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Title:
Comments:
Ms. Marcia Gilles
Acting District Ranger
c/o Matt Klein, Realty Specialist
White River National Forest
PO Box 190
Minturn, CO 81645

June 28, 2020

Dear Ms. Gilles and Team,

I write with concern about the "fatal-flaw geotechnical investigation" to be undertaken by the Partners in developing a potential Homestake II reservoir.

My concerns are two:

1) This investigation, regardless of whether Homestake II becomes a reality, will have lasting impact on both the Holy Cross Wilderness Area and the current recreational uses of the Homestake Valley. The drill rigs and the roads required to create drill pads will irrevocably change the current ecosystem and the human recreational use of this popular area.

a)On an average summer weekend there are thousands of outdoor lovers in the area relying on the water in Homestake Creek and its tributaries (in Wilderness Area) for fly fishing, tubing, dispersed camping, and general enjoyment of the pristine valley.
b)The valley has wetlands and fens which are irreplaceable-requiring further scientific study. Future Coloradans have a right to know the diversity of the high country's ecosystems from the glacial Missouri Lakes tot the fens they feed
c)Drilling will occur on land bordering Wilderness Area with no plan to prevent ATVs and campers from utilizing roads built for investigation-the valley appears to be at capacity for recreational use already.
d)The Holy Cross Wilderness is going to be impacted not only through diminished size but the noise created by drilling and traffic-these are irreplaceable wild spaces-our national visual and acoustic treasures.

2)The Partners are not adequately caring for Homestake I, leaving questions about their ability to take on this new project. On a recent weekend there was a major leak from the 4ft pipe pumping water from Missouri Creek into Homestake I, not to mention innumerable small leaks in the area. This caused muddy and dangerous roads. The catchment area on Missouri Creek, bordering Holy Cross Wilderness, was a mess of barbed wire, concrete, piles of rock and sand, etc.

The stakes are big here for both the Partners and the environment. The Partners have already purchased a ranch for upwards of $4 million and unknown amounts of money on the preliminary aspects of this project, but this is small change compared to the money they want to put into testing and more. This is a pittance, though, by comparison to the costs to the environment and Coloradans who love our public lands-costs that are incalculable if the valley is flooded.

While acknowledging the front range needs water in the future, I question whether an old-school dam is the best

approach. Colorado, the National Forest Service, and America can do better than simply giving in to another dam project.

Please feel free to contact me if you have further questions.

Sincerely,

Dr. Susan Carrese