



Hannah Elliott

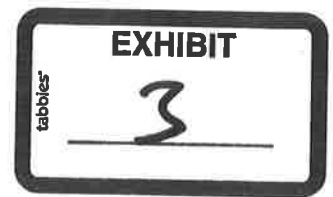
From: Amy Stuart <amystuart63@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, February 29, 2024 3:44 PM
To: Plan
Subject: Comments on Proposed Crook County Standards for Outdoor Lighting
Attachments: Stuart Gerdes Tices Alexander Response to Crook Co Lighting Standards 3 families Grizzly Mtn Feb 29 2024.pdf; CUP Response Letter Stuart & Gerdes.pdf

Dear Crook County Planning Commission and Community Development,

Please see attached letters in support of proposed outdoor lighting standards, suggestions for additions, and a request to Crook County Community Development in 2017 asking for the county to limit outdoor lighting on a request for a non farm dwelling that has become a severe nuisance to several neighboring properties.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.
Amy Stuart and Mike Gerdes

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plan@crookcountyor.gov

Re: Record Number: regarding 217-24-000016-PLNG

February 29, 2024

Crook County Community Development
Crook County Planning Commission and Staff
300 NE 3rd Street, Prineville, OR 97754

Dear Crook County Planning Commission and Staff,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit public comments on proposed outdoor lighting standards for Crook County. We are Crook County residents living on Grizzly Mountain that chose to move here years ago to enjoy night skies and darkness. The families included in this letter have lived on Grizzly Mountain for 10, 20 and in some cases over 30 years. We are concerned about the ever-growing number of houses on Grizzly Mountain and nearby areas at the north end of the county that add more and more outdoor lighting that has steadily diminished our enjoyment of nighttime dark skies. We are also concerned about the impacts to native resident and migratory wildlife species. We respectfully request that you consider our comments and make strong provisions to reduce the impacts of outdoor lighting on neighboring residences and native wildlife.

We have seen the number of homes and related structures like garages and workshops on Grizzly Mountain and nearby areas at the north end of the county more than double, particularly in the past 7 years. Many of these new homes and structures have installed outdoor lighting that has impaired the night skies, caused light trespass pollution and glare on our properties, and created nuisances that impact the quality of our night skies and our lives.

Besides the abusive practice of creating nuisance outdoor pollution, Dark Sky, a global authority on light pollution, ([https://darksky.org/resources/what-is-light-pollution/effects/energy-climate/Wildlife and ecosystems](https://darksky.org/resources/what-is-light-pollution/effects/energy-climate/Wildlife-and-ecosystems)) states that outdoor lighting has negative impacts to human health, energy and climate change, crime and safety, and our night sky heritage.

The purpose of this letter is to comment on proposed amendments to the Crook County code Chapter 124.XX OUTDOOR LIGHTING, 124.XX.010 Policy and purpose, and 124.XX.030 Applicability. We strongly encourage and support new standards in the Policy and Purpose and emphasize ***"B. Prevent light from shining onto adjacent properties, rights-of-way, or the night sky; C. Encourage energy conservation without decreasing safety, utility, security, and productivity; D. Enhance the livability and nighttime enjoyment of property in [Crook County] by minimizing the negative impacts exterior lighting can have on surrounding persons, properties, rights-of-way, and the environment; and E. Establish guidelines for the installation and use of outdoor lighting that is controlled in such a way that it illuminates only the subject property and avoids illumination of surrounding properties, rights-of way, or the night sky."*** We appreciate inclusion of language in standard 124.XX.060, that declares neighboring properties that are a nuisance are not exempt from the standards even if installed prior to the effective date of Chapter 124.

We also urge the Commission to apply these standards to Heavy Industrial Zones including rock quarries and not exempt any commercial enterprises. For example, rock quarries in the Lone Pine area, especially the **"Sustainable Aggregate Resources" company along Lone Pine Road, has excessive lighting with high glare throughout the entire valley.** We also urge you to work with the City of Prineville to improve and enforce lighting standards in areas such as Les Schwab and Facebook on the bench above Prineville.

[An Example of a Nuisance and Trespass Problem](#)

One newly constructed home above us has bright lights that we can easily see from more than 5 miles away and are sometimes on all night. One of our households specifically sent a letter to the county requesting when the conditional use request was sent to neighboring landowners, that no new lights be allowed, or any outside lights must be shielded. Please see attachment (CUP Response letter Stuart and Gerdes, dated January 17, 2017). We never heard from the county regarding the letter, and the county never implemented requested outdoor light limitations as a requirement for this house despite our request.

Under proposed Count Code “124.XX.020 Definitions,” we are experiencing significant “light trespass”, of which several of us have asked the new owners of this house to turn off their lights or use shields, to no avail. Two of our households politely asked for them to turn off their bright lights and the new owners subsequently had a contractor add *more* outdoor lights. This is a particular problem because this house is above us on the mountain and shines down onto our properties. The owners are a particularly aggressive couple from Portland that do not understand the concept of having a good relationship with new neighbors in a country setting. While we understand the county may choose to “grandfather” existing homes in the new standards, *the letter requesting lighting limitations went to the county in 2017*, long before the house was built. We request that when the county adopts these standards, that the county should apply lighting standards to any recent homes or outbuildings built in the last 3 years, to the new homeowners on Grizzly Mountain that we submitted a formal request to limit their outdoor lighting, and any future development must comply with practices that stop nuisance outdoor lighting.

Wildlife Impacts

Some new residents use outdoor lights, like our new neighbor up the hill, and have bright glaring lights on all night. Besides impairing our enjoyment of the night sky and stars, it severely impacts native pollinators, resident and migratory birds, and big game species. Our area is designated as big game winter range, yet some newcomers leave their lights on every night and all night. Lights have been shown to dramatically alter behavior, deplete energy reserves, increase stress, and are linked to long term declines in a variety of wildlife. See the following links of examples of light pollution impacts to wildlife species, adding to declines in native species.

National Wildlife Federation <https://www.nwf.org/Magazines/National-Wildlife/2023/Summer/Conservation/Light-Pollution-Wildlife>

US Fish and Wildlife <https://www.fws.gov/story/2023-07/dim-lights-pollinators-and-plants-night>

National Geographic <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/environment/article/light-pollution-how-to-help-wildlife>

NASA <https://earthobservatory.nasa.gov/images/145767/night-lights-can-disrupt-wildlife>

Human Health and Crime

Dark Sky (<https://darksky.org/resources/what-is-light-pollution/effects/human-health/>) reports that research suggests that light pollution at night can negatively affect human health, increasing sleep disorders, obesity, depression, diabetes, breast cancer and more.

Dark Sky (<https://darksky.org/resources/what-is-light-pollution/effects/safety/>) reports that while outdoor lighting may make people *feel* safer, in fact there is no clear scientific evidence that shows increased outdoor lighting deters crimes. Several studies reported by Dark Sky has shown that it can actually increase crime.

Summary

Please consider outdoor lighting standards that include shielding light from the sky to direct it downward where it is needed and not outward or up. Require the use of colors that are less detrimental such as amber over bright white, requirements to shield lights from neighbors with consideration of elevation differences, and lights-off hours. Dark Sky reported that “Research indicates that light pollution is increasing at a global average rate of ten percent per year” which means the harmful effects to human health, wildlife and ecosystems, energy and climate change, crime and safety and night sky heritage is increasing.

Deschutes County has become an example of what Crook County could become without proper standards and enforcement of outdoor light pollution. **Please Don't “Bend” Prineville** and please avoid the mistakes Deschutes County has made in failing to limit and enforce light pollution standards.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Electronic signatures

/s/ Amy M. Stuart/ and /Michael G. Gerdes/

/s/ Jeff Tice/ and /Jaime Tice/

/s/ David Alexander/

Crook County Community Development Department
300 NE Third St.
Prineville, OR 97754

January 17, 2017

Re: Conditional Use Request for a non-farm dwelling on an existing 60 acre parcel in EFU-2;
Property #1315190000100; 217-16-000339-PLNG.

Dear Sirs,

We are writing this letter in response to a notification regarding a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) for building a non-farm dwelling on a property above our property on Grizzly Mountain Road. While we don't oppose the development we have several concerns:

1) One of the reasons we choose to live on Grizzly Mountain is the rural nature, clear skies, and the relative lack of light pollution. We ask that the owner of the property to either not put up a big flood light typically placed around houses or dwellings, or, if they do, please require a full shield so that we don't have to see a large flood light above and shining down on our property. Some cities that choose to restrict light pollution, such as the city of Tucson, have required shields so that while there is lighting, it restricts the amount of light pollution experienced by nearby dwellers. We request that the county require the landowner to implement a "full cutoff shield" or a "house-side shield", so that the lights are directed toward the ground where it belongs.

2) Ground water is becoming increasingly scarce, valuable and challenging to manage. The top 4 properties immediately below the proposed CUP property have all had to dig at least 2 if not 3 wells in the past 20 years. Some of these wells have been over 1,000 feet deep with no water found. In addition, some wells on Grizzly Mountain with water are notorious for having arsenic and are not potable. We hope the landowner is aware of this fact.

3) We note the easement for the Grizzly Mountain Road to the top of the mountain on the map. The map did not show the easement for John Dehler's 80 acres above and to the east of the property.

4) There is no public snow plowing available on Grizzly Mountain. We have been assisting our neighbors and plowing a portion of the Grizzly Mountain Road for over 25 years. We hope the landowner is aware that they will be responsible for plowing themselves out of their property and the portion of Grizzly Mountain Road that is not accessible to other neighbors. Plowing is required to get to Grizzly Mountain Rd and typically occurs every year for a few weeks. This year has been a very high snow pack year (which typically occurs about every 5 years) and has required landowners to pay for backhoes and road graders to plow their driveways. Even the chained-up backhoes have gotten stuck and required towing.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.



Amy M. Stuart



Michael G. Gerdes

Landowners on Grizzly Mountain Road