

1 **Chapter 6 Environmental Resources**
2

3 (December 2008)

4 **Strategic Objectives**

5 The natural environment is a primary asset to the community and positively influences
6 the continued success of the resort. The environmental resources of the Town of
7 Snowmass Village have played a significant role in attracting people to the area as well
8 as in stimulating and regulating the Town's growth and development. The community
9 supports the conservation and preservation of unique lands, wildlife habitat, stream
10 corridors, sensitive hillsides, important view corridors, and other significant natural
11 features. The Town promotes long-term stewardship of clean water and air, energy
12 efficiency, and ongoing opportunities for residents and visitors to explore, learn, and
13 enjoy the natural beauty of the area.
14

15 **Background**

16 Recognizing that the quality of our environmental resources are directly tied to the health
17 of our citizens, our resort competitiveness, and our economy, the community initiated a
18 number of efforts aimed at improving environmental sustainability during 2008.
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20 The concept of environmental sustainability speaks to the preservation of an ecological
21 system in its naturally occurring state, that it may continue providing life-supporting
22 resources such as food, water and oxygen over a very long period of time. Ecological
23 sustainability is integrally linked to our resort economy by virtue of global warming's
24 predicted impact on winter recreational activities. Preserving the quality of our natural
25 environment and taking action to minimize local contributions toward global climate
26 change is expected to positively affect our resort competitiveness and long-term
27 economic stability.
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29 Land development and its associated energy consumption can negatively affect the
30 natural environment by consuming resources faster than they are able to be regenerated.
31 Consideration of impacts to ecological sustainability can be applied to several aspects of
32 development review. By considering the characteristics of a site in its natural condition
33 (soils, drainage ways, slope, solar access, etc.) and those of a proposed development's
34 impacts to the surrounding environment (view sheds, air quality, wildlife, etc.),
35 environmental quality can be preserved.
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37 Protection of wildlife has long been a value in the Town of Snowmass Village, although
38 much of the development and recreational activities we enjoy today have been created in
39 direct conflict with that statement. Wildlife migration corridors have been pinched to a
40 fraction of what they once were, and reproduction areas and other important habitat areas
41 have been affected tremendously. Development should be located and designed to
42 minimize its impact to wildlife and wildlife habitat. Wetland and riparian communities
43 are especially significant in this regard because they have the highest density and
44 diversity of wildlife species.

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2 Scenic views and air quality are also highly important. Air quality is an environmental
3 resource that has been periodically and narrowly measured (primarily during periods of
4 heavy development activity) through PM-10 monitoring, designed to measure particulate
5 matter important to public health and safety. Air Quality Monitoring Plans, requiring the
6 most appropriate and up-to-date technologies available at a given time, are required on a
7 project-by-project basis in order to ensure that the quality of our air is protected. Quality
8 public views contribute greatly to the uniqueness and attractiveness of this valley and
9 significantly contribute to the desirability of our resort and the value of local real estate.
10 Although the quality of public views has no direct impact on environmental carrying
11 capacity, it is highly valued from a quality-of-life perspective.

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13 The Snowmass Water and Sanitation District recently conducted a review of its water
14 rights inventory and its ability to serve future development and service requirements
15 generally in the Snowmass Village area (W. W. Wheeler & Associates, Dry Year Yield
16 Analysis for Snowmass Creek Water Supplies and Evaluation of Raw Water Storage
17 Requirements, 2006). The review considered the treatment capacity of the Waste Water
18 Treatment Plant, the priority and diversion availability of its water rights, raw water and
19 potable water storage capacities, peak demand requirements, projected growth and raw
20 water storage for system reliability. The limiting factor to the ability of the District to
21 provide potable water service was determined to be the legal and physical availability of
22 raw water of satisfactory quality for treatment at peak demand times. The District
23 currently is serving a demand of approximately 4,900 equivalent residential units
24 (EQRs). The District's analysis estimates that approximately 1,100 EQRs will be added
25 upon completion of Base Village, Sinclair Meadows, Entryway, Snowmass Center
26 (assuming a project similar to the Third Amendment), and West Village (assuming a 20
27 percent increase in EQRs, i.e. bedrooms & bathrooms). This falls within the District's
28 anticipated ability to reliably serve 6,200 EQRs. On the basis of the planning, the District
29 determined that a reasonable estimate of its ability to reliably serve potable water is 6,200
30 EQR. The District determined that treatment capacity of the Waste Water Treatment
31 Plant is adequate and can treat the anticipated associated influent from 6,200 EQR
32 potable water usage.

34 **Existing Environmental Conditions**

35 Detailed descriptions and discussions on the following environmental resources are
36 included in the Chapter 6 Appendix:

- 37
38 • Elevation
39 • Slope
40 • Aspect
41 • Geology/Soils
42 • Vegetation
43 • Hydrology
44 • Rain/Snowfall
45 • Wildlife

- 1 • Water
- 2 • Open space
- 3 • Environmental sensitivity

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5 **Policies**

6 The Town of Snowmass Village shall:

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- 8 • Promote renewable energy generation, conservation of natural resources, and energy
- 9 efficiency.
- 10 • Employ smart-growth strategies and land use policies that limit development to the
- 11 minimum amount deemed necessary for the community to achieve economic
- 12 sustainability.
- 13 • Provide essential community-oriented goods, services, and housing with an aim to
- 14 reducing the environmental impacts associated with our dependency on other
- 15 communities.
- 16
- 17 • Promote community stewardship for the Town’s natural resources and for those of
- 18 the Brush Creek, Snowmass Creek, and Owl Creek Valleys by supporting land use
- 19 policies and regulatory processes that acknowledge an understanding of our
- 20 environmental carrying capacity.
- 21 • Ensure that development review processes include consideration of the
- 22 community’s environmental values and an understanding of potential impacts to
- 23 environmental resources.
- 24 • Identify and protect significant public views and view corridors and enhance the
- 25 visual quality of open space, national forest, wilderness, and agricultural lands of the
- 26 Town, Brush Creek, Snowmass Creek, and Owl Creek Valleys.
- 27 • Protect riparian habitat and ensure that riparian vegetation and streambeds are
- 28 maintained in a naturally functioning state.
- 29 • Discourage development in critical wildlife habitat areas, including but not limited
- 30 to elk calving and severe winter range and migration corridors mapped by the
- 31 Colorado Department of Wildlife (CDOW), in order to maintain ecosystem integrity
- 32 and preserve the existence and diversity of species within the Town.
- 33 • Require new development to incorporate mitigation measures deemed appropriate
- 34 by the Town and ecologically sound design principles that protect wildlife and
- 35 wildlife habitat in Snowmass Village.
- 36 • Update, adopt, and/or reference the following reports, as such reports may be
- 37 deemed pertinent to the specific project under development review:

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- 39 1. Snowmass Village Elk Monitoring Study (2005)
- 40 2. Greenway Master Plan (2000).
- 41 3. Two Creeks and the Pines Wildlife Enhancement and Management Plan
- 42 (1994)
- 43 4. Snowmass Ski Area Wildlife Enhancement and Management Plan (1994)
- 44 5. Snowmass Ski Area 1994 FEIS Mitigation and Monitoring Plan
- 45 6. Snowmass Wildlife Committee Report (1991)
- 46 7. Pitkin County Wildlife Task Force and Report (1989)

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- Evaluate all proposed development and redevelopment against the Town of Snowmass Village Environmental Sensitivity Map.
- Require a site-specific review for any proposed development that appears to penetrate any part of designated sensitive lands.
- Discourage construction on slopes greater than 30 percent grade.
- Encourage new development to restore degraded reaches of the Brush Creek Watershed located within Town and adjacent to and/or within their projects.
- Encourage new development to help fund bridges and culverts necessary to preserve the Town's waterways located adjacent to and/or within their projects.
- Prohibit any new development that is determined to cause an exceedence of the Snowmass Water and Sanitation District's stated maximum treatment capacity (currently defined as 6,200 EQRs).