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Comments: Dear White River National Forest Stewards,

Your job is to steward the forest. This means to protect and maintain it--especially those fragile areas like wetlands. For some reason, the FS has decided that geophysical drilling of exploratory holes is separate from the ultimate goal of building a reservoir. They are not. Thinking of the area that includes the Holy Cross Wilderness Area must be viewed as a whole--not parts. (Like one would like to be treated at the Doctor's office--your whole person, not just your headache which could be from any number of maladies originating from different parts of your body.) However, because this is what the FS has chosen to do, I will direct my comments there.

As a hydrogeologist, my job was to design projects to understand water and soil contamination on sites where pollution was present. This required bringing in drill rigs weighing many tons. It was required that the land that they crossed be solid to bear that weight. These rigs would not enter fragile areas so that they would not be damaged.

This project will require big drilling rigs weighing many tons to cross fragile wetland areas. This will decimate these areas that the Forest Service is charged with protecting. These wetlands are formed over thousands of years and are irreplaceable. The ecosystem depends on these wetlands for a variety of reasons the least of which is to provide water and nutrients to the flora and fauna around the area.

It is well documented that there are geologic faults in the vicinity of the proposed dam sites (the USGS has these maps online -- here is the one for the area showing numerous faults https://pubs.usgs.gov/sim/3451/sim3451_georeferenced.pdf)--this would prohibit the construction of any dam in the area.

My question to the stewards of this land: Why destroy fragile wetlands to build roads for drill rigs for a project that is unfeasible. It is a waste of money and time; and ultimately, it will damage ecosystems unnecessarily.

Please, please, please, look at the whole picture. Let the flora and fauna survive in this pristine area.

Thank you for your time and careful consideration of this important ecosystem that you are charged with protecting.