

# *Grand Forks County*

## **Rural Living Agreement**

**Introduction:** Agriculture is a vital part of the Grand Forks County economy. Life in the rural areas of the county is different from life in the city. County governments may not be able to provide the same level of service that city governments provide. To that end, we are providing you with the following information to help you make an informed decision before you purchase land or build a home in rural Grand Forks County.

1. **Agriculture:** Some of the people who feed this nation (and the world) work right here in Grand Forks County. If you are going to move your family into their work area, it is important you understand how their job, work environment, and hours of operation may affect you.
  - Farmers often work around the clock, especially during planting and harvest time. It is possible that adjoining agriculture uses from lighting and noise may disturb you at any hour.
  - Land preparation and other agricultural operations, as well as rural roads, cause dust, especially during windy and dry weather.
  - Farmers occasionally burn ditches and fields to keep them free of debris and weeds. This is a normal part of a farming operation, and this may create smoke.
  - Chemicals (mainly fertilizers, pesticides and herbicides) are often used in agricultural activities and may be applied via irrigation systems, ground vehicles or various aircraft. These are necessary tools for agricultural areas of our county, and you must be aware of and prepared to deal with the noise and the hours associated with their application.
  - Farm animals are raised in the country and they can generate odors that can be very strong at times. They also make noise, draw insect populations, and sometimes get loose from their pasture or holding areas. Please be aware that farmers working within their rights can place cattle or hogs on their property, and you have accepted the consequences by choosing your proximity to the property line.
  - If you choose to live in the work area of farmers, you are expected to adapt to the normal day-to-day operations of your agri-business neighbors as this is their workplace and you have made the decision to reside adjacent to their work area.
  - Farmers must move their equipment between fields. Anticipate these delays and be patient, keeping their, your, and other's safety at the forefront.

- Farm animals can be dangerous. Children need to know that it may not be safe to enter pens where farm animals are kept, even the little cute ones. It is your responsibility to teach your children respect for livestock, property and property lines of your neighboring farmer.
- Livestock animals being herded from one location to another have the right-of-way on county roads and highways.
- Insects may be more of a problem in the country than they are within city limits. The county does not spray for mosquitoes, so you will encounter more of them. Other insects feeding on actively growing crops or emerging from cropland can migrate to landscaping and gardens adjacent to cropland.
- Posted farm, hay, pasture and timber ground is not open for your use to hunt, ride ATV's, etc. unless you have requested and been given permission to do so by the owner or tenant.

**2. Access:** Check existing easements to your property. You cannot assume that you have an automatic easement across someone else's property to enter your property.

- Emergency response times (sheriff, fire suppression, medical care, etc.) may be much longer than in an incorporated city. Under some extreme conditions, you may find that emergency response is extremely slow due to circumstances beyond their control. Some fire, ambulance and search and rescue services in Grand Forks County are volunteer and may only provide limited services. Check with the departments or organizations that provide these services if you are contemplating residing in their jurisdictions.
- Grand Forks County has a county road network to take care of, and there are also numerous township roads totaling hundreds of miles, ranging from paved to unimproved dirt roads. There are also a number of roads that are private drives, and these may have a homeowners association to whom you pay dues, which is responsible for the maintenance of roads, bridges, plowing etc.
- Grand Forks County can experience adverse weather conditions that may cause damage to roads. It is wise to determine who is responsible for the maintenance of the roads providing access to your property.
- In extreme weather, even the best county maintained roads could become impassable.
- Many large construction vehicles and some fire and rescue vehicles cannot navigate small, narrow roads. If you plan to build, it is prudent to check out construction and emergency vehicle access.

- School buses travel only on maintained public roads that have been designated as school bus routes by the local school district (some subdivision roads are private). In order for your child or children to get to school, you may be responsible to drive your children to the nearest county road or designated school bus route. Please check with the appropriate school district for school locations and routes.
  - Dust, is an unpleasant fact of life for most rural residents. If your road is unpaved, it is unlikely that it will be paved in the foreseeable future.
  - Mail delivery may not always be available to some rural areas of the county. Ask the postmaster to describe the system for your area. This may also apply to package delivery services as well.
- 3. Services:** Water, sewer, electric, fire, telephone and other services may be unavailable or have more frequent interruptions. Repairs may take longer due to their rural nature.
- Cellular communications may be a problem in some areas of Grand Forks County.
  - Sewer service is not available to sites located outside city limits. You will need to use an approved subsurface sewage (septic) system or other treatment process. The type of soil, depth to ground water or bedrock, slope, etc. will be very important in determining the cost and function of your subsurface sewage system.
  - Some unincorporated areas do have access to a rural water supply for domestic use. Based on the location of existing water lines the cost of servicing your property can vary greatly. If there is not rural water available, you will need to locate an alternate supply. The most common method is use of a well.
  - It is important to determine the proximity of electric power because it can be expensive to extend power lines to very remote areas. In addition, if you have special power requirements, it is important to know what level of service can be provided to your property.
  - Trash removal may be more expensive in rural areas. It is illegal to create your own trash dump, even on your own property. In some cases, the only option may be to haul your trash to a local landfill. Recycling services may not be available in rural areas.
- 4. Your property:** There are many issues that can affect your property. It is important to research them before purchasing land or building in rural areas of the county. All properties within the County's jurisdiction are subject to County Building, Subdivision, and Zoning Ordinances and Codes.

- Easements may require you to allow the construction of roads, power lines, water lines, sewer lines, etc. across your land. There may be easements that have been recorded by the county or as part of the original property. Check these issues carefully.
- You may be provided with a map of your property, but unless the land has been surveyed and pins placed by a licensed surveyor, you should not assume that the map is accurate.
- Fences that separate properties are sometimes misaligned with the actual property lines. A survey of the land by a licensed surveyor is the only way to confirm the exact location of property lines.
- The surrounding properties may not remain as they are indefinitely. If you are moving to the country on a small piece of ground, anticipate that others may do the same thing.
- Flowing water can be a hazard. Before you decide to locate your home near an active ditch, canal or other water conveyance, consider the possible danger to your family, property, and the fact that it is your responsibility to take safety measures.

**5. Mother Nature:** Residents of the county may experience more problems when the elements and earth turn unfriendly. Here are some thoughts for you to consider:

- Black ice or icy conditions on rural roadways is always a probability.
- Floodplains have been designated by the United States Geologic Survey (USGS) within the county. Portions of the county require special building considerations if located within the floodplains. It is advisable to consult Grand Forks County Planning & Zoning Office before buying or building.
- Nature can provide you with some wonderful neighbors. However, even harmless wildlife can cross the road unexpectedly and cause traffic accidents. Rural development encroaches on the traditional habitat of animals. In general, it is best to enjoy wildlife from a distance. It is important that you handle your pets and trash properly so that they will not create problems for you and/or the wildlife.

In Conclusion: Grand Forks County is a wonderful place to live, work, and raise a family. This agreement is designed to provide information that will help enhance the quality of life here. Respect your agri-neighbor's livelihood and property, and be aware that your actions may impact your neighbors, human and otherwise. While the information presented here is intended as a guideline and an introduction into some of the realities of rural living, you may discover other issues that have not been covered by this document. We encourage you to research and examine all aspects of country living prior to moving to a rural setting so you will enjoy the country and not have any unpleasant surprises.

Grand Forks County elected officials, administration and staff, pride themselves on their accessibility. By participating in the publication of the Rural Living Agreement, Grand Forks

County is in no way divesting itself of its responsibility to its constituents, rather, is attempting to make clear to constituents what those responsibilities are. We offer this publication in the sincere hope that it will help you better understand how things work in the rural areas of Grand Forks County.

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I/we have read the above and not only understand the items mentioned, but understand the more general concept of rural living, and I/we hereby agree to live according to these concepts, whether specifically mentioned or implied.

Parcel: \_\_\_\_\_

Township: \_\_\_\_\_

Resident: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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