

For Immediate Release

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Grand Lake organization calls for heightened water quality protections at Colorado's largest and deepest natural lake

Change would protect Grand Lake's water quality from further degradation

Denver, CO – The Colorado Water Quality Control Commission will kick off a multi-year rulemaking process tomorrow that could result in heightened water quality protections for Grand Lake. At tomorrow's scoping hearing, the Outstanding Grand Lake Foundation will propose the designation of Grand Lake as an "Outstanding Water" under the Clean Water Act and state law. An Outstanding Waters designation is the highest tier classification and would limit the further degradation of Grand Lake's waters.

Grand Lake is Colorado's largest and deepest natural lake, and it is located at the headwaters of the Colorado River and is surrounded on three sides by Rocky Mountain National Park. Grand Lake is the focal point of the multimillion-dollar tourism economy in the region, and the lake is threatened by worsening water quality. A variety of factors have caused decreased water quality at Grand Lake, including population growth on the Front Range that requires more and more water to be pumped through the transmountain diversion system known as the Colorado-Big Thompson Project.

The water quality challenges facing Grand Lake have led public officials and business leaders to mobilize to protect Grand Lake, which is their most important community asset and greatest economic driver. Local proponents have formed a nonprofit organization, Outstanding Grand Lake Foundation, dedicated to maintaining and improving Grand Lake's water quality. One of the organization's initial campaigns is to designate Grand Lake as an Outstanding Water. The foundation also pursues sustainable tourism and environmental education objectives, under the Grand Lake Chamber of Commerce umbrella.

"We need to see the balance maintained in the ecology of the lake and the surrounding region," said **Samantha Bruegger, executive director of the Grand Lake Area Chamber of Commerce**. "We need more attention to water conservation practices on the Front Range to preserve this critical natural resource."

The nonprofit law firm Earthjustice, is representing the group. "Grand Lake is a one-of-a-kind Colorado treasure," said **Michael Hiatt, a staff attorney at Earthjustice**. "It is imperative we fully protect Grand Lake by using all of the tools the Clean Water Act provides."

The scoping hearing is the first step in a three-year rulemaking process before the state Water Quality Control Commission. Additional hearings are scheduled for November 2018 and June 2019.

What: Issues Scoping Hearing before the Colorado Water Quality Control Commission
When: 10 a.m. Tuesday, Oct. 10
Where: Florence Sabin Conference Room
Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment
4300 Cherry Creek Dr. South, Denver

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