

# CHAPTER VI

# ENVIRONMENTAL

# QUALITY

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c.1950 Photo. Automobiles and more trees. Ice House, RR depot and tracks are gone. UPHS



## ***6.1 What are the Primary Environmental Concerns in Green Mountain Falls?***

The primary environmental concerns are water quality and air quality.

### **6.1.1 Water Quality**

There is no central sewage system in the lower Ute Pass area. Green Mountain Falls sewage disposal is by individual sewage disposal systems (ISDS) such as septic systems as is the case for neighboring Crystola, Chipita Park, and Cascade. Tests of water quality in Fountain Creek near Green Mountain Falls have shown no significant levels of pollution.

All sewage disposal system designs for new construction, repair and upgrading are reviewed and permits issued by the El Paso County Health Department and Teller County Health Department. Many lot sizes in Green Mountain Falls are small making it difficult and expensive to install ISDS. However, engineers have been able to find ways to design acceptable systems.

Although a few existing ISDS may fail each year, the County Health Departments respond immediately, specify corrective actions, and make follow up inspections for compliance.

### **6.1.2 Air Quality**

The overall air quality in Green Mountain Falls is considered very good. However, in the summer, dust particles are suspended in the air from unpaved roads. In the winter, a low level of air pollution may result from smoke from wood burning stoves and fireplaces. Although many of the old summer cabins featured inefficient stoves and fireplaces, most of these cabins are closed in the winter. Many residents have converted to gas and stopped burning wood. Others have installed modern stoves and fireplace equipment that reduce emissions.

## ***6.2 Environmental Quality: Principles and Policies***

### **6.2.1 Environmental Quality**

**PRINCIPLE: Protect the environmental quality of the Town.**

#### **POLICIES**

- Continue to ensure that the water quality of the creeks and Gazebo Lake are monitored by appropriate agencies and take any corrective actions as necessary.
- Insure that all that all development plans and building permit requests that include ISDS are forwarded to County Health Departments for review and permitting
- Promptly report ISDS failures to the County Health Department.
- Treat Town gravel roads to control dust.



## 6.2.2 Groundwater

**PRINCIPLE: Take all necessary measures to prevent the contamination of groundwater.**

### POLICIES

- Require storm drainage plans and waste disposal plans that minimize the contamination of groundwater as required by Colorado laws.
- Educate the community about groundwater contamination. Organic chemicals and groundwater contamination is an area where much research is needed. In the meantime, the prudent use and disposal of all chemicals (agricultural, industrial, home and garden) can go a long way to protect the environment and groundwater from contamination.
- Work with the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment to understand what the Town of Green Mountain Falls can do to implement the EPA's new Phase II stormwater regulations. While these new standards only apply to Colorado municipalities that are over 10,000 people, the Town's topography, coupled with the location of Fountain Creek, Catamount Creek, Crystal Creek, and Gazebo Lake suggest that stormwater retention techniques can assist in preventing the contamination of groundwater as well as the water quality of these natural assets.

## 6.2.3 Lakes and Streams

**PRINCIPLE: Continue to enhance, protect and maintain Green Mountain Falls's lakes and streams –Fountain Creek, Catamount Creek, Crystal Creek and Gazebo Lake.**

### POLICIES

- Work with El Paso County and adjacent landowners to continue to develop pedestrian/bicycle trails that access these natural features.
- Look to agencies such as Great Outdoors Colorado to assist with the funding necessary to improve, preserve, and the creeks and particularly Gazebo Lake.

## 6.2.4 Sewer

**PRINCIPLE: Plan ahead**

### POLICIES

- Before any significant development occurs, the ability to provide sewer to the development must be determined. The historic lot size is inadequate for individual septic systems without extensively engineered systems. State Health requirements provide two options for those who own historic cabins on small lots-buy additional land to improve the property or be prepared to spend a lot of money on a properly engineered individual septic system. Town officials are quick to point out that it can be accomplished, but the cost is significantly greater than a typical septic placed on a flat piece of land.



- Individual sewage disposal system provides wastewater treatment and disposal, primarily for individual homes (as well as some commercial and business facilities) in areas not served by central sewer systems and wastewater treatment plants. These systems are prevalent throughout Colorado, but most particularly in rural and suburban areas where densities are not adequate to support central collection and treatment systems.



2006 Photo. Lake Street businesses

Dick Bratton

