

DISCOVERY HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION

Fence Policy and Recommendations

Introduction

The Discovery HOA has long endeavored to limit the use of fences throughout our neighborhood to preserve the natural beauty and openness of our community. The concept was to avoid becoming a sea of 6 ft solid fences that block our wildlife from moving about freely and mitigate the negative impact of poorly designed and ill-maintained fences.

However, one size does not fit all requests. As our demographics have changed and younger families with children and pets move into Discovery, we are receiving more requests for fencing. Fences are evaluated on an individual basis, which led your HOA board to document guidelines that will help clarify our policy for fence material and design, along with the benefits for doing so.

When we decide on an individual request, we look at factors such as height, design, and the extent of fencing requested. We are also revising and clarifying our community fence policy to include fire department recommendations and state legislation focused on reducing the risk of spreading fires more quickly in residential neighborhoods located in Wildland Urban Interface Areas and provisions to maintain wildlife corridors.

The Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI) refers to the transition zone between unoccupied land and human development. In neighborhoods like Discovery, the WUI is especially significant due to the proximity of homes and communities to natural, undeveloped areas. This interface poses unique challenges and opportunities, as it requires balancing development with the need to preserve natural landscapes and wildlife habitats. Effective management of the WUI is crucial for reducing wildfire risks, protecting property, and ensuring the safety of both residents and the environment. By incorporating fire-resistant building materials, creating defensible spaces around properties, and promoting community awareness, residents can mitigate the impact of wildfires and contribute to a more resilient and sustainable coexistence with nature.

The wildlife corridor can be viewed as a kind of highway for animals, weaving through neighborhoods like Discovery. By leaving a gap of 8 to 10 feet along one side of your yard when you build a fence, you're giving local wildlife—like deer, bobcat, and small critters—a safe passage.

These corridors are more than just a thoughtful gesture; they're crucial lifelines for many species whose habitats have been divided by development. By maintaining continuous habitats, wildlife corridors help preserve biodiversity, support ecosystems, and allow animals to move freely for breeding, feeding, and survival. Essentially, the corridors allowed by your fence are contributing to a thriving, interconnected natural community.

Benefits of the Policy – Why are we doing this?

1. **Cost-Effective and Sustainable:** The policy will help homeowners achieve the best outcome for their budget and home by providing clear guidelines on cost-effective and sustainable fence designs.

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2. **Reduced Maintenance:** Recommendations on design and material selection can reduce long-term maintenance costs for homeowners.
3. **Wildlife Corridors:** Maintaining wildlife corridors is crucial for the free movement of animals and preserving the natural ecosystem within our neighborhood.
4. **Fire Risk Mitigation:** The Discovery HOA location in the Colorado Springs Wildland Urban Interface is identified as a very high-risk fire neighborhood. Addressing fire safety in fence design can help reduce the risk of fires and potentially lower home insurance rates.

Policy Guidelines

The following guidelines have been established for fence policy within the Discovery HOA:

1. **Fence Height:** While the preference is for shorter fences, the fence shall not exceed 6 ft in height.
2. **Wildlife Movement:** Fence design needs to consider wildlife movement limitations and allow for the free movement of wildlife within our Discovery neighborhood.
3. **Materials:** Fences should be constructed with non-combustible materials when possible and allow wildlife to see what is on the other side. Combustible materials need to be fireproofed on a regular basis.
4. **Design:** Fence design should maximize horizontal railings, including split rails with heavier gauge metal wiring (See example in Attachment A).
5. **Maintaining Aesthetics:** Homeowners are encouraged to maintain the stability and appearance of their fences. This includes keeping fences in good repair and ensuring they blend with the natural environment. Weathered wood that matches the color of trees can be attractive, but falling or unstable fences are not.

Requirements and Recommendations

1. **Fence Styles:** Our policy encourages open fences ranging from 3'6" to 6'. We discourage 6-ft privacy fences. While we prefer horizontal boards (e.g., split rails) with wire where desired to limit access, we are open to various styles of fences. However, chain link fences are not allowed in Discovery. No fence may be installed or replaced without the written approval of our Architectural Review Committee (ARC).
2. **Neighbor Notification:** Homeowners must notify their adjacent neighbors of their proposed fence design prior to seeking ARC approval. This requirement is intended to foster community harmony. The notification must be documented via use of a Neighbor Notification Form which is available on our website. The completed form does not require approval of the neighbors, only notification, but must be submitted with any Property Improvement Request seeking permission to install or change a fence.

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3. **Wildlife Corridor:** An 8 to 10- ft wildlife corridor must be maintained to allow for the free movement of animals. The corridor on the outer perimeter of the fence must still be maintained; trimming and hauling out dead branches from trees, managing and removing ground fuels, along with the occasional weed and grass mowing.
4. **Avoid Cedar Picket Fences:** Cedar is a very resinous wood that burns at a low temperature. Due to studies showing that cedar picket fences contributed to fire spread in the Marshall fire along with the material having long-term maintenance issues, the use of cedar picket fences is discouraged.
5. **Fire Safety:** Homeowners should design fences with a focus on fire safety, using materials and designs that reduce the risk of fire spread. Upcoming Firewise legislation will be considered, including limitations on the attachment of wooden fences to houses. When new fences are installed or existing fences are replaced, non-combustible materials should be used for the final 5-ft attachment to the residence to avoid igniting soffits.
6. **Practicality and Costs:** The ARC recognizes the importance of practical costs and is open to concrete or black iron fences, though these may not be feasible for all homeowners.
7. **Visual Examples:** This policy document has included examples of fence designs to help guide homeowners. See attachment A.

The Discovery HOA appreciates the cooperation of all residents in adhering to these guidelines to maintain the beauty, safety, and harmony of our community.

The undersigned hereby certifies that the foregoing resolution was adopted and made a part of the minutes of the March 12, 2025, meeting of the Board of Directors of the Association.

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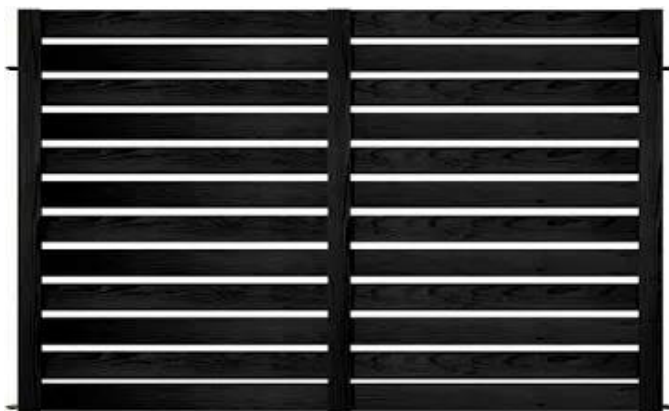
By: Gary A. Morrell, its President

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Attachment A:

Example of Fire-Resistant Fencing and Gate



DISCOVERY HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION Fence Policy and Recommendations



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DISCOVERY HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION Fence Policy and Recommendations

Bobcat walking through actual Discovery Wildlife Corridor



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Example of failing Cedar Picket Fence



What we don't want

