



Janna Berard <janna.berard@bonnercountyid.gov>

Bonner County Planning - Agency Review - SS0007-21

Horsmon, Merritt <merritt.horsmon@idfg.idaho.gov>
To: Bonner County Planning <planning@bonnercountyid.gov>

Thu, Mar 10, 2022 at 12:45 PM

Hi Janna,

Please find corresponding Idaho Department of Fish and Game comments attached.

Thank you,

Merritt Horsmon

Environmental Staff Biologist

Panhandle Region

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From: Bonner County Planning <planning@bonnercountyid.gov>

Sent: Thursday, February 10, 2022 11:49 AM

To: PHD <EHAdmin@phd1.idaho.gov>; Northern Lights <kristin.mettke@nli.coop>; Northern Lights - Clint Brewing <clint.brewington@nli.coop>; Dale Hopkins <dhopkins@selkirkfire.com>; Superintendent School Dist 84 <kelly.fisher@lposd.org>; School District 84 Transportation - James Koehler <james.koehler@lposd.org>; Road & Bridge - Matt Mulder <matt.mulder@bonnercountyid.gov>; ITD - Robert Beachler

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Cc: Swati Rastogi <swati.rastogi@bonnercountyid.gov>; Jacob Gabell <jacob.gabell@bonnercountyid.gov>
Subject: Bonner County Planning - Agency Review - SS0007-21

The above-named application has been submitted to the Bonner County Planning Department for processing.

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IDAHO DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

PANHANDLE REGION
2885 West Kathleen Avenue
Coeur d'Alene, Idaho 83815

Brad Little / Governor
Ed Schriever / Director

March 9, 2022

Ms. Swati Rastogi, Planner
Bonner County Planning Department
1500 Highway 2, Suite 208
Sandpoint, ID 83864

REFERENCE: SS0007-21 – Happy Meadows, 2nd Addition

Dear Swati:

We have reviewed the above-named application requesting a subdivision of an approximately 50.206 acre parcel to create 10 new 5 acre (approximate) lots. The subject property is zoned R-5. The purpose of these comments is to assist the decision-making authority by providing technical information addressing potential effects on wildlife and wildlife habitat and how any adverse effects might be mitigated.

Each new rural subdivision displaces wildlife and permanently reduces the capability of Bonner County to support future wildlife populations. The following suggestions, if implemented and included in covenants where applicable, will reduce but not ameliorate impacts to wildlife from this proposal. Because other proposals in this area will likely follow, cumulative impacts to the County's wildlife populations can be expected.

The application indicates a total of 10 lots with no planned open spaces. There are no wetlands or watercourses on the parcel, and the area is currently timbered and vacant.

Deer and turkey will remain in the area and may be problematic to residents. The area is rurally developed and borders Highway 95. Much of the area remains forested with and is developed with 5 acre lots. Moose, elk, black bear, and mountain lion are likely to occasionally pass through. The Department will not be responsible for losses of domestic animals (dogs, cats, livestock), ornamental plants, or private property.

Recognizing the need to manage fire risk, we recommend that the applicants retain as much standing timber (including dead snags) and natural vegetation (including shrubs) as practicable. Mid-story vegetation (shrubs) not only provides nesting habitat for many bird species, it also provides cover for small mammals, such as snowshoe hare, as well as hiding and resting cover for deer, wild turkey and upland game birds (pheasant, quail, etc.). Snags are an important component of the forest structure that provide denning, nesting, roosting and foraging sites many wildlife species, as well as nutrients for the soil as they breakdown and decay. Several species of amphibians and reptiles are dependent on snags and downed logs for dens and food. A variety of insectivorous birds, bats and other mammals use snags and downed logs for homes and foraging habitat, and contribute to keeping insect populations in check. For example, one bat can consume about 420 mosquitoes and other insects in an hour and bats typically feed for several hours a night.

Keeping Idaho's Wildlife Heritage

Additionally, there are numerous bird species that feed on insects, including woodpeckers, flycatchers, warblers, bluebirds, purple martins, and swallows among others. Some of these species are cavity nesters and some require dense vegetation to build and conceal their nests.

As the amount of suburban development in the area continues to grow, we have seen an increase in the number of deer and elk caught in fencing. Wrought-iron fences have proven particularly hazardous to deer in suburban areas, with adults impaled on fence spikes and fawns trapped between bars. This can be disturbing to residents, may damage property, and creates an undue burden on IDFG staff resources. If perimeter fencing cannot be avoided, we recommend wildlife-friendly fencing (such as post and rail) that allows animals to move through unrestricted. Woven wire and chain link fencing can result in entanglement and injury to deer and elk. Exclusion fencing (e.g., chain link with slats, wood slat) is recommended for smaller areas such as gardens or pet runs. Wildlife-friendly fencing guides are available online from NRCS, Arizona Game & Fish, and Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks.

Wildlife use is typically reduced and often permanently displaced with conversion of forest to subdivisions. While the habitat and species are currently common and similar resources are available nearby, continued development will change the amount and arrangement of wildlife within Bonner County.

The following are general considerations for residential development:

- 1) Avoid storing residential garbage outside, bear-proof dumpsters should be used, and an adequate garbage collection system should be designed and implemented.
- 2) Due to several recent incidences of big game mortality due to the ingestion of yew, Idaho Fish and Game strongly discourages the planting of ANY toxic yew species in the proposed subdivision. Four types of yew or their hybrids are commonly found in residential and commercial landscapes across the west. Japanese yew is the most common type planted in Idaho. All four are toxic to a variety of animals including domestic livestock, horses, wild ungulates (deer and elk), dogs, cats and humans:
 - **Japanese yew** (*Taxus cuspidate*)—native to Japan and neighboring regions; many varieties are widely planted in the US; a shrub or small tree, with some varieties reaching 40 feet tall
 - **English yew or European yew** (*Taxus baccata*)—native to Eurasia; many varieties are widely planted in the US; a shrub or small tree, with some varieties reaching 50 feet tall
 - **Chinese yew** (*Taxus chinensis*, *T. sumatrana*, *T. celebica*)—native to Asia; a few varieties of these three species are sometime planted in the US; a shrub or small tree
 - **Canadian yew, Northern yew** (*Taxus canadensis*)—native to eastern North America; a few varieties are planted in the US; a low-growing shrub to 5 feet tall
- 3) Residents should be informed on how to avoid attracting bears, raccoons and skunks. For instance, cleaning barbecue grills frequently, avoid leaving pet food outside, not distributing bird feed on the ground, and protecting compost piles and fruit trees.
- 4) Purposely feeding wild animals creates an unnatural situation and may cause local population increases, which may create an unwanted nuisance for neighboring residents and eventually, the resident that is providing the food. An increase in the local deer population creates a hazard for motorists and animals. Many animals are hit by cars when moving from one feeding area to another. Additionally, when being chased by dogs, deer can become tangled in garden fences, run through

picture windows, or dart into oncoming traffic. Also, concentrating a large number of animals in a small area can facilitate local disease outbreaks and/or attract predators such as mountain lions.

- 5) DO NOT FEED BEARS. Bears that obtain human food, garbage, or pet foods lose their natural fear of humans and can become dangerous. Bears that are habituated to these unnatural food sources can damage vehicles, tear into tents, cabins, or barns, or aggressively approach people looking for food. Bears that continue to seek human food may require trapping and euthanization. Bears displaying behavior dangerous to people will require euthanization. This is an undesirable situation, as it is labor-intensive and an unnecessary waste of wildlife.
- 6) Birdseed or corn distributed on the ground may attract wild turkeys and waterfowl. This unnatural situation often increases the local waterfowl and turkey population, which frequently causes damage to private property and leads to human/wildlife conflicts. IDFG will not be responsible for property damage caused by waterfowl or wild turkeys, nor will the Department trap and remove birds that have become accustomed to being fed by residents.
- 7) Providing food (particularly sunflower seeds) for songbirds during the summer months also attracts bears to feeders. We recommend that residents do not feed songbirds during the summer months. Bird feeders should be routinely cleaned to prevent the spread of disease.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,



Charles E. "Chip" Corsi
Panhandle Regional Supervisor

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