Explanation on the Outdoor Movie Series cancellation for 2022

This zoning/allowed use issue has come to light as we have moved through our internal Community Involvement Process (CIP) to approve the concept of adding a building at Base Camp and at the Horse Corrals to house our camps, environmental education programs, equine programs, a forest preschool, and various events that serve our mission and our 501c3’s mission. The overall project is called the Backcountry Outdoor Center Project.

Our Community Involvement Process (CIP) for the Backcountry Outdoor Center Project started in the Fall of 2021 and was completed in July 2022 with near unanimous approval from the HRCA Delegate body. The CIP is an internal process that occurs for any proposed improvement to the Backcountry. The CIP includes two Delegate votes and two Board votes with a public meeting between each vote. However, this CIP included five public meetings and a robust public outreach effort.

As we moved through the CIP, we were also working with the County to address uses and zoning of the specific areas under consideration: Base Camp and the Horse Corrals. The County asked us to apply to amend the Planned Development of Highlands Ranch to ensure the proper zoning is in place for the proposed uses and to remove any subjectivity of the current zoning and allowed uses. Until the amendment is passed, the County has determined that movie nights aren’t an allowed use.
Currently, 7,000 acres of the 8,200-acre Backcountry Wilderness Area are zoned to allow for certain uses and limited structures to accommodate those uses. Structures up to 10,000-square-feet are allowed for particular uses, such as “Community Camps for all ages.” Base Camp and the Horse Corrals are in this 7,000-acre area.

Approximately 1,200 of the 8,200 acres of the Backcountry Wilderness Area allow for much more significant development and much more intensive uses such as recreation centers, churches, universities, equine centers, and more. With allowed structures up to 50,000 square feet. These areas of allowed intensive use are called “Planning Areas” in the Highlands Ranch Planned Development.

Currently, Base Camp and the Horse Corrals do not have any permanent structures other than small sheds for storage of equipment and hay and loafing sheds to provide shelter from the elements for the horses. Our use of these two areas has increased over the years to the point where the use should be addressed through an amendment to the Highlands Ranch Planned Development.

HIGHLANDS RANCH PLANNED DEVELOPMENT AMENDMENT

The purposes of the Amendment to the Highlands Ranch Planned Development are the following:

- To remove any subjectivity in the zoning and allowed uses of the Base Camp and Horse Corral areas
- To clearly outline the proposed uses: Preschool, Administrative Offices, Equestrian Center, and Events
- To eventually execute the Conceptual Plan and associated improvements
- To allow the County and HRCA to go through a Public Process, allowing for public input/comment

The Amendment proposes to reduce one of the Planning Areas in the Backcountry that allows for intensive use and development by 65 acres and move those 65 acres to the Base Camp and Horse Corral areas; 45 and 20 acres respectively. The two new areas of 45 and 20 acres would create two new Planning Areas with clearly outlined uses and allowed structures. Approved uses would include movie nights and other programs, events, and activities that directly support our 501c3’s mission allowing for movies to return to Base Camp in 2023.

If you’d like to give feedback on the amendment or have questions, please email Mark Giebel at mark.giebel@hrcaonline.org.