COLORADO
Parks and Wildlife
Department of Natural Resources

Gunnison Office
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Gunnison, CO 81230
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February 17, 2017

Neal Starkebaum
Gunnison County
Community Development Department
221 N. Wisconsin St., Suite D
Gunnison, CO 81230

Re: McGuinness Three Lot Subdivision
LUC-16-00042

Dear Neal:

I have reviewed the proposal by Tina McGuinness to subdivide 3.82 acres into three residential parcels. The project is located at 2375 County Road 10, which bounds it on the south. To the east is residential development, and on the north and west lies the Esty Ranch.

The location of this project is within mapped, significant wildlife habitat for Gunnison Sage-grouse and mule deer (DOW GIS Mapping, 2007). Although the project area is contained within these mapped wildlife habitats, it's important to note that many components are required to provide wildlife species suitable living space. Impacts from the existing subdivisions and the heavily traveled county road have already degraded the habitat value of the project area, and therefore, this subdivision is not likely to result in significant additional impacts to wildlife.

In order to minimize conflicts with wildlife, Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) strongly encourages the applicant and potential property owners to educate themselves on wildlife that inhabits the area and ways to avoid or reduce potential problems. Adopting these standard wildlife protocols can significantly reduce conflicts:

To avoid human/bear encounters, the storage and handling of trash should be given a high priority. CPW's "Living with Bears" brochure provides guidance on proper trash management and other tips to avoid creating a "nuisance bear". The use of bear-proof trash containers is proven the safest and best technique to avoid human/bear conflicts. Although feeding birds is legal, it is known to attract bears and other nuisance wildlife.

In Gunnison County, where subdivisions encroach upon mountain lion habitat containing an abundance of prey (winter concentrations of deer), encounters between lions, humans and their pets and livestock may arise. CPW's brochure entitled "Living with Wildlife in Lion Country" provides good information to help residents reduce the potential for conflicts with mountain lions.

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"Household" pets, such as dogs and cats present perhaps the greatest threat to native wildlife when a new development is created. Dogs allowed to roam may "pack-up" and harass and kill deer and other

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wildlife. Dogs outside their yard, kennel or dog run should be on a leash or otherwise under direct control. If enclosed dog runs are utilized, they should be located adjacent to the home to maximize the amount of suitable wildlife habitat available within the subdivision. *(In areas known to be frequented by mountain lions, it is strongly recommended that tops be included on dog runs and/or kennels to avoid potential predation).* Domestic cats are formidable hunters, and can devastate populations of local birds and small mammals. They may also attract and ultimately become prey for coyotes, foxes, lions, and bears. Consideration should be given to the potential impacts and conflicts that could result from free ranging domestic cats. Pet food left outside may attract bears and other predators as well as nuisance wildlife species.

As for horses and other livestock, property owners should consult the Natural Resource Conservation Service to determine the actual carrying capacity of the land. CPW does however recommend that only certified weed free forage be used, and when possible, areas disturbed by construction should be re-vegetated as soon as possible with native plant species to avoid invasion of noxious weeds.

Fences should be minimized to facilitate wildlife movements, optimize habitat availability, and reduce wildlife mortality. Fence construction, whether of wire, wood, electric, or synthetic, should be wildlife friendly (not exceed 42 inches in height, and not restrict movement of deer or elk). "Fencing for Man and Beast" is a booklet available from CPW to help land owners construct wildlife friendly fences that suit their needs.

As the Gunnison Basin continues to develop, habitat available for wildlife is incrementally lost and conflicts with wildlife increase. Although this project in itself affects only a small fragment of available wildlife habitat, the effects of "minimal impact" projects such as this are cumulative, and should be considered as such.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this land use change. If you need further assistance regarding wildlife issues with this project, please contact me at (970) 275-2409.

Sincerely,

For Chris Parmeter

Chris Parmeter
District Wildlife Manager, Gunnison
Colorado Parks and Wildlife

cc: Patt Dorsey, Southwest Region Manager
J Wenum, Area Wildlife Manager