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Comments: Sweetwater Lake Development Project - It's Not Safe!

There are many reasons the Sweetwater Lake and the local surrounding communities are united in their opposition of the proposed Sweetwater Lake Recreation Management and Development Project. From the concerns raised over the environmental impacts, disruptions to the established ecosystems and wildlife habitats, to the traffic issues expected from increasing visitation numbers, and/or the exorbitant taxed expenses associated with addressing the road requirements to safely evacuate Sweetwater Lake in Emergency Situation, to the imminent danger the current community would face from over-occupancy of the single-road accessed box canyon Lake, it's easy to see why these communities are fighting to Save Sweetwater. Drive the Colorado River and Sweetwater Roads to visit Sweetwater Lake, you will count more bright yellow yard signs displayed in objection to the development; "Save Sweetwater" than driveways found on the same stretch of road. It is a unified community trying to protect the one of our last natural spaces that has over generations found a balance between nature, wildlife, recreation & ranching by organically maintaining low visitation numbers and limiting human interference.

One of the largest concern (although there are many...) regarding the plan to increase the average per person traffic visiting Sweetwater Lake above the current 60 person per day average to an anticipated 250 persons per day is Public SAFETY.

Sweetwater Road was not developed for, and does not have the capacity to, carry the surplus traffic anticipated from increased visitation of Sweetwater Lake. The current road conditions must be addressed prior to growing the number of recreational vehicles/trailers/RVs on Sweetwater Road in order to provide safe passage. The drive to Sweetwater Lake is unforgiving. Drivers are without cell phone service for the 7 miles they travel on the PAVED Colorado River Road, and an additional 10 miles on the DIRT Sweetwater Road where the turns are tight, the passes are narrow, and drivers unfamiliar with single-lane passage locations may put themselves, and others, in danger causing accidents and further safety concerns from recovery efforts.

In addition to the road improvements required to provide safe access to Sweetwater Lake, the cell service limitations in the area to call for emergency services, consideration of the impact of an "impasse" adds additional dangers to consider. With an amplified number of visitors/campers, an increase of "recreational" trailers can be expected on Sweetwater Road. This will inevitably result in a higher probability of "impasse" situations caused by two trailers (or oversize RVs) meeting on the road where they cannot safely pass, or by an accident prohibiting through traffic to pass until the wreckage is able to be cleared. An impasse on Sweetwater Road would further delay the already delayed response times to Sweetwater Lake are already extended do to the communication limitations and remote location.

Before deliberately increasing the number of persons visiting Sweetwater, the safety concerns surrounding an emergency response and/or evacuations must be addressed. The threat of wild fire danger to the Sweetwater community drastically increases with the additional human visitation numbers projected. Sweetwater Lake is located at the end of a "Box Canyon" and only has a single road in/out. It would be prudent to have an established plan and necessary to have an infrastructure in place to support a safe evacuation of the Sweetwater community, its visiting occupants, and the livestock in the event of an emergency.

There are major concerns from the community regarding the proposed increased visitation numbers and how they pose a threat to the community, it's natural surroundings, and the safety of those living in and visiting the Sweetwater Lake area. Without addressing the access conditions and evacuation/passagage concerns on

Sweetwater Road, the community and visitors will have been placed in eminent danger when an emergency situations develop. Increasing the number of visitors will exponentially increase the number of incidents, (Wild fire, car accident, medical emergency, serious injury, etc) and the requirement of surrounding Police, Fire, Medical Emergency teams to respond to these incidents in the remote Sweetwater location will pull resources and putting the greater community's safety in jeopardy.

We ask that you strongly reconsider the Sweetwater Lake Recreation Management and Development Project's efforts to increase visitation numbers and the promotion of Sweetwater Lake. The current visitation numbers have created a balance allowing many to enjoy the natural sanctuary, while preserving the habitats of the wildlife that live there. Most of all, the community asks you to consider the danger brought onto the community and the potential loss of life that could be caused by over-occupancy of this beautiful single-accessed box canyon.

Sincerely & Concerned,

~Sweetwater Ranch