

Subject:

Sent: Friday, June 5, 2020 11:13 AM
To: Fitzwilliams, Scott -FS
<scott.fitzwilliams@usda.gov> **Subject:** Homestake
Creek

Hi Scott,

I am writing to express concern in regard to the proposed new water project on Homestake Creek. My family and I spend a lot of time in this area. My husband helps take care of property around mile marker 5. I would like to know if there are going to be opportunities for public informational meetings and input.

It is my understanding that Aurora Water is seeking permits for exploratory drilling to pursue the possibility of creating a second reservoir to increase water storage for the cities of Aurora and Colorado Springs. This reservoir would destroy irreplaceable wetlands and fens. After spending countless hours exploring the wetlands along Homestake Creek I have found abundant habitat and ecological diversity. I truly appreciated your comment in the Aspen Journalism article by Sarah Tory about the importance of protecting fens. We have a game camera on the private property that we caretake. We often see moose, elk, deer, and mountain lions. We also have found chorus frogs and a variety of waterfowl. Homestake valley is a nursery for these animals, a safe place to find food, cover, and access to water. This little slice of the White River Forest is also a haven for campers, hikers, and anglers, being a close destination for vail residents and tourists.

The adjacent wilderness area is equally unique and incredibly valuable to our high-country wildlife populations. Some of the proposed plans would cut into this wilderness area.

“If future generations are to remember us with gratitude rather than contempt, we must leave them a glimpse of the world as it was in the beginning, not just after we got through with it.”
Proclaimed by President Lynden B Johnson upon his signing of the Wilderness Act.

Constituting only a third of our public lands, which is less than five percent of the total US land base, slipping or cutting into wilderness boundaries reduces the small amount of land that we have set aside for protection. Our resource and water needs will only increase as our population increases, yet we are dependent on our natural resource systems to sustain us. While I understand that water storage is part of the Colorado Water Plan, if we want to continue to enjoy our piece of paradise that is Colorado, we need to aggressively defend the critical areas that preserve our systems. The wetlands and fens found in Homestake valley are the nurseries and recharge centers of our headwaters. They should not be buried under a second reservoir but left, so they can continue to do their job.

Thank you for your time and all that you do for our public lands. Please feel free to contact me or pass on any information you have.

Respectfully,

Megan Dean