

# CREEKSIDE SOUTH AT LORSON RANCH FILING NO. 1

## Natural Features Report

Vicinity Map:



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**Site Location, Size, Zoning:**

The Creekside South at Lorson Ranch project is 64.26 acres and is located within the south-central portion of Lorson Ranch between the Jimmy Camp Creek main channel and east tributary and south of Lorson Boulevard. The Creekside South PUD is a continuation of the phased Lorson Ranch development and consists of one of the last remaining undeveloped parcels of land located between and adjacent to the two creek channels. The site is currently zoned RM (Residential Medium 7-10 DU/ AC) as illustrated on the Lorson Ranch Minor Sketch Plan Amendment approved on April 21, 2016.

**Topography**

The topography of the project site is mixed between relatively flat to moderately sloped towards the north/northeasterly direction. The existing slopes are slight to moderate with no portions of the proposed site possessing slopes that would prevent development. The site is suitable for development and is not impacted by the flat or moderately sloped grades as current acceptable state and local best grading practices will be employed during development including grading and erosion control activities. The site slopes to the south and west where drainage will be collected into detention facilities prior to discharge into the Jimmy Camp Creek Main Channel or East Tributary.

The development will drain into detention pond/water quality basins located within the northeast corner of the project limits. Flows will then be conveyed to Jimmy Camp Creek and/ or off-site in a manner consistent with El Paso County and State requirements.

**Wetlands**

There are no jurisdictional wetlands found on site or within the Jimmy Camp Creek East Tributary as determined during the 404-permit process acquired to complete the Jimmy Camp Creek East Tributary channel improvements. A previous application of delineation, approval and monitoring of the 404 Permit for this area was granted under Action #2005 00757 through Army Corps of Engineers which remains active through 2021 per a letter dated September 7, 2017 provided by the Army Corps of Engineer's Southern Colorado Regulatory Branch. The existing delineations for this area will be reviewed and verified for current conditions with any future permit modifications.

As part of the initial 404 application, a report was completed in 2006 for all of Lorson Ranch which included portions of the Jimmy Camp Creek East Tributary describing any wetlands found within the Jimmy Camp Creek corridors.

**Vegetation and Soils**

The majority of the site consists of low-lying native grasses and weeds. The few deciduous trees located on the property, generally near the abandoned FMIC ditch or the bank of the Jimmy Camp Creek East Tributary. According to the 'Geology and Soils Study' prepared by completed by RMG-Rocky Mountain Group, dated February 27, 2020, which has been included with the submittal, the soils exposed along the banks of the Jimmy Camp Creek East Tributary appear to be stable, and consist primarily of moderately cemented silty sand and trace gravel.

**Scenic Resources & Unique Natural Areas**

The natural mountain backdrop of the Rampart Range is perhaps the best natural feature of Lorson Ranch with sweeping views the mountain skyline and surrounding grasslands in nearly all directions. The scenic view shed is impaired somewhat by intervening development; however, the panoramic views remain quite spectacular. There are no unique natural features on the site other than the Jimmy Camp Creek Main and East Tributary which have been discussed above.

### **Wildlife and Migratory Birds**

While the area's most distinctive wildlife is probably the prairie dog, the Colorado Division of Wildlife notes the following as also present in the area; however, the Division also expresses no concern regarding negative and/or unmitigated impacts to wildlife:

- Mule and White Tailed Deer
- Pronghorn Antelope
- Fox species
- Coyote
- Rabbits
- Raptors
- Songbirds
- Numerous Small Mammals

Due to the construction activity and adjoining residential developments, it is not anticipated that the Creekside at Lorson Ranch project will have significant impacts on wildlife in the area. However, the area has been identified for potential of raptor nesting which is discussed in more detail below. The existing Jimmy Camp Creek Main and East Tributaries may also create an environment that will enhance and create a natural wildlife habitat travel corridor.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's IPaC mapper and website database (<https://ecos.fws.gov/ipac/>) was used to determine the potential of migratory birds within the area. The IPaC mapper listed 5 migratory birds that may be affected by Creekside at Lorson Ranch East; however, this list may also include birds occurring outside this area's FWS office jurisdiction. Breeding migratory birds do receive statutory protection; however, the site contains very few if any trees. There is potential for vegetation to be reestablished along the banks of the Jimmy Camp Creek which could introduce additional bird habitat.

### **Raptor Nesting**

Per discussions with the El Paso County Natural Resources division this area has been identified as potentially being within the buffer area of seasonal raptor nesting. As a result, Creekside at Lorson Ranch may be impacted by seasonal raptor nesting which could limit when construction and disturbance would be permitted. The Colorado Division of Wildlife has drafted guidelines for recommended buffer zones and seasonal restrictions which should be followed for the Creekside at Lorson Ranch project. While the exact species and numbers of raptors that may occupy this area remains confidential due to safety concerns, the types of raptors that may be present include Bald Eagle, Golden Eagle, Osprey, Ferruginous Hawk, Red-Tailed Hawk, Swainson's Hawk, Peregrine Falcon, Prairie Falcon, Northern

Goshawk, and the Burrowing Owl. Each of these species has different recommended buffering zone and seasonal restrictions for surface occupancy and human encroachment. Consultation with the Colorado Division of Wildlife and/ or a bird specialist prior to construction is recommended to ensure compliance with all federal, state and local laws pertaining to the raptor nesting protection requirements.

**Rare Species**

A clearance letter provided by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service stating '*No Concerns*' was provided on July 20, 2018. A copy of this letter has been provided to El Paso County as part of the PUD/ Preliminary Plan submittal. Based on this clearance letter there are no critical habitats or rare/ threatened species found to be present on the site.