

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 3/12/2022 8:25:36 PM

First name: Nick

Last name: Landers

Organization:

Title:

Comments: At a time when the Forest Service, and more specifically, the White River National Forest and the Aspen-Sopris Ranger District is making a push to fill out its organizational chart with many low paying, permanent-seasonal and other positions none of which offer locality pay, it is incompressible to even consider demolishing and selling off employee housing. With the astronomical cost of living in the valley, how is the district or forest thinking it is going to be able to attract and retain talent when nobody can afford to live in the valley on a Forest Service salary? It is clear the community values this property at the state it is in, and the Forest Service needs it more than ever for its employees. The White River National Forest, the "Crown Jewel" of the National Forests, is exemplary at finding resources and running its programs well. There is no excuse to have let this property become so deteriorated that the only option is to sell it off. The forest should right its wrong, re-invest in this property, as it is an asset to the community, the Forest Service and its people. While there may not be money available right now, with proper management and forest leadership that is willing and able to think outside the box, it is not to say that down the road there won't be funding available. Once this property is gone, it will be gone forever. Eliminating employee housing will inevitably lead to seasonal employees living off the forest, which is illegal and something the Forest Service enforces, and uncomfortable for all parties involved, but unfortunately that is what decisions like these will result in. That, and it will become impossible to fill any positions in the future. If Forest leadership does not believe this will happen, open your eyes, it already is. Don't let poor current management seal its fate. With this property being so valuable to the community and with no guarantee of replacing these government housing facilities, this proposal needs to be scrapped.