
Sweetwater Lake Draft EIS

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Date Wed 7/15/2026 8:58 AM
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Hello Ken,

Thank you for reaching out to Colorado Parks and Wildlife with your comments and concerns regarding the management of Sweetwater Lake. We recognize and appreciate the natural and cultural values of the property and share your desire for the property to be managed in a way that maintains and improves these values while the visitation and recreation at Sweetwater Lake and in public lands across the state continue to increase.

At this point in time, the property is owned and managed by the US Forest Service while the Service implements the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process to determine what the future management of the property will look like. While much of the information referenced in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) was produced by Colorado Parks and Wildlife, this information was gathered to help CPW inform the USFS of property specific management issues, to determine how the involvement of CPW as managers could benefit the property, and what CPW's role could be in the management of the property.

If an alternative in the NEPA process is chosen that identifies CPW as the manager of Sweetwater Lake, the agency will have the opportunity to rely on its long standing history of and experience in managing properties for recreation while focusing on maintaining and improving the natural and cultural resource values of the specific property. Some of these standards include:

- **Raptor Management** - There are many examples of how CPW is implementing successful raptor management actions within the state park system. Some examples include:
 - Barr Lake State Park - identification of a wildlife refuge area and seasonal closures of the lake and select trails for nesting bald eagles and other raptor species
 - Staunton State Park - seasonal closures of trails to protect nesting peregrine falcons
 - Eldorado Canyon State Park - seasonal closures of trails and climbing areas to protect nesting golden eagles
 - Fishers Peak State Park - seasonal closure of the trail to the top of Fishers Peak to protect nesting peregrine falcons
- **Environmental Review of Construction Projects** - CPW has an internal procedure that reviews all ground disturbing activities and changes in land use on state parks. During this process, potential impacts are identified and project management actions are identified to eliminate or minimize these potential impacts. This includes timing construction to avoid

sensitive breeding seasons and, in some cases, monitoring sensitive resources during construction to ensure that irreversible impacts do not occur.

- **Adaptive Management** - Colorado's state park system has a robust raptor monitoring program that monitors every known raptor nest on these lands. Monitoring informs property managers of when seasonal closures and other management actions should be implemented and how these important species are doing during their breeding seasons.
- **Noxious Weed Management** - Colorado's state park system regularly maps invasive plants on properties and regularly updates an integrated weed management plan for each property.
- **Property Management Planning** - CPW conducts a thorough inventory program for natural and cultural resources on each property managed within the state park system. These inventories result in information that informs the Environmental Review process mentioned above, individual management plans such as the Integrated Weed Management Plans, and results in the creation of a Resource Stewardship Plan for each property. These Stewardship Plans are the foundation of property specific Management Plans that address how visitation, infrastructure and site specific resources will be managed.

At this point in the NEPA process, Colorado Parks and Wildlife is participating as a commenting member of the public and CPW is providing comments during the 90 comment period. We encourage you to provide your comments to the US Forest Service to help inform the decision process. If CPW is identified as the manager of the property when the NEPA process is complete, we hope that your interest in the property will continue and that you will participate in future management planning processes.

If the result of this process is CPW's management of Sweetwater Lake, we will have more opportunities to discuss raptor management decisions. Thank you for your interest in Sweetwater Lake. We appreciate it.

Jeff

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"Conservation is primarily not about biology, but about people and the choices they make."

~ Balmford & Cowling 2005

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