**WATER DESK SCRIPT: City water from wilderness (Jerd Smith)**

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| **VIDEO** | **AUDIO** |
| **SUGGESTED LEAD-IN**  **Track 1**  Greg Baker  Aurora Water  Warren Hern  Holy Cross Wilderness Defense Fund  **Track 2**    **Track 3**  **Track 3**  **Track 4**  **Track 5** | **In Colorado, some of the highest, most pristine wilderness areas are**  **less than 100 miles from metro Denver. While their trails are enjoyed**  **by millions of people, that proximity means their waters are coveted**  **by close-by cities. In this special report from the Water Desk, Fresh Water News’ Jerd Smith reports.**  **------------------------------------------------------------------------------**  (Nat)  **The Holy Cross Wilderness is known for its lush wetlands, stunning vistas and the Eagle River, which is part of the giant Colorado River system. Cities have tapped this area once for water before it became a wilderness. Now, faced with drought and looming shortages, they’ve come back.**  (Baker) -- “Water is a rare commodity and needs to be used very carefully. So if you’re going to continue to provide water for growth, there are several places you look.”  “They want to build a dam here, which would destroy these wetlands,  And this is a major fault zone.”  **Warren Hern began coming here as a boy, and he and many**  **others are deeply attached to this region.**  (Hern) -- “I love the beauty of the place. I have a lot of memories  here, and I think I regard it as one of the most beautiful places on the planet.”  **The ancient bogs, plant species and rock formations are considered irreplaceable, given that the glaciers and lush snows that created**  **them no longer exist.**  (Hern) -- “It took 20,000 years for them to be created. They can’t  replace it.”  **Under a 1998 agreement, cities who own the water agreed to**  **develop it only if necessary and only if it could be done in an environmentally sensitive** **way.**    (Baker) – “What you do is wetlands rehabilitation, so you develop  wetlands in other areas and generally on a two- to three-to-one  basis, so in fact you’re restoring additional wetlands for those that  you may lose.”  **One of the most controversial aspects of the project is a plan to**  **actually shrink the size of the wilderness area, something that would require Congress to approve and that is rarely done**.  (Hern) -- “We will do anything that is legally possible to stop this  project.”  **Jerd Smith, Freshwater News, reporting for the Water Desk.** |