



COLORADO

Parks and Wildlife

Department of Natural Resources

Northeast Region
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MEMORANDUM

DATE: December 10th, 2021
TO: Fletcher Jacobs, State Trails Program Manager
FROM: Mark Leslie, Northeast Region Manager
SUBJECT: Wildlife Impacts Review, 2022 Non-Motorized Trail Grant Cycle

The Northeast Region received 22 trail project applications for wildlife impacts review. These applications were sent to Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) Area field staff (Area Wildlife Managers and District Wildlife Managers) for review and comment. The comments were then reviewed and organized by Northeast Region Trails Coordinator Ben Plankis, Deputy Regional Manager Shannon Schaller, and Regional Manager Mark Leslie.

Below is a synopsis of applications with their associated wildlife impacts and CPW's mitigation recommendations:

Construction Grants:

- **104th Connector Trail #14**
 - No significant wildlife impacts
- **Poudre River Trail #31**
 - The applicant worked with CPW field staff and realigned this trail away from a river corridor and eagle nest. The current alignment does go through or near a wetland, which is not ideal, but is better than the original alternative. The applicant is planning on going through the required wetland permitting process. The current alignment eliminates the need for a seasonal eagle's nest closure. To completely eliminate wildlife impacts, the applicant would need to realign the trail to County Road 13. However, CPW understands that this is not feasible because of safety concerns, easements issues, and because the trail would not be nearly as aesthetically pleasing for trail users.

Maintenance Grants:

- **Bass Lake Trail Boardwalk #19**
 - No significant wildlife impacts
- **Gunbarrel Hill Trail #23**
 - No significant wildlife impacts



- **Boulder Climbing Access #27**
 - No significant wildlife impacts
- **Coalton Trail #29**
 - No significant wildlife impacts
- **Partnership for Stewardship 2022 #40**
 - No significant wildlife impacts
- **Roaring Creek Trail Realignment #42**
 - No significant wildlife impacts
- **Trail Conservation Services #44**
 - CPW would like to continue working with COMBA on the location and timing of maintenance activities in areas that may impact calving areas. Since specific locations are not yet known, CPW requests that we meet with COMBA and communicate the best approach for reducing impacts to wildlife for this project.

Planning and Support Grants:

- **Indian Creek Planning #24**
 - This application requests funding for the Indian Creek Planning process where “The Colorado Mountain Bike Association (COMBA), in partnership with Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) and the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) will conduct a comprehensive planning process for the Indian Creek Recreation Area in Pike National Forest.” CPW supports the planning process identified in the application as well as the maintenance of existing trails, and CPW may support individual trail realignments as the process progresses and realignments are identified. Support for the planning process does not necessarily indicate support for the addition of new trails, realignments, or the establishment of unauthorized trails that are specifically identified in the application. Support for trail realignments and the establishment of unauthorized trails will depend on wildlife impacts surrounding each specific trail and its anticipated realignment route. CPW acknowledges that exact trail alignment/reroutes would be difficult to identify at this stage in the process. Further discussion of specific wildlife impacts would be necessary as the planning process progresses, as well as throughout the construction and maintenance of new and existing trails. Certain areas, including those with a water source or other critical habitat component, should be identified, discussed, and avoided as the planning process moves forward and alignment options are evaluated. Outside 285 identified several objectives for the Zone 2: Waterton Canyon - Indian Creek section of the study area outlined on pages 40-41 in the Master Plan. CPW expects those objectives to be incorporated into the Indian Creek Planning process. Those objectives include, but are limited to:

- Protect critical habitat in the canyon, movement corridors for wildlife, and large areas of undisturbed habitat
- Protect the environmental resources and unique visitor experience within Roxborough State Park
- Additionally, Outside 285 identified and incorporated wildlife and habitat resources into the strategy recommendation in the Master Plan. These concepts should be incorporated into the Indian Creek Planning process as well. The concepts include, but are not limited to:
 - Conservation of stream riparian habitat and habitat for the Preble's meadow jumping mouse.
 - Protection of lambing, production, and winter habitat for bighorn sheep.
 - Protection of nest sites and buffers for golden eagle and peregrine falcon.
 - Conservation of intact critical habitat for Mexican spotted owl.
 - Protection of migration corridors between the Chatfield Basin and the foothills habitats.
 - Protection of winter range and migration corridors for mule deer.
 - Protection of intact roosting habitat for wild turkey.
 - CPW looks forward to working with COMBA and the USFS on the Indian Creek Planning process and the improvement of the trail system in Indian Creek.
- **South Park Buffalo South Willow Connector Trail #38**
 - The Northeast Region is only commenting on the South Park Connector Trail Plan, as the Buffalo South Willow Trail is located in the Northwest Region.
 - The proposed connector trail would skirt the tree line in an area that elk use frequently year round but particularly during spring and summer months when this trail would get the most use. The proposed trail would also be in an area that elk use for calving. The motorized roads in this location are already closed for elk calving from January 1st through June 15th annually. These closed roads are still open to foot and bike traffic and are used frequently during the road closure. The proposed connector trail would further spread out foot and bike traffic into areas that are currently un-touched by trails and are used by elk because there are no trails in the area.
 - There is also a Big Horn Sheep herd that uses this area that could be heavily impacted.
 - The mitigation that CPW would propose or an alternative project would be building a trail on the decommissioned roads if and when they are decommissioned. A new route may have significant impacts to wildlife, but there is opportunity to improve the roads for hiking and biking once they

are closed to motorized travel. CPW would look forward to being involved with this planning process, so that wildlife impacts are a key component in the final trail alignment.

- **Leave No Trace Program Prep #21**
 - No significant wildlife impacts
- **CDTC Field Instructors #37**
 - No significant wildlife impacts
- **Increasing Volunteer Capacity #45**
 - No significant wildlife impacts

Land and Water Conservation Fund Grants:

- **Willow Bend Park #1**
 - No significant wildlife impacts
- **Riverdale Bluffs Open Space #10**
 - No significant wildlife impacts
- **Centennial Park Improvements #11**
 - No significant wildlife impacts. CPW suggests educational signage concerning wildlife/human conflicts. CPW can provide these signs. CPW also suggests bear proof trash containers.
- **Castle Pines Lennar Trails Project #12**
 - No significant wildlife impacts
- **Shur View Property Acquisition #18**
 - The trail density that is currently outlined in the conceptual plan may be too high for accommodating wildlife. CPW would continue to work with the applicant during the planning process to help reduce impacts to wildlife. CPW also suggests introducing native shrubs, forbs, and grasses, not trees. CPW staff can give more specific information on plant types if needed.
- **104th Street Connector Trail #20**
 - No significant wildlife impacts
- **Coal Creek Park Development - Phase II #25**
 - No significant wildlife impacts
- **Martinez Park Phase 1A #32**
 - Due to the lack of sufficient habitat to support wildlife in the area, the impacts can be classified as minimal. However, in regards to aquatic species, a recent fish survey conducted by CPW determined there are a variety of native fish in Lakewood Gulch. In order to mitigate any negative

impact to the native fish within Lakewood Gulch CPW suggest, avoid work or disturbance in Lakewood Gulch during fish spawning timeframes. CPW can provide these timeframes to the applicant. Consider signage to educate about sensitive species in the area.

- **Pleasant View Community Park Improvements #34**
 - No significant wildlife impacts

- **Coal Creek Park Development - Phase II #25**
 - No significant wildlife impacts