

August 17, 2026

VIA EMAIL

Jeff Thompson

Resource Stewardship Program Manager
Colorado Parks and Wildlife
711 Independent Avenue
Grand Junction, CO 81505

Re: Request for CPW's official Sweetwater position and reconciliation of the 2021 record

Dear Mr. Thompson:

Your July 15 response did not answer whether [Alternative 2](#) reflects the facilities, management, and wildlife protections CPW actually proposes if selected. It described practices CPW *might* use later and called CPW a “commenting member of the public.” A newly produced 5,796-page FOIA record makes that answer untenably incomplete.

The contemporaneous record shows a planning partner—not a peripheral commenter

The [executed October 2021 partnership MOU](#) (PDF pp. 2, 33–42) records CPW’s “strong interest” in creating a state park and CPW’s agreement to coordinate planning, design, implementation, monitoring, management, and maintenance. It calls for a comprehensive site and development plan that the partners would follow absent unanimous change and Forest Service approval, plus an annual maintenance and operations plan. The MOU is nonbinding and does not itself authorize CPW to operate or build—but it plainly documents a formal planning role. By its terms it lasts five years unless terminated in writing. Separately, the [DEIS](#) identifies CPW as a cooperating agency and lists you as CPW’s “Natural Resources and Recreation Planning” participant (p. 221).

Your own 2021 warning now bears directly on the proposed action

In your [November 12, 2021 concept-plan comments](#) (PDF pp. 301–305), you recommended inventories and conservation planning “ideally ahead of recreation planning,” followed by a Stewardship Plan, Master Plan, and Park Management Plan. You wrote that the team was “putting the cart before the horse,” that it was premature to identify recreation uses and infrastructure, and that the layout’s specificity could create a precedent CPW might not want or be able to follow. You questioned the equestrian compound, suggested moving the administrative area to previously developed land, and called for CPW raptor buffers.

CPW Area 8’s earlier [August 2021 site-plan comments](#) (PDF pp. 619–621) were still more specific: move the administrative area off the north bench, find another family-campground location, close retained horse facilities December 1–June 15, and eliminate north-side trail segments. Area 8 warned that year-round disturbance would further reduce shrinking elk winter habitat and said, **“as an agency we should set the example when it comes to development in sensitive habitat.”** The joint CPW–Forest Service [November 2021 wildlife report](#) (PDF pp. 851–858), reviewed by a CPW terrestrial biologist, repeated the relocation recommendations and June 15 closures.

Alternative 2 nevertheless places year-round employee housing and maintenance on the north bench and retains the north-side campground, equestrian facilities, outfitter facilities, and trail; RPM-WLD-17 closes only the Keep Ditch Trail through April 15 (DEIS pp. 20–23; Appendix A). CPW’s 2024 [Sweetwater Resource Stewardship Plan](#) again labels a December 1–June 15 closure “High” priority if facilities or trails are placed nearby (pp. 212–213). Your July letter calls Stewardship Plans the foundation of property-specific management plans, yet it never mentioned the Sweetwater Lake Plan created by your own team. That Plan reiterated raptor protections as “High” priority and called for enforcement of CPW’s buffer zones and seasonal restrictions (p. 222). However, CPW’s *Recommended Buffer Zones and seasonal Restrictions for Colorado Raptors 2020* were neither implemented nor even referenced in the 1,116-page DEIS package.

Please provide one official, on-the-record answer to three questions

1. **Is Alternative 2 CPW's intended plan if CPW is selected?** If not, identify the precise facility, use, closure, and management changes CPW will request before the Final EIS and permit.
2. **Does CPW still stand behind the 2021 and 2024 site-specific recommendations?** For each relocation and seasonal-closure recommendation, identify the exact DEIS/RPM/permit provision adopting it—or state when, by whom, and on what technical basis CPW withdrew or modified it.
3. **What is CPW's present legal and planning role?** Reconcile “commenting member of the public” with the executed MOU and cooperating-agency record. State whether the 2021 MOU remains in effect; if not, provide the date and written termination or modification.

Examples from other parks do not answer these Sweetwater-specific questions. Please respond by **August 31, 2026**. If you are not authorized to state CPW's official position, please forward this request to Director Clellan and identify who is authorized. I will place the response—or the absence of one—in the Forest Service project record before the September 23 comment deadline.

Sincerely,



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