



Animal and Plant
Health Inspection
Service

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Wildlife Services
Colorado State
Office

**To: Elizabeth Dukes
Community Planner
21 CES/CENB
Peterson Space Force Base**

13922 Denver
West Parkway
Suite 100-WS
Golden, CO 80401

From: USDA – APHIS – Wildlife Services – Colorado

SUBJECT: Reagan Ranch Community Park – Wildlife Concerns

720-595-0297

The off-base development: Reagan Ranch Community Park is located within a 5-mile radius of Colorado Springs Airport (KCOS). It is located near the approach/departure corridors of runway 35R-17L and other frequently used airspace. KCOS serves as a hub for commercial airlines, private aviation, and flight education programs. Peterson Space Force Base, which supports the 302nd Airlift mission and numerous high value airframes also operate from this airfield. This project exists within an advanced aeronautic environment that numerous entities utilize. Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) **Advisory Circular (AC) 150-5200-33C** recommends comprehensive consideration be given to any land use projects that are proposed within the 5-mile radius of an airport to reduce hazardous wildlife attractants that could cause hazardous wildlife movement into or across the approach or departure airspace.

Multiple portions of **AC 150-5200-33C** apply to the project and should be considered by planners and developers to not introduce avian wildlife attractants to this critical airspace. The following items within planning documents would potentially attract wildlife and should be modified to prevent introducing hazards to aviation safety:

Structures: Structures whether they are commercial or residential can create an attractant for wildlife. Flat rooftops can provide locations for species to loaf and potentially build nests. Tall structures can be utilized by raptors as perch points. Solar panels, though useful, can create shade and shelter utilized by flocking species and pigeons. Any structure established should be monitored and exclusion efforts should be made to reduce the attractiveness of avian wildlife species.

Landscaping: Wildlife Services recommends against the establishment of any landscaping or vegetation within the 5-mile radius of KCOS that may attract wildlife. While the introduction of vegetative landscaping is aesthetically pleasing it will likely increase the bird abundance to the area. Large trees, shrubs, and ornamental grasses should be avoided. If this recommendation cannot be adhered to, tree and shrub species should be significantly reduced and spaced appropriately to prevent the establishment of continuous canopy or dense cover. Any plants introduced should be of a species which do not produce seed, fruit, or any other wildlife food attractant. The use of hardscaping such as large rocks, crushed stone, and other landscaping features which do not attract birds should replace plants to the greatest extent possible.

Detention Ponds, Wetlands, and other Water Sources: Wildlife Services recommends against the introduction of open water sources (lakes, ponds, etc..) within the 5-mile radius of KCOS. FAA AC 150-5200-33C states “Drinking water intake and treatment

facilities, storm water and wastewater treatment facilities, associated retention and settling ponds, ponds built for recreational use, ponds and fountains for ornamental purposes, and ponds that result from mining activities often attract large numbers of potentially hazardous wildlife. Where possible, airport operators should modify stormwater detention ponds to allow a maximum 48-hour detention period for the design storm”. Additionally, “Detention basins should remain totally dry between rainfalls”. Wildlife Services recommends against the establishment of any body of water which does not completely drain within 48 hours, to decrease the attractiveness of a water source to waterfowl and other water bird species.

Should this or any future retention ponds not comply with the 48-hour drainage recommendation FAA Advisory Circular 150-5200-33C 2.3.1.3 states: “When it is not possible to drain a large detention pond completely, airport operators may use physical barriers, such as bird balls, wire grids, pillows, or netting, to deter birds and other hazardous wildlife. When physical barriers are proposed, airport operators must evaluate their use, effectiveness and maintenance requirements. Airport operators must also ensure physical barriers will not adversely affect water rescue. Before installing any physical barriers over detention ponds on Part 139 airports, airport operators must get approval from the appropriate FAA Regional Airports Division Office.”

Community and Neighborhood Parks: Open grass areas such as parks will enhance the attractiveness of the area to wildlife. Parks with short turf grass have high potential to attract Canada geese and snow geese. Goose species are documented to be some of the most hazardous wildlife species to aircraft. Community parks often allow areas for Canada geese to congregate and can result in the establishment of resident Canada goose populations. These individuals often do not migrate and present year-round strike risk. Wildlife Services recommends against multi-use sports fields and large areas of short turf grass in this vicinity of the approach and departure of 35R-17L of KCOS.

The proposed development near Colorado Springs Airport may increase wildlife strike risks. Within the FAA’s designated 5-mile safety radius, all structures, landscaping, drainage, and park and open space plans should prioritize aviation safety over aesthetic considerations. Wildlife Services recommends updating project designs and plans to include specific mitigation measures that minimize wildlife attractants. These modifications are essential to minimize wildlife movement through active airspace and ensure the continued safety of Colorado Springs Airport operations.

Trevonne Robinson
Wildlife Biologist
USDA-APHIS-WS-CO
720-595-0297
Trevonne.Robinson@USDA.gov