

Game Trail Association



TIPS FOR BUILDING IN GAME TRAIL

Building a new home, or modifying an existing one, is often a dream-come-true for owners. Congratulations!

- *The purpose of this document is to share tips and advice for building in Game Trail.*
- *First, you should read and follow the Architectural Control Policies.*
- *You'll also need to submit an ACC application and receive approval for your project.*
- *It's also a good idea to contact the ACC chairperson to get acquainted and have your questions answered. Email ACCchair@gametrailassn.org*
- *You can get a lot of great ideas and advice by talking to Game Trail residents.*
- *This document is simply a supplement of ideas for your consideration.*

THE BUSINESS OF BUILDING

1. Owners should **thoroughly research all contractors and subcontractors.**
 - a) Conduct due diligence. **Seek out homeowners** of your potential contractor's previous projects and ask them about their experience and satisfaction with their contractor. Better yet, ask if you can tour their home.
 - b) **Interview potential contractors.** Ask about their experience building in Game Trail and following our ACC process and the ACP. Determine their willingness to review and use Game Trail's ACP. Ask about their contract policy and insurance status.
 - c) Reach out to the local Better Business Bureau and the Buena Vista Chamber of Commerce for contractor information.
 - d) The Chaffee County Building Department is an excellent source of building information. One of their resources is a Permit Search to look up previous construction by permit number, address, contractor, or owner.
 - e) Be aware that in Chaffee County, builders are not required to be licensed.
2. It is the owner's responsibility to ensure that they, as well as their contractor and subcontractors, **have appropriate construction-related insurance.**
3. It's a good idea to have a **signed contract** between you and the building contractor.

4. If you are obtaining a **construction loan**, make sure you understand the bank inspection process versus the contractor/builder's draw requests and lien protections.
5. If you'll be out of state or otherwise unavailable while your home is being built, **plan periodic visits** to review the work and make corrections along the way.
6. Stay in contact with the Chaffee County Building Department as to what **inspections** are being conducted and when. Check with the Chaffee County Building Department for frost zone information below finished grade as it relates to your home's footers.
7. **Radon** can be an issue in the rocky mountain area. Discuss with your builder whether a mitigation system is needed.
8. Keep an approved set of **building plans** and all GTA documents for reference.
9. **Water pressure** can vary within Game Trail. All homes should have a pressure reducing valve. To prevent accidental leaks, a monitoring system, such as Moen Flo Smart Water Monitor or Phyn Plus Water Assistant and Shutoff, can be well worth the cost for peace of mind while you are away from your home. Also, **water meters** are required and provided by Game Trail. Finally, the water can be "hard." Discuss with your plumber the options for pressure, filters, and softeners.
10. GTA **trash removal** service is provided at the trash/recycle center only for normal household trash items. No construction materials are allowed in the trash/recycle center.

BE MINDFUL OF THE WEATHER & ENVIRONMENT

1. Consider your **energy sources and costs**. Most Game Trail homes are heated with propane or electric systems (natural gas is not available). Insulate your home well. Use quality, double pane windows. Use programable thermostats. For radiant heat systems, develop zones for active use; no sense heating the entire home if portions are unused for long periods. Even consider a whole-house fan system and/or renewable energy systems when feasible.
2. **Buried propane tanks** are preferred.
 - a) Buried tanks are completely concealed from view except for the small filling cap.
 - b) Buried tanks have a 1000-gallon capacity. You can save money by filling the tank prior to cold weather when propane costs are lowest.
 - c) Buried tanks can be purchased or leased by the customer.
 - d) Buried tanks are better protected from wildfires
 - e) The cost of materials and labor to build and maintain the fencing around an above ground tank will also be saved.
3. Think about **drainage, water, and ice control**. Game Trail, like most of Colorado, receives summer "monsoon" thunderstorms which can be heavy at times and winter snowfall. Attention should be given to details such as drainage away from the foundation, crawlspace vapor barriers, proper roof pitch and materials, gutters, attic insulation, and heat tape to avoid ice damming in roof valleys and gutters.
4. Consider a **garage drain**. Most of Game Trail roads are unpaved which means you may be dropping snow and mud on your garage floor in the winter.
5. Account for **high altitude solar intensity** and plan for materials that hold up better to extreme sun, wind and cold. At Game Trail's altitude, solar intensity and much higher levels of ultraviolet radiation are what lead to faster degradation of many materials. Game Trail

also has intense freeze/thaw cycles that cause high levels of expansion and contraction. Consider home designs that shade or shield direct sun. If you have a wall of windows facing south, overhangs or window coverings will be helpful.

6. Don't minimize **driveway** width. You will need a place to pile and store snow. Assume you will need at least 2 extra feet on each side of the drive. Also, plan for driveway turn-outs or backing areas. Be sure your driveway can accommodate emergency response vehicles and delivery trucks. Have a plan for keeping your drive plowed and free of snow both during construction and after you move in.
7. An ideal **orientation for the home and garage** is to face south. This helps melt snow on driveways, shields northern winds, and allows for sun-angle planning for windows, overhangs, and decks.
8. **Prevailing winds** in Game Trail are from the north and the southwest, depending on your lot's location. Wind speeds of 50 mph and greater are not uncommon. Orient your home to serve as a wind-break and place entry door accordingly.
9. Think about using awning-style **windows**. They offer some protection from sudden rain and wind storms.
10. Plan early for **International Dark Sky compliant exterior lighting** fixtures. This is both a Chaffee County and Game Trail requirement.
11. If you're going to do any landscaping, do not plan on watering using Game Trail's water system. We have **restrictions on outside use of water**. You're better off enjoying our natural landscape, or if necessary, xeriscaping. Cisterns (underground tanks) for supplemental landscape watering are allowed. However, in accordance with our water agreements, the tanks must be filled from a water source outside of the Game Trail system so that the limited allowable yearly amount of outside water use per lot is not exceeded. You might also consider rain barrels to capture run-off from your downspouts. Two barrels, up to a combined capacity of 110 gallons, are allowed by Colorado law.

PROTECT YOUR PROPERTY & REDUCE YOUR WILDFIRE RISKS

1. Please consider **fire danger and mitigation techniques** in selecting home materials, home location, and forestry practices during and after home construction. Educate yourself by accessing our Forestry Committee page on the Game Trail website.
 - a) Contact the **Forestry Committee** at forestry@gametrailassn.org to ask questions about tree removal and tree health. Permission is required to remove any live tree with a base diameter of 3" or larger.
 - b) To help defend your home, read, and wherever possible follow, the Colorado State Forest Service guidebook "**FireWise Construction: Site Design and Building Materials**".
 - c) **Build defensible space** around your home and on your lot. In general, fuels, including trees and shrubs should be 25-30 feet from the house. For information, read the Colorado State Forest Service guidebook "**The Home Ignition Zone**." Several Forestry Committee members are trained in educating homeowners on defensible space. Email forestry@gametrailassn.org to ask questions or request a meeting.
 - d) Maintain your property by **clearing slash** (branches and shrub debris) **annually**. Game Trail is unique in that we have a slash pit within our community for convenient use.

2. Game Trail is somewhat remote from public safety and emergency services. Help first responders by putting a **reflective green address sign** at your driveway entry. Details on how to get your sign are in the Architectural Control Policies. Also ensure your driveway and turnaround are designed with adequate space to **accommodate emergency vehicles**.

CONSIDER STORAGE

1. Be aware of Game Trail vehicle policies as you design your home, garage, and driveway. Only a **limited number of vehicles may be stored outside**, so create adequate interior vehicle storage. For that reason, it's not uncommon to see 3-5 car garages in Game Trail. Consider a storage facility in town for your RV or trailer. At a minimum, plan storage on your lot that conceals these vehicles from the road. For details, see [Game Trail R&R 20-01 "Vehicles"](#) and the [Good Neighbor policies](#) on the Game Trail website.
2. If you plan to use wood as a fuel source, plan to **store your wood** at least 30 feet from any structure to reduce wildfire risk.
3. Incorporate **adequate home and garage storage** for things like family mementos, holiday decorations, hobbies, landscaping tools, etc.