

# Friends of Park County

P.O. Box 23, Pray, Montana 59065

*Promoting thoughtfully planned growth in order to protect and enhance Park County's vibrant communities, sustainable working lands, and healthy natural resources.*

Dear Friends of Park County

Friends of Park County has been very busy the last two months – so busy we have neglected to update you about all that is happening. (Of course you can always keep up with our activities and learn about upcoming education events [on our website.](#))

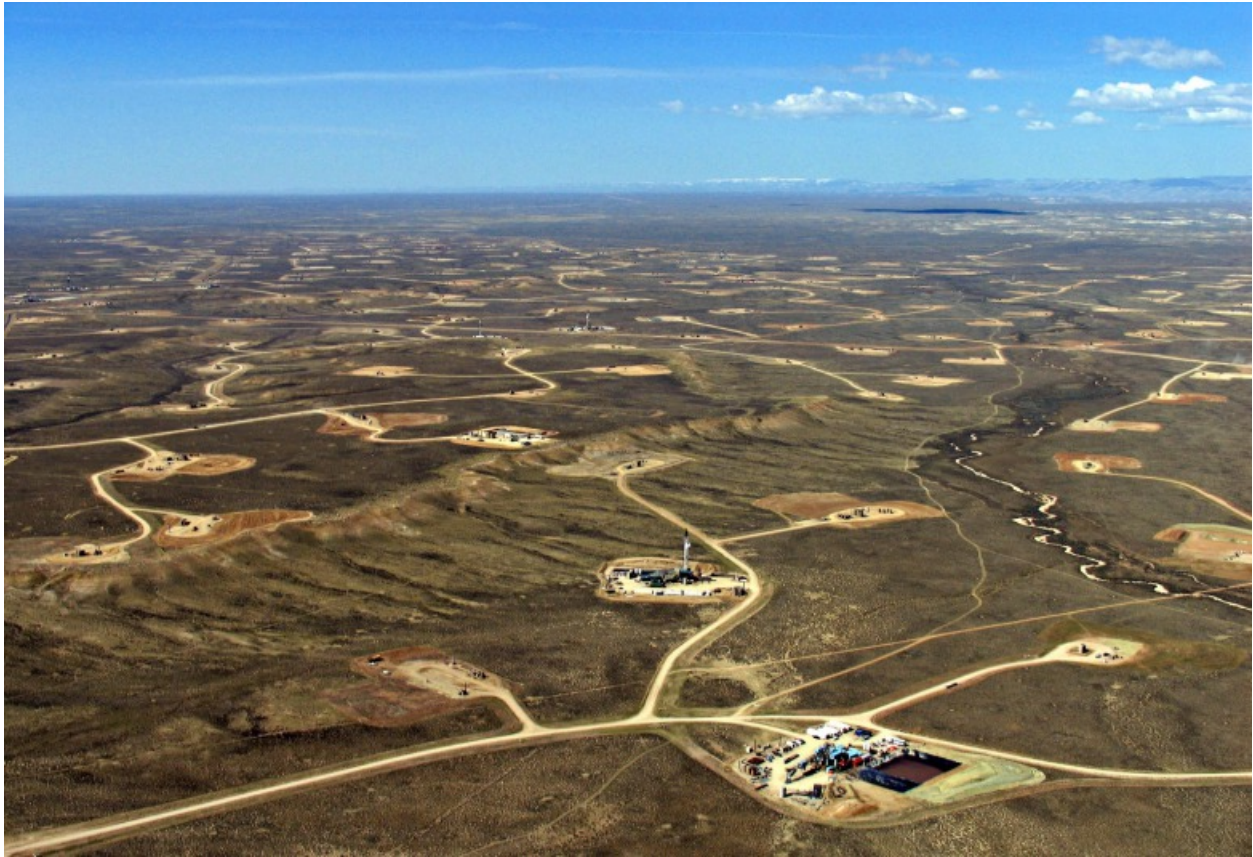
Here is a snapshot of our work:



- **Livingston Growth Policy: Great progress!**

The Livingston Planning Board has made great strides in transforming a very ordinary, sprawl-accepting growth policy into a strong statement in favor of compact, traditional pattern of development and the protection of the farmlands, ranch lands and wildlife habitat around the city from rural sprawl. Friends of Park County has played a crucial role in assisting the Board by providing specific recommendations backed by data and information. (See examples, [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#).) The City Planning Board finishes its work this month [click [here](#) for meeting

information packet] and then it is on to the City Commission for its review. And then comes the next hard assignment – implementation.



The above depicted rural sprawl would **FULLY** comply with the proposed Conflict Mitigation Zoning Regulation.

- **Curbing sprawl in rural Park County: No progress with County government. Friends of Park County, other community organizations and especially County residents will need to fill the rural sprawl leadership vacuum.**

In January Friends of Park County and its supporters presented [testimony to the County Planning Board about the risks and impacts of rural sprawl](#). At the end of the public comments, the Planning Board voted to request staff to bring forth information about rural sprawl for future County Planning Board discussion. So it was disappointing when at the March meeting the Planning Director and Planning Board Chair made it very clear that they do not regard rural sprawl as a threat to Park County, either because they believe it is not happening and will not happen or because they actually welcome this kind of development. Instead of addressing rural sprawl, the County continues to focus on the permit-processing ordinance the staff began working on in November 2019. To fill the leadership vacuum on rural sprawl, Friends of Park County is working alongside others to organize presentations and discussions about different options for curbing sprawl.

- **Concern and information about rural sprawl in Park County growing fast: Read or watch the news reports, commentaries, webinars, letters to the editor.**

While rural sprawl may be a non-issue to the Park County government, it has been the subject of many recent commentaries, webinars and news stories, which we invite you to read and watch:

[\[Keffeler commentary\]](#)

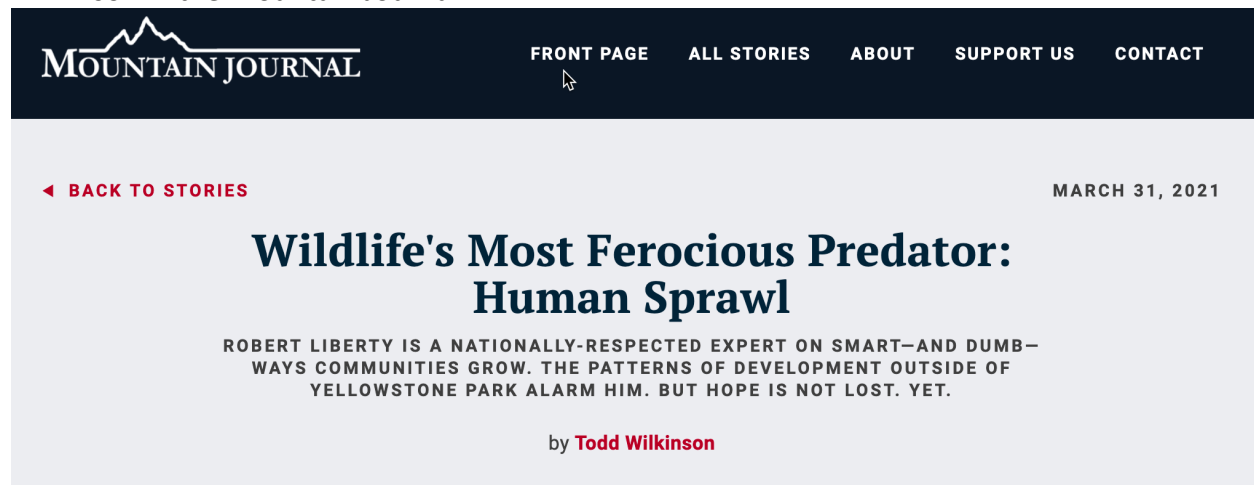
[\[Future West webinar on wildlife\]](#)

[\[Wuerther letter\]](#)

[\[FPC Rural Sprawl webinar\]](#)

[\[FPC letter on bad state legislation\]](#)

Most recently, our professional land use consultant, Robert Liberty, was interviewed by Todd Wilkinson in the Mountain Journal.

The screenshot shows the Mountain Journal website. At the top is a dark navigation bar with the Mountain Journal logo on the left and links for FRONT PAGE, ALL STORIES, ABOUT, SUPPORT US, and CONTACT on the right. Below the navigation bar is a light gray header area containing a red link for BACK TO STORIES on the left and the date MARCH 31, 2021 on the right. The main content area features the article title "Wildlife's Most Ferocious Predator: Human Sprawl" in a large, bold, dark font. Below the title is a short paragraph in all caps: "ROBERT LIBERTY IS A NATIONALLY-RESPECTED EXPERT ON SMART-AND DUMB-WAYS COMMUNITIES GROW. THE PATTERNS OF DEVELOPMENT OUTSIDE OF YELLOWSTONE PARK ALARM HIM. BUT HOPE IS NOT LOST. YET." At the bottom of the article preview is the byline "by Todd Wilkinson" in a smaller font.

Read the entire interview [here](#)

### Upcoming Events!

Future West will be presenting the second in their series of presentations on the subject of "Managing Growth in the New West"

On April 14<sup>th</sup> at 11:00 AM MDT, Urban Planner Joe Minicozzi will be the featured speaker for a webinar entitled How Do Patterns of Growth Affect Our Wallets?

Attendance requires registration which can be accessed at [https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_DE0\\_MRnASUyNkB5Cu5PYqw](https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_DE0_MRnASUyNkB5Cu5PYqw)

Friends of Park County's second Education in Action webinar on "Conflict-Mitigation: The wrong solution for the wrong problem" will be held in Mid-May. We will keep you updated when a final date is determined.

For those of you who want more details, the following is a first of a two-part detailed update that will focus on the revisions to the City of Livingston's Growth Policy Draft review. Part two of our detailed update will deal with the Park County's Planning Board struggle to meaningfully deal with rural residential sprawl and development of a planning strategy for smart growth.

## **Livingston Growth Policy: Great Progress!**

The Livingston Planning Board has been working very long hours (four-hour meetings!) reviewing and revising the city's draft Growth Policy. They have taken long strides toward a serious commitment to compact growth based on traditional neighborhood design and to stopping sprawl around the city. At every meeting Friends of Park County has ***proposed specific language and offered supporting information for new and better policies*** to reinforce this compact, Smart Growth re-orientation.

FPC used some simple calculations to show that ***the city already had more than enough land available inside the city limits to accommodate new housing for 20 years*** or more.

Perhaps the most dramatic shift has been the Planning Board's decision to replace the proposed land use designation allowing ½ acre and 1 acre lots across thousands of acres outside the city limits with the designation of that land for pastoral and open space. That followed FPC's testimony that ***the proposed city land use designation would have allowed up to 26,000 new homes, enough for 59,000 people -in the rural areas outside Livingston city limits.***

You can read FPC co-founder Jean Keffeler's ***commentary in the Livingston Enterprise about the City Planning Board's good work*** [here](#)

FPC's positions on many of the biggest issues have been echoed by other people and organizations. Overall, the level of public engagement has been high and of high quality and that is making a big difference.

***Wednesday April 7 is the final Planning Board meeting to consider revisions to the draft Growth Policy.*** (Meeting information can be found [here](#).) Friends of Park County will be contributing testimony on the Chapters related to Public Facilities, Inter-governmental Coordination and Implementation.

They expect to conclude their work on the draft Growth Policy on April 21 and send it on to the City Commission for its review and final action.

But a Growth Policy is, by law, only advisory. Almost as hard as preparing a strong Growth Policy is implementing that Growth Policy by revising and adopting appropriate land use regulations, by implementing policies governing annexations and the extension of city services and other means.

We are glad you are reading about our work but if you want to take the next step and take action, here are some ways you can help curb sprawl in Park County:

- Become an endorser for Friends of Park County
- **[Make a contribution](#)** to Friends of Park County
- Circulate this email to your friends.
- Write a letter to the editor.
- Sign up for our educational events.
- Testify in support of Friends of Park County's positions before the City and County Commissions and Boards. (We can help you if you have never done this before.)

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