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First name: Erin

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Organization: Colorado Cattlemen's Association

Title: Executive Vice President

Comments: To Whom it May Concern,

I am writing on behalf of the grazing permittees and Colorado Cattlemen's Association members affected by and concerned about the Sweetwater Lake Recreation Management and Development Project (SLDP) #64047. As you may be aware, five permittees manage around 700 head of cattle on the adjacent allotments: Deep Creek and Lake Creek.

Colorado Cattlemen's Association (CCA) is the oldest cattlemen's organization in the United States, founded in 1867, and represents all segments of the beef supply chain. Our direct and indirect membership totals approximately 6,000 producers, individuals, and businesses. Our affiliate organizations, which cumulatively canvas the state, total 49 local, breed, and issue organizations that operate within the CCA structure. CCA's landowner members own or lease approximately 70% of the state's private and state grazing lands totaling 25 million acres. The association is guided by its grassroots membership and vision of advancing the legacy of beef production. Association members take pride in the fact that CCA is nationally recognized for its leadership and ability to achieve results for Colorado's beef producers.

One of our primary concerns is the impact of increased park usage on livestock management and access. The southeastern corner of the lake provides one of only two access points to the allotment, and it is the sole all-weather access point. This access is crucial for the daily operations and welfare of the livestock.

The permittees' gate is located approximately 100 yards up the trail leading out of the lake. Given the projected increase in human activity in the area, we are concerned about potential conflicts between park visitors and livestock operations. To mitigate these conflicts, we propose the following considerations:

Access for Grazing Permittees: It is imperative that the access point in the southeastern corner of the lake remains open and unrestricted to ensure the continued viability of our grazing operations.

Livestock Management Infrastructure: We request the installation of corrals and a load-out chute to facilitate safe and efficient livestock handling. This infrastructure is essential to minimize the risk of conflicts and ensure the safety of both livestock and park visitors.

Avoiding Livestock Reduction: We urge that any management plans or mitigation measures do not include reducing livestock numbers. The current herd size is critical to the permittees' economic stability and the overall sustainability of the grazing operation. There is no assurance in the NEPA document to continue historical uses, we ask that be clearly communicated in final documentation.

With careful planning and consideration, we believe that Sweetwater State Park can be developed to accommodate recreational use and traditional livestock grazing practices. We are willing to work collaboratively with United States Forest Service and Colorado Parks and Wildlife to develop strategies that address these concerns and ensure the continued success of grazing operations. Please listen to local concerns and work to address them.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. We look forward to a constructive dialogue and a mutually beneficial resolution.

Sincerely,

Erin Karney Spaur

Executive Vice President