

Unanswered request for natural-disaster ingress and egress analysis

Prepared: September 23, 2026 at 5:27 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 E-1 through E-4 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.

My September 20 email to Supervisor Glaspell asked whether the analysis of “ingress/egress for natural disaster emergencies (e.g. wildfire)” referenced on page 170 of the Draft EIS exists, and requested a copy or an explanation if it could not be supplied (Exhibit E-1). The email described the August 30 mudslides and our August 31 meeting. My September 20 CARA confirmation lists Letter ID **284162-6986-97** (Exhibit E-2). Please associate that receipt with its underlying submitted comment; the receipt itself does not display the comment text.

Separately, my August 14 FOIA request sought route-specific evacuation modeling, road-capacity inputs, wildfire and landslide analyses, compound-hazard scenarios, secondary egress, and related agency records (Exhibit E-3). The Forest Service acknowledged it on August 18 under **2026-FS-R2-06639-F** (Exhibit E-4).

As of September 23, 2026 (MST), I have received no substantive response to the September 20 inquiry or responsive records or a final determination on that FOIA request. The absence of a response does not establish that the analyses do not exist.

Requested action. Identify and release the particular analysis cited in the Draft EIS, including its route-specific assumptions, hazard scenarios, evacuation clearance estimates, road-blockage conditions, and responder access findings. If it was not performed, say so explicitly and complete a publicly available, route-specific assessment of wildfire, debris flow or rockfall, road impassability, and evacuation capacity before deciding whether to increase visitor use. Explain how the assessment supports the chosen alternative and provide a meaningful chance to comment on material new analysis before a decision.

Please identify any records later produced under FOIA case 2026-FS-R2-06639-F that bear on this issue and add them to the project file when available. I will separately submit any relevant responsive documents I receive so they can be considered before a final decision.

Exhibits: E-1 - September 20 inquiry (1 page); E-2 - CARA confirmation (1 page); E-3 - August 14 FOIA request (3 pages); E-4 - August 18 FOIA acknowledgment (1 page). Original scanned pages follow their dividers. Source screenshots show clock times without a stated time zone; their times have not been converted.

EXHIBIT E-1

September 20, 2026 request to Supervisor Glaspell

Source file: 20260920_Natural_disaster_egress_analysis_follow_up_emailredacted.pdf

1 original scanned page follow.

Sweetwater Lake Draft EIS: Request analysis for ingress/egress for natural disaster emergencies

From [REDACTED]
Date Sun 9/20/2026 7:54 PM
To Glaspell Brian FS CO <brian.glaspell@usda.gov>
Cc [REDACTED]

Dear Supervisor Glaspell,

In the meeting with the Sweetwater Lake Working Group on August 31, 2026, the community expressed serious concerns regarding emergency ingress/egress along the Sweetwater Road corridor as it relates to the increase in visitors proposed in the Draft EIS.

The group noted that page 170 of the Draft EIS cites an analysis of "ingress/egress for natural disaster emergencies (e.g. wildfire)," but that specific analysis is missing from the Draft EIS and its supporting documents. This is particularly concerning given the wildfire evacuations in recent years, as well as frequent road closures due to mudslides/boulders—including the multiple newsworthy August 30, 2026 mudslides just the day before our meeting—that have trapped residents and lake visitors alike.

During the meeting, we asked if the referenced analysis was completed and requested a copy. You agreed to check for us, but we have not yet received a response.

Please kindly confirm if such an analysis exists. If it does exist, we respectfully request a copy or a reason why a copy cannot be shared with us.

Thank you for your time and assistance with this matter.

Sincerely,

Maria Summerlin

Sweetwater Lake Working Group

EXHIBIT E-2

September 20, 2026 CARA receipt, Letter ID 284162-6986-97

Source file: 20260920_Natural_Disaster_submission_receipt.pdf

1 original scanned page follow.

Sweetwater Lake Recreation Management and Development Project (SLDP) #284162

Thank you for Your Comment.

Your comment has been received by our system on 9/20/2026

Your letter may be found in the Public Reading Room within 24 hours. The reading room can be found at the following site: [Public Reading Room](#)

Your letter ID is **284162-6986-97**. Please save or print this page for your records.

Regards,
The Sweetwater Lake Recreation Management and Development Project (SLDP) Team

[Return to top](#)

Recreation.gov	askUSDA	Report Fraud on USDA Contracts	Accessibility Statement
WhiteHouse.gov	Policies and Links	Visit OIG	Privacy Policy
eGov	Our Performance	Plain Writing	Non-Discrimination Statement
Anti-Harassment Policy	No FEAR Act Data	Open Government	Careers
FOIA	Information Quality	USA.gov	

EXHIBIT E-3

August 14, 2026 FOIA request for evacuation and hazard records

Source file: 20260814_FOIA_Request_Evacuation_Modeling_Wildfire_Landslide_red.pdf

3 original scanned pages follow.

Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Request – Sweetwater Lake Recreation Management and Development Project (Evacuation Modeling, Wildfire Risk, and Landslide Hazards)

From [REDACTED]
Date Fri 8/14/2026 12:02 PM
To sm.fs.r2foia@usda.gov <sm.fs.r2foia@usda.gov>
Cc Glaspell, Brian - FS, CO <brian.glaspell@usda.gov>; Veldhuis, Leanne - FS, CO <leanne.veldhuis@usda.gov>

To the Freedom of Information Act Officer:

Pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), 5 U.S.C. § 552, I hereby request copies of all records, data, and communications from January 1, 2021, to the present date, regarding the Sweetwater Lake Recreation Management and Development Project, specifically concerning Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI) evacuation clearance times, traffic modeling, landslide/geological hazards, and single-access road constraints along the Sweetwater Road corridor.

Please provide all final documents, drafts, interim reports, raw data sets, geospatial (GIS) files, shapefiles, and electronic communications (including emails, text messages, meeting minutes, and memos) related to the following specific items:

1. Evacuation Clearance Time Modeling & Simulations

- All reports, studies, and data sets detailing Evacuation Time Estimates (ETE) for the 12-mile stretch of Sweetwater Road.
- All input, configuration, and output files from traffic simulation software (including but not limited to VISSIM, DynusT, TransModeler, MATSim, or similar platforms) used to model project-related traffic flows.
- Documented definitions of the "critical thresholds" used by the Forest Service, local fire marshals, or emergency management agencies to determine acceptable evacuation clearance times.
- Any records establishing the physical boundaries of the Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI) modeling zone for this project corridor.

2. Traffic Flow Variables & Capacity Metrics (Inputs)

- Records showing peak population inputs used in evacuation models, including maximum capacities for campsites, cabins, day-use boaters, equestrian users, and permanent local residents.
- Data or assumptions regarding vehicle response, mobilization, and preparation times (e.g., time required to hook up trailers or pack campsites) during an emergency alert.
- Studies accounting for physical roadway constraints along Sweetwater Road, including lane widths, unpaved surfaces, bridge weights, turning radii, and bottlenecks impacting large vehicles or horse trailers.

3. Fire Behavior & Fast-Moving Wildfire Scenarios

- Fire propagation models, wind scenario files, fuel moisture data, and rate-of-spread models (e.g., FlamMap, BehavePlus) utilized to test the single-access evacuation route.

- Maps, descriptions, and reports identifying simulated fire ignition points used during project safety and traffic risk assessments.
- Analysis regarding how smoke, fire-degraded visibility, or abandoned vehicles along the route would degrade traffic flow capacity.

4. Geotechnical Studies, Slope Stability, & Landslide Hazards

- Geotechnical engineering reports, slope stability analyses, and rockfall hazard ratings for the Sweetwater Road corridor and the immediate perimeter of the project area.
- Geospatial layers (GIS shapefiles) and LiDAR data mapping active landslides, debris flow paths, and historic rockfall zones along the corridor.
- Models or studies assessing post-wildfire debris flow risks, including how vegetation loss on canyon walls increases the threat of rain-induced mudslides or landslides blocking the evacuation route.

5. Compound Hazards & Single-Point-of-Failure Analysis

- Records, simulations, or risk assessments analyzing a cascading disaster scenario where a landslide, slope failure, or rockfall blocks one or both lanes of Sweetwater Road during an active wildfire evacuation.
- Estimates regarding the physical clearing time required for heavy equipment to remove debris from the road during an active evacuation emergency.
- Documents discussing alternative emergency protocols, such as temporary shelter-in-place structures or boat-based water evacuations across Sweetwater Lake if the road is compromised.

6. Inter-Agency Communications & Legal Capacity Triggers

- All communications, letters, and emails between the USFS and local fire protection districts (including the Greater Eagle Fire Protection District and Gypsum Fire Protection District) regarding evacuation capacities, safety thresholds, or secondary route mandates.
- All communications between the USFS, Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW), Eagle County, and Garfield County emergency management officials regarding the potential legal denial of additional visitor capacity due to single-route evacuation constraints.
- Feasibility studies, correspondence, or maps regarding the potential acquisition, construction, or clearance of a secondary emergency egress route out of the Sweetwater basin.

7. NEPA & Draft EIS Background Records

- Internal reviewer notes, contractor working files, and agency comments regarding the "Public Health and Safety" and "Infrastructure and Transportation" sections of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).
- Unredacted scoping comments submitted by state, county, or local emergency management agencies voicing public safety concerns regarding evacuation routes.

Fee Waiver Request

I request a waiver of all processing and duplication fees because the disclosure of this information is in the public interest. This project directly impacts public health and safety regarding wildfire and landslide emergency management on federal public lands. The requested records will be used to inform the public and participating stakeholders about safety risks during the active NEPA process. This request is not made for commercial purposes.

If this request is denied in whole or in part, please justify each deletion by reference to specific exemptions of the FOIA. Please release all segregable, non-exempt portions of otherwise exempt

documents. I look forward to your response within the statutory 20-working-day time limit.

Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,
Maria Summerlin
Sweetwater Lake Working Group

EXHIBIT E-4

August 18, 2026 FOIA acknowledgment, 2026-FS-R2-06639-F

Source file: 20260818_FOIA_Evac_Rcpt_red.pdf

1 original scanned page follow.

FOIA Acknowledgement

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

Date Tue 8/18/2026 9:15 AM

To [REDACTED]

August 18, 2026

2026-FS-R2-06639-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 14, 2026 which was received in the R2 office on August 14, 2026. You requested:

All records, data, and communications from January 1, 2021, to the present date, regarding the Sweetwater Lake Recreation Management and Development Project, specifically concerning Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI) evacuation clearance times, traffic modeling, landslide/geological hazards, and single-access road constraints along the Sweetwater Road corridor.

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-R2-06639-F.

Your patience is greatly appreciated.

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