

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

January 16, 2024

Director Charles F. Sams III  
National Park Service Director  
1849 C Street NW  
Washington DC 20240

Dear Director Sams,

Thank you for your recent steps to consider the historic Dearfield Settlement for inclusion in the National Park System. As you know, Dearfield was founded in 1910 in Weld County, Colorado, and eventually became the largest Black American homestead in the state. As you conduct a special resource study on the suitability of this site for the National Park System, we urge you to seek robust public input, which we believe will help make the case for recognizing the significance of this site.

The Dearfield Homestead was one of more than a dozen African American agricultural settlements established in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, as part of a larger movement inspired by Booker T. Washington to promote Black land ownership and economic independence. At its peak, Dearfield expanded to as many as 300 residents farming over 15,000 acres, and included multiple churches, restaurants, businesses, and a hotel.

Dearfield was a thriving agricultural community until the hardships brought on by the Dust Bowl and the Great Depression led many residents to leave. Today, a gas station, diner, and Dearfield founder Oliver Toussaint Jackson's home—which was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1995—remain standing. But even with these few remaining tangible reminders of their legacy, the settlers of Dearfield authored an important chapter of Colorado's history, and by preserving this site for future generations we can continue to honor them.

Thank you for opening the current special resource study, and for convening public information sessions in the days to come. We stand ready to assist as you work to better understand the significance of this site for telling our shared national story.


Sincerely,



John Hickenlooper  
United States Senator




Michael F. Bennet  
United States Senator




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Joe Neguse  
Member of Congress



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Ken Buck  
Member of Congress



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Jason Crow  
Member of Congress