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October 27, 2017

Nina Ruiz
Project Manager
El Paso County Development Services Department
2880 International Circle
Colorado Springs, CO 80910

Subject: Rice Ranch Rezone Application Review (I-17-002)

Hello Nina,

The Planning Division of the Community Services Department has reviewed the Rice Ranch Rezone application and has the following comments of behalf of El Paso County Parks.

The El Paso County Parks Master Plan (2013) shows no open space, park facilities, or trails intersected by or within the project area. The project site is located southeast of the intersection of Interstate 25 and State Highway 16, west of Highway 85 along Fountain Creek. Fountain Creek Regional Park, Schafer Open Space, Fountain Creek Regional Trail, and the Fountain Creek Nature Center are all located immediate adjacent the subject property. Rice Ponds, a commonly-visited site along the Fountain Creek Regional Trail, are located within the subject property, and are viewable from the Fountain Creek Nature Center.

The Open Space Master Plan of the Parks Master Plan shows two overlapping candidate open space areas encompassing the subject property. The Fountain and Jimmy Camp Creek Candidate Open Space natural resource values include wildlife habitat, including for the Arkansas Darter (a State Species of Concern), wetlands and riparian vegetation. The Widefield/Fountain Candidate Open Space features shortgrass prairie with large groupings of cholla cactus, as well as prairie dog habitat and agricultural areas. Water quality and habitat protection is a concern in these areas that drain to Fountain Creek and its adjacent tributaries. The project would not be in conflict with either plan, as long as operations do not adversely affect water or habitat quality.

These comments are being provided administratively, as this application does not require Park Advisory Board consideration.



Please let me know if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Ross A. Williams
Park Planner
Planning Division
Community Services Department
rosswilliams@elpasoco.com