

May 14, 2007

Senator Denton Darrington
Idaho State Legislature
State Capitol Building
PO Box 83720
Boise, Idaho

Dear Senator Darrington,

The Cache Peak Civic Association has been established by local residents, business owners and friends to provide a means to address the needs of the communities of Almo and Elba, Idaho, and Yost, Utah. Our mission statement and bylaws established a committee to keep the CPCA members and others informed of decisions by local government entities affecting the community.

At the April meeting, concerns were aired over plans for the “Bunkhouse” at the Castle Rocks State Park. The understanding of the community and the residents involved in the development of the Master Plan was that the Bunkhouse would be a large common room with community bath and open bunks or cots. When Mr. Keck showed detailed plans for the “Bunkhouse” to Mr. Wynn Dewsnup, owner of the Almo Creek Outpost, significant differences were apparent. The plans showed a 12-14 unit motel with private rooms and baths, a conference room, a large lounge with a huge fireplace, and a full service kitchen. This clearly was a facility which would be in direct competition with locally owned private businesses.

We invited Mr. Keck to our May 3rd meeting to discuss plans for the Castle Rocks State Park. He declined, saying that there are no detailed plans yet and that the community would be invited to an open house later this summer when detailed plans had been completed and approved. A second invitation to meet with us was also declined. Local residents are very concerned about Mr. Keck’s reluctance to discuss the intentions for the Castle Rocks State Park, especially those which may impact local businesses.

Another important issue that members had hoped to discuss with Mr. Keck is the building of a fish pond which may impact the Almo Water Company’s ability to deliver water to its shareholders. This is of significant concern to local residents.

It appears that Mr. Keck’s vision for the Park is very different from that which was originally presented to the community. Local residents believe that waiting until detailed plans are presented in an open house will be far too late to have any voice in the development of the state park or the protection of our interests.

Experience has taught us that once “detailed plans” are presented, the decisions have already been made. An open house is held simply to showcase the plans with the knowledge that comments for and against will always be received. Following an open house, those who voice opposition are routinely told that most of the comments are positive and therefore the

project will continue as planned. Since the format of an open house does not provide for group discussion, there is no venue to address issues which may greatly impact the area. When questioned about problems, Mr. Keck asserts that local committees are involved from the inception in the drafting of every comprehensive plan governing the development of state and national parks.. Therefore he insists the public is involved and has given its approval. *However, the plans which have been developed in the planning meetings frequently take on a scope and magnitude very different from those discussed.* Often there is no regard for community interests. Mr. Keck routinely withholds information until the project has already been approved or initiated.

The Cache Peak Civic Association takes very seriously its mission to protect and preserve the lifestyle and heritage of the local community. It would be grossly unfair for State Parks and Recreation to develop facilities funded by taxes which would compete with or otherwise affect members of this community as they attempt to secure a living.

Respectfully,

Janis Durfee
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Enclosures

cc: Representative Scott Bedke
Mr. Bob Meinan
Mr. Dean Sangrey
Mr. Garth Taylor
Mr. Latham Williams
Mr. Wallace Keck
Cassia County Commissioners