

Dear Planning and Zoning Commission Members;

I have lived in Marvin Gardens subdivision at the mouth of Quigley Canyon for nearly 30 years, and have had the opportunity to closely observe wildlife movements along the east side of the Wood River Valley. Mule deer, elk and pronghorn have been resident in summer and winter and have made seasonal movements in our literal backyard.

The Quigley area has been identified as the northernmost winter range in Blaine County for elk and mule deer. This fact has been reiterated in numerous letters of agency review of land use actions by Idaho Department of Fish and Game IDFG.

In the last several years, IDFG has been researching wildlife movements of Pronghorn and mule deer. This spring, over 1500 mule deer were found to have migrated south to an area east of Jerome, ID, and near Twin Falls. (Personal Communication Sierra Robetchek, IDFG Regional Biologist) Some GIS points from radio collars showed deer from the Wood River Valley had traveled some 60 plus miles, crossing 5 highways to reach what is now thought of as possible historic winter range. In previous years, one had only to look from Croy Road after a Blaine County snowfall to see lines of mule deer migration tracks down the east side of the Wood River Valley. These kinds of movements are learned by fawns from their mothers, and are true wonders of nature.

Here is a photograph of mule deer behind my house at the mouth of Quigley in March 2017. There were over 100 animals:



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And here is a link to a video that was taken the same year from the Valley Country Store of these same deer moving from Slaughterhouse into Muldoon Canyon. It was shared over 1200 times on Facebook:

I think that you will find from the following information that jurisdictions in Blaine County have not adequately considered the value of wildlife in development applications and annexations. The public considers wildlife a valuable asset to the County.

I hope that you will take a very serious look at the serious impacts that the Quigley Ranch proposal will have on deer and elk. The proposed 24 lots are not only in mapped winter range, the development is at the bottom of the first drainage in Quigley, which is a major migration route for both elk and deer as well as below a summering and wintering area for both species.

Thank you for your service to the people of Blaine County.

Best Regards,

Elizabeth Lili Simpson
7 Quigley Lane
Blaine County

The following is a collection of recommendations by IDFG over the years about wildlife in the Quigley area.

In 2006, IDFG noted as a part of their review the wildlife habitat values in the area behind Old Cutter's proposed subdivision, and identified the irrigation ditch as a movement corridor. (see 2006 Old Cutter's IDFG review) Their recommendation was that the foothills behind the proposed subdivision be closed December 1 through April 15 to support wintering wildlife .

This appeared to be an impediment for the local the development community, which was anxious to promote recreation on public lands. After years of political wrangling, the area has user created trails on adjacent BLM, and no annual seasonal closures to protect wildlife. Deer and elk move seasonally from Old Cutter's to the proposed Quigley Ranch area, which is a migration route.

In 2009 and again in 2017, IDFG reviewed Quigley Farms development plans and made the following recommendations:

Quigley Farms Hearing, April 20, 2017 Hailey City Council

Frequently Asked Questions by Council members

What are the impacts to wildlife from additional phases?

The overall master plan is designed to keep the development at the mouth of the canyon as well as in areas that have been used for agriculture. Wildlife corridors run through the property. Fencing will be restricted on the outer lots.

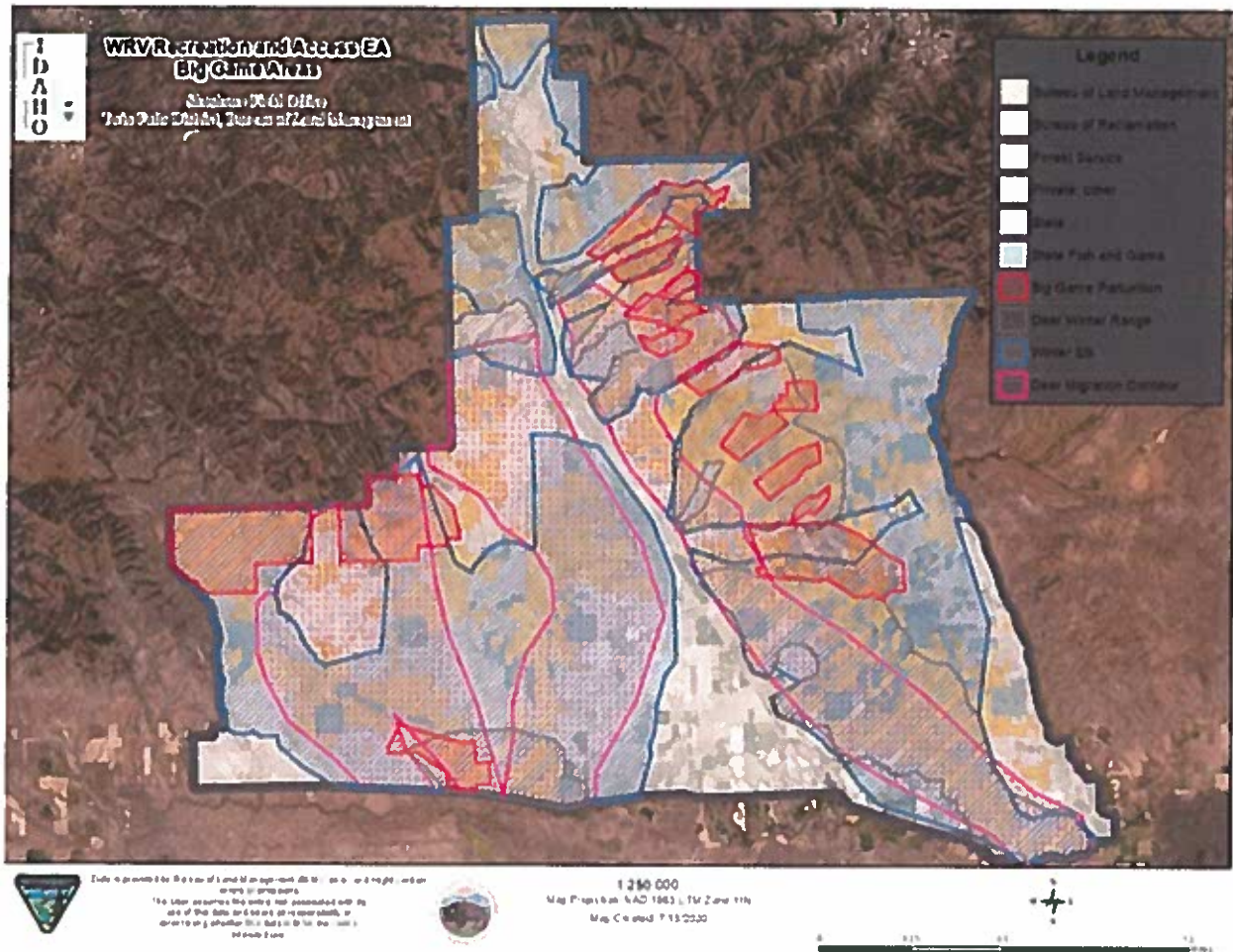
The following excerpt from the 2016 Quigley Farm Wildlife Assessment and Conservation report states:

"IDFG also maps big game migration corridors and one of these corridors does extend through the western portion of the proposed development (Figure 5, Mule Deer Winter Range/Migration Map). The migration corridors are used by big game moving back and forth from higher elevations, in the summer and fall, to lower elevations in the winter (McDonald personal communication 2016). To mitigate for potential impacts from the migration corridor being within the development site, IDFG suggests the development should designate open space and develop management strategies to accommodate continued deer migration (McDonald personal communication 2016)

map:

Bureau of Land Management Wildlife information:

The BLM released the Wood River Valley Recreation and Access Plan WRVRA in February of 2021, which includes new trails in areas identified by their own Wildlife Specialist as disturbing to wildlife. (see Specialist Report below, begin page 25) Proposed trails behind Old Cutter's and over to the proposed Quigley Ranch area in Quigley Canyon will have no annual closures, and no conditional closures until January 1. This BLM map of Wildlife Corridors was included in the Environmental Assessment for the WRVRA Plan. One can see migration corridors, parturition and winter range for elk and deer throughout both sides of Quigley Canyon.



The BLM Wildlife Specialist in the WRVRA Plan noted:

11 Cumulative Effects Common to All Wildlife Resources (3.4.1.6)

"Development and expansion of recreation facilities is proposed at varying amounts amongst the alternatives as identified in this document. Development would contribute to direct and indirect adverse impacts to wildlife resources over time as new recreation facilities are developed and attendant use increases. Cumulatively, each of the alternatives, except the no action, would expand recreation use on the landscape with varying degrees of disturbance and habitat loss.

"The range of habitat loss would be variable amongst habitat types within the respective cumulative effects analysis areas for wildlife. The greatest habitat loss and disturbance from attendant use would occur in shrubland habitats. In addition to habitat loss, the action alternatives are anticipated to have long-term adverse impacts to wildlife resources from attendant use amongst all seasons and habitat types, but the greatest impacts are anticipated to occur to wintering big game animals. The alternatives include design features and education plans to minimize adverse impacts to wildlife, including big game. The cumulative habitat loss from development would be limited relative to habitat available amongst the cumulative effect's analysis areas (Wildlife 16). However, the greatest acreage of habitat loss would occur in shrubland habitats dominated by sagebrush"

From BLM Wildlife Specialists report 7/15/2020



Regulatory considerations:

Part of the Quigley area has been annexed into the City of Hailey, which has few ordinances to protect wildlife. However, Blaine County has mapped this area as Winter Range for elk and deer in GIS, and has corresponding Wildlife Overlays in the County Code. See Wildlife Overlay District:

https://codelibrary.amlegal.com/codes/blainecountyid/latest/blaineco_id/0-0-0-11395.

The Overlay District purpose states "It is the purpose of these regulations to preserve and enhance the diversity of wildlife habitat and species throughout the county for the economic, recreational, and environmental benefit of county residents and visitors. (Ord. 2006-19, 11-14-2006).

Idaho Department of Fish and Game manages wildlife for the people of the State of Idaho by State Statute:

2017 Idaho Statutes

Title 36 - FISH AND GAME

Chapter 1 - FISH AND GAME COMMISSION

Section 36-103 - WILDLIFE PROPERTY OF STATE — PRESERVATION.

Universal Citation: ID Code § 36-103 (2017)

36-103. Wildlife property of state — Preservation. (a) Wildlife Policy. All wildlife, including all wild animals, wild birds, and fish, within the state of Idaho, is hereby declared to be the property of the state of Idaho. It shall be preserved, protected, perpetuated, and managed. It shall be only captured or taken at such times or places, under such conditions, or by such means, or in such manner, as will preserve, protect, and perpetuate such wildlife, and provide for the citizens of this state and, as by law permitted to others, continued supplies of such wildlife for hunting, fishing and trapping.

(b) Commission to Administer Policy. Because conditions are changing and in changing affect the preservation, protection, and perpetuation of Idaho wildlife, the methods and means of administering and carrying out the state's policy must be flexible and dependent on the ascertainment of facts which from time to time exist and fix the needs for regulation and control of fishing, hunting, trapping, and other activity relating to wildlife, and because it is inconvenient and impractical for the legislature of the state of Idaho to administer such policy, it shall be the authority, power and duty of the fish and game commission to administer and carry out the policy of the state in accordance with the provisions of the Idaho fish and game code. The commission is not authorized to change such policy but only to administer it.

History:

[36-103, added 1976, ch. 95, sec. 2, p. 317.]

