



# COLORADO

## Parks and Wildlife

Department of Natural Resources

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January 06, 2022

**Attention: John Deagan, AICP**  
Park County Planning  
P.O. Box 1598  
Fairplay, Colorado 80440  
Phone: (719) 836-4254

### Re: Mosquito Creek Project

Dear John Deagan,

Thank you for providing Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) the opportunity to comment on the wildlife impact report for the proposed Mosquito Creek Project located within the southwest quarter of Section 9, Township 9, Range 78. This property is located within Game Management Unit (GMU) 049 in Park County Colorado.

The mission of CPW is to perpetuate the wildlife resources of the state, to provide a quality state parks system, and to provide enjoyable and sustainable outdoor recreation opportunities that educate and inspire current and future generations to serve as active stewards of Colorado's natural resources. CPW has a statutory responsibility to manage all wildlife species in Colorado and to promote a variety of recreational opportunities throughout Colorado. One way we achieve this goal is by responding to referral comment requests.

The proposed Mosquito Creek Project development site has historically been used by many wildlife species. The proposed changes to the habitat along with the disturbances associated with commercial lodging developments could alter the wildlife uses of the surrounding wildlife habitat. The site is located within an area that has been designated as overall range for bighorn sheep (overall habitat and winter concentration area), moose (overall range and priority habitat), mule deer (migration corridor and winter concentration area), elk, mountain lion, and black bears, just to name a few. It should also be noted that this area has historically had a number of bear human conflicts.

The most critical habitat that the Mosquito Creek Project could impact is bighorn sheep winter concentration areas and lambing habitat. Bighorn sheep use the alpine areas around the Mosquito Creek drainage, especially the north and west ridges, as



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winter range during severe winters and lambing areas in the spring. Increased recreation in this area could push sheep off their preferred habitat during severe winters and lambing season. CPW recommends reducing human activity in these sensitive habitats from November 1<sup>st</sup> through April 30<sup>th</sup> for bighorn sheep winter range and from April 15<sup>th</sup> to June 30<sup>th</sup> for bighorn sheep lambing seasons. Since most of the area is public land, CPW understands that these areas are open to recreation year round. The Mosquito Creek Project's plan to provide accommodations for people seeking access to the National Forest and is likely to significantly increase the amount of users on the landscape during these critical seasons and could significantly affect bighorn sheep.

The Mosquito Creek drainage is also summer range and production area for elk and moose. Elk use the vast willow complexes as cover while calving and moving from grazing areas to water. Moose use the willows in the Mosquito Creek drainage to forage year round. Increased recreational use in this area could push elk and moose off of their preferred habitat also.

The presence of black bears should also be respected. All visitors during the summer months should be required to keep all trash in bear-proof containers or inside. Bear proof dumpsters should be provided on site at all times for users to properly dispose of their garbage. All bird feeding should be discouraged. Pets should be fed indoors. Bar-B-Q grills should be stored indoors when not in use, and cleaned and restored indoors after every use. Feeding big game animals in Colorado is not only prohibited, it can also be extremely harmful to wildlife and people alike.

Upon review of the wildlife impact report for the proposed Mosquito Creek Project, CPW appreciates the mitigation efforts to reduce wildlife conflicts however, education generally is helpful but not often reliable. Experience has taught us that educating attempts are difficult and often ignored. Flyers and leaflets are not enough to prevent users from recreating in critical habitats. Would it be possible to restrict commercial lodging from November 1<sup>st</sup> through April 30<sup>th</sup> for bighorn sheep winter range and from April 15<sup>th</sup> to June 30<sup>th</sup> for bighorn sheep lambing season protections?

Requiring pet owners to bring pets inside or be on a leash at night is a good start but how and who will enforce it? It would be better for the surrounding wildlife and habitat by not allowing pets on the property at all or at a minimum not allow them off a leash at any time of the day or night.

CPW appreciates the bear mitigation efforts. Attention should be paid to the bear proof dumpsters to ensure that they are bear proof and not "bear resistant". Often times, bears can defeat containers labeled "bear resistant". Metal dumpsters are highly encouraged and it is critical they remained locked at all times.

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CPW appreciates the collaboration with Park County and its residents as we strive to protect and improve critical wildlife habitat located within the county. Through wise planning and by promoting "wildlife-friendly" lifestyles a number of potential wildlife-related impacts and conflicts can be greatly reduced in not avoided entirely. If the scope of this project changes and/or if you have wildlife-related questions or concerns, please contact Tyler Stoltzfus, District Wildlife Officer, at 303-916-0784 or [tyler.stoltzfus@state.co.us](mailto:tyler.stoltzfus@state.co.us).

Sincerely,

*Mark Lamb*

Mark Lamb  
Colorado Parks and Wildlife  
Area Wildlife Manager - Area 1

cc: Leslie, Schaller, Carpenter, Stoltzfus, file