

FLYING HORSE NORTH

FILING NO. 9

Noxious Weed Management Plan

April 22, 2026

Owner:

Flying Horse Development, LLC

Applicant:

HR Green Development, LLC



PCD File Number:

SF25_____

Owner / Applicant Information

Owner:

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Applicant

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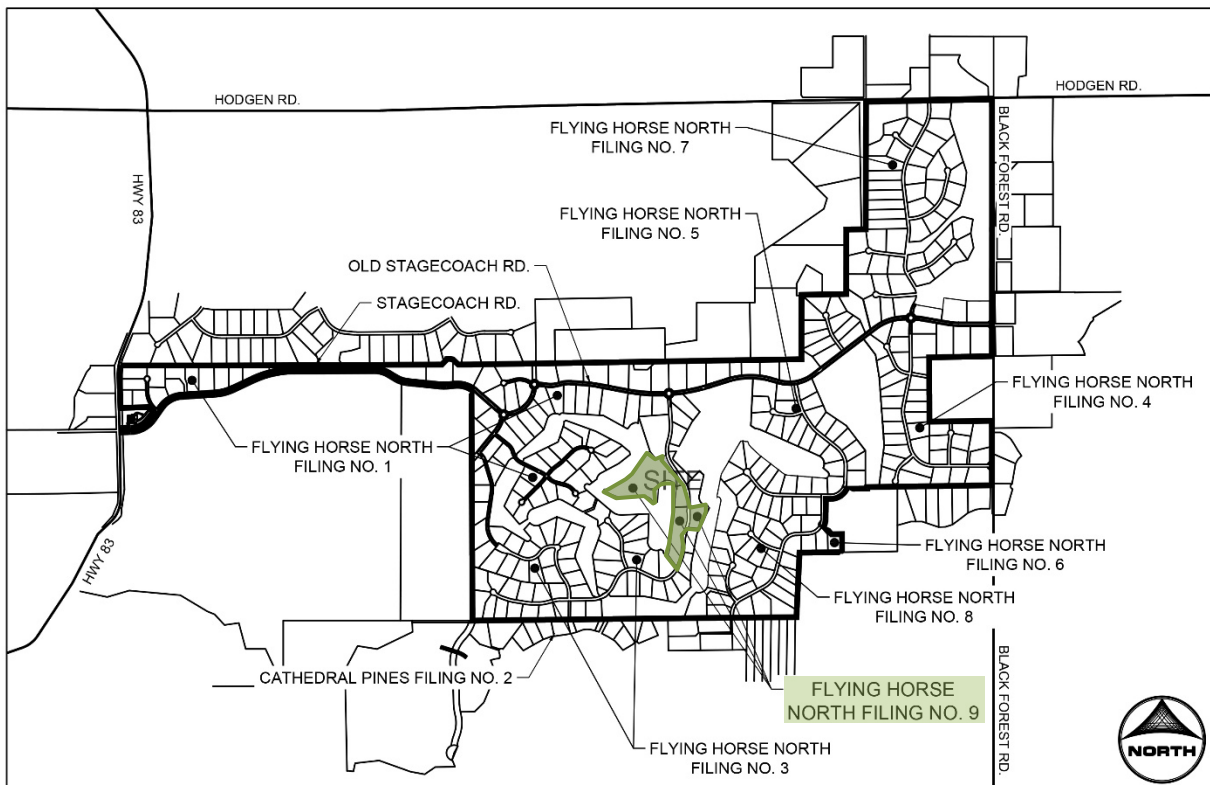
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Site Location

Flying Horse Filing No. 9 "the project" is located within the overall Flying Horse North community "FHN" which is generally located east of Highway 83, north and south of Old Stagecoach Road which transverses through the center in an east/west direction. The project area is in the southeast portion of FHN east of the golf course, south of Old Stagecoach Road, and to the north of rural single family residences. The proposed development includes 10 single family detached lots on approximately 32.07 acres. The area has been used historically as rangeland, but residential and commercial development is increasing steadily.

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The project area is located on the border of two ecoregions: the Foothill Grasslands ecoregion and the Pike-Oak Woodlands ecoregion (Chapman et al. 2006). Topography of the project consists mainly of rolling grasslands and is bordered on all sides by golf course, rangeland and scattered rural residential development. Grasslands dominate the property. The Foothills Grasslands Ecoregion is composed of a mixture of tall and mid-grasses and isolated pine woodlands; conversely, the Pine-Oak Woodlands are mainly forests of both pines and scrubby oaks that form a mosaic with the prairies to the east (Chapman et al. 2006). Dominant species in both ecoregions include little bluestem (*Schizachyrium scoparium*), switchgrass (*Panicum virgatum*), yellow Indiangrass (*Sorghastrum nutans*), Junegrass (*Koeleria macrantha*), mountain muhly (*Muhlenbergia montana*), needle-and-thread (*Hesperostipa comata*), and Gambel oak (*Quercus gambelii*) (Chapman et al. 2006). The Project site contains no Colorado Natural Heritage Conservation Areas or Potential Conservation Areas according to the CNHP (2022).

Noxious Weed Management Background

To limit the expansion of noxious weeds across the United States the Federal Noxious Weed Act (7 U.S.C. 2801 et seq.; 88 Stat. 2148) was enacted in 1975. The state of Colorado passed the Colorado Noxious Weed Act ("Act"; C.R.S. 35-5.5-103) in 1990. Noxious weeds specific to Colorado are identified in this Act and defined as any non-native plant that:

- aggressively invades or is detrimental to economic crops or native plant communities;
- is poisonous to livestock;
- is a carrier of detrimental insects, diseases, or parasites;
- the direct or indirect effect of the presence of this plant is detrimental to the environmentally sound management of natural or agricultural ecosystems.

In 2002 an amendment to the Act required counties to establish individual management plans. El Paso County's Noxious Weed Management Plan was last updated in 2022 and identifies county-level noxious weed management practices to preserve the economic and environmental value of El Paso County lands (EPC 2022). Disturbance during construction activities such as clearing, grading and excavation create opportunities for noxious weed establishment ahead of the reestablishment of native vegetation in cleared areas. This scenario is one of the major reasons the El Paso County Noxious Weed Management Plan requires integrated management plans for any activities requiring dirt moving activities within El Paso County (EPC 2022).

Three levels of priority for control are identified in the Act for noxious weeds throughout Colorado. These levels are outlined in the following paragraph. The State of Colorado maintains a "watch list" of noxious weeds that occur in proximity to State borders and/or those species with a distribution that is not yet understood.

List A noxious weeds are those species targeted for eradication. List A noxious weed populations are typically isolated in nature or rare throughout much of the State (Colorado Revised Statutes 35-5.5-103). Eradication and reporting of List A populations is required by law (Colorado Department of Agriculture [CDA] 2006). List B species are discretely distributed throughout the State and must be eradicated, contained, or suppressed (Colorado Revised Statutes 35-5.5-103). El Paso County's Noxious Weed Management Plan requires control of all List B noxious weed populations (EPC 2022). List C noxious weed populations are widespread and well established. El Paso County requires control of List C species through education of the public and/or chemical control (EPC 2022).

Survey/Inventory

In preparation of this Noxious Weed Management Plan site reconnaissance and inventory of plant communities on site was conducted by Bristlecone Ecology. The Project site is within the Foothill Grasslands and Pine-Oak Woodlands, with the predominant vegetation corresponding to those ecoregions. Blue grama (*Bouteloua gracilis*), buffalograss (*B. dactyloides*), purple threeawn (*Aristida purpurea*), Western wheatgrass (*Pascopyrum smithii*), Junegrass (*Koeleria macrantha*), needle-and-thread, yellow Indiagrass, and little bluestem are the dominant species in uplands throughout the site. Other upland species present include threadleaf sedge (*Carex filifolia*), crested wheatgrass (*Elymus cristata*), sideoats grama (*Bouteloua curtipendula*), Junegrass, switchgrass, fringed sage (*Artemisia frigida*), soapweed yucca (*Yucca glauca*), Woods' rose (*Rosa woodsii*), yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*), stiff goldenrod (*Solidago rigida*), mountain mahogany (*Cercocarpus montanus*), and annual ragweed (*Ambrosia artemisifolia*), among others. There is little to no riparian vegetation, as there is not sufficient hydrology on the site to support more mesic vegetation. Much of the site appears to have been lightly disturbed by livestock grazing in the past, but vegetative cover is currently relatively extensive and healthy. Diversity is moderate for this ecoregion, and the structure of vegetation is somewhat underdeveloped, likely owing to livestock activities.

Noxious weeds are present on the Project site in several areas ranging from widespread but limited distribution to isolated, but no large concentrations are present. There were no large, monotypic stands of noxious weeds present. Other scattered populations of noxious weeds were found throughout various portions of the site.

Several noxious weeds are present on the site, scattered throughout the property in low densities. Weed species include:

- Diffuse Knapweed (*Centaurea diffusa*) a List B species in El Paso County
- Spotted Knapweed (*C. stoebe*) a List B species in El Paso County
- Scotch Thistle (*Onopordum acanthium*) a List B species in El Paso County
- Common Mullein (*Verbascum thapsus*) a List C species in El Paso County

Localized, sparse occurrences of Scotch thistle were found in the uplands. Diffuse and spotted knapweed were observed in minor quantities throughout the site. A site inventory to identify and map noxious weeds during the growing season would be required to accurately catalogue all populations on the site.

Management Goals

During construction the contractor, and post-construction the property owner, will employ integrated management methods to include the following:

- surveys to inventory and map established noxious weed populations;
- contract a licensed herbicide applicator to seasonally survey and spray for noxious weeds throughout the site as necessary;
- sharing of data with El Paso County to aid in county level inventory;
- physical, biological, and or chemical treatment of all identified noxious weed populations;
- and periodic post-construction treatment as needed, implemented by the landowner or other responsible entity.

Control Methods

Management methods carried out on site and identified within this Plan will comply with Chapter 6: General Development Standards of the El Paso County Land Development Code (EPC 2017b), the El Paso County Noxious Weed Management Plan (EPC 2022) and the Act (Colorado Revised Statutes 35-5.5-103).

Diffuse Knapweed (*Centaurea diffusa*) List B

- Control populations of Diffuse Knapweed by preventing current plants from producing seeds to add to the seed repository on site.
 - Any mechanical or physical method that severs the root below the soil surface. Mowing or chopping is most effective when Diffuse Knapweed plants are at full-bloom.
 - Properly dispose of the flowering cut plants, since seeds can mature and become viable after the plant has been cut down.
 - Apply herbicides effective on Diffuse Knapweed. Herbicides are best applied in spring when plants are at the rosette stage prior to bolting or fall.

Spotted Knapweed (*Centaurea stoebe*) List B

- Control populations of Spotted Knapweed by preventing current plants from producing seeds to add to the seed repository on site.
 - Any mechanical or physical method that severs the root below the soil surface. Mowing or chopping is most effective when Spotted Knapweed plants are at full-bloom.
 - Properly dispose of the flowering cut plants, since seeds can mature and become viable after the plant has been cut down.
 - Apply herbicides effective on Spotted Knapweed. Herbicides are best applied in spring when plants are at the rosette stage prior to bolting or fall.

Scotch Thistle (*Onopordum acanthium*) List B

- Control populations of Scotch Thistle by preventing current plants from producing seeds to add to the seed repository on site.
 - Sever the Scotch thistle root below the soil surface by mechanical or physical methods such as mowing or chopping, to kill the plant. This is most effective when the plants are at full bloom. The flowering plants must be properly disposed of once cut as the seeds can still mature and reach viability after the plant is cut down.
 - Apply herbicides effective on Scotch Thistle. Herbicides are best applied in spring when plants are rapidly growing.

Common Mullein (*Verbascum thapsus*) List C

- Control populations of Common Mullein by preventing current plants from producing seeds to add to the seed repository on site.
 - Prior to flowering and seed production, pull or dig out by hand. Collect and dispose of plants in a manner that avoid scattering the seeds.
 - Apply herbicides effective on Common Mullein. Herbicides are best applied in spring and fall when plants are at the rosette stage prior to bolting.

The Colorado Weed Management Association (CWMA) prohibits the use of biological control methods on species targeted for eradication, so they are not included in this Plan. (CWMA 2015)

Timeline of Activities

Diffuse Knapweed (*Centaurea diffusa*) List B will receive herbicide treatments in spring and fall.
Spotted Knapweed (*Centaurea stoebe*) List B will receive herbicide treatments in spring and fall.
Scotch Thistle (*Onopordum acanthium*) List B will receive herbicide treatments in spring.
Common Mullein (*Verbascum thapsus*) List C will receive herbicide treatments in spring and fall.

Management, Monitoring and Evaluation

Management of noxious weeds during construction will include prevention and treatment protocols through surveillance separate from and prior to primary chemical treatment. Surveillance and treatment will occur prior to any ground disturbing activity.

Surveys of the noxious weeds will be conducted by a qualified ecologist and collect data to include but not limited to:

- List C populations – species and general coordinates of population
- List A & B populations – species, coordinates for approximate center of each identified population, and the approximate radius of infestation

A map of the identified noxious weed populations on site will be shared with El Paso County.

List A and B species: El Paso County will be formally notified if any List A species are identified. Treatments of identified noxious weeds will be determined by the species, ranking, location and intensity of the population. Eradication and reporting of List A populations is required by law (Colorado Department of Agriculture CDA 2006).

Positive identification of any List A species will be confirmed through El Paso County's Environmental Division. Upon positive identification, the List A species will be physically removed to eliminate the mechanism for establishing a seedbank.

Any populations of List A or B species on site will receive chemical treatment in compliance with El Paso County Noxious Weeds and Control Methods. Herbicides will be selected for the time of year and the life cycle of the plant and be applied concurrently with initial ground disturbing activities. Herbicide applicators to treat noxious weed populations only with El Paso County recommended chemicals (EPC 2022a).

During ground disturbing activities on site contractors will be required to use clean equipment and treat List A and B noxious weed populations to prevent spread. To manage List A and B species during construction, treatments should be conducted strategically in areas anticipating disturbance and/or immediately following initial ground disturbance activities. To prevent cross contamination between sites, any heavy equipment should be washed off site before mobilization on site.

List C species: List C noxious weeds are established and can be resistant to herbicides, therefore instead of treatment, avoidance during ground disturbance activities is recommended. This avoidance will reduce the likelihood of the list C seeds spreading.

Any topsoil for landscape areas should be from native, on-site topsoil and treated for noxious weeds. This soil will be protected from erosion and the establishment of noxious weeds by adhering to the Best Management Practices (BMPs) identified in the Grading, Erosion, and Sediment Control (GESCC) Plan included with this Final Plat application.

Following construction, the property owner as the responsible entity will treat all noxious weeds on site to manage the ecological health of the landscape. This will include protocols and treatments focused on maintenance. Any landscape areas should receive seasonal noxious weed treatment and maintenance. Noxious weed management will continue after construction and treatment will likely be required for persistent populations on the property's periphery. It will be the responsibility of the land owner to identify and treat noxious weeds on the property.

Please contact me at 719.394.2434 with any questions or comments.

Sincerely,

Brynhildr Halsten, PLA

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