

SOURCE EXCERPTS

Open Letter to Eagle Valley Land Trust - Sweetwater Wildlife Protections

This packet contains the narrow public-source record cited in the open letter. It is intentionally limited to the campaign representation and CPW's site-specific High-priority wildlife actions. Originals control.

- Exhibit A - EVLT Save the Lake flyer, pages 1-2. The campaign identifies public access and conservation of critical habitat for elk, deer, osprey, Bald Eagles, and other wildlife.
- Exhibit B - CPW Sweetwater Lake Property Resource Stewardship Plan, PDF p. 30 (printed p. 20). CPW's mission combines wildlife conservation, a quality State Park system, and sustainable outdoor recreation.
- Exhibit C - CPW Resource Stewardship Plan, PDF p. 222 (printed p. 212). High-priority raptor protections and seasonal access restrictions.
- Exhibit D - CPW Resource Stewardship Plan, PDF p. 223 (printed p. 213). High-priority seasonal elk and mule deer habitat protections.

Prepared September 20, 2026. No source page has been edited, cropped, or annotated.



SAVE THE LAKE

HELP PROTECT SWEETWATER LAKE

The Conservation Fund (TCF) and the Eagle Valley Land Trust (EVLTL) are leading a campaign to raise \$3.5M to purchase Sweetwater Lake for the public before it is sold for development or extractive commercial uses. We need your help to make it happen.

The property—if acquired—will provide new public access to the iconic Sweetwater Lake and surrounding public lands. The 488-acre parcel is an important community asset, but public access was revoked after development plans for 240 homes, a hotel, and golf course failed to materialize.

Protecting Sweetwater Lake means:

- Creating new public recreational access to Sweetwater Lake for fishing, horseback riding, boating, and camping.
- Opening access to surrounding public lands including Flat Tops Wilderness, White River National Forest (the most visited National Forest in the U.S.), and the Ute trail.
- Conserving critical habitat for elk, deer, osprey, bald eagles, and other wildlife.
- Protecting the Upper Colorado Watershed.
- Opening new public access to the historic Ute Cave while protecting cultural resources.

TCF, a national non-profit land conservation organization, secured a contract to purchase the property amidst competing bids from private developers. With your help, TCF, EVLTL, and other local partners are raising money to purchase Sweetwater Lake for our community.

If the required public and private funding can be raised, TCF will move forward in purchasing the property. TCF will hold the property until the U.S. Forest Service can purchase and integrate it into the surrounding White River National Forest.

DONATIONS REQUESTED (100% TAX DEDUCTIBLE)

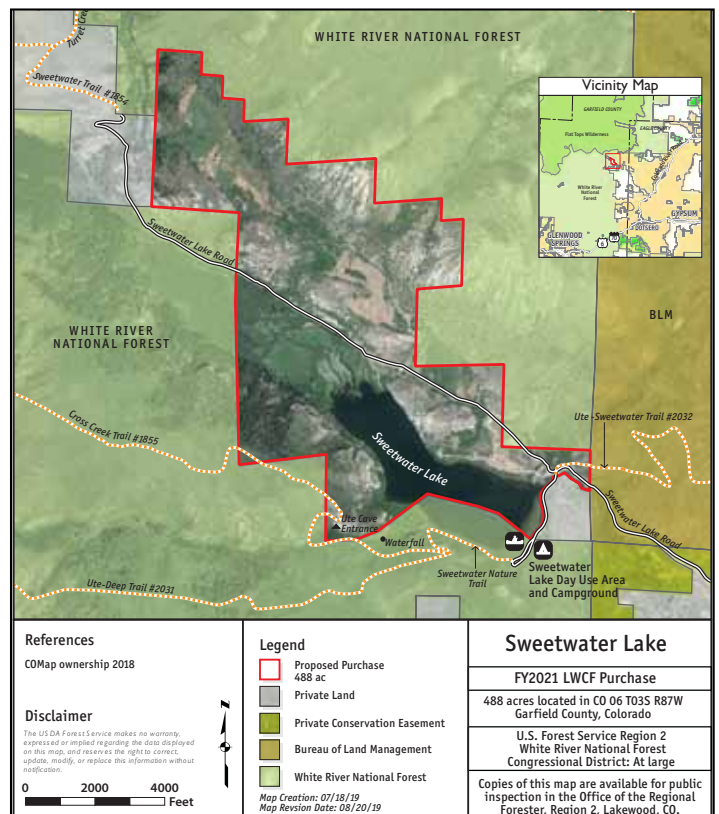
PHONE: (970) 748-7654

ONLINE: www.evlt.org/savethelake

MAIL: Eagle Valley Land Trust

PO Box 3016, Edwards, CO 81632

Memo: Save The Lake



CONSERVE

SWEETWATER LAKE

FUNDRAISING GOAL

\$3,500,000

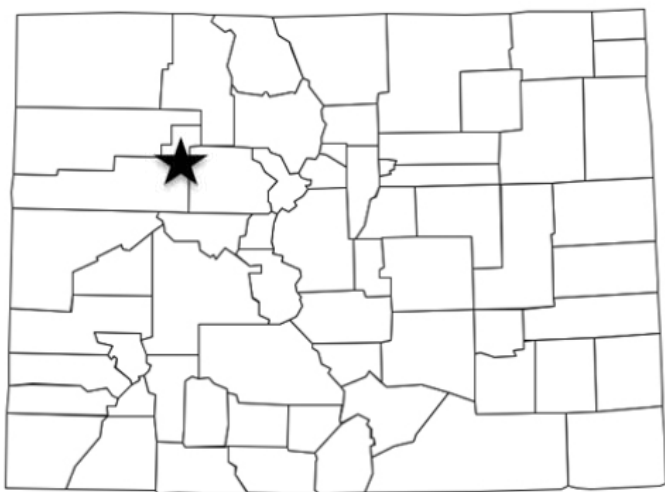
KEY FEATURES

Recreation Access: Sweetwater lake, White River National Forest, Flat Tops Wilderness, Ute Indian Cave.

Habitat Protection: Permanent conservation of important watershed; habitat for bald eagles, osprey, elk, deer, and other wildlife.

PARTNERS

The Conservation Fund, Eagle Valley Land Trust, Garfield County, Brink Outfitters, U.S. Forest Service, Colorado Parks and Wildlife, Sweetwater Lake Community, Walking Mountains Science Center.



The Conservation Fund

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Mandate for the Stewardship Plan Process

The 2015 CPW Strategic Plan outlines the agency's mission, vision statement, goals, and objectives. This Plan presents a roadmap and understanding for where CPW is headed in the future. The Stewardship Plan is consistent with the following CPW-wide mission, vision and goals (as defined in the Strategic Plan) which are highlighted below.

Mission

CPW's mission is "to perpetuate the wildlife resources of the state, to provide a quality state park system, and to provide enjoyable and sustainable outdoor recreation opportunities that educate and inspire current and future generations to serve as active stewards of Colorado's natural resources" (C.R.S. 33-9-101).

Vision

CPW's vision is to be a national leader in wildlife management, conservation, and sustainable outdoor recreation for current and future generations.

Strategic Goals

CPW's Strategic Plan, finalized in November 2015, provides a roadmap for achieving the agency's vision and mission through concrete goals and objectives. The six CPW goals identified in the Strategic Plan are:

1. Conserve wildlife habitat to ensure healthy sustainable populations and ecosystems
2. Manage state parks for world class outdoor recreation
3. Achieve and maintain financial sustainability
4. Maintain dedicated personnel and volunteers
5. Increase awareness and trust for CPW
6. Connect people to Colorado's outdoors

Goal 2 specifically relates to the management of State Parks and the Stewardship Plan process. Within Goal 2, three Objectives with strategies have been identified. Objective A states that CPW is to, "Manage facilities and outdoor recreation amenities within state parks to provide positive experiences for Coloradans and visitors." Under Objective A, five strategies have been identified. Strategy 2 addresses Stewardship Plans and states that CPW is responsible to:

"Develop and implement Park stewardship plans to enhance natural resources at State Parks."

General Management Plan

Since the Sweetwater Lake Property was newly acquired, a Management Plan has not been created yet and will be composed after the creation of this Stewardship Plan.

Table 32. Resource Management and Conservation Actions Priority List.

Resource	Description of Action Item	Priority
Implement the Noxious Weed Management Plan	- Follow instructions in the 2022 Plan, specifically, what species and individual populations to prioritize for treatment. - Follow instructions in the Plan for how to treat various species of noxious weeds with chemical, biological, or mechanical controls. - Review Noxious Weed Management Prescriptions. - Review the Noxious Weed BMPs before development projects.	High
Temporarily close trails and lake access to protect raptors during breeding season	- Protect existing raptor nests and those newly discovered through adaptive management techniques, such as the application of raptor monitoring data to seasonally close raptor breeding areas in consultation with CPW raptor management experts. Also, follow management recommendations in the CPW Recommended Buffer Zones and seasonal Restrictions for Colorado Raptors 2020 document (Appendix). - Implement a visitor access management action that would seasonally restrict lake surface access to the western portion of the lake that is adjacent to the wildlife breeding habitat for raptors when raptor nests are active. At the time of the drafting of this document, bald eagles and peregrine falcons were actively nesting in this area. A seasonal management action for these species would occur between December 1st and July 31st or when nesting attempts were observed as completed. - Seasonally close the South Overlook Trail and South Shore Trail # 1855 during raptor breeding seasons, as these trails fall within raptor nest buffers (December 1st and July 31st). - Seasonally close the North Overlook Trail and North Shoreline Trail (proposed trails - currently not formal system trails) during wildlife breeding seasons for raptors (December 1st and July 31st), as these trails fall within raptor nest buffers and are in the line-of-sight of raptor nests.	High

Resource	Description of Action Item	Priority
	- The wetland area would remain closed to human entry year-round as it is currently managed by the USFS. This is to protect this sensitive ecosystem and foraging opportunities for wildlife, including nesting eagles and falcons. - Review the CPW raptor nest buffer guidelines provided in Chapter 6 and the Appendix.	
Install wildlife-safe fencing around sensitive areas to prevent degradation from Property use activities	- To reduce vegetation trampling that causes erosion and sedimentation of waters, consider installing new fencing in areas impacted by activities. - Use exclusion fencing to protect the following resources: - Rare plants - Wetlands - Access management to calving area - Use BMPs for fence installation.	High
Limit activity near cave to protect bat species and cultural resources	- Restrict actions within 350 feet of cave bat roosts to those that will not negatively alter the vegetative and structural characteristics of roosts or impede the movement of bats. - Conduct tribal consultation regarding cave access and cultural resource preservation. - Consider a metal gate or other access methods to manage access to the cave.	High
Temporarily/seasonally close public access to sensitive elk and mule deer habitat	- The south-facing slope that predominates the landscape on the north side of County Road 150 is ideal for wintering ungulates, including mule deer and elk. This area has been mapped by CPW as a mix of elk winter, severe winter, and winter concentration area. This same area is valuable spring fawning and calving area for mule deer and elk. - Development in this area is still uncertain. If facilities and trails are located nearby, initiate and enforce a closure of these areas from December 1 - June 15 or in consultation with the District Wildlife Manager.	High