COLORADO
Parks and Wildlife
Department of Natural Resources

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

March 29, 2023

El Paso County
ATTN: Ryan Howser
2880 International Circle, Suite 110,
Colorado Springs, CO 80910

Re: The Estates at Cathedral Pines PUDSP

Dear Ryan Howser,

Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) has reviewed the The Estates at Cathedral Pines PUDSP Preliminary Plan located in El Paso County. This area included within the Development boundaries will sustain numerous wildlife species including elk, deer, mountain lion, black bear, coyote, fox, raptors, songbirds, and numerous small mammals. CPW makes the following recommendations.

We would request that all areas of disturbance and any exposed soils be re-vegetated with a native seed mix. This will contribute to the replacement of lost vegetation values and minimize establishment of noxious weeds. We recommend planting of vegetation along steep inclines to help reduce and control erosion and contribute to hill 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 steeper hillsides. 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.

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.

Suitable habitat for nesting raptors and migratory birds may also exist within the project area. CPW recommends the use of preconstruction surveys to identify raptor nests within the

Heather Dugan, Acting Director, Colorado Parks and Wildlife
Parks and Wildlife Commission: Carrie Besnette Hauser, Chair • Dallas May, Vice-Chair • Marie Haskett, Secretary • Taishya Adams
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project area and implement appropriate restrictions. 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. Active and potential nest sites and winter night roosts should be considered when evaluating disturbance during construction.

Other interactions with wildlife should be considered after the project is completed. 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. It is strongly encouraged that dog kennels have a top enclosure, regardless of the height of the kennel. 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 coyotes, foxes, eagles, hawks 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 raccoons or skunks and other wildlife species that might cause damage or threaten human safety. It is illegal to feed big game including deer and pronghorn.

Trash should be kept indoors until the morning of trash pickup. Skunks, raccoons, and other scavenging wildlife are attracted to garbage and do become habituated, but an even big concern is that trash is an attractant to black bears. Pet food is also attractive to bears and scavengers, so pets should be fed inside. 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. Barbecue grills should be placed in a secure area when not in use.

When landscaping lots, it is strongly recommended that native vegetation be used, as wildlife can be attracted to ornamental and floral landscaping features. Planting of trees and shrubs that are attractive to native ungulates (deer, elk, and pronghorn) 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 719-439-9601 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