

August 28, 2019

Dan Williams  
Teller County Planning Official  
Teller County Planning Department  
P.O. Box 1886  
Woodland Park, Colorado 80866

RE: Lutheran Valley Retreat Special Use Permit File: Z17-0012

Dear Dan Williams:

We felt compelled to respond regarding the request for a special use permit by Lutheran Valley Retreat. As members of the community who legally own firearms and regularly hunt in the public lands in Teller County, it is concerning to us that there is the potential for an outdoor shooting range at Lutheran Valley Retreat. This is not an issue with people owning and using firearms, more so that shooting ranges should be operated by trained professionals. We understand there are shooting ranges on open land, this however is on private land and should be operated with the same level of care and professionalism as any other shooting range used by members. There is too much at stake, firearms not handled properly can be very dangerous. Since its inception the primary mission of Lutheran Valley Retreat is that of a youth camp for children. We feel that a youth camp licensed by the state is no place for a shooting range. We have chosen to personally send our children to other camps because of this. The use and safety of fire arms is an activity that we feel should be taught by parents and professionals. This is not a gun issue, but a concern with guns being used at a place established to teach children the beauty of out the outdoors, respect and conservation of nature, and give rest to those who need a retreat.

We understand the intent is not to use the range while youth camps are in session and reserve usage only for the adult retreats. If they were to obtain a permit allowing them to use the range only a limited number of days, it would be nearly impossible to police. History has shown that proper permitting and following the law comes as an afterthought for Lutheran Valley Retreat leadership, which is dangerous behavior when firearms are present. There have been past instances of shooting and using the National Forest adjacent to Lutheran Valley Retreat as a range for certain events. The results were large amounts of trash left behind from the events and a pure disregard for the rules established by the U.S. Forest Service. These actions were not condoned by the U.S. Forest Service and show a lack of respect for public land. Lutheran Valley Retreat then proceeded to begin construction of a shooting range on Retreat property without securing proper approval and permits. Google Earth Imagery from September 2016 clearly shows the development of this range prior to acquiring a permit from the planning department.

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Lastly, and what saddens us the most, is the attempted construction of this shooting range is causing a rift in our community that has co-existed peacefully for over 50 years. The world is filled with an extreme amount of adversity to which the youth camp at Lutheran Valley Retreat has successfully combated for thousands of children across the United States. We strongly believe the best way to continue this mission is by following the successful strategy implemented up until this point in time. We very sincerely request the denial for the special use permit related to a shooting range on Lutheran Valley Retreat property.

Respectfully,

Kathleen Arbogast and Paula Snowden

Lutheran Valley Ranch Members