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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Date; June 27, 2020

To: USFS White River National Forest
and all other affected parties

Re: Whitney Reservoir Project

To Whom it may Concern,

I am strongly opposed to the Whitney Reservoir Project and the Categorical Exclusion request by Colorado Springs and Aurora. In a time when the assaults on our remaining wild places are mounting we must insist on stringent analysis and oversight so all impacts can be brought to the table. It is not a time to "fast track" decisions on our environmental and social responsibilities. A dangerous precedent will be set if we allow reduction or our federal wilderness areas here in the Holy Cross Wilderness or in wilderness areas across the country.

The loss of wetlands anywhere is a travesty. Here in Colorado we have already destroyed over 50% of our wetlands and we cannot allow this trend to continue. I know the Homestake Creek valley very well and have seen first hand the intricate system of wetlands and fens. As you well know this area is unique for Eagle County and Colorado. I am not a hydrologist or an expert on the creation and ecological function of wetlands but I have seen first hand and know that: WETLANDS RECLAMATION AND RESTORATION DOES NOT WORK!!

The impacts of the Whitney Reservoir Project will extend beyond the ecological loss in the Homestake Valley. For those who are familiar with the human presence in the valley the loss of possible open camping options will further stress the existing locations as well as reaching further into other areas. As more areas are being lost for camping options I have not seen any attempt to establish additional Forest Service campgrounds to accommodate and contain people to established camp areas. The Homestake Valley is already overrun with campers. Is there any plan for dealing with the potential overcrowding? The Forest Service needs to take into account its lack of providing camping alternatives as it makes a decision on this project.

It is time to draw the line between ecological sustainability and the ever increasing, ever thirsty Front Range cities. As we have heard before, "if not now.....when?"

Thank you for considering not just the quality of the bore holes or the calculated abundance of the watershed but the impact of our acceptance of just another reservoir. Donny Shefchik