

## **Coyote Management Plan**

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this plan is to provide strategic actions that increase the community's knowledge and understanding of how to live with coyotes, and guidelines for responses to conflicts with coyotes. This plan seeks to give structure and definition to resolve human-coyote conflicts in a thoughtful, consistent and expedient manner. The plan also seeks to identify and achieve a balance between the importance of human safety and the importance of native wildlife as part of the ecology of the region.

### **Strategic Plan**

This plan includes: (1) an education program that is ongoing and seasonally appropriate, (2) information about the rights and responsibilities of private property owners, (3) monitoring coyote activity, (4) implementing hazing programs appropriate for residents, volunteers and staff to implement as a method to instill natural wildlife wariness, and (5) targeted lethal control on private and public property as determined to be necessary for the public health and safety.

The plan is being continuously developed with the understanding that this is not a static plan, but rather one that may be situational and strategic in nature. Additionally, as the plan unfolds and the dynamics of the issue in question change, modifications to the plan may be advisable.

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### **Definitions**

The following definitions will be used in the process of obtaining information on which to base the decisions to implement different portions of the plan.

Observation: The act of noticing or taking note of tracks, scat or vocalizations.

Sighting: A visual observation of a coyote(s). A sighting may occur at any time of the day or night.

Encounter: An unexpected, direct meeting between a human and a coyote that is without incident.

Incident: A conflict between a human and a coyote where the coyote exhibits the following behavior: approaches a human and growls, bares teeth, or lunges; injures or kills an attended domestic animal. A human is not injured.

Attack: An aggressive action initiated by the coyote that involves physical contact with a human and/or a human is injured by a coyote.

Provoked: A provoked attack or incident is where the human involved encourages the coyote to engage. Examples include allowing a dog off-leash in an on-leash area; a dog on a leash longer than 6' in length or a human intentionally approaches a coyote natal den or feeds the coyote.

Unprovoked: An unprovoked attack or incident is where the human involved does not encourage the coyote to engage.

Domestic Animal Loss or Injury: When a coyote injures or kills a pet animal. This definition also includes "depredation" which is predation on domestic pets or livestock. Depredation is normal behavior in a coyote.

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**Unattended Domestic Animal Loss or Injury:** When a coyote injures or kills a pet animal that is unattended by a human. This category would also include pet loss or injury by a coyote of pets that are off-leash/extended leash in open space or left unattended in a back yard where coyote habitat is present.

**Attended Domestic Animal Loss or Injury:** When a coyote injures or kills a pet animal that is attended by a human. This category would also include pet loss or injury by a coyote of pets that are on leash with a 6' leash and are not left unattended in a back yard where coyote habitat is present.

**Livestock Loss or Injury:** When a coyote injures or kills livestock.

**Feeding of coyotes:** The following are definitions of the types and kinds of ways that humans feed coyotes.

**Intentional Feeding:** A resident or business is actively and intentionally feeding coyotes. This category includes intentionally providing food for animals that are in the coyote food chain except for bird feeders.

**Unintentional Feeding:** A resident or business is unintentionally providing access to food. Examples are inappropriate composting, fruit from fruit trees that is on the ground, pet food/water bowls, barbecue grills, sheds and doors (house) left open, etc.

**Unintentional Feeding – Bird Feeders:** A resident or business that has bird feeders that may provide food for coyotes, e.g. birds, bird food, squirrels, etc. Bird feeders must be kept high enough off of the ground that a coyote would not be able to reach the birds/animals feeding, and the area under the bird feeder must be kept clean and free of residual bird food.

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Unsecured Trash: Trash that is accessible to wildlife, e.g. individual garbage cans, bags or dumpsters that are uncovered, open, over-flowing or where trash is scattered outside of the receptacle.

Hazing: Hazing is a training method that employs immediate use of deterrents to move an animal out of an area or discourage an undesirable behavior or activity. Hazing techniques include loud noises, spraying water, bright lights, throwing non-edible objects toward the coyote, and shouting. Hazing can help maintain a coyote's fear of humans and deter them from neighborhood spaces such as backyards and play spaces. Hazing does not do damage to animals, humans or property. Hazing can be defined in three levels:

a. *Passive Hazing*: Passive Hazing occurs **without the presence** of a person and includes methods the homeowner or landowner can use to discourage the presence of the coyote on the property. This form of hazing may include sprinklers and lights operated by motion detectors, fence rollers, and electric fences.

b. *Active Hazing*: Active Hazing involves human intervention by both physical presence and action. The use of devices are designed to change the behavior of the habituated coyote can include noise making (air horns, whistles, rocks in cans), water squirted from hoses or water guns, rock throwing toward the coyote and verbal hazing.

c. *Aggressive Hazing*: Aggressive hazing techniques, e.g. paint balls, pepper balls, slingshots, etc., may be employed by situation and not in general, and on substantiated cases only. Because of the safety issues associated with aggressive hazing techniques, only highly skilled and trained experts or volunteers will be employed to assist.

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Active Coexistence: To exist together at the same time. Communities understand that there are times and places for coyotes to be active and do not haze the coyotes during these times or at these places. Communities decide on community space, including parks and open spaces where coyotes are allowed to exist. Humans take an active role in keeping coyotes in their community wild by removing attractants, taking responsibility for pet safety, hazing coyotes in neighborhood or community spaces (except for predetermined coyote appropriate areas); and learning about coyote ecology and behavior.

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**Coyote and Human Interactions and Responses:** The following are descriptions of interactions between coyotes and humans that will be used in the process of making decisions to implement different portions of the plan.

Level 1: A coyote that has been involved in an investigated and documented Unprovoked Attack on a human being. Targeted lethal control may be employed within 72 hours of the Attack.

Level 2: A coyote that has been involved in an investigated and documented Provoked Attack or an Incident with no pet involved. Immediate intervention by the jurisdiction occurs including a neighborhood coyote-safety meeting within four days of the Attack/Incident in the neighborhood of the Attack/Incident. The jurisdiction may also choose to employ targeted lethal control based on the investigation results showing a clear and continued threat to human health and safety.

Level 3: A coyote involved in an incident(s) and/or an attended Domestic Animal Loss. Citizens will be contacted and intervention action taken including education and hazing. Evaluation of the success of these actions will occur throughout the following thirty (30) days to assess whether aggressive hazing is recommended.

Level 4: A coyote that appears to frequently associate with humans or human related food sources, and exhibits little wariness of the presence of people, including unattended domestic animal loss. Reports will be taken, citizens contacted, and plan components will be initiated starting with education, awareness and low-level hazing methods.

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### **Coyote Education and Awareness**

The first and ultimately best element of the program is an education and awareness plan at all levels. This element uses in-house resources, websites and newsletters, printed material, and an unscientific mechanism to record the coyote activity. Educational materials will be obtained from organizations that are knowledgeable in the areas of coyote ecology and behavior of coyotes and trained volunteers and staff will facilitate the distribution of these educational materials as needed.

Educational and awareness programs will be provided for schools, neighborhood and district meetings, as well as other opportunities as they arise. These organizations will be systematically contacted to schedule the distribution of the information either by presentation or printed materials (largely focusing on problem areas).

Information about excluding or removing areas of habitat from residential property, identifying the attractants and removing them, as well as descriptions of hazing methods and tools that may be used to discourage coyotes from areas close to residential areas will be provided.

#### **Plan:**

1. Obtain, with permission, educational materials from organizations that are knowledgeable in the area of coyote ecology and behavior.
2. Identify and organize staff and volunteers that are available to provide the education and awareness materials to the residents.
3. Contact schools, community groups, homeowner organizations, libraries, medical centers, churches, recreation areas, and other groups where residents gather or obtain information.
4. Arrange with the organizations a time to distribute information concerning coyotes via presentation, printed materials, articles in newsletters, or other means.

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5. Distribute the information.
6. Follow up with the organization within thirty (30) days after distribution for feedback and further distribution if requested or needed.
7. Continually update the information available on the website and through newsletters to address seasonal differences, e.g. mating season, etc.
8. Schedule additional distribution of information on a regular basis (monthly, quarterly, seasonally, etc.) to make sure that current information is available throughout the community.

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### **Coyote Hazing Education Program**

A coyote hazing educational program will be implemented for residents. This educational program will include the benefits of coyote hazing and demonstrate suggested techniques. This educational program will become available at any time when the interactions between the humans and coyotes change from observation and sightings to encounters and incidents.

This program will be implemented in conjunction with key stakeholders including the Colorado Division of Wildlife (CDOW), law enforcement, parks and recreation districts, animal protection groups, and community organizations/schools. This component of the plan includes only those techniques that can safely be used by residents, volunteers and staff. The more aggressive techniques will only be implemented by trained personnel.

### **Plan:**

1. Incident tracking and creation of a centralized database of reports.
2. Identify the geographical areas where the coyotes have become habituated. This requires receiving information through the coyote sighting reports of habituated coyotes.
3. Contact the landowners, e.g. homeowner associations, community groups, libraries, schools, churches, parks and recreation officials, etc., in the areas of those reports and work with the landowners to develop a plan.
4. Identify the groups and individuals that will assist with the distribution of information.
5. Provide written and verbal information to the landowners on the possible types and methods of hazing. Tools may be provided for use in the hazing process,

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e.g. air horns, whistles, instructions for making hazing tools (cans with rocks), etc.

6. Schedule volunteers and staff to go to the identified areas, observe the coyote sightings and demonstrate the hazing techniques to the residents, school officials, etc.
7. Maintain a regular schedule of hazing activities for a sustained period of time (TBD) to achieve the desired change in the behavior of the coyotes for the highest possible long-term success.
8. Follow up after the coyote behavior has changed to see if further action is needed.
9. Contact adjacent landowners to the geographical areas where hazing techniques have been employed and inform them of the hazing activities. The adjacent landowners may choose to mimic the hazing activities, further encouraging the change in the behavior of the local coyote population. This effort may, on occasion, cross jurisdictional boundaries requiring coordinated efforts between the agencies and jurisdictions involved.

Hazing Techniques and Parameters: The chart describes the activity, classification and suggested guidelines for response. These guidelines should be used in conjunction with training received by approved personnel.

Animal Activity	Classification of interaction	Hazing Response
Coyote(s) seen moving through an area (any time of day)	Sighting/ Not aggressive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Examine location-if near to where people &amp; pets will be moving, clap hands, shout, try and startle it to leave.</li> <li>• Stay aware of animal's location until out of sight.</li> <li>• Coyotes are creatures of habit and may use same path, same time on other days.</li> </ul>

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Animal Activity	Classification of interaction	Hazing Response
Coyote(s) moving along same path as people/pets	Sighting/ Not aggressive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Don't ignore or avoid.</li> <li>• Make eye contact, yell, clap hands, use noise makers and encourage coyote to change path away from people/pets</li> </ul>
Coyote(s) sniffing areas recently vacated by people/pet	Sighting/ Not aggressive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Don't ignore or avoid.</li> <li>• Make eye contact, yell, clap hands, use noise makers and encourage coyote to move away from people/pets</li> </ul>
Coyote(s) entering back yard w/ no pet present	Sighting/ Not aggressive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aggressively face coyote-yell, clap, noisemakers, move towards, spray with hose, gather other people and encourage coyote to leave yard.</li> <li>• DO NOT STOP until coyote has left.</li> </ul>
Coyote(s) following person/pet	Sighting/ Watch for signs of aggression	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aggressively face coyote-yell, clap, noisemakers, move towards, gather other people and encourage coyote to change path away from people/pets.</li> <li>• DO NOT STOP until coyote has left.</li> </ul>
Coyote(s) entering back yard w/ pet present	Incident/ Expect aggression towards pet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Get pet inside or pick up if possible.</li> <li>• Aggressively face coyote-yell, clap, noisemakers, move towards, throw items, and spray with hose.</li> <li>• DO NOT STOP until coyote has left.</li> <li>• DO NOT INJURE COYOTE – can increase chance of attack. Report Incident</li> </ul>
Coyote(s) “playing” w/pet	Incident/ Expect aggression towards pet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DO NOT ALLOW.</li> <li>• Get pet inside or pick up if possible.</li> <li>• Aggressively face coyote-yell, clap, noisemakers, move towards, throw items, spray with hose.</li> <li>• DO NOT STOP until coyote has left.</li> <li>• DO NOT INJURE COYOTE – can increase chance of attack.</li> <li>• Report incident.</li> </ul>

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Animal Activity	Classification of interaction	Hazing Response
Coyote(s) circling a person/pet	Incident/ Watch for signs of aggression	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pick up pet if possible.</li> <li>• Aggressively face coyote-yell, clap, noisemakers, move towards other people, throw items.</li> <li>• Don't ignore and turn back to it.</li> <li>• DO NOT STOP until coyote has left.</li> <li>• DO NOT INJURE COYOTE – can increase chance of attack.</li> <li>• Report incident.</li> </ul>
Coyote(s) approaching, circling a child	Incident/ Watch for signs of aggression	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pick up child immediately, yell, noisemakers, throw things, act aggressively.</li> <li>• DO NOT RUN AWAY OR IGNORE.</li> <li>• DO NOT STOP until coyote has left the area.</li> <li>• Report immediately.</li> </ul>
Coyote(s) biting pet	Incident/ Aggressive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yell, call for additional people, pick up pet if possible, use item to hit coyote, it is possible and common to be able to scare a coyote into dropping pet.</li> <li>• THERE IS DANGER OF GETTING BITTEN BY GETTING BETWEEN ANIMAL AND PREY.</li> <li>• Report incident.</li> </ul>
Coyote(s) biting person	Attack/ Aggressive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yell, call for help, punch, kick and fight, coyote will usually flee.</li> <li>• Seek medical attention as needed.</li> <li>• Report incident to law enforcement and CDOW immediately.</li> </ul>

Aggressive Hazing: Aggressive hazing techniques, e.g. paint balls, pepper balls, slingshots, etc., may be employed situationally and on substantiated cases only. Because of the safety issues associated with aggressive hazing techniques, only highly skilled and trained personnel will be authorized to carry out this activity.

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### **Lethal Control Measures**

#### Private Property:

This plan does not address the rights and responsibilities of owners of private property in determining what lethal control measures may be used by private citizens on property owned by them. Owners of private property are responsible for obtaining and following all laws and regulations relating to this issue. Following is general information only.

Property owners may use lawful methods on their property to control nuisance wildlife. The State of Colorado prohibits the poisoning of animals for everything but undesirable pests defined in CRS Title 35. Intentionally placing poison where domestic pets and non-targeted animals or humans can access it is a violation of the statutes.

In November 1996, Colorado voters approved Amendment 14. This constitutional amendment created a “method of take” prohibition for wildlife with respect to the use of leghold and conibear type traps, snares and poisons. There were two exemptions written into the amendment – specific to the “method of take”. One is for agricultural damage, and the other is to address human health and safety. A property owner must apply for the human health and safety exemption through Tri-County Health Department to lawfully use these specific methods.

#### Public Property:

Targeted lethal control may be instituted when the interactions between humans and coyotes creates a verified danger to human safety. Information on the behavior of the coyotes will be obtained through the reports received by the investigator and evaluated in conjunction with the Colorado Division of Wildlife. Targeted lethal control may be utilized when a report has been received, verified, documented and investigated and the results clearly indicate that a coyote poses an immediate or continued danger to a human. It is recognized that it may be difficult to identify the specific coyote that has become problematic. All reasonable measures will be taken to obtain information that is as accurate as possible so that any lethal control measures employed are aimed at the offending coyote and not used indiscriminately.

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This Active Coexistence coyote plan is intended to prevent human/coyote conflicts. Education and hazing are the foundations of this plan and lethal control should only be used as an absolute last resort and when human safety is in jeopardy.

The definition of terms and descriptions of interactions between coyotes and humans previously outlined in this plan should be used to make the appropriate decision concerning the use of lethal control on public spaces. Documented investigation of the report should be used in conjunction with direction from CDOW and law enforcement to determine the best course of action.

### Plan for Public Property:

1. Obtain information from law enforcement, CDOW, citizen reports, school district officials, or other authorities that can identify and document the attack.
2. Perform, or request that a designated authority perform, an investigation of the attack obtaining relevant information, testimonies, and evidence.
3. Assess whether adequate education and hazing techniques have been employed, and if there are other options that are available.
4. Employ other non-lethal options if those are viable solutions.
5. If lethal control is the only option, obtain the documented investigation report, consider the advice of CDOW and law enforcement concerning the proper method to be used, e.g. shooting or trapping. That advice will be based on the evidence provided and an evaluation of the geographical location in question, e.g. highly residential or open space.
6. Provide immediate communications to the surrounding residential and school properties advising them of the potential unsafe activity of the coyote(s). The

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method of lethal control will be communicated to the residents and landowners unless adequate time is not available for that communication to occur.

7. Provide comprehensive follow up communications to the surrounding residential and school properties giving them the update and any additional information needed.
8. Once the offending coyote(s) has been removed, initiate an immediate and comprehensive education and awareness program in that area.
9. Follow up with residents and agencies in that area for several months to make sure that education and hazing techniques are being utilized.
10. Use volunteers and stakeholder groups as necessary for community outreach and education.

### Critical components are:

1. Investigation of the reports: The CDOW and/or law enforcement will investigate the attack and work in conjunction with each other to provide the documents, evidence, and report on which a decision will be based.
2. Identification of the offending coyote(s): As part of the investigation and documentation, eye witness accounts of the attack will assist the agencies in identification of the offending coyote(s). Only the offending coyote(s) should be targeted for lethal control.
3. Securing the personnel/professional to execute the lethal control tool chosen: A list of competent personnel and professionals should be selected and readily available to assist with all components of this portion of the plan. In all cases, the vendor responsible for executing the lethal control tool should not be the same

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vendor that assists with the identification and recommendation. Law enforcement and CDOW could provide the same service.

### The tools for lethal control and their parameters for usage are:

*Shooting:* If shooting is the recommended method, a company or agency will be secured to shoot the coyote. In some cases law enforcement will be the recommended agency. An evaluation of the report and geographical location will be considerations when choosing this tool.

#### Pros:

- Potentially selective, if a specific coyote is shot after a verified attack on a person.
- Non-target species would not be in danger.
- More humane and expedient.

#### Cons:

- Public safety issue from firearms discharge in urban/suburban areas if you do not have a safe backstop.
- Requires well-trained shooters.

#### Pros/Cons:

- Expense would depend on who the shooter is, e.g. police officer, city employee, or contracted private individual.
- Humane to the coyote – humane if it is a quick, 1-shot kill, inhumane if animal is wounded and the coyote escapes or has prolonged death.

*Live Trap/Euthanasia:* Live traps are allowed without the need of an exemption permit. The offending coyote may not be relocated and must be euthanized as soon as possible after being trapped. Caution should always be used to make sure that domestic animals and/or children are not trapped. Signs must be posted and traps checked every three (3) hours to ensure public and domestic animal safety. If the non-target coyote is trapped, it may be released at the trap site and cannot be moved to another area for release. Care must be taken to when releasing a non-target coyote from a life

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trap since the coyote may be frightened and may have been injured in this process. It is recommended and preferred that active traps are constantly monitored.

### Pros:

- Allowed without special application process.
- Humane trap.

### Cons:

- Methods of euthanasia may create a dangerous situation, e.g. shooting.
- Children or non-target animals can potentially be caught.
- Nontarget coyotes may be caught.
- Expensive if following the recommendation that active traps are constantly monitored.

*Darting/Euthanasia:* If tranquilization by darting and subsequent euthanasia is the chosen tool, a company or agency will be secured to provide this service. In some cases law enforcement and/or CDOW will be the recommended agency. An evaluation of the report and the geographical location will be considerations when choosing this tool. A critical component of this tool is the safety of the public when considering whether this is a viable method, keeping in mind that tranquilizer agents do not take immediate effect and may create a dangerous situation in executing the darting and tracking/location of the tranquilized coyote.

### Pros:

- Most selective option.
- Most humane option.

### Cons:

- Logistic difficulties with domestic animals and humans in the area and location/access for performing euthanasia where the coyote may run after darted.

*Leg-hold Trapping:* If leg-hold trapping is recommended as a last resort, apply for a trapping exemption through Tri-County Health Department, and if the exemption is obtained, hire a private trapper to trap the offending coyote(s). Identification of the

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offending coyote should be done as part of the investigation performed by a law enforcement agency. The trapper will be required to post clear signage and employ public safety measures to notify the residents and landowners. All required permits/applications with the Tri-County Health Department will be on file in preparation of submitting to Tri-County in the event of an emergency situation. The offending coyote may not be relocated and must be euthanized as soon as possible after being trapped. Caution should always be used to make sure that domestic animals and/or children are not trapped. Signs must be posted and traps checked every three (3) hours to ensure public and domestic animal safety. It is recommended and preferred that active traps are constantly monitored.

### Pros:

- May be necessary if a human has been bitten by a coyote and shooting is not an option.

### Cons:

- Not selective for the offending coyote.
- Non-target animals could be trapped.
- Considered a method that is not humane and requires application and approval by the Colorado Department of Health and the Colorado Division of Wildlife.
- Expense is potentially the highest option due to the number of days and trap visits that may be required.