

GREENLEE COUNTY
LAND USE AND RESOURCE
POLICY PLAN
(LURPP)



Presented to the Greenlee County
Planning and Zoning Commission
on
May 24, 1995

Adopted by the Greenlee County
Board of Supervisors
on
June 6, 1995

Presented to the Greenlee County
Planning and Zoning Commission
for final recommendations
on
June 26, 1995

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AUTHORITY FOR LURPP

This Land Use and Resource Policy Plan was developed and adopted according to the provisions of A.R.S. §11-822.

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE, PROCESS AND INTENDED USES

The purpose of the Land Use and Resource Policy Plan is to provide direction from the citizens of Greenlee County to assist county, state and federal decision makers in protecting, evaluating and enhancing Greenlee County's customs, culture, social stability, economy, tax base and overall public lands ecosystem health.

The process of developing the LURPP involved four distinct processes: 1) Documenting and evaluating public attitudes about the economic base, customs, and cultures of Greenlee County; 2) Documenting and evaluating public assessment of the ecosystem health of public lands within County boundaries; 3) Documenting and evaluating public attitudes towards human and natural resources as they relate to public lands; and 4) Utilizing an information gathering process that is compatible with local, state, and federal laws.

It is intended that this LURPP may be used for several possible uses for example: 1) Joint planning with federal and state public land management agencies, environmental research, environmental assessments, environmental impact statements, and public hearings with federal and state agencies; 2) Development of meaningful cooperation, coordination, and consultation with federal and state agencies; 3) Mitigation of adverse social, cultural, economic and environmental impacts of public land management decisions; 4) Development of Greenlee County's Comprehensive Land Use Plan.

MAIN POLICY ISSUES

The main policy issues listed below and detailed in the pages that follow, are the result of a public scoping process which solicited comments from Greenlee County residents on any topic relating to public lands. The policy statements were formulated by analyzing all public comments received, grouping the comments according to the themes or issues which the comments suggested, and then developing policy statements based upon the groups of similar comments. The similar comments listed in groups are found in Appendix B. Some comments may be listed in several groups. A list of all public comments received is included as Appendix C.

1. **ECONOMICS**
 - a. Mining
 - b. Grazing
 - c. Farming
 - d. Timber
 - e. Recreation
 - f. Tax Base/Diversity

2. **ECOSYSTEMS/PLANTS/ANIMALS**
 - a. Forest Health
 - b. Range Health
 - c. Watershed/Riparian Health
 - d. Endangered Species/ Wildlife Management
 - e. Multiple-Use

3. **PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY ON PUBLIC LANDS**
 - a. Role of County Government.
 - b. Coordination & Coalition
 - c. Law Enforcement
 - d. Private Land/Water Rights Ownership
 - e. Access & Authority to Manage Public Lands

4. **CULTURE - DEFINITIONS/ PRESERVATION/DIVERSITY**

ECONOMICS

MINING

1. Copper mining and the mine at Morenci is the cornerstone of Greenlee County's economy. Greenlee County must take all measures necessary to protect this industry.
2. Mining has played a defining role in the culture, custom and economy of Greenlee County and its continued viability is essential to the county's culture.
3. Open access to public lands by both small and large scale prospecting must be preserved to provide incentive for private investment in mining and development of natural resources. Regulation which inhibits mining must be discouraged and a mining friendly environment must be encouraged.
4. Extractions of minerals where they exist in commercial concentrations, is clearly the land's most beneficial use.

GRAZING

1. Ranching has historically been and continues to be one of the defining and fundamental components of Greenlee County's rural culture, agricultural customs, and economy.
2. Ranches in Greenlee County are typically made up of both privately and publicly owned land; privately, publicly and jointly owned improvements; and privately held water rights and developments, i.e. stock tank, wells and so forth. The privately owned land and improvements contribute to the county's tax base. In order for such mixed ownership operations to continue, Greenlee County shall support efforts to reduce regulatory restraints on ranching and encourage private investment and ownership of range improvements and water rights.
3. Because of the positive effects good ranching has on the economy and ecosystem health, Greenlee County shall support coordination with county extension agents and the development and application of scientific range management information to ensure fully stocked permits and a healthy and permanent cattle industry utilizing a completely renewable resource.
4. It shall be the policy of Greenlee County that stocking rates shall not be reduced unless verifiable, objective data provides unambiguous evidence that reduction in livestock numbers is the only way to avoid permanent or long term damage to the natural resource, and then only after other methods of management, such as creating additional water places, removed from sensitive riparian areas, have been considered.

FARMING

1. Farming has been an important element of Greenlee County's economy and rural culture, since before the county was established and is still an essential aspect of the county's custom, culture and economy.
2. Because of the important role farming plays in the county's economy and rural, family oriented culture, Greenlee County shall foster a regulatory and economic environment which supports and encourages farming and agriculture.
3. Farming in Greenlee County occurs principally in the lower elevations of the county along the Gila River. All commercial farming is irrigated from a combination of surface water diverted from the Gila River and groundwater. Greenlee County shall protect the senior water rights acquired by farmers.

TIMBER

1. Greenlee County must recognize the important role timber plays in generating public revenues for the county and as a factor in overall economic stability. However, the county must prioritize timber's role in overall economic and social structure by recognizing that timbering is secondary to Greenlee County's primary industries: mining, farming and ranching.
2. Because of timber's contribution to county revenues and overall economy, Greenlee County shall support and encourage timbering on forest land within its borders.
3. Greenlee County must recognize the positive effect that multiple-use, long-term forest management has on forest health, watershed improvement and range health.
4. Because of the positive effects on the forest, watershed, and range health, Greenlee County shall support and encourage long-term, multiple-use forest management.

RECREATION

1. Recreation is not nor should it be a substitute for Greenlee County's basic industries which includes mining, farming, and ranching. Because recreation is tied to a healthy overall economy, the county must not in any way abandon these basic industries.
2. Although recreation is secondary to the county's basic industries, the county shall support recreation as a way to expand and diversify the county's economy. The county shall support such efforts by its individual communities.
3. Greenlee County shall coordinate efforts to develop a recreation industry with other agencies and should seek to obtain federal public land revenues to support this effort.
4. In developing a recreation industry, the county must understand the nature of the recreational user and carefully plan sites to minimize negative effects on local economy and environment. The county must ensure that recreation facilities are adequately supervised and policed.

TAX BASE & DIVERSITY

1. Greenlee County must understand its role in regional, national, and global economies. The county shall strive to stabilize its local economy by seeking to increase its economic base; diversifying its economy, and preserving and expanding private property.
2. Greenlee County must preserve private property in order maintain its tax base.
3. Greenlee County shall pursue industries which add value to copper, timber, cattle, and agricultural food and fiber products, as well as tourism in an effort to maintain or increase its economic base.

ECOSYSTEMS - PLANTS - ANIMALS

FOREST HEALTH

1. In order to have a healthy forest, it must be actively managed. The county shall support scientific efforts which define a healthy forest and outline management efforts necessary to achieve such a forest.
2. Since fewer trees and less dense stands decrease the risk of catastrophic fire and improve range and watershed health, resulting in increased volume and less fluctuation in in-stream flows in the Gila and San Francisco rivers, it shall be the policy of Greenlee County that timbering and controlled burns shall be used to decrease forest density.
3. An ideal forest is one where the resources are managed, timber is harvested, tree densities are managed, and ground cover is maximized thereby minimizing soil erosion and providing forage and water.
4. The county shall promote the positive environmental effects traditional public land uses, such as timbering and grazing, and the application of a multiple use, sustained yield philosophy have on forest, range, and watershed health.

RANGE HEALTH

1. Greenlee County shall encourage coordination of agencies, universities and private citizens to promote the best science for range health.
2. The County shall encourage managed timbering, controlled burns and the use of privately owned range improvements to improve range health.
3. The County shall support those traditional uses and practices that are beneficial to range health.
4. Greenlee County shall support education efforts which illustrate that resource wildlife damage resulting from excessive wildlife herd size is a primary threat to range and riparian health.

WATERSHED & RIPARIAN HEALTH

1. Greenlee County shall define what constitutes healthy riparian and watershed areas, and strive to achieve the defined condition.
2. Greenlee County must recognize the importance of both surface and ground water and develop and promote a program to maintain and conserve watershed health.
3. Greenlee County shall promote the positive effects that traditional uses have on watershed health and should encourage range improvements in an attempt to improve watershed health.
4. Greenlee County shall investigate the use of the state universities, including their extension agents' services, to develop data concerning riparian and watershed condition, the benefits of selective cutting versus fire suppression as a tool to reduce fuel loads and fire ladders, and the causes of natural conditions and changes in watershed health.
5. Because of damage to riparian systems by elk and other wild animals, Greenlee County shall investigate ways to control these sources of damage within the confines of existing laws.
6. Greenlee County must recognize and support efforts to keep, maintain, and enlarge the acres of grass vegetation to protect watershed health.

ENDANGERED SPECIES & WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

1. Greenlee County shall support efforts to educate the public about the negative effects of endangered species or single-species management.
2. The Endangered Species Act must be done away with or reformed to reflect common sense and a priority of the human environment over the non-human environment.
3. Greenlee County shall support and acquire scientific information which illustrates the damage to riparian, range and watershed health due to uncontrolled wildlife management.
4. Predator control is essential to protection of traditional public land uses in Greenlee County. Predator relocation shall be carefully managed such that it does not place an unnatural and unreasonable burden on ranchers and other private landowners, particularly in remote areas.
5. Greenlee County shall strongly encourage other agencies to manage the game species under their respective jurisdictions so that wildlife management does not cause adverse effects on traditional uses.

MULTIPLE-USE

1. Greenlee County shall push for a return to and the continued application of a multiple-use, sustained yield concept of public land management to improve the health of public lands and reestablish the priority of human uses.

PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY ON PUBLIC LANDS

ROLE OF COUNTY GOVERNMENT

1. Greenlee County shall take an aggressive stance to secure a prominent role for the county in public land management policy development and should seek funding for this effort from all available sources.
2. The County shall define the key terms used in public land management and seek scientific data to support these definitions. Such terms may include, but are not necessarily limited to: riparian areas; riparian health; navigable streams; waters of the United States; wetlands.
3. The County shall support efforts to educate the public, especially urban dwellers, as well as politicians with respect to the negative effect environmental regulations have had on Greenlee County's customs, culture, and economy and provide support for litigation in these areas.
4. Greenlee County shall support and pursue litigation which promotes interests similar to the county's.
5. Greenlee County shall actively encourage the rural, family-oriented traditional lifestyle that constitutes the county's custom, culture and economy.
6. The County shall facilitate joint communication exchange and planning among federal, state and county governments, universities, and private citizens.
7. The County shall push for more management authority over public lands.
8. Greenlee County shall take an aggressive stand in favor of private property rights.

COALITION AND COORDINATION

1. Greenlee County shall facilitate the coordination of the efforts of agencies, universities, other counties, and individuals to manage public land resources and establish the county's role as a major decision maker in such coordination. The county shall also seek funding to accomplish such coordination efforts.
2. When coordinating with other agencies, especially Federal agencies, the County must strive to assure that Greenlee County's priorities and goals as well as the interests of county residents are paramount in the coordinating and decision making process.
3. The County shall be active in organizations of other counties with similar concerns and objectives. The county shall support such organizations and seek support from such organizations.

PRIVATE OWNERSHIP OF LAND AND WATER RESOURCES

1. Greenlee County shall encourage private ownership and strive to obtain more local management authority of natural resources because such management fosters individual responsibility and stewardship which in turn encourages long term commitment to ecosystem health.
2. If private ownership and management cannot be achieved, then the County shall strive for County and State management authority over Federal management authority.
3. It shall be the policy of Greenlee County that local public land users shall be the primary decision makers with respect to the lands they use.
4. It shall be the policy of Greenlee County that all water rights shall be privately owned to improve watershed and riparian health. Range improvements shall also be privately owned.
5. Other than the tax base it provides, private property shall not be used for public purposes. If it becomes necessary for a public purpose to take title to property or reduce its value through regulation the property owner shall be compensated for his loss at full market value.
6. In land exchanges with the federal government, the County shall demand that there be no net loss of private property within the county and preferably within a school district.

ACCESS AND AUTHORITY TO MANAGE

1. Greenlee County shall push for increased private land within the county and for localized private or county management and individual stewardship.
2. The County shall develop plans and support efforts which ensure access to public lands.
3. Greenlee County shall take an aggressive stance to secure a prominent role for the county in public land management policy development and shall seek funding for this effort from all available sources.
4. Greenlee County shall support a reduction in regulation which hinders effective management.
5. The County shall support efforts to maximize private ownership and individual land management. Where individual management is not possible the County shall support efforts to place management authority in the County and State rather than the Federal Government.
6. Greenlee County must have the authority and ability to protect the health, safety and welfare of its citizens.

CULTURE

DEFINITIONS / PRESERVATION / DIVERSITY

1. Greenlee County is a multi-racial culture consisting of primarily Hispanic and Caucasian races. The county needs to more specifically define and understand this culture.
2. Greenlee County's culture and customs are heavily influenced by the following factors: private property ownership, individual stewardship, mining, Hispanic heritage, strong family orientation, remote location, ranching, farming, and natural resource use.
3. The county shall strive to preserve its unique culture by promoting and encouraging its traditional, basic land use activities.
4. Greenlee County's culture may be further defined by the ability of its citizens to adapt and assume many responsibilities. Greenlee County citizens provide moral support for each other and have profound respect for individual rights and liberties while having great tolerance of differences.