

## CHAPTER 4.2 ENVIRONMENTAL ELEMENT

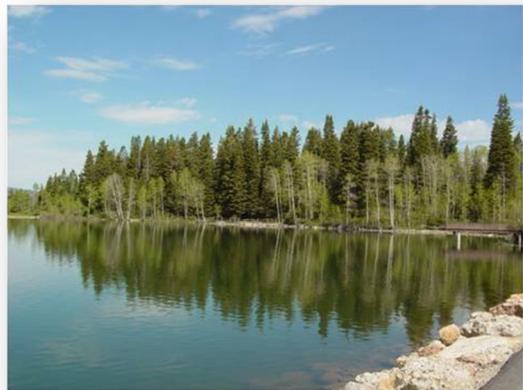
**Vision:** *Promote efforts that will conserve, protect, and improve the quality of natural resources, and assure that all new development meets strict environmental quality standards that will sustain our natural resources.*

### Guiding Principles

- *Provide efficient natural resource management.*
- *Preserve and protect both environmentally and culturally sensitive areas of the community.*
- *Promote and support local and regional efforts to improve air quality.*
- *Encourage sustainable practices with new construction and remodeling.*
- *City beautification.*

### Introduction

Payson has an abundance of natural resources and open space features that are fundamental to our quality of life. A General Plan that fails to consider these amenities would be incomplete and could fail to accomplish one of the basic principles of planning; making great communities happen. Just a few of the unique features that combine to create a high quality of life in Payson include the mountainous setting with undeveloped natural hillsides, spectacular scenic views, high value wildlife habitat, historic and cultural resources, lakes and creek corridors, and a built environment that offers a wide variety of commercial businesses and a healthy mix of residential development.



For many reasons such as private ownership, growth pressure, growth in surrounding communities, and economic pressures, these natural amenities are vulnerable to development pressure and irreversible damage. This damage is likely to occur as it has in countless communities unless local, state and federal agencies work together to implement methods to protect these resources.

Proper protection of the environment will not necessarily limit growth or devalue property, but may increase the demand for residential growth in the community and improve and stabilize property values. The preservation and management of natural resources and the environment is essential to the growth, diversity, and quality of life in the community. As Payson continues to grow, the need for environmental protection is even more critical than in the past. We have benefitted from the diligence of past leaders. We are now the stewards of the land and we are responsible to protect these resources for future generations.

**Guiding Principle A*****Provide Efficient Natural Resource Management***

Too often, environmental degradation occurs because the immediate cost of protecting natural resources is the focus rather than the long term, much more expensive costs of environmental restoration and remediation. Payson City has been at the forefront of encouraging cost effective methods of environmental protection. As one of the leaders in the region in providing secondary non-treated water for irrigation purposes, Payson has taken measurable and proactive actions to protect the diminishing groundwater aquifer by using available surface water. The City maintains a series of reservoirs in Payson Canyon and utilizes water from Strawberry Reservoir in a comprehensive irrigation system. One of the concerns with the system is that to date, the water has remained unmetered which can result in improper use and waste.



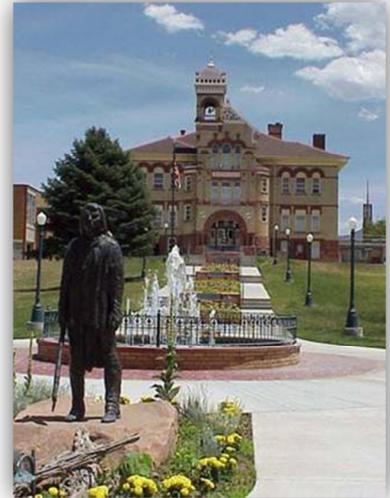
Payson City also provides opportunities for recycling yard waste. Residents are encouraged to deposit green waste (yard waste, tree trimmings, garden waste, etc.) in a separate portion of the city owned landfill. The green waste is treated, nutrients are added and productive compost and topsoil is produced. These are just a couple of examples of what the City is doing. Additional resource management could occur as follows:

- The City will seek opportunities to conserve and encourage reuse of water resources while seeking new options for using non-treated surface water. This can be accomplished by protecting water source recharge areas, limiting or metering the use of water in the pressurized irrigation system, exploration of use of treated wastewater for irrigation needs, and identification of new water sources such as the potential of constructing a larger reservoir in Payson Canyon to retain more of the runoff water for use later in the summer.
- Strong policies need to be supported that require landowners and developers to protect wellhead areas and natural springs, water recharge areas, and other locations that can impact the water systems used by the City. Many of the resources are outside of the City and require careful coordination with partners such as Utah County, the Forest Service, the Bureau of Reclamation and Strawberry Water Users Association.
- All development, but with an emphasis on new projects, should be designed with energy efficiency in mind. The integration of renewable energy features such as solar panels, natural lighting reflection tubes, solar gain positioning of structures, careful placement of landscaping materials and many other energy saving options should be highly encouraged or incentivized.
- Recycling efforts need to be an emphasis beginning with recycling of construction waste to daily recycling of solid waste by the end users. New developments should be required to recycle at least fifty (50) percent of construction waste, neighborhoods should be designed to include yard waste recycling, and solid waste recycling should be considered.

Although resource management on an individual basis does not seem significant enough to worry about, collective resource management by an entire community can have transformational results.

**Guiding Principle B*****Preserve and Protect Both Environmentally and Culturally Sensitive Areas of the Community***

Some features in a community are obvious to even non-residents as areas that need to be protected. However, in every city there are features important to the residents of the community that need to be preserved as part of the identity of the City, for historical purposes, or sometimes simply to add interest in the community. While the environmental features are more timeless and have always needed to be protected, community culture changes from time to time and it is important to continually listen to residents about the important features in the City. Payson City should continue to regulate land use to protect sensitive areas including, but not limited to:



- Environmentally Sensitive Features:
  - Hillsides and areas with significant slope
  - Payson Canyon water shed, aesthetic, and recreational resources
  - Wetland and riparian areas that support wildlife and water protection
  - Floodplains and floodways supporting a wide variation of spring runoff and where damage could occur
  - Fault lines and other geologic features where damage could occur
  - Agricultural operations, such as raising and harvesting of crops
- Culturally Sensitive Features:
  - “P” Mountain as a historic symbol of the community
  - Memorial Park and other open spaces that create an outdoor atmosphere valued by most residents
  - Historic buildings and structures that help us learn about our history and protect our heritage
- Carefully monitor and regulate any alteration of property or improvements in sensitive areas.
  - There should be proper setbacks from fault lines, ridgelines, floodplains, wetlands and other similar hazards.
  - Building height restrictions, reflectivity and other architectural considerations should be implemented on structures in protected areas to include environmentally and visually sensitive areas such as ridgelines and view sheds.
- Title 21, Sensitive Lands Ordinance, should be implemented and supported where appropriate. Title 21 is an important tool in protecting the sensitive areas of the community.
- Coordinate with appropriate agencies that have regulatory jurisdiction of environmental or cultural sensitive areas surrounding the community.



- *Design parks and open space to accommodate multiple uses, such as preservation of natural landscape and environmentally sensitive areas.*

### **Guiding Principle C**

#### ***Promote and Support Local and Regional Efforts to Improve Air Quality***

Payson is part of a much larger ecosystem that must be protected at a regional scale. Nowhere is this more evident than in the protection and improvement of air quality. As a member of the Mountainland Association of Governments, Payson City has partnered with other communities to improve the air quality throughout the region. Some of the tasks Payson City can implement to improve air quality include:

- Use innovations and technologies to minimize atmospheric emissions and noise. In order to accomplish this task, the City will promote clean industry that can demonstrate an ability to mitigate emissions.
- Carefully design transportation systems to promote efficient traffic movement in an effort to maintain particulate matter levels at or below federally required attainment level.
- Encourage development patterns that support alternative modes of transportation including trails, transit, carpooling, bicycles, etc.
- Promote compliance with all applicable environmental laws and regulations.

### **Guiding Principle D**

#### ***Encourage Sustainable Practices with New Construction and Remodeling***

Recognizing that growth will occur, but resources to serve additional people will be limited, is the basis for implementing sustainable practices. If it cannot be demonstrated that new growth can be served by the available resources, the new development should not be approved. However, by growing smarter and learning to be more aware of resource limitations, there will likely be ample resources to serve the growing population for the duration of this General Plan. Some of the sustainable practices that should be implemented by the City include, but are not limited to:

- Implementation of measurable conservation standards and construction recycling efforts. Builders and construction companies should be encouraged to recycle at least fifty (50) percent of all construction waste. With the cost of building materials rising, many builders are already using excess materials such as lumber and copper on other projects.
- Implementation of conservation methods, such as use of native and low water usage landscaping and conservation measures in development and housing design.
- Implementation of policies that require development practices that are environmentally sound and use “green building” alternatives. There are many supporting organizations for these practices such as the Green Building Council and Leadership in Environmental Efficiency Design (LEED).
- Take proactive actions to educate the public and municipal employees about the value of sound environmental policies.

**Guiding Principle E**

***City Beautification***

Typically when an Environmental Element to a General Plan is contemplated, the body of the document rightfully focuses on environmental protection. However, a very important part of the “environment” is the visual appearance of the community in the built environment of neighborhoods and commercial areas. Without city beautification, protection of the other environmental and cultural features would be for not. Therefore, the City will consider the following strategies to maintain pleasant and attractive neighborhoods and commercial areas:

- Promote clean and neat properties in the community that allow for individuality, but with limitations on the spread of noxious weeds, debris, odor, unsightly appearance, and other nuisances.
- Creation of incentives and awards in concert with citations and fines to ensure beautification of the community occurs.
- Implement maintenance standards for public properties owned and maintained by Payson City.

**Other Environmental Considerations**

The environment (environmental, cultural, aesthetic) is a living and breathing organism that needs care and attention to thrive. It is a comprehensive system with a series of actions impacting each other in both positive and negative ways. By following the basic Guiding Principles found in this element, Payson City will continue to develop into a community with a great physical environment that can be enjoyed by all residents and visitors.

As a final note, initial protection of the environment is much more cost effective than future remediation or improvement of the environment. Furthermore, most residents desire to live in a clean, wholesome environment for which Payson City is known. Protection of these resources is really a form of economic development that can stabilize and even grow the economic base of the City.