



**IDAHO DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME**

MAGIC VALLEY REGION  
324 South 417 East, Suite 1  
Jerome, Idaho 83338

Brad Little / Governor  
Ed Schriever / Director

January 18, 2023

Kathy Grotto, Deputy Director  
Blaine County Land Use and Building Services  
219 1st Avenue South, Suite 208  
Hailey, ID 83333

Ashley Dyer, Senior Planner  
City of Bellevue: Community Development  
P.O Box 825, 115 East Pine St.  
Bellevue, ID 83313

**RE: IDFG Comments – Drinkers of the Wind Subdivision**

Dear Kathy and Ashley,

The Idaho Department of Fish and Game's (IDFG) mission is to preserve, protect, perpetuate, and manage fish and wildlife for the public interest (Idaho Code § 36-103). Accordingly, IDFG has reviewed the preliminary plat for the proposed Drinkers of the Wind Subdivision in Blaine County. This property is found overlapping and immediately west of the City of Bellevue and is within Blaine County Zoning of Residential/Agricultural (R-5). The east side of the property is bordered by the Big Wood River.

This area supports a diversity of big game that includes moose, elk, and deer; furthermore, mountain lions and black bears are native species that inhabit the Wood River Valley near Bellevue and occasionally enter vicinity subdivisions, which can lead to conflicts with people, pets and livestock.

Our following plat note recommendations are intended to minimize impacts to fish and wildlife from the proposed subdivision:

1. IDFG agrees with the Plat Survey Note #14 stating "Parcel A shall be un-buildable and remain in the City of Bellevue with no access or municipal services". This parcel is largely occupied with riparian habitat surrounding the Big Wood River. We also encourage full consideration of these criteria for Tax Lot 7515; it appears that this lot is subject to similar conditions (erosion, deposition, etc.) from its proximity to the Big Wood River active channel.
2. Construction and ground disturbance has the potential to cause sediment runoff and stream degradation under scenarios with precipitation. We urge that the proposed design include best management practices (BMPs) that will minimize impacts on water quality, sedimentation and effects on fisheries within the Big Wood River (BWR). These should include erosion control strategies (e.g. straw wattles), turbidity monitoring immediately downstream of the site, and stoppages in construction if a turbidity plume is observed.
3. To minimize impacts to the BWR and riparian habitat, the Department recommends full adherence to the riparian setback requirements described in Blaine County Code (Title 9, Ch. 17); this includes a minimum setback of 75 feet from the BWR.

*Keeping Idaho's Wildlife Heritage*

4. At this property, IDFG staff has previously responded to complaints of 30-40 elk that deplete crops on a year-round basis. Big game and wildlife depredation on gardens and landscaping will occur if development occurs at this site. Notify property owners that all responsibility for controlling wildlife depredation will belong with the property owner.
5. For clarity to future homeowners, please specifically prohibit yew plants from being planted, in accordance with Blaine County Code (Title 3-2-3). Yews or their hybrids are commonly installed by landscaping companies across the western US; several species are toxic to a variety of animals including humans, livestock, ungulates (deer and elk), dogs and cats. These include the Japanese yew (*Taxus cuspidata*), English/European yew (*T. baccata*), Chinese yew (*T. chinensis*, *T. sumatrana*, *T. celebica*), and the Canadian/Northern yew (*T. canadensis*). Yew ingestion is fatal and has repeatedly caused elk and moose mortality in the Wood River Valley.
6. Perimeter fencing should be minimized to avoid entanglement with big game. If livestock fences are necessary, they should be a wildlife-friendly design with a maximum top rail height of 42" and a minimum bottom rail height of 18".
7. Residential fences for pet containment should be used for portions of the property near the home, rather than the entire property perimeter; continuous perimeter fencing that does not follow wildlife-friendly standards creates a barrier to animal movement across the landscape. Fences should not have spikes, pickets or barbs that protrude above the top bar; furthermore, impermeable residential fences should also either be less than forty-two inches (42") or greater than eighty-four inches (84") to prevent animal entanglement with the top of the fence.
8. Prohibit the feeding of all wildlife, and require potential wildlife attractants (pet food, garbage cans, compost) be stored in an enclosed structure (garage or shed) to prevent wildlife use. Livestock food (hay, etc.) should be fenced to prevent attracting big game. Do not put garbage out until the morning of pick-up.
9. When possible, keep livestock in sheds or barns at night to prevent mountain lion depredations.
10. To prevent depredation or use by mountain lions as day beds, completely enclose any outdoor pet kennels (including a roof), outbuildings, window wells, and space underneath decks.

Thank you for the opportunity to review the preliminary plat. Please contact Bradley Dawson (Technical Assistance Manager; [Bradley.dawson@idfg.idaho.gov](mailto:Bradley.dawson@idfg.idaho.gov)), at this office with questions.

Sincerely,



Craig White  
Magic Valley Regional Supervisor