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Comments: I want to directly address the Sweetwater scoping letter. Part 1

INTENT:

1. "To maintain the natural resources and cultural characteristics, of the newly acquired property, the white river national forest intends to improve recreation access, update the facilities onsite, and create a state managed recreation area around sweetwater lake".

In my educated opinion, this is a direct contradiction. Maintaining (preserving and protecting) natural resources and cultural characteristics, is not done through improving recreation access (we're not talking road repair, but increased promotion, and availability towards increased recreation). Nor is it done through creating larger and more facilities development (this is not just an update of the facilities onsite but an enlargement). Creating a state managed RECREATION area, is ensuring that more maintenance of the natural resources and cultural characteristics will be needed to offset the increased development and traffic.

Improving site conditions is one thing, increased development of the site is contrary to the stated goal of this intent

PURPOSE:

2. " The purpose of the proposed action is to provide the public a natural resource based recreational and educational experience at sweetwater lake that is reflective of the culture and history of the area while managing visitation at the appropriate scale for long term viability of the 832 acres surrounding the lake and it's resources".

"Reflective of the culture and history of the area". The culture and history of the area is community-based rural agriculture, ranching, and homesteading, with a remote and secluded wilderness access, and minimal lake front guest and horse operation. The proposed enlargement of this cultural and historic use of the area is contrary to this intent.

"managing visitation at the appropriate scale for long term viability" has already been shown by a hundred years of use at numbers at or below a 60 person per day maximum, except for infrequent special events of numbers up to around 200. This historic use number is required for the long term viability of the wildlife population, environmental health, cultural and historic community health and safety, and natural resources of the area.

NEED:

3. "The actions proposed in the sweetwater lake recreation management and development project are needed to:". Just the fact that it is called RECREATION management and DEVELOPMENT, speaks volumes to the true intent of this proposal: To DEVELOP and MANAGE RECREATION. This is in direct conflict with the afore mentioned intent (maintain natural resources and cultural characteristics) and purpose (reflective of the culture and history of the area, appropriate scale for long term viability of lake and resources).

This is clearly a development - grow or cause to grow and become more mature, advanced, or elaborate, convert (land) to a new purpose by constructing buildings or making other use of its resources. And not a protection of existing conditions.

"Enhance and provide sustainable management...". Enhance - intensify, increase, add to, or further improve the quality, value, or extent of. Basically meaning make bigger and improve for purposes of INCREASED RECREATION.

"Provide updated and sustainable nature based recreational services to the public that are appropriate to the

environment and responsive to the recreational needs of the public". Updated means adding more, not just improving existing conditions, right? Appropriate to the environment will be based on EIS and other studies I assume, therefore and designs preceding such studies are moot. Responsive to the recreational needs of the ever-expanding and care-less public is poor reasoning for sustainability.

"Improve the site's existing infrastructure , while providing updated facilities in alignment with applicable laws, policies, and known best practices". "Improve" (enlarge facilities), "update" (enlarge facilities), "alignment with applicable laws" (county codes and restrictions), "policies" (I am guessing this means forest service guidelines) and "known best practices" (protection, or development?)

"Develop and implement management strategies to reduce or mitigate potential impacts on the site's natural and cultural resources from public visitation". This is the most worthy statement I have read so far! And, reducing the scope of development will go a long way to reducing and mitigating impacts.

"Provide for year round on-site management, including over site and management for all the site's resources and facilities". The realistic operational / seasonal window for this area is approximately June-ish (after the elk calving season) to mid October-ish (winter is coming and guests are transitioning to hunting and winter activities). I think that year round site management is unnecessary and creates for added development, utilities infrastructure, disturbance of site conditions, and costs, etc.

"Provide public recreational, interpretive, and educational opportunities". Again, size is the determining factor here. Bigger, more, improved, updated = more development, more disturbance, more negative impact. Maintaining historic use numbers = current conditions maintained.

Stay tuned for part 2: Proposed actions