



COLORADO

Parks and Wildlife

Department of Natural Resources

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

August 13, 2020

El Paso County Planning and Community Development
ATTN: Kari Parsons-Project Manager
2880 International Circle
Colorado Springs, CO 80910

Re: Sanctuary of Peace Residential Community at Benet Hill

Dear Ms. Parsons,

Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) has reviewed the development plans for Sanctuary of Peace Residential Community at Benet Hill and is familiar with the project site located west of Hwy 83, south of Hodgen Rd. and north of Stagecoach Rd. in El Paso County. CPW staff has visited the site and offers the following comments for your consideration.

CPW is concerned about the trees that will be removed for the development because trees may be currently occupied or historic bird nesting sites. Please take care to avoid removal of trees with occupied nesting birds. 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 and should be left standing where possible.

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 or smooth wire or rail construction. 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.

Black bears are common along the Front Range, and this development will have bears in 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-proof 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 proof dumpsters that employees, customers, and the trash service provider would have access to. This would eliminate the need for individual trash cans. Second, residents and food vendors 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.

Feeding of all wildlife should be prohibited, with the exception of songbirds and squirrels 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.

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,



Frank McGee
Area Wildlife Manager

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