

## **Gross Dam Expansion Impacts of Concern to the Boulder Community - July 2016**

### **Environmental Impacts and other Concerns for the Boulder Community. Moffat Gross:**

- Is inconsistent with Boulder County's Comprehensive Plan, including Critical Wildlife Areas and the Walker Ranch/Upper Eldorado Canyon Environmental Conservation Area.
- Would be the largest construction project in Boulder County's history and would last at least five years, disrupt quality of life of Boulder County residents, and mar the County's reputation as an environmentally pro-active and responsible community and recreational paradise.
- Would cause South Boulder Creek water quality to be impaired – there would be negative impacts to fish and other species due to freezing temperatures of water released from bottom of dam for long periods of time. The project would compromise stream health, fisheries, and nutrient production below the dam and above Walker Ranch and Eldorado Canyon State Park. Clean Water Act water quality standards for iron and copper would also be exceeded
- Would cause large greenhouse gas emissions from construction and operation of Gross Dam and Reservoir – GHG emissions would be so large that they trigger White House Council on Environmental Quality Regulations.

### **Impacts to Boulder County – Gross Reservoir Area: Flagstaff, Magnolia, Gross Dam Road, Coal Creek. The project would:**

- Increase the height of the concrete dam by 131 feet requiring tens of thousands of tons of cement poured across South Boulder Creek.
- Require the large-scale use of explosives to blow up a nearby mountain for cement.
- Increase mercury levels in water and fish in the reservoir, exceeding health standards.
- Require tens-of-thousands of semi-tractor/trailer trips along the curvy mountain roads.
- Clear-cut of 200,000 trees, with some use of "hydro-axing" and helicopter logging.
- Require helicopter staging and landing sites that would impact the north shore neighborhood of Gross
- Cause significant noise pollution from construction.
- Cause uncontrollable and massive air pollution from construction.
- Inundate a substantial area of forest lands including Forsyth Canyon and waterfall.
- Cause wetlands destruction.
- Disrupt migrating elk, cougars, and newly resident moose. The Winiger Ridge elk herd, elk severe winter range, an elk winter concentration area, and migration corridor would be disturbed and partially lost to inundation.
- Cause the loss of 5 acres of two globally rare foothills riparian shrubland communities: 1) river birch/mesic forb community and 2) thinleaf alder/mesic forb community.

- Cause the loss of 1 acre old growth ponderosa pine forest.
- Cause the reservoir to have fluctuating water levels, revealing a larger denuded wasteland as water goes up and down every year.
- Cause significant negative impacts on the home values and quality of life of nearby residents.
- Cause huge disruptions for the many Boulder County residents and visitors who recreate on the existing reservoir, in the surrounding Boulder County Open Space and National Forest lands, and along South Boulder Creek.
- Be incompatible with the vision to “re-wild” South Boulder Creek and restore the ecosystem.

**Impacts to Colorado’s West Slope & the Colorado River. Moffat would:**

- Decrease streamflows (some 80% - 100% depleted) in the tributaries of the Upper Colorado River in Grand County. The FEIS found that fish populations in ten streams are at or near collapse, and fifteen streams are past or near the ecological tipping point.
- Cause Clean Water Act water quality standards for iron and copper to be exceeded in Fraser River and some tributaries.
- Cause increased impacts on endangered fish downstream in the Colorado River due to decreased flows.
- Increased likelihood of a “compact call” on the Colorado River from lower basin states.
- Allow Denver Water to continue wasting water on lawns instead of focusing on alternatives including conservation, recycling, reuse, and agreements with farmers.

**The State of Colorado Water Quality Control Division issued a “Conditional 401 certification” under the Clean Water Act for the project in June 2016. The Division:**

- Lacks legal authority to deny a permit that would infringe state water rights “in any way” even if the diversion sucked the rivers completely dry.
- Found significant impacts to water quality in the Upper Colorado River on the West Slope, in Gross Reservoir, and in South Boulder Creek downstream from the dam.
- Stated that the proposed mitigation and was “untested in a real-life situation,” except for proven technologies to protect South Boulder Creek that Denver Water rejected



**Forsythe Canyon**



**Forsythe Falls**