



BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

P.O. BOX 699
SALIDA, CO 81201

PHONE (719) 539-2218
FAX (719) 539-7442

WEBSITE www.chaffeecounty.org

January 19, 2011

Mr. Robert White, Park Manager
Arkansas Headwaters Recreation Area
307 West Sackett Ave.
Salida, CO 81201

Dear Rob:

Chaffee County Board of Commissioner's is in support of AHRA seeking funding for a grant for the reconstruction of the Helena Diversion Dam near Buena Vista, Colorado to include a safe passage for river craft. It is our understanding this proposed project includes a new head gate, boat chute and fish ladder.

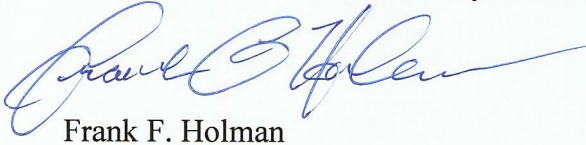
The existing dam/diversion structure has been changing in recent years, particularly during the 2010 runoff season. Rocks have shifted creating a significant hazard that needs to be addressed. Boats are hitting these new rocks on river left causing boats to flip and people to be knocked out of rafts. At low flows, boats must either risk hitting rocks hard on the river left side of the drop or grind down the unacceptable shallow right side boat chute. Boats are also getting stuck on the left side causing boat to boat collisions.

Another change seems to be the severe disintegration of the wing dam that is structurally critical to the dam. The left side seems to no longer be connected to the head gate. Given the severe disintegration we are concerned failure could occur that not only dries up the Helena ditch, but also releases concrete and rebar into the river channel below. Rebar and concrete are major hazards to boats and swimmers. In the early 1980's, prior to the reconstruction of the dam, a customer of Buffalo Joe's Rafting was impaled by rebar in the dam, causing significant injury. Reconstructing the dam will alleviate these future risks.

You are already aware that the violent nature of the drop has caused numerous flips and swims without collisions with rocks. In addition, unfortunately there has also been at least one tragic commercial boating fatality that has occurred in this location. Replacing the existing boat ramp and therefore reducing the energy of this drop will also help avoid future flips that may result in additional fatalities.

Good luck in your application to the Arkansas Basin Roundtable and other potential funding sources in regards to finding a solution to the aforementioned!

On behalf of the Chaffee County Commissioners

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Frank F. Holman", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Frank F. Holman