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First name: Chelsea

Last name: Brundige

Organization:

Title:

Comments: September 20, 2018

Mr. Scott Fitzwilliams, Forest Supervisor

c/o Monte Lutterman, Mountain Sports Ranger

White River National Forest

Aspen- Sopris Ranger District

620 Main Street

Carbondale, CO 81623-0309

Re: NOPA Snowmass Snowmaking and Elk Camp Meadows Project

By US mail and email

Dear Mr. Fitzwilliams,

I offer these comments to contribute to the Environmental Assessment of the proposed Snowmass Snowmaking and Elk Camp Meadows Project.

As a resident of Old Snowmass, Colorado, I have enjoyed the beauty and ecosystem values provided by Snowmass Creek for decades. I have served as the chair of the Snowmass Capitol Creek Caucus water committee for many years, and am very proud of the efforts of that volunteer neighborhood organization to maintain scientifically informed advocacy and stewardship for the maintenance of sustainable healthy flows in Snowmass Creek.

As you are aware, water from Snowmass Creek (including East Snowmass Creek) supplies Snowmass Water and Sanitation District's (SWSD) Ziegler Reservoir through gravity-fed diversions from East Snowmass Creek as well as pumped diversions directly from Snowmass Creek. The Aspen Skiing Company purchases water from SWSD for snowmaking on the Snowmass Ski Area.

The agreements, permits and water right cases governing how and when water can be diverted from the Creek and stored for snowmaking are numerous. They represent years of study and negotiation by the federal and state governments, SWSD, the Aspen Skiing Company, Pitkin County and the Snowmass Capitol Creek Caucus to balance the health of Snowmass Creek, especially in the winter, with the water needs of Snowmass Village and the Snowmass Ski Area. Specifically, the Colorado Water Conservation Board (CWCB) holds a "stairstep" instream flow right on Snowmass Creek intended to provide minimum flows necessary to protect trout habitat and stream health. Special conditions and restrictions pertain with this instream flow right and with the Army Corp of Engineer's (ACOE) 1995 modifications to the SWSD 404 permit (No. 6516) governing withdrawals for snowmaking, and withdrawals in low flow water years (e.g. one-in-10 year events).

The proposed project contemplates the withdrawal of an additional 24.75 af of water from Ziegler Reservoir, which supplies snowmaking water to the Snowmass ski area. I encourage you to ensure that the Operating Plan

for Ziegler Reservoir guarantees that this additional diversion for snowmaking during early and late parts of the ski season and during years with below average snowfall can be accommodated without necessitating additional diversions from Snowmass Creek after December 31 (when snowmaking water must be in storage) or in conflict with the environmental flow protections that are in place for Snowmass Creek.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

Chelsea Congdon Brundige