

To: Responsible official: Scott G. Fitzwilliams, Forest Supervisor

National forest and/or ranger district: White River NF; West Zone/Sopris Ranger District

Proposed project: El Jebel Administrative Site, Upper Parcel Conveyance Project

I live at [REDACTED] in a Rural Residential neighborhood on the Roaring Fork River corridor, a 2 minute walk the Lower Parcel. My ditch runs through the Lower parcel and with my neighbors maintain that ditch, I hike and fish on the adjacent public river access open space to the Lower parcel. I know it well.

I object to the sale of the Crown Mountain Lower Forest Service Parcels as proposed. The Lower parcel should be preserved and enhanced as natural open space as it adjoins the river riparian corridor. I would only support a sale of the Lower parcel if it were deed restricted in forever, in perpetuity, as natural open space. I would support a modified proposal the Upper Parcel. The western portion of the Upper Parcel should be as open space for an extension of Crown Mountain ball fields and park land, and the sale of only the eastern portion of the Upper Parcel directly across from the existing multifamily housing project on Valley Road to be used as either an addition to Crown Mountain Park or a price controlled Affordable Senior Housing Project for residents of the 81621 or 81623 Basalt and Eagle County zip codes.

I object to this sale as proposed on the basis of the 10 points of the CFR Title 40 1508.27 as follows:

1: Open space is a valued premium in the Roaring Fork Valley. Open space and affordable housing are competing interest valued by residents of the Roaring fork valley. Open space is fast disappearing. Lower parcel is appropriate for open space and not appropriate for affordable housing. The adjacent area from these parcels to the Carbondale Town border is zoned as Rural Residential, 2 acre parcels or larger. The adjacent subdivision Arlian Ranch Subdivision is zoned as Rural Residential and it's covenants stipulate that any development preserve the rural quality of this area. development of the lower parcel would be in direct conflict with the intent of that covenant. The lower parcel is adjacent to the river corridor, a fisherman's egress and summer home to ospreys and other birds and a winter home to deer and elk. Preserving and enhancing that open space would provide a significant benefit to the community. Development in this location would be adverse for the fisherman and locals using the public river corridor for hiking, and adverse for wild animal population. Development is better suited for other locations away from the river corridor.

2. Public safety would be significantly effected if dense development occurred. Valley Road does not meet the standards required by the County for such development. Until Valley road is brought up to the required standards for such development the parcels should not be sold for development. The intersection at Valley Road, Hwy 82 and Blue Lake Subdivision is one if the most dangerous intersections on Hwy 82. I live near there and many serious accidents occur there. CDOT will not put a traffic signal there. Until a traffic signal or a round about is installed at this intersection not a single dwelling unit or should be added along Valley road that would add to the traffic at this intersection should be added.

3. Geographic Areas. The Lower Parcel is adjacent to the public access to the river corridor, a fisherman's egress The lower parcel is adjacent to the river corridor, a fisherman's egress and summer home to ospreys and other birds and a winter home to deer and elk. Preserving and enhancing that open space would provide a significant benefit to the community. and summer home to ospreys and other birds and a winter home to deer and elk. Preserving and enhancing that open space would

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Conveying a Forest Service open space parcel that is an active ecological resource in order to put high-density housing on that land is antithetical to the Forest Service mission "to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the nation's forests and grasslands to meet the needs of present and future generations." On the Forest Service Meet the Forest Service web page, under "What does the Forest Service do?" it says "We help people share and enjoy the forest, while conserving the environment for generations to come." Conveyance of the Upper parcel would not conserve the environment for generations to come; it would remove land that is an active ecological resource already being conserved and open it up to developers who would push to build high-density housing on it. The Forest Service is not directed to make decisions based on availability of housing in communities. It is supposed to conserve the environment for generations to come. Conveyance of the area outlined in blue would be particularly egregious. It would have significant qualitative and quantitative effects on the human and biological environment. The value of the land as a current ecological resource far outweighs the potential benefits of high-density development on that parcel.

4. Quality of Human Environment. The increase in development in the Roaring Fork Valley has maxed out our infrastructure. Hwy 82 has significant traffic jams at rush hour through the mid valley are which has 5 traffic lights. This valley was a rural mountain valley when I first moved here in 1977. That's why many of us moved here to escape city traffic and congestion. That quality needs to be preserved as it is fast disappearing. The commute to Carbondale, Glenwood and Western Garfield County where many Aspen / Snowmass workers live will be significantly impacted. Adding to that commute time is not acceptable.

5. In addition to the traffic impacts above, Holy Cross Electric has identified an electricity supply shortage and the potential for rolling blackouts. Emergency services and other services are stretched thin. The impacts of already approved development in the mid valley still under construction have not yet been seen. Adding to these and other adverse human impacts should not occur, further development should not occur until the effects of the already improved development or seen.

6. Precedent: The value of the land as a current ecological resource far outweighs the potential benefits of high-density development on that parcel. The implementation of the proposed action would set a precedent to make USFS land and other land in Rural Residential areas and Open Space areas in the mid Roaring Fork Valley available for development.

7. Significant cumulative impacts. The cumulative impact has been addressed above as noted. Simply the multitude of development in the mid valley presently under construction will negatively impact, traffic, demand for electricity, air pollution which could impact trees and other flora and fauna as high alpine environments are sensitive, run off from road and paved areas and roofs on developed properties into our rivers and negatively impact our trout population which is a significant economic and intrinsically valued resource, etc. The forest should be protecting the environment not adding to negative impacts to our environment.

WHO GETS IT:

The Lower Parcel should not be sold to Eagle or Pitkin County unless it is permanently designated as natural open space as it has been forever. If Eagle and / or Pitkin County are not willing to make this designation of the lower parcel, and, the Forest Service cannot keep it, then a buyer such as Crown Mountain, if it will make the same designation as permanent natural open space, the Aspen land trust, Wilderness land Trust, or Nature Conservancy, or other similar entity should be pursued to keep it natural open space. This would be more in keeping with the Forest Service mission statement.

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Eagle County should be given priority over Pitkin county to purchase the land. Eagle County only has 2 miles along Hwy 82 to locate affordable housing for its residents who live in the Roaring Fork Valley. This Upper parcel is located within that 2 miles. Pitkin has 20 miles along Hwy 82, all closer to where their workers are needed in Snowmass and Aspen with plenty of Open Space rural land. Pitkin County needs to be held accountable and solve it's affordable housing issues within it's borders. Pitkin County has the space and money to solve this issue within it's borders, it must have the will as well. Housing Pitkin County workers in Pitkin county means less of a commute for these workers and less traffic on Garfield and Eagle County roads and Hwy 82 down valley. Eagle county needs affordable housing for its own residents and workers. It should not be required to give up what little public land it has in the Roaring Fork Valley to solve the housing issue for a county that has more land and funding. Aspen /Pitkin County could should build a Town at the Intercept lot, the junction of Brush Creek Road to Snowmass Village and Hwy 82 to Aspen. Call it the Town of Intercept – underground parking, transit station, grocery store shops for workers and multi story employee housing, and monorails or subways Aspen and Snowmass Village. Aspen /Pitkin County and it's residence have the money to do this. BUT ... AGAIN if either County is allowed to purchase the Lower Parcel it should be designate it as natural open space in perpetuity, forever. It is now and always will be next to the Roaring Fork River corridor and should be a buffer to protect and enhance the roaring Fork River.

Finally, this land is public land owned by the public. The Lower Parcel need be sold if it remains permanent natural that all the the citizens of the United States of America can enjoy and benefit from, locals and visitors. If the Forest Service cannot continue to maintain this asset as natural open space the grant it to an entity that will.

Sincerely,

Bruce Stolbach, Lead Objector

[REDACTED]

Bruce Stolbach 10/29/22