

Glade discussion flows into classroom

BY KRISTEN ELLIS • For the Coloradoan •
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Lincoln IB World School eighth-grade students shared their ideas and opinions about the future of the Poudre River and the proposed Glade Reservoir project with environmentalists, naturalists and community activists recently during a town-hall style forum.

The forum, "A Conversation Café, is different from a debate because it's not about right or wrong," said Sarah Bayer, Lincoln science teacher. "It's about expressing your views."

Students developed their views and opinions after studying and analyzing the Poudre River and the proposed reservoir for a science ecology unit.

"The assignment was designed to teach students to research information, apply it to a real world issue and use higher level thinking skills to form an opinion about an important issue," Bayer said.

Sitting at round tables in groups of eight, students and community representatives had spirited conversations with volunteers from Rocky Mountain National Park, the Northern Integrated Supply Project, or NISP, Friends of the Poudre and Save the Poudre.

Students and guests shared ideas about the river, its future and the potential impact the Glade Reservoir might have.

"I'm against the Glade Reservoir project because it will lower the water levels in the Poudre, and kill a bunch of fish," said Michael Thomas, a Lincoln student who participated. "Animals won't have water to drink, and kids that want to go swim in the river and have fun will have to go to a public pool."

Most students at the table nodded in agreement, but eighth-grader Charlo Duran spoke in favor of the project.

"I think they should build the Glade Reservoir because we need more water for the growing population, and for agriculture," Duran said.

Classmate Everitt Merritt said he was opposed to the project, but offered an alternative plan.

"I don't believe the reservoir is a good choice for the northern Colorado economy," Merritt said. "It would also be bad for the Poudre River water shed and surrounding eco system. The reservoir would kill the fish and plants. I believe that Glade is not a good idea and there are much better alternatives. I was thinking it is better to let the Poudre flow naturally through the town of Fort Collins and Greeley and build a reservoir out on the plains. There would be no reduction in the cost, but I think it would be better for the environment."

Bill Bertschy, representing Friends of the Poudre, said he enjoyed listening to the students' thoughts as well as sharing his own views.

"The students were very well prepared, I could tell by the questions they asked and their reasons for their positions," Bertschy said. "I appreciated the opportunity to participate."

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