

Bear Creek Lake Park at Risk

The Army Corps of Engineers is investigating the potential impacts of adding water storage to Bear Creek Reservoir in Lakewood, Colorado. Initial considerations included a tenfold increase in volume. Current alternatives include a 300 acre-feet (ac-ft) increase and a 6,000 ac-ft increase in storage. We support the small increase as it would have minimal impact on the Park and would provide needed water storage for small, local interests. **However, the 6,000 ac-ft option would destroy a significant portion of Bear Creek Lake Park.**

The Bear Creek Dam and Reservoir was built in 1977 by the Army Corps of Engineers for the purpose of Flood Control. Under the current proposal, a portion of its capacity would be re-allocated from Flood Control to Water Storage (a reallocation of use).



6000 ac-ft Expansion Results: 183 acres inundated including 1.15 miles of riparian corridor

The Bear Creek Lake Reallocation Study is investigating potential impacts, including how additional storage may impact flood control. The current operating pool is 2,000 acre-feet, although the size of the pool increases during flood events. Additional water storage will leave less capacity in the reservoir to absorb flood waters.

A 6,000 ac-ft addition would consume over a mile of Bear and Turkey Creeks. This is critical riparian habitat for both year-round and migrating wildlife. Thousands of trees stand within the inundation zone and widespread tree removal would result. Miles of forested, shady trails, the most cherished portion of the Park for those seeking natural refuge, would be flooded.

The primary storage interest is the City of Brighton. Lakewood manages the Park, which is owned by the Corps of Engineers, but Lakewood is **not** a partner in the water storage proposal.

Importantly, Bear Creek can't supply 6,000 ac-ft of additional storage every year. During low-water periods, a "bathtub ring" of mud flats would surround the pool. In drought scenarios, such barren, treeless areas could persist for years.

Bear Creek Lake Park attracts more than 800,000 visits each year. This priceless community resource contributes to quality of life for residents across Jefferson County and beyond.

We can secure Colorado's water future AND preserve irreplaceable ecosystems that promote community health and well-being by utilizing less destructive, more sustainable water storage solutions. A 6,000 ac-ft pool would evaporate approximately 700 ac-ft of water each year, or enough for 1,600+ homes. Across the West, Aquifer Storage and Recovery (ASR) is offering a more less evaporative means of storing water in increasingly warmer, arid climates.



HOW YOU CAN HELP:

1.) Join our email list to receive updates and public hearing info.

Email: Katie@SaveBearCreekLakePark.org and ask to be added to the list. The next public hearing will be critical. As soon as it is scheduled, we will send info via email.

2.) Visit SaveBearCreekLakePark.org and go to the Take Action Page.

3.) Send a comment. The Study Team is soliciting community input.

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

