
Glade Reservoir opponent blasts poll that showed support for water project

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By Rebecca Boyle

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Days after the release of a poll results indicated that a majority of northern Coloradans support the proposed Glade Reservoirs Project, an opposing group is blasting the way the study was conducted.

Gary Wockner, a spokesman for the Save the Poudre Coalition, a group opposing the project, blasted the poll Monday in a press release, calling it a "push poll" and saying the questions deceived respondents.

"This push poll is a desperate last-ditch attempt to prop up a dying project," he said. "The NISP ship is sinking."

The poll was conducted by Denver pollster Floyd Ciruli, well-known for political polling work and other public-policy polls. Ciruli presented his results to the board of the Northern Colorado Water Conservancy District on Friday and said his study shows residents know the area needs more water storage.

According to the poll results, 81 percent of Weld residents favor the Northern Integrated Supply Project, and 8 percent oppose it. Eleven percent of people in Weld aren't sure.

In Larimer, 63 percent of people favor the project and 24 percent oppose it. About 13 percent of Larimer residents aren't sure.

Northern Water officials hope to build NISP, a \$426 million project intended to take water off the Cache la Poudre River during its peak flow season and put it into a new reservoir. Through added storage and exchanges with farmers that will allow them to use water from the South Platte River, NISP will provide 40,000 acre-feet of guaranteed water a year. That's enough for about 80,000 homes for a year, give or take.

In Monday's Save the Poudre release, the group went through several statements in the poll and said the questions were designed to frighten the public.

One such statement, about which respondents are asked whether they agree or disagree, says "local water providers should continue to provide water to major industries and businesses, such as Anheuser-Busch."

In a statement, the Save the Poudre Coalition said that sentence is a scare tactic to threaten the public.

"Anheuser-Busch (Budweiser) gets water from the city of Fort Collins, and Fort Collins is not even a participant in NISP/Glade. Anheuser-Busch is under no threat of losing its water. Further, during Fort Collins City Council meetings, it has been stated by city staff that Fort Collins breweries are very concerned about NISP because NISP is a threat to their water quality and their profits," the statement reads.

The coalition had several other concerns about questions it said were designed to elicit a pro-Glade response.

"The push poll is filled with false information, manipulates the person on the phone, and never mentions any of the project's problems, like that this reservoir scheme will cost over a billion dollars, dry up and pave over farms, threaten Fort Collins' economy, and nearly drain the already degraded Poudre River," Wockner said.

MORE ONLINE

» More information about Glade Reservoir can be found at a new Web site maintained by the project's

advocates, the Northern Colorado Water Conservancy District. The site is at www.gladereservoir.org and contains details about the project as well as the public opinion survey released Friday.

» Opponents of the project also maintain a site, www.savethepoudre.org.

<http://www.greeleytribune.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20080916/NEWS/109169991/-1/rss02&template=printart>

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