

Advisory Board on the Environment

Park County Planning Department

P.O. Box 1598
Fairplay, Colorado 80440

Phone: (719) 836-4254 • Fax: 719-836-4268 • E-mail address: jdeagan@parkco.us

Referral Response

Comment Deadline Date: August 10th, 2021 **Submitted Date:** June 24th, 2021

Case #: 21CUP-04 **Case Name:** Mosquito Creek Project

Request: The applicant is requesting a conditional use permit to allow an Outdoor Recreational Facility (backcountry huts) on a 10.33 acre Residentially zoned lot.

Legal Description: The Stephens Lode, M.S. #4053, part of the SW ¼ Section 9 T09 R78, addressed as 4455 C.R. 12, Alma.

Date of Planning Commission Hearing: Wednesday, August 11th, 2021

Date of BOCC Hearing: To be determined.

We have reviewed this referral and find that it **does** comply with our specific organization's concerns.

We have reviewed this referral and find that it **does not** comply with our specific organization's concerns for the following reasons:

We have reviewed this referral and find no conflicts with our interests.

A formal recommendation is under consideration and will be submitted to you prior to _____.

Please refer to the enclosed letter.

We offer the following comments regarding this referral:

ABE reviewed the application based upon an occupancy of 24 people. With regard to the septic systems design, issues were raised regarding the set back from the right of way, property boundary lines and the leach field.

The site plan did not identify the boundaries of the wetlands; ABE recommends that the wetlands be accurately identified. ABE is recommending that the Planning & Zoning Department request a Wetlands Delineation for the site. Once the wetlands have been identified, the setbacks for the septic system - leach field need to be reviewed and adjusted accordingly.

Mr. Stoltzfus stated that this site maybe included in a critical wildlife area. After describing the details of a critical wildlife area, and since this site is in an area experiencing a substantial increase in recreation and the addition of camping at this site ABE recommends that a 1041 Wildlife review be requested/completed.

ABE reviewed the impact of parking onsite. Several concerns were raised regarding snow removal, the impact of additional fill from snow removal to the wetlands, and the parking area surface treatment. ABE recommends that the Planner request more details regarding the surface treatment of the parking area and seasonal snow removal.

ABE reviewed the topography map supplied by the applicant. Concerns were raised about past rockslides/snowslides in the area. ABE recommends that the County Planner determine if the proposed cabins are located in an avalanche zone.

Signed: John Reiber Chairman Date: August 6, 2021

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We have reviewed this referral and find that it does comply with our specific organization's concerns.

We have reviewed this referral and find that it does not comply with our specific organization's concerns for the following reasons:

[Blank lines for reasons]

X We have reviewed this referral and find no conflicts with our interests.

A formal recommendation is under consideration and will be submitted to you prior to

Please refer to the enclosed letter.

We offer the following comments regarding this referral:

[Blank lines for comments]

Signed: [Signature] Date: 08/03/2021

File Code: 6270
Date: July 30, 2021

John Deagan

Park County Planning Department
PO Box 1598
Fairplay, CO 80440

Dear Mr. Deagan,

Thank you for the opportunity for the Pike - San Isabel National Forests and Comanche and Cimarron National Grasslands (PSICC), South Park Ranger District to provide comments on this request within the Mosquito Creek Corridor. Although this request is on a private land parcel, this proposal will impact wildlife and other associated resources on the adjacent Forest Service Lands.

Recreation has grown significantly in the past couple of years within the Mosquito Creek drainage and across the Forest overall. Mosquito Creek, which has had relatively limited use in past years, especially during the winter months, is growing in popularity with recreational user groups during all seasons. It is anticipated that this use will continue to grow over time as people seek out areas to recreate away from large crowds in other locations.

The high elevations and ridgelines surrounding the Mosquito Creek corridor provide important year-round and winter range for Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep. Specifically, the ridge above the property in question are actively used by sheep. Bighorn sheep are highly sensitive to disturbances from people. As winter and summer use expand throughout the area and become less predictable, the sheep will likely become misplaced from the area. With the expansion of visitor use across the Mosquito Range, suitable habitat available to the local herd will become limited. Summer and winter use confined to County Road 12, is not likely to be an issue for the sheep as they already avoid that area and travel along the ridgetops. However, if recreational pressure expands outside of the road corridor, it will become much less predictable and will push the sheep out of the area. As sheep are moved to more confined habitat within the area, their stress levels rise and the herd becomes more confined in smaller spaces, making the chances of disease transmission much higher. Several sheep herds in the state are struggling due to disease and habitat loss. It does not take much to cause a decline in sheep populations as observed in other locations of the state. Herds in areas of high human disturbance have been found to struggle the most.

Mosquito Creek also provides important reproductive habitat for elk and wintering habitat for white-tailed ptarmigan. These species are most sensitive during the winter and spring months.

The railroad-grade trail they are referring to is not a designated Forest Service hiking trail, has not been analyzed for impacts to wildlife or heritage resources and is not maintained. The development of non-system hiking trails is not supported by the Forest Service. Construction and



maintenance of non-system trails is illegal.

Currently, the Mosquito Creek Project has not contacted the Forest Service regarding recreational outfitting and guide permits.

The proposal also mentions providing access for four-wheel drive vehicles in the Mosquito Creek drainage. The road up Mosquito Pass is a county road and is currently closed to all non-licensed vehicles. All Off Highway Vehicles, OHV are prohibited in this corridor.

Developments and recreational access should be designed to protect sheep and other wildlife species in the area. During the critical bighorn sheep months of January through May, the owners could discourage recreational use on the Forest outside of the county road corridor. In addition, avoid riparian zones during the winter months to limit disturbance to ptarmigan. In essence, education and respect for wildlife is critical if we are to maintain healthy wildlife populations on private and public lands in the future.

Sincerely,

X

JOSHUA VOORHIS
District Ranger