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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Hello, As a nearly lifetime Colorado resident, fly-fisherperson and avid hiker and birder, I was initially appalled by the resistance to the Sweetwater Lake State Park development. However, after learning about the potential birding and other wildlife impacts, I am writing today to urge you to make a careful review and mindful planning of trails, campsites and other public access. (I live in Glenwood Springs, and I do want more Colorado State Parks, but the environment of Sweetwater Lake really concerns me.) I believe it is your/our responsibility to protect native species and the habitat upon which they depend from recreational disturbances and development. Follow recommendations from CPW and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for protecting raptors, waterfowl and songbirds from recreational and development disturbances.

Prohibit human recreational use on the northwestern 2/3rd of the lake where waterfowl are nesting and foraging.

Waterfowl: Recreational activities that cause disturbance to waterfowl include rapid overwater movement and loud noise, overwater movement from sailing, windsurfing, rowing or canoeing and to a lesser extent wading or swimming; fishing, birdwatching, walking and traffic.

Establish and enforce spatial and temporal buffer zones to protect raptors from the effects of visual disturbances (e.g., human development or recreation), audible disturbances (e.g., motorized and non-motorized recreation), and direct disturbances. Bald Eagles and Peregrine Falcons were observed nesting, raising, and fledging their young at Sweetwater Lake in the spring and summer of 2023 and 2024.

Spatial and temporal restrictions or buffer zones are important strategies to protect raptors during periods of extreme sensitivity such as nesting and fledging young. Median distances recommended for buffer zones for Bald Eagle are 650m (445m-800m range) and for Peregrine Falcon peregrine falcon are 800m (50m-1600m range). Temporal buffers should include all nesting activities but must at least extend from the arrival of the adult birds in the nesting area through the first few weeks of nestling development (Suter and Jones 1981). For Bald Eagles and Peregrine Falcons this means from February 1st through August 1st

Also, the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) process should include:

Analyses of impacts to the Creek and the Lake water quality and quantity,

Analysis of impacts to environmental resources including birds, mammals, amphibians, fish, plants, and mammals and the surrounding habitats upon which wildlife depends for nesting, foraging and cover including wetland and uplands ecosystems.

I truly appreciate your attention to my concerns. I speak for more than myself, as my values extend to other species and other generations.