

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 9/23/2026 3:10:10 PM

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Title: Communication Chairman

Comments: September 23, 2026

To: USFS:

Re: Public Comment on the Sweetwater Lake Recreation Management and Development Project Draft EIS

I am writing to formally urge the you to reject Alternatives 2 and 4 and strongly advocate for the creation of a new Hybrid Alternative 1 & 3. A combined alternative-merging Alternative 1's strict habitat and resource protections with Alternative 3's low-impact, primitive public amenities-is the only responsible path to protect Sweetwater Lake from overdevelopment, fire hazards, and environmental degradation.

Key Reasons to Adopt a Hybrid 1 + 3 Alternative:

*Water Scarcity & Stream Flow Protection: Alternative 4 increases domestic water diversions from King Spring by 290% (8.5 AF/year), while Alternative 2 significantly increases consumptive water demands. In contrast, a Hybrid 1/3 plan preserves local groundwater and results in a net reduction of water depletions by ~0.4 AF/year due to reduced pasture irrigation, returning critical water to the stream system.

*Wildfire Danger & Evacuation Bottlenecks: County Road 40/150 is a single, narrow, unpaved dirt road. As demonstrated by recent wildfire history in the area (such as the Derby Fire), funneling 250 to 479 daily visitors and up to 185 vehicles into a dead-end canyon creates severe public safety hazards and evacuation bottlenecks. A Hybrid 1/3 plan caps daily visitation to primitive levels (60-120 visitors), preventing catastrophic traffic jams during an emergency evacuation.

*Wildlife & Big Game Habitat Conservation: Alternatives 2 and 4 construct major road loops, campgrounds, and equestrian facilities directly inside mapped severe elk winter range-violating Management Area 5.41 standards-and disturb up to 12.7 acres of sensitive pollinator and songbird habitat. A Hybrid 1/3 plan completely eliminates commercial lodges, workforce housing, and winter cabin rentals, preserving crucial big game winter security and restricting long-term habitat loss to just 3.6 acres.

*Wetland & Riparian Protection: Alternatives 2 and 4 directly destroy 0.21 to 0.25 acres of wetlands and over 2.25 acres of upland riparian habitat, disturbing 2.5 acres within the sensitive Water Influence Zone. A Hybrid 1/3 approach limits permanent wetland loss to a negligible 0.02 acres and maintains a minimal Wetland Impact Scale score (1.8).

*Preserving Rural Character & Taxpayer Dollars: Building a ~4,000 sq ft commercial lodge, general store, and 12-14 rental cabins commercializes a quiet alpine valley. A Hybrid 1/3 alternative limits development to basic vault restrooms (~1,200-1,800 sq ft total) and 10 primitive campsites. This prevents heavy financial and logistical burdens on county road maintenance and emergency response services.

A Hybrid Alternative 1 & 3 delivers the ideal compromise: it fulfills public day-use and primitive camping needs without forcing an invasive, commercial state park buildout onto an ecologically fragile landscape. I urge the U.S. Forest Service to select this balanced solution.