



Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks - Region 2
3201 Spurgin Road
Missoula, MT 59804
(406) 542-5500
09-12-2024

Ravalli County Planning Department
Attn: Jacob Cummings
215 S. 4th St., Suite F
Hamilton, MT 59840
406-375-6530

RE: Comment Request on Calf Creek, 4-Lot Major Subdivision

Dear Mr. Cummings,

Thank you for the opportunity for Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) to provide input on the proposed *Calf Creek 4-Lot Major Subdivision* located in Section 18, Township 6 North, Range 19 West. The proposed project is located in an area where residents should expect to have wildlife like deer, elk, mountain lions, grizzly and black bears using habitats around and within their property boundaries. FWP recommends *Living with Wildlife Covenants* be put in place as part of the project development. These types of covenants are critical to responsible development of natural areas. FWP requests that you review the covenants in the attachment at the end of this letter and adopt these as official covenants for the project area, including adequate enforcement mechanisms that assure the covenants are followed by the eventual residents.

Subdivision development between Eastside Highway and the state and federally managed public lands in the Sapphire Mountains has and will continue to reduce available habitat for wildlife. Elk specifically are being affected by habitat loss and in the potential for increased conflict (i.e. crop damage, habituation, & vehicular strikes). Elk herds have been documented all throughout the private lands in this area, including agricultural lands further to the west, especially during winter. Currently, the upland habitat is experiencing conversion to housing developments in historic elk range, and that pushes elk to smaller available habitats. FWP believes sufficient open lands exist that have not yet been or cannot be converted, such as the Calf Creek Wildlife Management Area and adjacent private lands protected from development by conservation easements. However, with new subdivisions comes the potential for the larger landscape to be unable to hold elk and other wildlife populations at their current levels. The development of the Calf Creek subdivision would contribute to further reduction of available elk winter range.

Thank you again for providing FWP the opportunity to comment on the proposed *Calf Creek Major Subdivision*. We encourage you to reach out to Rebecca Mowry, *Bitterroot Wildlife Biologist*, (406) 363-7141, RMowry@mt.gov with questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Kendra McKlosky
Region 2 Supervisor