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Comments: I ask that, for the following reasons, the Forest Service deny any and all permits for exploratory drilling and/or any construction activity in the environmentally sensitive area of Whitney Creek and the Homestake Valley for the purpose of advancing the proposal to create a dam for trans-mountain water diversion.

1.Drilling or construction will create economic and political havoc and will irreparably damage the sensitive local ecosystems and negatively affect the entire Colorado River Basin.
2.The dam is unlikely to ever be built, so there is no point to allow drilling and suffer the environmental damage it will cause strictly for the purpose of feasibility.
3.Until Aurora and Colorado Springs eliminate their wasted water usage, there is no way to know how much water is actually needed. Until that is accomplished, this project should not move one inch forward.
4.Neither city has proven the ability to fund such a project. And now, with the economy precariously balanced on the edge of a cliff, the ability to come up with that funding is even more uncertain. To start a project without funding in hand is likely to lead to liens, defaulted payments, loss of public confidence, lawsuits and the like.
5.In this time of global warming and Western droughts, the resources of the Holy Cross Wilderness have no substitute. A water diversion project will devastate what is irreplaceable and already at risk.
6.Such a project will cause severe damage the rare form of wetlands known as fens and their endangered flora and fauna habitats in the Homestake Valley. It is the duty of the Forest Service to protect these rare and irreplaceable natural treasures. If you won't do it, who will?

I have lived in Colorado for four decades. I have seen the damage rampant development has done to this beautiful state. It is heartbreaking. More heartbreaking and unconscionable would be the destruction of wetlands and water resources in the Holy Cross Wilderness for the sake of watering lawns in Aurora and Colorado Springs.

Please do right by the people of Colorado.

Please do right by the wilderness that you are designated to protect.

Please do the right thing and deny all permits for drilling and construction activity in the Whitney Creek and Homestake Valley areas.

It is not what should be done, it is what must be done to protect what cannot ever be replaced.

Thank you for your time and consideration