

September, 2022

Hello Bear Creek Lake Park advocates,

The Colorado Water Plan is being updated, and public comments will be accepted on the draft Plan through next Friday, September 30. Please consider sending a short comment to the Colorado Water Conservation Board on the topic of the Water Plan. (Note: these comments are different from the comments we've been sending to the Army Corps of Engineers on the Feasibility Study for the Bear Creek Reservoir expansion proposal.)

Here's a link the CWCB page where you can access the public comment portal and review the draft Plan:

<https://engagecwcb.org/comment-on-the-draft-2023-colorado-water-plan>

Here's a link to a one-page summary of the draft Water Plan:

<https://dnrweblink.state.co.us/CWCB/0/edoc/217378/2023WaterPlanRolloutOnePagerFINAL.pdf>

Thanks for your continued engagement!

Katie Gill  
Chair, Save Bear Creek Lake Park

**Here are some suggested Talking Points on the Water Plan Draft:**

Start by thanking the Colorado Water Conservation Board (CWCB) for crafting and re-crafting this important document to guide Coloradans into a secure water future.

Please share your own comments about the negative impacts of increasing water storage in Bear Creek Lake Park and how the proposal to store more water in the Park does not align with themes of water conservation and watershed protection described in the Plan.

The plan should emphasize alternative water storage opportunities over expanding traditional reservoirs. Innovative, sustainable solutions such as underground water storage and rewilding natural open spaces should be prioritized. Gravel pits can be used to store water in locations already damaged by human activity instead of increasing reservoirs in more natural areas. As sand and gravel are mined along the South Platte, more pits become available for repurposing into water storage reservoirs.

Water conservation is more important than trying to find more water to store. Since the first Water Plan was released, per capita consumption has only been reduced by 5%. This leaves room for a great deal more conservation before approving highly impactful surface storage projects.

The Plan's Thriving Watersheds Action Area seeks to protect rivers, watersheds, and the habitat and recreation they support. Trade-offs are inevitable, but conservation should be prioritized over storage measures that negatively impact our watersheds.

Agriculture accounts for 90% of all water used in Colorado. While we must conserve water used by municipalities and industry, more emphasis needs to be placed on how improving soils management to support healthy soils, increasing regenerative agriculture, and replacing aging irrigation infrastructure can conserve water. We can only succeed in securing Colorado's water future by focusing on reducing marginal agricultural uses and making valuable agricultural uses more efficient.

The Resilient Planning vision emphasizes water security in relation to the uncertainties of climate change. Dam safety is also a critical part of Resilient Planning, particularly for communities who live downstream from reservoirs where reallocating flood storage capacity to water storage is being considered. This is an issue of particular concern for people who live downstream from the Bear Creek Dam.

The Plan is too long for most people to find accessible. Some themes are repeated in ways that could perhaps be consolidated. The Plan is a critical undertaking, and the content is complex. If it could be shortened without sacrificing content, more people might engage in the process.

The Plan contains little in the way of truly measurable goals. Without such goals the Plan will not be an effective tool to help Colorado build a sustainable water future.