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Organization:

Title:

Comments: 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. I oppose both the SUP/CE and the underlying proposed Whitney Reservoir project. I am concerned about the Whitney Reservoir project's impact on the environment, especially the complex fen wetlands. These wetlands are some of the finest of their type in the White River National Forest. Reclamation and restoration of complex fen wetlands has not been proven to be possible.

In addition, diverting more water out of the headwaters of the Colorado River is an unsound idea because the Colorado River is already overallocated and because climate change is reducing the amount of water available in the Colorado River watershed.

As a key step in advancing the Whitney Reservoir project, the proposed work could lead to the need to make a Wilderness Area boundary adjustment to reduce the Holy Cross Wilderness by almost 500 acres. I strongly oppose reduction of any federal Wilderness Areas.

I also believe the communities of Aurora and Colorado Springs should take action to reduce their water needs before implementing a project with such potential negative environmental impacts.

Thank you for your consideration.