

September 6, 2026

Brian Glaspell, Forest Supervisor, WRNF

c/o Leanne Veldhuis, attn. Sweetwater Lake Recreation Management and Development Project

900 Grand Avenue

Glenwood Springs, CO 81601

RE: Comments on DEIS

Dear Ms. Veldhuis,

The Forest Service facilities are weary and outdated at Sweetwater Lake. However, with relatively minor improvements, the campground, trails, parking and few salvageable cabins can be restored and preserved. I support Alternative #3 as the most context sensitive alternative proposed in the DEIS. Alternatives #2 and #4 will introduce industrial scale tourism and not only eliminate the inherent qualities around the lake but adversely impact the entire valley.

There are multiple severe downsides to the two CPW transfer alternatives (2 and #4), which seem to have originated from a lingering commitment between the FS and CPW that precedes the EIS process entirely.

Impacts on the site landscape Alts #2 and #4 include the following:

- Forty-one acres of disturbance with up to 100 acres of disturbance during construction.
- 1.9 to 2.9 miles of new roadways.
- 125 to 185 new parking spaces.
- 29 to 33 new structures.
- Erosion and runoff from all the new impervious surfaces compromising water quality.
- Massive amounts of wastewater being treated on site in various OSWT facilities which will potentially compromise water quality.

This level of development is not consistent with a precious mountain valley headwaters environment. Couple this with the encroachment into critical deer and elk winter range, the failure to adequately address protections for raptor species nesting, likelihood of invasive species, and the sizable increase in new users in the wilderness are all factors that reinforce that the scale of these two alternatives is inappropriate. Both alternatives create a village-sized development. The DEIS document labels this as a “resort permit”. Is a resort village with a permanent population really what is most appropriate at Sweetwater Lake?

Furthermore, the DEIS does not adequately address the law enforcement and maintenance impacts on Eagle and Garfield Counties with more than doubling of traffic and user volumes. The traffic report admits that Sweetwater Road will exceed its functional capacity and has substandard geometry and safety. Emergency services, such as medical and fire, are also not addressed adequately.

Alternative #3 is the most viable option. It is context appropriate preserving the historic character and visual qualities of the upper valley. With only one-third of the amount of disturbance of alternative #2, it maintains lake access, trails and improves the campground but at a scale that will not degrade the lake and surrounding environment.

When considering the purpose and need stated at the outset of the DEIS document, Alternative #3 best addresses the following statements:

“Provide updated and sustainable nature based recreational services to the public that are appropriate to the environment and are responsive to the recreational needs of the public.”

Thanks for your consideration of my comments.

Andrew McGregor