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If approved, project will be 'Gladedoggle'

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The word "boondoggle" is defined by Webster's Dictionary as "a trifling or pointless expenditure, etc.; now, especially, one financed by public funds." The online encyclopedia Wikipedia calls it a "slang term for a scheme that wastes time and money." Dictionary.com describes it, among other things, as "to do work of little or no practical value merely to keep or look busy."

Pertinent to these definitions, I would like to propose a new addition to the lexicon: *Gladedoggle*. I refer, of course, to the Glade Reservoir proposed by the Northern Colorado Water Conservancy District as part of its Northern Integrated Supply Project.

At a projected cost of \$431 million and climbing, Glade, if it comes to pass, will be a boondoggle of epic proportions. Tragically, the cost in dollars will not be the worst of it. The ultimate cost will be the demise of the Cache la Poudre River as we know it as it flows through Fort Collins.

This wonderful local natural amenity, already essentially dry for a good part of the year, simply cannot survive having another 40,000 acre feet of water removed on average annually. To make matters worse, this water will be siphoned off during the peak spring flows that are so vital to the health of the river corridor.

This snowmelt-fueled "June Rise" is critically necessary to flush sediments, recharge the water table and redistribute Cottonwood seeds to maintain the riparian forest.

Sadly, this boondoggle is totally unnecessary as water needs for projected Front Range growth can easily be met by reasonable conservation measures (these, as opposed to more draconian steps the fearmongers suggest would be necessary). These would include water-sharing agreements with agriculture, which uses 85 percent of Poudre water. A pathetic sidebar to the issue of conservation is the fact that the 15 municipalities that are proposing to use the Glade water have very little, or no, water conservation programs in place. Furthermore, these communities will take on so much debt in the process that they will have no choice but to encourage the replacement of agriculture by residential development in order to raise revenue to pay this debt. This contradicts the purported prevention of agricultural "dry up" as one of the touted benefits of Glade.

If you are incensed about this threat to our river, there are actions you can take. The Army Corps of Engineers, the permitting agency for the project, will be releasing its Environmental Impact Statement around May 1. Following that, there will be a 90-day public comment period. Attend those meetings and voice your opinions. There will also be an informative panel discussion at 6:30 p.m. April 7 in the Front Range Community College student center. To learn more, volunteer and donate, go to the SaveThePoudre.org Web site. Donations are much needed in that the campaign is hiring scientists and attorneys to review the EIS.

In the meantime, when you hear Glade, think *Gladedoggle*, a huge waste of both money and a precious resource. Remember, too, that the city and developers are investing many dollars in downtown development tied to a healthy river corridor. Conservation is the sustainable solution. Building dams and reservoirs is not. We have the water we need. We just need to use it wisely.
