

Chapter Four - Land Use Element

"programmed" industrial uses which either support the current cleanup mission or were part of the terminated Cold War Plutonium Production Mission. With some small exceptions, the lands and infra-structure on

Hanford suitable for non-federal industrial uses are not yet available to the private sector, but are a major potential resource for the future.

**TABLE 4.3 CURRENT LAND USE BENTON COUNTY<sup>3</sup>**  
(2006, City annexations updated 2006)

<u>Land Use Type</u>	<u>Acres</u>	<u>Square Miles</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Cities and Urban Growth Areas	71,235	111	6
Hanford Site	266,220	416	24
<b>Unincorporated Area</b>			
Irrigated Agriculture	251,406	393	23
Dryland Agriculture	309,373	484	7
Rangeland & Undeveloped	183,973	288	16
Residential (rural)	22,342	35	2
Public	5,945	9	1
Commercial	3,035	.5	0
Industrial	1,526	2.3	0
Aggregate	367	.57	0
Unbuildable	251	.39	0
Total Unincorporated Area	778,218	1,235	
Total County Area	1,115,673	1,782	99

<sup>3</sup> Computer generated accuracy within 1%.

situated at the confluence of three rivers and its mountainous and ridged geological characteristics, protection of the County's environmental resources is also an important aspect for future planning.

As the agriculture economy continues to grow in Benton County, properly locating sites and providing basic services for agriculture related industries, facilitating the growth of "agri-tourism" and "value-added" processing sectors will be important.

### 3.3 Land Use Categories

As noted above, land use in Benton County is organized into designation categories: urban, rural, agriculture, industrial, public, and open space lands. Some of these designations also have sub-categories. Table 3-3 indicates the proposed land uses and distribution of lands within Benton County (see Appendix A: Map Folio, Figure 5 – Future/Proposed Land Use Designations Map).

**Table 3-3**  
**Proposed Land Uses and Land Distribution in Benton County**

Land Use Type	Acres	Square Miles	Percent
Cities and Urban Growth Areas	72,245	111	6.58
Hanford Site	265,576	415	24.19
Hanford Reach	12,443	19	1.13
Unincorporated Area			
Growth Management Act Agriculture	649,153	1,014	59.12
Open Space Conservation	2,169	3	0.20
Public	15,563	24	1.42
Rural Transition	3,507	5	0.32
Rural Remote	66,402	104	6.05
Rural Resource	7,214	11	0.66
Rural Community Center	448	1	0.04
Rural Commercial	423	1	0.04
Rural Industrial	2,870	4	0.26
Total Unincorporated Area	747,749	1,168	
Total County Area	1,098,013	1,716	100

Benton County implements its various land uses through zoning designations as shown in Table 3-4 below.

**TABLE 4.2 PLANNING REGIONS: ACREAGE BY LAND USE DESIGNATION**

Planning Region	Acres <sup>5</sup>	Urban Area	GMA Ag	Rural Lands	Industrial	Commercial	Public
Rattlesnake Mountain	205,559	10,334	148,540	40,841	552	161	5,121
Horseheaven Hills	502,086	0.00	489,083	3,270	1,607	204	7,922
Red Mountain	72,368	44,062	5,853	21,519	188	71	675
Finley	29,268	16,829	0	10,358	1,286	28	767
Hanford <sup>6</sup>	266,220						
Total Acres	1,075,501	71,235	643,476	75,988	3,633	464	14,485

\* computer calculations are + or - 1%

#### **Rattlesnake Mountain Planning Region Boundaries, Natural Characteristics and Size**

The Rattlesnake Mountain Region covers the drainage areas of the south and southwest flank of Rattlesnake Mountain, and the western slope of Red Mountain, as they descend to the Yakima River. The Region contains approximately 205,559 acres, or 321 square miles. It represents 19 percent of the county's total landmass. It lies in the northwest portion of the county, extending from the Yakima County line in the west to the ridge of Red Mountain in the east.

The Region's southern boundary is the crest line of the Horse Heaven Hills as they rise above the south bank of the Yakima River. To the north the boundary extends to the Columbia River just downstream of Priest Rapids Dam.

Prominent physical and biological features are Rattlesnake and Red Mountains, and the network of canyons, creeks and swales, basalt outcrops, cliffs, and perched waters that extend down to the Yakima River. The waters and tributaries of the river are the principal support of both man and wildlife in the Planning Region.

#### **Predominant Land Uses**

The predominant land use within the Rattlesnake Mountain Planning Region is commercial agriculture on lands designated for Agricultural Use, which comprise approximately 72 percent of the land area, or 148,540 acres. Irrigated orchards and other specialty crops including apples, cherries, currants, hops, mint, juice grapes, pears, peaches and wine grapes are grown on the irrigated lands called

<sup>5</sup> Does not include right of ways

<sup>6</sup> The Hanford land uses have not been determined at this time and will be addressed and amended in Chapter 13 of this plan.

- platted to rural lot sizes (approx. 2,750 acres);
- orchards, forage crops and dairy operations along the north side of the Yakima River between Benton City and Prosser, on acreage platted to or encroached upon by rural residential developments (approximately 226 acres);
- Forage crops, between the Yakima River and I-82, two miles west of Benton City on land short-platted to rural lot sizes. (Approximately 400 acres);
- East of Prosser (three miles) several pockets of agriculture use on the north and south side of the I-82 freeway. (Approximately 160 acres of orchard and 80 acres of forage crop.)

**TABLE 4.4 LANDS DESIGNATED "GMA AGRICULTURE" BY PLANNING REGION**

Planning Region	Total Acres	Irrigated Acres <sup>5</sup>	Dryland Acres <sup>6</sup>
Rattlesnake Mt.	148,540	41,638	106,902
Horseheaven Hills	489,083	191,662	297,421
Red Mt.	5,853	3,749	2,104
Finley	0	0	0
Hanford*			
Total GMA Agriculture	643,476	237,049	406,427

\* Designations have not been finalized.

### **Current Trends**

#### ***Competition for Suitable Lands:***

Generally, the conditions which make land unsuitable for agriculture are constraints as well to the development of other land uses, such as "residential" and "commercial."

Therefore, with some exceptions (e.g., view lots on steep slopes, and dryland

areas without underlying groundwater), there is an unavoidable competition between farmers and developers for the same types of land. Over time, the result of the competition for land is often a landscape pattern of mixed agricultural and non-agricultural uses. Typically, the pattern has evolved

<sup>5</sup> Acreages for both irrigated and dryland are approximate as of the date of this Plan. The ratio of irrigated to dryland is in a constant state of change.

<sup>6</sup> For this Table, dryland includes rangelands.