COLORADO
Parks and Wildlife
Department of Natural Resources

Southeast Region – Area 14
4255 Sinton Road
Colorado Springs, CO 80907
P 719.227.5200 | F 719.227.5264

April 20, 2023

El Paso County
ATTN: Kari Parsons
2880 International Circle,
Colorado Springs, CO 80910

Re: Grandview Reserve Geick Basin Channel – CDR

Dear Ms. Parsons,

Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) has reviewed the plans for the Grandview Reserve Geick Basin Channel in El Paso County, Colorado in the area of the future expansions of Rex Road between Eastonville Road and Highway 24. Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) is in receipt of the above referenced permit application and is familiar with the site. CPW offers the following comments for your consideration.

In general, CPW prefers that drainages are altered to the minimum extent possible, so that naturally occurring drainages continue to provide wildlife habitat that is as close to unaltered as possible. CPW's preference would be for the channel work planned for the Geick Basin Channel in this area to be focused on the construction of the future road crossings in the plans, with limited or no alterations added in the remainder of the project area. If this approach is taken, CPW can provide additional comments on construction recommendations.

The design does appear to have a low flow channel is designed through most of the normal stream flow, but CPW feels that it is very important to reiterate that a low flow channel remain incorporated into the drop structure designs. Many native fishes and amphibians have difficulty navigating high velocity and sheet flows that many drop structures create. The design of the low flow channel should allow for upstream and downstream migration of fishes and amphibians that is essential for their reproduction, dispersion, distribution, and abundance. If designed properly, this channel should not compromise the integrity of the grade control structure and will be beneficial to wildlife inhabiting the stream.

Due to the intermittent nature of the existing drainage, it is not believed that fish are likely to be found in the current tributary channel. It is possible that pockets of shallow water may exist either permanently or seasonally. This type of habitat can be important for amphibians

and may be critical breeding and nursery habitat for tadpoles. As a caution, much of this water appears to be in the form of seeping groundwater. Moving the natural channel may not redirect the seeping groundwater to the new low-flow channel. The new channel may be largely dry except for runoff from impervious surfaces in the development. This will greatly reduce the habitat value for amphibians and other wildlife.

Regarding the deviation request, it appears that the County drainage criteria does not allow for a low-flow channel such as the one designed. CPW prefers a sinuous low flow channel that allows for adequate conveyance of base flows. This type of design reduces velocities and scour, and it accommodates a diverse range of stream habitat types including riffles, runs and pools. Since it is closely connected to the floodplain, the design allows larger flows to be conveyed during 2 year and higher flood events. The higher velocity flood water will travel over substrate that is armored with heavy vegetative growth, which will limit erosion and incision in the channel. CPW supports allowing this deviation.

CPW noted in the designs of the channel that most of the rip-rap throughout the drop structures of the project appear grouted. CPW recommends using non-grouted rip-rap throughout all portions of the plan. Vegetation and tree roots are more stable in non-grouted rip-rap and it can help provide habitat for small mammals. This not only benefits wildlife, but makes the construction more aesthetically pleasing.

CPW also recommends that all areas of disturbance and exposed soils above the ordinary high water mark be re-vegetated with a native seed mix. This will contribute to the replacement of lost riparian vegetation values and minimize establishment of noxious weeds. The placement of willow sprigs or bare root stock should also be considered along the banks, especially in those areas which have been disturbed. CPW recommends planting of vegetation along the bank to help reduce and control erosion and contribute to bank stability over the long term. The site should be monitored for a period of at least two growing seasons.

CPW recommends the development and implementation of a noxious weed control plan for the site. Any stands of noxious weeds that become established should be controlled with appropriate mechanical and/or chemical methods suitable for the proposed location. CPW recommends using a clean fill material, if needed, that would be conducive to growing native vegetation. Non-native vegetation can overrun native vegetation and can become problematic.

CPW recommends a 100 foot buffer zone be permanently placed around the channel design. If a trail is ever constructed near the channel design, it should be a minimum of 100 feet from the edge. This buffer zone will offer wildlife utilizing the creek less disturbance by development and decrease the likelihood of human and wildlife encounters. With the

establishment of native vegetation and a buffer zone, wildlife can feel safe to utilize the channel. This is critical with the surrounding existing and future development of the channel and around the channel.

We appreciate being given the opportunity to comment. Please feel free to contact District Wildlife Manager, Aaron Berscheid, should you have any questions or require additional information at 719-439-9601 or via email at aaron.berscheid@state.co.us

Sincerely,

Travis Sauder
Assistant Area Wildlife Manager

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