

Wildlife Habitat threatened by RV Development

My question is related to wildlife habitat. In the 11 years I've lived in Arvada, we saw open space changed to Westwood Mesa, Geos, West Town, and Forest Springs Park. The trees in the ravine next to the West Woods Police station were cut down. The 4 remaining wildlife habitats within a 1/2 mile radius of my house in the middle of Forest Springs are the West Woods golf course, the native area of Forest Springs park, private land along Croke Canal and the Ralston Creek riparian area. It seems wildlife is being squeezed into tight quarters. This past Tuesday, I cut my walk short because a coyote jogged across 6800 Kilmer lot to Ralston Creek and our paths would have crossed. This potential interaction prompted me to research human-wildlife conflict. There is no formula to determine human - wildlife cohabitation that I could find but I did locate 2 academic articles that stated urban development has resulted in exponentially more research in the last 20 years.

I turned to a local resource---the CPW and received the following reply. I could not find a reference in the applicant's recent documentation. Do you know if a wildlife/habitat assessment was conducted? It would have to be current to be of any relevance since the residential area has significantly changed since the 2007 and 2017 Terracon reports. I also understand that there is no regulation about the subject that I could find but there are industry Best Management Practices.

Most land use departments require that a wildlife/habitat assessment be conducted for the proposed development project. In this case, the applicant would hire an environmental firm to conduct the assessment, take inventory of habitats and wildlife present, and then make recommendations on impacts. You may want to talk with the case manager for the project to see if this is a practice they follow. If not, the community should encourage that those be done for any future development. If it has been done, those documents are public record. The case manager should be able to provide you with information on how to access the document.

Sincerely,

Jerrie McKee
District Wildlife Manager



Denver Office 303.291.7227

To my knowledge no such report or assessment has been conducted. This is not typically something that the City receives since we defer to CPW. During construction they are required to follow all State and Federal regulations dealing with endangered species, wildlife habitats, raptor nests, etc. To my knowledge (aside from Boulder and Broomfield) I am not aware of other metro area municipalities that require these. I'm no wildlife expert by any means (despite my love for animals) but I would be surprised if there was an abundance of animals that actually live on this site versus using it to pass through considering how exposed it is.

Best,

Jeremiah Bebo, AICP

He/Him/His

Planner II

Community & Economic Development

(720)898-7438

jbebo@arvada.org

