



MT Fish, Wildlife & Parks  
Region 3 Headquarters  
1400 S 19th Avenue  
Bozeman, MT 59718

September 18, 2023

Department of Planning, Gallatin County  
311 W. Main, Rm 108  
Bozeman, MT 59718

Dear Regan Fruh,

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) appreciates the opportunity to provide these comments.

The Quarry 2 project is proposed in a portion of the 175-acre property that is currently important elk winter range for a population that is chronically below objective. Quarry 2 represents clustered condominium development in just 9.6 acres. The development of this 9.6 acres alone would not result in substantial wildlife impact. However, recreational or other activities by future residents across the hillside to the west (where the trail easement is indicated) are likely to displace wintering elk.

Maintaining a generous buffer around the riparian area and maintaining the hillside to the west in open space, ideally with a winter closure to protect elk winter range, would reduce some of the potential negative impacts to elk and other wildlife.

Attached are two figures representing elk year-round reliance on this area (Figure 1) and their winter use of the area (Figure 2). It is important to note that wildlife flights are one point in time across an entire winter, and locations near the target property reflect general use in the area.

FWP recommends that this applicant collaborate with the applicant for the adjacent development to coordinate allocation of open space between the two proposals. By working together, they could ensure that some wildlife habitat and connectivity will be maintained. If designated independently and incongruently, this open space could end up being ineffective at best, and at worst an ecological trap for wildlife. FWP staff would be happy to meet with developers and planners to facilitate this possibility.

Other wildlife, to include mountain lions, black bears, grizzly bears, wolves, mule deer, and moose are also present in this area, which is designated as "higher value for wildlife" under the Gallatin County Growth Policy (2021). Given these values, FWP notes the Growth Policy recommendations (page 6-38), to include consideration of conservation easement in lieu of development depending on willingness of landowners and available resources. FWP would re-emphasize the County recommendations on being bear aware and implementing design standards that would reduce human-bear conflicts, such as requiring bear-resistant facilities for garbage collection. Education and outreach for all future residents is essential in this wildlife-rich environment. FWP is only able to attend to remove wildlife in situations

Quarry

of disease or extreme human safety threats, making education about wildlife safety and securing attractants including barbecue grills, compost, garbage, fruit trees, bird feeders, and pet food of paramount importance.

Due to proximity of a native population of wild bighorn sheep (Figure 2), FWP requests that this development prohibits all domestic sheep and goats, including for 4-H projects and for weed control, in the area. Domestic sheep and goats can carry a pathogen (*Mycoplasma ovipneumoniae*) that can devastate populations of wild bighorn sheep.

Finally, FWP recommends minimizing fences or constructing fences of a wildlife-friendly design to allow safe passage and prevent entanglement. Additionally, pets should be controlled and not allowed to roam, both for their own safety and to prevent them from harassing wildlife.

For further questions or concerns, please reach out to the following FWP personnel:

Julie Cunningham, biologist (406-577-7865, [juliecunningham@mt.gov](mailto:juliecunningham@mt.gov))

Jen Smitham, public comment coordinator (406-495-3262, [jsmitham@mt.gov](mailto:jsmitham@mt.gov))

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Marina Yoshioka', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Marina Yoshioka  
Region 3 Supervisor