



COLORADO

Parks and Wildlife

Department of Natural Resources

Pueblo Service Center
600 Pueblo Reservoir Road
Pueblo, CO 81005
P 719.561.5300 | F 719.561.5321

April 11, 2024

Cheri Chamberlain
401 Main Street Suite 304
Walsenburg, CO 81089

RE: Application 24-008 Malachite RV Park

Dear Cheri Chamberlain,

Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) has received and appreciates the request for comments on the proposed Malachite RV Park located off of County Road 570. CPW has prepared a list of potential impacts to local wildlife and recommendations to avoid, minimize, and mitigate those impacts.

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, 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 (USFWS) should be consulted on any Federally-listed Endangered and Threatened Species that might be present at the location.

Raptors and Migratory Birds: There is suitable habitat for nesting raptors and migratory birds on the proposed site. To avoid impacts to the nesting efforts of migratory birds CPW recommends that proposed development of the site, construction and vegetation clearing activities occur outside of the breeding season (March 15th-October 31st). If construction must occur during the breeding season, surveys for active nests should be conducted prior to groundbreaking. All migratory birds are protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and removal or disturbance of any active migratory bird nest would require consultation with CPW and USFWS prior to disturbance. CPW also recommends the use of preconstruction surveys to



Jeff Davis, Director, Colorado Parks and Wildlife

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identify raptor nest within the project area and the implementation of appropriate restrictions.

Mule Deer Severe Winter Range: Mule deer severe winter range is defined as that part of overall range where 90% of the individuals are located when the annual snowpack is at its maximum and/or temperatures are at a minimum in the two worst winters out of ten. Mule deer winter ranges are considered high priority for protection from disturbance associated with development and critical to sustain mule deer populations across Colorado. For parcels or portions of parcels, that overlap mule deer severe winter range, CPW recommends a timing limitation for no permitted or authorized human activities from December 1 to April 30. The proposed project is located within an area that is classified as severe winter range for mule deer in Huerfano County.

Elk Severe Winter Range: Elk severe winter range is defined as that part of the overall range where 90% of the individuals are located when the annual snowpack is at its maximum and/or temperatures are at a minimum in the two worst winters out of ten. Elk winter ranges are considered a high priority for protection from disturbance associated with development, and are critical to sustain elk populations across Colorado. For parcels or portions of parcels, that overlap elk severe winter range, CPW recommends a timing limitation to preclude any permitted or authorized human activities from December 1 to April 30. The proposed project is located within an area that is classified as severe winter range for elk in Huerfano County.

Invasive and Nuisance Species: CPW recommends the development and implementation of a noxious weed control plan for the site. It is recommended that all disturbed soils in the area be monitored for noxious weeds. Noxious weeds should be actively controlled until native plant revegetation and reclamation is achieved. It is recommended that all areas disturbed by the development be revegetated with native plant species.

Other considerations: Huerfano County is well known for its black bear population. To reduce any wildlife conflicts involving black bears, CPW recommends and encourages the use of bear resistant trash containers in the campground. The use of a bear resistant dumpster located behind a permanent enclosure such as fencing/brick, or other type of enclosure is highly advised. Food like trash is another bear attractant that results in human bear conflicts. Placement of bear resistant food storage boxes or containers in the primitive campground for use by tent campers to secure food away from human tents/other temporary dwellings is recommended.

CPW would appreciate the implementation of a dog leash rule in the campground. A campground rule requiring all pets must be leashed and appropriate signage for such a rule will reduce human wildlife conflicts including pets chasing/harassing wildlife. Furthermore bear aware and ethical wildlife viewing information is encouraged to be posted and communicated to guests.

Construction of a bathroom facility at the campground is encouraged by CPW to prevent waste and litter from entering the surrounding habitat and riparian areas. Implementation of the lights out policy after dark, no generators, single communal fire pit, and noise curfew will all aid in minimizing impacts to wildlife.



Furthermore CPW encourages that riparian areas and mature native trees not be impacted or disturbed on the property to minimize impacts to wildlife.

In areas where ground disturbing activities are anticipated, CPW recommends reclamation with native grass and/or plant species. Proper reclamation, from a wildlife perspective, involves both soil stabilization and ground cover establishment. Reclamation seed mixes should be suited for on-site soil types and mirror both existing and native plant communities. Specific seed mixtures may be specified and or obtained by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (USDA).

A thorough noxious weed control program is also essential in proper reclamation to prevent disturbed areas from being invaded by non-native vegetation that can be detrimental to existing wildlife habitat. This may be achieved via a noxious weed management plan.

CPW appreciates this opportunity to review the proposed Malachite RV Park on County Road 570. Economic developments such as this project are understood to be important to the local communities and Huerfano County as a whole.

Impacts to local wildlife can be minimized through all of the following; The use of bear resistant storage/trash receptacles, pet leash rules, bathroom facilities to contain waste, reseeding of disturbed areas, and minimizing disturbance while avoiding riparian areas. Please feel free to contact our office at (719)-561-5300 if you have any questions and or comments regarding this letter or any other wildlife matter.

Sincerely,



Michael D Brown
Area Wildlife Manager
Area 11-Pueblo



