

*Below is a synopsis of comments that Becky Tillson, Alliance Wildlands & Community Planning Associate, verbally presented at the Nov. 28, 2011, Teton County Planning Commission public hearing on proposed land development regulations for recreational park trailers (RPTs).*

Thank you for the opportunity to comment and for your willingness to discuss this important issue.

To add to the comments and conversation from a few weeks ago, I have a few additional thoughts tonight.

First, with regard to seasonality: If a property is within the Natural Resource Overlay, we should enforce the procedures for building in the NRO, and take the necessary precautions to avoid or at least mitigate impacts on wildlife. This should be more explicit in the RPT regulation.

And more broadly with regard to enforcement and monitoring, it will be important to have some sort of structured enforcement program, aside from yearly reports from the campgrounds, to ensure that RPT placement and use is in line with this regulation. It seems appropriate for staff to develop such a system.

Second, in terms of the areas that are appropriate for this sort of development, these RPTs are, as was discussed in the last meeting, essentially permanent structures, and are not appropriate in zones other than the Business-Commercial Zone. Limiting RPTs to that zone would be a step in the right direction. In addition, broadly, campgrounds that existed prior to this regulation should not serve as precedent for future campgrounds.

Third, with regard to employee housing, it seems appropriate for staff to continue to work with the Teton County Housing Authority as their study comes to a close to make sure that the impacts of this new style of campgrounds are properly mitigated. It would be interesting to look into this in the future, but I would imagine that employee generation for a campground does increase as RPTs are added.

With regard to the ratio of RPTs to other types of camping that is allowed, Jackson Hole as a vacation destination is moving more and more away from being accessible. I believe that we want to be a community that provides amenities for people of all budgets, and camping has traditionally been a more accessible form of lodging for visitors. We need to ensure that this gateway to our National Parks remains accessible.

At this stage, it is important to debate the big issues – the distinction between camping and short-term lodging, the defacto expansion of the Lodging Overlay and Resort Zone, and the impacts on wildlife and community character – in addition to the more nuanced details, such as whether the units should be skirted. So, how will these concerns be factored into this discussion?

Thank you for your work on this.