial development.

AIR

Lincoln County has airports in Troy, Eureka, and Libby. The Troy airport is owned by the Forest Service. Some maintenance is shared with the Lincoln County Airport Board. It has a chip sealed runway of 3,570 feet. Currently there are no hangars on the field for occupancy, though tie downs are available. Libby Airport is south of Libby on the Farm to Market Road, with a 5,000-foot long runway. Numerous FAA grants have been secured to upgrade the airport over the years. It has a paved taxiway as well as a paved apron and lighted beacon segmented circle with wind cone. Tie downs are available but there are no public hangars. Aviation gas and jet fuel are available on the field. Eureka has an airport, owned by the County, which has a 4,200-foot runway and a lighted beacon segmented circle with wind cone. Aviation gas and jet fuel are available on the field. All of Lincoln County's airports are very busy during the fire season.

WATER

Outside of the communities of Troy, Libby, Eureka, and Rexford, Lincoln County residents largely rely on individual groundwater wells for their water supply. Several community water systems have been developed to address water issues where development has taken place. There are approximately 88 community or public water systems in Lincoln County which includes cities, businesses, churches, and mobile home parks. Residents not supplied with water from a community water system usually rely on individual wells. As of February 2019, there were 7,263 wells in Lincoln County. Of these wells 84% are used for domestic purposes. While not in Lincoln County's jurisdiction, one big water issue facing County residents is Libby's aging water distribution system which needs replacing as there are currently extensive leaks throughout the system. Repairing and updating the water system has been estimated to cost approximately \$1.5 million. As a general policy, Lincoln County strongly supports the efforts of Troy, Libby, Rexford and Eureka to expand and maintain their public water systems.

WASTEWATER TREATMENT

Wastewater treatment systems in Lincoln County are primarily individual septic drain field systems. The communities of Troy, Libby, Eureka, and Rexford all have public wastewater systems. Outside of these communities, the Kootenai Business Park has a wastewater distributions system with aerated lagoons. As a general policy, Lincoln County strongly supports the efforts of Troy, Libby, and Eureka to expand and maintain their public water systems. Additionally, where water quality may be impaired by septic effluent, Lincoln County supports the development of community / public wastewater systems to be developed and maintained.

PARKS

Lincoln County maintains parks consisting of roughly 500 acres. J. Neils Park north of Libby and Kootenai Falls Park on the Kootenai River account for almost half of the total park acreage. The County Fairgrounds in Eureka also provide substantial facilities and opportunities for enhancement. The remaining parks are divided among neighborhood parks and scattered undeveloped parcels dedicated as part of subdivision process. As a general policy, the County prefers new subdivisions pay cash in lieu of parkland or provide and maintain parkland and facilities within new subdivisions as opposed to dedicating parkland for the County to maintain. This policy will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis and may be altered depending on individual circumstances.

LOCAL SERVICES

LAW ENFORCEMENT

Lincoln County's Sheriff's Office provides services outside the city limits of Troy, Libby, and Eureka. Each of these communities have local police departments responsible for law enforcement protection within city limits. All departments work cooperatively in providing police protection. The Sheriff's Office consists of administrative staff, sworn deputy sheriffs, detention and dispatch. The Sheriff also oversees additional sworn reserve deputy volunteers and oversees the activities of two search and rescue organizations. The jail facilities are in the basement of the courthouse; are undersized and create security concerns for processing with the Justice of the Peace, housed in the Annex building a few blocks away.

In addition to deputies based out of Libby, there are resident deputies assigned to the Eureka and Troy areas. The Eureka deputies are headquartered in the North Lincoln County Law Enforcement Center, which is a new facility also housing Eureka Area Dispatch, Eureka Police Department, and Montana Highway Patrol. The Troy deputy has an office within the Troy Police Department.

FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES

Fire protection is a mixture of fire districts, fire service areas, and rural fire departments. These fire districts, service areas, and departments include:

- Libby Rural Fire Department
- Bull Lake Rural Fire District
- Eureka Fire Service Area
- Fisher River Valley Fire/Rescue
- McCormick Rural Fire District
- Trego, Fortine, Stryker Fire Service Area
- Troy Rural Fire District
- Yaak Fire Service Area
- West Kootenai Fire Protection Company

All fire districts in Lincoln County are part of a mutual aid agreement and will respond to calls for assistance from other districts. The State Fire Marshall office in Kalispell assists with commercial inspections, training, and inspections of suspicious fires. The Lincoln County Emergency Management Agency (EMA) is the lead agency for disaster related services and coordination. The EMA is responsible for coordinating mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery activities related to natural and man-made disasters in Lincoln County.

There are limited portions of the County that are without structure fire protection, primarily due to distance from a rural fire department. Rural departments have identified several major needs including a shortage of volunteer members and/or aging members; funding to meet increased demands from growth which include operations, training and equipment.

LINCOLN COUNTY, MONTANA EMERGENCY DISTRICTS-2016

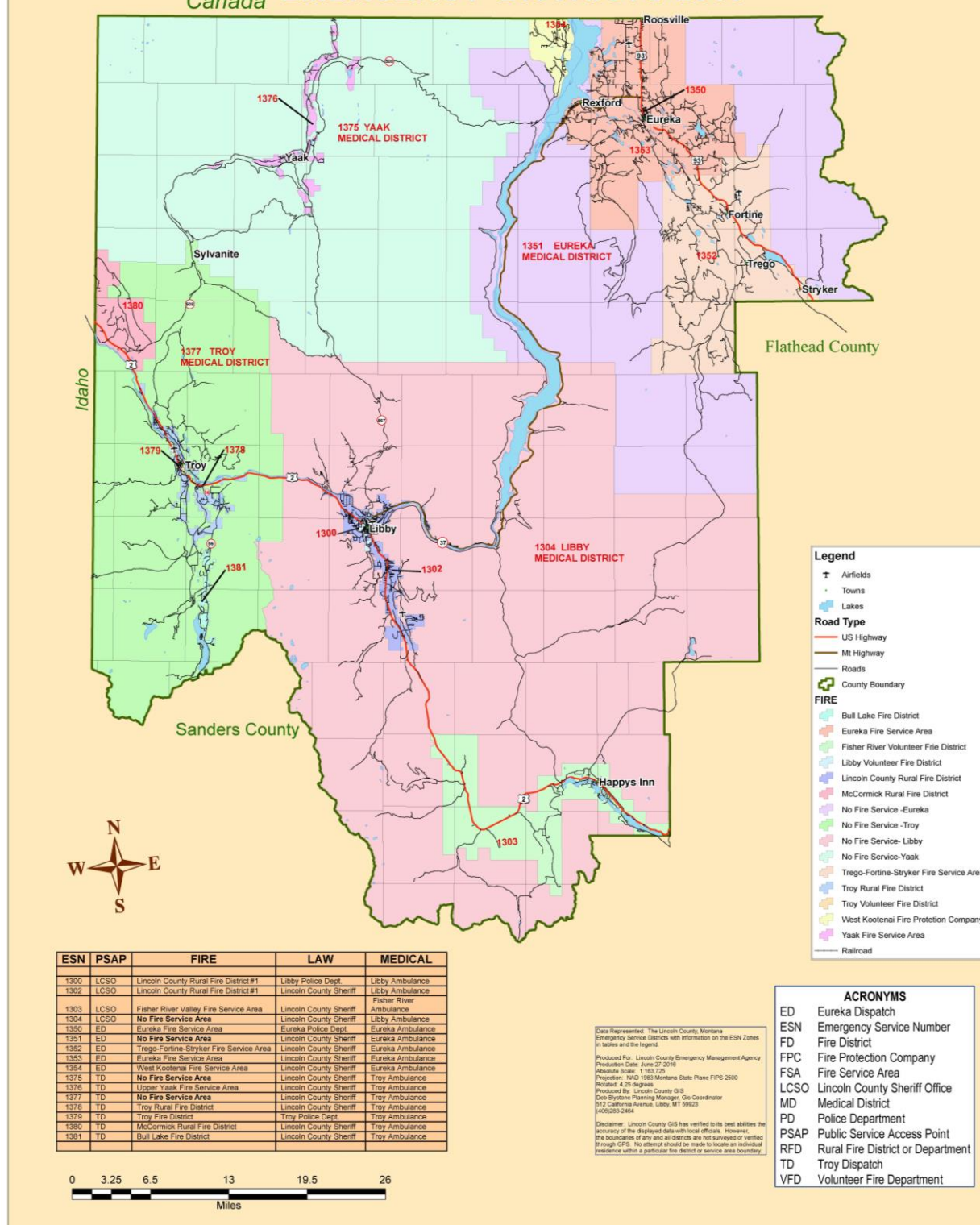


Figure 23 Emergency Districts

SOLID WASTE

All waste in Lincoln County is taken to the County landfill outside of Libby. While the current cell has an estimated nine years remaining until it is at capacity, there is ample room at the landfill site to develop another cell, which is in planning at the time of this writing. Transfer stations operate out of Troy, Eureka, and Happy's Inn. Several companies provide trash pickup service for most of Lincoln County. In addition, Lincoln County provides "green boxes" in numerous locations to make disposal of household garbage more convenient for residents. For recycling, Lincoln County has self-serve recycling trailers dispersed throughout the county and the landfill in Libby is near completion of being renovated as a recycling facility.

POWER

Electric service in Eureka and northern Lincoln County is provided by Lincoln Electric Co-op. Flathead Electric Cooperative provides electrical service in the City of Libby and in the surrounding area. The City of Libby recently installed a small water turbine power generator along Cedar Street and is selling power back to Flathead Electric. It provides enough to support 5-9 homes. The Yaak area and the area around Bull Lake are serviced by Northern Lights, also a cooperative. The Town of Troy has its own electrical distribution system. All electrical utilities are dependent on the Bonneville Power Administration for their wholesale electric needs. Commercial facilities and residents use a variety of fuels for their heating needs. Electricity, propane, wood and fuel oil are used throughout the area for heating. There is no natural gas available in south Lincoln County.

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Outside of Libby and Eureka insufficient broadband internet connectivity is a common concern in Lincoln County – particularly in Troy and unincorporated areas in the south end of the County. South Lincoln County is served by two internet service providers – Montana Sky and Frontier Communications. At the time of writing Frontier Communications was in the process of being sold to two investment firms, as such the longevity of Frontier as a provider is not certain yet the infrastructure will remain in place. Frontier maintains the only fiber optic line going into Troy from the Idaho side. Fiber that comes into Libby from the east is maintained by Montana Sky, though they also use wireless transmission to extend their service into Troy. Montana Sky has made recent equipment upgrades in both Libby and Troy to allow faster upload and download speeds. The upgrade in Libby has nearly doubled internet speeds. Northern Lincoln County is served by Interbel Telephone Cooperative, and areas around Eureka have high internet capacity that is seen as a key asset in providing for economic growth in the region. Rural and remote areas of the County rely on satellite internet, which tends to have low data limits and operates at slower speeds.

INTERNET CONCERNS IN TROY

As mentioned above, internet connectivity is a pronounced issue in the Troy area where internet speeds and access are much lower than the rest of the County. There several infrastructure investments needed to increase internet speeds and access in Troy. There is infrastructure in place, it just needs to be activated or upgraded. The problem is that due to Troy's small population it is

difficult for the community to demonstrate high enough return on investment for providers to upgrade outdated or degraded infrastructure.

To address this issue, Troy has been working with consultants to layout a road map for getting better internet connectivity in the community. This work identified last mile and middle mile connections have the primary issues affecting internet speeds and access in Troy. Middle mile connections refer to connections between the backbone internet network and the local network while last mile connections refer to connecting the end customer's home or business to the local network provider. The roadmap lays out a path for Troy to address this important issue, starting with the development of a broadband task force. Looking ahead, the roadmap calls for developing a broadband strategic plan to more clearly identify demands, specific needs, and funding opportunities.

EDUCATION

Flathead Valley Community College (FVCC) maintains a campus in Lincoln County which offers the same coursework as the main college in Kalispell including associate degrees in nursing and other healthcare-related fields and technical certificates for workforce training. The college has been an important resource for the community as major industries have waxed and waned and re-training has been sought by interested employees and employers. In addition, it provides access to college credits for Lincoln County high school students.

NATURAL RESOURCES & WILDLIFE

From its vast forestlands to large mineral deposits, diverse aquatic and terrestrial habitat, extensive public lands, and quality water resources, Lincoln County is rich in natural resources. The County also has a history of natural resource and environmental issues as well, including two superfund sites, overgrown forests at risk to catastrophic wildfires, and areas of poor air ventilation during winter months. With Lincoln County's vast natural resources and environmental concerns comes the need for thoughtful planning to preserve and utilize these resources and the quality of life residents enjoy.

WATER RESOURCES

SURFACE WATER

The primary surface water sources in Lincoln County are found in the Yaak, Upper Kootenai, Fisher, and Stillwater watersheds. The Kootenai River flows south out of Canada into Lincoln County and leaves the state west of Troy. The Kootenai River Basin is an international watershed encompassing about 18,000 square miles of British Columbia, northwestern Montana, and northern Idaho. Montana's portion of the Kootenai Basin is narrow, with steep and densely wooded mountains and slender flood plains along the river and its two major tributaries, the Fisher and Yaak Rivers.

The upstream portion of the Kootenai River is dominated by Libby Dam and its reservoir, Lake Koocanusa. Sub-basins include the Upper and Lower Kootenai Rivers, Yaak River, and Fisher River. The southwest portion of the County is within the Lower Clark Fork watershed. The Lower Clark Fork sub-basin is part of the Columbia River basin and is characterized by mountainous and forested terrain. The Lincoln County portion of the watershed is among the least populated areas in the basin.

In 1964 the Columbia Basin Treaty, an agreement between the United States and Canada, established the development and operation of dams in the upper Columbia River Basin for purposes of flood control, power generation, and ecological management. The Libby Dam on Kootenai River was constructed under the agreement in the mid-1970s, creating Lake Koocanusa. Construction of the dam required flooding and displacing entire communities. Under the Columbia Basin Treaty, Canada was granted half the revenue from power generated downstream in exchange for regulating flooding in the U.S. by building three dams



Kootenai Falls, Troy

in Canada. But even though the Libby Dam prevents flooding in parts of British Columbia, no such agreement was ever put into place for Montana. In addition, through the treaty, Canada receives on average 250 to 350 million dollars per year for providing flood control and water storage. Three of the dams listed in the Columbia Basin treaty are in British Columbia while the fourth dam, the Libby Dam, is in Lincoln County, yet Lincoln County receives no payment for water storage and flood control. Libby Dam provides water storage and flood control down stream of Lake Koocanusa. As of winter of 2019, the federal government is in negotiations with Canada on updating the Columbia Basin Treaty. Montana's delegation is working to secure the interests of Lincoln County due to the impacts the Treaty has on its citizens and resources.

GROUNDWATER

Lincoln County lies within the Northern Rocky Mountains Intermontane Basins Aquifer. Although most of the basins that compose the aquifer system are not hydraulically connected, they share common hydrologic and geologic characteristics and are treated together as an aquifer system. These basins consist primarily of unconsolidated-deposit aquifers of quaternary sand and gravel. These types of aquifers are the most productive in the Rocky Mountains region and are a source of water for thousands of shallow wells. Recharge to the aquifer is by precipitation that falls directly on basin floors and by snowmelt that runs off the surrounding mountains and is transported into the basins by tributary streams. The chemical quality of ground water is the most pressing groundwater issue. Highly mineralized water is present in shallow and deep aquifers in many parts of the County. Depth to groundwater varies throughout Lincoln County with some areas of deep, low yielding wells.

WATER USERS

Groundwater yields in Lincoln County are generally adequate for domestic use and livestock-watering purposes from wells of 200 feet deep or less. Deeper wells yield adequate volumes of water for irrigation, industrial purposes and public water supply. Although there are few agricultural uses in the County compared to other parts of Montana, irrigation still utilizes the most water in the Kootenai River Basin. Mining and the wood products industry also use significant amounts of water. Public and rural water supplies are drawn almost equally from surface and ground water. In-streams flows in the Kootenai River Basin support electrical power generation, fisheries, and recreation.

Glen Lake Irrigation District is a major water user of North Lincoln County. It manages a series of reservoirs and irrigation ditches to provide water to most agricultural lands in the Tobacco Valley.

MINERAL RESOURCES

Lincoln County is a mineral rich county along with its neighbor to the south, Sanders County. The two counties share copper and silver ore deposits that offer tremendous economic opportunity. Historically, Lincoln County has been home to several active and productive mining operations. However, with the closing of the Troy Mine in 2015, mining operations, and employment in mining,

are virtually non-existent. There are plans by the Hecla Mining Company to bring the Montanore and Rock Creek copper and silver mines into operation in nearby Sanders County. However, these mines have been tied up in regulatory processes and legal challenges for years. While both proposed mines are in Sanders County, it is expected that if they ever become operational, they will provide a substantial number of job opportunities for Lincoln County residents.

FOREST RESOURCES

Lincoln County is heavily forested, with conifer forests covering over 80% of the County area. The U.S. Forest Service owns most of the forestland in the County, which is managed by the Kootenai National Forest. Stimson Lumber and Weyerhaeuser also collectively own over 300,000 acres of forest land in the County. The predominant tree species in Lincoln County are Douglas fir, lodgepole pine, western larch, ponderosa pine, grand fir, hemlock, western white pine, sub-alpine fir and cedar, with isolated pockets of whitebark pine at higher elevations. Increased tree density and fuel loading as a result of fire suppression has created stress on forests, resulting in increased insect and disease activity. This, in turn, has resulted in more intense wildfires over a greater land area than existed historically.

TIMBER HARVESTS

Historically, the timber industry has been an important economic driver in Lincoln County in the form of both logging operations and wood processing. However, as of 2019 there are no major lumber mills in Lincoln County and timber harvests have steadily decreased over the last 30 years. As of 2019 the closest lumber mill to Libby is located 40 miles west of Libby in Moyie Spring, Idaho. The overall result is that timber employment has decreased from 26% of total private employment in 1999 to just over 4% in 2016.

Over the last roughly 20 years, most timber harvests in Lincoln County have been on federal and private forest lands, with state lands representing a small share of total timber harvests. However, between 2002 and 2016 timber harvest dropped substantially on both private and federal lands – see Figure 24. Despite this decline in timber harvest, as of 2016 Lincoln County still ranked second in timber harvests when compared to neighboring counties in Montana and Idaho – see Figure 25. One

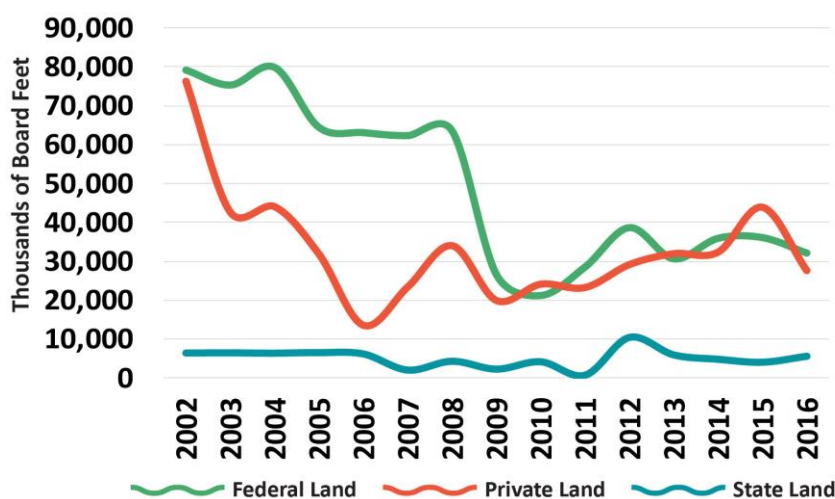


Figure 24 Timber Harvests, 2002 - 2016

bright spot is recent conservation easements placed on forest lands, which can be an effective tool for maintaining working forests.

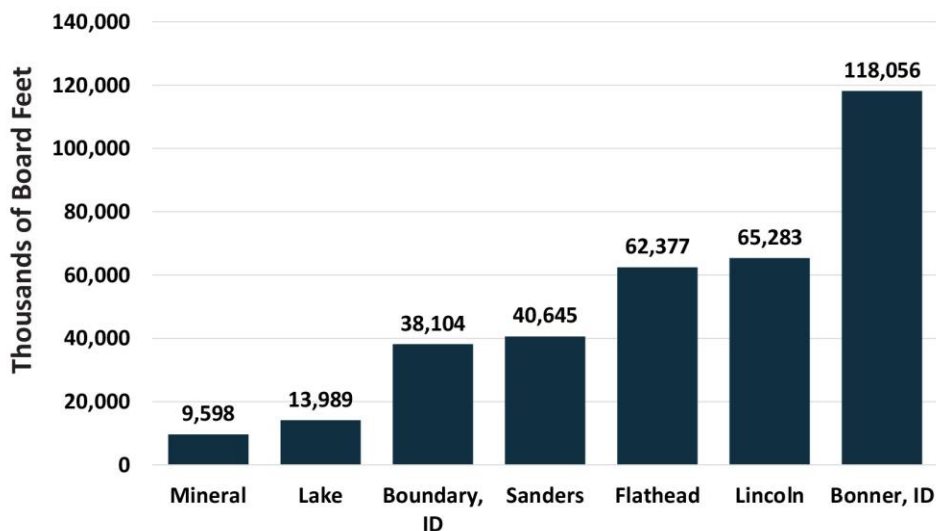


Figure 25 Comparison of County Timber Harvests in 2016

FISH AND WILDLIFE



Fishing Access at Thompson Chain of Lakes

The majority of Lincoln County is forested federal land, which provides habitat for a wide variety of terrestrial and aquatic species. While public lands provide large undisturbed blocks of critical habitat, many terrestrial and aquatic species in Lincoln County depend on low elevation wetland/riparian areas, rivers and streams, or forested foothills on private lands. Subdivision activity in Lincoln County impacts wildlife as these areas tend to be at lower elevations where terrestrial species seek forage, and which can overlap with winter ranges for ungulates. As a result, human-wildlife conflicts and

limitations on wildlife migration are an outcome of increased subdivision activity in the County.

Lincoln County is home to six ungulates: elk, moose, mule deer, whitetail deer, big horn sheep, and mountain goat. Whitetail deer and to a lesser degree, elk, moose, and mule deer are prevalent throughout Lincoln County. Deer and elk are the most hunted game animals in the region and provide a tremendous economic and recreational activity for residents and some nonresidents of the area.

Currently, there are two issues that pose a threat to wildlife and fisheries: Aquatic Invasive Species and Chronic Wasting Disease. The former is being addressed at a statewide level, but with special emphasis on some western counties such as Lincoln with so many water bodies. Chronic Wasting Disease has recently been found in deer in the city limits of Libby. Each of these issues will take a concerted partnership with Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks to address.

THREATENED AND ENDANGERED SPECIES

There are currently four animals listed by the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service as threatened or endangered species in Lincoln County. The Kootenai River White Sturgeon is the only endangered species. The gray wolf was removed from the endangered species list in Montana, which has a cooperative management plan currently being implemented in conjunction with Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks. The three threatened species in the County include the bull trout, grizzly bear, and Canada lynx.

CHAPTER IV—ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS OF STATE LAW

SAND AND GRAVEL RESOURCES

The vast public lands and mountainous terrain naturally concentrate Lincoln County's accessible sand and gravel resources along the carved river valleys and major transportation corridors. Sand and gravel are essential resources to the physical growth and development of communities. They are necessary for the construction of infrastructure and in many housing applications. A major component to the cost of sand and gravel is transportation, therefore sand and gravel must be extracted in proximity to the location of the end user. Sand and gravel operations, although not desirable, may be necessary near residential neighborhoods. Figure 26 shows potential gravel resources and currently permitted gravel pits throughout the county.

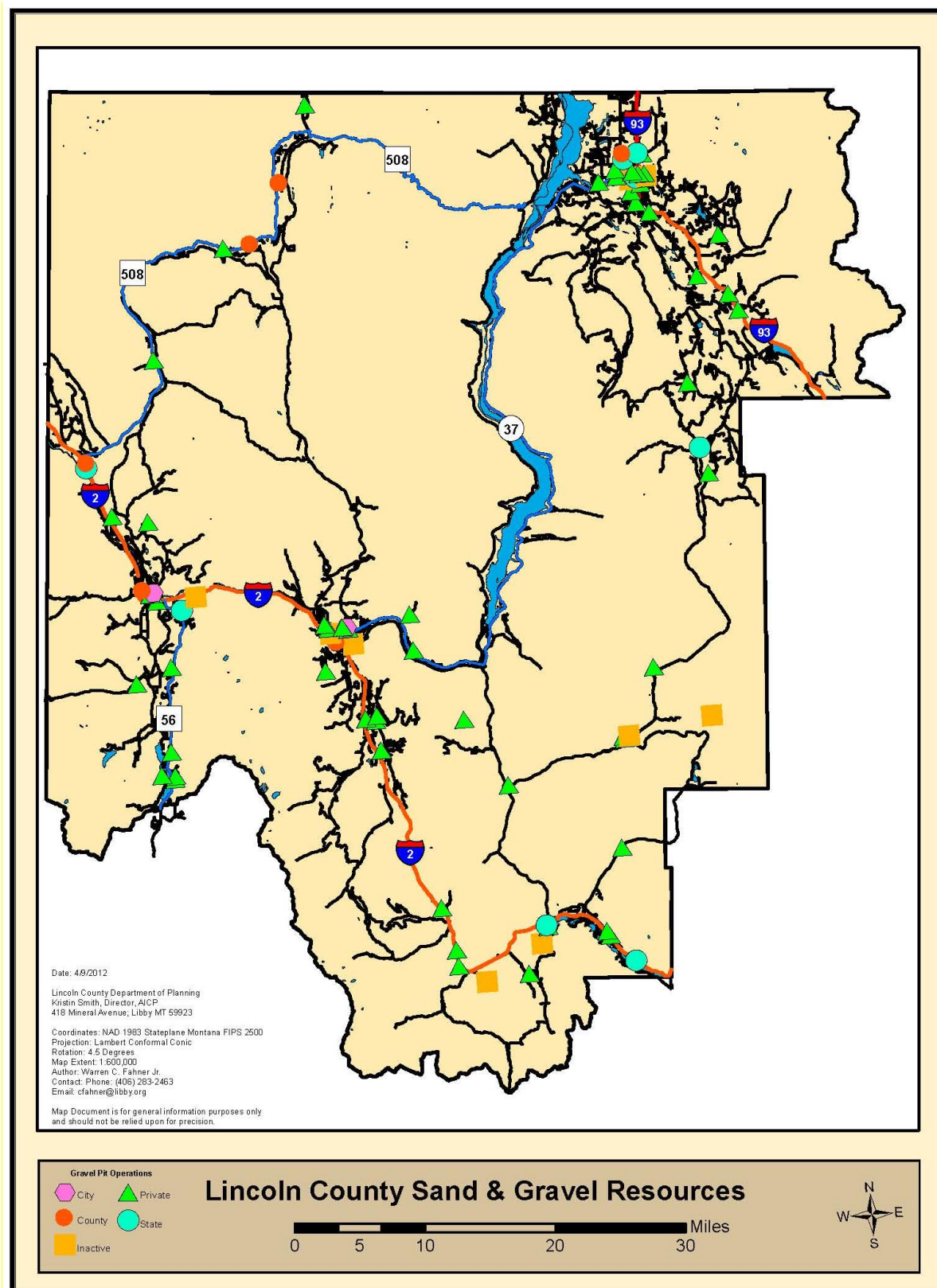


Figure 26 Sand and Gravel Resources

INFRASTRUCTURE STRATEGY

Unlike municipalities that own and maintain water and sewer systems and may accept dedication of new streets and sidewalks, Lincoln County does not own water and sewer systems and does not plan to accept new County roads. New public water and sewer systems will be developed and maintained by either public water and sewer districts or be privately developed and maintained. As discussed previously in this document, the County landfill has less than 10 years of capacity, so plans are being made to address this issue. Chapter II of this growth policy discusses the need for and potential approaches to develop a steady revenue stream to maintain County roads. Lincoln County also owns and maintains roughly 500 acres of public parks which are funded in part through county park districts. There are also several fire districts and fire service areas that rely on local funding through property taxes and special assessments. These approaches to providing public infrastructure are planned to continue, with additional needs addressed opportunistically on a case-by-case basis.

SUBDIVISION REVIEW & PUBLIC HEARING PROCESS

The Montana Subdivision and Platting Act (76-3-101 through 76-3-625, Montana Code Annotated) requires that a subdivision proposal be evaluated for compliance with six primary review criteria, in addition to state and local law. The primary review criteria are a subdivision's anticipated:

- Effect on agriculture;
- Effect on agricultural water user facilities;
- Effect on the natural environment;
- Effect on wildlife and wildlife habitat;
- Effect on local services; and
- Effect on public health and safety.

The purpose of this section of the growth policy is to define the primary review criteria to provide guidance to developers, the public, and public officials so that the subdivision process is more predictable and efficient. No two subdivision proposals are the same and the process requires a degree of flexibility for decision makers to exercise sound judgment. While most of the impacts of subdivisions may be mitigated, in some instances the probable impacts of a subdivision may be deemed too great for the project to be approved. As always, the decision makers will attempt to balance the rights of the developer with the good of the community when reviewing subdivision proposals.

The following section lists the primary review criteria and define how County staff, the Lincoln County Planning Board, and the Board of County Commissioners will use them to evaluate subdivision proposals. Included are potential mitigation measures that may be required of subdivision proposals as conditions of preliminary approval. Since 1974, every county, city, and town has been required by state law to "adopt and provide for the enforcement and administration of subdivision regulations."

CRITERIA DEFINITION

This section clarifies how Lincoln County defines these review criteria:

Agriculture: All aspects of farming or ranching including the cultivation or tilling of soil; dairying; the production, cultivation, growing, harvesting of agricultural or horticultural commodities; raising of livestock, bees, fur-bearing animals or poultry; and any practices including, forestry or lumbering operations, including preparation for market or delivery to storage, to market, or to carriers for transportation to market.

Agricultural Water User Facilities: Those facilities which provide water for irrigation or stock watering to agricultural lands to produce agricultural products. These facilities include, but are not limited to, ditches, head gates, pipes, and other water conveying facilities.

Local Services: Local services are defined as any and all services that local governments, public or private utilities are authorized to provide for the benefit of their citizens.

Natural Environment: The natural environment is defined as the physical conditions which exist within a given area, including land, air, water, mineral, flora, fauna, sound, light and objects of historic and aesthetic significance.

Wildlife: Those animals that are not domesticated or tamed.

Wildlife Habitat: The place or area where wildlife naturally lives or travels through.

Public Health and Safety: The prevailing healthful, sanitary condition of well-being for the community at large. Conditions that relate to public health and safety include but are not limited to: disease control and prevention; emergency services; environmental health; flooding, fire or wildfire hazards, rock falls or landslides, unstable soils, steep slopes, and other natural hazards; high voltage lines or high pressure gas lines; and air or vehicular traffic safety.

EVALUATION / EFFECT

Subdivisions will be evaluated for their material effect on these seven criteria. The evaluation of the effect of a proposed subdivision on these criteria determines if there are significant, unmitigated, adverse impacts. Such impacts are potential grounds for denial of a proposed subdivision. Below are examples of items considered in evaluating the impact of a proposed subdivision on the seven criteria. These examples do not reflect all potential items or circumstances of subdivision evaluation, but they do include a preponderance of the items under consideration. Depending on the proposed subdivision, some of these items may not be relevant. In addition, some proposals may require evaluation of other topics not included in these examples to weigh the subdivision's effect on these criteria. It is the subdivider's responsibility to document proposed mitigation of any adverse impacts on the criteria.

EFFECT ON AGRICULTURE

- Number of acres that would be removed from the production of crops or livestock;
- Acres of prime farmland (as defined by the USDA Soil Survey) that would be removed;
- Effect on use of remainder of the property and adjoining properties as farm or ranch land;
- Potential conflicts between the proposed subdivision and adjacent agricultural operations including:
 - o Interference with movement of livestock or farm machinery;
 - o Maintenance of fences;
 - o Weed proliferation;
 - o Vandalism or theft; and
 - o Harassment of livestock by pets.

EFFECT ON AGRICULTURAL WATER USER FACILITIES

- Location and proximity to agricultural water user facilities, including easements;
- Potential conflicts between facility users and subdivision residents including:
 - o Seeps, flooding, washouts;
 - o Obstructions and interference; and
 - o Unintended uses (recreation or landscaping);
- Water rights; and
- Vehicular access to facility.

EFFECT ON LOCAL SERVICES

- Increased demand on services and need to expand services;
- Ability to provide services to the subdivision;
- Response times;
- Conditions of roads, bridges, and railroad crossings;
- Physical Barriers;
- Provision of adequate local services and public facilities simultaneous with or prior to onset of impact; and
- Any special or rural improvement districts that would obligate local government involvement fiscally or administratively.

EFFECT ON NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

- Noxious weeds;

- Runoff reaching surface waters (e.g.: streams, rivers or riparian areas);
- Impacts on ground water supply, quantity, and quality;
- Impacts on air quality;
- Impacts on scenic resources;
- Impacts on historic, pre-historic, and cultural resources;
- Wetlands; and
- Cumulative impacts of multiple subdivisions on natural environment.

EFFECT ON WILDLIFE AND WILDLIFE HABITAT

- Loss of significant, important, and critical habitat; and
- Impacts on significant, important, and critical habitat including potential effects of roads and traffic; and potential for human wildlife interactions.

EFFECT ON PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY

- Creation of potential man-made hazards (e.g. unsafe road intersection, development in wildland-residential interface fire areas);
- Natural hazards (e.g.: wildfire, flooding, steep slopes);
- Existing potential man-made hazards (e.g.: high pressure gas lines, lack of fire protection, cumulative impacts);
- Traffic safety;
- Emergency vehicle access;
- Emergency medical response time;
- Cumulative impacts on groundwater from individual sewage disposal systems and/or individual wells; and
- Any other item that endangers public health and safety.

PUBLIC HEARING PROCEDURES ON MAJOR SUBDIVISION PROPOSALS

A fundamental component of the subdivision review process is the opportunity for members of the public and interested groups to offer comments on the proposal. The opportunity to make comments is provided by the public hearing process. The Planning Board will also accept written comment received outside of the public hearing but may set deadlines for the receipt of such comment. Under state law, the requirement to hold a public hearing does not apply to the first minor subdivision, containing five or fewer lots, from a tract of record.

The following describes how public hearings will be conducted for the review of subdivision proposals:

1. When required under the MSPA and/or the Lincoln County Subdivision Regulations, subdivision proposals shall be advertised in a newspaper of general circulation in Lincoln County not less than 15 or more than 30 days prior to the date of the public hearing.
2. Minutes shall be taken at all public hearings and made available to the public.
3. At the public hearing, the Chairman of the Planning Board shall open the hearing, introduce the proposal and ask for a staff report to be presented. A staff member shall review the proposal, evaluate it against state and local law and the public review criteria described above (when applicable), and make a recommendation to the Planning Board. Members of the Planning Board may then ask questions of staff.
4. The Chairman will then ask the developer or his/her designated agents to respond to the staff presentation and to describe pertinent features of the proposal. The Board may ask questions of the developer.
5. The Chairman will then ask for public comment on the proposal in a manner and of a duration to be determined by the Chairman and members of the Planning Board. All members of the public choosing to speak shall identify themselves prior to commenting on the proposal and shall direct comments to the Board and not members of the audience.
6. After public comment has been received, the Chairman may then close the floor to public comment. However, during the Board's deliberation, any Board member may ask further questions of the staff, developer and the public.
7. After deliberation, a member of the Board may then move to recommend approval, conditional approval, or denial of a proposal. The Board may also ask the developer for an extension of the preliminary review period if unanswered questions persist. After additional discussion, all Board members may vote on the motion or abstain from voting.
8. The Planning Board will then forward its recommendation to the Board of County Commissioners for a final decision prior to the mandatory review deadline.

GROWTH POLICY REVIEW AND REVISION

This Growth Policy is intended to be a general guide for the growth and development of Lincoln County from 2020 through 2030. It provides a general action plan and sets out a potential implementation schedule listing actions the Lincoln County Board of County Commissioners, in cooperation with planning staff and other interested parties, can take to achieve that vision. It is based on recent conditions and trends and assumes that similar trends will continue. This growth policy cannot and does not describe every single issue and task Lincoln County will engage in to guide growth in the coming years because some of the issues yet to confront us are currently unknown and some priorities are sure to change.

As required by state law (76-1-601, Montana Code Annotated), the Lincoln County Growth Policy must be reviewed a minimum of every five years to determine if any revisions to the document are necessary. The Lincoln County Planning Board, Board of County Commissioners, planning staff, and the public will review the document to determine its relevance and accuracy and address the document's deficiencies and make any revisions as required by state law. At the minimum, the parties will update the implementation plan and schedule of tasks to reflect those that have been achieved and the new issues to be addressed.

SCHEDULE FOR REVIEW

The Planning Board will submit a two-year report of accomplishments and the next biennium's work plan to the County Commission. The report will also identify any revisions proposed for the Growth Policy.

Conditions that might trigger changes and revisions to the Growth Policy include:

- Issues that come up during implementation phase that may not have been anticipated during the drafting of the plan;
- New development proposals not provided for in the plan;
- Modifications needed to comply with changes in state legislation, judicial decisions or state programs;
- Priorities that need to be reassessed to take advantage of new opportunities such as grants, partnerships, and state and federal programs;
- Planning Board evaluation of implementation measures and progress, and determination that modifications would enhance the effectiveness of the Growth Policy;
- Changes affecting information assumptions, needs or legal framework;
- Additional public input suggests the need for changes; and
- New data and/or changed circumstances and issues.

In the meantime, if local conditions are such that a component of this growth policy is inaccurate or damaging, a court finds that a section is illegal, or other conditions arise that make this document either non-functional or otherwise inspire revision, the Lincoln County Planning Board and Board of County Commissioners, in coordination with interested parties and the public, will revise this document in accordance with state law.

CHAPTER V—IMPLEMENTATION

Lincoln County’s Growth Policy is structured to focus on key issues or areas of focus and to describe strategies for addressing those issues. In addition to the key issues are a host of other issues and items discussed in the growth policy that also need to be addressed. The implementation table presented in this chapter identifies goals and actions for Lincoln County to address. It is important to note that implementing some actions will be simple and straight forward, while others will be more complex, with implementation occurring over several phases. For each identified action the implementation table includes a priority ranking as well as organizations the County will seek to partner with to see implementation through to completion.

IMPLEMENTING THE GROWTH POLICY

Lincoln County’s Growth Policy is intended to be an actionable and achievable document that is implemented over time. In order to prevent the plan from collecting dust on the shelf, Lincoln County will need to take a strategic approach to using the growth policy as a tool to inform decisions related to budgets and workplans for individual County departments. As such it is recommended that the Lincoln County Commissioners and Planning Board develop a growth policy workplan on an annual or two-year basis.

Ideally, the work plan would identify a list of prioritized projects for the year, including projects to be completed within the year as well as projects that may take more time. In terms of budget, the work plan should identify stable funding sources as well as potential grants to apply for. The work plan should also identify roles and responsibilities for each department and partnering organization as well as a timetable for completion. The work plan is an important component to keeping on task towards implementation.

IMPLEMENTATION TABLE

The implementation table organizes the growth policy’s goals and actions in order to easily identify the priority of each action and which organization(s) will do the work of carrying them out. The columns in the implementation table are:

LEVEL OF IMPORTANCE

The level of importance column is intended to be used as a tool for prioritizing the allocation of limited time and resources. Because resources are limited, implementation of each action will be incumbent upon availability of staff and funding. Priority rankings are organized as follows:

1. High Priority
2. Medium priority
3. Low priority

The level of importance rankings are intended to inform the planning board, county commissioners, and partners regarding where to direct efforts. Recognizing that priorities may change over time, Lincoln County should use the priority ranking as a guide and adjust the implementation of actions as conditions and opportunities warrant.

PARTNERS

Recognizing that implementation will require working with other agencies and organizations, the partners column identifies the parties likely to play key roles in implementation of each action.

TIMEFRAME

The timeframe column is intended to recognize that while some actions are very important, they may take a while to accomplish while other, potentially lower priorities may be less urgent but more easily accomplished – the low hanging fruit. The timeframes provided are:

1. Short term – 1 to 2 years
2. Mid-term – 3 to 5 years
3. Long term or ongoing – more than 5 years or an ongoing effort.

IMPLEMENTATION TABLE

Goal 1: Increase Opportunities for New Businesses and Entrepreneurs to Locate in Lincoln County.				
Actions		Level of Importance	Partners (Bold indicates Lead Partners)	Timeframe
1.1	Conduct a county-wide broadband study to identify 1.) residential and commercial internet needs, 2.) which areas of the County are underserved, and 3.) the feasibility of increasing capacity, expanding infrastructure, and improving internet speeds.	High	Lincoln County , Kootenai River Development Council, Tobacco Valley Industrial District, City of Troy, internet service providers	Mid-term
1.2	Work with internet service providers on increasing capacity, expanding infrastructure, and improving internet speeds in underserved areas of Lincoln County.	High	Lincoln County , KRDC, City of Troy, internet service providers	Long term/ongoing
1.3	Support the Troy community on implementing their internet connectivity roadmap as a means of improving internet speeds and access in the community.	High	City of Troy , internet service providers	Long term/ongoing
1.4	Market Lincoln County throughout Montana and in key out of state markets as a destination with small town charm, ample business opportunities, and unparalleled recreation opportunities.	High	Local Chambers of Commerce , KRDC, TVID, Lincoln County, municipalities	Long term/ongoing
Goal 2: Improve Opportunities for the Development of Industrial and Manufacturing Businesses in Lincoln County.				
Actions		Level of Importance	Partners (Bold indicates Lead Partners)	Timeframe
2.1	Make infrastructure upgrades needed to attract and enable industrial and manufacturing development at the Kootenai Business Park and Tobacco Valley Industrial District.	High	Lincoln County Port Authority , TVID , City of Libby,	Long term/ongoing
2.2	Implement strategic marketing plans for the Kootenai Business Park and Tobacco Valley Industrial District targeted to businesses and industries compatible with each site.	Medium	KRDC , TVID	Short term
2.3	Provide targeted incentives for businesses considering locating or expanding in Lincoln County.	Medium	KRDC , TVID , municipalities, local business owners	Long term/ongoing
2.4	Identify locations(s) and pursue funding for food incubator space (small scale commercial food processing).	Medium	KRDC , TVID , YVFC, local Farmer's Markets, municipalities	Mid-term

Goal 3: Reinvigorate Lincoln County's Natural Resource Based Economies.				
Actions		Level of Importance	Partners (Bold indicates Lead Partners)	Timeframe
3.1	Develop stewardship agreements to enable greater local input on the management of federal forest lands.	High	Lincoln County, USFS, DNRC, Kootenai Forest Stakeholders	Mid-term
3.2	Participate in the identification of Good Neighbor Authority projects to increase the pace and scale of forest projects, including small timber sales; and enable cooperative forest management between Lincoln County and the Kootenai National Forest.	High	Lincoln County, USFS, DNRC, Kootenai Forest Stakeholders	Mid-term
3.3	Support efforts to develop a local wood processing mill in Lincoln County.	Medium	Lincoln County, Kootenai Forest Stakeholders, private timber and processing companies	Ongoing
3.4	Continue to support Hecla Mining Company's effort to bring the Montanore and Rock Creek mines into operation.	Low	Chambers of Commerce, Lincoln County	Ongoing
Goal 4: Ensure Lincoln County's Labor Force has the Skills Necessary to Succeed.				
Actions		Level of Importance	Partners (Bold indicates Lead Partners)	Timeframe
4.1	Convene an annual or biennial meeting where representatives from local business, local government, economic development, workforce development, and education come together to discuss the needs and opportunities relating to preparing Lincoln County's labor force for success.	High	KRDC, TVID, FVCC, Job Service, local business owners, school districts and municipalities	Short-term and ongoing
4.2	Based on the outcomes of the labor force meeting, work with local education providers, economic development organizations, and employers on providing classes, opportunities, and resources to prepare (or retrain) Lincoln County's labor force for in-demand local job opportunities.	High	KRDC, FVCC, Job Service, local business owners, school districts and municipalities	Ongoing

Goal 5: Improve Access to Recreational Amenities for the Enjoyment of Residents and Visitors.				
Actions		Level of Importance	Partners (Bold indicates Lead Partners)	Timeframe
5.1.	Participate in the implementation of the Greater Libby Area Trails Plan and other trails planning efforts.	Medium	Lincoln County , KRDC, City of Libby, Kootenai Mountain Riders, DNRC, Libby Outdoor Recreation Association	Ongoing
5.2	Participate in the development of a network of non-motorized, motorized, and multi-use trails on public lands near established communities.	High	Lincoln County , Forest Service, DNRC, Kootenai Forest Stakeholders	Ongoing
5.3	Provide for safe non-motorized connections to trails on public lands – e.g. sidewalks, off-street paths, protected bike lanes, etc.	Medium	MDT, Lincoln County, municipalities , Forest Service, DNRC, Kootenai Forest Stakeholders, KRDC	Ongoing
5.4	Work with local ski clubs on maintaining and expanding the network of cross-country ski trails in Lincoln County.	Low	Kootenai Cross-Country Ski Club , Lincoln County, USFS, KRDC	Ongoing
5.5	Install infrastructure that provides for safe bicycle travel on popular cycle routes on County and State roads – e.g. off-street paths, bike lanes, bikes-on-road signs, etc.	Low	MDT , Lincoln County, City of Libby, Towns of Eureka and Troy, KRDC, Libby Outdoor Recreation Association	Ongoing
5.6	Continue to support the recreation service agreement between the City of Libby, Lincoln County and the Libby Park Board for the funding of the park coordinator position.	Medium	Lincoln County , City of Libby, Libby Park Board	Ongoing
5.7	Develop and maintain bicycle camp areas in or nearby each community.	Low	KRDC, TVID , Troy, Libby, Eureka communities, Libby Outdoor Recreation Association	Ongoing
5.8	Work with USFS and USACE to add recreational access to Koocanusa Reservoir as had historically been planned	High	USFS, USACE , Lincoln County	Ongoing
Goal 6: Increase Promotion of Lincoln County as a Year-Round Outdoor Recreation Destination.				
Actions		Level of Importance	Partners (Bold indicates Lead Partners)	Timeframe
6.1	Promote Lincoln County as a destination for unspoiled winter recreation without the crowds, focusing on skiing at Turner Mountain, XC skiing near picturesque main streets, and snowmobiling.	Medium	Local Chambers of Commerce ; Glacier Country Tourism, Turner Mountain, Libby Outdoor Rec. Assoc.	Ongoing

6.2	Continue to promote Lincoln County's summer and fall recreation opportunities including biking, backpacking, fishing, rafting/kayaking, hunting, etc. Targeted relevant trade publications and websites and to populations living in and visiting nearby destinations including Glacier Park, Missoula, and Northern Idaho.	Medium	Local Chambers of Commerce ; KRDC, TVID, Glacier Country Tourism, municipalities	Ongoing
6.3	Increase Lincoln County's online presence through social media – e.g. hold an Instagram contest to find the best Lincoln County photos from residents or allow residents to take over a local Instagram feed for a week to showcase the County from different people's perspective.	Medium	Local Chambers of Commerce , KRDC, Glacier Country, Governor's Office of Outdoor Recreation, municipalities	Ongoing
6.4	Support efforts to create online and hard copy maps showcasing area trails and recreation amenities.	Low	Local Chambers of Commerce , Libby Outdoor Recreation Association, KRDC, Yaak Valley Forest Council	Short
6.5	Promote motorized recreation opportunities.	High	Local Chambers of Commerce , KRDC, USFS, DNRC, Libby Outdoor Rec. Assoc.,	

Goal 7: Improve the Appearance of Highway Corridors Leading into Lincoln County Cities and Towns.

Actions		Level of Importance	Partners (Bold indicates Lead Partners)	Timeframe
7.1	Develop corridor plans for Highway 2 and Highway 93 in the areas surrounding Troy, Libby and Eureka. The corridor plans should address and provide recommendations on roadway design, access points, non-motorized transportation, land use patterns, signage, viewsheds, and landscaping.	Low	MDT, Lincoln County , Troy, Libby, Eureka communities	Long term
7.2	Work with MDT & USFS to make improvements to US Hwy 37 to improve safety and the viewshed on this scenic highway	High	MDT, USFS , Lincoln County	Ongoing

Goal 8: Provide for a Level of Predictability of Future Land Use Patterns in Growing Areas of Lincoln County.

Actions		Level of Importance	Partners (Bold indicates Lead Partners)	Timeframe
8.1	Engage the City of Libby and Town of Eureka in separate planning exercises to identify a shared vision for the unincorporated areas around each community, what services and infrastructure improvements are needed to accommodate growth, and potential measures for mitigating adverse impacts.	Medium	City of Libby, Town of Eureka , Lincoln County	Long term

8.2	Explore developing regulatory controls for mitigating adverse impacts associated with the proliferation of RVs in residential subdivisions.	High	Lincoln County Planning Board	Ongoing
8.3	Explore developing density regulations (or other measures) in areas of the County not conducive to dense residential or commercial development – e.g. areas with high wildfire risk, areas with productive agricultural lands, areas located far away from existing infrastructure and services, etc.	Medium	Lincoln County Planning Board , FireSafe Council, NRCS	Long term
8.4	Facilitate and support private landowner's interest in developing citizen-initiated measures for regulating land use patterns in individual neighborhoods in the County.	Medium	Neighborhood groups , Lincoln County	Ongoing
Goal 9: Efficiently Manage Water Resources				
Actions		Level of Importance	Partners (Bold indicates Lead Partners)	Timeframe
9.1	Develop a water management plan for the Tobacco River Valley to identify solutions for the long-term availability of water for fish and wildlife, municipal needs, and to support residential, commercial and agricultural development.	Medium	DNRC, Lincoln County Conservation District	Long term
Goal 10: Become Active Partners with Federal and State Agencies in the Management of Public Lands and Waters.				
Actions		Level of Importance	Partners (Bold indicates Lead Partners)	Timeframe
10.1	Ensure Lincoln County's interest are represented in the renegotiation of the Columbia River Treaty.	High	State representatives , Congressional leadership	Mid-term
10.2	Establish cooperating agency status with the U.S. Forest Service as a means of having more local involvement in planning activities on the Kootenai National Forest.	High	Lincoln County, USFS , Kootenai Forest Stakeholders	Mid-term
10.3	Participate in the management of grizzly bears in the Yaak-Cabinet Ecosystem, working towards de-classification.	Low	USFWS, MTFWP , Lincoln County	Ongoing
10.4	Continue to support efforts of the Kootenai Forest Stakeholders Coalition to engage the Kootenai National Forest on the management of federal lands.	High	Kootenai Forest Stakeholders , Lincoln County	Ongoing
Goal 11: Improve Communication Channels with Local Communities on Issues of County-Wide and Local Importance.				

Actions		Level of Importance	Partners (Bold indicates Lead Partners)	Timeframe
11.1	Organize quarterly (or bi-annual) in-person meetings between the Lincoln County Commissioners and elected officials from each of the County's incorporated communities to discuss upcoming projects, issues of concern, and opportunities for collaboration.	High	Lincoln County, City of Libby, Town of Eureka, City of Troy	Ongoing
11.2	Use social media as a means of disseminating information to the public and Lincoln County communities.	Medium	Lincoln County , Chambers of Commerce	Ongoing
Goal 12: Decrease Uncertainty Surrounding the Future of the County's Road Fund.				
Actions		Level of Importance	Partners (Bold indicates Lead Partners)	Timeframe
12.1	Develop alternative road funding scenarios that evaluate road maintenance needs, projected revenues, and impacts to citizens based on different funding scenarios – e.g. do nothing and continue to rely on uncertain federal payments, road assessment, special improvement districts, etc.	Medium	Lincoln County , local media	Mid-term
12.2	Develop a public outreach campaign about the need for a predictable, stable source of funding to maintain levels of service on County roads.	Medium	Lincoln County	Mid-term
12.3	Continue to add language to new subdivisions that notify future property owners they may be assessed for maintenance of County roads used to access their properties.	High	Lincoln County Planning Board	Ongoing
Goal 13: Improve Fire Protection Measures and Resources.				
Actions		Level of Importance	Partners (Bold indicates Lead Partners)	Timeframe
13.1	Improve fire coverage in areas not currently located in a fire district or fire service area.	Medium	Fire districts	Ongoing
13.2	Reduce fuel loads along County roads accessing residential areas.	High	Lincoln County , fire districts	Ongoing
13.3	Explore developing / improving regulatory standards for reducing wildfire risk.	Low	Planning Board , FireSafe Council	Long term
Goal 14: Reduce Wildfire Risk.				

Actions		Level of Importance	Partners (Bold indicates Lead Partners)	Timeframe
14.1	Work with the Kootenai National Forest on getting advance notice of fuels reduction projects on public lands to enable targeted outreach to adjacent private landowners.	Medium	Kootenai National Forest , Lincoln County Forester	Ongoing
14.2	Create a centralized database and map displaying the location of completed and planned fuels treatments on public and private lands.	Medium	DNRC	Long-term
14.3	Prioritize private land fuels reduction projects in areas where work has been done, or is planned, on adjacent lands.	Medium	Lincoln County , DNRC, FireSafe Council	Ongoing
14.4	Communicate with federal and state agencies, and other large landowners, about keeping roads open on a case by case basis for ongoing forest management and fire response.	Low	Lincoln County , USFS, DNRC, Weyerhaeuser, Stimson	Ongoing
Goal 15: Improve Public Infrastructure and Services				
Actions		Level of Importance	Partners (Bold indicates Lead Partners)	Timeframe
15.1	Explore options for a new landfill site or for extending the life of the Libby landfill.	High	Lincoln County	Long term
15.2	Work with the Montana Department of Transportation to address traffic, congestion, and safety issues on Highway 93 south of the Canadian border. Potential solutions may include a north bound commercial traffic lane, a dedicated lane for border traffic, and/or dynamic message times near Eureka that display estimated border wait times.	Low	MDT	Long term
15.3	Expand the wastewater capacity at the Lincoln County Fairgrounds.	Medium	Lincoln County , Fairgrounds foundation	Mid-term
Goal 16: Provide for the Availability of Affordable Housing for Lincoln County Residents				
Actions		Level of Importance	Partners (Bold indicates Lead Partners)	Timeframe
16.1	Develop a housing needs assessment to assess which types of housing are needed where and to identify solutions for addressing housing issues in the County.	High	KRDC , Port Authority, Lincoln County, municipalities	Mid-term
16.2	Work with the City of Troy identify and prioritize land appropriate for new residential development.	Medium	City of Troy	Mid-term

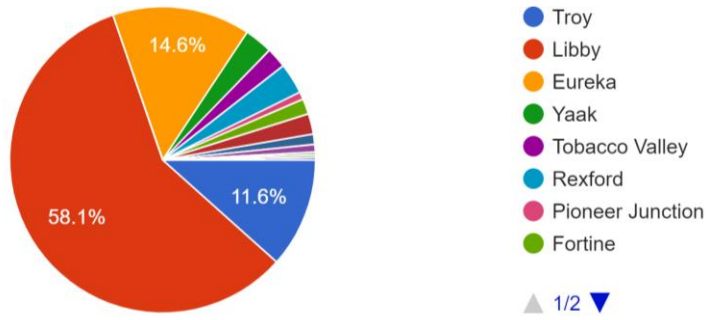
16.3	Support efforts of non-profits and other non-governmental organizations to address the provision of affordable housing in Lincoln County.	High	Lincoln County	Ongoing
16.4	Encourage the development of higher density housing close to the established communities of Libby, Troy, and Eureka.	Medium	Planning board	Ongoing
16.5	Provide incentives for the development of affordable and workforce housing.	Medium	Lincoln County, municipalities	Ongoing

APPENDIX A – SURVEY RESULTS SUMMARY

GENERAL QUESTIONS

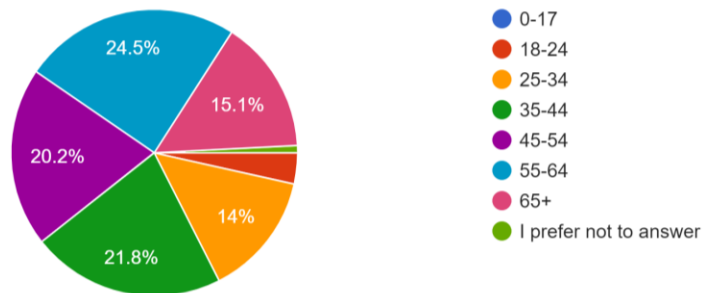
Where do you live?

370 responses



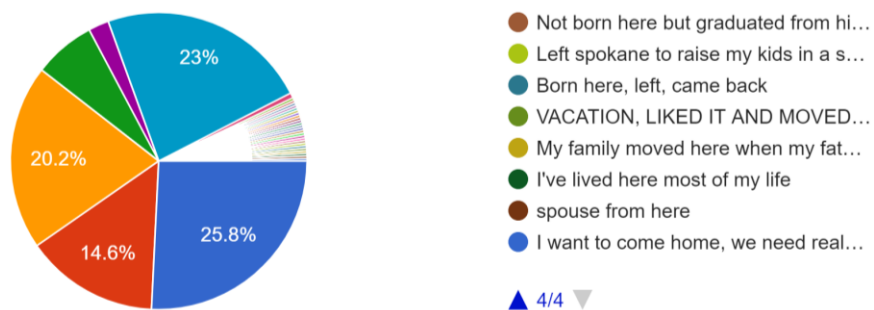
What is your age?

371 responses



What brought you to Lincoln County?

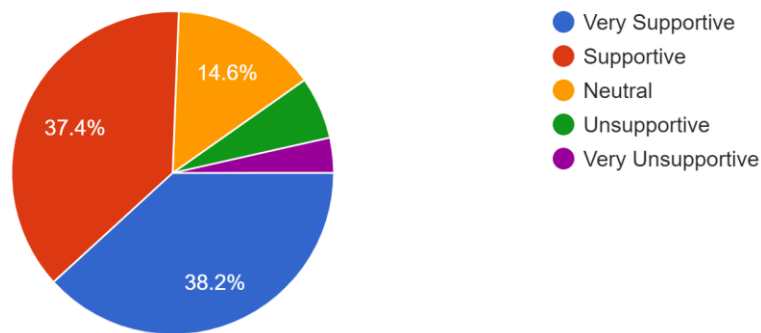
357 responses



ECONOMY

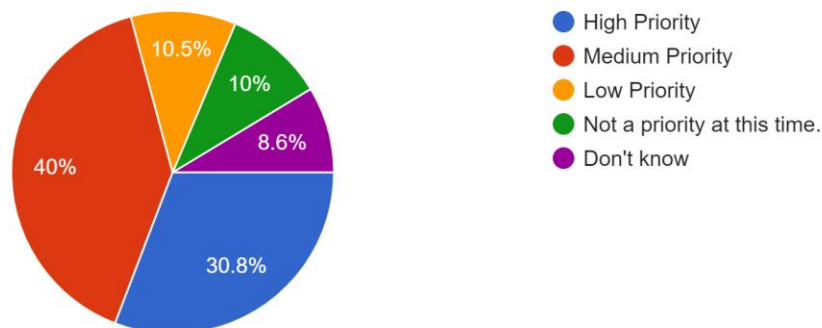
How supportive are you of the County providing financial incentives for economic development and jobs (e.g. subsidizing businesses, providing tax breaks, etc.)?

369 responses



How would you prioritize the County funding infrastructure upgrades at the Kootenai Business Park and Tobacco Valley Industrial District as a means of attracting and enabling manufacturing and industrial development at each site?

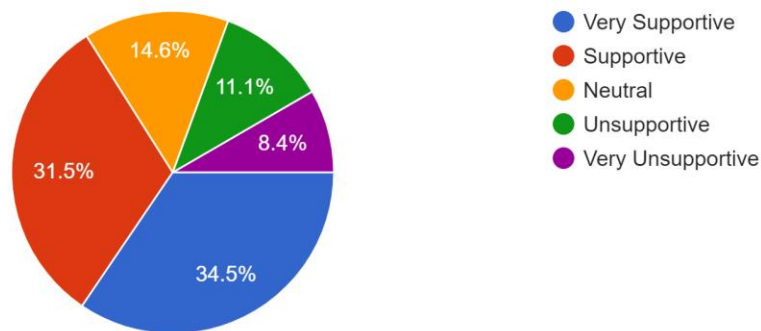
370 responses



LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT

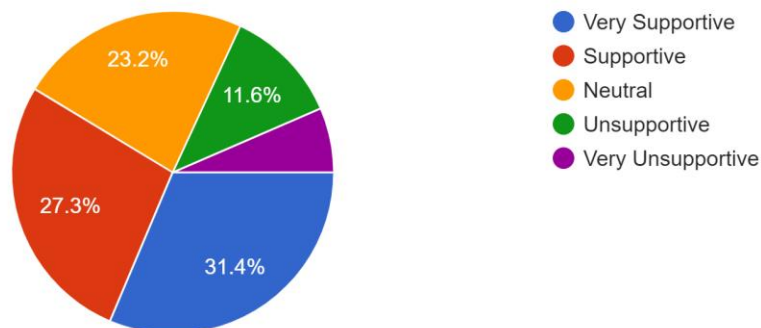
As a means of improving the appearance of gateways to Lincoln County communities, how supportive are you of the County developing some form of development regulations along highway corridors leading into Troy, Libby, and/or Eureka? Development regulations could include items pertaining to landscaping, setbacks, land uses, signage, requirements for sidewalks and trails, or protection of scenic views.

371 responses



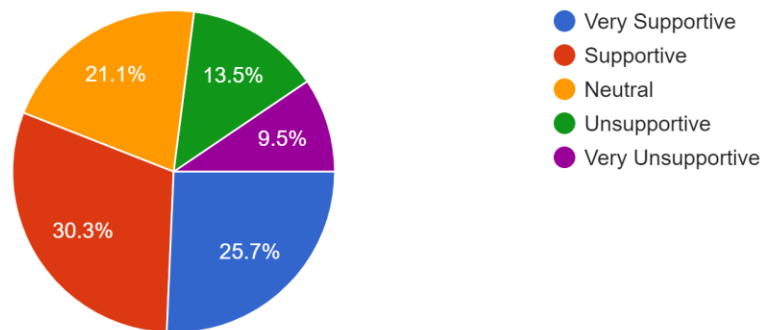
How supportive are you of the County developing some form of development regulations aimed at minimizing impacts associated with RVs in residential areas (e.g., de facto RV parks in residential neighborhoods, conflicts with vacationers among residences, possibly diminished residential property values)?

370 responses



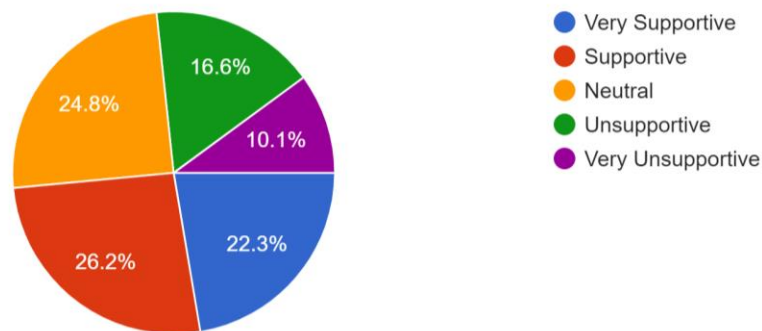
As a means of improving the quality of building in Lincoln County, how supportive are you of the County developing structural building codes?

370 responses



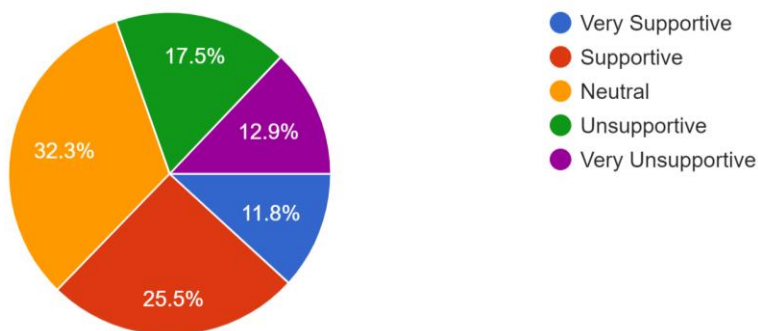
How supportive are you of the County developing density regulations in areas that may not be conducive to dense residential or commercial development - e.g. areas with high wildfire risk, areas with productive agricultural lands, areas located far away from existing infrastructure and services, etc.?

367 responses



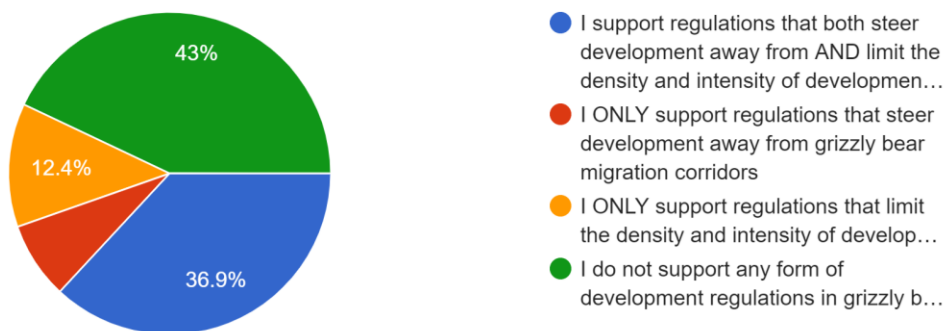
How supportive are you of private landowners developing citizen-initiated measures for regulating land use patterns in individual neighborhoods in the County, such as a local zoning district?

365 responses



As a means of protecting grizzly bear migration corridors and reducing human-wildlife conflicts, how supportive are you of the County developing regulations that either steer development away from these corridors OR limit the density and intensity of development in these corridors?

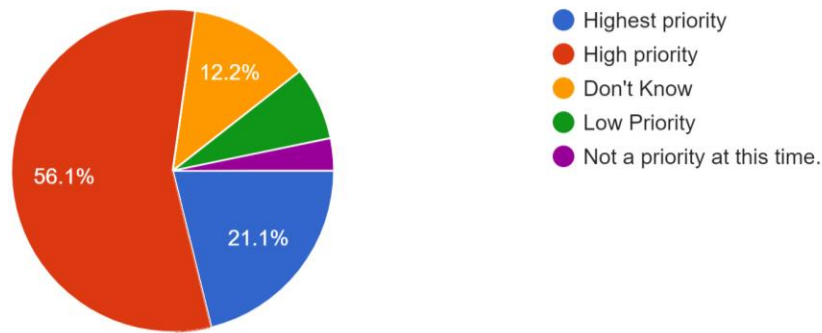
363 responses



ROAD FUNDING

How would you prioritize identifying a stable funding source for future road maintenance?

369 responses



What potential road funding measures would you be supportive of? (check all that apply)

364 responses

- Continue to rely on federal sources – 31%
- Explore a County-wide road assessment – 58%
- Explore special improvement districts for road maintenance in specific areas – 36%
- None of the above – 9%

Recognizing resource and capacity constraints, please rate how you would prioritize the following activities for Lincoln County?

	High Priority	Medium Priority	Low Priority	Not Sure
Road Maintenance	53%	40%	6%	0%
Coordination with Federal Govt.	40%	40%	19%	1%
Coordination with Local Govts.	42%	46%	12%	1%
Recreation Development	36%	40%	24%	0%
Reduce Wildfire Risk	59%	31%	11%	0%
Protect Open Space and Ag. Lands	39%	36%	23%	3%
Infrastructure to support commercial	48%	33%	18%	1%
Support economic development	60%	30%	11%	1%
Protect wildlife habitat	30%	36%	33%	1%