



Acknowledgements



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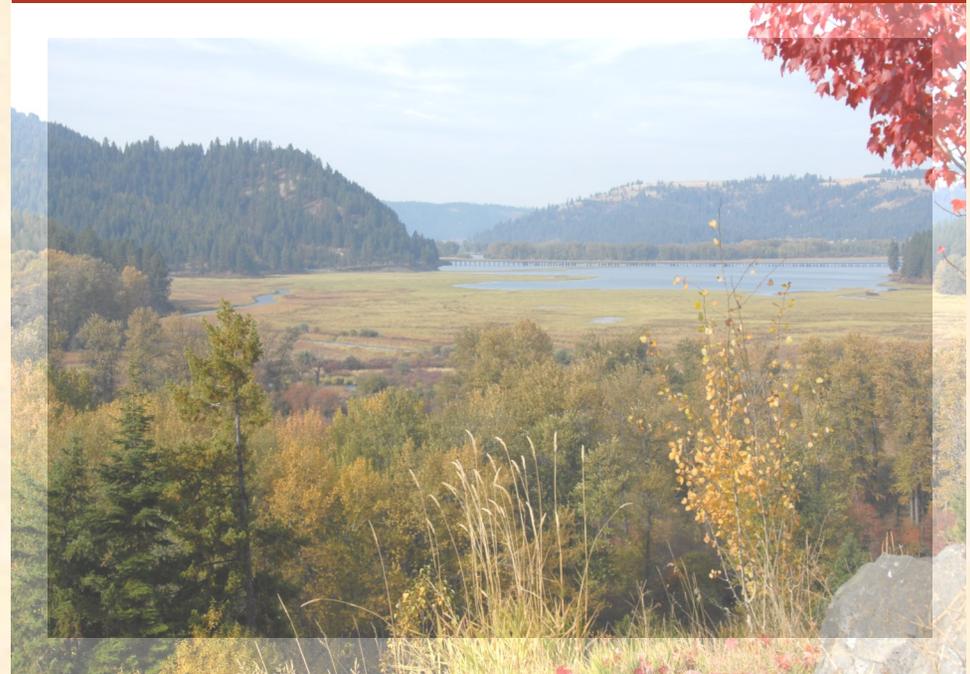
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CODE OF THE NEW WEST



A GUIDE TO RURAL LIVING IN BENEWAH COUNTY, IDAHO



For the full document and supplemental documents, please visit our web page BenewahCountyIdaho.org



PRESENTED BY

**Benewah County
Farm Bureau®**

CODE OF THE NEW WEST

Benewah County Farm Bureau® designed this booklet to provide prospective new residents with a broad range of information about making Benewah County their home. We hope that by providing this information new residents will avoid surprises that can cause disappointment or regret after relocation. The Code of the New West is not intended to promote nor discourage new residents; rather we have collected relevant, factual information, which may be useful to the prospective resident or buyer of a home or property in Benewah County. Please pass this publication along to neighbors or give them the Benewah County Farm Bureau web address. Note that contact information for various organizations is found in the last pages of this booklet.

ACCESS

1.1 Emergency response from law enforcement, fire departments, and ambulances is often not as quick in rural counties as in the cities. Weather conditions can also become a complicating factor with responding vehicles. The distance to emergency services is one factor that should be considered when evaluating property.

Residents should know if their property is within a Fire Protection District. The following are the fire districts within Benewah County: Emida, Fernwood, Plummer Gateway, St. Maries, and Tensed. Even if a home is within a Fire Protection District, the road must be maintained year-round and wide enough for fire trucks to drive within a reasonable distance to the home or fire protection may be voided.

1.2 County roads are maintained by the Benewah County Road and Bridge Department. Total inventory amounts to slightly over 318 miles. There are approximately 54 miles paved and the remaining 264 miles are graded and drained gravel roads. Dust is controlled as much as possible in summer and snow is plowed in the winter. Only roads with green signs are maintained by the county. Roads with blue signs are privately maintained. The county does **NOT** plow snow on private roads and has no responsibility to maintain access for those residents.

1.3 Logging is a major industry in Benewah County. Truck traffic can be heavy and dusty at times on paved, gravel or dirt roads in summer. Log truck drivers use Citizens Band radio to warn vehicles on narrow (sometimes precipitous) unimproved roads in the back country. If residents choose to explore widely, it would be wise to install one and learn the channel regimen (ask a log truck driver). Channel 7 is universally used by log trucks, logging crews and flatbed hauling of heavy equipment in the county unless the road is posted otherwise. Large chip trucks, traveling to or from mills, use channel 10.

1.4 School District buses generally will not travel on private roads. Parents may need to provide the means for their children to get to a bus stop on the public road. The School District Offices can answer questions on this subject.

1.5 Dust and potholes are frequently a problem to new homeowners on unpaved roads when roads dry after snow and rains. Some roads are treated with dust guard in the summer, but this doesn't always solve the problem completely.

1.6 Don't expect new services from the county. Costs are kept down by people willing to provide for themselves or go without many things suburban and urban people expect to be provided.

1.7 If a road is unpaved, it is highly likely that it will remain that way for some time. \$200,000 to \$300,000 per mile for construction is not easy for the county, and ultimately the taxpayers, to fund.

UTILITIES

2.1 Septic Permits from Panhandle Health must be obtained prior to a residential building permit being issued.

2.2 Electricity and telephone service is often available but residents should check the costs in undeveloped areas. Since much of Benewah County is heavily timbered, winter storms may take down power lines. In very remote areas, emergency heat or power generation should be considered.

UTILITIES CONT.

2.3 Water can usually be obtained from a well which the resident must drill. Permits from the Idaho Department of Water Resources (IDWR) are required. Water right claims: County property owners are required to file a “water right” claim for wells, creeks, and lakes with the IDWR. Water rights also pertain to farming and ranching uses. The North Idaho Water Adjudication, started in 2012, regulates water usage. A residential well permit allows the resident to draw domestic needs and irrigation for up to ½ acre of landscaping. Use the IDWR website to check nearby well drilling reports showing average depths of wells drilled.

2.4 Refuse. Benewah County has public dumpsters located in rural areas. There is no individual home trash pickup in outlying rural areas. Large items must be taken to the County Transfer Station at 81725 Highway 3, three miles south of St. Maries. Debris burning is allowed at specific times of the year without a permit. During fire danger season burning may be prohibited altogether.

THE PROPERTY

3.1 Planning and Building: Both Benewah County and the City of St. Maries require building permits. The adopted building code is the 2012 International Building Code. The County Building Official may recommend certain elements of newer building or fire codes but acceptance of a recommendation from a non-adopted code is voluntary. Building Permits for both Benewah County and the City of St. Maries are obtained from the Benewah County Building Department. Information on plumbing, electrical and mechanical permits can be obtained from the County Building Official.

3.2 Coeur d’Alene Tribe. Most of the western half of Benewah County is designated as the Coeur d’Alene Indian Reservation. The Coeur d’Alene Tribe has civil jurisdiction of some matters within the reservation, even if a resident is not a tribal member. While people may hunt on private or public lands with an Idaho hunting license, to hunt on tribal lands a tribal license is required. Private property rights are the same within the reservation as without.

3.3 Owning timber land, especially a rural parcel, demands a certain level of care. Non-residential timberland (more than 5 acres) may be taxed as residential unless a timber management plan is registered with the County Assessor and is practiced.

3.4 Learn about any easements that affect the property. They may allow another party to use a road across the land. Residents should also be aware that long term use may have established a de-facto prescriptive easement which must be honored, even though they hold title to the land. Examine the property for signs of vehicle use. Obtain a title search. If in doubt, consult an attorney. Prospective home buyers can benefit from a survey. Fences can be misaligned and do not necessarily depict an accurate property line.

“We see a lot of people in the rural area throwing up gates over private roads that go through their property without regard for those who have the right to use them. Prospective buyers should research easements to learn what access they have to their property and who may have the legal right to go through their land. Easement information is available at the Assessor’s Office in the County Courthouse.” — County Assessor.

3.5 Insuring a home is becoming harder because insurance companies are raising standards when the home is located near forests. It can take weeks to make some homes insurable, while others are just not insurable. Look into insurance before it is needed. Not all insurance agents will visit the home prior to writing the business. Be aware that insurance companies can send inspectors out at a later date and cancel the policy if they see what they consider unacceptable conditions concerning the home and property. The local Farm Bureau Office Secretary has collected home insurance tips to avoid common insurance problems. Please view these tips before buying or insuring property by visiting:

BenewahCountyIdaho.org/wp-content/uploads/Tips.pdf

3.6 Noxious weeds are a serious concern in Idaho. They threaten natural ecosystems and their ability to crowd out native plants and completely take over valuable rangeland and natural habitats. Idaho law directs that it is a landowner’s responsibility to eradicate noxious weeds on their property.

THE PROPERTY CONT.

3.7 Idaho Department of Lands (IDL)

- **Burning permits and State Land firewood permits.** Open burning ends and permits are required May 20th. Obtain firewood permits before October 20th, the day open burning usually starts. Slash piles and fields are burned in the fall after the rains begin by various entities. This can produce poor air quality for a limited time but reduces fire danger.
- **Timber harvest notifications.** Persons seeking to perform a forest operation must notify the IDL. Forest practice rules for land owners are available at the IDL office.
- **IDL Service Forester** has information concerning timber management. The IDL Service Forester administers the “Idaho Forest Practices Act,” which encourages reforestation, clean water, forest fuel hazard reduction, and soil erosion control. Forest Practices Act rules may be accessed at extension.uidaho.edu/idahoforestrybmps/idaho-forest-practices-act/.

Timberland Woodlots, Things to Do to Improve Forest Health a PDF by John Ferris is available on our county website.

3.8 Some Subdivisions and PUDs are internally governed by a set of covenants (CC&R) that lay out the restrictions and rules by which owners must live. One should never buy a piece of property without thoroughly reading the legal documents that go with it. The seller is obligated to provide a copy, don’t hesitate to remind the seller or agent. New residents should make certain they can abide by any rules or restrictions. Homeowner’s Associations can change CC&Rs after the developer has sold his interest. The county Does Not enforce rules that are not related to county ordinances.

3.9 Unforeseen Changes. Don’t forget that changes may occur around a new owner’s chosen home site. Views can change by growth of trees or can be blocked by new development. Treasured adjacent timber lands may be logged off. Be aware that the “ambiance” of the prospective new home may not be in the home owner’s total control.

MOTHER NATURE

4.1 Fire Season. Benewah County is blessed with four distinct seasons and each bring typical North Idaho weather. Summers can be pleasantly warm. Late summers are usually the fire danger season and occasionally thousands of acres of North Idaho forests may go up in smoke. Generally, forests are protected by the Forest Service or Idaho Department of Lands, but private structures and residences outside of a rural fire district are not provided protection. For that reason, residents might choose to initiate woodland residential fire protection measures. Landscape should be designed to ensure the home has a green envelope to protect it against wildfires and improve the insurability of the home (see supplemental documents). The local fire department/district and the Idaho Department of Lands can give advice on this subject.

4.2 Winters can bring periods of below zero temperatures and heavy snowfalls in higher elevations. A few warm days in spring can change the snow into rushing torrents of water that can sometimes damage property, bridges, and roads. Each of the seasons should be considered when choosing a home site. County, state, and local fire protection agencies are not always able to protect private property from wild fires and flooding. Before buying a property, consider if a mortgagee will require the resident to have flood insurance.

4.3 Wildlife. Be aware that some wildlife encountered may wreak havoc on a resident’s lifestyle. Deer might browse on landscape and garden plants. Preparation is needed to deal with coyotes, foxes, mountain lions, raccoons, ground squirrels, bears and even wolves in remote areas. Small pets, pet food and trash left unattended will attract many of these animals. Precaution is prevention.

PUBLIC SAFETY

5.1 Benewah County Sheriff. Before calling the Sheriff’s office to report hearing gunshots, please be aware that Benewah County residents often target practice and use their firearms to ward off coyotes at night. Reasonable discretion should be exercised.

PUBLIC SAFETY CONT.

5.2 Personal responsibility. Please be responsible for dogs and/or livestock. Benewah County is not free-range. Neighbors tire of hearing dogs continually barking. Please be considerate. Letting a dog roam free jeopardizes the dog's well-being and the owner's peace of mind.

5.3 Waterways safety. Large bodies of water and small children don't mix. If home owners are located near any rivers or lakes, they should understand the dangers posed to children. Drowning can usually be prevented by reasonable precautions. New residents should keep away from any frozen lake or stream unless they know what they are doing. Falling through the ice is often fatal.

AGRICULTURE

6.1 Farming. Farmers often work long hours, especially during planting and harvest. Those hours may conflict with new home owners, especially after mid-night. Machinery can be very noisy and they invariably cause lots of dust. If located near this occupation, be prepared to live with it. State law says a farmer has a right to farm.

6.2 Logging. Logging is a major industry in Benewah County. Truck traffic can be heavy and dusty at times on paved, gravel, or dirt roads.

6.3 Chemical Spraying. In some parts of the county, chemicals may be sprayed from airplanes. They try to spray when the wind isn't blowing but there is no guarantee. Aerial sprayers are required to notify the neighbors of planned adjacent activity. Some timber replanting of logged areas may be accompanied by selective spraying, usually by helicopter, to help young trees establish.

6.4 Ranching. Cattle and other herd animals can be noisy and may create objectionable odors, especially when large numbers are confined in a small area. The prospective home owner should consider this when deciding where or not to live near an operation.

6.5 Wide open spaces are not a license for pets to roam. An untrained or undisciplined dog can quickly become a nuisance. Dogs caught attacking livestock or big game animals may be shot in Idaho. For the sake of the pet, residents should teach them to stay on the property.

FARM BUREAU® MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS

Agriculture is still actively pursued in Benewah County. The family farm is a noble calling, regrettably diminishing in numbers. There are several in Benewah County and many of these are operated by **Farm Bureau members**. Anyone can be a Farm Bureau member. Please visit our website for information on membership benefits.

If residents contemplate an activity directly or indirectly connected with agriculture including forest products production, we invite them to consider membership in the Benewah County Chapter of Idaho Farm Bureau. Call the local office for more information about how Farm Bureau benefits local farmers. We are always looking for more members who want to join our local board and committees. Make a difference by being a part of our grassroots organization.

FOR THE PROSPECTIVE BENEWAH COUNTY NEW CITIZEN

It is our sincere hope that new comers who choose to live in Benewah County will have a positive experience. If the tips offered in this publication helped make that decision, the effort will have been worthwhile. This information will be amended, added to, or removed as the need or circumstances change.

QUESTIONS, COMMENTS, SUGGESTIONS?

After reading this booklet, please take all **SITE SPECIFIC QUESTIONS** directly to the sources of information we have listed. Comments and suggestions help us provide the most useful tips for potential new neighbors. Call or email our office or visit our website to contact us about our Code of the New West so that we can keep it up to date and useful.

PUBLIC HEALTH

Panhandle Health District

Panhandle Health District's mission is to prevent disease, disability, and premature death; promote healthy lifestyles; and protect and promote the health and quality of the environment.

Panhandle Health District: 245-4556 www.phd1.idaho.gov

Benewah Community Hospital

Benewah Community Hospital's mission is to provide quality comprehensive healthcare and wellness services to residents of Benewah County. They are a 19-bed Critical Access Hospital, offering a full range of diagnostic and therapeutic services. They also house **St. Maries Family Medicine**, a health clinic. They have multiple family practice physicians trained to prevent, diagnose, and treat patients of all ages.

Benewah Community Hospital: 245-5551

St. Maries Family Medicine: 245-2591 www.bchmed.org

PUBLIC LIBRARIES/SCHOOL DISTRICTS

St. Maries Public Library: 245-3732 StMariesLibrary.lili.org

Plummer Public Library: 686-1812 Plummer.lili.org

Tensed Library: 274-3201 Tensed.lili.org

Tri-Community Library: 245-4883 TriCommunity.lili.org

St. Maries School District: 245-2579 sd41-id.schoolloop.com

Kootenai School District: 689-3631 ksd-id.schoolloop.com

Plummer-Worley School District: 686-1621 pwsd44.com

BENEWAH COUNTY FB WEBSITE

Please visit our website (BenewahCountyIdaho.org) for the full Code of the New West document, to learn more about our grassroots organization, view our member benefits, find local news and upcoming events, and to view our supplemental documents.

Our Supplemental documents include:

- Tips for insuring your home and property
- Timberland-Woodlot Best Practices
- Fire Protection Districts

COUNTY CONTACT INFO.

All phone numbers are "208" area code.

Emergency Contacts

Call 911 for emergencies only

St. Maries Police Department: 245-5102

Tribal Police, Plummer: 686-1742

St. Maries Fire Protection District: 245-2183

Report a fire on private property: 911

Report a fire on State or National Forest Land: 245-2555

City Contacts

St. Maries City Hall: 245-2577 Plummer City Hall: 686-1641

Harrison City Hall: 689-3212 Tensed Clerk: 274-3239

County Contacts

County Prosecuting Attorney: 245-2564

County Assessor: 245-2821

County Sheriff, Non-emergency calls: 245-5555

County Building Inspector/Permitting: 245-4122

County Clerk's Office: 245-3212

County Assessor's Office: 245-2821

County Weed Control Officer: 245-4122

State Department of Lands (Fire Warden): 245-4551

Post Offices

St. Maries: 245-2031 Plummer: 686-1748

Santa: 245-3685 Fernwood: 245-3382

Tensed: 274-5551 Desmet: 274-6461

Other Useful Links

St. Maries Gazette Record: 245-4538 gazetterecord.com/stmarieschamber.org

Chamber of Commerce: 245-3563

Extension Office: 245-2422

Employment: 332-3570 or Local 245-2518 labor.idaho.gov

North Idaho College: 769-3300 nic.edu

University of Idaho: 885-6111 uidaho.edu

Idaho Dept. of Water Resources: 736-3033 idwr.idaho.gov

Idaho Farm Bureau Federation®: idfb.org

American Farm Bureau Federation®: fb.org