

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 6/29/2020 3:16:26 PM

First name: Colleen

Last name: Higgins

Organization:

Title:

Comments: Dear Ms. Veldhuis,

I am writing to oppose the plans for exploratory drilling in Homestake Valley in preparation for construction of the proposed Whitney Reservoir within the Homestake Valley (Whitney Creek Geotechnical Investigations #58221). I am in full support of the letter written by Warren Hern on June 28, 2020, as published in the Vail Daily.

As a full time resident of the Eagle River Valley, I spend considerable time in the area of Homestake Road year round. I am at a loss for why the USFS would entertain losing 500 acres of wilderness since the mission of USFS "...is to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the nation's forests and grasslands to meet the needs of present and future generations." How does exploratory drilling that would damage acres of wetland and forest be aligned to that mission? The proposal for the "Whitney Reservoir" is in direct conflict with sustaining the health of this area.

I realize the public comment is on the exploratory drilling, but it is absolutely connected to the proposed construction of a dam. There have been several highly public dam removals recently as evidenced in documentations such as Return of the River (A documentary film on the removal of the Elwha River dams) and DamNation (produced by Patagonia Films). This article from PBS highlights the changing position on dams: <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/article/dam-removals/>. I urge you to fully educate yourself on the destruction dams cause, not only in the near term of flooding hundreds of acres of protected land, but in the long term affects a dam has on the region.

Thank you for your consideration,
Colleen Higgins