

July 9, 2021

Planning and Building Department  
Teton County Wyoming  
200 S Willow Street  
Jackson, WY 83001

Dear Teton County Planning and Building Department and Commissioners,

Thank you for the opportunity to review the Wildlife Friendly Fence Amendment draft per the Teton County Land Development Regulation's update. We are grateful that the County is amending the current regulation as we also feel there is room for modification. The changes made in the draft amendment have improved the code greatly. In this letter we offer further suggestions for improvement.

Our small community is experiencing exponential growth and visitation. In 2012, we adopted a visionary Comprehensive Plan to address development and our community's values. In order to achieve the vision set by the Comprehensive Plan, we need County Land Development Regulations that provide clear, warranted, and unambiguously stated development guidelines.

Within the technical LDR descriptions, we believe the purpose, scope, and ecosystem benefit should be described within the Wildlife Friendly Fencing section A. Findings. In that vein, we provide slight yet important language modification suggestions in the below addendum to this letter (suggested edits to the proposed amendment AMD2021-0003 are in track changes). It is important to outline the safety and mobility of wildlife and human-wildlife coexistence accurately, as we foresee profound changes in the human population in Jackson into the future. Our community's Comprehensive Plan vision statement is to "preserve and protect the area's ecosystem in order to ensure a healthy environment, community, and economy for current and future generations." Getting code 'right' now helps us achieve this goal. It also ensures this amendment will stay relevant until the next official review of the Land Development Regulations.

Additional specific concerns are:

- Section 5.1.2.B.1.a: Repair of less than 10% of the total linear fence perimeter of each enclosure being repaired.

The way this is currently written, fence owners could replace 10% of their fence every month (or week!) and still be within code. Ideally, we prefer that fence replacement or repairs must fit within the wildlife friendly fence code unless exempted by the Planning Director. If repair or replacement cost is being incurred, those costs should go toward becoming compliant and protecting wildlife. If the county feels it is necessary to keep the percentage language, then we suggest a 5-year timeline for 10% fence replacement to remove the temptation to slip past regulations that are meant to protect wildlife.

- Section 5.1.2.B.2.b: Fences built for new riding arenas

Fence types that are required for the safety of riders are generally not permeable to wildlife movement. We are concerned that blanket exemptions of riding arenas outside of the NRO would be problematic to wildlife mobility. In addition to consideration of the NRO, we suggest that riding arenas need exemption from the Planning Director after also evaluating the property and adjacent lands for wildlife movement

paths that are not captured in the NRO. If this amended exemption remains as-is, we suggest that language such as “the riding arena shall be located outside the NRO.”

- Section 5.1.2.B.2.c: Fences erected for exclusionary purposes of small areas

Please include chicken yards in the “such as” list and describe ornamental landscaping in its own section (e.g., “d”) to elaborate on details. We feel it is reasonable to put a small fence around ornamental plants (individual tree, shrub, or small planter box) when they are first installed, but these fences should only exclude a single plant in a manner that does not inhibit wildlife movement and should be removed post establishment. Please consider establishing standards for the type of exclusionary fence materials that may enclose ornamental plants so as to reduce wildlife entanglement.

- Section 5.1.2.D.: Special Purpose Fencing

Ideally, buck and rail and worm fence would not be so blatantly demonstrated in the LDR as it leads landowners to consider some of the least-ideal fences based on aesthetics alone without due consideration for wildlife movement. We suggest removing worm fencing as an acceptable exemption on rocky or wet soil. This type of fence is purely installed for aesthetics and is a complete barrier for wildlife calves and fawns. We understand that the draft code requires a 10-foot gap in the fence every 120 feet, but if there is no real containment value for livestock or pets with worm fencing, then we see no need to approve it within the County. In addition, the buck and rail fence shown in the drawing as a possible fence design that could be exempted by the Planning Director is a wildlife unfriendly design and we suggest that if the county feels the need to include examples of buck and rail fences, they consider a design demonstrated in the [Wyoming Landowners Handbook](#) that does not have a rail in the cradle of the bucks and does not have a rub rail, but rather cross rails on the interior (see page 22 of the Handbook).

Thank you for taking the time to consider these important modifications that will provide further protections for wildlife movement in a complicated landscape. We provided additional language modifications throughout the document to try to make the language and code unmistakable.

We appreciate the work you do to conserve our ecosystem.

Sincerely,

*Renee Seidler*

Renee Seidler  
Executive Director  
Jackson Hole Wildlife Foundation

*Chelsea Carson*

Chelsea Carson  
Conservation Program Manager  
Jackson Hole Conservation Alliance

*Lorna Miller*

Lorna Miller  
Teton County Resident

*Chris Colligan*

Chris Colligan  
Wildlife Program Coordinator  
Greater Yellowstone Coalition