I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this document is to provide guidelines for responses to conflicts with coyotes, particularly to resolve and reduce human-coyote conflicts in a consistent and expedient manner. Public safety is the number one concern of the city and coyotes will be managed with human safety as a priority. While the city employs educational outreach tools as the primary tool in managing human-coyote conflicts, the city recognizes that there are situations where immediate lethal control is necessary.

II. RESPONSIBILITY

A. Animal Control is the primary contact for response and information regarding coyotes.
B. The Colorado Division of Parks and Wildlife (CPW) will provide guidance and education to residents and the city in managing nuisance coyotes. CPW personnel will respond to reports of dangerous coyotes and help make a management decision based on the interest of public safety.

III. EDUCATIONAL OUTREACH

A. Education and awareness are pro-active tools to avoiding human-coyote conflicts. Animal Control Officers, Parks & Open Space and Neighborhood Services staff, the city website, Inside Thornton magazine and Channel 8 are in-house resources to facilitate outreach.

1. The city will obtain educational materials and facilitate their distribution to schools, community groups, homeowner organizations, park and recreation areas, Ward meetings, city festivals and other community gathering opportunities.
   a) Coyotes are an important part of the natural ecosystem that controls the population of mice, voles, rabbits, snakes, insects and more.
   b) Coyotes are found throughout the United States, including within all our cities.
   c) The ultimate causes of human-coyote problems are direct or indirect feeding. Sources of food and water such as unsecured garbage, pet food outdoors, free-roaming cats and small dogs, fruit trees and ornamental fish ponds all attract coyotes.
2. The city will identify staff and volunteers that are available to provide education and awareness materials and presentations to residents.
3. The city will continually update the information available on the website, television or other means to address seasonal differences in coyote behavior during mating, pupping/denning and dispersal seasons.

B. Coexistence with coyotes is not a passive undertaking. Humans can shape coyote behavior. The city will encourage all residents to employ hazing techniques when encountering a coyote and will initiate a formal hazing program as a result of an encounter, incident or attack by a coyote.

1. The city will track and identify the geographic areas of coyote incident reports.
2. The city will provide written and verbal information on the possible types and methods of hazing techniques.
   a) Make eye contact, be as big, mean and loud as possible and never run if approached by a coyote.
b) Use air horns or home made noise-makers (i.e. 5-6 empty tin cans tied together and used as a clanger; aluminum foil covered soda or tin can filled with rocks or pennies and used as a shaker) to encourage a coyote to move away.

c) Don’t ignore or avoid a coyote. Do not stop hazing until the coyote has left.

3. The city will identify staff and volunteers available to distribute hazing educational materials and will schedule staff and volunteers as necessary to demonstrate hazing techniques to the community.

4. The city will schedule regular hazing activities for a sustained period of time as necessary. Aggressive hazing activities using projectile instruments may be employed situationally by city trained staff.

IV. DEFINITIONS OF COYOTE INTERACTIONS & GUIDELINES FOR RESPONSE

A. OBSERVATION - The act of noticing or taking note of tracks, scat or vocalizations.
City Response to an Observation

1. Provide caller with information on urban wildlife and ways to mitigate conflicts.
2. Mail caller additional information and/or refer to city or CPW website.

B. SIGHTING - A visual observation of a coyote(s).
City Response to a Sighting

1. Provide caller with information on urban wildlife and ways to mitigate conflicts.
2. Mail caller additional information and/or refer to city or CPW website.

C. ENCOUNTER - An unexpected direct meeting between a human and a coyote without incident.
City Response to an Encounter

1. Provide caller with information on urban wildlife and ways to mitigate conflicts.
2. Mail caller additional information and/or refer to city or CPW website.
3. Contact Police Communication Center, Animal Control Department, 720-977-5150.
4. Initiate a hazing program.

D. INCIDENT - A conflict between a human and a coyote where a coyote exhibited behavior creating an unsafe situation for the human.
City Response to an Incident

1. Notify Police Communication Center, Animal Control Department, 720-977-5150.
2. Notify the CPW.
3. Initiate a hazing program.
4. Provide caller with information on urban wildlife and ways to mitigate conflicts. Reference city or CPW website.
5. Determine if lethal control is appropriate and possible.

E. ATTACK - When a human is bodily injured or killed by a coyote.
City Response to an Attack

1. Notify Police Communication Center, Animal Control Department, 720-977-5150.
2. Notify the CPW.
3. Determine if lethal control is appropriate and possible.
4. Provide city-wide information on urban wildlife and ways to mitigate conflicts. Reference city and/or CPW website.
5. Initiate a hazing program.

V. DEFINITIONS OF COYOTE BEHAVIOR & GUIDELINES FOR RESPONSE

A. NUISANCE COYOTE
Habituated - A coyote that appears to frequently associate with humans or human related food sources and exhibits little wariness of the presence of people.
Menacing - A coyote that exhibits provoked territorial behavior toward humans, but that does not qualify it as a dangerous coyote.
City Response to a Nuisance Coyote
1. Notify Police Communication Center, Animal Control Department, 720-977-5150.
2. Meet at general location of Nuisance Coyote for site evaluation.
3. Increase Animal Control personnel patrol in area of report.
4. Initiate a hazing program.
5. Evaluate if additional information/signage on coyotes and ways to mitigate conflicts is needed.

B. DANGEROUS COYOTE
Dangerous – A coyote that has attacked a human or exhibits unprovoked aggressive behavior (bared teeth, lunging, nipping at clothing, growling) toward a human(s).
City Response to a Dangerous Coyote
1. Notify Police Communication Center, Animal Control Department, 720-977-5150.
2. Notify CPW.
3. Determine if lethal control is appropriate and possible.

VI. OTHER DEFINITIONS

A. Active Coexistence – To exist together at the same time. 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 and learning about coyote ecology and behavior. The ultimate causes of human-coyote problems are direct or indirect feeding.

B. Den Site – Coyotes do not use dens outside of breeding season. Coyotes will clean out dens and create fresh tracks around them during breeding season. They may clean out more than one den for use, in case they have to move. Coyotes actively use the den after the pups are born, usually about April. Parents are actively in and out of the den feeding the pups for 3-4 weeks. By late summer, the family is out of the den.

C. Hazing – 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 objects, shouting. Hazing can help maintain coyotes’ fear of humans and deter them from neighborhood spaces such as backyards and playspaces. Hazing does not harm coyotes, humans or property.
D. Intentional Feeding – A resident or business is actively and intentionally feeding coyotes, foxes, raccoons, geese, stray cats or other animals on their property or in open space.

E. Unintentional Feeding – A resident, business, community or school is providing easy access to food that could potentially attract coyotes.

F. Unsecured Trash – Trash that is accessible to wildlife. Individual garbage cans, bags or dumpsters that are uncovered, open, overflowing or where trash is scattered outside of the receptacle.

VII. AUTHORITY

Studies have shown that relocation of coyotes is not an effective solution to coyote-human conflicts and the Wildlife Commission of the CPW generally will not authorize the relocation of coyotes. The Wildlife Commission has the authority to provide for destruction of any wildlife that poses a threat to public health, safety, or welfare.