BY ANY OTHER NAME

ECHO PARK IS THE SAME

I see by the newspapers that the name of the proposed Echo Park Dam has been changed.

Echo Park Dam is the part of the multi-billion dollar Upper Colorado River Project that would flood Dinosaur National Monument. When it was first proposed last year, millions of Americans who don't want our national parks despoiled rose up in righteous wrath and appealed to Congress to turn thumbs down on the project. Congress obliged.

Now the scheme is back before Congress again (in H.R. 270), but the Colorado beetle, nee Echo Park, has been given a new disguise, to wit: The Yampa-Ladore Playground.

The new wig for the old dam that was snatched bald-headed last year was created by the Upper Colorado Basin Compact Commission, representing the States of Colorado, New Mexico, Utah and Wyoming. Admittedly the name changing was done for "publicity purposes." That may be interpreted to mean that the commission would like to lull the public into a state of unwatchfulness, under which the despoilment of this great scenic wonderland might be accomplished.

I don't believe that can be done. Certainly the mere changing of a name will not transform the true character, nor revise the sinister aspects of Echo Park Dam.

However, the Upper Colorado River Commission appears to have great faith in name changing. A recent dispatch in the Salt Lake
City Tribune, under the pen name of O. N. Malmquist, recounts the action taken at a December meeting of the commission.

Says this report:

"At the suggestion of R. J. Coury, adviser to the New Mexico member of the compact commission, the name of the Echo Park unit will be changed to the Yampa-Ladore unit for publicity purposes."

The same story goes on to explain that the term "park" creates an erroneous impression that the project would be built in a park similar to Yellowstone or some other national park. The opponents of Echo Park Dam ... meaning millions of Americans who would like to protect and preserve the heritage of our national parks ... are charged with creating this erroneous impression.

Says Mr. Malmquist's story:

"Mr. Coury suggested that the opposition, having spent $350,000 to create this false impression, might have to spend a considerable additional sum to try to prove that the Yampa-Ladore is the same thing they have been attacking under another name."

I'm afraid no map, however marked, could prove that the Yampa-Ladore Playground wouldn't stand exactly where Echo Park would stand. I am also of the view that it wouldn't cost any additional money to show that the Yampa-Ladore Playground was no more than a non-de-plume for another scheme to invade one of our national monuments for greedy commercial purposes.

Perhaps the Upper Colorado commissioners have a concealed reason for changing the name of Echo Park. Perhaps they think that if it's called Yampa-Ladore they won't hear their own voices coming back at them.

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