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RE: Project Name File Number: Fowler Creek Guest Ranch (CU-23-00003)  
[Kittitas County Community Development Services | Land Use](#)

We are George and Carrie Menzel and live at 31 Four Wheel Drive, Cle Elum. We are submitting this notice of opposition to the project "Fowler Creek Guest Reach" for consideration.

It is our belief, that the proposal as written under CU-23-00003 is:

- Non-Compatible with Kittitas County Code, KCC 17.30A.010
- Non-Compatible with Kittitas County Code, KCC 17.08.270
- Non-Compatible with existing roadways

We bought our home in this area in 2015, started out as weekenders and moved full time in 2018. Our community consists of roughly 60 property owners, with ~25 being year-round. The area is peaceful and quiet. We have a strong sense of community, helping each other out in times of need, overall, a great area to live in. With the addition of an RV park this close to our residents, using the same roadway as a primary access point – it will have an impact on our quality of life, our safety and the environment. From noise complaints to traffic concerns, to winter driving conditions adversely affecting our ability to navigate on our single access road. This is an rural area, it goes without saying that it has a natural charm and character, having upwards of 200 people partying, camping, using ORVS, and more right next to our community will forever impact the areas natural, rural, rugged state.

Please find the specific points of opposition below. Thank you for your time and consideration in reviewing this feedback.

Sincerely,  
George and Carrie Menzel

## Non-Compatible with Land Use Designation:

### **17.30A.010 Purpose and intent.**

*The purpose and intent of the Rural-5 zone is to provide areas where residential development may occur on a low density basis. A primary goal and intent in siting R-5 zones will be to minimize adverse effects on adjacent natural resource lands. (Ord. 2005-05, 2005)*

### **2021 Kittitas County Comprehensive Plan, 8.4, Rural Lands**

*One of the main attractions of the rural residential lifestyle is the low intensity of development and the corresponding sense of a slower pace of living. Part of what creates that attraction is the rural-level facilities and services. This Comprehensive Plan supports and preserves this rural lifestyle by limiting service levels to those historically provided in the County's rural areas. Residents should expect County services, such as road maintenance and emergency responses to be limited and to decrease as the distance from a rural activity center or urban area increases.*

The emergency response, while sufficient to support the estimated <100 residents of the surrounding neighborhood, is not equipped to support the need, timeliness, and size of potential emergencies that a site with 200+ guests could need. In addition, the road defined as an 'Exit' in the plan, falls onto FS RD 4517, a maintenance level 2 road with no provisions for road improvements or upgrades.

### **We request the hearing examiner condition the application in the following ways:**

- Apply the code as intended and described, and deny application for Land Use under **KCC 17.30A.010**
- As a condition prior to occupancy, require that the Forest Service upgrade the level of service to a level 4 on Forest Service Road 4517 with maintenance paid for on behalf of the proposed Resort or by USFS
- As a condition prior to occupancy, require the creation of an emergency egress road to Westside Rd or Zrebiec Rd

## Non-Compatible with Kittitas County Code, KCC 17.08.270

### **17.08.270 Guest ranch or guest farm.**

*"Guest ranch or guest farm" means a business or an organization providing overnight lodging, dining and recreational facilities in a rural setting. The purpose of a guest ranch or guest farm shall relate primarily to vacation, recreation and similar pursuits, and does not include rehabilitation centers, group homes, clinics, nursing homes, churches and church camps, and other similar uses. Events such as auctions, barbecues and similar gatherings which do not provide overnight lodging or which are not conducted on a continuous basis shall not be considered as guest ranches or guest farms. Enhanced agricultural sales are allowed.*

**As proposed, the Fowler Creek Guest Ranch does not meet the intended use of the code** and is a gross misinterpretation.

The proposal, **Exhibit 7, Buildings and Recreational facilities**, includes plans for **"Dining Area:** There will be a place that guests will be able to purchase and eat farm-to-table food and local brands in a common area" and **"Small Store:** The small store will sell groceries, snacks, and other supplies. The store will have a selection of recreational retail and rental items... souvenirs and apparel".

According to KCC **17.15.060 'Allowed uses in rural non-LAMIRD lands'** and **KCC 17.15.060.1 'Rural Non-LAMIRD Use Table'** retail sales are not allowed in the existing zoning.

**KCC 17.08.270:** *Events such as auctions, barbecues and similar gatherings which do not provide overnight lodging or which are not conducted on a continuous basis shall not be considered as guest ranches or guest farms.*

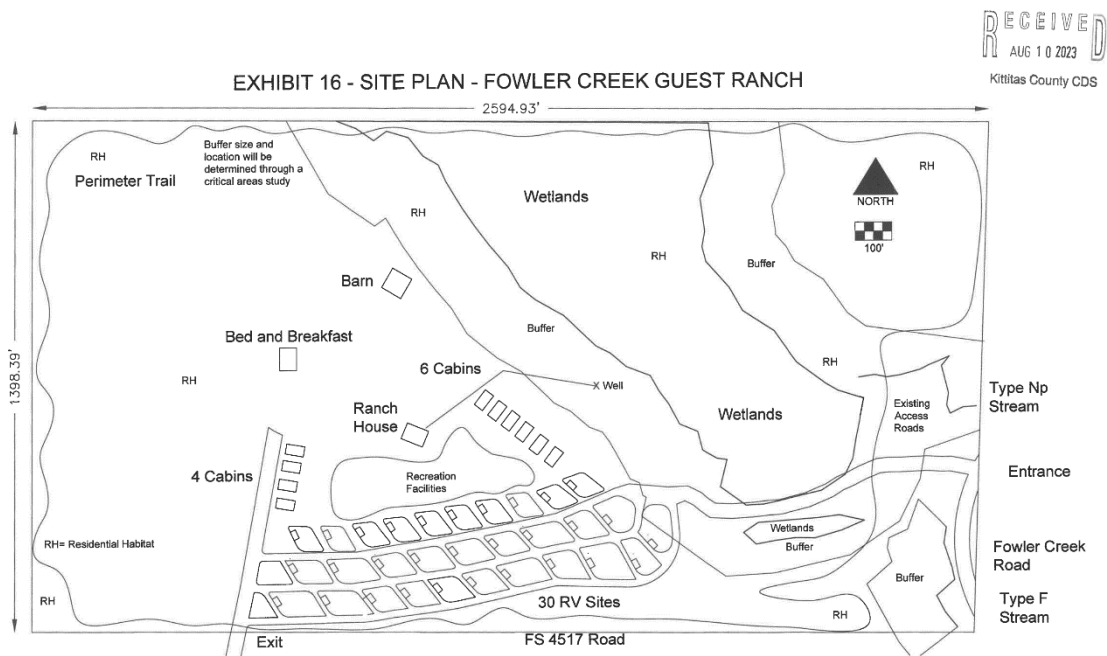
**Exhibit 7, Buildings and Recreational facilities** of the proposal states that: “The large barn will be used by guest ranch guests for **gatherings and events**. The barn can accommodate up to 200 people, and will be perfect for **weddings, birthday parties, and other special events**”.

A wedding and day use venue clearly does not meet the intended use and definition of “Guest Ranch” as defined in **KCC 17.08.270**.

**As proposed, the Fowler Creek Guest Ranch does not meet the intended use of the code** and is a gross misinterpretation.

### **Non-Compatible with existing roadway**

The Fowler Creek Guest Ranch development proposal shares a border and main roadway with my community. The following site map submitted by the developer clearly shows that there will be an official Exit from their Ranch onto FS 4517 Rd. Even though verbally it has been said by the developer that it's only an emergency exit.



Having an RV park with big rigs or trucks with ORV trailers using the same road for access will not only impact the roadway but it does indeed impact the character or charm of the surrounding neighborhood. Especially with the expected increase in traffic flow and usage on FS 4517. Note: the traffic reports submitted do not consider weekend flows and RVs w/ trailers but rather single vehicles. The FS 4517 roadway from Fowler Creek to the proposed exit for the Fowler Creek Guest Ranch is a long and winding steep hill, every single Winter I've been there since 2015 has had multiple spin outs, trucks stuck in the ditch, blocking the roadway because it is not well maintained or sanded. I've had to pull out FedEx twice in the last couple of years. If the Fowler Creek Guest Ranch were to be approved, this will only get worse with weekenders not prepared for Winter driving conditions, in larger rigs w/ trailers. In addition,

during the Winter months and the expected increase of snowmobilers looking to camp at this new Ranch, they will be riding on this same roadway with increased traffic, less visibility, and less width due to snow plowing, all right alongside residents from Granite Creek who commute to work or travel to town daily. This will certainly increase the frequency of accidents and will result in higher use of public funding through, Police, Fire, and other first responder needs. Given this I disagree with the following assessment, [SKM\\_C550i23081715101 \(kittitas.wa.us\)](https://www.kittitas.wa.us/SKM_C550i23081715101), stating it won't negatively impact the safety, peacefulness, and character of our existing community.

(ii) The proposed use will not be detrimental or injurious to the public health as the proposed Fowler Creek Guest Ranch will benefit public health by helping to alleviate dangerous roadside conditions and providing an expansion of safe tourist facilities in a largely underdeveloped area in the northwestern portion of Kittitas County. For a plan as to how Fowler Creek Guest Ranch will provide safe public health facilities, see Exhibit 8: Domestic Water Plan and Options and Exhibit 9: Sewage Treatment Plan.

In addition, Fowler Creek Guest Ranch will ensure that all users with access to Fowler Creek Guest Ranch will be educated on the importance of public health within the community. Fowler Creek Guest Ranch will improve public health.

(iii) The proposed use will provide a safe and peaceful environment for users and residents of Kittitas County as it will remove some of the unsafe and unpeaceful uses that are now occurring within rural areas of Kittitas County such as parked recreational vehicles on private property and on the sides of roads. In addition, the proposed use is in an isolated location surrounded by a forested area. The proposed guest ranch is being planned for the southern center and western portion of the property which are more isolated from the surrounding private properties due to natural land features, neighboring land uses, and Forest Service Road 4517. The bordering private property will not be connected to the guest ranch facility in order to preserve and maintain measures of safety and peace. This entire development is being planned to provide a safe and peaceful environment.

(iv) The proposed use will not impact the character of the surrounding neighborhood as all development and construction will be maintained within the 84.3 acres +/- . As the main appeal of the development will be its rural charm, much of the natural environment

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within the property will be preserved and, because of this, little work will be done that will impact the surrounding neighborhood. Required setbacks that border the surrounding properties will meet or exceed the requirements of the Rural Residential zoning and land use. Fowler Creek Guest Ranch as well as the properties to the north, west, south, and east are all zoned Rural Residential, so the land use is determined to be similar. See Exhibit 6: Surrounding Properties for additional information on each of the neighboring properties.