



COLORADO

Parks and Wildlife

Department of Natural Resources

Glenwood Springs Service Center
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March 16, 2021

Town of Eagle

Carrie McCool; Town of Eagle Contract Planner
200 Broadway, PO Box 609
Eagle, CO 81631

RE: Reserve at Hockett Gulch Second Referral

File Number: DR21-02 Major Development Permit and PPFP21-01 Preliminary Plan/Final Plat

Ms. McCool,

Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) has had an opportunity to review the second, updated Land Use Request for the Reserve at Hockett Gulch. The applicant is still proposing a major development permit for approval to construct 400 rental units and a clubhouse on 17.38 acres. Forty-five percent of the units proposed include a deed restriction requiring local residency. Preliminary Plan and Final Plat approval to subdivide 29.65 acres into 4 lots and two open space tracts. Current plans continue to show a soft recreation path drawn into the plans running to the west of the Hockett Gulch drainage and to the south of the proposed developed units. CPW appreciates the opportunity to provide the following comments and recommendations.

After the first round of referral comments regarding this proposed development, CPW District Wildlife Manager Brian Wodrich met on-site with Town of Eagle Staff and Planner and the Applicant's Representative on February 7, 2022. The purpose of this meeting was to discuss several of the issues addressed in the first referral review and how the proposed development would have an effect on the current wildlife populations utilizing the property. During this on-site visit, CPW showed in real time the significant use of the property by elk and deer,



especially to the west of the Hockett Gulch Drainage. This constant use by elk and deer throughout the winter months upon the property was observed by all present at the on-site visit in regards to winter range use and movement corridors. One of the main topics and concerns of CPW is the significant amount of vehicle collisions with wildlife occurring on Highway 6 (Grand Avenue) with deer and elk moving on and off of the property directly to the north of the proposed development. These collisions pose a significant public safety issue as well as being detrimental to the wildlife population, which CPW has observed crossing this section of road several times per day during the winter months. Additionally, at the on-site visit, it was observed by all as to how the elk and deer are heavily using the west side of the property as winter range and for a movement corridor to the connecting public lands to the south.

CPW continues to recommend a wildlife corridor of at least 250 feet of undeveloped land along the far western edge of the development. This corridor would prove extremely valuable as deer and elk attempt to occupy or cross the property in an undistributed way. The recommendation for this corridor is supported by the Governor's Executive Order D-2019-011 which promotes the conservation of wildlife corridors. Creating a vegetative buffer between the wildlife corridor and the proposed developed area will additionally assist in allowing wildlife to occupy the area undisturbed, especially in the winter months. In the updated proposed plan, the mapped soft trail remains to the west of Hockett Gulch in the area that is labeled "Lot 3". CPW continues to recommend not having this soft trail run through this area, as it is mule deer winter range and actively used by wintering elk. CPW would like to recommend having all residents utilize the existing hard path along Sylvan Lake Road to gain access and connectivity to all other Town of Eagle trails. While reviewing the updated plan map, access to these already developed trails could be easily accessed by future residents by using sidewalks and hard paths designed into the interior of the proposed development. CPW believes using the designed system of sidewalks within the interior of the development in order to gain access to the proposed Town of Eagle Trailhead and the existing Town trail system across Sylvan Lake Road would have the least amount of impact upon the existing wildlife populations. Recreation trails like the previously mentioned proposed soft path through Lot 3 would most likely be used by residents walking their dogs and would create continued disturbance upon the local wildlife populations in this area. Connecting this proposed development to the already existing hard trail system within the Town of Eagle

along Sylvan Lake Road would be the most recommended alternative to the proposed soft trail.

During the site visit, the topic of fencing was discussed as a tool to decrease the amount of wildlife-vehicle collisions on the section of Highway 6 (Grand Avenue) directly to the north of the proposed development. High-fencing along the north and south sides of this section of roadway would reduce the ever-growing wildlife and vehicle collisions within this location. Utilizing this fencing to guide wildlife to the existing underpass to the north of the proposed development would allow connectivity within the wildlife movement corridor while reducing the amount of vehicle collisions with wildlife. The amount of fencing would not have to be extensive as it could be designed to end into the hillside just west of the property on the south side of the road and connect into the already existing fencing along the bike path on the north side of Highway 6 (Grand Avenue). CPW can provide additional recommendations regarding wildlife fencing designs along roadways to prevent collisions if requested.

The mapped Bald Eagle roost site that falls within “Lot 1” in the North East corner of this proposed development previously mentioned in CPW’s first referral letter appears to be currently unused. CPW has monitored this roost site throughout the winter with no sightings reported. Due to the current inactivity at this Bald Eagle roost site, CPW recommends bypassing our standard seasonal restrictions and buffer zones, however, if Bald Eagles do begin to occupy the roost site, CPW will contact The Town of Eagle and discuss appropriate restrictions and buffer zones.

In addition to CPW’s recommendations for mule deer and bald eagles, CPW would like to continue to recommend the following guidelines:

- Ensure that bear-proof containers are utilized for all garbage and food-related waste on the property and only put trash out on the day of scheduled pickup during and after construction. Animals (especially black bears) do become habituated to anthropogenic food sources, which often leads to the euthanasia of these animals due to repeated conflicts with people.
- Adhere to the already established wildlife seasonal closures on all public lands in and around the Town of Eagle to minimize wildlife disturbance
- Keep dogs on leash in areas where wildlife occurs and prevent all dogs from coming into contact with wildlife

- Discourage fruit, berry, or nut producing trees and shrubs from the landscaping plans to further reduce attractants for bears and other wildlife.
- Refer to CPW's Fencing with Wildlife in Mind document and ensure that any new perimeter fencing, if deemed necessary, is in compliance with the standards outlined in that document.

As a referral agency we hope to provide recommendations and provide concerns that may help make this proposal more successful. CPW will attend any meetings that we are requested and provide explanations or further information regarding our comments. The contact for CPW will be District Wildlife Manager, Brian Wodrich at 970-948-9166 or by email at Brian.Wodrich@State.CO.US.

Sincerely,



Matt Yamashita
Area Wildlife Manager
Colorado Parks and Wildlife