



COLORADO

Parks and Wildlife

Department of Natural Resources

Southeast Region, Area 14
4255 Sinton Road
Colorado Springs, CO 80907
P 719.227.5200 | F 719.227.5223

August 24, 2017

El Paso County
ATTN: Kari Parsons
2880 International Circle,
Colorado Springs, CO 80132

Re: Abert Ranch Preliminary Plan (file # SP17007)

Dear Ms. Parsons,

Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) has reviewed the plans for the retreat at Abert Ranch near Stepler Road. This area included within the development boundaries will sustain numerous wildlife species including deer, elk, pronghorn, turkey, black bear, mountain lion, coyote, fox, raptors, songbirds, and numerous small mammals. CPW makes the following recommendations.

CPW recommends consultation with the Army Corps of Engineers to ensure compliance with the Clean Water Act due to the identification of possible jurisdictional wetlands on the site. CPW will comment on specific plans for wetland-related issues as part of that 404 permitting process.

CPW recommends the development and implementation of a noxious weed control plan for the site. All disturbed soils should be monitored for noxious weeds and noxious weeds should be actively controlled until native plant revegetation and reclamation is achieved. Care should be taken to avoid the spread of noxious weeds, and all construction equipment should be cleaned prior to leaving the site. A noxious weed management plan should be developed prior to any disturbance of the site. CPW recommends that all landscaping in the developed area should be comprised of native species. Using native species with high food and cover values in an open space area is beneficial to wildlife. This can encourage wildlife to concentrate in areas that minimize human conflicts and optimize wildlife watching opportunities. Native plant species can also provide an aesthetically pleasing landscape that requires little maintenance, and are frequently more drought-tolerant than non-native species

There is suitable habitat for nesting raptors and migratory birds along the trail route. CPW recommends the use of preconstruction surveys to identify raptor nests within the project area and implement appropriate restrictions. CPW recommends adherence to the



recommended buffer distances and timing stipulations identified in the attached document "Recommended Buffer Zones and Seasonal Restrictions for Colorado Raptors".

Fences can cause many problems for wildlife, including death, entanglements, and barriers to movements. CPW recommends the developers consult our publication "Fencing with Wildlife in mind." when considering the design of fences within the development. The publication is available on our website and we would be happy to provide a direct link to the PDF. The use of privacy fencing, chain link fencing, and other exclusionary fencing should be at least 6 feet high and should be restricted to the immediate area surrounding the buildings or within the designated building envelope and should not be used as a method to designate boundaries of larger lot sizes (> 1 acre). Fencing outside the immediate building envelope or area surrounding the buildings on larger lots within the known range of elk, deer and pronghorn should be a maximum top height of 42" with at least 12" spacing between the top two wires or rails and a bottom wire or rail at least 16" above the ground to allow passage of juvenile animals and pronghorn antelope. It is also recommended that the top and bottom wires be a twisted barbless type or smooth wire or rail construction. Construction of ornamental wrought iron fencing with closely spaced vertical bars (<12") and sharp projections extending beyond the top horizontal bar should be strongly discouraged in areas where deer, elk, and black bear are known to occur. This type of fencing typically ensnares deer and elk by the hips when trying to squeeze through and impales animals attempting to go over the top. It should be noted that it is very distressing to find wildlife in or impaled on fences.

The following is a list of general recommendations the CPW would like to be taken into consideration with the residential side of this development in order to avoid nuisance conflicts with wildlife. Many times these conditions can be enforced through the local Homeowner's Association or through covenants.

Pets should not be allowed to roam free and fences should be installed to decrease or eliminate this problem. Dogs and cats chase or prey on various wildlife species. One benefit to keeping animals under control is that they are less likely to bother other people, be in roadways or become prey for mountain lions, coyotes, foxes or owls.

Trash should be kept indoors until the morning of trash pickup. The CPW recommends using bear resistant trash containers. Bears, skunks, raccoons, and neighborhood dogs are attracted to garbage and do become habituated.

Feeding of all wildlife should be prohibited, with the exception of songbirds. The use of bird feeders, suet feeders, and hummingbird feeders are discouraged. However, if feeders are used, they should be placed so they are inaccessible to bears, raccoons or skunks and other wildlife species that might cause damage or threaten human safety. It is illegal to feed big game including deer, elk, antelope, moose, bear and lion.

Pets should be fed inside or if pets are fed outside, feeding should occur only for a specified period of time and food bowls returned afterwards to a secure site for storage. Pet food left outside attracts various wildlife species which in turn attracts predators.

When landscaping lots, it is strongly recommended that native vegetation be used that wildlife is less likely to be attracted to. Planting of trees and shrubs that are attractive to native ungulates should incorporate the use of materials that will prevent access and damage (fencing, tree guards, trunk guards, etc.).

It is strongly encouraged that dog kennels have a top enclosure, regardless of the height of the kennel.

Barbecue grills should be placed in a secure area when not in use.

CPW appreciates being given the opportunity to comment. Please Feel free to contact District Wildlife Manager Benjamin Meier at 719-227-5231 or Benjamin.meier@state.co.us should you have any questions or require additional information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Frank McGee".

Frank McGee
Area Wildlife Manager

Cc: Benjamin Meier DWM
SE Regional File
Area 14 File