January 18, 2018

Angela Gee  
Boulder District Ranger  
United States Forest Service  
Boulder, Colorado

Dear Ms. Gee:

At a series of public meetings this past summer, the Town of Nederland Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Advisory Board (PROSAB) discussed issues surrounding the USFS West Magnolia Recreation Area that neighbors the Town of Nederland. These meetings were in response to concerns voiced by town residents over deteriorating ecological conditions and fears for health and human safety in this area due to overuse, pollution, and lack of public safety and law enforcement resources. The PROSAB drafted and recommended a request for action plan to the Nederland Board of Trustees that was subsequently reviewed and adopted at our meeting on August 1, 2017.

Because of the transition in the Boulder ranger position, we now want to forward this request for action by the USFS to your office for consideration. We understand that the USFS has limited resources, but we hope this request from the Town of Nederland can be addressed in a timely fashion. The Town of Nederland enjoys a collaborative relationship with the USFS, and we would like to work with your office to address the concerns of Nederland residents as they pertain to the West Magnolia area, as well as other mutually beneficial projects.

Attached is the recommendation of the PROSAB and adopted by the Nederland Board of Trustees. Please feel free to reach out to Karen Gerrity, Town Administrator, myself, or Dallas Masters, PROSAB chair, with any questions.

Sincerely,

Kristopher Larsen, Mayor  
Town of Nederland  
Nederland, CO
June 12th, 2017

Dear Nederland Board of Trustees,

The Nederland PROSAB frequently meets with the USFS at our monthly meetings, and the topic of conditions/issues at the USFS West Magnolia camping area is a reoccurring discussion. The USFS District Ranger Sylvia Clark has requested that Nederland provide input regarding potential policy changes to the West Magnolia dispersed camping area. This memorandum provides a recommendation to the Nederland Board of Trustees.

The recommended policy changes are intended to improve the current conditions at West Magnolia dispersed camping area which are considered unacceptable by Nederland residents. Current conditions pose extreme safety and health hazards to all users, including both visiting users and Nederland resident users. Although multiple law enforcement groups (NPD, BCSO, and USFS) have increased presence in the area, and local users and organizations have increased reporting, the poor condition of the area remains relatively unchanged.

A long and detailed history at West Magnolia shows recurring issues resulting from the camping users at West Magnolia. The unsafe conditions are widely recognized by the local community to a point where a large majority of Nederland residents no longer use the area nor recommend the area to others. Specific issues include, aggressive and threatening behavior towards other recreational users, use of hard drugs (methamphetamine, heroin), as evidenced by frequently strewn hypodermic needles, widely spread human waste improperly disposed of as evidenced by seeing it surrounding the campsites, disregarding fire safety, including unmonitored fires and fires during fire bans, illegal cutting of trees and the building of semi-permanent shacks and living structures, almost ubiquitous disregard for the 14-day camping stay limits, illegal trash dumping on site, and the frequent abandonment of complete campsites which leaves mounds of trash, often including hazardous materials, to be removed at the taxpayers’ expense.

PROSAB recommends that the Nederland BOT formally proposes to the USFS the following policy changes to the West and East Magnolia areas. This proposal is a result of discussion of all possible options and listening to public input. The below “Vision” and proposed policy changes are as follows.

**VISION:**

*West Magnolia 3-5 years from now:* A monitored (ranger/host) pay campground very similar to the USFS Kelly Dahl campground located 2 miles south of West Magnolia road. A location where locals would send visiting friends or family to camp without hesitation and where families from the Colorado Front Range would come to camp and recreate. Potentially expand the number of sites from 22 to 40/50. Provide
multiple bathroom facilities, fire rings that ensure containment, and a dumpster. Basic, yet clean, monitored, and safe camping would be provided to attract area residents and visitors alike. This is a sustainable model, not dependent on the likely up and down swings of volunteer policing and varying priorities of law enforcement year to year.

**PROPOSED POLICY CHANGE:**

PROSAB recommends that in the interest of public safety that the Nederland BOT makes the following recommendation to the USFS. Figure 1 graphically shows the areas of proposed change.

1. Long-term vision: Convert West Magnolia to a monitored/pay campground similar to USFS Kelly Dahl Campground which will provide the best benefit to the majority of users, including Nederland area residents, neighboring Front Range communities, visiting tourists, and recreationalists.
2. Short-term plan: It is recognized that it may take some time to convert West Magnolia to a pay campground. Until it is a monitored campground, West Magnolia should be closed temporarily to all camping immediately until or unless the USFS demonstrates that it can provide adequate law enforcement. Nederland would defer to the USFS and local law enforcement agencies (NPD and BCSO) to propose the best management method to accomplish this. The ability for all agencies to enforce the specific camping closure without ambiguity is critical. Nederland would urge the USFS to consider management plans that would maximize legal access hours for recreational users. This closure should be in effect until the monitored pay campground is opened.
3. In conjunction with either the proposed pay camping or temporary camping closure in the West Magnolia area the adjacent area of East Magnolia must also be managed differently and designated as a no-camping area. Specifically, the East Magnolia corridor east of the Peak to Peak Highway (see Figure 1). This closure would be very similar to the “no shooting” ban which is in place in this very same property, which exists to maintain public safety for the nearby community.
In the interest of public safety for the greater good of the Town of Nederland community, PROSAB urges the Nederland Board of Trustees to make a formal recommendation to the USFS for new management policies for the West and East Magnolia areas. PROSAB recognizes that this is a larger issue than just Nederland and exists along the entire Front Range and nation. PROSAB intends to fully support the future efforts of the USFS and law enforcement agencies to address this issue.

Sincerely,

Nederland Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Advisory Board