



July 8, 2014

Colorado Springs Utilities Board of Directors  
c/o Mark Shea, Watershed Planning Supervisor  
121 S. Tejon St., 3rd Floor, PO Box 1103, Mail Code 930  
Colorado Springs, CO 80947-0930

Dear Colorado Springs Utilities Board of Directors,

Friends of the Peak, a volunteer organization working to preserve, restore, and promote responsible recreational use on the Pikes Peak massif, supports the proposed transfer of the Colorado Springs Utilities properties in Jones Park to U.S. Forest Service through the National Forest Foundation.

The proposed transfer provides several benefits, as Colorado Springs Utilities personnel have detailed. It also puts the area under one jurisdiction, which should simplify management and make management more efficient.

CS Utilities has considered many alternatives to the transfer to USFS. They have diligently pursued possibilities and found that several are simply not viable. We applaud CS Utilities' efforts to preserve recreational access to Jones Park and trails in the area, which has led them to reject some possibilities.

It seems that the main alternative to donating the land through NFF to USFS that is being considered is transferring the land to El Paso County. The reason provided for doing this is maintaining local control. But this option results in several disadvantages, and the amount of local control is questionable. CS Utilities' holdings in Jones Park are completely surrounded by Forest Service land. If, for example, USFS limits or restricts access in the Bear Creek watershed, that will necessarily affect access to Jones Park, regardless of county policy. Further, transferring the land to El Paso County loses the \$250,000 matching grant to care for the land. An additional level of government will have to deal with any issues that arise in the Bear Creek watershed, which will take more time and effort, and could lead to inconsistent and confusing policies. Finally, El Paso County would be liable to lawsuits, with all the expense those can lead to, in addition to the expense of caring for the area.

CS Utilities is trying its best to be good stewards of the land and do what is best for the environment and for the recreational users, and have found the option with the best balance between those sometimes competing interests. They should be commended for their efforts. We urge the Utility Board to follow CS Utilities' recommendation on their Jones Park land.

Thank you for your time and effort.

Sincerely,  
*Carol Beckman*  
Carol Beckman  
President  
Friends of the Peak