



KITTITAS COUNTY COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

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"Building Partnerships – Building Communities"

Mountain River Trails Administrative Conditional Use File Number ACU-26-00001 FINDINGS OF FACT, DECISION AND CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL

I. GENERAL INFORMATION

Requested Action: The applicants are proposing an RV park that has existed since 1970. Included with the park is an existing clubhouse building and 7 restroom buildings. The property is zoned Forest and Range with Rural Working land use.

Location: Parcel # 604735, located 0.25 miles East of South Cle Elum, WA on Mountain River Trails Road, in SEC 35 TWP 20 RGE 15; in Kittitas County.

II. SITE INFORMATION

Total Property Size:	64.84 acres
Number of Lots:	1 (no new lots are being proposed)
Domestic Water:	City of Cle Elum
Sewage Disposal:	On-Site Septic
Power/Electricity:	City of Cle Elum, WA
Fire Protection:	Fire District 7 (Cle Elum)
Irrigation District:	None

Site Characteristics:

North: Yakima River and Interstate 90
South: Palouse to Cascades Trail and forest land
East: Residential use forest land
West: Mix of residential, City of South Cle Elum

Access: The site is accessed from Mountain River Trails Road.

Zoning and Development Standards: The subject property has a Zoning designation of Forest and Range with a Land Use designation of Rural Working. The purpose and intent of the Forest and Range zone is to provide for areas of Kittitas County wherein natural resource management is the highest priority and where the subdivision and development of lands for uses and activities incompatible with resource management are discouraged. The proposed project is classified as "Campground." Per KCC 17.08.155 "Campground" means any parcel or tract of land under the control of any person, organization, or governmental entity wherein two (2) or more recreational vehicle, recreational park trailer or other camping unit sites are offered for the use of the public or members of an organization. Typically the length of stay for a majority of the guests will range from one (1) to fourteen (14) days. The purpose of a campground use shall relate primarily to vacation, recreation and similar pursuits, and is not a place of permanent residence for the campers. A single-family residence may be allowed for the owner or caretaker. Very limited service commercial activities may be allowed which are intended for campers of the

campground and must be approved as part of a conditional use permit. Youth Camps may offer additional education and child-care assistance elements as secondary uses to the Campground. These secondary uses shall comply with all applicable Federal, State and local regulations

Per KCC 17.15.060(1), campgrounds are allowed with conditional use procedures specified in KCC 17.60A and the general requirements of the code are applicable to this proposed development. The conditional use permit criteria are examined in Section VII “Project Analysis” of this staff report. This Administrative Conditional Use requires that the following be met:

III. ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW

Deem Complete: An administrative conditional use permit application for Mountain River Trails (ACU-26-00001) was submitted to Kittitas County Community Development Services Department on April 13, 2026. The application was deemed complete on May 11, 2026.

Notice of Application: A Notice of Application for the Mountain River Trails Administrative Conditional Use Permit (ACU-26-00001) was mailed to adjacent landowners located within 500 feet of any portion of the boundary of the proposal's tax parcel & associated Agencies on May 13, 2026. Notice was given to and published in the official newspaper of record for Kittitas County, and notice was posted to the Kittitas County Website on May 14, 2026, all in conformance with the Kittitas County Project Permit Application Process (Title 15A).

IV. COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The Kittitas County Comprehensive Plan has established specific goals and policies associated with Rural Resource lands. The following goals and policies guide activities on Rural Resource lands throughout the County. These goals and policies were developed in response to identified needs within the county, and support the County Wide Planning Policies:

RP-14: Uses common in rural areas of Kittitas County enhancing rural character, such as agriculture uses in Lower Kittitas and rural residential uses and recreation uses in Upper Kittitas shall be protected from activities which encumber them.

Staff Consistency Statement: The proposed project is for a recreational land use in Upper Kittitas County. The project is being proposed in an area where the primary surrounding uses are recreational in nature.

RR-G28: Increase rural tourist and rural recreational spaces while maintaining environments characteristic to rural areas.

Staff Consistency Statement: The proposed project would provide recreation opportunities in Upper Kittitas County by providing recreation focused lodging facilities. “Rural character”, as defined in RCW 36.70a.030, refers to the land use patterns established in the county and a focus “...in which open space, the natural landscape, and vegetation predominate over the built environment...” and “...that foster traditional rural lifestyles, rural-based economies, and opportunities to both live and work in rural areas...”. The predominate land use pattern of the surrounding neighborhood is recreational. CDS staff finds the proposed project would likely not conflict with the established rural recreational residential development of the adjacent community.

RR-P17: Limit development in rural areas through density requirements that protect and maintain existing rural character, natural open space, critical areas, and recreation areas. Direct rural development to lands that have adequate public services.

Staff Consistency Statement: While the proposed project would increase recreational options in Upper Kittitas

County they will not increase more than what is currently available as this use has technically existed since 1970.

RR-G26: Maintain and enhance the extraordinary and expansive recreational opportunities in Kittitas County.

Staff Consistency Statement: *The proposed project would provide additional outdoor recreation opportunities and recreational lodging in Upper Kittitas County.*

RR-P61: Commercial uses proposed for development to service recreational tourists and residents will be permitted in spaces when found to be suitable to surrounding rural areas.

Staff Consistency Statement: *The proposed development contains limited commercial focused structures which would service recreational tourists.*

RR-G14: Provide opportunity for development for recreational purposes which are consistent with rural character and protect public health and safety.

Staff Consistency Statement: *The proposed development is for recreational purposes and unlikely to harm public health or safety.*

This application is consistent with the goals, policies, and objectives of the Kittitas County Comprehensive Plan as outlined above.

V. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

A SEPA checklist was submitted with the conditional use application and processed concurrently using the Optional DNS process under WAC 197-11-355. Comments were received from the public and various agencies. All comments were considered in the SEPA determination. An MDNS was issued on July 16, 2026. No appeals were received during the appeal period.

The proposed project is subject to the provisions of KCC 17A Critical Areas. A review of the Kittitas County COMPAS mapping system indicates a Type F stream (Yakima River) is present on site. The Yakima River has a 150' buffer, measured from the ordinary high-water mark, and an additional 15' structural setback from the edge of the buffer. Along with the river is a floodway and floodplain. Code enforcement compliance efforts have been successful in removing unpermitted structures in the floodway and addressing building placement in the floodplain.

VI. AGENCY AND PUBLIC COMMENTS

Applicable agencies, adjacent property owners, and interested parties have been given the opportunity to review this proposal. All comments are on file and available for public review. The following parties provided comments during the comment period: Bonneville Power Administration, Washington State Department of Health ODW, Kittcom, Washington State Parks, Public Health, Kittitas County Public Works, WDFW, DNR, Fire District 7, Kittitas County Fire Marshal, and Department of Archeology and Historic Preservation.

Bonneville Power Administration

BPA has reviewed the proposed plan and does not have any facilities within this area. BPA has no comments at this time..

Applicant Response: *The applicant provided no response.*

Staff Response: Staff has no response.

Washington State Department of Health ODW

- Based on the input from the City of Cle Elum that the site is connected to the city water system and no plans exist to discontinue water service office of drinking water has no further questions or concerns.

Applicant Response: The applicant provided no response.

Staff Response: The application has been conditioned to retain water service from the City of Cle Elum which will meet WSDOHODW requirements.

Kittitas County Public Works

Access

- An approved access permit may be required from the Kittitas County Department of Public Works prior to altering existing access.
- Maintenance of driveway approaches shall be the responsibility of the owner whose property they serve. The County will not maintain accesses.
- In addition to the above-mentioned conditions, all applicable Kittitas County Road Standards apply to this proposal. Access is not guaranteed to any existing or created parcel on this application.

Engineering

- Except as exempted in KCC 14.05.060, no grading or filling upon a site involving more than one hundred (100) cubic yards shall be performed without a grading permit from the County Engineer or Public Works designee (KCC 14.05.050). An application for grading in excess of five hundred (500) cubic yards shall be accompanied by an engineered grading plan (KCC 14.05.080).

Transportation Concurrency

- A concurrency evaluation and determination shall be required for all development applications in which the proposed development is projected to have an impact upon the transportation corridor or intersection. Developments generating 41 or fewer daily trips are exempt from the TIA and concurrency evaluation requirements.

Flood

- Parcel 604735 is within the FEMA mapped special flood hazard area (100-year floodplain and floodway). The floodway is highly restricted and any development within this boundary must demonstrate no rise in the level of the 100-year flood before being permitted. All development within the floodplain requires a floodplain development permit. All construction, including structures that are exempt from a building permit, must follow the guidelines within KCC 14.08.
- Recreational vehicles shall not be stored unattended in special flood hazard area from January 1st until the Wednesday before Memorial Day and again from November 15th through December 31st. Additionally, recreational vehicles must be fully licensed and ready for highway use, on its wheels or jacking system, be attached to the site only by quick disconnect type utilities and security devices, and have no permanently attached additions.

Applicant Response: The applicant provided no response.

Staff Response: The application has been conditioned to meet Public Works requirements.

Kittcom

This particular campground raises numerous addressing related issues. We view this as an opportunity to reset and

make sure that the addressing architecture is correct, the sites addresses are logical and follow a pattern, and that all sites are clearly marked from both directions of travel. This is a public safety issue that has existed for years. As it stands now, the addresses do not validate as 1000 Mountain River Trails Rd # 10A, #6F, 14B, Clubhouse, etc.

Applicant Response: *The applicant provided no response.*

Staff Response: *Staff has reached out to Medic 1 and Fire District 7 to collaborate and provide a solution to the addressing issue.*

DAHP

DAHP originally provided comments requesting a cultural resource survey, after consultation and explaining that the campground already exists and no ground disturbing activities are proposed for the project Mr. Mcnaughten revised his comments to let the project go with an IDP.

Applicant Response: *The applicant responded asking if there was a way not to require a cultural resources survey.*

Staff Response:
Staff described the project to DAHP and after consultation the application has been conditioned to prepare for the inadvertent discovery of cultural resources.

Fire District 7

Addressing and Emergency Location Identification For effective emergency response, it is essential that every campsite, RV pad, rental unit, and occupied location within the development be assigned a **unique, clearly visible, and county-compliant address or site number**. There have been prior incidents at this campground where incomplete or unclear site addressing created challenges in locating the caller or incident scene. These experiences highlight the importance of establishing a fully compliant and clearly visible addressing system moving forward.

Inaccurate, missing, or non-visible addressing directly increases emergency response time by delaying dispatch mapping, complicating responder navigation, and impairing location verification—especially during low-visibility conditions such as smoke, darkness, or winter weather. The Fire District requests that the applicant provide a complete addressing plan that meets county standards and ensures rapid identification of all units during emergency operations.

Emergency Apparatus Access Fire District #7 also emphasizes the need for all-weather, unobstructed emergency access that meets the required width, grade, and turning radius necessary for fire apparatus. Roads and drive aisles must be capable of supporting the weight and dimensions of emergency vehicles year-round. Clear access is critical for timely arrival, effective deployment of equipment, and the safety of both occupants and first responders.

Applicant Response: *The applicant provided no response.*

Staff Response: *The application has been conditioned to update the addressing scheme and provide visible space identification. Also included is the requirement for all access roads to meet minimum widths and turning radius keeping driveways clear and providing code compliant turn-arounds.*

Kittitas County Fire Marshal

- Building construction occurring subsequent to this application shall be in accordance with the provisions of the county's building and fire codes. Additional specific requirements may be made at the time of building construction as a result of the permit review and approval process.
- Fire flow in the amount of 1500 gallons per minute supplied at 20 psi for 120 minutes duration is required

for this application. Prior to final approval submit proof from the water purveyor indicating that the required fire flow is available at the site. Water mains supplying fire flow and fire hydrants shall be installed, approved and operational prior to final plat approval. This is based on a 2788 square foot club house of Type 5B construction.

- Fire hydrants are required for this application. Either the indicated number or the spacing of the fire hydrants is inadequate. Provide fire hydrants such that the maximum spacing between hydrants does not exceed 500 feet and such that no lot or parcel is in excess of 500 feet from a fire hydrant as measured along approved fire apparatus access roads.
- Fire apparatus access is required for this application. The roadways and maneuvering areas as indicated in the application do not adequately provide the required fire apparatus access. Provide fire apparatus access roads with an unobstructed width of not less than 20 feet, an unobstructed vertical clearance of not less than 13.5 feet, with an all-weather driving surface and capable of supporting the imposed loads of fire apparatus.
- Approved fire apparatus turnarounds are required for this project. The indicated provisions for turning around fire apparatus are not adequate. Provide a turnaround meeting the requirements of the International Fire Code Appendix D.
- Streets and roads shall be identified with approved signs. Lots shall be signed with proper addresses.
- No gate may be installed across a required fire department access road or driveway without first obtaining a permit from the fire marshal's office. Inspection and testing of the gate will be required.

Applicant Response: The applicant provided no response.

Staff Response: The application has been conditioned to meet the Fire Marshal's requirements.

Kittitas County Public Health

- Environmental health records indicate prior public health enforcement actions associated with the property related to wastewater handling, sewage disposal practices, solid waste accumulation, and general sanitation concerns. Prior health orders issued by Kittitas County Public Health Department required corrective actions related to waste management and wastewater disposal practices.

Applicant Response: The applicant provided no response.

Staff Response: The application has been conditioned to obtain proper permitting from the Health Department for operating the campground including wastewater and sanitation.

Washington State Parks

State Parks has reviewed the proposed plan and requests additional information on the scope of the project. In addition, State Parks requests information on whether and how the proposed project would impact the adjacent Palouse to Cascades Trail.

Applicant Response: The applicant provided no response.

Staff Response: Staff communicated the scope of the project with State Parks and also confirmed there are no connections to the Palouse to Cascades Trail proposed with this application.

Department of Natural Resources

Based on remote review of this parcel(s) it appears that some or all of the parcel(s) consist of forestland, and it will require a Forest Practices Application (FPA) from the DNR if merchantable timber is removed/harvested as part of the proposal and/or is being converted out of forest land (RCW 76.09 and WAC 222). The FPA would need to meet the requirements of the Forest Practices Act and its rules. It is our recommendation that the applicant meet with our local forest practices forester to discuss, they may call our Southeast Region office at (509) 925-

8510 to schedule an appointment.

Applicant Response: The applicant provided no response.

Staff Response: The application has been conditioned to obtain proper permitting from the DNR.

Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) has reviewed the application materials available on file and we have specialized knowledge of the wildlife and critical areas surrounding the project area. As an agency of expertise, we offer the following comments to be considered as part of this review and determination process.

We acknowledge that Mountain River Trails Campground has been in operation for multiple decades, this is an opportunity to bring the Campground into compliance with today's regulations for protection of important Shorelines and critical areas that exist throughout the parcel. The Yakima River is a Shoreline of Statewide significance in this reach and home to numerous native aquatic species. Spring Chinook salmon and coho salmon spawn and rear throughout this reach of the Yakima River. Juvenile salmon are likely to seek refuge from the higher flows of the mainstem river in the small channels through the property. Mid-Columbia Steelhead are also present in this reach and are listed as Threatened by the Endangered Species Act. The floodplain and riparian habitat throughout Mountain River Trails Campground are important parts of the riverine ecosystem and are critical to the long-term health of the river and habitat creation for anadromous salmon, steelhead, and other native fishes in the Yakima River.

During review of this project, we did not see a site plan that identifies existing infrastructure such as buildings, roads, septic tanks, or camping facilities. **We recommend that a site plan with existing infrastructure be compared with today's critical area and Shoreline requirements to ensure that this conditional use permit is conditioned such that it is consistent with today's CAO and SMP standards.** WDFW would welcome the opportunity to work directly with the County and project proponents to review the site plan and recommend measures to enhance the habitat throughout the Campground while maintaining recreational opportunities.

Additionally, as part of this conditional use permit, **WDFW recommends that a habitat management plan be incorporated into the approval due to the critical areas and Shoreline present on the site.** The habitat management plan should identify existing critical areas and protection measures associated with them as well as adaptive management provisions in consultation with WDFW as a condition of approval.

Applicant Response: The applicant provided no response.

Staff Response: The application has been conditioned to include a Habitat Management Plan .

Public Comments

No public comments were received.

VII. PROJECT ANALYSIS

In review of this proposal, it is important to consider the goals and policies of the comprehensive plan, applicable county code, public and agency comments, any identified environmental concerns and state and federal requirements. Identified below is the planning staff's analysis and consistency review for the subject application.

Consistency with the Comprehensive Plan:

The proposal is consistent with the goals and policies of the Kittitas County Comprehensive Plan. As referenced above in Section IV of this staff report, the following Comprehensive Plan Goals and Policies apply to this proposal: LU-P1, E-P21 RR-G15.

Provided the applicant follows and maintains the Goals and Policies, they shall be in compliance with the Kittitas County Comprehensive Plan. Therefore, the County and applicant are in compliance with the Comprehensive plan.

KCC 17.60A.015 Review Criteria

1. The proposed use is essential or desirable to the public convenience and not detrimental or injurious to the public health, peace, or safety or to the character of the surrounding neighborhood.

Applicant Response:

No response

Staff Response:

Staff believes that the proposed use will not be detrimental or injurious to the public health, peace, safety, or to the character of the surrounding neighborhood. The existing campground has been in place for years. The campground, once cleaned up, will be a desirable place to recreate and provide much needed lodging.

2. The proposed use at the proposed location will not be unreasonably detrimental to the economic welfare of the county and that it will not create excessive public cost for facilities and services by finding that:
 - a. The proposed use will be adequately serviced by existing facilities such as highways, roads, police and fire protection, irrigation and drainage structures, refuse disposal, water and sewers, and schools; or
 - b. The applicant shall provide such facilities; or
 - c. The proposed use will be of sufficient economic benefit to offset additional public costs or economic detriment.

Applicant Response:

No Response

Staff Response:

The proposed use will be adequately serviced by existing facilities and public services. CDS has determined that the project will provide a positive public benefit without negative economic or public service impacts to the Kittitas County public.

3. The proposed use complies with relevant development standards and criteria for approval set forth in this title or other applicable provisions of Kittitas County Code.

Applicant Response:

No Response

Staff Response:

The project, as conditioned, complies with Kittitas County Development standards.

4. The proposed use will mitigate material impacts of the development, whether environmental or otherwise.

Applicant Response:

No Response

Staff Response:

The application and staff review have identified potential environmental impacts can be addressed through a habitat management plan developed to improve the health of the riparian management zone of the Yaima River within the project site.

5. The proposed use will ensure compatibility with existing neighboring land uses.

Applicant Response:

No Response

Staff Response:

The proposed use is consistent with county code and the existing use of the parcel. CDS finds the use, as conditioned, compatible with existing neighboring land uses and in turn consistent with this criterion.

6. The proposed use is consistent with the intent and character of the zoning district in which it is located.

Applicant Response:

No Response

Staff Response:

CDS staff has confirmed that, per KCC 17.15.060(1), "Recreational Vehicle Parks" may be permitted with a Conditional Use application in the Forest and Range zone. This project is consistent with the "Recreational Vehicle Park" definition which has been identified as a compatible use within the Forest and Range zone per KCC 17.15.060.1.

7. For conditional uses outside of Urban Growth Areas, the proposed use:

- a. Is consistent with the intent, goals, policies, and objectives of the Kittitas County Comprehensive Plan, including the policies of Chapter 8, Rural and Resource Lands;
- b. Preserves "rural character" as defined in the Growth Management Act
- c. Requires only rural government services; and
- d. Does not compromise the long-term viability of designated resource lands.

Applicant Response:

No Response

Staff Response:

CDS staff finds that this project is located just outside the UGA of the town of South Cle Elum, WA. Therefore rural government services would respond as needed. The proposal does meet the intent of the goals, policies and objectives of the Kittitas County Comprehensive Plan. The allowed use does preserve the rural character and does not compromise the long-term viability of designated resource lands.

Conditional Uses:

This application is consistent with the requirements of KCC 17.60A.015 as demonstrated above.

Consistency with the provisions of KCC 17A, Critical Areas:

Staff conducted an administrative critical area review in accordance with KCC 17A. GIS information indicates the Yakima River a Type F Stream with associated Shoreline borders this property. Any development within 200 feet of the ordinary high watermark is subject to the Shoreline Master Program.

Consistency with the provisions of KCC 17.56, Forest and Range Zone:

This proposal, as conditioned, is consistent with the Kittitas County Zoning Code 17.56.

Consistency with the provisions of KCC 17.60A, Conditional Uses:

This proposal as conditioned is consistent with the Kittitas County Zoning Code for Administrative Conditional Uses. The proposed administrative conditional use is consistent with Kittitas County Zoning Code 17.60A as described above.

Consistency with the provisions of the KCC Title 14.04, Building Code:

This proposal, as conditioned, is consistent with the provisions of KCC Title 14.

Consistency with the provisions of KCC Title 12, Roads and Bridges:

The proposal is consistent with the provisions of KCC Title 12.

Consistency with the provisions of KCC Title 20, Fire and Life Safety:

As conditioned, the proposal must be consistent with the provisions of KCC Title 20.

Agency Comments:

The following agencies provided comments during the comment period: Bonneville Power Administration, WSDOT, Kittitas County Public Works and Snoqualmie Tribe. All comments are on file and available for public review.

Public Comments:

There were no public comments submitted during the comment period.

Staff Conclusions:

1. As conditioned, the development meets the goals, policies and implementation recommendations as set forth in the Kittitas County Comprehensive Plan.
2. As conditioned, this proposal is consistent with applicable federal and state laws and regulations.
3. Public use and interest will be served by approval of this proposal.
4. As conditioned, the proposal is consistent with Kittitas County Code Title 17 Zoning, Title 17A Critical Areas, Title 17.15.060.1 Allowed Uses, Title 17.60A Conditional Uses, Title 14.04 Building Code, Title 12 Roads and Bridges, and Title 20 Fire and Life Safety.

Conditions of Approval:

1. Building

- a. The applicant shall conform to Kittitas County Code Title 14 and the International Building Code adopted at the time of building permit submittal.

2. State and Federal

- a. The applicant must meet all state and federal regulations.

3. Fire & Life Safety

- a. All development, design and construction shall comply with Title 20 Fire and Life Safety and the International Fire Code requirements.

4. Road and Transportation

- a. An approved access permit may be required from the Kittitas County Department of Public Works prior to altering existing access.
- b. Maintenance of driveway approaches shall be the responsibility of the owner whose property they

- serve. The County will not maintain accesses.
- c. Except as exempted in KCC 14.05.060, no grading or filling upon a site involving more than one hundred (100) cubic yards shall be performed without a grading permit from the County Engineer or Public Works designee (KCC 14.05.050). An application for grading in excess of five hundred (500) cubic yards shall be accompanied by an engineered grading plan (KCC 14.05.080).
 - d. Any proposed lighting must be directed down towards the site.

5. Archaeology and Historic Preservation

- a. Should ground disturbing or other activities related to the proposed project result in the inadvertent discovery of cultural or archaeological materials, work shall be stopped in the immediate area and contact be made with the Washington State Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (DAHP). Work shall remain suspended until the findings are assessed, and appropriate consultation is conducted. Should human remains be inadvertently discovered, as dictated by Washington State RCW 27.44.055, work shall be immediately halted in the area and contact made with the coroner and local law enforcement in the most expeditious manner possible.

From these conclusions and findings, the proposed Administrative Conditional use is approved with the above conditions. Kittitas County Code (Chapter 15A.07.010) stipulates that an appeal of this land use decision must be filed within 10 (ten) working days by submitting specific factual objections and a fee of \$1,670 to the Kittitas County Community Development Services at 411 N Ruby St. Suite 2; Ellensburg, WA 98926. The appeal deadline for this project is **July 31, 2026, at 5:00p.m.**

Responsible Official

Jamey Ayling

Title: Planning Manager

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Date: July 16, 2026