



February 20, 2025

Huerfano County Commissioners
401 Main St.
Walsenburg, CO 81089

Subject: Opposition to Proposed Development at Cuchara Mountain Park

Dear Huerfano County Commissioners,

The Cuchara Foundation is writing to express its strong opposition to the proposed development plan submitted by Buckhorn Ridge Outfitters for Cuchara Mountain Park. As stated on our website, the mission of the Cuchara Foundation is "to honor its history, respect the environment, and support opportunities to learn and have fun in the Cuchara Valley." The park was purchased with donations from the community through the Cuchara Foundation and was intended to be a free and open park space for public enjoyment.

In December 2024, representatives from the Cuchara Foundation met with Buckhorn Ridge Outfitters, during which the development plan was shared with our Board. We were dismayed to learn of the proposal to construct 20 tiny home lodging units and other commercial amenities within the park. This plan directly contradicts the original intent of maintaining the park as a public space free from commercial exploitation. It is also out of alignment with the SE Group's proposed "[master plan](#)" for the Cuchara Mountain Park, which was commissioned by the Huerfano County Board of County Commissioners and funded by a DOLA Planning Grant, The Virginia Wellington Cabot Foundation, and the Cuchara Foundation, and which has guided decision making and planning for Cuchara Mountain Park until now.

It has come to our attention that the Huerfano County Commissioners are now attempting to finalize a lease agreement with the developer without opening the process for public comment. This lack of transparency and public involvement is deeply concerning, especially given the significant impact such development would have on the community. The residents of Huerfano County have a vested interest in the future of Cuchara Mountain Park, and bypassing public discourse undermines the democratic process and erodes public trust.

While we appreciate and fully support the County's decision to continue partnering with Panadero Ski Corporation for winter operations, we firmly oppose any for-profit development within the park. The introduction of commercial enterprises not only violates the park's founding principles and contradicts our commitment to pursuing “Dark Sky” designation and complementing existing activities provided by local organizations, but it also sets a dangerous precedent for future exploitation of public lands.

We urge the Huerfano County Commissioners to halt any agreements with Buckhorn Ridge Outfitters and to engage in an open, transparent process that includes ample opportunity for public input. Preserving Cuchara Mountain Park as a free, public recreation space is essential to honoring the commitments made to the community and the donors who made this park possible.

Sincerely,
Cuchara Foundation Board of Directors

Cuchara Foundation
PO Box 316
La Veta, CO 81055