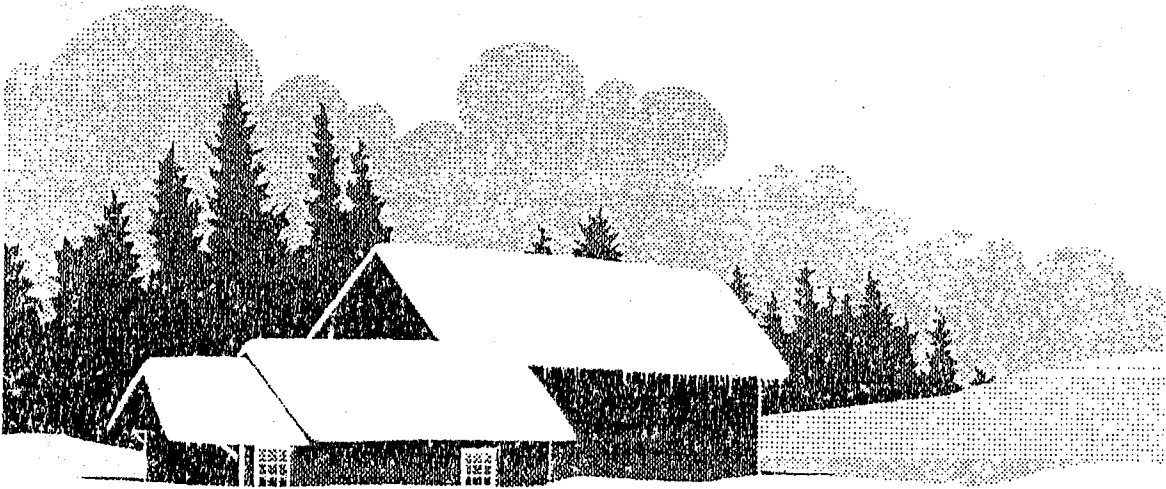


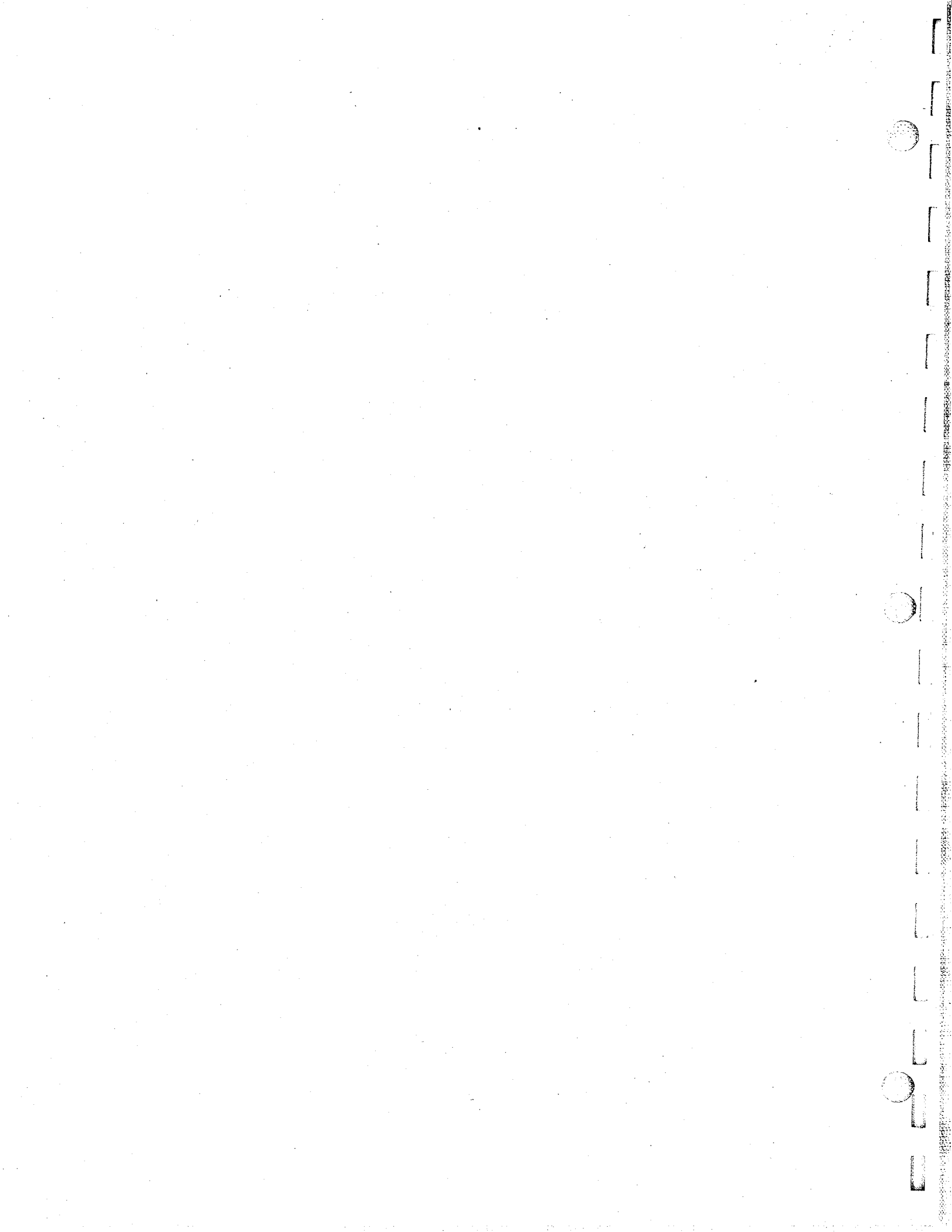
THE CANYON PLAN

AN AMENDMENT TO THE FLATHEAD COUNTY MASTER PLAN



FLATHEAD COUNTY RESOLUTION NO. 1009A

ADOPTED MAY 17, 1994



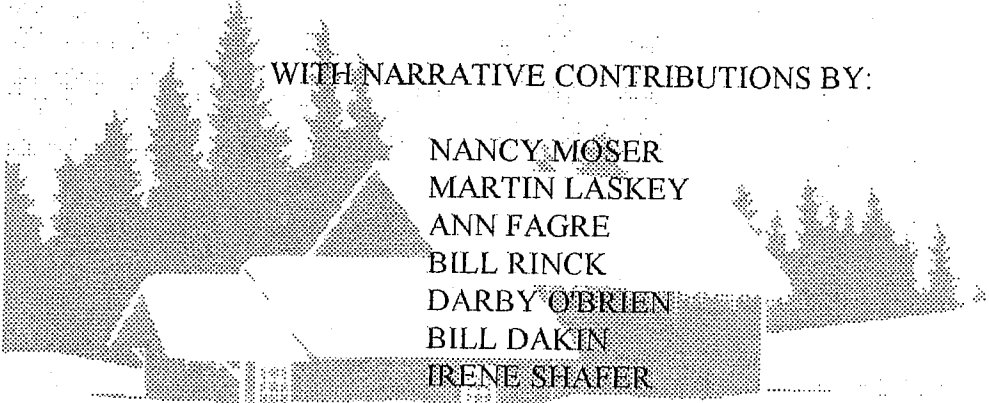
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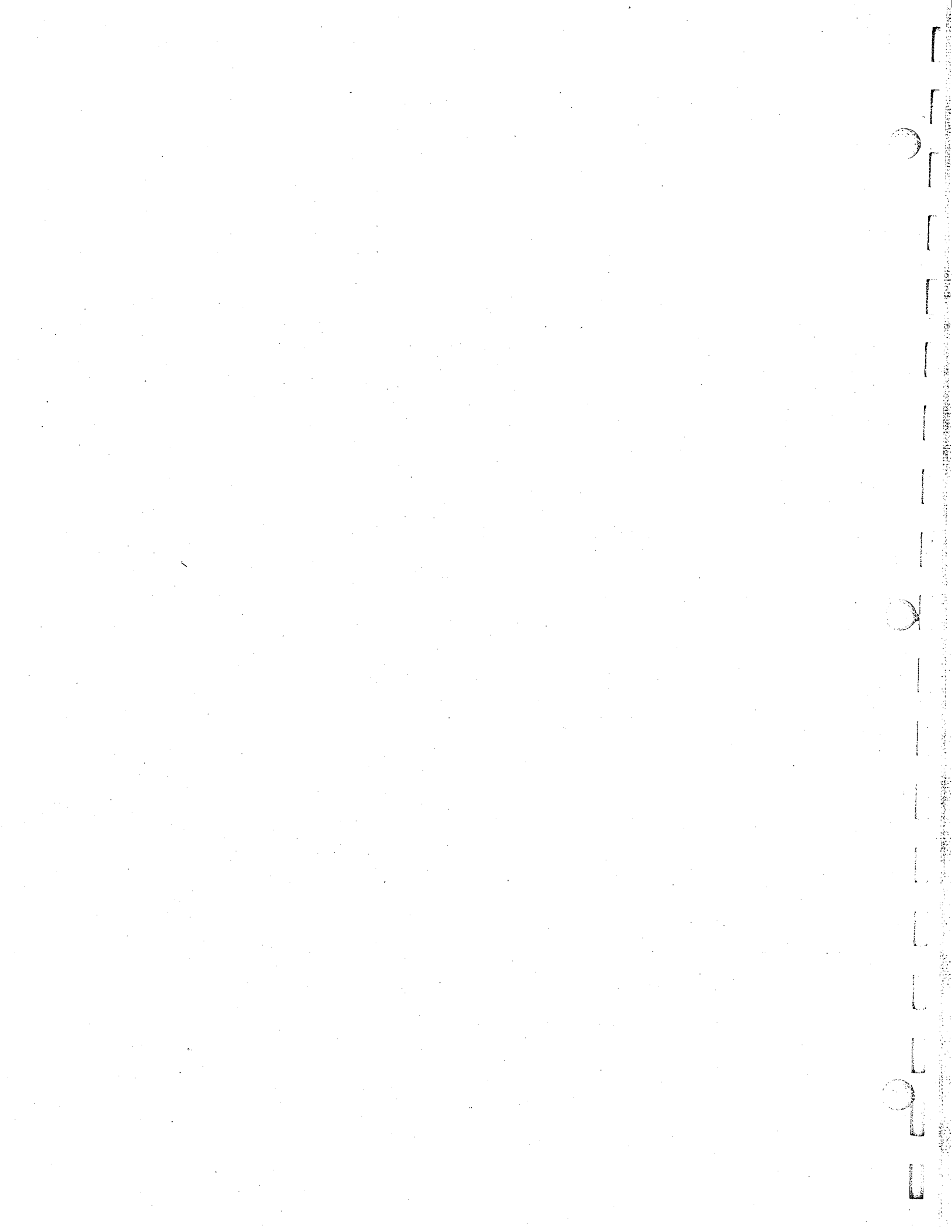


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Preface
THE CANYON PLAN

TODAY I'D LIKE TO TAKE YOU ON A ROAD TRIP--ABOUT 30 MILES "UP THE LINE" TO THE INFAMOUS CANYON AREA.

NOW SOME WHO ARE NEW TO THE VALLEY ARE PROBABLY QUESTIONING "WHY INFAMOUS -- THAT'S A LOVELY AREA?"

AND THERE ARE SOME WHO MAY SKEPTICIZE, SAYING "ONLY IF WE'RE GOING TO THE PARK."

AH.... BE A SPORT....COME ON UP....SEE WHAT WE'RE ALL ABOUT.

OH--WE HAVE HORSE DRAWN CARRIAGE RIDES UP THERE TOO--LETS CLIMB INTO ONE OF THOSE, SO WE DON'T HAVE TO SPEED THROUGH THE NEIGHBORHOOD.

WHEN MY FAMILY FIRST MOVED FROM "PHILA" TO THE OLD SILVER TIP RANCH IN MARTIN CITY IN '71, LIFE WAS MUCH DIFFERENT UP THE CANYON THAN TODAY. OF COURSE, THINGS HAVE CHANGED ALL OVER THE VALLEY, AS WELL, OVER THE PAST 20 YEARS.

COMPARED TO THE REST OF THE COUNTY, WHAT WE LACKED IN CITY GOVERNMENT AND ORGANIZATION, WE HAD IN LOCAL LIVING COLOR.

I REMEMBER ONE OF MY FIRST WELCOMING EXPERIENCES....IT WAS A LATE SATURDAY AFTERNOON--DURING SPRING BREAK-UP WHEN THE LOGGERS AND OUTFITTERS WERE LITERALLY COMING OUT OF THE WOODS.

I WAS SITTING AT THE DEERLICK BAR IN MARTIN CITY--CLOSE TO THE DOOR- WATCHING EVERYONE AND EVERYTHING. THE PLACE BECAME A VERITABLE TOWN HALL, WITH WOMEN AND CHILDREN COMING TO MEET THE MEN WHO HAD BEEN UPCOUNTRY FOR WEEKS ON END. THE CAFE BEGAN BRINGING OUT FOOD, AND COUNTRY MUSIC ROSE UP FROM A GROUP OF MUSICIANS OVER IN THE CORNER.

I WAS QUIETLY THINKING OF HOW GREAT IT WOULD BE TO GET TO KNOW SOME OF THESE LIVELY, REAL, WESTERN PEOPLE!!

WHEN JUST THEN, ONE OF OUR NEIGHBORS RODE THOUGH THE FRONT DOOR ON HIS DAUGHTER'S HORSE, SHAWNEE, AND SAUNTERED UP TO THE BAR--RIGHT NEXT TO ME!!

I WAS IMPRESSED!!

THE BAR MAID NONCHALANTLY PLACED AN ICE CUBE TRAY FILLED WITH BEER ON THE BAR IN FRONT OF SHAWNEE, THEN AS SHE HANDED A GLASS OF THE SAME TO THE RIDER, CALMLY STATED "IF SHE....DEFECATES ON THE FLOOR, YOU CLEAN IT UP!"

MIND YOU, I HADN'T EXACTLY FELT AS THO I HAD DIED AND GONE TO HEAVEN--BUT WHAT A PLACE TO LIVE!--TOTALLY UNLIKE ANYTHING I HAD EVER KNOWN, AFTER ALL,

I WAS TRYING TO ESCAPE, WASN'T I?

AND THE BEAUTY OF THE PEOPLE--NOT AT ALL PREOCCUPIED WITH THAT BUNK OF WHAT OTHERS MIGHT BE THINKING.

THESE ANECDOTAL MEMORIES OF THE PAST CAN HARDLY BE RELIVED, FOR TODAY WE ARE BEING FACED WITH A RAPIDLY CONSUMING INFLUX OF CHANGE.

BUT WE, THE CITIZENS OF THE CANYON, ARE TRYING TO PRESERVE WHAT LITTLE OF OUR PAST QUALITY OF LIFE IS LEFT.

PERHAPS THE NON-CONFORMING APPEARANCE OF OUR NEIGHBORHOODS, AS WELL AS THE REPUTATION WHICH PRECEDES US, IS OUR ONLY SAVING GRACE.

IN JUNE OF '92, WE ORGANIZED OURSELVES AS THE CANYON CITIZEN INITIATED ZONING GROUP, FOR THE PURPOSE OF WRITING OUR OWN AMENDMENT TO THE COUNTY MASTER PLAN, ON WHICH EVENTUAL ZONING WILL BE BASED. WE INCLUDED THE 70 MILES STRETCH FROM THE SOUTHFORK BRIDGE IN HUNGRY HORSE TO THE COUNTY LINE AT MARIAS PASS.

WE ALMOST IMMEDIATELY REALIZED OUR NEED FOR PROFESSIONAL GUIDANCE IN NOT ONLY DEALING WITH COUNTY GOVERNMENT, BUT THE IMPLEMENTATION OF OUR FINISHED PRODUCT. WE SOUGHT AND OBTAINED FUNDING, AND IN JUNE OF THIS YEAR (1993) WE HIRED A PLANNER.

WE ARE ENGAGED IN A DESPERATE BATTLE OF PRESERVATION-- FOR OUR COMMUNITIES AND OURSELVES.

SOME OF YOU MAY BE THINKING--GEE THAT CANYON REALLY IS A VALID COMMUNITY.

I'LL LET YOU IN ON A SECRET--WE ALWAYS HAVE BEEN!!

CCIZ PRESIDENT

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THE CANYON PLAN

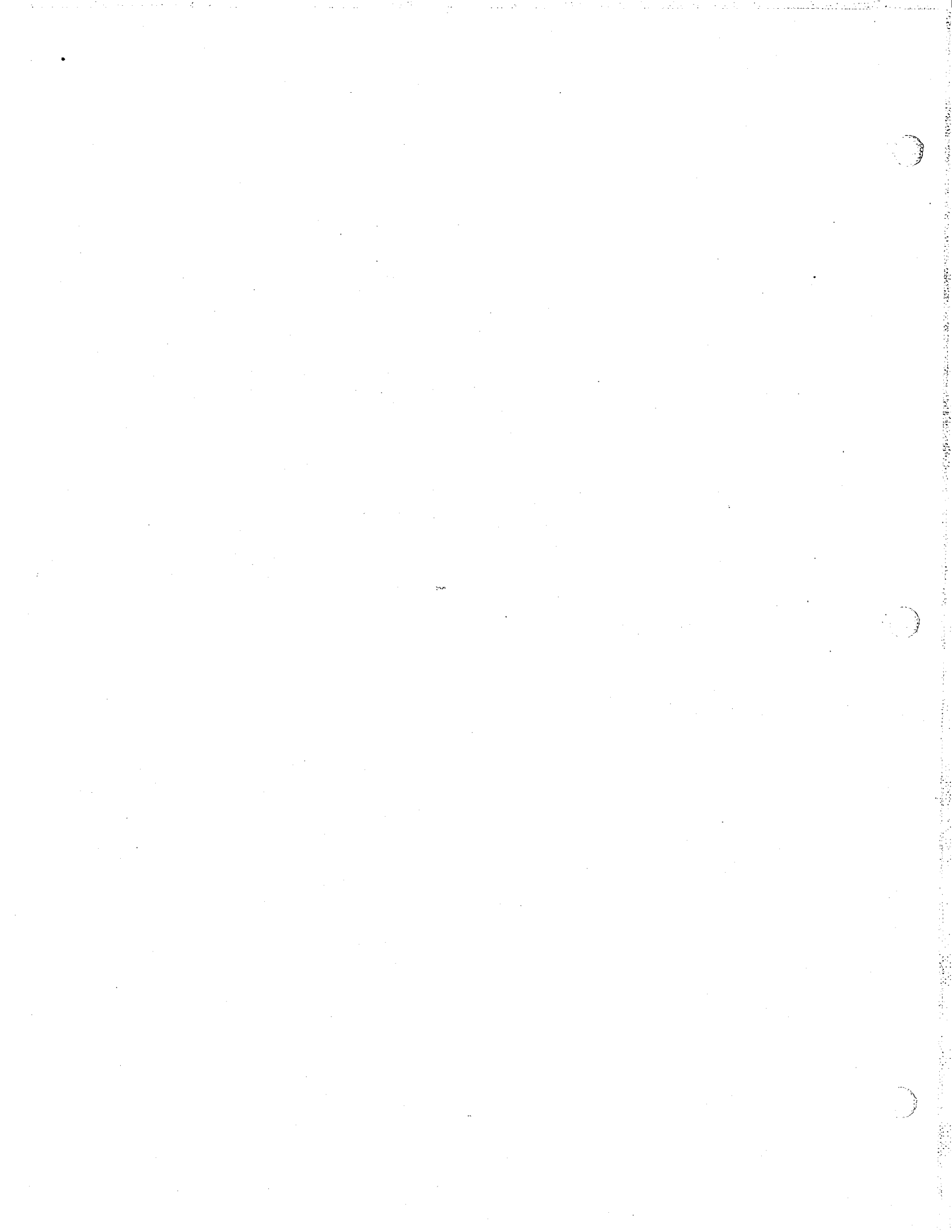
CHAPTER I BACKGROUND

The concept of a "Canyon Area Neighborhood Plan" evolved in response to "Valley" issues on growth and development. Flathead County is experiencing rapid change brought about by the increasing influx of new residents. Land divisions were occurring at a record pace and many county residents feared the loss of community identity. Some residents responded by seeking "protection" of neighborhoods through the establishment of zoning districts. Other communities, such as Bigfork, pursued a neighborhood planning approach.

These different approaches to guiding growth and development in the County did not offer a comprehensive solution to the perceived problem. At best, these piecemeal approaches tended to complicate growth problems for those areas that remained "unzoned." The county government took a wait-and-see attitude as many of these voluntary land use regulations were being pursued. The increasing interest by local residents in pursuing some form of land use "protection" eventually spiked the attention of the County Commissioners. On September 24, 1991, the Flathead County Board of Commissioners instructed the Flathead Regional Development Office (Planning Office) to pursue county-wide zoning. By default, the imposed zoning would have to be in conformance with the then-existing Flathead County Master Plan. This zoning decree became a local concern to many Canyon residents who had yet to experience the "Valley" problems with growth.

Several meetings were held by the Planning Office in the Canyon area to explain the zoning process and probable outcome. Local residents expressed considerable concern and discovered that the existing Master Plan had very little reference to the Canyon communities. One approach suggested early on by the Planning Office was to investigate the possibility of preparing a Neighborhood Plan for the Canyon. Initial community reaction ranged from "do it as soon as possible" to "let's have no regulations on development." However, most of those 1991 meeting participants agreed that additional information was needed, including a better understanding of community opinion. With the support of the Flathead Economic Development Corporation and the Flathead Regional Development Office, *The Future of the Canyon Survey, 1992* was sent to all property owners in the Canyon in February, 1992. This began a citizen-driven planning effort for the Canyon Communities.

BACKGROUND



The maps were presented for public review and comment at a meeting in December 1992.

After completion of this massive mapping effort, the CCIZ decided that professional assistance was needed to guide and facilitate the local effort. Such assistance, however, needed to be compatible with the original objective of having a community-driven process. The Flathead Economic Development Corporation and the Flathead Regional Development Office assisted the CCIZ in obtaining the necessary funding to secure a local planning professional. The scope of work stated, in part, that the selected planner would lead Canyon residents through a process that:

- ▶ identifies values to be preserved in the Canyon area;
- ▶ provides for public discussion of ideas, interests, and goals regarding the future of the Canyon;
- ▶ develops options and alternatives for residents to consider regarding how to achieve these goals; and
- ▶ concludes with the development of a plan and implementing mechanisms for the Flathead County Planning Board and County Commissioners to consider as the basis for growth management for the Canyon Area.

PLANNER

David Greer, of Montana Planning Consultants, was hired as the resident planner for the CCIZ. David had previously worked as a Senior Planner for the Flathead Regional Development Office and was currently serving as the Principal Planner for Montana Planning Consultants out of Kalispell. Serving in the role of the Canyon planner required maintaining a physical presence in the Canyon at least 2-3 days per week. The Hungry Horse Ranger District of the U.S. Forest Service provided a detached office house in Hungry Horse for this purpose. In this way, the planner achieved local identity with an in-Canyon office. The office provided an informal meeting location and a field office for preparing related work products.

COOPERATING AGENCIES

The planning process was supported directly and indirectly by a variety of agencies. Cooperating agencies included the U.S. Forest Service (USFS), Glacier National Park (GNP), Flathead Economic Development Corporation (FEDC), Flathead Regional Development Office (FRDO), Flathead County Clerk & Recorder's Office (C&RO), Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks (MDFW&P), and Montana Dept. of Transportation (MDOT). The World Wildlife Fund (WWF), Burlington Northern Railroad (BN), and the Glacier Natural History Association (GNHA) also assisted with the funding of this private effort as did numerous individuals and businesses in the Canyon. Primary roles played by these agencies are outlined below:

CANYON AREA SURVEY (1992)

The Canyon Survey was completed by 22% of the land owners in the Canyon. A summary of the results is available from the Flathead Economic Development Corporation. Selective findings of the 1992 Survey include the following:

- ◆ "Controlling growth and development" was cited as the most important issue;
- ◆ "Clutter, dilapidation of structures, and unattractive development" was cited as the least liked aspect of living in the Canyon;
- ◆ Accelerated economic growth was not generally supported;
- ◆ Residents had specific location preferences for new development. New commercial uses should locate within existing downtowns and industrial uses in industrial parks;
- ◆ Residents felt that local services are inadequate or, at best, marginally adequate to support any substantial population growth;
- ◆ "Maintaining a pleasant living environment" was ranked as the most important future land use consideration;
- ◆ A strong 79.5% agreed that "a local planning effort is necessary to further define Canyon area goals before permanent land use guidelines go into effect."

CANYON CITIZEN INITIATED ZONING GROUP

In June, 1992, the Canyon Citizen Initiated Zoning Group (CCIZ) was formed to guide the planning process for the Canyon communities. Underlying the formation of the CCIZ was the belief that there must be a "buy-in" at the local level if zoning or other growth management tools are to be accepted in the Canyon. The CCIZ provided a mechanism to empower the local citizens to help decide their own future.

County-wide zoning of some sort is inevitable. We can sit back and allow someone from County offices, who we rarely see, who knows less about us than we do of them, to plan future use of our land. But doesn't it make more sense for us to group together and do this planning amongst ourselves? [CCIZ Newsletter]

The CCIZ began meeting regularly in June, 1992. One of the initial tasks of the group was to map all the existing land uses in the Canyon. Section maps were purchased from the County, and individuals from seven regions in the Canyon began to describe land use on a parcel-by-parcel basis. The maps were color-coded to identify the land use relationships of the Canyon.

local communities.

PUBLIC AWARENESS/PARTICIPATION

Public participation and involvement was an essential element of the planning process. Efforts to maximize public awareness included mailing newsletters and holding monthly public meetings. The Hungry Horse field office also offered citizens access to the planner.

The newsletters provided an on-going update on the planning process and announced the locations and time of public meetings. The August mailing included a multi-page listing of all the identified community issues with check-off columns to rank the importance of each issue. Four rounds of public meetings, involving 14 separate meetings, were held throughout the Canyon between July 1993 and December 1993. Regional meeting locations included the communities of Essex, West Glacier, Lake Five (summer), and Hungry Horse. The focus of each round of meetings is presented below:

PUBLIC MEETING PROCESS AND FOCUS

ROUND 1: Overview of planning process and identification of community issues.

ROUND 2: Evaluated appropriateness of particular land uses in Canyon communities through participant reactions to photos (slides) of various land uses; evaluated location preferences of listed land use types and the regulatory approach associated with each land use type.

ROUND 3: Presented an overview of the COMMUNITY ISSUE SURVEY that was sent to every household and land owner in the Canyon; identified community boundaries and growth centers; identified preferable density allowances and community growth rates; identified positive site plan features with the use of alternative slide scenarios of specific land uses.

ROUND 4: Slide presentation of socio-economic information and update on status of planning progress; presentation of resource mapping including wildlife habitat areas; list of all the proposed community goals and policies with tabular evaluation columns.

Results of the Issue Survey and the various forms used at the neighborhood meetings are available for review in the offices of the Flathead Regional Development Office.

- ◆ USFS -- Office space & technical mapping/information support;
- ◆ GNP -- Technical mapping support;
- ◆ FEDC -- Financial support and record keeping;
- ◆ FRDO -- Financial support and technical assistance;
- ◆ C&RO -- Parcel based mapping support;
- ◆ GNHA -- Funding;
- ◆ BN -- Funding;
- ◆ WWF -- Funding;
- ◆ MDFW&P -- Technical mapping and information support; and
- ◆ MDOT -- Financial Support.

PLANNING PROCESS

The Planner outlined a one year program to accomplish the development of (1) a Neighborhood Plan and (2) implementing regulations. The process to complete these objectives began in July 1993.

PLANNING AREA BOUNDARIES

The perimeter boundaries of the planning area are not rigid but, instead, "float" beyond the private lands. The generalized boundaries were determined using a combination of factors, including natural landscape features, census boundaries, economic influence areas, and transportation patterns. The most westerly boundary occurs near the entrance to Badrock Canyon, in the vicinity of the "House of Mystery". The most easterly boundary corresponds to the Continental Divide at Marias Pass. All of the Hungry Horse Ranger District was included, as were portions of the Spotted Bear District. No detailed consideration was made of those private lands situated north of the Middle Fork of the Flathead River, including much of the Blankenship area and the headquarters area of Glacier National Park. The planning evaluation primarily focused on the private and public lands situated along and adjacent to the Middle Fork of the Flathead River and U.S. Highway 2. The private lands, which total less than 12,000 acres, tend to appear as "inholdings" to the much greater expanse of public lands in the Canyon. A LOCATION MAP of the Canyon Planning Area is included at the end of this chapter.

DATA COLLECTION

The collection of data on the Canyon communities was on-going throughout the planning process. The 1990 U.S. Census was a source for much of the socio-economic data. State employment statistics also contributed to this category of information. Public and quasi-public agencies assisted with information on the provision and/or availability of public services in the Canyon. Natural resource information was collected and generated from existing resource agency publications and through discussions with resource managers. Members of the CCIZ provided land use information and other informational insights on the

THE CANYON PLAN

CHAPTER II AGENCY INFLUENCES

Influencing the land use development pattern in the Canyon are a number of planning processes and regulations that often operate independently of each other. This type of incremental planning process fails to offer the affected communities a predictable outcome and can produce results that are contrary to citizen and community objectives. Planning is not foreign to the Canyon area, but the direct application of planning principles to private lands in the Canyon is a new concept to many area residents. In reality, however, planning has been active in the Canyon area and has been a tremendous influence on local development patterns. Existing regulations also play a significant role in the Canyon communities. Despite the absence of zoning or similar regulations in the Canyon, other state and local laws continue to influence local land use decisions.

STATE & COUNTY INFLUENCES

Land uses in the Canyon are being directly and indirectly influenced by State laws, an existing County master plan, and by County subdivision regulations. These land use tools, however, are not capable of guiding growth in a goal-directed fashion without the framework of a community supported plan. Discussion of these existing regulatory influences follows.

MASTER PLAN

The Canyon area of Flathead County is under the umbrella of the Flathead County Master Plan 2000. This land use plan was most recently updated in March 1987. The Plan provides general policy guidelines for the future use and development of lands in Flathead County. Included in Chapter VI of the Plan are the 1978 community goals and objectives for two Canyon communities. The text of these objectives is listed below:

- ◆ HUNGRY HORSE: Provide for expansion of development patterns in the townsite and adjacent Forest Service land; expand commercial area south of Highway 2.
- ◆ MARTIN CITY: Encourage an agricultural emphasis and plan for major investment for improvement of major community facilities.

AGENCY INFLUENCES