

**APERTURE HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION, INC.****Wildlife Brochure**

Aperture is fortunate to be immersed in the incredible natural and wildlife resources of the Colorado Rockies. Most of the development is upland dominated by mountain big sagebrush, other low shrub species, and perennial grasses and forbs. Wetlands are dominated by dense stands of planeleaf willow and Geyer's willow. The Slate River lies within the development, and is bordered by a narrow band of riparian area with willow-dominated vegetation similar to the scattered wetlands.



*From a hilltop on the Aperture, looking south. Sagebrush // grassland uplands are mixed with willow-dominated wetland patches.*



*Looking south along the Slate River.*

The uplands provide habitat for wildlife species such as coyote, red fox, badger, mule deer, and nesting and foraging habitat for many bird species. Because the development is too small to provide by itself a habitat for larger wildlife species, such as elk, it functions as a transitional range between other habitats in the area (see included map). Willow patches in the scattered wetlands and along the river margin provide security cover for smaller mammal species and habitat for some riparian-dependent bird species. The river and its margins provide habitat for fish, beaver, mink, and aquatic bird species including Canada geese, ducks, and a few shorebird species. The development represents a small remnant of shrubland / grassland uplands, swale wetlands, and river-associated willow riparian habitats that were once common in the area.



*From a hilltop, panoramic view to the west and north. The town of Crested Butte is at far left, the Slate River Valley is at center, and the town cemetery is visible at center. The elk migration corridor extends northwest up the Slate River Valley.*

Because the development has such incredible wildlife resources, this brochure includes information on living with wildlife, both generally and within the development, compiled from Colorado Parks and Wildlife (“CPW”), a wildlife habitat analysis of Aperture, and resulting covenants.

## **Living with Wildlife from Colorado Parks and Wildlife**

CPW provides many resources for living with wildlife that are applicable to life in Aperture. The following links provide resources for limiting conflict with wildlife, with specifics for life around bears and mountain lions:

<http://cpw.state.co.us/learn/Pages/LivingwithWildlife.aspx>

<http://cpw.state.co.us/learn/Pages/LivingwithWildlifeComfort1.aspx>

<http://cpw.state.co.us/learn/Pages/do-not-feed-wildlife.aspx>

<http://cpw.state.co.us/learn/Pages/LivingwithWildlifeWildBears.aspx>

<http://cpw.state.co.us/learn/Pages/LivingwithWildlifeLion1.aspx>



## Living with Wildlife in Aperture

Although CPW provides many great resources for living with wildlife in Colorado, there are specific considerations for Aperture residents memorialized in the covenants that minimize impact to wildlife. Because household pets can impact wildlife, each residential lot may only have up to three domesticated household pets. Furthermore, domestic animals are to be controlled by kenneling, leashing, fencing, or other physical constraint because unrestrained dogs and cats may cause many larger animals to avoid the area, and may result in harassment and killing of wildlife. The fencing referenced above shall be limited to enclosing an area no larger than 500 square feet, which will help to maintain wildlife movement through the development while limiting the impact to wildlife through unrestrained pets.

Black bears are common in the area and bear conflicts with humans are common and increasing, according to CPW. The best strategy for reducing conflicts is to avoid bear habituation through supplemental food. Therefore, the covenants require that all trash shall be placed in bear-proof containers. This requirement will also minimize the impact on other wildlife species such as red foxes and raccoons, which can also become nuisances if supplemental food is available.

Lastly, wetlands in Aperture shall be protected from development, including a 50-foot building setback from all high-quality wetlands and a 25-foot building setback from all low-quality wetlands.

## Living with Elk in Aperture

As mentioned above, Aperture is fortunate to be within the transitional range for elk moving up and down the Gunnison Valley. Elk historically used the subdivision as a migration corridor for elk moving through the Slate River drainage between summer ranges to the north and winter ranges beginning several miles to the south. CPW has observed elk using this migration corridor regularly each year, most noticeably in fall when elk move through in a single group or a few large groups. According to CPW, in fall about 200-300 elk congregate on the private land conservation easements in the Slate River floodplain and adjacent hills northwest of Aperture. When snowfall forces them south they tend to move quickly through the corridor between Crested Butte and Mt. Crested Butte to reach winter ranges. In spring elk make the return trip in smaller and more scattered groups.

Being in such a location, it is imperative to minimize the impact to elk, so that elk will still have passage through the transitional ranges. The limit of three domesticated household pets per lot combined with the requirement of controlling those pets will minimize the impact to elk. Furthermore, the covenants with respect to fencing will minimize the impact to elk attempting to pass through or in close proximity to Aperture.



These covenants provide for exterior fencing around the perimeter of Aperture will be constructed by the Association, and such exterior fencing shall be wildlife friendly and shall not exceed 42 inches in height. Interior fencing within lots shall be limited to enclosing an area no larger than 500 square feet. These fencing requirements will help to maintain wildlife movement through the development.

