



COLORADO

Parks and Wildlife

Department of Natural Resources

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May 29, 2018

Scott Fitzwilliams
c/o Max Forgensi
Mountain Sports/Special Uses
White River National Forest
PO Box 0190
Minturn, CO 81645

RE: Beaver Creek Resort - McCoy Park Terrain Development Notice of Proposed Action

Dear Scott,

Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) has reviewed the materials provided by the Forest Service and SE Group regarding the proposed McCoy Park expansion at Beaver Creek Resort. CPW staff has been working with Vail Resorts to discuss options for minimizing impacts related to the proposed expansion and possible mitigation projects to offset any remaining impacts. CPW's meetings with Vail Resort have included topics such as: habitat enhancement projects, possible conservation easements, funding for research, and removal and restoration of roads and trails (especially illegal social trails).

As you are aware, CPW has a statutory responsibility to manage all wildlife species in Colorado; this responsibility is embraced and fulfilled through CPW's mission to protect, preserve, enhance, and manage the wildlife of Colorado for the use, benefit, and enjoyment of the people of the State and its visitors. Colorado Parks and Wildlife staff has reviewed the proposal from Beaver Creek Resort and would like to offer the following comments and recommendations for your consideration.

According to CPW's species activity maps (SAM), the McCoy Park project area contains the following wildlife habitats: elk production area and summer range, mule deer and moose summer range, boreal toad overall range, and moderate to high predicted use for Canada lynx during both summer and winter periods.

Terrestrial Wildlife

The area surrounding Beaver Creek Resort has experienced a significant loss of elk calving habitat due to the ski area and associated residential development. McCoy Park and the hillside to the west have been documented as important areas for elk calving since before the resort was constructed. CPW supports enforcement of the mandatory Supervisor's Closure prohibiting all human activity within the elk production area from May 6th to June



30th.¹ CPW also supports the decisions by Vail Resorts and the USFS to prohibit organized summer use of this area and to ensure that construction occurs during winter months when snow cover is present. Additionally, the following recommendations may be helpful to further minimize impacts to wildlife:

- Prohibit nighttime activities within the McCoy Park expansion area.
- Implement an aggressive noxious weed monitoring and treatment program to minimize weed infestations, especially in disturbed areas following construction.
- Prohibit construction workers and contractors from bringing dogs on-site during construction.
- Utilize bear-proof trash receptacles for any activities that may be occurring during months when bears are active.
- Implement sediment and erosion control BMPs for construction areas to minimize transport of sediment into McCoy Creek and adjacent drainages.
- Ensure secondary containment for any fuel storage sites during and after construction.
- Conduct raptor surveys within ½ mile buffer of all proposed disturbances according to USFS protocol.
- To the maximum extent possible, minimize new areas of snow compaction to limit impacts on lynx foraging activities.

Aquatic Wildlife

CPW agrees with the measures contained in the NOPA document to protect wetland/riparian habitats. Specifically, the spanning bridge and hand treatments for vegetation removal will help to minimize impacts. Stream monitoring before and after construction will help identify any impacts related to the project, and CPW would appreciate feedback from the applicant and USFS regarding the results of this monitoring. Cutthroat trout may not be present in the upper reaches of McCoy Creek; however, CPW recommends that fish surveys be included to identify if and where cutthroat trout may be present within the drainage.

In addition to jurisdictional wetlands that may have already been delineated, CPW recommends avoiding impacts to all wet areas in the park that may not meet the standards to be considered a wetland, but are equally important to wildlife.

The project area is also within boreal toad overall range; however, survey efforts have been limited within McCoy Park. CPW recommends that boreal toad surveys be conducted by a qualified wildlife biologist before any construction is initiated. Disinfection measures for any equipment operating in wetland/riparian habitats should be considered to avoid spreading aquatic diseases (i.e. Chytrid fungus and/or whirling disease).

¹ Page 12 (Table 1 - Project Implementation Requirements) of the NOPA Document

Colorado Parks and Wildlife appreciates the opportunity to review and submit comments for this project. If there are any questions or needs for additional information, don't hesitate to contact Land Use Specialist, Taylor Elm, at (970) 947-2971 or District Wildlife Manager, Bill Andree, at (970) 328-6563.

Sincerely,

Dean Riggs For JT Romatzke

J.T. Romatzke,
NW Regional Manager

Cc. Perry Will, Area Wildlife Manager
Bill Andree, District Wildlife Manager
Taylor Elm, Land Use Specialist
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