US National Forest Service

Pike & San Isabel National Forests and Cimarron & Comanche National Grasslands

Attn: **Locke Park Land Exchange #63709**

To Whom It May Concern,

As long-time campers, staff, and volunteers of Rainbow Trail Lutheran Camp, we feel that our lives are truly vested in the continuation of the great work and ministry that is done on this site. We are grateful for the opportunity to comment on the proposed land exchange project that will benefit both the United States Forest Service and Rainbow Trail Lutheran Camp. As this letter will surely show, we are very much in favor of this proposed land exchange.

The first benefit of this proposed land exchange is the return of prime, undeveloped forest land that can then be used for both land conservation by the Forest Service as well as possible public recreational use. The 120 acres of land located on the south side of Locke Park and houses the headwaters of Newlin Creek is shown to be home to a large array of wildlife including Canadian lynx and cutthroat trout as well as being marked by U.S. Fish and Wildlife as a critical habitat for the Mexican spotted owl.

Another benefit of this land exchange is that it closes a hole that currently exists in this forest area. This will allow for land that is currently private to be utilized with its surrounding area as it should be. On that same note, the exchange would allow for Rainbow Trail Lutheran Camp to then have private land, making their site a more secure and safe area for its campers and staff. As it stands right now, Rainbow Trail is unable to keep visitors from walking on their site during the weeks of programing throughout the year.

There are further benefits to the forest service in that they would decrease their permitting work load by no longer having to grant a special permit for the federal parcel land to be used as a camp. And even with Rainbow Trail owning the current 100 acres of land, they have numerous plans in place to continue to protect the national forest that surrounds the camp as well as continued use of Forest Service Road 198 for public access to the National Forest System lands that lie west of the Rainbow Trail parcel. This is a popular 4-wheel drive road with access to Balman Reservoir, Rainbow Lake, and Cloverdale Basin.

Finally, this land exchange would allow Rainbow Trail Lutheran Camp to develop a new master plan and improve their site so that their amazing ministry and programs can continue for generations to come. It is our hope that Rainbow Trail will be around for our children, our grandchildren, and even our great-grandchildren. By owning the land outright, Rainbow Trail would not have to worry about the risk of losing site should the Forest Service ever want to take it back that land.

In all, this land exchange is of incredible benefit to both parties involved. Two incredible pieces of land will have the opportunity to be utilized to their fullest potential while still both keeping focus on land and wildlife conservation. We have been involved with this land exchange project from its very early stages and it is truly a blessing to see how far it has come. The continued commitment and determination to obtain the land on which Rainbow Trail Lutheran Camp sits on should be reason enough to say yes to this proposed land exchange. Please approve this proposal.

Thank you for your time and consideration in the very large project. Should you want any further information from us, feel free to contact us by phone at, 720-300-7492, or by email at, lindsay.crock89@gmail.com.

Sincerely,

Jesse & Lindsay Crock