

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 2/22/2025 2:03:20 AM

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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest Ranger,

I agree and support the FS's recommendation, that extraordinary circumstances do not exist and a categorical exclusion be granted, regarding the 13 acres rehabilitation project area. Montlure leadership and staff have been good stewards of the land for the past 95 years by maintaining structures, vegetation, pathways throughout camp, and respecting all wildlife great and small. This step forward will allow the leadership team to make plans for expanded seasonal use of the property and consider larger renovation efforts.

Any given weekend, it's common for Montlure alumni to visit the site and enjoy the beauty the area has to offer. Alumni, volunteers and staff also stimulate the local Greer community economy. From my conversations with Greer community members and homeowners along FS road 1121, they all look forward to the issuance of a new special use permit, and hearing life brought back to the camp.

My wife, daughter and I first experienced Montlure 19 years ago, well before the ravages of fire swept through the valley. We enjoyed fellowship, playing various sporting activities in the meadow and sitting on the lodge deck taking in passing weather with friends and fellow church members. While the Wallow fire and debris flows were intense and devastating, with time there are clear indications the forest is healing. Groves of maturing aspens are visible on and around the permitted area. And pausing to take in the scene, I see new pine tree growth everywhere I look. The beauty we first fell in love with can be seen, and improves with each season.

My two children both experienced the Montlure Greer property prior to the fire. They both looked forward to the Montlure overnight camp, spending a week with friends away from home. Unfortunately, the Wallow fire interfered with those plans, but the program continued by renting camps around the state. Both my children attended Montlure overnight program every year since they entered the 4th grade. Even though they were not able to attend camp in Greer, they participated in many Greer service camp weekends, maintaining the property. They have been transformed by the experience, seeing perseverance and leadership demonstrated in action, and looking forward to full operational use of the camp.

Rehabilitating the property and issuing a new special use permit will bring stability and sustainability to the Montlure ministry for generations to come. More than ever, youth need space away from the drone of city life to immerse themselves in the beauty of nature. Montlure is committed to offering that safe and nurturing space to connect lives through transformation, restoration, and faith exploration.

Respectfully,

Cameron Mitchell