



COLORADO
Parks and Wildlife
Department of Natural Resources

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

11 July 2026

El Paso County
ATTN: Ryan Howser
2880 International Circle,
Colorado Springs, CO 80132

Re: Flying Horse North PUD/SP Amendment (Major/Filing 9)

Dear Ryan Howser,

Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) received your request for comment on the Flying Horse North PUD/SP Amendment (Major/Filing 9) Project, to be developed in El Paso County. CPW staff are familiar with the location of the Project as well as the area surrounding the site. This letter includes a summary of CPW's statutory responsibility, general recommendations, understanding of the project, potential impacts to wildlife, and recommendations for impact avoidance, minimization, and/or mitigation.

CPW'S STATUTORY RESPONSIBILITY

CPW has a statutory responsibility to manage all wildlife species in Colorado; as such we encourage protection for Colorado's wildlife species and habitats through responsible energy development and land use planning. Protection of core wildlife areas, quality fisheries and habitat, big game winter range and seasonal migration corridors, and raptor nesting locations are of extreme importance. CPW recommends that all proposed projects be assessed to avoid, minimize, or mitigate impacts to sensitive wildlife habitats and species. That includes species



of concern as well as Federal and/or State listed species, big game wildlife (migration corridors, winter range, and parturition areas), breeding and nesting habitats for sensitive ground-nesting birds, and nests of raptors sensitive to development in order to prevent loss of habitat or fragmentation of habitat. US Fish and Wildlife Service should be consulted on any Federally-listed Endangered and Threatened Species that might be present at the location.

GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

The 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.

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 be gated to reduce traffic disruptions to wildlife. If any temporary (e.g., construction) or permanent fencing is proposed, CPW recommends that it is wildlife-friendly fencing that allows young to cross and does not include high-tensile hog wire.

IMPACT AVOIDANCE, MINIMIZATION AND/OR MITIGATION RECOMMENDATIONS

Native plant management

CPW recommends the development and implementation of a noxious weed control plan 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 are achieved. Care should be taken to avoid the spread of noxious weeds, and all construction equipment should be cleaned before leaving the site. A noxious weed management plan should be developed before any disturbance of the site.



CPW recommends that all landscaping in the developed area should be comprised of native species. Using native species with high food and cover values in an open space area is beneficial to wildlife. This can encourage wildlife to concentrate in areas that minimize human conflicts and optimize wildlife-watching opportunities. Native plant species can also provide an aesthetically pleasing landscape that requires little maintenance and are frequently more drought-tolerant than non-native species.

CPW recommends a 100-foot buffer zone be permanently placed around the creeks and ponds. If a trail is constructed near the creek or ponds, it should be a minimum of 100 feet from the edge. This buffer zone will offer wildlife utilizing the creek and ponds less disturbance by development and decrease the likelihood of human and wildlife encounters. The existing native riparian vegetation around the creeks, the ponds, and the drainage ways should be kept intact for wildlife habitat and to increase ground stabilization.

Trails 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 to have minimal impacts on wildlife.

Raptors and Migratory Birds

There is suitable habitat for nesting raptors and migratory birds in the development site. CPW recommends the use of preconstruction surveys 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”.



Laura Clellan, Director, Colorado Parks and Wildlife

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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 the 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 before disturbance. Both active and potential nest sites, and winter night roosts should be considered when evaluating disturbance during construction.

US Fish and Wildlife Service should be consulted on any federally listed Endangered and Threatened Species that might be present at the location. CPW recommends consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service when permitting any permanent or temporary activity within the known or potentially occupied habitat of Preble's meadow jumping mouse habitat.

Fencing

The CPW document "Fencing with Wildlife in Mind" provides general suggestions for wildlife-friendly fencing. In addition to the measures outlined in the report, CPW recommends the following:

- For security fencing, CPW requests that the security fence be tall enough to discourage deer from jumping, at least 8 feet in height, and have a smooth top with no protrusions or wire that can risk entanglement or impalement.
- Security fencing should allow for movement of small and medium sized wildlife by providing a 6-inch gap at the bottom of the fence, or using woven wire fencing as described in the Colorado Department of



Transportation Standard Plan No. M-607-4. CPW is happy to discuss this recommendation in more detail with the developer as site plans progress.

- Anywhere that security fencing is not required on the site, CPW recommends the use of wildlife permeable fencing (wildlife-friendly) to allow movement of wildlife to the extent possible.
- Project design should continue to consider wildlife movement and the inclusion of wildlife movement corridors through the Project to avoid potential impacts to big game and other wildlife moving through the area. Any planning should consider the entire Project area with the goal of allowing wildlife movements through the larger development site.

Bears

Black bears are known to inhabit the proposed campground and adjacent properties. Improperly managed trash receptacles, bins, and storage areas at campgrounds and other recreational facilities can become strong attractants for bears, leading to increased bear-human conflicts, habituation, and potential threats to both human safety and wildlife health. Bears attracted to readily available food sources, including garbage, frequently become habituated to human presence, increasing risks of property damage, vehicle collisions, and management actions, including lethal removal of problem bears (Beckmann & Berger, 2003; Spencer et al., 2007). District staff respond to numerous bear incidents directly adjacent to the proposed campground annually due to trash cans being flipped and/or destroyed.

To minimize the potential property damage and/or human-bear conflict, CPW recommends the following:

- Post Bear Aware guidance for campground users to help educate the public on proper trash disposal, food storage, and best practices while recreating in bear habitat.
- Install bear-resistant trash receptacles *with locking lids* throughout the facility, particularly in parking areas and throughout the campground.



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- Ensure regular trash removal schedules to prevent accumulation and potential attraction. This is particularly important in May and August when local bear activity is highest.
- Secure storage for waste bins and dumpsters in bear-resistant enclosures or fenced areas.
- Ensure longer-term waste storage and food-related operations are located in centralized portions of the campground, away from habitat edges, to minimize bear attractants near natural habitats.

OTHER CPW RECOMMENDATIONS

The following is a list of general recommendations the CPW would like to take into consideration with the residential side of this development to avoid nuisance conflicts with wildlife. Many times these conditions can be enforced through the local Homeowner's Association or covenants.

Pets should not be allowed to roam free and fences should be installed to decrease or eliminate this problem. 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 on roadways, or become prey for mountain lions, coyotes, foxes, or owls.

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 become habituated. Feeding of all wildlife should be prohibited, except for songbirds. The use of bird feeders, suet feeders, and hummingbird feeders is discouraged. However, if feeders are used, they should be placed so they are inaccessible to bears, raccoons, 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, and food bowls returned afterward to a secure site for



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storage. Pet food left outside attracts various wildlife species which in turn attracts predators.

It is strongly encouraged that dog kennels have a top enclosure, regardless of the height of the kennel.

CPW appreciates your consideration of our comments and recommendations. As always, CPW staff are available to work with operators on how best to minimize development impacts to both wildlife and their habitats. If you have questions or would like clarification about any of our comments, please contact District Wildlife Manager District Wildlife Manager Demetria Wright at 719-439-9601 or demetria.wright@state.co.us

Sincerely,



Travis Sauder

Assistant Area Wildlife Manager - Area 14

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Cc: Demetria Wright - District Wildlife Manager - demetria.wright@state.co.us





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