



United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
EASTERN IDAHO FIELD OFFICE - ES
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June 18, 2008

JUN 19 2008

Sue Bagley
Teton County Planning and Building Department
89 North Main, Ste 4
Driggs, Idaho 83422

Re: USFWS comments on Mahogany Ridge PUD proposed plats

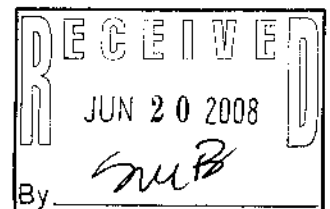
Dear Ms. Bagley,

Thank you for allowing the US Fish and Wildlife Service the opportunity to comment on the Mahogany Ridge PUD proposed plats. Per a previous request from the developer, we have also reviewed and commented on the conservation program for the Mahogany Ridge planned development. We included comments that address the proposed plats as well as the conservation program since the two are interrelated in the conservation of species habitat.

The Teton River Valley is an important ecosystem for many sensitive species, which include but are not limited to: Yellowstone cutthroat trout, Trumpeter swan, Sharp-tailed grouse, Sandhill crane, long billed curlew, and other species. The Mahogany Ridge development is planned in an area that is very important Sandhill crane habitat as well as deer, elk, moose, and migratory birds. The preservation of meaningful open space will be critical to the preservation of these important trust species.

The PUD plats that were provided to us by the county show development area with open space delineated around the development; the Conservation Program document refers to the open space areas as crane management areas for mitigation impacts. We will refer to open space and crane management areas as the same. Please consider the following specific comments:

- The Teton Regional Land Trust is mentioned many times throughout the Conservation Program document. A crane management area is only protected in perpetuity if this land is placed into a conservation easement. A transfer of land ownership would leave no protection on the crane management area. No mechanism is in place that will protect the open space areas for wildlife.
- We recommend that any crane mitigation actions be implemented in Phase I by the developer, rather than allowing homeowner associations to take upon themselves the promises made by the developer.

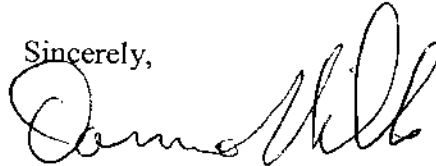


- We recommend that the crane management area be extended and connected to the Mahogany Creek corridor and that all of this property be protected in perpetuity by conservation easement.
- We recommend that any inactive phases be maintained in grain food plots for the benefit of wildlife. Maintenance of a food plot also will help with dust issues and wind erosion.
- We recommend that grain be planted in the crane buffer areas.
- People and dog management will be critical for the cranes to effectively utilize this habitat. Fences should be constructed around the crane management area and the Mahogany Creek corridor that will inhibit dogs from harassing wildlife. The fences should be permeable to wildlife.

In summary, we feel that the preservation of meaningful open space is critical to the survival of our wildlife resources. Protection of open spaces in perpetuity should be considered a high priority that should occur the first developmental phase. We feel that it is important for the county to hold developers accountable to promises, such as mitigation for wildlife and habitat open space, made during the planning stages. Please contact Cary Myler of my staff at 208-237-6975 with any questions or concerns regarding these comments.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment of the valuable resources of the Teton Valley.

Sincerely,



Damien Miller
Eastern Idaho Field Supervisor
US Fish and Wildlife Service

