

September 22, 2026 | Via CARA | Project No. 284162

To: Brian Glaspell, Forest Supervisor, White River National Forest

Supplemental DEIS comment: road failure, CPW silence, permit safety

Dear Supervisor Glaspell:

On July 29 and August 5, our Working Group emailed CPW Commission Chair Jay Tutchton and the Commission, copied CPW leadership, and filed both letters in CARA (284162-6986-46 and 284162-6986-55). We asked for written answers by August 21 about the missing natural-disaster ingress/egress analysis and Karen Houck's warning that debris flows could make Sweetwater Road impassable. CPW has given us no substantive response.

On August 30, mudslides blocked Sweetwater Road - the only public route out - at multiple locations. I was at Sweetwater and could not leave. FOX31 reported the road impassable for close to six hours.[1] You met with our Working Group on September 1 and drove the affected corridor. Eagle County crews were still working on the road September 22. The failure we warned about has now happened.

Eagle County's September 15 comment supports a CPW special use permit yet acknowledges that Sweetwater is at the end of a narrow, single-access box canyon and that its hazards cannot be eliminated by road improvements alone (Exhibit H, p. 4). The County suggests informing visitors of the risks and expecting them to assume personal responsibility. Visitors can choose not to drive this road; residents must use it to reach their homes and evacuate. The proposed increase in visitor traffic, including drivers unfamiliar with the road's grades and curves, would add risk to residents and complicate evacuation. A visitor warning does not address that involuntary risk or open a blocked road for responders.

On September 17, CPW reported no records responsive to Larry Mabry's narrower CORA request for final CPW-authored road-impassability analyses and final evacuation or secondary-egress recommendations. That request excluded drafts, routine emails, and published NEPA documents. This limited CORA response does not establish that no safety work exists, but it does not answer our questions or provide the missing analysis.

The special-use rule requires enough information to assess a proposal's safety and requires that the proposed use "will not pose a serious or substantial risk to public health or safety." 36 C.F.R. § 251.54(d)(4), (e)(1)(iii). A proposal failing that initial screen must not proceed; an application failing the screening criteria must be rejected. Id. § 251.54(e)(2), (g)(1). You cannot issue CPW's permit on a record that leaves the actual failure of its sole access road unanalyzed. Nor should you sign a Record of Decision that defers this known safety problem to future planning.

Before selecting an alternative or issuing a permit, obtain CPW's written answers; publish route-specific analysis of road closure, evacuation and responder access for residents and visitors under each alternative, including wildfire or flooding during a closure, traffic capacity, and feasible secondary egress; and allow at least 90 days for public review. If you believe this analysis already exists, identify its exact location in the record. If the proposed use cannot satisfy the public-safety criterion, reject or redesign it. Do not shift an unresolved risk onto the people who live here.

Sincerely,

Kenneth A. Wright III

Authorized Representative, Sweetwater Lake Working Group

Attachments: A - July 29 CPW letter; B - July 29 email; C - July 29 CARA receipt; D - August 5 Houck supplement; E - August 5 email; F - August 5 CARA receipt; G - CPW CORA correspondence; H - Eagle County September 15 comment.

[1] FOX31 Denver, Nate Belt, "Sweetwater Lake mudslide further raises concerns," August 31, 2026.