

July 29, 2026

Submitted via CARA for the Sweetwater Lake Draft EIS record and via the CPW Commission Engage Page

James "Jay" Tutchton, Chair  
Colorado Parks and Wildlife Commission  
6060 Broadway  
Denver, CO 80216

**Re: Missing natural-disaster egress analysis; request for a written response and 90-day public review after disclosure**

Dear Chair Tutchton:

The Sweetwater Lake Working Group respectfully asks CPW to answer three questions on the record about the natural-disaster ingress/egress analysis identified in the DEIS materials but not provided.

In its July 23, 2024 scoping comment, CPW said it was "critical that a robust response plan for emergencies be analyzed for each alternative" and specifically identified emergency egress and onsite wildfire response. CPW later represented in Water Court that CPW and the Forest Service together "engaged and selected" SE Group to prepare the EIS.[1]

The Traffic, Parking, and Roads Technical Report directs readers to the Socioeconomics Technical Report for "analysis" of ingress and egress during natural disasters such as wildfire. The cited report identifies hazards and emergency-service providers but contains no evacuation or responder-access analysis. The DEIS also:

- states that defensible space should be maintained along primary ingress and egress routes;
- says fuels reduction is not currently proposed under the special-use permit;
- defers an Emergency Response and Evacuation Plan to a future permit condition; and
- rejects a lodge configuration because trailers backing up on Sweetwater Road could create "dangerous traffic conditions," while never analyzing emergency traffic on that same road.[2]

This omission is consequential. The DEIS describes the project area as the terminus of a dead-end road and recognizes wildfire, flash-flood, landslide, debris-flow, and mass-wasting hazards. It also states that Garfield County "would remain the primary responsible entity" for emergency calls. Garfield County's scoping comment similarly described a "box canyon with only one road out" and requested a comprehensive emergency plan involving the County.[3]

The DEIS itself says the 2025 Derby Fire demonstrated that "wildfire continues to pose a risk to public safety" at Sweetwater Lake. Garfield County Commissioner Tom Jankovsky recently emphasized the one-road evacuation problem and observed that the Derby Fire "affected your entire community." [4]

Colorado law directs the Commission to establish parks and outdoor-recreation uses only where the areas, properties, and facilities are suitable for those uses. C.R.S. § 33-10-106(1)(c). Federal rules require sufficient information to evaluate the safety of a special-use proposal, prohibit further processing of a use posing a serious or substantial public-safety risk, and authorize permit conditions necessary to protect lives and property. 36 C.F.R. §§ 251.54(d)(4), (e)(1)(iii), and 251.56(a)(1)(ii)(D).[5]

Please answer:

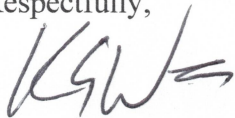
1. Does CPW agree that no natural-disaster ingress/egress analysis is disclosed in the DEIS or its technical reports? If not, please identify the document, page numbers, and public link.
2. If the analysis is absent, why was it omitted or deferred, and what did CPW do to ensure the concern it called “critical” was addressed?
3. Will CPW publicly request that the Forest Service publish an alternative-specific analysis of evacuation feasibility and emergency-responder ingress and then extend or reopen the DEIS comment period for **at least 90 days after disclosure**?

At minimum, the analysis should compare the time required for notification and evacuation with the time available before a hazard affects the site or route. It should also address simultaneous outbound evacuation and inbound emergency responders, consistent with NIST’s 2025 ESCAPE guidance.[6]

The Colorado Sun reported the Working Group’s egress concerns and request for a new 90-day review on July 24.[7] Because the DEIS comment period closes September 23, please provide a written response by **August 21, 2026**, and submit that response through CARA for inclusion in the project record.[8] Please also circulate this letter and CPW’s response to every member of the Commission.

We are simply asking CPW to follow through on the public-safety analysis it identified as critical. Thank you for considering this request.

Respectfully,



**Kenneth A. Wright III**  
Authorized Representative  
**Sweetwater Lake Working Group**  
[k13w@hotmail.com](mailto:k13w@hotmail.com)  
407-694-3099

cc: Laura Clellan, Director, Colorado Parks and Wildlife  
Travis Black, Northwest Region Manager, Colorado Parks and Wildlife  
Garfield County Commissioners Tom Jankovsky, Mike Samson, and Perry Will  
Ali Longwell, Vail Daily  
Jason Blevins, The Colorado Sun

## Sources

[1] CPW scoping comment, July 23, 2024, p. 6:

<https://cara.fs2c.usda.gov/Public/Letter/4581859?project=284162>

Colorado Division 5 Water Court, August 2024 Resume, Case No. 24CW3121, p. 32:

[Colorado Division 5 Water Court, August 2024 Resume](#)

[2] Traffic, Parking, and Roads Technical Report, pp. 4 and 20; Socioeconomics Technical Report, pp. 41 and 49-50; Sweetwater Lake Draft EIS, pp. 32-33, Appendix A, p. A-19, and Appendix B, p. B-12. Documents are available at:

<https://www.fs.usda.gov/r02/whiteriver/projects/284162>

[3] Sweetwater Lake Draft EIS, pp. 159-160 and 173; Socioeconomics Technical Report, pp. 41 and 49-50; Garfield County scoping comment, pp. 10-11:

<https://cara.fs2c.usda.gov/Public/Letter/4581837?project=284162>

[4] Sweetwater Lake Draft EIS, p. 4; Garfield County, "Sweetwater residents speak out against state park plans," July 23, 2026:

[Garfield County article](#)

[5] C.R.S. § 33-10-106(1)(c): [Colorado Revised Statutes, Title 33](#)

36 C.F.R. § 251.54: [eCFR § 251.54](#)

36 C.F.R. § 251.56: [eCFR § 251.56](#)

[6] Alexander Maranghides and Eric Link, WUI Fire Evacuation and Sheltering Considerations: Assessment, Planning, and Execution (ESCAPE), NIST Technical Note 2262r1 (2025):

<https://doi.org/10.6028/NIST.TN.2262r1>

[7] Jason Blevins, "Sweetwater residents blast Forest Service plan for development around Sweetwater Lake," The Colorado Sun, July 24, 2026:

[Colorado Sun article](#)

[8] Forest Service, "Forest Service seeks comments on Draft EIS for managing Sweetwater Lake," June 26, 2026:

[Forest Service notice](#)