Q. **What is a Guest House?**
A. A Guest House is a second, small dwelling that is allowed on property that already has a dwelling. Rural land development codes or zoning ordinances allow only one dwelling per property. The Guest House is a special exception to this rule.

Q. **What makes a Guest House a dwelling?**
A. When a structure has a kitchen, it is considered a dwelling. A kitchen is a space that is designed for the preparation and cooking of food because it contains features such as a sink, cooking stove, refrigerator, counters, and/or cupboards.

Q. **Are Guest Houses allowed in all zones?**
A. No. Guest Houses are permitted in the Rural Residential, Serpentine, and Limited Development zones only.

Q. **Does the parcel have to be a certain size to qualify for a Guest House?**
A. Yes. The parcel must be at least 2.5 acres in size. This limitation is necessary to meet a state planning rule that specifies rural dwelling densities which cannot exceed urban levels.

Q. **How large may a Guest House be?**
A. A Guest House cannot be larger than 500 square feet in size. The size is measured by total floor space, so second floors count toward the limit. Also, Guest Houses cannot be directly attached to or placed inside other structures, such as the main dwelling or a garage or shop. They can be attached to these structures, however, by a covered walk, causeway or intervening patio.

Q. **Can a Guest House be placed anywhere on the property?**
A. No. A Guest House must be sited within 50 feet of the main dwelling. This limitation, however, can be varied when physical conditions of the land make the 50 foot limit impractical. This requires a variance application that demonstrates compliance with the standards and criteria set out in Article 44 (Variances) of the *Rural Land Development Code* (RLDC). The RLDC may be viewed and downloaded from the county web-site (see information box on the reverse side of this page for the county web address).

Q. **Are special plans or drawings required to get a development permit from the Planning Office?**
A. Yes. Building and design plans for a Guest House must be reviewed and approved by the Planning Office before a development permit can be issued. This allows a planner to make sure the special Guest House limitations are satisfied.

Q. **Can there be more than one Guest House on a property?**
A. No. The ordinance clearly states there can be only one guest house per legal parcel.

Q. **Can a manufactured dwelling be used as a Guest House?**
A. Yes, a manufactured dwelling can be used for a Guest House, but it needs to meet the 500 square foot size limit. Sometimes manufactured dwellings this small are hard to find.

Q. **Are there other ways to have guest quarters if a Guest House cannot be approved?**
A. Yes, there are three possible options: 1) Recreational vehicles sites can be used for occasional guests. An RV site must be approved by Planning (development permits), Building Safety (electrical and...
plumbing permits), and DEQ (septic connection permit). Connection to an existing septic may require improvements to the system; 2) Separate accessory structures that do not have kitchens can also function as guest quarters. These structures can have separate spaces, such as living rooms, bathrooms, bedrooms, and hobby and recreation areas. There is no specific size limit on accessory structures, although there are cumulative limits for the whole property that increase with the size of the property (see Article 72.060 of the RLDC; 3) A Medical Hardship permit may also meet an immediate need for a second dwelling when it will be used to care for a dependent person (see handout for Medical Hardship Dwellings). The second dwelling can be occupied by either the dependent person or the care provider. The necessity for the care relationship must be certified annually by an attending physician. Again, there are no size limits for hardship dwellings, and manufactured dwellings, recreational vehicles, and converted site-built structures can all be used. Kitchens, however, must be removed from permanent structures when the hardship situation ends.

Q. Where can I get additional information about Guest Houses?
A. Guest Houses can be complicated given the number of special limitations. If you have any questions about the Guest House option, it is highly recommended that you talk to a planner about your specific plans before purchasing property or making other kinds of investment. Office hours and contact information are shown below. Also, the RLDC, handouts and land use applications may be viewed and downloaded from the Josephine County website shown below.