

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 6/26/2020 9:09:09 PM

First name: Jill

Last name: Dahlman

Organization:

Title:

Comments: I am a US citizen, and I vote. I also live in the west, a place fraught with water issues from time immemorial. Those water issues mean that cities need to share resources with the environment (flora and fauna). Thus, it should come as no surprise that I strongly oppose the requested special use permit (SUP) and related Categorical Exclusion (CE) for geotechnical investigations in connection with Homestake Partners' proposed transmountain diversion of water from Homestake Creek in the Holy Cross Wilderness for the Whitney Reservoir project.

Let's first address this whole diversion of water thing. Mother Nature bats last. Bottom line. We cannot control nature. It is not possible because Mother Nature will always prevail. Thus, we're talking about a boondoggle here. How unusual... Furthermore, the requested SUP/CE would allow for up to a year of drilling, road construction, and cross-country travel by vehicles and equipment within the White River National Forest in support of the proposed reservoir and diversion project. That forest is home to far more than a boondoggle road and construction--it's home to established flora and fauna. We need to share the planet with plants and animals or we will be responsible for our own deaths. This is written in countless scientific documents. Countless. Everything is interconnected, so we need to act as such. You're not doing that with the boondoggle. Basically, diverting even more water out of the headwaters of the Colorado River is a terrible idea.

The proposed work also is a critical step in advancing the Whitney Reservoir project, which would require making a Wilderness boundary "adjustment" to reduce the Holy Cross Wilderness by almost 500 acres. I oppose reduction of any federal Wilderness Areas, and especially the unique Holy Cross Wilderness which is already being dewatered by the Homestake Partners. Remember that whole "interconnectedness" I wrote about above? We are not virtual superior beings that can do whatever we'd like with whatever resources are available. No. If you believe in the Bible, the Bible clearly states that we are to be stewards--caretakers--of the land. You are not being a steward when you seek to destroy.

I am deeply concerned about the Whitney Reservoir project's impact on the environment and the complex fen wetlands. These wetlands are some of the finest of their type in the entire White River National Forest. Reclamation and restoration of complex fen wetlands has not been proven to be possible. It would take billions of dollars to provide the care of the planet that a wetland currently does FOR FREE. Hint: Don't waste money when you don't need to. You attempt to shove this thing through, and you will realize that the cost of controlling nature is FAR MORE than anyone can afford.

The communities of Aurora and Colorado Springs should take action to reduce their water needs, and not destroy our Wilderness and rivers. People (all people) need to care for the land as if there is not other planet to go to. Because there isn't.