

CLIMATEWISE IN MISSOULA COUNTY

STRATEGIES FOR PROTECTING OUR LAND, WATER & COMMUNITY

*Developed by local stakeholders in a June 2011 ClimateWise workshop,
convened by the Clark Fork Coalition and its partners.*

RISK ONE - LOCAL IMPACTS FROM GLOBAL CLIMATE CHANGE

HOW WILL GLOBAL CHANGE AFFECT MISSOULA COUNTY AT A LOCAL LEVEL?

Compared to other parts of the United States, Missoula County will be spared from some of the worst climate change scenarios, due to our intact headwaters, high peaks, and near-pristine aquifer.

However, our local quality of life will likely make our region an even more desirable location for newcomers, especially as they seek to escape sea level rise and hurricanes in coastal areas, intolerable heat and drought in the southwest, or increased flooding in the Pacific Northwest.

STRATEGIES & ACTIONS

REVISE MISSOULA COUNTY GROWTH POLICY AND IMPROVE LAND USE PLANNING.

- **SET UP A WORKING GROUP** to review and suggest revisions that account for these factors: climate change impacts; low income populations, local values, water resources, predicted versus desired rates of population growth, agriculture, wildlife, and long-term transportation needs.
- **APPLY DENSITY DESIGNS** that are attractive and functional. Provide incentives for cluster development and community and water and sewer system. Work with real estate agents and developers to achieve community growth goals.
- **USE LAND USE PLANNING TOOLS**, including zoning and other regulations, to keep wildlife habitat connected, and to protect our agricultural lands, riparian areas, floodplains and watersheds.
- **REMOVE INCENTIVES** for subdivisions that are costly to rural emergency services, are located in fire-prone areas, or fragment open lands and wildlife habitat.

CRAFT AN EDUCATION AND INCENTIVES PROGRAM TO SAVE ENERGY, WATER, AND NATURAL RESOURCES.

- **OFFER FREE ENERGY AUDITS** and consultations to households to help them conserve energy and to lower heating costs.
- **TEAM UP WITH UTILITIES** to develop education materials on saving energy and conserving water.
- **FACTOR ENERGY CONSUMPTION** into competing bids for County and City projects to foster sustainable business practices.
- **REPLICATE THE BLACKFOOT CHALLENGE MODEL** of cooperation in other watersheds in the County for effective conservation.
- **INSPIRE YOUTH** with positive messages and education on conservation, water, energy, and natural resources.
- **REFRAME THE MESSAGE OF "ZONING"** with examples and terminology that lead to sustainable land use planning, while supporting individual rights.

SUPPORT A DIVERSIFIED ECONOMY IN MISSOULA COUNTY FOUNDED ON SMART, MANAGED, AND SUSTAINABLE GROWTH.

- **INTEGRATE** ClimateWise strategies into the City of Missoula's "Best Place Project" that is working today on attracting and retaining jobs.
- **START** an association of local businesses as "incubators" that identify needs and offer funding and training for individuals wanting to start a new commercial endeavor. Work with existing programs like the Sustainable Business Council.
- **PROMOTE** and support outdoor recreation and tourism that adapts to climate change. Identify alternative recreation destinations away from wildfire areas. Encourage new tourism in burned areas, such as birdwatching and mushroom picking. Encourage restoration work that enhances ecotourism.

DEVELOP NEW, SUSTAINABLE, AND WISE USES FOR TIMBER RESOURCES, AS WELL AS RENEWABLE ENERGY TECHNOLOGY AND DEVELOPMENT.

- **PROVIDE** start-up loans for businesses that can provide value-added wood products, like blue stain pine, biochar, and biofuel. Help develop markets and remove barriers to entry into these new sustainable uses for timber.
- **EXPAND** technologies for micro-hydro power as a potential source of energy production.
- **STREAMLINE** permitting processes for renewable energy production. Provide incentives and remove barriers. Work with existing alternative energy groups to achieve goals.

SUPPORT AGRICULTURE, LAND CONSERVATION, AND THE LOCAL FOOD MOVEMENT.

- **HELP** develop local food processing to reduce transportation costs and support local agriculture.
- **OFFER** incentives and other support for community supported agriculture, farm-to-market programs, and downtown gardens.
- **IMPROVE** the County's food security by conserving agricultural lands. Apply successful techniques for preserving open space and parklands.
- **ENCOURAGE** and support sustainable farming and ranching that protects riparian zones, provide wildlife habitat, and improves grazing methods and irrigation efficiency.

For more information on the 2011 workshop and strategies, please visit: www.clarkfork.org

