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That is unlikely now.

Johnson told *The Nugget* last month that the planned transfer is "still slogging along." TNC and the Forest Service have to work out an issue around third-party mineral rights.

Such reservations were long a common feature of land transactions in the West. The reservation on this property dates to 1953 and belongs to Oregon & Western Colonization Co., Johnson reported.

before the Forest Service can take ownership.

Transfer from TNC to the USFS remains a controversial plan for some of those who care deeply about the preserve. They are concerned that simply managing the property like surrounding lands will lead to a degradation of conditions for trees and wildlife. And many think that transfer to the Forest Service violates the intent of the late Gil and Vivian Staender when they donated the property to TNC some 35 years ago.

There is particular concern about the fate of Nature House, the stone house the Staenders built on the property, which has been the home of the Grapes in their role as caretakers.

A large, rustic stone house with a corrugated metal roof and a balcony, surrounded by trees and vegetation. The house features a steep gabled roof made of dark, weathered corrugated metal. The walls are constructed from rough-hewn, light-colored stone. A prominent balcony with a dark wooden railing is situated on the upper floor. The house is nestled among tall evergreen trees and dense shrubbery, with a grassy area in the foreground. The overall style is a blend of natural stone and industrial corrugated metal, typical of early 20th-century mountain architecture.

PHOTO PROVIDED

preserve and Nature House.”

Sisters District Ranger Ian Reid told *The Nugget* that “we’re still trying to sort out the house idea and what’s going to happen with that structure. We’re still exploring all ideas.”

Reid noted that the Forest Service is not looking to take on new facilities.

“We have a large backlog on maintenance on all our facilities — our existing facilities,” he said.

The agency would prefer that an independent party operate and maintain any program at the house.

"If somebody wanted to manage it on a special-use permit, that is something we would entertain," he said. "For the Forest Service, that would be the path of least resistance — that somebody would retain it besides us."

Reid said that the transfer is not at the top of the priority list for the Sisters Ranger District, which is wrapping up its post-Milli Fire work and determining how to handle a thousand or more dead trees along the Highway 20 corridor.

Wehrle said that he and

other “friends” of the preserve would be eager to work to come up with a solution.

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