

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 7/25/2026 6:37:57 PM

First name: Paul

Last name: Stege

Organization:

Title:

Comments: Subject: Public Comment on Sweetwater Lake Draft Environmental Impact Statement

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to the proposed development alternatives that would transform Sweetwater Lake into a Colorado State Park or significantly increase the level of development around the lake.

Sweetwater Lake is already public land. It is one of the few remaining places in our area that still feels quiet, remote, and largely untouched. That character is exactly what makes it special, and I believe it should be protected rather than changed.

I have personally seen what can happen when a beautiful mountain lake becomes heavily developed and promoted for higher visitation. Sylvan Lake State Park in Eagle County is an example. While I appreciate that it provides recreational opportunities, the increase in use has noticeably impacted the experience and the resource itself. Fishing line and discarded hooks are common along the shoreline. Picnic areas show heavy wear, trash is more prevalent, and the peaceful atmosphere has largely been replaced by crowds. It is no longer the pristine mountain lake experience that many people seek.

I do not want to see Sweetwater Lake follow the same path.

I am also deeply concerned about the effects that increased development and visitation would have on wildlife. Sweetwater provides important habitat for bald eagles, peregrine falcons, elk, and many other species. Increased traffic, cabins, campgrounds, trails, and year-round human activity will inevitably place additional pressure on these animals and diminish the qualities that make this ecosystem so valuable.

The remote location and single access road also raise legitimate public safety concerns. Expanding visitation without addressing those limitations seems irresponsible, particularly during wildfire season or other emergency situations.

If improvements are deemed necessary, I encourage the Forest Service to pursue only the most minimal level of development. Basic maintenance, restroom facilities, waste management, and perhaps a very limited number of campsites may be appropriate. However, I do not support a lodge, cabins, extensive new trail systems, or the transfer of management to Colorado Parks and Wildlife as a state park.

Please preserve Sweetwater Lake as a quiet, low-impact public resource. Not every beautiful place needs to be developed to accommodate maximum visitation. Some places should remain largely as they are so future generations can experience the same sense of solitude, wildlife, and natural beauty that exists today.

Thank you for considering my comments.