

To Heather Noel

JULY 25, 2024

This letter is to show my support for the Sweetwater Community Board's position objecting to the designation of Sweetwater Lake as a state park.

My family history on Sweetwater dates back to my grandfather who purchased the 7W in the 1940s, from his best friend, John Davidson who originally homesteaded the property in the early 1920s. My grandmother lived on Sweetwater with my aunt until her death at the ripe age of 92. Joanne Brallier, my aunt continued to live there until she was in her 80's, moving to Eagle due to her advanced age. In 1995, we purchased property on Sweetwater, and my cousin who has lived in Gypsum nearly all of his life, built our cabin located near cow camp. With the addition of our children, and upcoming birth of our first grandchild, we will have a history of 5 generations on Sweetwater.

Objections to designating Sweetwater Lake as a state park have been well outlined by Janet Rivera, other concerned Sweetwater residents and the Sweetwater Community Board. I will not reiterate their concerns in detail here, and I support their objections on all levels.

Sweetwater has a unique and treasured culture, a lasting vestige to what the west once was. Many families on Sweetwater still earn their livings ranching, herding cattle, and outfitting for hunters who come to the area. The proposed designation of Sweetwater Lake as a state park will surely impact their livelihood. The plan to demolish the existing rustic cabins and cherished restaurant with RV pads and hookups ensures that the "Sweetwater experience" will become just another consumptive, mundane exploit. The Brink family for years has kept patrons well fed and informed during their tenure managing the restaurant and lake. Replacing them with employees with little knowledge of the area will be a great loss to all. Existing structures including the restaurant, (famous for its homemade pies and buffalo burgers), and cabins should be maintained, restored and appreciated for their historical significance. Leveling these structures will erase the important visible connection with the community's history and culture. Sadly, such "progress" will be another obliteration of our connection with the history of the American west.

I am not proposing that the experience of Sweetwater Lake should be available only to its residents. I am legitimately concerned about the impact of large numbers of people with large RVs, traveling long distances on roads not equipped to handle the volume, unavailability of cell service, the potential for wildfires in an area with minimal fire mitigation capabilities, and other issues well addressed by the Sweetwater Community Board.

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Susan Savage

