

CHAPTER FIVE: RUSH VALLEY PLANNING DISTRICT



LAND USE

The Rush Valley planning district faces the challenge of potential growth but retains its original, rural character. Now is the time to preserve Rush Valley's resources before it must deal with the conflict between maintaining open space/agriculture, environmental resources, and development as seen in Tooele Valley.

Land ownerships and administrations in Rush Valley include a substantial amount of private land, Bureau of Land Management land, the Tooele Army Depot South Area, the eastern halves of two blocks of the Wasatch National Forest, and three incorporated cities--Rush Valley, Stockton, and Vernon. There is moderate agricultural activity in and near Rush Valley and Vernon. The valley is very open--a characteristic which residents would like to preserve. Due to its proximity to the faster-growing Tooele Valley, Rush Valley is experiencing growth from people who want to live in "the country," but commute to work elsewhere.

Both Rush Lake and the Oquirrh Mountains attract some recreational use, creating an increased interest in second homes and cabins. While second homes provide some tax revenue, their impact upon the natural resources of the valley should be weighed carefully with benefits to the valley and county. Approvals of all types of development should be based upon the preservation of the open, rural character of the valley. Preservation of the valley's open character would also benefit the enjoyment and sensitive development of historic resources, including the Pony Express Route, which passes approximately through the center of the valley.

Residential Development

There is little residential development outside the incorporated cities of Rush Valley. Existing land use is primarily agricultural or open, with primary zoning designation of MU-40 (multiple use, one per 40 acres).

In the interest of both residential development and agriculture, this zone designation should be changed to an agricultural zone of one unit per 40 acres which is a less industrially and commercially permissive zoning designation. More dense development should be directed into incorporated cities. Areas near incorporated city and town boundaries may have a higher density zoned of one unit per 20 acres, and one unit to 5 acres for those developments that have an open space cluster design and have culinary water and/or sewer systems. Families wishing to increase the density upon their own property to allow additional home sites can be addressed with density bonus procedures.

Agriculture

Agriculture in Rush Valley benefits from having prime farmland areas and plentiful water resources. As a result, several agricultural land uses take place in Rush Valley both inside and outside of the incorporated cities. These areas are zoned A-20 while the rest of the valley is designated MU-40. As stated previously, land use and zoning which is less commercially and industrially permissive helps both residential development and agriculture by minimizing land uses conflicting with agriculture.

Adoption of the bonus density structure (discussed in "Land Use" in Chapter 2) would also serve to preserve lands for agricultural uses. Farming, ranching and other large landholding families would benefit from continued living on the land with the remaining property be dedicated to continuing agricultural use.

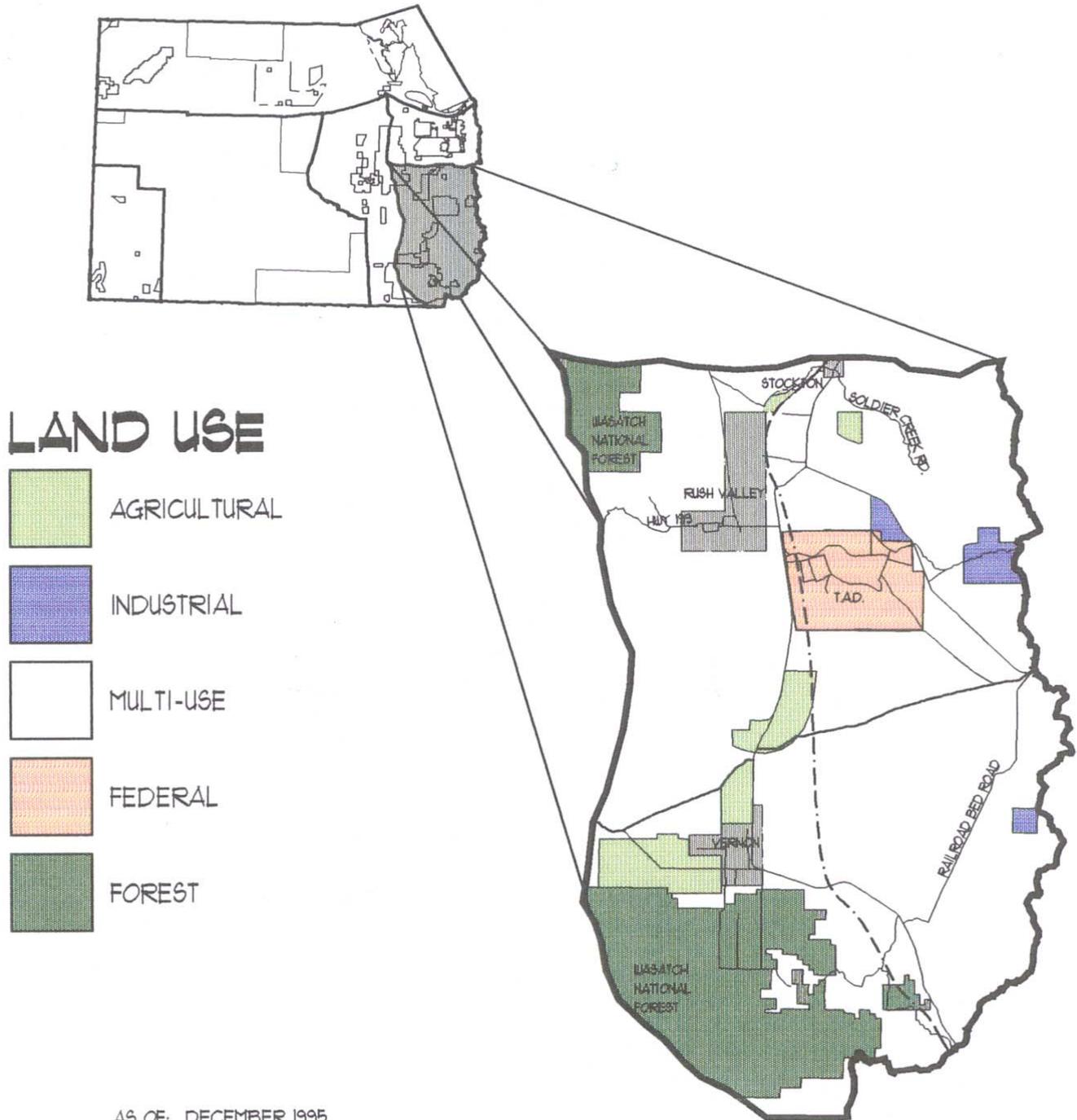
Commercial/Industrial

Interest in commercial development in the valley conflicts with current land uses and community desires to preserve open, rural character. Commercial development should be located in incorporated towns.



TOOELE COUNTY PLANNING DISTRICT

RUSH VALLEY



ECONOMIC AND DEMOGRAPHIC

Demographic Summary

The Rush Valley Planning District is comprised of the communities of Stockton, Ophir, Rush Valley, Vernon, St. John, Clover, Lofgren, and Hogan. There are approximately 399 households in this area receiving county utility service. Applying the average household size of 3.06 persons to this number produces a population estimate of roughly 1,220 persons. According to the 1990 census, 971 persons resided in the towns of Stockton, Vernon, Rush Valley and Ophir, so factoring in the remainder of the area, the 1220-person estimate appears to be reasonable. At this population, the planning district contains approximately 4.6 percent of the county's population.

Economic Summary

There is no detailed employment information available for the area. The major industry in the area is agriculture -- ranching and farming. Of the people responding to the resident survey that are employed, the majority commute to work outside of Rush Valley. Roughly 12 percent work in Rush Valley, 42 percent work in the Tooele Valley, 15 percent are employed in Skull Valley and the remaining 31 percent work in Salt Lake City. The respondents to the resident survey expressed a strong desire for more employment opportunities in Rush Valley. Unfortunately, a population base of 1,220 persons will not support a great deal of industry or commercial enterprise. Small business development geared to support the agricultural concerns in the area or convenience retail could be developed within the existing communities, particularly in Stockton with the advantage of potentially drawing demand for services from the traffic along SR 36.

TRANSPORTATION

The planning district is served by a number of State-maintained roads as well as numerous county roads. The principal State roads are SR 199 connecting Rush Valley with Dugway Proving Grounds; SR 36 which runs north and south through the planning district connecting Tooele with Juab and Utah Counties and

provides access to Stockton, Rush Valley, Vernon and the Tooele Army Depot South Area; and SR 73 which provides access eastward into Utah County through Five Mile Pass. The Union Pacific Railroad has a mainline track running north and south through this planning district extending from Tooele to the south boundary of the district. This is the main Union Pacific route into Southern California and is used frequently.

The county roads are primarily graveled surface roads in the Vernon and Stockton areas. There is a major north-south collector road, Mormon Trail Road, which connects Rush Valley with Grantsville on the west side of the valley. The roads are used primarily for access to rural farmland and public lands located within the area.

It is recommended that Mormon Trail Road be designated as a collector road and be maintained as such. Similar designations should be made to Hogan Road, Vernon Road and Pony Express or Lookout Pass Road. These serve as collector roads and should be designated as such.

Access to Wasatch National Forest properties is important for recreational use of forest lands. The roads located south of Vernon provide access into the Sheep Rock Mountains and should be maintained to provide access to public lands. Similar access should be maintained to the Stansbury Mountains, which contain National Forest land west of Rush Valley. These access roads are primarily county roads, and should be maintained for access by the general public to these public lands. The other roads within this area should be designated as local roads and be maintained by the county when they are located in unincorporated areas.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Infrastructure serving the Rush Valley planning district consists primarily of centralized water systems located in parts of Vernon and town of Stockton. The only other centralized infrastructure within the planning district is at the Tooele Army Depot South Area, where centralized systems are provided for the developed areas of the depot. Use of this system is restricted



to the Tooele Army Depot personnel and the system provides service to the buildings and facilities located at the depot. The balance of residents within this planning district live on rural farm sites and obtain sewer and water services through individual systems. Power and telephone services are available throughout the planning district. There are other limited services, such as natural gas and cable T.V.

Little increased demand is expected for centralized infrastructure services in the unincorporated areas of this planning district. The possible exception would be around the Rush Lake Area, which is a popular recreation site. Sewer and water services should be provided in this area as it continues to develop. This would consist of drinking water for campers, and portable toilets could be utilized to provide sanitary facilities to visitors.

ENVIRONMENT

Natural Resources

A potential contributor to air pollution in this district is the U. S. Department of Defense incinerator facility located at the Tooele Army Depot South Area as part of a national plan to destroy old munitions which are either not planned for use or are degrading. The Army depot was chosen as one of only a few sites throughout the country where this type of destruction will occur. The Army is nearing completion of the facility and expects to begin destruction of munitions after completion of trial burns and issuance of an operating permit by the Department of Air Quality.

Surface waters in Rush Valley include a number of streams that eventually join to form Faust Creek, the drainage for most of the valley. These streams include Hickman, Clover, Government, Dutch, Mercur, Soldier, Ophir, and Boulter Creeks. The second largest body of water in Tooele County is Rush Lake located southwest of Stockton. This is an intermittent lake that is fed by springs and Faust Creek. Although there are not outlets, Rush Lake is still considered to be a fresh water lake. There have been times when Rush Lake has been completely dry for extended periods of time, and has experienced wide fluctuations during the past

10 years. Rush Lake receives occasional recreational use.

The Rush Valley area currently has a surplus of groundwater resources. According to the Shambip River Basin Study, there is about 77,000 acre-feet of water available for use from the Rush Valley area. This is about one-half the amount of water already used in the region for municipal, industrial, and irrigation uses. Central water systems serve the communities of Rush Valley, Clover, Vernon, Stockton and the Tooele Army Depot South Area. The general quality of the groundwater found in the Rush Valley area is considered to be good. Table 1 presents an estimate of water balance for the Tooele Valley and Rush Valley areas of the county. The table shows that most of the unappropriated water is located in the Rush Valley area.

See Table 1, next page. (Wetlands data for Rush Valley is combined with Tooele Valley data, see Chapter 3 for wetlands discussion.)

Mountainsides, Vegetation and Wildlife

The foothills and rugged slopes of the Oquirrh and Tintic mountains define the edges of this open, rolling valley. These mountainsides are valuable amenities to the residents of Rush Valley and the county. Views in the valley take in dramatic mountains against the open skies and a valley inhabited by wildlife and hardy vegetation. Planning efforts should preserve the valley character and its healthy, yet sensitive, environment.

Vegetation in the valley is made up of shadscale, sagebrush, greasewood, maple, Utah Juniper, singleleaf pinyon, cliffrose, and cheatgrass. A variety of wildlife inhabits the valley, including: deer, elk, pronghorn antelope, sage grouse, chukar and raptor nest sites. Critical habitats in Rush Valley are:

- C Mule deer habitat located on western slopes of Oquirrh Mountains;
- C Substantial and high value year-long habitat for pronghorn antelope in southeastern Rush Valley;
- C Critical year-long sage grouse habitat in western Rush Valley, and critical sage grouse strutting ground in Rush Valley;



Table 1
Shambip River Basin Water Budget By Sub-Area
Volumes in Acre-Feet per Year

River Basin Sub-Area	Area (Acres)	Annual Precip.	M&I ¹ Divers.	Irrig. ² Divers.	Wildlife Reqmts.	Stock Reqmts.	Evapo-trans.	Balance ³
Stansbury Island	58919	48500	0	0	1	2	48400	100
Grantsville	12441	11800	840	37400	1		125000	**** ⁵
Clover	80359	10500	0	13800	1	4	79900	11900
Vernon	145815	15200	20	24300	2	8	134700	200
North Tintic	130408	128500	50	0	2	5	11500	12800
Southern Oquirrh	105383	15200	50	3800	1	4	113000	38800
Northern Oquirrh	121787	175700	8730 ⁴ (18,730)	28900	2		130400	7700 (-2300)
Totals	79112	841500	10290 (21290)	108200	10	35	747000	77500 (67,500)

¹ Does not include private domestic use outside incorporated areas.
² Refers to the amount of water required to meet full season C.U. of present corps with present irrigation systems
³ The water budget balance is assumed to contribute to the groundwater and is rounded to the nearest 100 acre-feet.
⁴ Does not include the 10,000 acre-foot per year water right from Mill Pond which has been exported to the Kennecott Smelter Operations in the past and may again be used for this purpose in the future. The numbers in parentheses include the effect of this export of water.
⁵ No additional water is available if all present needs are met.

Source: Shambip River Basin Study, Water Supply and Hydrology Appendix, 1988.

C Raptor nest sites located in Stansbury, Onaqui, and Sheeprock Mountains.

While these habitats are considered critical, it should be remembered that substantial, migratory and mating habitats are also invaluable for the survival of wildlife. All wildlife habitats of Tooele County should be preserved to the greatest extent possible.

RECREATION

Recreation Resources

Recreation opportunities are abundant in the district’s national forests, at Rush Lake, and elsewhere in the valley. People travel substantial distances to enjoy the national forests. Rush Lake is enjoyed by windsurfers and nearby residents. Soldier Creek Canyon has been a popular place for cross-country skiing. Enforcement is needed in the southern area of the Wasatch National Forest and Black Canyon to prevent inappropriate behavior. This area is under BLM (Spanish Fork

office) and Tooele County jurisdiction.

Because of these recreational opportunities and the open, rural character of the valley, there is increasing recent interest in development of second and summer rental homes. Soldier Canyon has been looked at for second home development, and the Vernon area (north of the national forest) has been the site of interest for summer rental cabins. Stockton, due to growth pressures, might, in the future, consider annexing Soldier Canyon development. Processes for proposed development should acknowledge existing availability of water resources.

Recreation Designation

The primary recommendation for the Rush Valley planning district is the designation of recreation areas featuring natural and historical amenities. The Tooele County Recreation Corridor includes much of Rush Valley, extending from Stansbury Island, along the Stansbury mountains and into Rush Valley where the Onaqui and Sheeprock Mountains are taken in. The



CULTURAL AND SCENIC RESOURCES

Rush Valley History

Rush Valley City is now incorporated, but it began as several small settlements. During the mid-1850s, Clover, St. John, Centre and Ajax were the first settlements in the valley. These towns have since combined into today's Rush Valley City. Vernon also began as several small settlements and is now incorporated.

Since the mid-1850s, the military has been present in Tooele County. The military was interested in Rush Valley because of its proximity to the several trails used to travel across the nation's territories to and from California. Stockton began in 1854 when Lt. Col. E. J. Steptoe established a military reservation in the valley for maintenance of horses. The World War Two era military establishment of Tooele Army Depot South Area is still active, being used primarily for storage of outdated toxic substances.

Gen. Connors also installed his company in Rush Valley; Ophir boomed later when his soldiers discovered silver in 1860. The town was a wild boomtown, but rather than dying completely, it has settled down to the quiet town it is today. The effect of the historic Rush Valley Mining District continues today with mining in the valley. At its peak the district was made up of more than 400 mining camps and its boom era was marked by the removal of \$1,000,000 in silver in one year.

Rush Valley Historic Sites:

- Daughters of the Utah Pioneers (D.U.P.) Monument to Ajax and the Underground Store. Built by William Ajax, the store began as a corner in his adobe home while he excavated an underground cavern 100 feet by 80 feet and 20 feet at its deepest, which housed his general store and inn. The store continued to serve the surrounding area and travelers until 1913, when the cavern was emptied. It burned down and now only a monument donated by the DUP and a round ragged hole mark its place in the valley.

border of the recreation corridor then crosses the valley from the Onaquis, around and including the Wasatch National Forest, and stretches east to the Tooele/Utah county border north of, including, Black Rock Canyon and its road. (More on the Tooele County Recreation Corridor and other recreation issues in Chapter 3, Recreation.) It is the intention of recreation area designation to preserve the amenities of the area, while promoting beneficial, enjoyable, yet low-impact, recreation uses.

District Trail Concept

The trail concept diagram above shows by shaded arrows the direction of recreation travel to reach and enjoy the variety of outdoor recreation resources. The recreation amenities are given by the notes on the trail concept diagram. Recreation resource users can enter the district at the approximate locations of the arrows, travel within this general pattern to reach recreation resources, and/or travel to other recreation resources just outside the district. Rush Lake is an intermittent lake used primarily by windsurfers. The valley mountains and foothills of Rush Valley offer mountain recreation including two sections of the Wasatch National Forest in the Stansbury and Sheeprack Mountains.

Other aspects of the trail concept include historically influenced patterns of natural resource uses: cavalry encampment in the valley (horse-riding), mining exploration in the canyons (hiking, rockhounding), and the Pony Express route (lending a romantic Old West appeal to the district). The dashed arrow relates the general direction of the Pony Express Route through the valley.

Cross-country skiing has been popular, creating interest in second homes, or cabins, in the district. These interests will need to locate development in the incorporated cities in the valley if lot sizes smaller than 40 acres are desired. It would greatly impact the quantity and quality of recreation resources, and the current recreation travel pattern, if foothills and canyons in the district were to be developed extensively.



- The “Steptoe Monument” for Lt. Col. E. J. Steptoe and Gen. Connors’ mining efforts is located along SR-36 and relates how the soldiers built roads, bridges, began mining and organized the town of Stockton. Stockton was the first mining camp in Utah, and was the first mining town in the West to be surveyed and laid out according to the compass.

- Ophir Town Hall, John C. Sharp House, Soldier Creek Kilns, and Stockton Jail are all on the National Register of Historic Places.

- East Rush Valley Station - Pony Express entered the county from Utah Valley over Five Mile Pass, and was used for only a short time before the route across Rush Valley changed. Faust Station (a.k.a. Meadow Creek) is located in Rush Valley and was operated by Dr. Henry J. Faust. A small cemetery is located in the foothills to the east of the station and a DUP monument

to the station is located at SR-36.

- Lookout Station, or Point Lookout, is located between Rush and Skull Valleys, at Lookout Pass, named for its use as lookout point for spotting possibly aggressive Indians in valleys below. A store operated there where riders could purchase water, supplies and home cooked meals. “Aunt Libby” was the cook and wife of store operator, Horace Rockwell. Alvin Anderson ran the station. Aunt Libby had many much-loved pet dogs, who are buried in “Aunt Libby’s Dog Cemetery” (along with some anonymous people). The site is commemorated with a sign. Lookout Station is commemorated with a DUP monument, and another sign commemorates the work of the Civilian Conservation Corps in the area.

Please refer to the Historic Sites map at the end of Chapter Two.

