



Farmers rally for Glade and NISP

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WELD COUNTY - Invoking images of the past and future, supporters of the proposed Glade Reservoir rallied on Tuesday saying the controversial project was needed to protect agriculture in northern Colorado.

About 300 people attended the rally sponsored by the Colorado Farm Bureau and the Northern Colorado Water Conservancy District, which has proposed building Glade as part of the Northern Inte-grated Supply Project, or NISP.

A series of politicians and representatives of farm associations told the crowd that without the water-storage provided by the Colorado-Big Thompson Project, which includes Horsetooth Reservoir, Weld County wouldn't be one of the top agricultural producers in the country and the region wouldn't enjoy such a high quality of life.

The foresight that went into building the Big Thompson project is needed now, said Weld County Commissioner Sean Conway.

"Today is our generation's turn to step up to the plate," Conway said. "It's our generation's turn to say, we're moving forward, we're going to do something for our children and our grandchildren and we're going to build NISP."

Supporters say the project is needed to meet the water needs of growing communities. Without additional storage capacity, municipalities would dry up farms by buying their water, supporters say.

Opponents of NISP say the project would damage the Poudre's ecology and only fuel growth that would consume thousands of acres of agricultural land.

John Leffler, whose farm west of Eaton played host to the rally, said in an interview growth is going to come with our without the reservoir.

"You need to be ready for growth when it comes - that's what this project would do," he said. "But growth for growth's sake alone is some-thing I'd be against myself."

Farmer's would not get "one drop of water" from NISP said Gary Wockner, spokesman for the anti- Glade group Save the Poudre Coalition, in a telephone interview.

The project also would result in poorer-quality water for farms served by the irriga-tion companies.

"NISP and Glade will fuel the destruction of the farm economy and farm culture in Northern Colorado and Weld County," he said.

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