



**For Immediate Release
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**Denver Audubon Files Notice of Appeal
To protect Chatfield State Park**

Denver, CO - The Audubon Society of Greater Denver (Denver Audubon) has filed a Notice of Appeal to the United States Court of Appeals for the Tenth Circuit to protect Chatfield State Park from the massive environmental damage that the Chatfield Storage Reallocation Project would do to the Park.

The Society has also filed a request for an Injunction Pending Appeal to halt construction on the project, which is now moving forward on the west side of the State Park and in Plum Creek.

The US District Court for the District of Colorado ruled on December 15 in favor of the US Army Corps of Engineers' decision to proceed with the Chatfield Reallocation Project, based on its October 2013 plan that would increase storage space in Chatfield Reservoir by 20,000 acre-feet, and denied Denver Audubon's request to protect the park while the litigation plays out.

"We were disappointed, but not surprised, by the District Court's ruling on our case and have filed our appeal in hopes of saving Chatfield State Park from this wrong-headed project," said Polly Reetz, Conservation Chairman for the Society.

"Unfortunately the Corps of Engineers selected the most environmentally damaging alternative for the Chatfield project, one which will provide only a highly unreliable water supply yet cause substantial environmental damage to Chatfield State Park, one of the State's most heavily used and biologically diverse State Parks," noted Karl Brummert, Denver Audubon Executive Director.

"Colorado will lose cottonwood forests, wetlands, and free-flowing streams heavily used by recreationists and essential for wildlife, including the threatened Preble's meadow jumping mouse. In return we get acres and acres of barren mud flats, for what the Corps determined to be "0" dependable yield – the amount of water the project could reliably provide," Board Member Ann Bonnell said.

In Colorado Parks and Wildlife's Fish, Wildlife and Recreation Mitigation Plan the agency noted that while historic reservoir operations have seen approximate water level fluctuations of up to 9 feet, the project will add up to 12 feet of water fluctuation, and concluded that the resulting "fluctuation zone" could be up to 21 vertical feet; the park would lose 587 acres of wildlife habitat and recreational land. The Corps estimated that the reservoir would fill only 2 or 3 years out of 10. The project has been touted as environmental restoration for the South Platte in Denver but the Corps' own studies show that the river's flows would decrease 9 months out of 12 and increase only one month out of 12.

Chatfield State Park hosts over 1.6 million visitors a year, with opportunities for a wide variety of recreational activities, including boating, fishing, camping, hot-air balloon rides, horseback rides, hiking, trail running, bird-watching, nature photography, bike riding, and scuba diving. It also provides a great diversity of wildlife habitats that support 375 species of birds, and has been designated an Important Bird Area by the National Audubon Society. Denver Audubon asserts that the Corps did not seriously consider a number of sound, reasonable alternatives that would do less environmental damage, including increased water conservation, use of space in Rueter-Hess reservoir, storing water in underground aquifers, and storage in re-purposed gravel pits like the South Platte Reservoir near Chatfield.

“We do need to augment our water supplies, but we need to do it in a smart way, especially when other alternatives are achievable that do not destroy the outdoor recreation and wildlife resources so important to Colorado residents. Water conservation must be the foundation for meeting future water needs,” said Gene Reetz, Audubon Technical Advisor.

For more information go to www.savechatfield.org.

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About Audubon Society of Greater Denver

Founded in 1969, the Audubon Society of Greater Denver (ASGD) is an affiliate of the National Audubon Society. ASGD is an environmental education and conservation organization with more than 3,000 members whose goal is to protect birds and their habitats in the Denver region and beyond. ASGD is dedicated to connecting people with nature through education, conservation and research. For more information, call 303.973.9530 or visit www.denveraudubon.org.



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