

Scope Letter: re Sweetwater Project 64047

Sweetwater Resort consisting of 466 acres was acquired by the Forest Service in 2020 from the Eagle Valley Land Trust which, along with substantial contributions from others, wanted to preserve the area. I would liken this acquisition by the Forest Service to one who discovered they had also received a bag full of lemons and is now trying to make lemonade without much sugar.

To facilitate this generous gift the Forest Service added 366 acres to the Project and would grant a 20 year lease to (CPW) Colorado Parks and WildLife. CPW approach is to install a Sylvan Lake State Park pattern which includes eliminating the Forest Service camp ground, tearing down the historic buildings including the restaurant, eliminating the current horse operation and horse grazing pastures. In its place there would be up to 20 camping sites, up to 12 cabins and new stables. The stables are to be remotely located and would allow for up to 7 equestrian camping sites, outfitter housing and up to 10 parking spaces for horse trailers.

During the 3 decades I have lived in EagleCounty I have often visited Sweetwater and had lunch at the restaurant including homemade pie and hamburger (grass fed). I have also enjoyed a day horseback trip for some fishing that was in wonderful remote valley. The Sweetwater facilities, excluding the horse operation, were run down and the delightful restaurant structure needs some help. Replacing and adding cabins and the eliminating the Forest Service camp ground with one that is not on the lake is a good approach.

What I am troubled by is the nature of traffic on the Sweetwater Road and River Road. I agree with most comments that Sweetwater Road is not suitable for Motor Homes and oversized trailers. This road is the lifeline for the residents in the area and they deserve respect! The campground reservations should be limited to vehicles that are sized appropriately for the road. There should be a plan for construction that would limit the amount of construction travel. A Staging area on site may be an approach.

The food service plan is not well thought out. Unlike Sylvan Lake the closest support for medical, food and restaurants involves a round trip of at least 1 1/2 hours on a good dry day on difficult roads. The restaurant could be a doable historic amenity. Neither the Forest Service or CPW desire to be restaurateurs. Either a concession agreement or lease for the current facility, with remediation, would enhance the enjoyment by the increased day use and campers. I know I would again make my pilgrimage for home-made pie, burger and a frosty root beer.

As to the horse operation relocation. I don't see a problem. However how is the new facility to be operated? Horse pasture for resident horses is a necessity unless animal

abuse is part of the program. CDW has always had a symbiotic relationship with outfitters and their high dollar hunting licenses. Will the enhanced outfitter facilities overwhelm the hunting trails, camp areas and the available game? The entire equestrian operation as envisioned in the Plan should have more discussion and revisions!

I believe that implementation of these changes could mitigate many of the criticisms that have been expressed about the Project.

Thank you for your consideration

Chuck Powers