September 7, 2018

Scott Armentrout

Forest Supervisor GMUG National Forest

2250 South Main Street

Delta, CO 81416

gmug@fs.fed.us

Dear Mr. Scott Armentrout

The board of County Commissioners is writing to express Gunnison County's support of the Crested Butte Land Trust's ("Land Trust") effort to protect Long Lake (Meridian Lake) through the Fossil Ridge II Federal Land Exchange. This unique alpine lake sits on the ridge between Washington Gulch and the Slate River Valley. Residents and visitors alike have long enjoyed access to the lake, making it one of the most beloved water bodies in the Crested Butte region.

Through a trade with the U.S. Forest Services, Grand Mesa Uncompahgre and Gunnison National Forest district (Forest Service), the Land Trust will acquire 120 acres which includes the southern half of the lake from the U.S. Forest Service. To make this exchange possible, the Land Trust would contribute 15 acres of property it owns on Copley Lake to the Forest Service. In addition, the Land Trust will purchase 613 acres of in-holding land in the Fossil Ridge area and give that land to the Forest Service. Not only does this land exchange accomplish the protection of a highly valued community amenity, and ensure access to Long Lake is secured forever, it will provide the American people with an additional 628 acres of public land, and generate in excess of $2.5 million to be used for affordable housing in the Gunnison Valley. This funding for affordable housing is made possible by long time locals Judy and Butch Clark who donated the Fossil Ridge parcel to The Trust for Public Land in 2010 with the stipulation that, when sold, the proceeds generated by public acquisition would go to the Gunnison Valley Housing Foundation.

The permanent protection of the Long Lake parcel complements state, regional and local policy including the Colorado Conservation Partnership's *Keep it Colorado Initiative*, and Gunnison County Land Use Regulations. The public land acquisition of 628 acres by the Gunnison National Forest will enhance opportunities for all Americans to enjoy the public lands for which Gunnison County is renowned. The contribution of $2.5 million to the Gunnison Valley Housing Foundation will help develop regional housing solutions that provide affordable choices for Valley residents and ensure we are investing in communities where all can live, work, and play.

The benefits of this project are tangible and diverse, accomplishing local and federal land protection priorities while addressing the critical housing needs of our county. The Board of County Commissioners for Gunnison County support the Land Trust's effort to make this project a reality.

Sincerely,

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