



COLORADO

Parks and Wildlife

Department of Natural Resources

Southeast Region

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Colorado Springs, CO 80907

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June 08, 2024

El Paso County Planning and Community Development

c/o Kylie Bagley - Project Manager

2880 International Circle, Suite 110

Colorado Springs, CO 80910

Re: Monument Ridge East Preliminary Plan

Dear Ms. Bagley,

Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) has reviewed the information for the Monument Ridge East Preliminary Plan. The proposed development area is located southeast of the Interstate 25 and the County Line Road interchange. The property is bordered on the northeast by Doewood Dr. and bisected by the planned extension of Misty Acres Boulevard. This property lies within the Town of Monument and within northern El Paso County. CPW has visited the location and offers the following comments for your consideration.

Threatened and Endangered Species

The project lies within Preble's Meadow Jumping Mouse (PMJM) range. PMJM is currently on both the Federal and State threatened species list. Temporary and permanent construction impacts within PMJM range or critical habitat areas may permanently impact resident mouse numbers. CPW can see that the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) was contacted for their opinion on the impact to PMJM and its habitat within the proposed area. CPW also observes that the USFWS concurs that the proposed project area does not contain suitable mouse habitat for the mouse and that the project will not have adverse impacts on the PMJM or PMJM habitat. CPW does recommend that observations and continued communication with the USFWS be maintained in case PMJM may be observed during construction.

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 · Jack Murphy · Gabriel Otero · Duke Phillips, IV · Gary T. Skiba · James Jay Tutchton · Eden Vardy



Habitat

CPW observes that two wetlands have been identified on the proposed development property. CPW also sees that the US Army Corps of Engineers has been contacted and made aware of the development near these wetlands. CPW agrees with the decision of the developer to preserve all riparian habitat and wetlands within an open space tract at part of the development project.

CPW is concerned that some trees may be removed during the development process. The concern lies in the fact that trees may be currently occupied or be historic bird nesting sites. Please take care to avoid removal of trees with visible nests within the canopy. We recommend leaving as many native healthy trees on site and replacing trees that are removed with comparable native species on a 3:1 basis. Dead trees, or snags, provide valuable perching areas for native birds or nesting opportunities for cavity nesting species. Snags should be left standing where possible.

Fencing

Fences can cause many problems for wildlife, including death, entanglements, and barriers to movements. CPW recommends the developers consult our publication "Fencing with Wildlife in mind." (*cpw.state.co.us. Hanophy 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. 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.

Bear Aware

Black bears are common along the Front Range, and this development will have bears coming into and around the development. CPW recommends several measures to reduce the potential for human bear conflicts. First, we strongly recommend that home owners

are advised to purchase bear-resistant trash containers, and that potential home owners are advised that bears will be present in the area. 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 resistant dumpsters that residents and the trash service provider would have access to. This would eliminate the need for individual trash cans. Second, residents 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. Bears that become habituated to people and human foods ultimately have to be euthanized. Proper education and trash storage reduces the number of these "problem" bears.

Wildlife Feeding

Feeding of all wildlife should be prohibited, with the exception of songbirds with the above paragraph in mind. It is illegal to feed big game including deer, elk, antelope, bear and mountain lion. CPW would recommend that home buyers are provided with educational material regarding wildlife either through the purchase process, or through the development itself. There is a sizeable resident herd of deer in the area. It is illegal to provide feed for deer because of health and safety concerns both for humans and the deer. Concentrations of deer will attract predators, including mountain lions. Dangerous conflicts with mountain lions are rare, however care should be used when living in mountain lion habitat. Human health and safety is a top priority for CPW. Feeding and habituating deer may cause the deer to lose fear of humans and could then lead them to interact with humans in unsafe ways. Deer are still wild animals and they may become defensive and dangerous when they are not getting what they want. By not feeding or habituating deer, these encounters may be avoided.

Invasive and Nuisance Species

CPW recommends that a Noxious Weed Management Plan be developed 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 is achieved. All areas disturbed by the development should be revegetated with native plant species.

CPW appreciates being given the opportunity to comment on this development project. Please feel free to contact Wildlife Officer Corey Adler at 719-439-9637 or corey.adler@state.co.us should you have any questions or require additional information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Travis Sauder'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name 'Travis' written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name 'Sauder'.

Travis Sauder
Assistant Area Wildlife Manager

Cc: Corey Adler, DWM
SE Regional File
Area 14 File