

Regional

Op-Ed | Tanner Huntley: Save Our River

By **Tanner Huntley** - December 5, 2017, 09:15:17 AM

December 5, 2017 – The topic I will be covering in this Op-ed is the Centennial Dam and the impact it will have on the Bear River and the surrounding area. The purpose of me creating this op-ed is to inform the public what the NID is doing is wrong. The main goal is to get you to take action against NID and the Centennial Dam. The people I want this to reach are the residents of Grass Valley, Nevada City, Auburn and the members of SYRCL.

I am arguing that our community should take action against the Centennial Dam project in order to preserve the wildlife and marine habitat in the affected area. The dam will wipe out 6 miles of pristine habitat for wildlife that live along its banks, and the native trout and other fish species that live there. I am proposing that our community takes steps to conserve water and to attempt to convince NID to take more water conservation efforts other than a dam. Instead of building a dam they could put more money towards restoring our forests and meadows. They could also dredge sediment out of the existing lakes along the Bear River to create more room for water.

If Centennial dam is built many miners will lose their livelihood and be forced to find a new source of income. The construction of the dam will also destroy all of the native trout habitats. It will cover up the Dog Bar Recreation Area where myself and others enjoy swimming and fishing. Six miles of pristine wilderness will be gone forever. My friends and I fish where the dam is supposed to be built and have seen the pure beauty and the essence of wilderness that this place gives off. Once the dam is built no one will ever be able to experience that same beauty ever again.

If the dam is built it will flood the last 6 miles of free-flowing public access to the river. This means that the only parts of the river that are still flowing naturally would be accessible only through private land. Another reason is that the dam will not be adding more water storage to the local area is that it will be supplying 20,000 new houses in Lincoln with water, instead of the local area, like the NID said it would.

The Bear River is already the second most endangered river in the U.S. because of the dams that are in place on it; Why would we add another? If we add this dam it would change the ecosystem all around it for the worse not the better. If this atrocity is constructed, then all of the public access to the free flowing river will be gone. So you will only be able to access it if you know someone or ask permission of someone who owns a part of it.

There are ways you can stop this atrocity from happening. You can go to the SYRCL (South Yuba River Citizens League) website and find more information on how to save our river.

Editor's note: Tanner Huntley is a 16-year old student at Sierra Academy.