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Organization:

Title:

Comments: We are against the development of Sweetwater Lake by the USFS/State of Colorado for the following

reasons. We are also strongly against the USFS leasing this land to the State of Colorado on an unprecedented setup for the next 20 years

Sweetwater Lake is not a good location for a state park due to safety concerns:

Road Concerns:

To get to the proposed park, a visitor first has to navigate the Colorado River Road which is overrun in the summer with bicyclists, rafting shuttles, visitors to Round-Up River Ranch, and is often packed with back up traffic at the Dotsero end when the Glenwood Canyon is closed.

Then add the 10 miles of narrow, curvy Sweetwater Road. This dirt road isn't even two lanes wide in places! It could not handle the RV traffic a state park would invite. In addition, the community fears accidents from people driving too fast; increased human/wildlife interactions (esp. worrisome are moose and bear); and trespassers on

the private lands that border this possible new park. The nearest police station is in Gypsum, 24 miles away.

Mudslides and rockslides have closed numerous portions of Sweetwater Road and the Colorado River Road over the years. This is a risk to the park visitors who will be stranded in our box canyon.

The repeated closures of the Glenwood Canyon back up traffic at Dotsero making it hard for residents, visitors, and even safety services to get through. This could exacerbate any emergencies that happen at Sweetwater Lake.

Sweetwater Road is mostly a dirt road. Seasonally, it gets washboards and potholes, which are graded out by the county on a rotating schedule. The increase in traffic will only exacerbate road damage.

Improvements to the road will cost the taxpayer - whether through County construction or State Park funding - a significant amount of money, in the millions. Yet, if the road was widened and improved, that would just increase the speed at which people navigate it. The isolated location means it is rarely patrolled for speed enforcement.

Some RV's will be too long or wide for the road, which might end up blocking the narrow road for local traffic and park guests

A traffic count on the lower end of Sweetwater Road in 2021 showed 240 vehicles daily. The scoping report as presented at input sessions, puts 100 more cars on the road (250 people with 2.5 people per car). However, since there is only one way in and out, that results in 100 cars going up and 100 cars going down. So, 240 becomes 440. More people means more road upkeep and more vehicle accidents.

The intersection of County Road 150 (Sweetwater Road) and County Road 151 (sometimes referred to as the 7W Road) in Garfield County is a huge concern. Even at the current level of traffic, this is a dangerous, blind intersection. Deliberately increasing traffic on the road without mitigating this danger is unconscionable.

Search and Rescue:

Search and Rescue is located an hour or more away.

When search and rescue teams go into the Flat Tops Wilderness from the east side, they often land helicopters in a lower pasture near Sweetwater Lake. CPW's site plan is to turn this pasture into an RV park with cement pads and electric hookups. There are few, if any, other places that a rescue copter could land safely

Communications

There is no cell service along the Colorado River Road, the Sweetwater Road, and County Road 151. The large number of visitors projected for the park will have emergencies without a way to get help. Drivers could be stranded or come to private homes for help.

There are many reasons that all these residents feel this way. Sweetwater Lake is a good spot for the small, primitive Forest Service Campground located there. A resort that has been operating in the area for years and has hosted tourists from around the world is another good idea. These smaller and historical uses around the lake maintain the wildlife, the beauty, and the riparian ecosystem while welcoming visitors.

Our number one worry is how unsafe this location would be for all the visitors if expanded, developed, and

marketed into a State Park!

Brad & Kindra Stiles