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Organization:
Title:
Comments: June 23, 2020

Mr. Scott Fitzwilliams
Forest Supervisor
White River National Forest
900 Grand Ave.
Glenwood Springs, CO 81601

Dear Mr. Fitzwilliams,

I respectfully request that you deny the Special Use Permit for the Whitney Creek Geotechnical Investigation project. This project threatens irreplaceable wetlands and critical habitat for our high country Colorado animal and plant species. It is also extremely valuable for outdoor recreation. It provides easy access to an amazing wilderness area for anglers, hunters, tourists, and campers.
Please take into consideration the following negative impacts this proposal would have on our watersheds and national forests.
Transmountain Diversions: Front Range cities have developed conservation measures that have been extremely successful in allowing additional growth without destroying critical high elevation ecosystems. The cumulative negative impacts of sending critical waters to the Front Range must be addressed prior to any developments. As the nation moves forward in the decommission of dams across the country, it is questionable why this old technology is being considered. It also takes water out of our watershed contributing to rising temperatures and degrading water quality.

Loss of Wetlands and Fens: The wetland that would be submerged in the new reservoir serves as a sponge and recharge center for our headwaters. Holding water during times of drought and increasing soil moisture in an area that is constantly threatened by wildfires. This area also serves as a nursery for many species including elk, deer, moose, trout, waterfowl, and fragile wetland plant species.
Holy Cross Wilderness: The proponents have stated that some 500 acres of the Holy Cross wilderness would be required to facilitate the proposed dam, roads, and construction of the proposed project. This contentious action will result in a very long and drawn-out fight. "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.

While growth is considered good for the Colorado economy, Statewide Water Supply Initiative studies have demonstrated that open-ended growth is not sustainable due to projected water shortages. In the meantime, ongoing research-and-development efforts have revealed better water-supply alternatives to building dams, which ultimately create more harm than good for the state's crucial water resources. Denying this proposed project will ensure the protection and integrity of the Holy Cross Wilderness and the outstanding wetlands in the Homestake drainage, which includes irreplaceable fens.

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,

Best,

Whit Dean