

## SCREENING FORM FOR LOW-EFFECT HCP DETERMINATIONS

### I. Project Information

- A. Project name:** Dahle Family Residence in El Paso County (Dahle Property)
- B. Affected species:** Preble's meadow jumping mouse (*Zapus hudsonius preblei*)
- C. Project size (in acres):**
- |          |                    |
|----------|--------------------|
| House    | = 1800 square feet |
| Driveway | = 1900 square feet |
| Total    | = 0.15 acre        |
- D. Brief project description including minimization and mitigation plans:**

Lee J. Dahle (Permittee) purchased the 0.65 acre parcel located at 17 El Dorado Lane, Colorado Springs, Colorado, in March 1982. No construction of any kind has been done at the site. This lot is the last open parcel remaining in the subdivision and is surrounded by homes built in the 1960s and 1970s. The Permittee intends to construct a single-family residence at the site. The lot is located entirely in the 100-year floodplain of Monument Creek. The house will be situated close to the road so that development will not occur on the platted drainage easement located on the back of the lot and adjacent to Monument Creek. No riparian vegetation would be affected by the project.

As part of the proposed action, the following measures will be implemented to avoid or otherwise minimize potential adverse affects of the project on the Preble's meadow jumping mouse: (1) The Permittee will work with the Service to design and implement habitat improvements within the riparian corridor that offset potential effects to the mouse and its habitat; (2) preserve 0.50 acre of the lot in a native and unmowed condition, preserving the corridor and habitat for the mouse; (3) implementation of best management practices during construction including: a) locate spoils piles away from the back of the lot during excavation; and b) limit access to the construction area to only front and sides of the lot through the use of a temporary construction fence.

**II. Does the HCP fit the low-effect criteria in the HCP Handbook?** *The answer must be "yes" to all three questions below for a positive determination. Each response should include an explanation.*

**A. Are the effects of the HCP minor or negligible on federally listed, proposed, or candidate species and their habitats covered under the HCP prior to implementation of the mitigation plan? (Handbook pg. 1-8 and 1-9)** *In making this determination, actions undertaken by the applicant to avoid "take" are not considered mitigation.*

Yes. There is a possibility for minor adverse effects as a result of home construction. However, these impacts are considered to be negligible because: (1) the area of listed species habitat to be affected is very small. None of the proposed construction occurs in riparian habitat associated with the Monument Creek floodplain. No riparian habitat will be affected and only grass and two pine trees will be removed; (2) disturbance is not expected to appreciably reduce any food resource, affect day nesting behavior, or affect reproduction. Modifications to listed species habitat is so limited that impacts to the species can be considered negligible. No other federally listed, proposed, or candidate species occur on the Dahle Property, therefore, the project will not affect any proposed or candidate species or their habitats.

**B. Are the effects of the HCP minor or negligible on other environmental values or resources (e.g. air quality, geology and soils, water quality and quantity, socio-economic, cultural resources, recreation, visual resources, etc.) prior to implementation of the mitigation plan? (Handbook pg. 1-8 and 1-9) *In making this determination, actions undertaken by the applicant to avoid "take" are not considered mitigation.***

Yes. Impacts to the geology of the area are anticipated to be minor because negative impacts to the soil would be of minimal scope.

Water quality of the area should not be affected because ground disturbing activities will not be conducted in Monument Creek, increase the risk of sedimentation, or affect ground water.

Air quality will not be significantly impacted because of the small construction site and limited duration of construction; emissions from construction related activities would be localized and limited to short periods of time.

No known cultural or archeological sites exist on the site, therefore, no impacts to cultural resources are anticipated.

No major changes in land use or the socio-economic environment are expected to occur as a result of implementing the HCP.

The property is not open to public access, so the proposed project will have no effect on recreational resources.

Visual resources of the area will not be affected because the residence will blend in visually with the rest of the development.

**C. Would the impacts of this HCP, considered together with the impacts of other past, present and reasonably foreseeable similarly situated projects not result, over time, in cumulative effects to environmental values or resources which would be considered**

**significant? (Handbook pg. 5-3).** *The same concept is also included in the exception to categorical exclusions, III. F. below.*

This project will be an in-fill within an existing subdivision. No significant cumulative effects are expected to occur as a result of project implementation. The loss of about 0.15 acre within the 0.65 acre Dahle Property (none of which occurs within the riparian habitat associated with Monument Creek) will not result in significant cumulative effects to this species.

**III. Do any of the exceptions to categorical exclusions apply to this HCP? (from 516 DM 2.3, Appendix 2)** *If the answer is "yes" to any of the questions below, the project can not be categorically excluded from NEPA. Each "no" response should include an explanation.*

**Would implementation of the HCP:**

**A. Have significant adverse effects on public health or safety?**

No. The area affected by the project is very small, making impacts to resources such as air and water negligible resulting in no impacts to public health or safety.

**B. Have adverse effects on such unique geographic characteristics as historic or cultural resources, park, recreation or refuge lands, wilderness areas, wild or scenic rivers, sole or principal drinking water aquifers, prime farmlands, wetlands, floodplains, or ecologically significant or critical areas, including those listed on the Department's National Register of Natural Landmarks?**

No. There are no wilderness areas, wild or scenic rivers, refuge lands, sole or principal drinking water aquifers, prime farmlands, or wetlands in the proposed development area. Although the proposed project is within a floodplain, a berm and drainage easement has been placed at the back of the lot to allow development of the property. Therefore, this resource would not be significantly affected because the ground disturbing activities would be very small within the legal floodplain. In addition, construction activities would be limited to the front and sides of the lot, away from Monument Creek.

**C. Have highly controversial environmental effects?**

No. Given the limited nature of the impacts, there is no controversy over environmental effects.

**D. Have highly uncertain and potentially significant environmental effects or involve unique or unknown environmental risks?**

No. Construction of the proposed home does not pose highly uncertain and potentially significant environmental effects or involve unique or unknown environmental risks. The short-time frame during which construction would occur, and the small acreage that would be affected, all contribute to precluding unknown risks.

**E. Establish a precedent for future action or represent a decision in principle about future actions with potentially significant environmental effects?**

No. Future actions would be reviewed on their own merits. However, in this case the proposed home will have minimal impacts, therefore issuance of the permit would not establish a precedent for future action or represent a decision in principle about future actions with potentially significant environmental effects.

**F. Be directly related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant environmental effects?**

No. Implementation of the HCP is not directly related to other actions with significant cumulative environmental effects.

**G. Have adverse effects on properties listed or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places?**

There are no properties listed or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places within the Dahle Property.

**H. Have adverse effects on listed or proposed species, or have adverse effects on designated Critical Habitat for these species? Consider the degree or amount of take and the impact of the take on the species. Although take may occur under project implementation, it may be so minor as to result in negligible effects. The same concept applies when considering effects to critical habitat.**

Although take of Preble's meadow jumping mice may occur in the form of harassment and habitat modification as a result of home construction and use, the impacts are expected to be minimal to both the species and proposed critical habitat.

**I. Have adverse effects on wetlands, floodplains or be considered a water development project thus requiring compliance with either Executive Order 11988 (Floodplain Management), Executive Order 11990 (Protection of Wetlands), or the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act?**

No. The project will not occur in wetlands or impact wetlands and will have negligible effects on the floodplain. Thus, this project does not require compliance with either

Executive Order 11988 (Floodplain Management), Executive Order 11990 (Protection of Wetlands), or the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act.

**J. Threaten to violate a Federal, State, local or tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment?**

No. Implementation of the HCP does not threaten to violate any Federal, State, local, or tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment. All other Federal and State regulations shall be adhered to.

**V. ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION STATEMENT**

Within the spirit and intent of the Council on Environmental Quality's regulations for implementing the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), and other statutes, orders, and policies that protect fish and wildlife resources, I have established the following administrative record. Based on the analysis above, the Dahle Property HCP qualifies as a "Low Effect" HCP as defined in the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service *Habitat Conservation Planning Handbook*. Therefore, this action is categorically excluded from further NEPA documentation as provided by 516 DM 2, Appendix 1 and 516 DM 6, Appendix 1. The supporting documents include the Habitat Conservation Plan, Finding and Recommendations, and Biological Opinion.

  
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(1) Field Supervisor

7-24-02  
Date

Concurrence:

  
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schy (2) Assistant Regional Director for  
Ecological Services

7-29-02  
Date