Data Submitted (UTC 11): 10/6/2020 6:00:00 AM
First name: Jamey
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Organization:
Title:
Comments: Dear Ms. Veldhuis, Mr. Fitzwilliams, and Ms. Gilles,

I am strongly against both the Whitney Creek Geotechnical Investigation and the Whitney Creek Reservoir Project. If we consider the end result--complete and irreversible destruction of some of Colorado's most beautiful and healthy wetlands, which are cherished by thousands of Coloradans--the insanity of the whole project comes to light. Please, it would be a terrible, regrettable mistake to allow these pristine wetlands to be flooded and lost forever, especially when you consider that there are far less damaging alternatives for Front Range Cities to meet their growing water needs.

Over the years I have come to know the Homestake Valley and surrounding Holy Cross Wilderness well. I've had the privilege of spending countless days along Homestake Creek while staying at a cabin in the Lone Rock Summer Home Group, the very part of the valley this proposed project would ultimately flood. I have explored and fished all over the valley floor in this beautiful, untouched place. I have seen countless animals that use these wetlands for food and habitat. I have also experienced the rare fen wetlands, where several feet of spongy, organic matter moves underfoot, having built up for thousands of years in this perfect environment. These wetlands are an extremely healthy, diverse, and expansive ecosystem the likes of which are rare to see in our state, which we should cherish and protect.

I hope the following personal anecdote helps illustrate just how healthy and irreplaceable these wetlands are given the unique geological setting they are in. There is a notable pond in the valley that formed between two rock outcroppings, which acted as a natural dam. My family knows this spot simply as "Frog Pond". On any given summer evening one can listen to an incredible ensemble of croaking late into the night. I am no expert in biology, but I know that amphibians are an indicator species of healthy ecosystems. These factors make this spot a rare ecological gem. I have never encountered anything like it in all my years of exploring, fishing, and backpacking in the remote corners of the Homestake Valley and Holy Cross Wilderness. Tragically, this pond would be lost under every possible configuration of the reservoir. As others have pointed out, it's unrealistic to think that we could possibly relocate a delicate ecosystem like this, especially one that formed as a result of the unique geological features of the valley.

I also oppose the project on the grounds that it perpetuates inefficient and wasteful use of Colorado's finite water resources. Just this week (mid September) I was in Aurora helping my sister move houses. The grass throughout the apartment complex was lush and tall. The grass was so tall, in fact, that it had started to block the very sprinklers trying to water it. The puddles of water forming at each sprinkler head quickly started to flow over the sidewalk and down the street. Watching this blatant waste of water as we carried loads out across the soggy grass, it struck me just how illogical and tragic the tradeoffs of this project would be. Why would we trade an invaluable, diverse, natural ecosystem that has been developing over thousands of years for the artificial, short-lived ability to grow golf courses and lawns in a climate where they don't belong? Multiply this one example across the entire city, or indeed across the entire Front Range, and it becomes abundantly clear that water

conservation needs to be a major part of the solution.

Please, stop this project now, before it begins. It is indefensible and inexcusable to destroy such a pristine and irreplaceable part of our state to feed the insatiable, wasteful thirst of the ever growing Front Range.

Thank you for your consideration,

Jamey Frykholm