



March 11, 2022

Mr. Scott Fitzwilliams
900 Grand Avenue
Glenwood Springs, CO 81601

RE: El Jebel Administrative Site, Upper Parcel Conveyance Project

Dear Scott,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the USFS proposal to convey the upper parcel associated with Tree Farm property in El Jebel. Roaring Fork Conservancy (RFC) sincerely appreciates the effort being made to preserve and protect the outstanding conservation values to the lower parcel by keeping it under Forest Service Management. Having utilized the lower Tree Farm property riparian area as an outdoor classroom for many years, RFC applauds the effort to responsibly manage this area for future generations to enjoy. As transference of the upper property moves forward, please consider having a management plan that continues these protections in anticipation of development and increased use. Without proactive protections, this area could be severely degraded by overuse, trampling, dogs, and garbage.

In consideration of the upper parcel, this property holds 300 non-corporate shares of irrigation ditch water rights in the Robinson Ditch adjudicated under the laws of the State of Colorado. The Robinson Ditch rights amount to 6.62 cfs or approximately 250-acre feet of senior-priority irrigation water annually. RFC suggests that USFS strongly consider a conservation-based or in-stream use of this water, whether sold in conjunction with land, or separated. The development of this property creates an opportunity to use a senior water right on the Roaring Fork River to contribute to conservation programs that mitigate some of water resource impacts intensified by persistent drought including increased river temperatures, decreased flows, and Lake Powell shortages. RFC is willing to work with USFS and/or the perspective buyer on innovative ways to conserve and protect these water rights to benefit local rivers and west slope water resources.

We appreciate your consideration of these comments. Please do not hesitate to reach out to discuss further.

Sincerely,

Rick Lofaro, Executive Director

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