

July 24, 2023

San Carlos Ranger District
Pike-San Isabel National Forests
Attn: Destiny Chapman
3028 East Main Street
Canon City, CO 81212

Dear Ms Chapman

I have the privilege of serving on the Rainbow Trail Lutheran Camp Board of Directors. I am an avid hiker, camper and mountain biker who truly appreciates natural resource conservation and recreation opportunities on our national forests. As member of the RTLC Board, I have witnessed the lengthy and thorough federal process for the proposed Locke Park Land Exchange. It is important for the major tenets and details of the exchange to be shared and understood.

First, Rainbow Trail Lutheran Camp has continuously operated on the Federal Parcel for more than 66 years. Throughout this time, the camp has been good stewards of the land as a lessee, while the public has enjoyed access through the site to special recreational resources to the west such as the Rainbow Trail and Eagle Peak. Under this proposed exchange, RTLC will maintain its operations and the public will continue to enjoy access through the property as has been the case for the last six decades.

Second, the Lake Creek Campground is not included within the proposed land exchange. My family and friends have enjoyed this gem of a public campground over the years. RTLC and the Lake Creek Campground have successfully coexisted in close proximity to one another and this will not change with the proposed exchange. Furthermore, a conservation easement will be placed on the Federal Parcel to provide a buffer between the Lake Creek Campground and the RTLC, thus ensuring a quality camping experience into the future.

Third, the Federal Land Exchange process requires environmental studies to be conducted on both Federal and Non-Federal parcels. These studies will be undertaken to ensure natural resource values are identified and evaluated. In addition, the parcels will be mapped and surveyed to clearly identify the proposed property boundaries. Appraisals will be prepared to ensure the exchange is of equal value and the public interest is protected. These steps are necessary to ensure transparency for the general public and adjacent property owners.

Fourth, the Non-Federal parcel which will become part of the Pike San Isabel National Forest will be a fantastic addition to our public lands. The parcel offers excellent habitat, beautiful views, wetlands, and rich wildlife. It is surrounded by national forest on all sides making it logical and strategic for public ownership.

Finally, it has been good to see information regarding the Locke Park Land Exchange is being shared around the region. The recent article in the Canon City Daily Record as well as a post in the Fremont Adventure Recreation (FAR) newsletter raise community awareness and encourage participation in the federal process.

I strongly believe the proposed Locke Park Land Exchange is good for conservation of our public lands, good for RTLC, and good for members of the public who will continue to enjoy recreational access.

Sincerely,

Chris Lieber, RTLC Board Member