Valley County Planning and Zoning

PO Box 1350 • 219 North Main Street Cascade, ID 83611-1350



Phone: 208-382-7115 Fax: 208-382-7119 Email: cherrick@co.valley.id.us

STAFF REPORT:

C.U.P. 22-57 Lamon Multiple Residences

HEARING DATE:

February 9, 2023

TO:

Planning and Zoning Commission

STAFF:

Cynda Herrick, AICP, CFM Planning and Zoning Director

APPLICANT:

Jim Lamon

7300 N 70th ST, Paradise Valley, AZ 85235

REPRESENTATIVE:

Teia Golden

PO Box 4435, McCall, ID 83638

PROPERTY OWNER:

Joe Kennedy & Tracey Kennedy

3701 Waterwheel RD, Emmett ID 83617

LOCATION:

Corral Creek Road

Parcel RP13N04E150006 in the E 1/2 Section 15, T.13N R.4E,

Boise Meridian, Valley County, Idaho

SIZE:

320 acres

REQUEST:

Three (3) Residential Homes on One Parcel

EXISTING LAND USE:

Agricultural - Timber and Grazing

Jim Lamon is requesting a conditional use permit for three residential homes on a 320-acre parcel.

Proposed size of two homes is 7,500-sqft each. The other home would be 3500-sqft in size.

Individual wells and septic systems are proposed. Diesel generator(s) would be used until Idaho Power can install underground power to the homes.

Access would be from private driveway(s) onto Corral Creek Road, a public road that ends at the green gate north of the corrals. Beyond the green gate there are internal logging/ranch roads that are used by other private landowners.

FINDINGS:

- 1. The complete application was submitted on December 27, 2022.
- 2. Legal notice was posted in the Star News on January 19, 2023, and January 26, 2023. The property owner and applicant were notified by letter on January 6, 2023. Potentially affected agencies were notified on January 9, 2023. Property owners within 300 feet of the property

Staff Report C.U.P. 22-57 Page 1 of 5

line were notified by fact sheet sent January 10, 2023. The notice was posted online at www.co.valley.id.us on January 9, 2023. The site was posted on January 26, 2023.

3. Agency comment received:

Central District Health stated that applications for test holes and ground water monitoring is required. (January 10, 2023)

Steven Hull, Cascade Rural Fire Protection District Fire Chief, responded with requirements for shared driveways. (January 20, 2023)

4. Public comment received:

Lisa Mohler, McCall, ID, is opposed because the application is incomplete; there are no building designs. She questions the possibility of a future subdivision; no design review for homes greater than 5,000-sqft; and fire control. (January 31, 2023)

- 5. Physical characteristics of the site: Variable Topography; Ponds, Irrigation Ditches, Meadows, and Timber.
- 6. The surrounding land use and zoning includes:

North: Agriculture - Timber

South: Agriculture - Timber and Grazing

East: Agriculture - Timber

West: Agriculture - Timber and Grazing

- 7. Valley County Code (Title 9): In Table 9-3-1, this proposal is categorized under:
 - 2. Residential Uses (j) Multiple Residences on One Parcel

Review of Title 9 - Chapter 5 Conditional Uses and Title 10 should be done.

9-5B-7: FIRE PROTECTION:

Provisions must be made to implement prefire activities that may help improve the survivability of people and homes in areas prone to wildfire. Activities may include vegetation management around the home, use of fire resistant building materials, appropriate subdivision design, removal of fuel, providing a water source, and other measures. Recommendations of the applicable fire district will be considered.

9-5C-4: MAXIMUM BUILDING HEIGHT AND FLOOR AREA:

- A. Maximum Height: Building heights, except as may be modified by a PUD, shall not exceed thirty five feet (35') above the lower of existing or finished grade.
- B. Building Size Or Floor Area: The building size or floor area, except as may be modified by a PUD, shall not exceed the limitations of subsections <u>9-5-3</u>A and C of this chapter.
- C. Lot Coverage: No structure or combination of structures, except as may be modified by a PUD, may cover more than forty percent (40%) of the lot or parcel. (Ord. 11-5, 6-6-2011)

9-5C-5: SITE IMPROVEMENT:

- A. Off Street Parking Spaces: Two (2) off street parking spaces shall be provided for each dwelling unit. These spaces may be included in driveways, carports, or garages.
- B. Utility Lines: All utility lines, including service lines, that are to be located within the limits of the improved roadway in new residential developments must be installed prior to placing the leveling coarse material. (Ord. 11-5, 6-6-2011)

9-5C-6: DENSITY:

A. The density of any residential development or use requiring a conditional use permit shall not exceed two and one-half (2.5) dwelling units per acre, except for planned unit developments or long-term

- rentals. Long-term rental density can be determined by the Planning and Zoning Commission in regards to compatibility with surrounding land uses and will require a deed restriction.
- B. Density shall be computed by dividing the total number of dwelling units proposed by the total acreage of land within the boundaries of the development. The area of existing road rights of way on the perimeter of the development and public lands may not be included in the density computation. (Ord. 11-5, 6-6-2011; amd. Ord. 20-12, 7-6-2020)

SUMMARY:

Staff's compatibility rating is a +16.

The Planning and Zoning Commission should do their own compatibility rating prior to the meeting (form with directions attached).

STAFF COMMENTS / QUESTIONS:

The applicant's responses are below in italics and attached.

- 1. This site is within the Cascade Fire District. It is not within an irrigation district nor a herd district.
- 2. Approximate location of buildings and driveways should be noted.

Map is attached with general areas of the proposed homes and barns.

3. Will driveways be built to fire code?

Yes. The internal roads will be improved with gravel and correct driveway approach angles with room for emergency vehicles to turn around.

4. Outdoor lighting plan should be provided.

All outdoor lighting will be on the homes and barns and downward facing.

Staff recommends a Wildland Urban Interface Fire Protection Plan.

Barron & John have been contacted and it is the buyers plan to have the whole 800 acres cleaned up, and maintain the maintenance of the underbrush. Sprinkler systems will be installed in the homes.

6. Will guests or customers be invited for overnight stays, riding lessons, events such as weddings, etc.?

The only people on the property will be family. There will be no events or riding lessons.

7. Will any of the residences be used for short-term rentals?

There will be no rentals.

8. The Impact Report states there will be five homes and the application is requesting three homes. Please clarify.

FYI to the applicant: Any other homes on other properties that access using the shared driveway from the green gate will need to apply for a variance for a shared driveway. If there are two homes proposed on two other parcels, they cannot be used for event activities or a short-term rentals without proper permits being issued.

9. What is the expected building date of all three homes and two barns? When will the homes and barns be completed?

ATTACHMENTS:

- Conditions of Approval
- Blank Compatibility Evaluation and Instructions
- Compatibility Evaluation by Staff
- Vicinity Map
- Aerial Map
- Topographic Map
- Assessor Plat

 T.13N R.4E Section 15
- Picture Taken January 26, 2023
- Response from Applicant's Representative with Site Plan
- Responses
- Septic System Handouts

Conditions of Approval

- 1. The application, the staff report, and the provisions of the Land Use and Development Ordinance are all made a part of this permit as if written in full herein. Any violation of any portion of the permit will be subject to enforcement and penalties in accordance with Title 9-2-5; and, may include revocation or suspension of the conditional use permit.
- 2. Any change in the nature or scope of land use activities shall require an additional Conditional Use Permit.
- 3. The issuance of this permit and these conditions will not relieve the applicant from complying with applicable County, State, or Federal laws or regulations or be construed as permission to operate in violation of any statute or regulations. Violation of these laws, regulations or rules may be grounds for revocation of the Conditional Use Permit or grounds for suspension of the Conditional Use Permit.
- 4. The use shall be established by ______, or a permit extension will be required.
- 5. Building permits will be required for all structures, including homes, barns, and outbuildings.
- 6. Driveways shall be constructed to meet current Cascade Rural Fire Department requirements.
- 7. Shall clearly post the addresses at the driveway entrance (green gate where public road ends) and all three residences. Different addresses for each residence shall be assigned.
- 8. All lighting must comply with the Valley County Lighting Ordinance. All lights shall be fully shielded so that there is not upward or horizontal projection of lights.
- 9. Shall maintain septic systems and drainfields in accordance with Dept of Environmental Quality recommendations.

- 10. No residences can be used as a short-term rental unless a new conditional use permit is approved.
- 11. All noxious weeds on the property must be controlled.
- 12. If the shared driveway is used by other residences beyond the three approved, a variance permit will be required.
- 13. An easement should be provided for ingress/egress from the green gate to the parcel where the three homes will be located.

END OF STAFF REPORT

Compatibility Questions and Evaluation

Matrix Line # / Use:	Prepared by:
9	
Response YES/NO X Value	Use Matrix Values:
(+2/-2) X 4	1. Is the proposed use compatible with the dominant adjacent land use?
(+2/-2) X 2	 Is the proposed use compatible with the other adjacent land uses (total and average)?
(+2/-2) X 1	3. Is the proposed use generally compatible with the overall land use in the local vicinity?
(+2/-2) X 3	Site Specific Evaluation (Impacts and Proposed Mitigation) 4. Is the properly large enough, does the existence of wooded area, or does the lay of the land help to minimize any potential impacts the proposed use may have on adjacent uses?
(+2 <i>l</i> -2) X 1 C	5. Is the size or scale of proposed lots and/or structures similar to adjacent ones?
(+2/-2) X 2	6. Is the traffic volume and character to be generated by the proposed use similar to the uses on properties that will be affected by proximity to parking lots, on- site roads, or access roads?
(+2/-2) X 2	7. Is the potential impact on adjacent properties due to the consuming or emission of any resource or substance compatible with that of existing uses?
(+2/-2) X 2	B. Is the proposed use compatible with the abilities of public agencies to provide service or of public facilities to accommodate the proposed use demands on utilities, fire and police protection, schools, roads, traffic control, parks, and open areas?
(+2/-2) X 2	9. Is the proposed use cost effective when comparing the cost for providing public services and improving public facilities to the increases in public revenue from the improved property?
Sub-Total (+)	
Sub-Total ()	
Total Score	to the contract of the contra

The resulting values for each questions shall be totaled so that each land use and development proposal receives a single final score.

9-11-1: APPENDIX A, COMPATIBILITY EVALUATION:

A. General: One of the primary functions of traditional zoning is to classify land uses so that those which are not fully compatible or congruous can be geographically separated from each other. The county has opted to substitute traditional zoning with a multiple use concept in which there is no separation of land uses. Proposed incompatible uses may adversely affect existing uses, people, or lands in numerous ways: noise, odors, creation of hazards, view, water contamination, loss of needed or desired resources, property values, or infringe on a desired lifestyla. To ensure that the county can continue to grow and develop without causing such land use problems and conflicts, a mechanism designed to identify and discourage land use proposals which will be incompatible at particular locations has been devised. The compatibility evaluation of all conditional uses also provides for evaluations in a manner which is both systematic and consistent.

B. Purpose; Use:

- The compatibility rating is to be used as a tool to assist in the determination of compatibility. The compatibility rating is not the sole deciding factor in the approval or denial of any application.
- Staff prepares a preliminary compatibility rating for conditional use permits, except for conditional use permits for PUDs. The commission reviews the compatibility rating and may change any value.
- C. General Evaluation: Completing the compatibility questions and evaluation (form):
 - 1. All evaluations shall be made as objectively as possible by assignment of points for each of a series of questions. Points shall be assigned as follows:
 - Plus 2 assigned for full compatibility (adjacency encouraged).
 - Plus 1 assigned for partial compatibility (adjacency not necessarily encouraged).
 - 0 assigned if not applicable or neutral.
 - Minus 1 assigned for minimal compatibility (adjacency not discouraged).
 - Minus 2 assigned for no compatibility (adjacency not acceptable).
 - Each response value shall be multiplied by some number, which indicates how important that particular response is relative to all the others. Multipliers shall be any of the following:
 - x4 indicates major relative importance.
 - x3 indicates above average relative importance.
 - x2 indicates below average relative importance.
 - x1 Indicates minor relative importance.
- D. Matrix Questions 1 Through 3: The following matrix shall be utilized, wherever practical, to determine response values for questions one through three (3). Uses classified and listed in the left hand column and across the top of the matrix represent possible proposed, adjacent, or vicinity land uses. Each box indicates the extent of compatibility between any two (2) intersecting uses. These numbers should not be changed from proposal to proposal, except where distinctive uses arise which may present unique compatibility considerations. The commission shall determine whether or not there is a unique consideration.

E. Terms:

DOMINANT ADJACENT LAND USE: Any use which is within three hundred feet (300') of the use boundary being proposed; and

- 1. Comprises at least one-half $\binom{1}{2}$ of the adjacent uses and one-fourth $\binom{1}{4}$ of the total adjacent area; or
- Where two (2) or more tises compete equally in number and are more frequent than all the other uses, the one with the greatest amount of acreage is the dominant land use; or
- 3. In all other situations, no dominant land use exists. When this occurs, the response value shall be zero.

LOCAL VICINITY; Land uses within a one to three (3) mile radius. The various uses therein should be identified and averaged to determine the overall use of the land.

F. Questions 4 Through 9:

- In determining the response values for questions 4 through 9, the evaluators shall consider the information contained in the application, the goals and
 objectives of the comprehensive plan, the provisions of this title and related ordinances, information gained from an actual inspection of the aite, and
 information gathered by the staff.
- 2. The evaluator or commission shall also consider proposed mitigation of the determined impacts. Adequacy of the mitigation will be a factor,

APPENDIXA

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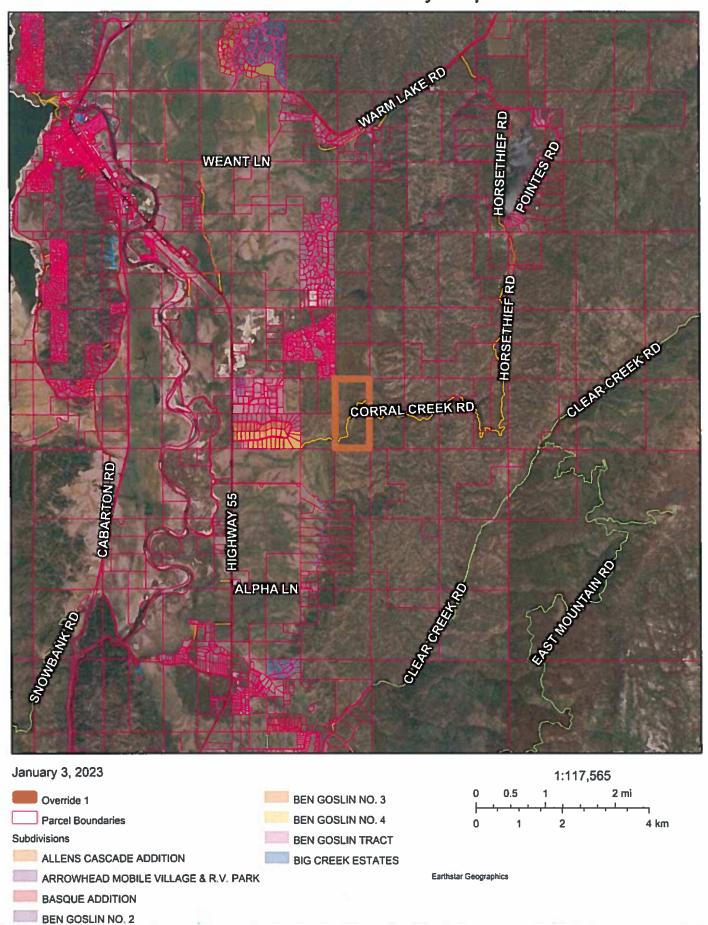
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Compatibility Questions and Evaluation

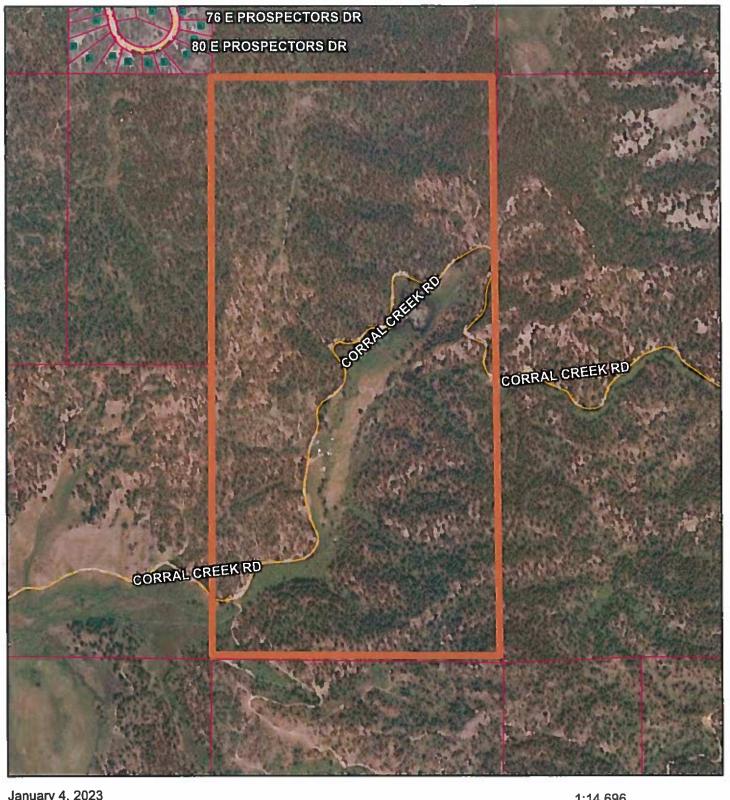
Matrix Line # / Use:	Prepared by:
Response YES/NO X Value	Use Matrix Values:
(+2/-2) $-2x 4 -4$	1. Is the proposed use compatible with the dominant adjacent land use? Agrical fam.
(+2/-2) <u>-2</u> x 2 <u>-4</u>	2. Is the proposed use compatible with the other adjacent land uses (total and average)? Agricultural
(+2/-2) + X 1 +/	3. Is the proposed use generally compatible with the overall land use in the local vicinity? Single family Residential
(+21-2) <u>+2</u> x 3 <u>+6</u>	Site Specific Evaluation (Impacts and Proposed Mitigation) 4. Is the property large enough, does the existence of wooded area, or does the lay of the land help to minimize any potential impacts the proposed use may have on adjacent uses? **Moderate Proposed Mitigation** **Index of the land help to minimize any potential impacts the proposed use may have on adjacent uses? **Index of the land help to minimize any potential impacts the proposed use may have on adjacent uses? **Index of the land help to minimize any potential impacts the proposed with the land help to minimize any potential impacts the proposed use may have on adjacent uses? **Index of the land help to minimize any potential impacts the proposed use may have on adjacent uses? **Index of the land help to minimize any potential impacts the proposed use may have on adjacent uses? **Index of the land help to minimize any potential impacts the proposed use may have on adjacent uses? **Index of the land help to minimize any potential impacts the proposed use may have on adjacent uses? **Index of the land help to minimize any potential impacts the proposed use may have on adjacent uses? **Index of the land help to minimize any potential impacts the proposed use may have a land the land help to minimize any potential impacts the land help
(+2/-2) <u>+/</u> X 1 <u>+/</u>	5. Is the size or scale of proposed <u>lots and/or</u> structures similar to adjacent ones? **No - large structures**
(+2/-2) <u>+/</u> x 2 <u>+/</u>	6. Is the traffic volume and character to be generated by the proposed use similar to the uses on properties that will be affected by proximity to parking lots, onsite roads, or access roads? **Historically logging, randling**
(+21-2) +2x 2 +4	7. Is the potential impact on adjacent properties due to the consuming or emission of any resource or substance compatible with that of existing uses? We want word Small
(+2/-2) +1 X 2 +4	8. Is the proposed use compatible with the abilities of public agencies to provide service or of public facilities to accommodate the proposed use demands on utilities, fire and police protection, schools, roads, traffic control, parks, and open areas? **The Control of the C
(+2/-2) +2 X 2 +4	9. Is the proposed use cost effective when comparing the cost for providing public services and improving public facilities to the increases in public revenue from the improved property?
Sub-Total (+) 24	1 taxes
Sub-Total () 8	
Total Score +16	e:

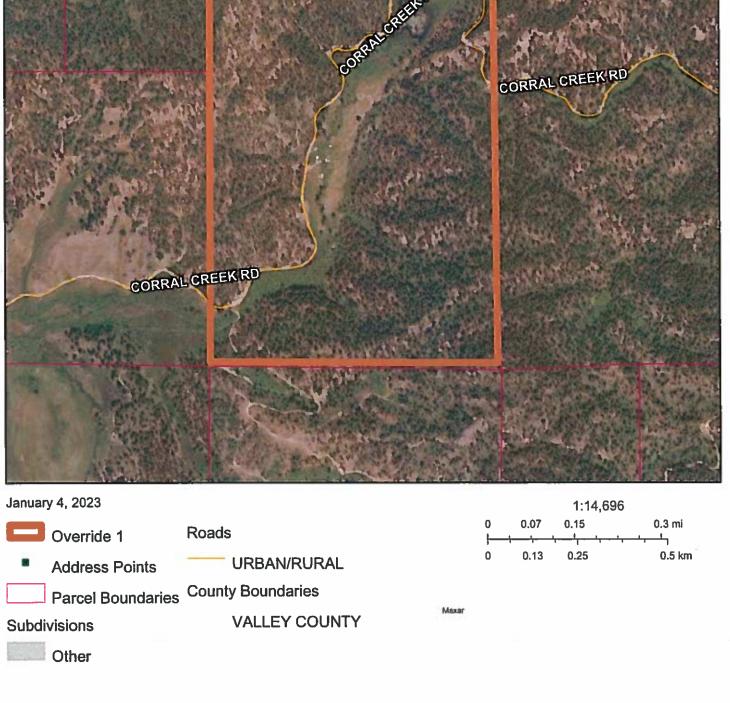
The resulting values for each questions shall be totaled so that each land use and development proposal receives a single final score.

C.U.P. 22-57 Vicinity Map

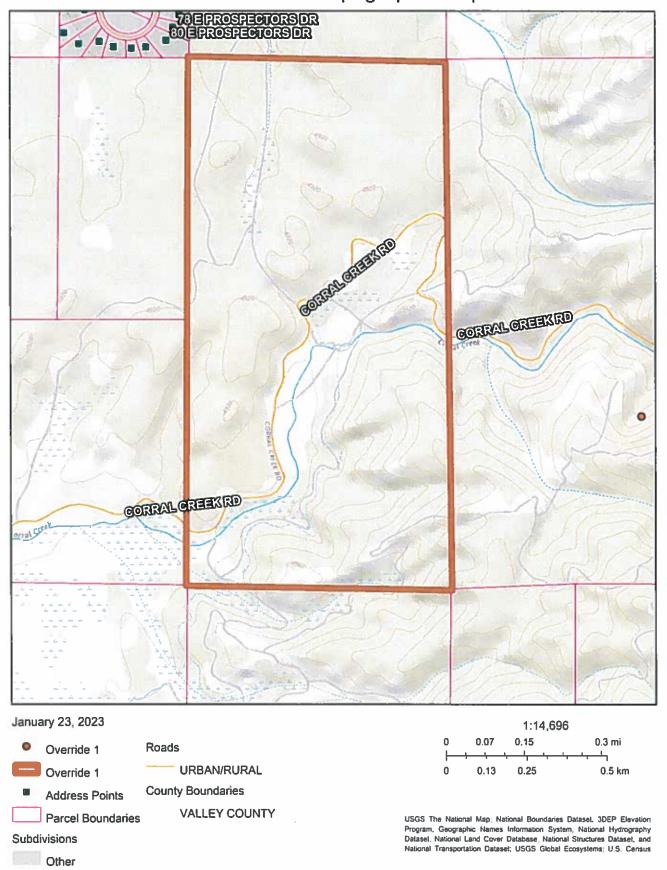


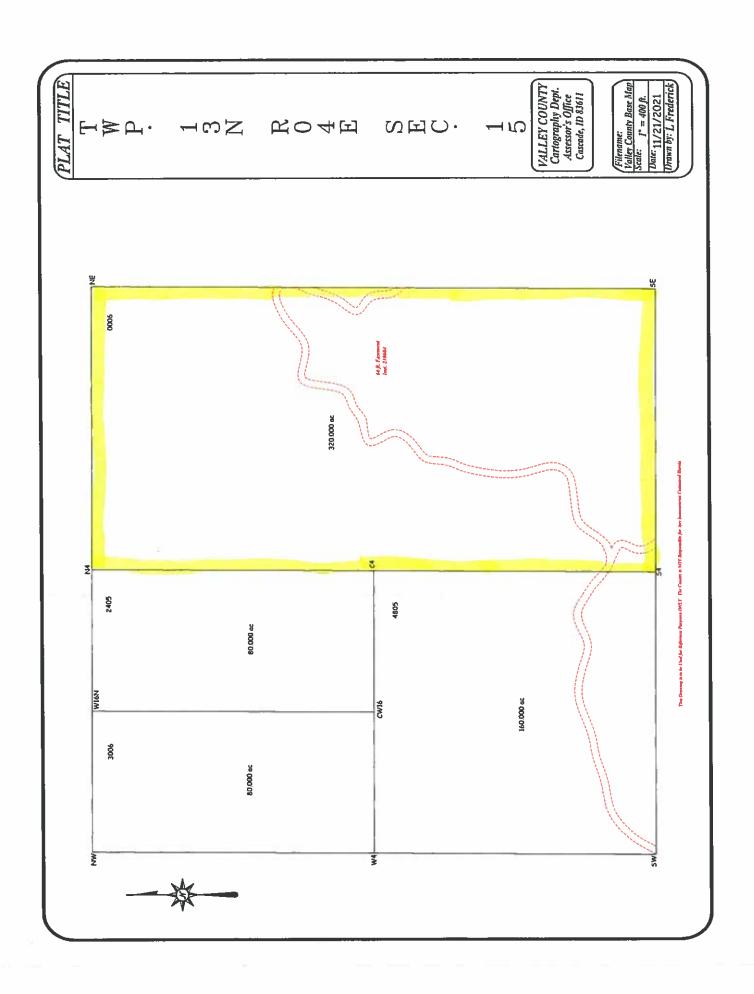
C.U.P. 22-57 Aerial Map

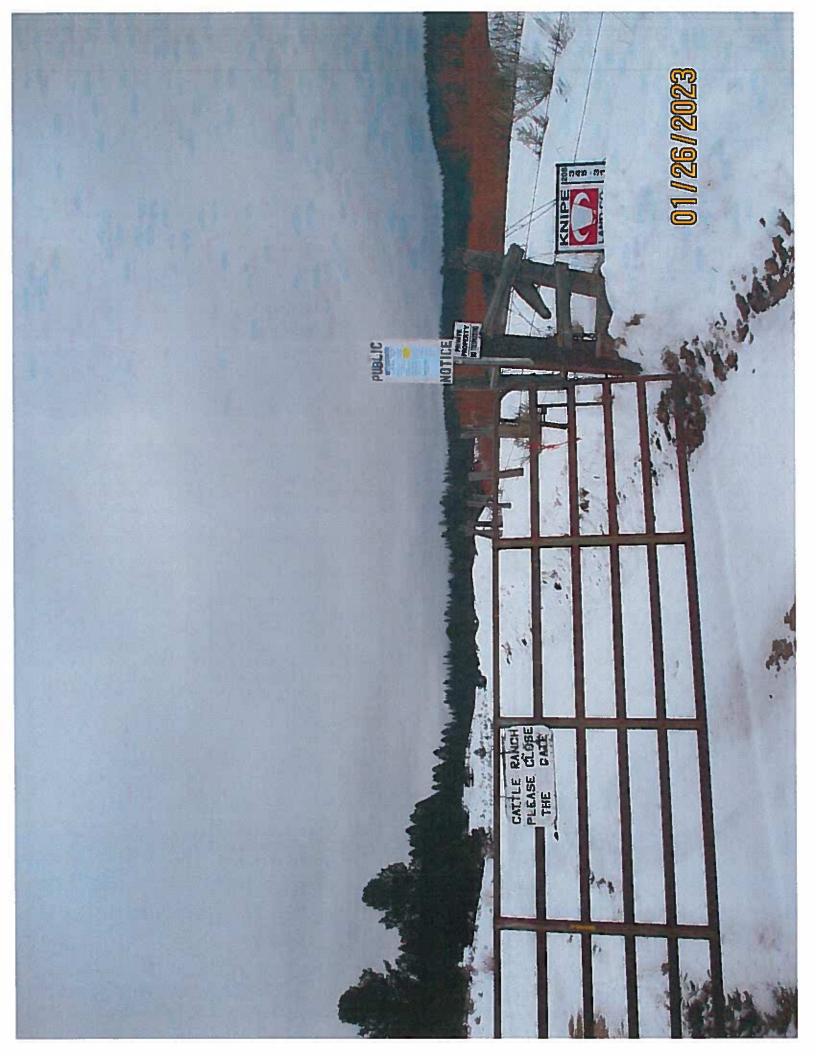




C.U.P. 22-57 Topographic Map







CUP 22-57 Lamon Multiple Residences / Answers

Teia Golden

Wed 1/25/2023 10:24 AM

To:

- Lori Hunter < lhunter@co.valley.id.us>;
- John@knipe
- Janey@knipe

H is for House (3 homes total, 2 family homes further back and one home for the ranch manager in the front)

B is for Barn (2 barns)

-All three homes will be built on the 320 acres, spread out.

All driveways will be built to fire code with amply room for emercency vehicles enough room to turn around.

All Out door lighting will be on the homes and barns and just downward facing lighting that does not cause lighting polution.

Barron & John have been contacted and it is the buyers plan to have the whole 800 acres cleaned up, and maintain the maintance of the underbrush.

Sprinkler systems will be installed in the home.

Roads will be imporved with gravel with large enough turn arounds for emergency vehilces & driveway apprach angles will be large for emergency vehicles

The only people that will be on the property is family, there will not be events, or rididng lessons.

There will be no rentals long or short

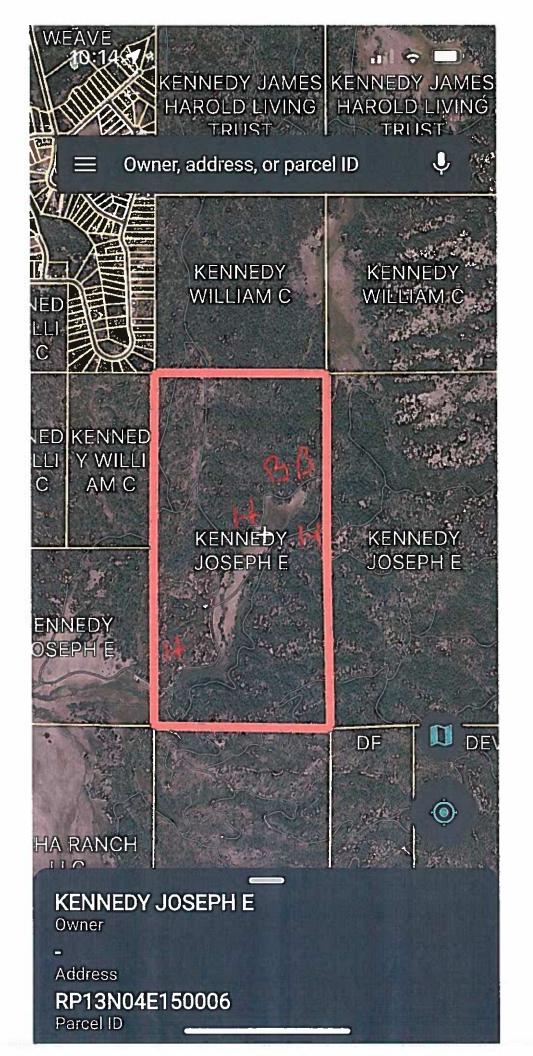
The seller & Title company does not believe Corral Creek is a county road to Horsethief Rd..l am on the agenda with County commissioners to talk about this.

TEIA GOLDEN

Realtor / Destination Living

WINDERMERE REAL ESTATE PROFESSIONALS

WWW.HWY55REALESTATE.com



-			
		CENTRAL Valley County Transmittal DISTRICT Division of Community and Environmental Health	Return to: Cascade Donnelly
	Rez	one #	☐ McCall
	Can	ditional Use #CuP 22-57	☐ McCall Impact
			Valley County
	Prel	iminary / Final / Short Plat	
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L		SECTION 15	
П	1	We have No Objections to this Proposal.	
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	۷.	We recommend Denial of this Proposal.	
	3.	Specific knowledge as to the exact type of use must be provided before we can comment on this F	Proposal.
KĮ	A.	We will require more data concerning soil conditions on this Proposal before we can comment.	
K	5.	Before we can comment concerning individual sewage disposal, we will require more data concern of: high seasonal ground water waste flow characteristics bedrock from original grade other	
	6.	This office may require a study to assess the impact of nutrients and pathogens to receiving groun waters.	d waters and surface
	7.	This project shall be reviewed by the Idaho Department of Water Resources concerning well constravallability.	ruction and water
	8.	After written approvals from appropriate entities are submitted, we can approve this proposal for:	
		☐ central sewage ☐ community sewage system ☐ communit☐ interim sewage ☐ central water ☐ individual sewage ☐ individual water ☐ communit☐ individual water ☐ communit☐ communit☐ central water ☐ communit☐ com	y water well
	9.	The following plan(s) must be submitted to and approved by the Idaho Department of Environment Central sewage Community sewage system Community sewage dry lines Central water	-
	10.	Run-off is not to create a mosquito breeding problem	
	11.	This Department would recommend deferral until high seasonal ground water can be determined i considerations indicate approval.	f other
	12.	If restroom facilities are to be installed, then a sewage system MUST be installed to meet Idaho Sta Regulations.	ite Sewage
	13.	We will require plans be submitted for a plan review for any: food establishment swimming pools or spas child care beverage establishment grocery store	center
П	14	Marting de della la Commentation de	

Date: / 1 /0123

Reviewed By:



CASCADE RURAL FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT P.O. Box 825 CASCADE, ID 83611-0825 109 EAST PINE STREET (208) 382-3200 FAX (208)382-4222

January 20, 2023

To: Valley County Planning and Zoning Cascade, Idaho Attn: Cynda Herrick

RE: CUP 22-57 Lamon Multiple Residences RP13N04E150006

The proposed shared driveway to be built on parcel RP13N04E150006 and access would be from Corral Creek Road. The shared driveway shall be built to the International Fire Code Standards 2018. Section 503 Fire Apparatus Access Roads:

- 503.2.1 **Dimensions.** Fire apparatus access roads shall have an unobstructed width of not less than 20 feet, exclusive of shoulders, and an unobstructed vertical clearance of not less than 13 feet 6 inches.
- 503.2.3 **Surface.** Fire Apparatus access roads shall be designed and maintained to support the imposed loads of fire apparatus and shall be surfaced so as to provide all weather driving capabilities.
- Dead-end Fire Apparatus Access Roads in excess of 150 feet shall be provided with an approved turnaround. Appendix D of the 2018 International Fire Code is attached.

If you have any questions, please contact me.

Stere Hull

Thanks
Steven Hull
Fire Chief

APPENDIX D

FIRE APPARATUS ACCESS ROADS

The provisions contained in this appendix are not mandatory unless specifically referenced in the adopting ordinance or legislation of the jurisdiction.

User note:

About this appendix: Appendix D contains more detailed elements for use with the basic access requirements found in Section 503, which gives some minimum criteria, such as a maximum length of 150 feet and a minimum width of 20 feet, but in many cases does not state specific criteria. This appendix, like Appendices B and C, is a tool for jurisdictions looking for guidance in establishing access requirements and includes criteria for multiple-family residential developments, large one- and two-family subdivisions, specific examples for various types of turnarounds for fire department apparatus and parking regulatory signage.

SECTION D101 GENERAL

D101.1 Scope. Fire apparatus access roads shall be in accordance with this appendix and all other applicable requirements of the *International Fire Code*.

SECTION D102 REQUIRED ACCESS

D102.1 Access and loading. Facilities, buildings or portions of buildings hereafter constructed shall be accessible to fire department apparatus by way of an approved fire apparatus access road with an asphalt, concrete or other approved driv-

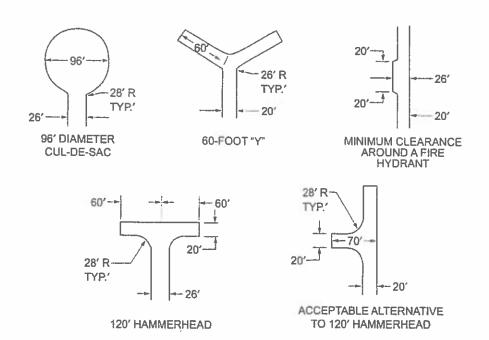
ing surface capable of supporting the imposed load of fire apparatus weighing up to 75,000 pounds (34 050 kg).

SECTION D103 MINIMUM SPECIFICATIONS

D103.1 Access road width with a hydrant. Where a fire hydrant is located on a fire apparatus access road, the minimum road width shall be 26 feet (7925 mm), exclusive of shoulders (see Figure D103.1).

D103.2 Grade. Fire apparatus access roads shall not exceed 10 percent in grade.

Exception: Grades steeper than 10 percent as approved by the fire code official.



For SI: 1 foot = 304.8 mm.

FIGURE D103.1
DEAD-END FIRE APPARATUS ACCESS ROAD TURNAROUND

CUP 22-57 Lamon

From: Lisa Mohler

Sent: Tuesday, January 31, 2023 10:03 AM To: Cynda Herrick <cherrick@co.valley.id.us>

Subject: CUP 22-57 Lamon

Lisa Mohler 47 Johnson Lane McCall ID 83638

Jan. 31, 2023

C.U.P. 22-57 Lamon Multiple Residences

To C. Herrick P & Z Director
Planning & Zoning Commissioners:
Katlin Caldwell Ken Roberts
Sasha Childs Scott Freeman
Gary Swain

DENY - Application is incomplete,

My reasons Why,

- 1. Is this not the beginning of a Subdivision?
- 2. There are no building designs for this application.
- 3. It was my understanding of County Code that NO house can be built bigger than 5,000sqft. (without a design to review this question has to be asked)
- 4. Due to location the application is not addressing Fire control for structures or grass fires.

I have to ask these questions, so others understand why certain C.U.P don't have to follow all the same rules.

Thank you for your time,

Lisa Mohler

Top 10 Ways to Be a Good Septic Owner

- Have your system inspected every three years by a qualified professional or according to your state/ local health department's recommendations
- Have your septic tank pumped, when necessary, generally every three to five years
- Avoid pouring harsh products (e.g., oils, grease, chemicals, paint, medications) down the drain
- Discard non-degradable products in the trash (e.g., floss, disposable wipes, cat litter) instead of flushing them
- Keep cars and heavy vehicles parked away from the drainfield and tank
- Follow the system manufacturer's directions when using septic tank cleaners and additives
- Repair leaks and use water efficient fixtures to avoid overloading the system
- Maintain plants and vegetation near the system to ensure roots do not block drains
- Use soaps and detergents that are low-suds, biodegradable, and low- or phosphate-free
- Prevent system freezing during cold weather by inspecting and insulating vulnerable system parts (e.g., the inspection pipe and soil treatment area)



For more SepticSmart tips, visit www.epa.gov/septicsmart

SAM

A Homeowner's Guide to Septic Systems



Idaho Department of Environmental Quality
1410 N. Hilton
Boise, ID 83706

January 2001

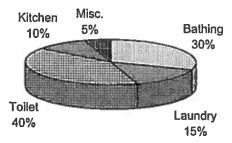


Do you have a home septic system? As an Idaho resident, there is a good chance you do—thirty-six percent of Idaho's homes, or about 210,000 residences, use septic systems to treat their sewage. These systems discharge more than 53 million gallons of wastewater into Idaho's soils annually, and this figure grows each year. In 1999, Idaho's seven health districts issued over 6,100 permits for new septic systems.

Septic systems dispose of household sewage, or wastewater, generated from toilet use, bathing, laundry, and kitchen and cleaning activities. Because septic systems are underground and seldom require daily care, many homeowners rarely think about routine operations and maintenance. However, if a septic system is not properly designed, located, constructed, and maintained, groundwater may become contaminated.

Household Wastewater

Households that are not served by public sewers depend on septic tank systems to treat and dispose of wastewater. Household wastewater carries with it all wastes that go down the drains in our homes, including human waste, dirt, food, toilet paper, soap, detergents, and cleaning products. It contains dissolved nutrients, household chemicals, grease, oil, microorganisms (including some that cause disease), and solid particles. If not properly treated by your septic system, chemicals and microorganisms in wastewater can travel through the soil to groundwater and pose a health hazard.



The average person uses between 50 and 75 gallons of water per day; mostly in the bathroom. Reducing your water use will help your septic system to work more efficiently.

Your Septic System

A conventional septic system has three working parts: a septic tank, a drainfield, and surrounding soil.

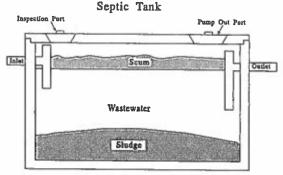
Septic Tank

Septic tanks can be made of concrete, fiberglass, or plastic and must be approved by the state. Minimum sizes of tanks have been established for residences based on the number of bedrooms in the dwelling. In Idaho, a 1,000-gallon septic tank is required for homes with three or four bedrooms. Larger tanks are required for larger homes. Local district health departments issue permits for septic systems and specify the minimum size tank. Some systems installed before the current rules and regulations may have smaller septic tanks.

A septic tank has three main functions:

- to remove as many solids as possible from household wastewater before sending the liquid, called "effluent," to a
 drainfield;
- to decompose solids in the tank; and
- to store solids that do not decompose.

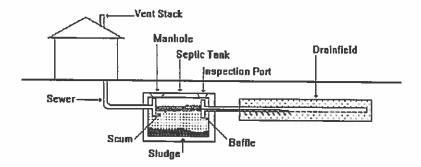
When raw wastewater enters the tank, heavy solids sink to the bottom of the tank as sludge. Light solids, such as grease and paper, float to the surface as scum. During the wastewater storage period, bacteria digest organic material in the wastewater. During this process, the solid material is reduced in volume and composition. Solids that do not decompose accumulate in the tank and eventually must be pumped out.



Tees, or baffles, are provided at the tank's inlet and outlet pipes. The inlet tee slows the incoming wastes and reduces disturbance of the settled sludge. The outlet tee keeps the solids and scum in the tank. As new wastewater enters the tank through the inlet tee, an equal amount of wastewater is pushed out of the tank through the outlet tee. The effluent that leaves the tank has been partially treated but still contains disease-causing bacteria and other pollutants.

Drainfield

Each time raw wastewater enters the tank it forces an equal amount of effluent into a drainfield. A standard drainfield is composed of a series of perforated pipes buried in gravel-filled trenches in the soil. The effluent seeps out of the perforated pipes and percolates through the gravel to the soil.



Soil

The soil below the drainfield provides the final treatment and disposal of the septic tank effluent. After the effluent has passed into the soil, most of it percolates downward and outward, eventually entering the groundwater. Soils are critical to the treatment of septic tank wastewater.

A system that is not functioning properly will release nutrient-rich and bacterial-laden wastewater into the groundwater and/or surface water. These contaminated waters pose a significant public health threat to people that come into contact with them. Wastewater that moves with groundwater can transport bacteria considerable distances. This can result in a threat to public health and adversely affect the quality of ground and surface waters.

Caring for Your Septic System

Installing Your System

In order to have a septic system installed on your property, you must first obtain a permit. Permit applications are available from your local district health department. Next, you must have a site evaluation performed. Make arrangements for this with your district health department and with a licensed septic system installer. Note that not all property is suitable for septic systems, so some permits may be denied. It is recommended that you have a site evaluation performed before you purchase property. Finally, have your system installed by a licensed installer and inspected by your local health district. Provide regular, preventative, maintenance to keep your system running smoothly.

Inspecting Your System

When too much sludge and scum are allowed to accumulate in your tank, the incoming sewage will not have enough time in the septic tank for solids to settle. Solids may flow to the drainfield and clog the pipes, causing the sewage to overflow to the ground surface, where it exposes humans and animals to disease-causing organisms. To prevent this from happening, it is very important to inspect your tank regularly and have it serviced when needed. All tanks have accessible manholes for inspecting and pumping. Some excavation work may be needed to uncover the manhole.

Properly designed tanks should have enough capacity for three to eight years of use before needing service. This is dependent upon the amount of wastewater generated. It is recommended that an average family of four have its septic tank pumped out every three to five years. Don't wait for signs of system failure to have your tank pumped. Your tank should be checked annually to measure sludge and scum levels. A licensed septic tank pumper can provide a septic tank inspection and recommend when the tank should be pumped. A tank inspection should include measuring the depth of scum and sludge and inspecting the tees in the septic tank.

If you do the inspection yourself, it is important to understand that septic tanks always appear full because both the inlet and the outlet are at the top of the tank. What you will need to know is how much of the tank's volume is being taken up by scum and sludge. When sludge and scum take up more than 35 percent of the tank volume, these solids need to be removed by pumping. A pole wrapped in a course weave cloth can be used to check the sludge depth. An extension on the pole can be used to measure the scum depth. Record these measurements as part of your pumping records. To check the tees, uncover the inspection ports.

Never allow anyone to enter your septic tank. Dangerous gases and the lack of oxygen can kill in minutes.

While it is impractical to inspect the pipes in your drainfield, it is important to watch for drainfield failure or overuse. See "Warning Signs of System Failure" in this booklet for information.

Maintaining Your System

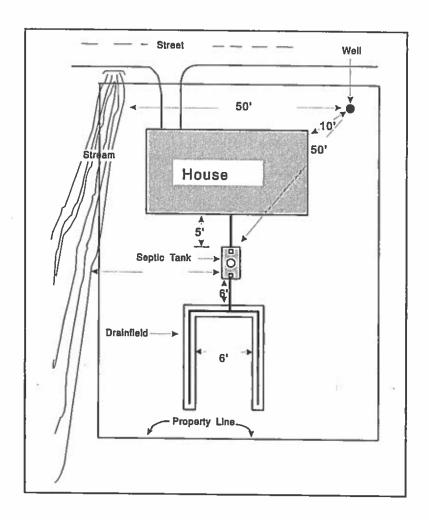
Pumping your septic tank every three years (or as determined by your inspections) will remove accumulations of solids, help keep the drainfield from becoming clogged, and help prevent you from experiencing sewage backups or septic system failure. An accumulation of sludge exceeding 35% of the total water depth in the septic tank could cause solids to enter the drainfield and clog the system. Hire a licensed septic tank pumper to pump your tank for you.

Mapping Your System

In order to take proper care of your septic system, you must know the location of the septic tank and drainfield. The location of your septic tank can be determined from plot plans, septic system inspection records, architectural or landscape drawings, or from observations of the house plumbing. If you do not have access to drawings, find where the sewer pipe leaves your house. Some installers mark the location where the waste pipe comes out of the house with an "S" on the foundation. You may want to do this as well. Probe in the ground 10 to 15 feet directly out from the location where the pipe leaves your house to find your tank.

Once the septic tank has been located, make several plot plan diagrams (with measurements) that include a rough sketch of your house, septic tank cover, drainfield area, well, and any other permanent reference points (such as trees or large rocks) and place them with your important papers. You'll find a sample system diagram on the next page, and a place to draw your own inside the front cover of this booklet. You may also want to hang a diagram in your garage and provide one to your local district health office.

Maintain a permanent record of any septic system maintenance, repair, sludge and scum levels, pumping, drainfield condition, household backups, and operations notes.



Create a septic system diagram, similar to this one, for your system.

Warning Signs of System Failure

While proper use, inspections, and maintenance should prevent most septic tank problems, it is still important to be aware of changes in your septic system and to act immediately if you suspect a system failure. There are many signs of septic system failure:

- surfacing sewage or wet spots in the drainfield area;
- plumbing or septic tank backups;
- slow draining fixtures;
- gurgling sounds in the plumbing system;
- sewage odors in the house or yard (note that the house plumbing vent on the roof will emit sewage odors and this is normal); and
- tests showing the presence of bacteria in well water.

If you notice any of these signs, or if you suspect your septic tank system may be having problems, contact a licensed septic system professional or your local district health agency for assistance.

Septic System Dos and Don'ts

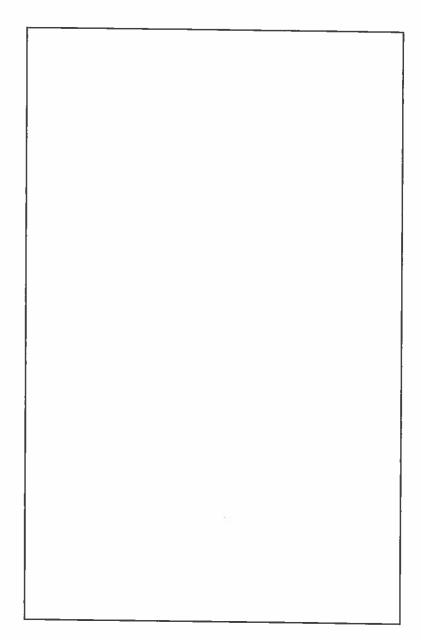
Proper operation of a septic system can prevent costly repairs or replacement. Observing the following guidelines will help to keep your system running efficiently.

Do

- ...practice water conservation. The more wastewater you produce, the more wastewater your system must treat and dispose. By reducing and balancing your use, you can extend the life of your system and avoid costly repairs.
 - Use water saving devices such as low flow showerheads.
 - Repair leaky faucets and plumbing fixtures immediately.
 - o Reduce toilet reservoir volume or flow.
 - Take short showers.
 - o Take baths with a partially filled tub.
 - Wash only full loads of dishes and laundry.
 - Shut off the water while shaving or brushing your teeth.
 - o Balance your water use (e.g., avoid washing several loads of laundry in one day).
- ...keep accurate records. Know where your septic tank is, keep a diagram of its location using the space provided in this booklet, and keep a record of system maintenance.
- ...inspect your system annually. Check the sludge and scum levels inside the tank and periodically check the drainfield for odors, wet spots, or surfacing sewage.
- ...pump your system routinely. Pumping your septic tank is probably the single most important thing you can do to protect your system.
- ...keep all runoff away from your system. Water from roofs and driveways should be diverted away from the septic
 tank and drainfield area. Soil over your system should be mounded slightly to encourage runoff.
- ...protect your system from damage. Keep vehicles and livestock off your drainfield. The pressure can compact the soil or damage the pipes. Before you dig for any reason, check the location of your system and drainfield area.
- ...landscape your system properly. Plant grass over the drainfield area. Don't plant trees or shrubs or place
 impermeable materials, such as concrete or plastic, over the drainfield.
- ...use cleaning chemicals in moderation and only according to manufacturer's directions.

Don't

- ...flood irrigate over your system or drainfield area. The best way to irrigate these areas is with sprinklers.
- ...use caustic drain openers for clogged drains. Use boiling water or a drain snake to clean out clogs.
- ...enter a septic tank. Poisonous gases or a lack of oxygen can be fatal.
- ...use septic tank additives. They are not necessary for the proper functioning of your tank and they do not
 reduce the need for pumping. In fact, some additives can even harm your system.
- ...flush harmful materials into your tank. Grease, cooking oil, coffee grounds, sanitary napkins, and cigarettes
 do not easily decompose in septic tanks. Chemicals, such as solvents, oils, paints, and pesticides, are harmful to
 your systems operation and may pollute groundwater.
- ...use a garbage disposal. Using a garbage disposal will increase the amount of solids entering the septic tank
 and will result in the need for more frequent pumping.



Map your septic system here

For More Information

If you need to obtain a permit for a new or replacement septic system, or if you have questions about septic systems and their operation and maintenance, please contact your local health district.

Panhandle District Health Department 8500 N. Atlas Road Hayden, ID 83835 208-415-5100

North Central District Health Department 215 10th Street Lewiston, ID 83501 208-799-0353

Southwest District Health Department 920 Main Street Caldwell, ID 83605 208-455-5400

Central District Health Department 707 N. Armstrong Place Boise, ID 83704 208-327-7499

South Central District Health Department 1020 Washington Street North Twin Falls, ID 83303 208-734-5900

Southeastern District Health Department 1901 Alvin Ricken Drive Pocatello, ID 83201 208-239-5270

District 7 Health Department 254 "E" Street Idaho Falls, ID 83402 208-523-5382