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First name: Pat

Last name: Messerli

Organization:

Title:

Comments: Strongly oppose Valle seco land exchange.

To Rebecca Smith,

As a sportsman and land owner in the upper Blanco Basin I strongly oppose the proposed Valle Seco Land Exchange. This is another attempt by billionaires to secure their fiefdoms and privatize prime National Forest for their own benefit. Parcels 7 and 8 requested by the Lindner family contain ancient old growth ponderosa pines and are prime habitat for turkey, elk and deer. The elk within the Blanco Basin often no longer migrate and stay year long within these parcels and their adjoining ranch. This exchange would secure a private reserve and further limit public access. They also contain rare specific habitat that produces lobster mushrooms that will be excluded from the public. Parcel 5 is exceptional turkey, elk and bear habitat and borders the Blanco River and provides a much needed wildlife corridor to the river. The banks along this stretch are extremely prone to erosion which could erode water quality and prime public fishing habitat. Parcel 8 is prime elk and bear habitat and is considered to already be a private hunting reserve by the Skidmore family. As the population of elk within the Blanco Basin continues to decline, these resources become more concentrated on private lands and under the control of a few wealthy land owners. Parcel 4 and 5 also contains occasional massive Ponderosa pines and Douglas Fir hundreds of years old as well as ancient and historic archaeologic sites which have not been surveyed. Don't be hoodwinked. beware of Greeks bearing gifts. Thank you, Pat Messerli

Patrick Messerli

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Durango, Co