



# COLORADO

## Parks and Wildlife

Department of Natural Resources

Southeast Region  
4255 Sinton Road  
Colorado Springs, CO 80907  
F 719.227.5223

November 3, 2018

El Paso County  
ATTN: Nina Ruiz

2880 International Circle,  
Colorado Springs, CO 80132

Re: McCune Ranch Preliminary Plan

Dear Nina Ruiz,

Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) has reviewed the preliminary plan for McCune Ranch located on the northwest corner of Hodgen Road and Meridian Road 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 work on this project.

We recognize and appreciate that there has been extensive planning to avoid construction on wetlands areas within the perimeter of the project with a planned 149 acres of open space surrounding West Kiowa Creek and its associated flood plain. In general however, if any construction of the crossing road or other construction occurs near these wetlands areas, we would request 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. We recommend 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. 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 that will help stabilize the banks. Non-native vegetation can overrun native vegetation and can become problematic. A seed mixture of native grasses is also recommended to provide a good support system in the soil.



CPW further recommends crossing riparian corridors and streams at a perpendicular angle, in order to reduce impacts to natural resources, as well as spanning the corridors with structures located outside the riparian and stream zone. CPW recommends avoiding treed areas of cottonwood and willow, as these areas provide bird and wildlife habitat. During construction, stream crossing by construction vehicles should be avoided. CPW requests that any new service roads that are proposed for construction in conjunction with the project avoid crossing creeks or stream beds to avoid impacts to wildlife and habitat. If any new access or maintenance roads will be constructed that cross stream habitat, CPW would like to be consulted on best management practices and options for construction to minimize impacts. A construction design for any new or reconstructed riparian crossing that actively minimizes barriers to fish passage at all water levels and mitigates any existing barriers where possible would minimize the negative impact of the project on native fish species.

CPW recommends the following Best Management Practices when working in or near aquatic habitats.

- Drainages should be crossed perpendicular to the flow of the stream
- Use existing road crossings and existing stream crossings for vehicles and other construction equipment instead of building new roads and stream crossings
- The width of construction should be minimized within the 100-year floodplain,
- Stream bank, wetland restoration/improvement should be performed, where necessary
- Vehicle and equipment crossing of creeks/streams should be made in locations that will cause the least erosion of banks and sedimentation.

As for more 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 are 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 that the 149 acre open space portion of the plan includes the development and implementation of a noxious weed control plan for the site, prior to any disturbance of 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.

Any trails created within the planned 149 acre open space would provide excellent opportunities for wildlife viewing. However, if trails are placed too close to areas utilized by wildlife it creates disturbances resulting in reduced wildlife viewing opportunities. CPW recommends constructing trails on the outer edges of open space areas. This minimizes wildlife disturbance and creates increased wildlife viewing opportunities. Trails near creeks and drainage areas should cross perpendicular rather than run parallel to these critical

wildlife habitat areas. Crossings should occur in areas that have the least usage by wildlife in order to have minimal impacts on wildlife.

CPW recommends that all landscaping in the sub-developed area should be comprised of native species. Using ornamental or non-native trees, shrubs, forbs or grasses can attract wildlife to the developed area, and create possible wildlife/human conflicts. The use of native plant species for landscaping purposes 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 on the site for nesting raptors and migratory birds. CPW recognizes that the “Natural Features and Wetlands Report” states that there are no mapped raptor nests within a mile of the site, nor were any nest found during a site visit. However, CPW recommends the use of another preconstruction survey 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”. 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.

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.

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 by future residents of this development 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 Aaron Berscheid at 719-439-9601 or [aaron.berscheid@state.co.us](mailto:aaron.berscheid@state.co.us) should you have any questions or require additional information.

Sincerely,



Frank McGee  
Area Wildlife Manager

Cc: Aaron Berscheid DWM  
SE Regional File  
Area 14 File