

**Title of Proposed Action given by USFS/CPW:** Sweetwater Lake Proposal #64047

Objection and Comments

**Commenter Names:** James & Irene Dysart

**Commenter Address:**

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**Signature:** *Jim and Irene Dysart* (electronic signature)

I am opposed the proposal on the grounds because of the many proposed changes to structures, roads and buildings, to complete this build-out/development. I suggest the USFS and CPW comply with their own mission and values statements that was given to me as an outfitter 20 years ago – Leave No Trace, Cause No Damage. I think all of the items in this proposal will leave a significant trace and cause damage.

Specific to the trailhead and building of trails in this proposal I would like to ask for the existing Hilltop Trailhead to be relocated down to the existing property.

Recommendation: Close the trailhead and road and move down to the lake and headquarters for the following reasons:

**i. Accessibility via the road**

- 1) Narrow gravel road that allows for 1 car only to be on the road at one time. Cannot have a car/truck coming up or coming down at the same time. Risk of a car rolling off the road or other encounters.
- 2) Steep grade of the road with no maintenance other than when it has been hired out by myself.
  - i. In 1991, County Commissioner motioned with the Fish and Game, Road and Bridge, and County Commissioners present, it was agreed that Forest Service would grade and maintain the road. This has never happened. It was told to me that the equipment was not available when it was transferred to Garfield County. After a few more years of no maintenance, other than who I have hired, they said there is not appropriate equipment and there has not been maintenance from either.
- 3) Weather conditions that have severe rain makes the road even more dangerous and unpassable at times.

**ii. Sustainable use of the road**

1. Road is not sustainable for public use – the safety, steep grade, and narrow road with no turn around on a blind road.
- iii. Appropriate use of the road**
1. Road is marked for 4-wheel drive vehicles only. This sign is at the bottom of the hill at the trailer turn-around. This has not been enforced as we have witnessed people in small front wheel drive cars, or All-Wheel Drive vehicles driving up the road.
- iv. No latrine facilities**
1. We have routinely removed human waste, trash, toilet paper from the parking lot and our property from people camping in their vehicles at the trailhead.
    - 1) If a latrine were available at this location, it would be extremely difficult to service and maintain due to the road conditions (narrow, 4-wheel, unmaintained).
    - 2) The construction of a latrine would negatively impact my property due to odor, poor aesthetics, and proximity to my property.
- v. Congestion in the trailhead lot**
1. There have been times when the trailhead is full but upcoming vehicles do not know this until they have made the last turn up to the trailhead. This results in vehicles backing down the hill and there have been vehicles slide off the road.
- vi. Camping at the trailhead**
1. There has been no enforcement of no camping at the trailhead or open fires. We have enforced it ourselves with risk as the closest law enforcement or Forest Service is over 1 hour away in Gypsum or Eagle.
  2. We have had confrontations over fireworks, campfires, burn bans, etc..
- vii. Emergency Vehicle Services**
1. If the road is congested or parking lot has excessive vehicles, the emergency vehicles will not be able to reach the trail head or those in need. An example of this from 3 years ago when there was suspected fire on the Flattops, 2 smoke jumpers were trying to get to the trailhead and ended up having to come up the hill in a side-by-side in order to get around the cars/trucks parked in the lot at the trailhead.

The reasons listed are why I think the trailhead would be better serviced and maintained by the USFS and CPW by having it more accessible at the lake.