



COLORADO

Parks and Wildlife

Department of Natural Resources

Southeast Regional Office
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Colorado Springs, CO 80907
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February 03, 2023

El Paso County Planning and Community Development
c/o Ryan Howser - Project Manager
2880 International Circle, Suite 110
Colorado Springs, CO 80910

Re: Hay Creek Valley Subdivision

Dear Mr. Howser,

Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) has reviewed the development application for the Hay Creek Valley Subdivision located south of Hay Creek Rd and north of the United States Air Force Academy in El Paso County, Monument, CO. CPW staff has visited the site and offers the following comments for your consideration.

The site falls within Preble's Meadow Jumping Mouse (PMJM) range. PMJM critical habitat does fall within the proposed boundaries. PMJM is currently on both the Federal and State threatened species list. Temporary and permanent construction impacts in this area may permanently impact resident wildlife. CPW recommends contacting the United States Fish and Wildlife Service for information regarding developing in PMJM habitat.

Within the proposed site prairie dogs may be found. Because of the potential for prairie dogs, CPW recommends a prairie dog survey be completed as soon as possible on the proposed site. If prairie dogs are present, the development will reduce the amount of habitat available for these animals. CPW recommends the prairie dogs either be relocated or euthanized before any dirt moving begins. CPW would be involved with any prairie dog relocation effort through our permitting process. Since burrowing owls (a federally protected species) can occupy prairie dog towns during the spring and summer, we recommend their presence be determined with a survey as well. Please see our recommendations below concerning the presence of burrowing owls.

BURROWING OWL

Nest Site:

No human encroachment within 150 feet of the nest site from March 15 through October 31. Although Burrowing Owls may not be actively nesting during this entire period, they may be present at burrows up to a month before egg laying and several months after young have fledged. Therefore it is recommended that efforts to eradicate prairie dogs or destroy abandoned towns not occur between March 15 and October 31 when owls may be present.



Because nesting Burrowing Owls may not be easily visible, it is recommended that targeted surveys be implemented to determine if burrows are occupied. More detailed recommendations are available in a document entitled “Recommended Survey Protocol and Actions to Protect Nesting Burrowing Owls” which is available from CPW.

CPW is concerned that many trees could 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.

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 construction. Ornamental wrought iron fencing with close vertical bars (<12”) and sharp projections extending beyond the top horizontal bar should be strongly discouraged. This fencing typically ensnares deer and elk by the hips when trying to squeeze through and impales animals attempting to go over the top.

Black bears are common along the Front Range, and this subdivision will potentially have bears coming into and around the area. 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). 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.

Feeding of all wildlife should be prohibited, with the exception of songbirds and 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 deer herd near this subdivision. 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 also warns that feeding and habituating deer may lead to harmful and dangerous interactions with these deer.

CPW recommends that a Noxious Weed Management Plan be followed closely during the development of the properties. 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.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this development application. If you have any questions or require additional information please contact District Wildlife Manager Corey Adler at 719-439-9637 or via e-mail corey.adler@state.co.us.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tim Kroening", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Tim Kroening
Area Wildlife Manager

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