



Figure 13.1
The Rocky Mountain region.

are experiencing many of the growing pains typical of the Third World, extremely rapid development without adequate planning or design controls.

A truly sustainable vision for the American West will require difficult but urgent decisions about development patterns in both small urban settlements and the surrounding landscape. This hard-headed approach to sustainability does not envision 21st century homesteaders 'self-sufficiently' populating hitherto unspoiled 'off the grid' areas by using solar and wind energy, but an interdependent community which has resulted from intelligent, logical and forward-thinking decisions as to the best means of utilizing land, water, air and other essential resources to provide human settlement such as transportation, food and water supply, preservation of other species, recreation, viewshed,¹ raw industrial and building materials. Many people currently living in or moving to the West would wholeheartedly agree with such a general and obvious goal statement, but few are actually willing to change their own lifestyle to help achieve it. The following proposals are quite modest, and, in keeping with the principles of American individualism and a consumer-driven market-based system, are designed to appeal to those who wish to enjoy and preserve the lifestyle, as well as the natural and man-made landscape, of the Rocky Mountain West.



Figure 13.2
Bozeman and the Gallatin Valley.

Population growth and current development

The Rocky Mountain city of Bozeman, Montana, has served as a transportation hub and commercial centre for the nearby mining, timber and agricultural communities for most of its history. It has long been one of the primary 'gateways' to Yellowstone National Park, but the principal employer and dominant presence in town remains Montana State University (Epple, 2001). Bozeman's non-student population increased 21% during the 20-year period from 1970 to 1990 to a total of 22,000 residents (Epple, 2001). It had exploded to over 31,000 residents by the year 2000, an increase of more than 40% in a single decade. It is anticipated that over 46,000 people will live in the city by the year 2020, a further increase of 48% (Epple, 2001). This staggering growth has combined with land-intensive development to consume the rich alluvial soil of the Gallatin River Valley (Figure 13.2) for low-density residential and commercial uses at an unprecedented rate. Over 2000 acres of formerly agricultural land adjacent to Bozeman were annexed into the city between 1990 and 2000, bringing the total acreage within the city limits to 8300, or 13 square miles, surrounded by an additional 25 square miles of planning area in which development is controlled primarily by a utilities expansion plan (Epple, 2001).