

Bald Eagle nesting data underlying the Draft EIS

Prepared: September 23, 2026 at 8:33 PM MST (UTC-7)

Submitted by: Maria Summerlin, authorized representative of the Sweetwater Lake Working Group

To the responsible official, White River National Forest:

Please place this comment and Exhibits B-1 and B-2 in the Sweetwater Lake Recreation Management and Development Project file and public record. I submit this specific issue on behalf of the Sweetwater Lake Working Group and request a substantive response before the Forest Service selects an alternative.

Page 44 of the project's Terrestrial and Aquatic Wildlife Report states that Bald Eagle nesting success at Sweetwater Lake has been monitored by the Forest Service since 2021. On August 16, I requested the monitoring data from 2021 onward, particularly any information used for the Draft EIS that is not in the Bird Conservancy Bald Eagle Watch reports (Exhibit B-1). The Forest Service acknowledged the request on August 18 under FOIA case **2026-FS-R2-06643-F** (Exhibit B-2). **As of September 23, 2026 (MST), I have received no responsive records or final determination.** The lack of a response does not show that the monitoring data do not exist.

Specific DEIS issue. The cited monitoring statement is a baseline claim used to evaluate effects on Bald Eagles. The public needs to see what years, observations, nest outcomes, methods, and sources support it; whether the Forest Service holds data beyond the Bird Conservancy reports; and how those findings inform predicted effects of construction and long-term recreation on the nest.

Requested action. Identify and disclose the monitoring records and methods underlying the page 44 statement, with a public version that protects any sensitive nest coordinates. Explain how the data support the impact analysis, what differs from the Bird Conservancy Bald Eagle Watch reports, and how the selected alternative will protect Bald Eagles through mapped buffers, seasonal restrictions, and enforceable terms in the Record of Decision and any special-use permit. If the baseline or effects analysis relies on material data not previously available for review, disclose the analysis and provide a meaningful opportunity to comment before a decision.

Please identify any relevant records later released in FOIA case 2026-FS-R2-06643-F and add them to the project file. I will separately submit responsive records I receive so they can be considered before a final decision.

Exhibits: B-1 - August 16 request (1 page); B-2 - August 18 FOIA acknowledgment (1 page). Each original scanned page follows a labeled divider. Source screenshots do not state a time zone for their clock times; those times have not been converted.

EXHIBIT B-1

August 16, 2026 request - Bald Eagle nesting monitoring data

Source file: 20260816_FOIA_Bald_Eagle_Data_Request_red.pdf

1 original scanned page follows.



Outlook

Sweetwater Lake Recreation Management and Development Project PALS #64047 (FOIA Request)

From i [REDACTED]

Date Sun 8/16/2026 4:44 PM

To Veldhuis, Leanne - FS, CO <leanne.veldhuis@usda.gov>; sm.fs.r2foia@usda.gov <sm.fs.r2foia@usda.gov>

Hi Leanne and FOIA officer,

On Page 44 of the Terrestrial and Aquatic Wildlife Report prepared of the Draft EIS for the Bald Eagles it states, "Nesting success at Sweetwater Lake has been monitored by the Forest Service since 2021".

May I have a copy of the USFS Sweetwater Lake nest monitoring data from 2021 to present, particularly if cited monitoring data used for the Draft EIS includes data not included in the Bird Conservancy Bald Eagle Watch data reports.

Sincerely,
Maria Summerlin

EXHIBIT B-2

August 18, 2026 FOIA acknowledgment - 2026-FS-R2-06643-F

Source file: 20260818_FOIA_Bald_Eagle_Data_Request_rcpt_red.pdf

1 original scanned page follows.

FOIA Acknowledgement

From misty.desalvo@usda.gov <misty.desalvo@usda.gov>

Date Tue 8/18/2026 9:30 AM

To [REDACTED]

August 18, 2026

2026-FS-R2-06643-F

Dear Maria Summerlin:

Thank you for your recent Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request to the U.S. Forest Service - Rocky Mountain Region (R2). This email acknowledges receipt of your FOIA request dated August 16, 2026 which was received in the Forest Service - (c) Rocky Mountain Region (R2) office on August 17, 2026. You requested:

On Page 44 of the Terrestrial and Aquatic Wildlife Report prepared of the Draft EIS for the Bald Eagles it states, "Nesting success at Sweetwater Lake has been monitored by the Forest Service since 2021".

May I have a copy of the USFS Sweetwater Lake nest monitoring data from 2021 to present, particularly if cited monitoring data used for the Draft EIS includes data not included in the Bird Conservancy Bald Eagle Watch data reports.

Your FOIA request is among numerous other requests that the R2 Office receives. We are diligently working to process each request in the order in which it was received. Please be assured that every attempt will be made to respond to your request within 20 working days (excluding weekends and holidays) from the date of our receipt of your request. If you do not receive a response by that cut off please feel free to submit a query via email to misty.desalvo@usda.gov for an update, please reference your assigned case number, 2026-FS-R2-06643-F.

Your patience is greatly appreciated.

Thank You,
U.S. Forest Service
Rocky Mountain Region
1617 Cole Boulevard, Building 17
Lakewood, CO 80401-3305