



COLORADO

Parks and Wildlife

Department of Natural Resources

Glenwood Springs Area Office
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Glenwood Springs, CO 81601
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6/4/2018

Scott Fitzwilliams
c/o TJ Broom
Mountain Sports Program Lead
Aspen-Sopris Ranger District
620 Main Street
Carbondale, CO 81623

RE: Aspen Mountain - Pandora Expansion Notice of Proposed Action

Dear Scott,

Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) has reviewed the Notice of Proposed Action (NOPA) to prepare an Environmental Assessment for Aspen Skiing Company's request to provide additional lift-served skiing opportunities in the Pandora area of Aspen Mountain. CPW appreciates the opportunity to review the project and help avoid, minimize, and mitigate potential impacts on wildlife and their habitats.

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 Aspen Skiing Company and would like to offer the following comments and recommendations for your consideration.

The Pandora area is located directly adjacent to a mapped elk production area according to CPW's species activity maps (SAM). CPW recommends that all construction occur outside the dates of May 1st to July 15th. Additionally, future use of this area should be prohibited except for winter skiing. Providing solitude for wildlife during reproduction periods and throughout the summer is important. Camera monitoring to document elk use of this area before and after construction, would be beneficial to determine if animals have been displaced from suitable habitat as a result of the proposed action.

In addition to the project implementation requirements within the NOPA document to protect migratory birds and avoid noxious weeds, CPW recommends adding these additional BMPs to further minimize impacts:

1. During construction all food and garbage must be stored in bear-proof containers and hauled off-site regularly.
2. Employees and contractors should not be allowed to have dogs on-site during construction.



3. Ensure the new snowmaking storage ponds have the following features to allow ingress and egress of wildlife:
 - a. At least two banks with 5:1 side-slopes
 - b. If a liner is used, cover liner with at least 18 inches of topsoil
4. Conduct surveys of known caves and mines before implementation of projects that have the potential to impact fringed myotis and Townsend's big-eared habitat.

CPW also supports the idea of off-site mitigation to compensate for the permanent loss of habitat resulting from the proposed action. CPW staff is available to work with the applicant and the USFS to determine the amount of impacted acres and identify potential projects to benefit impacted species. A mitigation plan may be helpful to outline any agreements made and timeframes for implementing mitigation projects.

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, Kurtis Tesch, at (970) 948-1662.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "J.T. Romatzke". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

J.T. Romatzke,
NW Regional Manager

Cc. Perry Will, Area Wildlife Manager
Kurtis Tesch, District Wildlife Manager
Taylor Elm, Land Use Specialist
File