

Jefferson County Coyote Management Plan (And Guidelines for Bear and Mountain Lion Issues)

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this document is to provide guidelines for responses to conflicts with coyotes, particularly to resolve and reduce human-coyote conflicts in a consistent and expedient manner. Public safety is the number one concern of the County, and coyotes will be managed with human safety as a priority. While the County employs educational outreach tools as the primary tool in managing human-coyote conflicts, the County recognizes that there are situations where other management techniques, including immediate lethal control, may be necessary.

In addition, this document provides general guidelines for County personnel who receive calls about bears and mountain lions and for law enforcement personnel who may be dispatched to respond to bear and mountain lion situations.

II. RESPONSIBILITY

- A. Jefferson County Animal Control will be the repository for coyote reports in unincorporated Jefferson County and will record and map reports of coyote activity and conflicts. Animal Control will distribute this information to members of the Jefferson County Coyote Management Group (JCCMG) including Jefferson County Public Health (JCPH), Jefferson County Open Space (JCOS), Colorado Division of Wildlife (CDOW), Foothills Park and Recreation District, Prospect Park and Recreation District, Evergreen Park and Recreation District, Leewood Metro Park and Recreation District, Ken Caryl Rangers, the Sheriff's Office Crime Prevention Unit and Community Relations Manager, other interested park districts, jurisdictions, and government agencies.
- B. The CDOW will provide guidance and education to landowners and Jefferson County in managing nuisance coyotes. CDOW personnel will respond to reports of dangerous coyotes and make a management decision based on the interest of public safety.
- C. Jefferson County Open Space and the park districts will monitor coyote activity in their areas of jurisdiction and will report encounters, human/coyote incidents, and pet attacks to animal control so that the information can be captured in the database. Any human/coyote incidents or human/coyote attacks that occur on park property will

require the immediate notification of Sheriff's Dispatch so that CDOW, patrol, and animal control can be sent immediately. JCOS and the park districts will also provide public educational information to park patrons and post signage as appropriate. In addition, employees of Jefferson County Open Space, park districts, and Ken Caryl Rangers will, when appropriate, engage in low-level hazing during the course of their daily work activities.

- D. The Sheriff's Office Community Relations Manager and the Crime Prevention Unit will be responsible to provide public educational information on coyote conflicts via the website, pamphlets, and HOA groups. The Crime Prevention deputies will serve as liaisons between the JCCMG and the various precincts to share information.
- E. Jefferson County Public Health will issue exemption permits when appropriate and will consult on issues relating to coyote bites to humans and pet exposures that require a quarantine procedure.

III. DEFINITIONS OF INTERACTIONS AND GUIDELINES FOR RESPONSE

- A. **Observation** - The act of noticing or taking note of tracks, scat or vocalizations.

County Response to an Observation

1. Animal control will record the observation on the animal control database.
2. Animal control will provide the reporting party with general coyote information, will refer them to the animal control web page, and will follow up by mailing the CDOW coyote postcard or brochure to the caller.
3. Animal control need not distribute this information to the JCCMG unless a group member specifically requests data from a particular geographic location.

- B. **Sighting** - A visual observation of a coyote(s).

County Response to a Sighting

1. Animal control will record the sighting on the animal control database.
2. Animal control will provide the reporting party with general coyote information, will refer them to the animal control web page, and will follow up by mailing the CDOW coyote postcard or brochure to the caller.
3. Animal control need not distribute this information to the JCCMG unless a group member specifically requests data from a particular geographic location.

- C. **Encounter**- An unexpected direct meeting between a human and a coyote without incident.

County Response to an Encounter

1. Animal control will record the encounter on the animal control database and will dispatch an animal control officer to take a report. Animal control will record this report on the animal control database.
2. The animal control officer will take a written report, evaluate the situation, and provide educational information (including suggestions for low-level hazing) and pamphlets to the reporting party.
3. Written reports will be forwarded to all members of the JCCMG.

D. **Pet Attack** – A situation where a coyote or coyote(s) attacks, injures or kills a pet animal. If the owner of the pet animal is in the immediate area of the attack and the coyote is undeterred by the presence of the human – thereby creating an unsafe situation for the person, the situation will be categorized as an *incident*.

County Response to a Pet Attack

1. Animal control will record the pet attack on the animal control database and will dispatch an animal control officer to take a report. Animal Control will record this report on the animal control database.
2. The animal control officer will take a written report, evaluate the situation, and provide educational information (including suggestions for low-level hazing) and pamphlets to the reporting party. Animal control will consult with JCPH on quarantine procedures for pets that were bitten by coyotes.
3. Written reports will be forwarded to members of the JCCMG.
4. If the animal control officer (or any other member of the JCCMG) believes that the pet attack poses a risk to public safety or if the particular geographic area is an area of increasing encounters or incidents that pose a growing concern for public safety, the members of the JCCMG will be contacted for consultation.
5. If members of the JCCMG deem that further intervention is appropriate to mitigate coyote behavior, the following actions may be taken:
 - Initiate a hazing program.
 - Contact the area HOAs via email alert, flyers or other communication to advise them of the situation and provide them information on legal hazing methods to utilize.
 - Determine if lethal control is appropriate and possible.

E. **Incident** - A conflict between a human and a coyote where a coyote exhibited behavior creating an unsafe situation for the human. This category will only include pet attacks when the pet owner is in the immediate area of the attack and the coyote is undeterred by the presence of the human – thereby creating an unsafe situation for the person.

County Response to an Incident

1. Notify the CDOW immediately so that they have an opportunity to respond and determine if immediate lethal control measures are appropriate and necessary.
2. Animal control will record the incident on the animal control database and will dispatch an animal control officer to take a report. Animal Control will record this report on the animal control database.
3. The animal control officer will take a written report, evaluate the situation, and provide educational information (including suggestions for low-level hazing) and pamphlets to the reporting party.
4. Written reports will be forwarded to all members of the JCCMG.
5. If the animal control officer (or any other member of the JCCMG) believes that the incident poses a risk to public safety or if the particular geographic area is an area of increasing encounters or incidents that pose a growing concern for public safety, the members of the JCCMG will be contacted for consultation.
6. If members of the JCCMG deem that further intervention is appropriate to mitigate coyote behavior, the following actions may be taken:
 - Initiate a hazing program.
 - Contact the area HOAs via email alert, flyers or other communication to advise them of the situation and provide them information on legal hazing methods to utilize.
 - Determine if other lethal control measures are appropriate and possible.

F. **Attack** - When a human is bodily injured or killed by a coyote.

County Response to an Incident

1. Notify the CDOW immediately so that they have an opportunity to respond and determine if immediate lethal control measures are possible.
2. Dispatch a patrol deputy and an animal control officer immediately. The animal control officer will take a written report. This information will be added to the

animal control database. Notify and consult with JCPH regarding follow-up for human bites and quarantine procedures for pet attacks and exposures.

3. Determine if other lethal control measures are appropriate and possible.
4. Initiate a hazing program if appropriate.
5. Initiate a public information campaign in the area.

IV. DEFINITIONS OF COYOTE BEHAVIOR AND GUIDELINES FOR RESPONSE

A. Nuisance Coyote

Habituated - A coyote that appears to frequently associate with humans or human related food sources, and exhibits little wariness of the presence of people.

Depredating - A coyote that is preying on pets or livestock.

Menacing - A coyote that exhibits aggravated territorial or predatory behavior toward people, but that does not qualify it as a dangerous coyote. This may include coyote incidents and/or encounters that were serious in nature or a coyote or group of coyotes that could potentially endanger human safety.

County Response to a Nuisance Coyote

1. Follow the procedures above for observations, sightings, encounters, pet attacks, and incidents.
2. In situations where public safety is determined to be compromised by coyote behavior, consult with members of the JCCMG to see if a public education campaign, hazing, or lethal control is appropriate for the situation.

B. Dangerous Coyote

A coyote may be defined as dangerous using the following guidelines:

1. A coyote that has attacked a person.
2. A coyote that exhibits aggressive behavior towards a human(s) and/or poses a significant threat to human safety.
3. A coyote or group of coyotes that a member of the JCCMG believes may be dangerous based on a totality of behaviors and/or locations.

County Response to a Dangerous Coyote

1. Follow the procedures outlined above for an incident or an attack: notify the CDOW immediately and dispatch a patrol deputy and an animal control officer immediately. CDOW will determine if immediate lethal control is appropriate and necessary.
2. An animal control officer dispatched to the scene will take a written report. This report will be added to the animal control database and copies will be forwarded to members of the JCCMG.
3. Determine if other lethal control measures are appropriate and possible.
4. Initiate a hazing program if appropriate.
5. Initiate a public information campaign in the area.
6. If appropriate, acquire a leg-hold trap, instant kill body-gripping trap, snare or poison exemption from JCPH.
7. If county personnel (or other members of the JCCMG) believes that a coyote may be dangerous based on a totality of behaviors and/or locations, consult with the CDOW and other members of the JCCMG to determine if hazing, additional public notification/education, or lethal control are appropriate.

V. AUTHORITY

- A. 33-1-106 gives the Wildlife Commission the authority to regulate the circumstances under which wildlife may be taken, and to determine the disposition of usable portions of wildlife.
- B. 33-1-105(1)(h) gives the Wildlife Commission the authority to provide for destruction of any wildlife that poses a threat to public health, safety, or welfare.
- C. 33-6-107(9) permits any person, any member of such person's family, or any employee of the person to hunt, trap, or take coyotes on land owned or leased by the person without securing licenses to do so, but only when such wildlife is causing damage to crops, real or personal property, or livestock.

*Note – This can only be done via legal methods (no leg-hold traps, body gripping traps, snares or poisons – and firearms only allowed for use as per local laws) unless the property owner has obtained an exemption permit from JCPH, or the CDOW, as outlined below in letter E of F. Landowners should be directed to contact the Sheriff's Office to determine firearms regulations in their area.

- D. Wildlife Commission Regulation 303 (A) prohibits the relocation of coyotes without a permit. Studies have shown that relocation is not an effective solution to coyote conflicts. The Colorado Division of Wildlife (CDOW) generally will not authorize the relocation of coyotes.
- E. 33-6-205 gives federal, state, county or municipal departments of health the ability to grant an exemption to Amendment 14 to take (by use of leg hold traps, snares, instant kill body-gripping design traps or poisons) wildlife for the purpose of protecting human health and safety.
- F. 33-6-208 gives the CDOW the authority to issue permits to eligible landowners, and others as authorized by statute, a 30-day trapping permit where certain body-gripping/death traps (including leg-hold traps and snares) may be used in order to protect commercial livestock and/or commercial crop production.
- G. Unincorporated Jefferson County does not have any ordinances related to the control or management (or feeding) of wildlife. (See exception below in A.)

VI. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

- A. Since Jefferson County does not have a local ordinance prohibiting the feeding of wildlife (and feeding is one of the major contributors to coyote conflicts) the CDOW will be the agency responsible for addressing wildlife feeders. To support this effort, animal control officers will conduct a courtesy visit to reported feeders, provide educational materials, and will pass along reports to the CDOW.

Note: Jefferson County Open Space does have a regulation that prohibits the feeding of wildlife in Open Space parks.

- B. Jefferson County Public Health in consultation with the CDOW, will have the final decision on issuing exemption permits for the use of leg-hold traps, body gripping traps, snares, and poisons for the taking of coyotes.
- C. In the event that JCPH and/or other members of the JCCMG determine that a lethal control program is warranted, the JCCMG will consult to determine the best method based on the circumstances and fiscal impact. The JCCMG will propose funding options, potential cost sharing, and obtain spending authorization from elected officials before an operation begins. Nothing in this plan shall prohibit the CDOW from taking whatever immediate measures are necessary to protect the public from coyotes.
- D. If high-level hazing (paintball/pepper spray hazing, bean bag rounds, bear spray, etc.) is a recommended mitigation tool for a particular area, this activity will be

coordinated with CDOW, the Special Operations Captain, and the precinct Patrol Captain before initiation.

- E. Low-level hazing techniques that will be recommended to citizens include throwing small rocks and sticks, noisemakers, air horns, yelling, clapping, garden hoses, water guns, banging pots and pans, and deterrent sprays.
- F. Animal Control Estimated Program Costs:
- Printed Materials - \$250
 - Postage - \$100 (Flyers to callers reporting observations and sightings.)
 - Staff Time - \$900/year (3 reports per month @ 1 hour per report x \$25/hour average wage.)
- G. In certain circumstances, animal control may offer to loan a live trap (with a damage deposit) to a landowner when a coyote(s) is causing damage to crops, real or personal property, or livestock. In the event that the landowner successfully traps a coyote, animal control will obtain a transport permit from the CDOW, move the animal to a suitable location, and will either have a deputy sheriff euthanize the animal with a gunshot or perform chemical euthanasia on the animal.
- H. Emergency Contact Information for Members of the JCCMG

Jefferson County Animal Control

Monday through Friday daytime – 303.271.5070, FAX: 303.271.5075

After-hours, weekends, holidays – via Jeffco Dispatch at 303.277.0211

Carla Zinanti – 303.271.5074, 303.435.1150 (cell), czinanti@jeffco.us

Sharon Wright – 303.271.5083, 303.435.2893 (cell), swright@jeffco.us

Martha Thaden – 303.271.5076, 303.435.9584 (cell), mthaden@jeffco.us

JCSO Crime Prevention Deputies

Jim Brendle, North Precinct – 303.271.5363, 303.435.4030 (cell)

Gordon Neuenfeldt, South Precinct – 720.377.2002, 303.435.4044 (cell)

Dale Wizieck, Mountain Precinct – 720.497.7860, 303.435.5471 (cell)

JCSO Community Relations Manager

Andrea Burns – 303.271.5577, 303.435.0465 (cell)

Jefferson County Public Health

David Volkel – 303.271.5730, Cell: 720.300.2017, dvolkel@jeffco.us

Jim Dale – 303.271.5718, Cell: 303.916.0810, jdale@jeffco.us

Jefferson County Open Space

All Open Space Rangers can be reached by radio via Jefferson County Dispatch at 303.277.0211.

Colleen Gadd – 303.887.5725 (cell)

Mark Oline (Tuesday – Saturday) – 303.887.6670 (cell)

Shaun Howard (Sunday – Thursday) – 303882.2516 (cell)

North District Resident Ranger/White Ranch, Dave Binkley – 303.277.1192, 303.882.1453 (cell)

Central District Resident Ranger/Elk Meadow Park, Jason Hamburg – 303.674.5416, 303.882.0820 (cell)

South District Resident Ranger/Pine Valley Ranch, Mike Morin – 303.883.1248, 303.882.6206 (cell)

Colorado Division of Wildlife

For questions Monday through Friday, 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM, contact the Northeast Region CDOW office at 303.291.7227. For emergencies 24/7, contact the Colorado State Patrol at 303.239.4501. CSP will contact the on-call wildlife officer.

Foothills Park and Recreation District

303.461.5504

303.461.5502

303.598.8536

303.598.8535

Prospect Park and Recreation District

Mike Hanson, District Manager - 303.210.0291, Home: 303.384.9415

Brian Beyer, Parks Supervisor – 303.554.9466, Cell: 720.272.6284

Evergreen Park and Recreation District

Ellen Stephan – 303.674.6441 x12

Leewood Metro Park and Recreation District

David Padilla, Parks Manager – 303.870.3482

Linda T. Smith, VP/Secretary – 303.730.8849

Ken Caryl Rangers

Office – 303.904.0249, FAX: 303.948.8891, Mobile: 303.901.6890

Pleasant View Metro District

Stewart McAlister – 303.277.9547

Normandy Estates Recreation District

George and Kathy Morkovin – 303.972.9301

Teri Stouder – 303.973.1623

Whitney Mayer – 720.922.2978

VII. MOUNTAIN LION AND BEAR CALLS

- A. Bears and mountain lions are the responsibility of the Colorado Division of Wildlife and management decisions about these animals are made based on the location of the animal and the potential for a public safety concern. As a general rule, sightings of bears and lions in suitable habitat will likely not require any action or response.

As a general guideline, Jefferson County will act in a supportive role to the CDOW by facilitating notification and communication, scene assistance, and educational outreach efforts.

County Response to Sighting in Suitable Habitat

1. Callers will be advised to leave the animal alone and report the sighting to the non-emergency number for the CDOW.
2. If the sighting is in an established wildlife corridor (Clear Creek, Bear Creek, South Platte, greenbelts, etc.) but outside of suitable areas, animal

control officers and deputy sheriffs may assist CDOW with their efforts or recommendations on how best to deal with the situation.

3. If a bear(s) is getting into trash or other attractants, it can be scared off by the resident if it can be done safely or by animal control or a deputy sheriff (as an assist to and/or at the request of CDOW).
4. In all cases, people, along with their pets, should be encouraged to stay inside and should be offered public education information about living in wildlife habitat.
5. Nothing in these guidelines shall prevent a deputy sheriff from taking whatever action is reasonably necessary to protect the public from immediate threats and dangerous situations resulting from lion and bear confrontations.

County Response to Sighting in Unsuitable Habitat

1. County personnel will contact the CDOW by calling the Colorado State Patrol at 303.239.4501.
2. Responding law enforcement units will approach the situation calmly and will ask people to go indoors and take all pets with them.
3. Maintain control of the media by establishing a staging area and contacting the Public Information Officer.
4. Do not allow people, to corner, approach, or chase the animal. If the animal is on the move, give it space, monitor its location but do not actively pursue it. If the animal is lost from sight, someone (residents) will eventually call with the new location and law enforcement personnel can move to that area. If the animal is lost from sight for a significant period of time, law enforcement should leave the scene and return upon a re-sighting. Every attempt should be made to keep the animal as calm and unstressed as possible as adrenaline counter-acts tranquilizing drugs that may be administered by the CDOW.
5. If the animal is up a tree or pole, one or two law enforcement officers can stand under the animal to keep it at that location. If the animal is in a yard, and a loose perimeter can be established to contain the animal without causing undue stress, this should be attempted. If the animal gets down from the tree or pole or wants to move, return to monitoring its location and wait for CDOW to arrive on scene.

County Response to a Bear or Lion Attack to a Person

1. County personnel will immediately contact CDOW via the Colorado State Patrol at 303.239.4501.
2. Law enforcement officers will take whatever immediate measures are necessary to protect members of the public and will request medical assistance if required. If applicable, the animal will be monitored until CDOW personnel arrive on scene – as per the above guidelines.

County Response to a Bear Entering a Dwelling

1. County personnel will immediately contact CDOW via the Colorado State Patrol at 303.239.4501.
2. People inside the house should be instructed to get out if it is safe to do so. If the resident can not get out safely, they should be instructed to go to a secure room that has no food or food odors. If possible, outside doors should be opened to provide the bear with an escape route.
3. If a resident returns home to find evidence that a bear has broken in, they should be instructed to stay out of the home until it can be determined that the bear is no longer inside.

CDOW Options for Reported and/or Problem Bears and Mountain Lions

1. Leave it Alone: This is typically the best option for animals that are observed in suitable habitat or along movement corridors. Given the opportunity, animals will move out of the urban corridors and back to more suitable habitat. This method has worked in much of Jefferson County.
2. Tranquilize and Relocate: Many of the animals that find their way into unsuitable areas are not bad or aggressive animals but ones that have lost their way in search for food. Tranquilizing and relocating can be detrimental to an animal in terms of reaction to the drug, relocation to an area of pre-established territories that are already home to dominant and territorial animals, and the chance of relocating the animal to an area where it will wander again into someone else's backyard. Bears and mountain lions that are tranquilized and moved will be ear-tagged and considered a "first-strike" animal. A second contact, by state policy, will require that the bear or lion be destroyed. On the positive side, by removing animals from urban settings, communities may feel more at ease and local law enforcement is not tied up on bear and lion calls.

3. Euthanasia/Destruction: Killing an animal is the last resort for CDOW personnel but will be done if an animal is an immediate threat to people or is deemed, by the circumstances, to be a dangerous animal. In addition, ear-tagged, or “first-strike” bears or lions must be destroyed if they are captured a second time.