



## Ascendigo Ranch Information

### Learn About our Inspiring Proposed Project in Missouri Heights

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#### About Us

Ascendigo Autism Services, Inc. ("Ascendigo") is a Colorado nonprofit organization founded in 2004 by parents with disabled children right here in the Roaring Fork Valley (RFV). The mission of Ascendigo is to ***elevate the spectrum by empowering people, inspiring lives and shattering expectations***. Since 2010, Ascendigo's primary operations have been based in Garfield County (Glenwood Springs and Carbondale). It serves clients from Aspen to Parachute, across Colorado and nationwide.

#### Ascendigo Ranch, an educational facility with less density than planned residential subdivision

After an exhaustive search spanning more than 12 years, Ascendigo recently purchased a beautiful 126-acre property in the eastern section of Missouri Heights that provides the ideal setting for its future home. This site offers Ascendigo a unique opportunity to develop a permanent site for its nationally recognized programs. These programs include educational, therapeutic and experiential opportunities, for those on the autism spectrum, professional training for those working with the autistic population, and a summer camp serving the autism community. Ascendigo's main offices will remain in Carbondale.

Ascendigo Ranch is currently under review in Garfield County. Based on the educational nature of its programs and a determination of use by Garfield County staff, Ascendigo has requested a ***limited impact review*** as an educational facility which is a permissible use under the existing zoning. The previous plans of single-family homes on the property include ***21 single family homes plus 2 ADUs for a total of 23 dwelling units***. If approved, Ascendigo will vacate the planned subdivision and develop the land in a significantly ***less dense and in a more environmentally friendly*** manner.

#### Learn the Facts of the Project Due Diligence, Public Safety and Neighborhood Outreach

Ascendigo has thoughtfully designed a ***low-impact project*** that meets the unique needs of those with autism and allows them to enjoy and learn from the Roaring Fork Valley's rural amenities. This design leaves more view planes intact and provides continuous tracts of open space for wildlife.

Please contact **Julie Kaufman** for a site tour information or an individual meeting regarding the proposed project elements. Our doors are always open. Contact: [jkaufman@ascendigo.org](mailto:jkaufman@ascendigo.org) or 970-927-3143.

## The proposed Ascendigo Ranch includes the following: Improvements to be built across 126 acres

1. **Base Camp (up to 6,800 square feet)**  
*Primary gathering space used for registration, reception, meals, training, and program administration*
2. **Activity Barn (up to 14,000 square feet, close to ½ of which is basement gear storage)**  
*Therapy, learning and experiential center for participants and professional development; basement area is for gear storage.*
3. **Camper Lodge (up to 8,500 square feet)**  
*Sleeping quarters and bathrooms for up to 24 program participants and on-duty staff*
4. **Staff Lodge (up to 8,500 square feet)**  
*Sleeping quarters and bathrooms for up to 48 staff members during the peak summer season and for fewer staff and participants in the other seasons.*
5. **Caretaker Dwelling (up to 3,500 square feet) and ADU (2,500 square feet)**  
*A single-family home for an on-site caretaker (and family) plus a secondary unit for on-site staff*
6. **Guest Cabin (up to 1,700 square feet)**  
*Cottage for Ascendigo families who need a place while visiting their children and for invited guests involved in our programs*

As proposed, Ascendigo Ranch will have approximately 42,000 square feet of improvements which is **substantially less than** the planned improvements of the current subdivision alternative (which could be as much as 100,000 square feet).

In terms of buildings, Ascendigo has 6 buildings planned whereas the single-family home alternative would have up to 21 buildings plus ADUs. Both scenarios would include accessory buildings for equestrian and equipment storage.

## Proactive Response to Concerns

### Ranch Use and Activity Timeline

- Ascendigo's Summer Adventure Camp takes place between June 1 and August 31. Current plans include 8 weeks at full capacity plus 4 weeks of staff-only training or specialty camps at lower capacity.
- Ascendigo Ranch will include overnight residential uses throughout the year for program purposes. There will be no rentals to outside parties not involved in Ascendigo. **Quiet hours** will be imposed during the summer from 9 p.m. to 8 a.m. and 7 p.m. to 8 a.m. during non-summer periods.
- Ascendigo has committed to limiting 'peak program days' where there could be as many as 100 people on-site to no more than 24 days per year, which equates to less than 7% of the year. Other non-summer days will have no more than 65 people on-site. Ascendigo will host only 2 fundraising/community events per year that will have no more than 150 people on the 126-acre property.

### Traffic Mitigation

- Ascendigo has committed to chip and sealing Harmony Lane from Fender Road to the entrance of Ascendigo Ranch to minimize dust and any impacts to neighbors. Ascendigo offered to make preliminary improvements immediately, but the other Harmony Lane stakeholders declined this offer.

- Peak Day Vehicle Trips will generate up to 210 trips per day. ***Peak Day Vehicle Trips for the single-family home alternative would have generated 269 per day, approximately 28% more.*** Peak days for the Ascendigo Ranch occur for only 26 days of the year. On other days the trips are far less. Per the Colorado Department of Transportation, our trip count does not rise to the level of having a substantial impact on traffic.

## Water Usage, Availability and Storage

- Ascendigo has engaged experts to perform extensive testing of the property's primary wells to better ensure sustainable use over time. In addition to State of Colorado oversight of the existing water system, Ascendigo has already initiated the installation of remote, real-time monitoring equipment to further ensure sustainable use of our domestic and irrigation water.
- A water retention pond for irrigation water exists on the site similar to other ranch properties. Ascendigo's proposal calls for the expansion of water storage through a larger retention pond. The proposal will be reviewed by the State of Colorado in the future. The water will be used to renew pasture land for the camp's equestrian program and for water sports use.
- Ascendigo has already engaged with the National Resource Conservation Service to guide our land stewardship and water conservation efforts to regenerate soils, plants and habitats.

## Wildfire Preparedness

- Ascendigo has taken great care in siting its buildings in unforested spaces with wide defensible space to reduce fire risk. Exterior materials were also carefully selected to be durable and nearly all are non-combustible, further reducing fire risk.
- In coordination with the Carbondale Fire District, Ascendigo has committed to increase fire protection by placing fire hydrants throughout the property as well as adding fire sprinklers in appropriate buildings.
- In addition, Ascendigo is in the conceptual design phase of incorporating an 'emergency irrigation system' to douse vegetation and buildings during an imminent fire event. Unlike ranch and residential properties, Ascendigo can utilize its year-round domestic water system with 203,000 gallons of storage to provide protection even when Spring Park Reservoir is dry.
- Ascendigo has committed to exceed state or county requirements in conjunction with other adjacent HOAs that adopt stricter standards regarding wildfire protection. A component of our engagement with the National Resource Conservation Service is to enhance soil and vegetation moisture to limit wildfire spread.
- Ascendigo's summer operations have been successfully hosted at CMC Spring Valley for many years here in Missouri Heights. The CMC campus has similar egress conditions as the Ascendigo Ranch. Per State regulations and oversight, Ascendigo is required to have emergency weather response plans in place which include emergency evacuations.

## Compared to the single-family home alternative, Ascendigo Ranch will have:

- fewer buildings (6 vs 23)
- fewer peak-day vehicle trips (210 vs 269)
- fewer septic systems (6 vs 21)
- significantly more fire protection
- better access on Harmony Lane
- better stewardship of fragile natural resources, stricter wildlife protection and more open space
- goals for net zero, potentially all-electric facilities to minimize climate impact

## Direct Letters of Support to:

Garfield County – [ghartmann@garfield-county.com](mailto:ghartmann@garfield-county.com)

Eagle County – [eagleadmin@eaglecounty.us](mailto:eagleadmin@eaglecounty.us)

*Ascendigo Ranch serves young people, families, educators, and others who seek inclusion and opportunities for those diagnosed with an autism spectrum disorder and related disorders. This service will have a positive impact in our communities, workplaces, and educational settings.*