

## **Bear Creek Reservoir Expansion- Talking Points**

### **Bear Creek Lake Park Impacts of a 20,000 acre feet Reallocation (expansion)**

- Reduction of land area by over 500 acres
- Loss of over 1 mile of Bear Creek Riparian Corridor
- Loss of 3/4 mile of Turkey Creek Riparian Corridor
- Loss of 12 miles of trails, and additional trails disrupted through segmentation
- Loss of wildlife habitat within the inundation zone (nearly a square mile)
  
- Reduction and/or loss of numerous Park amenities including:
  - Equestrian area
  - Turtle pond fishing and wildlife viewing area
  - Numerous picnic shelters and areas
  - Access for major regional bike route between downtown Denver and Jefferson County (west Lakewood, Solterra, Morrison and Red Rocks) on paved road that crosses the dam
  
- Over 800,000 annual Park visits, which may not account for everyone who walks or bikes in.
- Park use will increase as residential development continues in at Solterra and in Rooney Valley

### **Low Dependable Yield**

- Unallocated yield from Bear Creek may not be sufficient to maintain a 20,000-acre foot storage pool.
- Since 1986, annual inflow to the reservoir has averaged 9,171 AF and total annual inflow has reached 19,000 AF only four times (Brown and Caldwell; Technical Memorandum to the Colorado Water Conservation Board, 9/21/21).
- During non-maximum water years/cycles, the reservoir could be surrounded by an expansive “bathtub ring” of deforested mud flats, further diminishing wildlife and recreational values.

### **Dam Safety Concerns**

- Increased lake levels may impact outlet structure and require other renovations that are more expensive than alternatives.
- Dam was constructed primarily for short term flood control, not long-term storage. Infrastructure required to mitigate flood risk may include raising the dam and/or renovating the emergency spillway.

## **Alternative Water Storage Solutions**

- Deepening/excavating the current pool and forebays can increase storage with fewer park impacts and less evaporative loss. This was originally one of the primary plans for expansion and was tabled for reasons that are unclear until recently. Based at least in part on public feedback, USACE has indicated that this option is now back under consideration. Save Bear Creek Lake Park can support this alternative if properly executed. We seek a balance between storage and the preservation of wildlife, scenic, and recreational values.
- Underground Water Storage (Aquifer Storage and Recovery) is increasingly promising in Colorado. It is unclear whether the USACE or the potential junior rights holders (Brighton, Dacono and Berthoud) have meaningfully considered alternatives.
- Sand and gravel mining along the South Platte create significant off-stream reservoir potential. A number of gravel pits have been repurposed for water storage, and this capacity continues to grow with development. We encourage the CWCB and the USACE to consider further utilization of gravel pit storage potential, recognizing that additional water storage in Bear Creek Lake Park comes with significant riparian, recreational and quality of life impacts for the people of Jefferson County.

Submit written comments to:

Bear Creek Project Development Team  
US Army Corps of Engineers  
ATTN: CENWO-PM-AC  
1616 Capitol Ave, Omaha, NE 68102 .

Email: [Bear-Creek-Study@usace.army.mil](mailto: Bear-Creek-Study@usace.army.mil) ATTN: CENWO-PM-AC