

Kara Lamb - Comment on Reclamation's EIS

From: "John and Melanie Tappen" <tappens@p3mc.net>
To: "Kara Lamb" <klamb@gp.usbr.gov>
Date: 10/23/2008 1:35 PM
Subject: Comment on Reclamation's EIS

Dear Ms. Lamb:

May I comment briefly on the proposed Environmental Impact Statement on the Southern Delivery System. I am a longtime Pueblo County resident, living less than a quarter mile from the Fountain Creek. I used to walk down by (and in, in the summer) the Creek frequently. I know, from thirty years observation, the disastrous effects the floodwaters have had on its banks. I have watched trees and giant branches grind downstream under the tremendous force of the Fountain's roiling, muddy, foamy torrents. I have seen the river pile up against the 29th Street bridge nearly to the top, so it seemed the structure was going to give way. I have bicycled down the river trail for a week or two after the rains, down the trail to where it disappeared in a brown sea of mud and reeds, and looked to the broad expanse of brown and bubbles and foam and cottonwood treetops to the far, far distant shore. Those floods are real. I think the Bureau thinks the flood problem is a few spreadsheet pie charts and a couple of partial differential equations. Let me steadfastly and passionately disabuse you of your misconceptions--They are real! They are present! They are not uncommon! And they recur!!!.

In my opinion, the EIS completely fails to address the disastrous consequences of 78 million extra gallons of water piling down the Fountain in addition to stormwater runoff. This is particularly glaring in light of Colorado Springs' very clear intention to replace lands which might better absorb runoff with developed areas--asphalt streets, parking lots, large roofed structures, cement waterways, etc. all utterly incapable of handling water other than shove it away as fast as possible and with as little thought to its consequences as can possibly be gotten away with. How selfish! How greedy! How Un-American!!

In my view, there is a distinct and obvious solution to this problem, and only stubbornness and lack of vision stand in the way of its implementation. Let the Colorado Springs wastewater allocation be given or leased to Pueblo County for use in irrigating the vast amounts of land in its northern part, adjacent to El Paso County. Because it is a steady flow, it can be purified and managed for irrigation purposes. The land reclaimed thereby would then put to use for raising food and fuel as is so desperately needed in this time of declining supplies, and accelerating unemployment and scarcity. All this talk about floodwater problems would be eliminated, since that water probably wouldn't ever see the Fountain Creek, but would join the Arkansas well downstream, where its bed is ready to accommodate even at least the streamflow of yesteryear. I am stoutly convinced that it is a whole lot easier to convince obdurate and self-serving legislators to change the laws and rules to allow this to happen, than it is to turn again the muddy fist of the Fountain from its disastrous punch into Pueblo County. Were the choice presented to the County to make up from other sources the 20% depletion for evaporation, so that Kansas could receive its lawful allocation, it would jump at the chance to do so, for the revenues received would more than offset those costs. Water purification is a technologically solvable problem which has economical solutions (I am presently preparing one), which would exchange that northern desert for a prosperous and stable expanse of fields and farms.

Whatever is decided, I hope the Bureau will modify its EIS and rectify its bone-headed, simplistic deference to the maniacally money-driven interests to our North. We live down here too, and have the same desires, interests and rights in the Republic as do the citizens upstream who blithely flush their toilets, wash their sportsters, and go their merry ways. Thank you again for your attention.

Dr. John B. Tappen

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