



COLORADO

Parks and Wildlife

Department of Natural Resources

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

January 9, 2025

El Paso County
ATTN: Ashlyn Mathy
2880 International Circle,
Colorado Springs, CO 80132

Re: Skye Vista Subdivision

Dear Ashlyn Mathy,

Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) has reviewed the plans for the Skye Vista Subdivision in El Paso County. 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.

For general construction protocols, CPW recommends low speeds for construction vehicles to avoid wildlife collisions. Where new roads are required, CPW recommends that these single-purpose roads be gated to reduce traffic disruptions to wildlife. If any temporary (e.g., construction) or permanent fencing is proposed, CPW recommends that it is the wildlife-friendly fencing that allows young to cross and does not include high-tensile hogwire.

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 are achieved. Care should be taken to avoid the spread of noxious weeds, and all construction equipment should be cleaned before leaving the site. A noxious weed management plan should be developed before 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.



Jeff Davis, Director, Colorado Parks and Wildlife
Parks and Wildlife Commission: Dallas May, Chair · Richard Reading, Vice-Chair · Karen Bailey, Secretary · Jessica Beaulieu
Marie Haskett · Tai Jacober · Jack Murphy · Gabriel Otero · Murphy Robinson · James Jay Tutchtou · Eden Vardy

There is suitable habitat for nesting raptors and migratory birds in the development site. 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".

Care should be taken to avoid the destruction of active dens and nests while constructing structures, ponds, and trails. Possible dens or nests should be monitored for species activity. CPW would be concerned if trees and snags were removed for the development. The main concern with removal of trees is that these trees may be currently occupied or historic nest sites. Please take care to avoid removal of trees with occupied nests. For raptors, an active nest is any nest that is frequented or occupied by a raptor during the breeding season or which has been active in any of the five previous breeding seasons. Many raptors use alternate nests in various years; therefore, a nest may be active even if it is not occupied in a given year. Removal or relocation of any active raptor or migratory bird nest will require consultation with CPW and US Fish and Wildlife Service prior to disturbance. Both active and potential nest sites, winter night roosts should be considered when evaluating disturbance during construction.

US Fish and Wildlife Service should be consulted on any Federally-listed Endangered and Threatened Species that might be present at the location. CPW recommends consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service when permitting any permanent or temporary activity within known or potentially occupied habitat Preble's meadow jumping mouse habitat.

Fences can cause many problems for wildlife, including death, entanglements, and barriers to movements. CPW recommends the developers consult our publication Hanophy, Wendy "Fencing with Wildlife in mind." CPW.state.co.us. 2009 when considering the design of fences within the development. The publication is available on our website and we would be happy to provide a link to the PDF specifically. 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.

Due to the potential presence of black bears in the Development, CPW recommends several measures to reduce the potential for human/bear conflicts. First, we recommend that the owner invests in bear-proof trash containers. Trash containers should be stored in the garage or in a solid locked storage shed until the morning of trash collection during those months when bears are most active (April - November). Another possible alternative would be the use of a centralized and securely fenced trash collection site with the use of bear proof dumpsters what employees, customers, and the trash service provider would have access to. This would eliminate the need for individual trash cans. Second, residents and food vendors should also keep their barbecues and any food locked away in the garage or a secure building. Finally, we would recommend that the use of bird feeders and hummingbird feeders be discouraged, during the months mentioned above, since they also attract black bears. However, if feeders are used, they should be placed so they are inaccessible to black bears, raccoons, skunks, deer and other wildlife species that might cause damage or threaten human safety. A copy of a brochure entitled, "living with wildlife in bear country" is available for reference upon request from CPW.

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

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.

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.).

CPW appreciates being given the opportunity to comment. Please feel free to contact District Wildlife Manager Aaron Berscheid at 719-227-5231 or aaron.berscheid@state.co.us should you have any questions or require additional information.

Sincerely,

Tim Kroening
Area Wildlife Manager

Cc: SE regional files
Area 14 files
Aaron Berscheid, DWM