Environment

The clean water and air in the natural environment in the City of Hailey are critical assets that must be preserved and protected. Increasing evidence and overwhelming scientific consensus tell us that air pollution is having a profound effect on our global climate. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) recently released its 2007 report for policy makers, "Climate Change 2007: The Physical Science Basis." The summary, based on contributions of 2,000 scientists from 154 countries, states that evidence overwhelmingly indicates the climate is changing – more rapidly in the last 30 years than ever before – and that human activities are a primary contributing factor. Key findings include the following:

- Average temperatures from 1950-2000 were higher than during any other 50 years in the past five centuries in the Northern Hemisphere.
- There is a 90% likelihood that the increase in temperature is due to rising amounts of greenhouse gasses from human activities.
- Average arctic temperatures have risen at nearly twice the global rate for the past century. The maximum land area covered by seasonally frozen ground has fallen by 7% during that time.
- The rate of rise in sea levels accelerated during the last decade of the 20th century. Between 1961 and 1993, sea levels were rising at an average rate of 7 inches every century; yet between 1993 and 2003, the rates sped up to more than 12 inches per century.
- The intensity of hurricanes has increased and will continue to increase because of the energy associated with warming oceans and more water vapor from evaporation.
- Concentrations of carbon dioxide have increased by more than 35% since the dawn of the Industrial Age and are rising at an accelerating rate. The heat-trapping ability of atmospheric carbon dioxide increased 20% between 1995 and 2005.

The primary culprits cited for global warming are carbon dioxide emissions – from fuels we burn for heat, electricity and transportation – and methane emissions from livestock, mining and landfills.

In 2007, Mayor Susan McBryant of Hailey joined 496 mayors from around the nation and signed the U.S. Mayors Climate Protection Agreement. The agreement, among other things, urges federal and state governments to enact policies and programs to meet or exceed the Kyoto Protocol targets for reducing global warming pollution in our community. The City of Hailey also adopted a City Plan for Climate Protection that includes implementing policies for immediate action plans, intermediate action plans and long range action plans to help achieve a significant reduction in greenhouse gas emissions from city-related activities.

Environmental Issues to be Addressed by Climate Protection Committee

Air and Water Quality

Air Quality

Goal: Maintain full compliance with local and federal air quality standards.

1. **Policy:** Reduce stationary and mobile source emissions of pollutants**.**
   Implementation:
   a. Implement standards and support local and regional efforts to reduce air pollutants.
   b. Adopt zoning and subdivision ordinance amendments to promote air and water quality.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Goal: Strive to meet the Kyoto Protocol target of reducing greenhouse gas emissions seven percent below 1990 levels.

1. **Policy:** Adhere to the Climate Protection Agreement or policies and guidelines and support a region-wide movement to adopt similar policies.
   Implementation:
   a. Identify and implement cost-effective actions that will reduce the community's contribution to total global greenhouse gas emissions.
   b. Integrate land use, building code, transportation and energy policies to support this goal.
   c. Encourage land use patterns that reduce water pollution and air emissions.
   d. Promote transportation strategies that encourage low emission vehicles and alternatives to traditional fuels.

Water Quality

Goal: Protect and improve water quality.

1. **Policy:** Recognize the city and valley watersheds are a necessary component of an existing ecosystem and a critical resource for the community. Special emphasis should be placed on regional efforts such as watershed planning and protection.
   Implementation:
   a. Seek to reduce point and non-point sources of pollutants.
   b. Work regionally with other cities and the county to develop and implement appropriate water quality standards and water quality protection programs. Water resource planning efforts will include such things as water quality master planning, surface and ground water conservation, and evaluation of pollutant sources.
   c. Evaluate aquifers, groundwater recharge and discharge areas, and sources of groundwater pollution and formulate appropriate pollution and source protection programs.

2. **Policy:** The City shall strive to meet all requirements for wastewater treatment under its National Pollution Discharge Elimination System Permit and evaluate additional voluntary standards as appropriate. Support the South Central Health District's policies on the installation of private sewage disposal systems where a potential pollution or health hazard would be created. Support the Department of Environmental Quality's (DEQ) policies that encourage regionalization of wastewater systems.

   Implementation:

   a. Work with the County to develop programs to monitor problems associated with failing septic systems in or adjacent to the City limits.

Conservation of Natural Resources

Water Conservation

Goal: Pursue a water conservation program designed to minimize water waste and reduce water use during peak demand periods.

1. **Policy:** Promote the conservation of water resources through water quality protection, public education and monitoring policies that promote appropriate water usage.

   Implementation:

   a. Adopt zoning and subdivision ordinance standards that require low-water use landscaping that is compatible with native vegetation in the Wood River Valley for all residential and commercial development.
   b. Provide educational material on water conservation and appropriate irrigation practices.
   c. Encourage the use of low flow water devices in new construction.

Energy Conservation and Renewable Energy

Goal: Set goals for the use of non-renewable energy that is consistent with an orderly transition to a sustainable energy economy.

1. Policy: Implement policies and programs that enhance opportunities for individuals, businesses and public organizations to limit the use of non-renewable energy resources by conserving energy and converting to renewable resources.

Implementation:

a. Support private decisions to use renewable energy, publicly develop local renewable energy resources where economical and preserve future options for renewable energy so that they may be developed when they become cost effective.
b. Improve building codes and regulations to insure energy and resource efficiency in new construction, remodels and renovation projects.

c. Energy conservation programs must be structured so that they are sensitive to the unique situations that involve historic preservation and work-force housing.

2. Policy: Promote land use patterns that increase efficiency in buildings and transportation systems by making energy efficiency a critical element when developing new zoning regulations and the comprehensive map.

Implementation:

a. Locate downtown and neighborhood commercial service centers and industrial areas with a balance of complementary retail and employment opportunities near major arterials and transit lines.
b. Promote density, location and mix of land uses that decrease the length of required daily trips and encourage the consolidation or related trips

3. Policy: Promote conservation as the energy resource of choice. The City shall support environmentally acceptable, sustainable energy sources, especially renewable resources such as solar, wind, hydroelectric, geothermal, biomass, cogeneration and district heating and cooling.

Implementation:

a. Develop an energy supply assessment for the city, including solar, biomass and opportunities for using district heating and cooling, when funding is available.
b. Investigate the potential for using the City's groundwater system and wastewater treatment plant for district heating and cooling.