Talking Points

➢ Berlaimont developers bought this parcel knowing it had only seasonal, dirt road access across the forest ("buyer beware"). Existing access is adequate. The Forest Service should adopt the No Action Alternative.

➢ National forest inholdings are consistently accessed seasonally and via dirt roads—not via year-round paved roads like the one proposed for Berlaimont. There is no reason these real estate speculators should be granted special access that unreasonably damages our public lands and wildlife.

➢ Granting year-round paved access for this subdivision would damage public lands, wildlife, and recreation.

➢ It is unacceptable for the Forest Service to abandon protections for dwindling wildlife in order to allow a land speculator to pave critical deer and elk winter range. This would set a dangerous precedent for public lands across the country.

➢ It is not reasonable to change the existing land use management plan, which has been in place for more than 15 years and provides seasonal closures for protection of sensitive wildlife, in order to facilitate year-round access to this damaging subdivision.

➢ The proposed access road would sever an important migration route for the second largest migrating deer herd in Colorado—a herd that has suffered dramatic population decline due to habitat loss from sprawling development like the one proposed. That is unacceptable.

➢ The proposed access road would destroy sensitive plants in addition to important habitat and forage for deer, elk and sage grouse.

➢ The proposed access road would add paved road mileage and increase vehicle traffic by hundreds of times in a watershed with endangered cutthroat trout.

➢ Forest Service Regulations (36CFR251.114) require “reasonable” access, but specify that any impacts of access roads, etc. on surrounding national forest land must be “minimized.” Paving, road cuts, retaining walls, etc. in critical elk and deer winter range and migration routes will not “minimize” impacts, and the proposed access is not “reasonable.”

➢ The Forest Service is not required to allow pavement or year-round access across the forest, given the historic use. Adequate access exists, and a few minor improvements would make it more than adequate.

➢ Any new roads should be proposed on Berlaimont’s own land – not the national forest.
➢ The Forest Service has no legal obligation to approve such a dramatic upgrade from historic access. Especially given the unreasonableness of this proposed subdivision and the damage the proposed road will cause to public lands, wildlife and habitat.

➢ Quality of life: We live here to be close to nature, but nature is disappearing. We need to consider the carrying capacity of this valley. There are a lot of humans creating impacts that are destroying the non-human denizens and the reasons we live here. When is enough, enough?

➢ We count on the Forest Service to manage and protect our public lands, not bend over backwards to developers to make a lot of money at the expense of the wildlife that makes this National Forest such a special place.

➢ The Forest Service seems to be hiding behind a 2014 conditional road variance given by the County, using this as an excuse to move the project forward. In actuality, the County has told the Forest Service in written comments that “The County’s role was limited to deciding whether to grant a variance to roadway standards. Therefore, the road variance approved by Eagle County should not be interpreted as approval for this type of land use as suggested in the DEIS” (Draft Environmental Impact Study).

➢ What legacy do we want to leave our children? Do we want them to experience wild nature as we’ve been privileged to do?

➢ According to 2012 study (Vail Daily, Nov. 24, 2012) hunting brought $28 million to Eagle County in 2012. Hunters stay in hotels, eat in restaurants, and purchase supplies and clothing at our stores. Without healthy wildlife populations, this important part of our economy will disappear.

➢ Last year, as study of the economic contributions of outdoor recreation in Colorado (Vail Daily Sept. 2, 2018) concluded that hunters and fishermen generate $1.8 billion every year for Colorado’s economy. That supports 21,000 jobs across Colorado. Wildlife watching generated $1.2 billion and supports 12,800 jobs. The FS should manage wildlife habitat to ensure our herds remain a vital part of our economic and spiritual economy.