

APPENDIX D

AMENDMENT #3 TO THE GRANITE COUNTY GROWTH POLICY

Adopted By:

Granite County on November 30, 2010 – Resolution #2010-23

LOWER ROCK CREEK VICINITY

Mission Statement:
We share Rock Creek.

Vision Statement: Lower Rock Creek residents share a unique resource in Rock Creek, and value that unique resource equally in its use and enjoyment. We recognize that the continued health of Rock Creek is vital to all of us, however, the ways to preserve that health may not find consensus. Places change, and the Lower Rock Creek area has been changing since a time when the road was made of dirt, and horses stopped to eat grass in the middle of the road. Even so, some things stay the same, and the intrinsic beauty of the Lower Rock Creek valley is something all residents cherish. The shared values in Lower Rock Creek, including rural character, integrity, water quality and scenic beauty, should guide the future use and enjoyment of Rock Creek by residents and non-residents. The cumulative impacts of development and greater use may eventually have a negative impact on the overall quality of life in Lower Rock Creek, and all future decisions made by Granite County should be guided by weighing impacts of actions on the health of Lower Rock Creek.

1. Granite County should consider adopting general guidelines to protect the integrity, water quality, rural character and scenic beauty of Lower Rock Creek.
2. Granite County should support tourism and recreation, particularly those existing, local businesses which provide opportunities for residents and visitors.
3. Lower Rock Creek residents support small commercial activity in the valley that provides employment for local residents. However, we do not want commercial or industrial activity that threatens the health of the creek or causes environmental issues.
4. Granite County should consider evaluating the equity of existing taxes and services for Lower Rock Creek Residents.
 - a. While residents of Rock Creek would like certain services to be better provided, some are reluctant to pay additional fees or assessments because they feel they are already paying sufficient taxes to receive adequate services. In addition to paying sufficient taxes to receive adequate services, residents would like the County to consider the equity of payment for services which residents generally do not utilize due to location and availability.

- b. Residents of Lower Rock Creek are different than other areas of Granite County due to topography in that we are not linked to the county for normal services. Therefore we often rely on getting these services from Missoula County. This includes medical, mail, shopping, fire protection, garbage pickup, etc. However, most residents like being a part of Granite County in that it is a much more rural rather than the urban setting of Missoula.
 - c. Residents of Lower Rock Creek would like increased coverage from the county sheriff. A primary concern is traffic – speeding and careless driving. Also, cabin break-ins and vandalism are occasional problems. The nearest deputy is housed in Drummond.
 - d. Residents of Lower Rock Creek are generally satisfied with the quality and consistency of road maintenance in general and snow plowing during the winter months. Weekend storms can cause some difficulty for residents, but plowing has generally kept pace with demand. Granite County should pursue formal agreements with Missoula County for the maintenance and improvement of Lower Rock Creek Road.
 - e. Abandoned and unlicensed vehicles should be addressed as they create an eyesore and even a potential health and safety risk to the public.
5. Granite County should not allow future subdivision of land in the floodplain, and should consider the appropriateness of additional set-back guidelines and/or regulations, or at a minimum “buffer zones” to indicate areas where new development should be discouraged. Granite County should restudy the floodplain boundaries since the last data we have is 1988 which is old and not workable.
6. Granite County should examine the feasibility of creating a building permit program.
7. All septic systems should be inspected by Granite County.
8. Rock Creek, with its small canyon and abundant traffic should not be in an “open range” since we now have unattended cattle and horses on the road and in Rock Creek, sometimes on a regular basis, which creates a dangerous health and liability problem for both the animals and automobile drivers. In addition, there has been damage to riparian sections of the Creek from livestock. For the health and safety of residents and non-residents alike, residents of Lower Rock Creek recommend that Granite County explore the feasibility of creating one or more herd districts within and for the Lower Rock Creek area to address these concerns.
9. Granite County should continue to support conservation easements when proposed.
10. Granite County should consider zoning petitions when submitted by residents in Lower Rock Creek, and when supported through appropriate legal procedures.
11. The area generally defined from mile marker 12 to 22 has even greater isolation and limited services within Lower Rock Creek. The road through this area is a narrow dirt road with seasonal passage, and is almost entirely inhabited by seasonal residents. Snow plowing is provided on a limited basis by a single resident who remains in the area year-round.