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First name: Laura

Last name: Harney

Organization:

Title:

Comments: As a Colorado resident, an environmental sustainability advocate, and a former camp counselor at Rainbow Trail Lutheran Camp, I strongly support the Locke Park Land Exchange #63709.

The Locke Park Land Exchange is an asset to the American public. Returning prime undeveloped forest land to public access allows for public enjoyment and increases surrounding land value. Acquisition of this non-Federal piece of land will also eliminate the last privately-owned piece of land in the Locke Park area of the Wet Mountain Range which supports access to open spaces and critical natural resources that benefit the American people.

Preventing private development of this parcel is also critical to the conservation of the unique and important biodiversity of the region. As a habitat for lynx, cutthroat trout, Mexican spotted owl, and more, it's important that the Forest Service preserve the land on which they live and eliminate the possibility of destruction of their environment from private development. The parcel is also part of the Locke Park Potential Conservation Area due to the known occurrence of the Degener Beardtongue. This species is on the sensitive species list and by taking action now, we can help support the preservation of this endemic animal before it's too late.

The exchange also benefits the public through improvements to Rainbow Trail Lutheran Camp. As a camp counselor, I saw the impact of requiring two years' notice for new building or footprint revisions. By increasing this timeline, RTALC can responsibly provide a safe and comfortable environment to promote a love of nature and community for generations to come. Also, the exchange will increase security for young campers by not allowing strangers onto the lands. As someone responsible for campers' security, I fully support creating an environment where it is clear when someone new is on the land to ensure all children are kept safe.

This land exchange is mutually beneficial for the forest service, the American people, and RTALC. I sincerely hope that the Locke Park Land Exchange is approved. Thank you for your consideration and the opportunity to comment; please don't hesitate to contact me with any questions.