

VERDE VALLEY LAND PRESERVATION INSTITUTE

Presentation for Verde Valley Regional Planning Process

I. INTRODUCTION

THE VERDE VALLEY LAND PRESERVATION INSTITUTE (VVLPI) WHOSE PURPOSE IS TO IDENTIFY, ACQUIRE, PRESERVE, AND MANAGE OPEN SPACE IN THE VERDE VALLEY, IS FOLLOWING A MANDATE FROM THE FIVE CITIES AND TOWNS AND YAVAPAI COUNTY.

In 1998 Camp Verde, Clarkdale, Cottonwood, Jerome, Sedona, Cornville and Yavapai County signed resolutions that indicated their support for open space preservation. In addition, one of the main tenets of interest was to maintain the identities of each incorporated town and city by creating permanent open space between each of them. Each of the entities then engaged in open space planning.

In 2002, 125 community leaders came together to declare preservation of open space as essential to the well-being of the Verde Valley and that VVLPI should be the conduit for that process.

The interest is still there as more recent 2005 surveys of the residents of the Verde Valley attest. They are putting open space and riparian values at the top of their lists as the Public Response To The Most Important Planning Issues page describes. (See this document attached).

VVLPI comes today to bring to the Regional Planning Process the basic facts, observations, elements and a comprehensive map that have been accumulated for just such an opportunity as this. These ideas are from a collection of workshops, wisdom from experts and from the open space planning by the Verde Valley city and town and unincorporated area planners.

The entire population of Yavapai County was 68,000 in 1980 and now the population of the Verde Valley alone is about 68,000 people. That growth has, unfortunately, come in the form of parcel splits (wildcat building) 90% of the time, rather than by orderly 10% growth through planning and subdivisions. This regional Planning effort could not come at a better time.

We all recognize that our water resources are strained and currently we are not able to manage our water as we would like to do. But that is not a subject for this Regional Planning Project. However, to partially address this issue, protection and preservation of all the riparian and riverine areas in the Verde Valley is a major element in our program.

There is an opportunity to develop structures of all sizes and means within parameters that meet the needs of our communities, create a healthy economic environment and yet maintain the environmental integrity of our ecosystems, the beauty of our vistas and the rich historical and cultural diversity of our area.

VVLPI is prepared to present how this might happen through good regional planning.

II. HOW DO WE DO THIS?

BY APPLYING SCIENCE-BASED PLANNING IN CONSERVING RESOURCES WHILE ALLOWING GROWTH TO OCCUR :

- 1. DEFINE LOCAL RESOURCE VALUES**
- 2. PRESERVE *PRIORITY* CONSERVATION AREAS**
- 3. APPLY REGIONAL SCIENTIFIC-BIO PLANNING**
- 4. USE NEW APPROACHES TO LAND PLANNING & URBAN GROWTH**

1. LOCAL RESOURCE VALUES

- SCENIC
- BIOLOGICAL
- RIPARIAN
- HISTORIC
- CULTURAL

2. PRIORITY CONSERVATION AREAS

- RIPARIAN AND RIVERINE
- CRITICAL LANDSCAPE LINKAGES & BOUNDARIES
- HABITAT RESTORATION & ENHANCEMENT
- VIEWSHEDS & MOUNTAIN RIDGES
- TRAIL ACCESS AND RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES

3. REGIONAL SCIENCE-BIO PLANNING

- SCIENCE-BASED OPEN SPACE PLANNING
- FEDERAL, STATE, LOCAL STUDIES
- LARGE LANDSCAPE PROTECTION

4. NEW APPROACHES TO LAND PLANNING & URBAN GROWTH

- DETERMINING WHICH LANDS SHOULD BE EXCLUDED FROM GROWTH AND PROTECT FROM URBAN DEVELOPMENT
- USING THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT AS A BENEFIT TO THE QUALITY OF LIFE
- CONTEMPORARY GROWTH MANAGEMENT CONCEPTS; WORKING TOGETHER WITH DEVELOPERS AND BUILDERS
- DEFINE ADVANTAGES OF USING OPEN SPACE IN AND AROUND DEVELOPMENT

III. ELEMENTS

THE ELEMENTS OF A VERDE VALLEY OPEN SPACE PLAN ARE:

- 1. CRITICAL & SENSITIVE HABITAT AND BIOLOGICAL CORRIDORS**
- 2. RIPARIAN RESTORATION**
- 3. HISTORICAL & CULTURAL RESOURCES**
- 4. FOREST & MOUNTAIN RESOURCES**
- 5. RANCH CONSERVATION**

1. Critical & Sensitive Habitat and Biological Corridors

- a. Conserves biologically connected patches of land
- b. Maintains open space between communities, towns and cities
- c. Preserves habitat crucial to species recovery
- d. Supports biodiversity

2. Riparian Restoration

- a. Protects and restores riparian areas
- b. Enhances and protects the riverine environments
- c. Protects water resources and quality
- d. Enhances groundwater recharge
- e. Provides habitat linkage
- f. Prevents flooding
- g. Provides recreational experiences

3. Historical and Cultural Resources

- a. Preserves our cultural and historic heritage
- b. Maintains our unique town and urban center identities
- c. Protects our cultural identity
- d. Maintains our cultural diversity
- e. Saves the past for the future

4. Forest and Mountain Resources

- a. Protects viewsheds
- b. Protects wildland-urban interface
- c. Creates a partnership with the U.S. Forest Service to protect its forests
- d. Maintains and protects the ridgelines surrounding the Verde Valley
- e. Preserves natural recreational opportunities

5. Ranch Conservation

- a. Prevents land fragmentation
- b. Maintains an important traditional industry
- c. Maintains the heritage and culture of the rural west
- d. Encourages Conservation Easements
- e. Defines the urban boundary

IV. MAP PRESENTATION

(The VVLPI Open Space base Map)

V. CONCLUSION

The Verde Valley Land Preservation Institute would like to work within the regional planning process to see that these elements and principles are included in the final Plan. There is a mandate from the elected officials, the working staffs and the citizens of the Verde Valley to make sure that the right mix of sensitive development and science-based open space becomes the way we do business in the Verde Valley.

The benefits to a healthy economy, a quality lifestyle and a thriving environment are waiting for us to seize this moment to take appropriate action.

Everyone benefits:

- those who value recreation;
- those who value clean air and clean water;
- those who value scenic mountains and vistas;
- those who value streams and rivers;
- those who value a more rural atmosphere;
- those who want a fine quality of life; and,
- those who visit the open spaces of our beautiful state.

Verde Valley Land Preservation Institute
Presentation on how to include open space
In the Verde Valley Regional Plan

January 12, 2006