

Glade Reservoir: One Small Battle

Abstract:

"Whiskey's for drinkin' and water's for fightin'." The words uttered by my professor earlier this semester seem to linger in my head as though just spoken. Never has this old saying taken on such meaning and vigor than here and now. You may not drink whiskey, but you are in the middle of an H2O war that has stretched across generations with no end in sight; Glade Reservoir is just one small battle....

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While I'm happy that he chose to comment on the NISP/Glade proposal, Dudley's logic is seriously flawed. While he admits that "Glade Reservoir is not a cure to our water problems" and that "this type of thing is destined to plague our future unless water conservation becomes our No. 1 priority", he simply calls then for building it anyway...instead of advocating for the very conservation he acknowledges would be needed to prevent it. The web page

http://www.savethepoudre.org/alternatives_conservation.html lists a number of steps that would likely preclude the need for such a reservoir.

Furthermore, in discussing water needs, Dudley falls into an old trap. In dismissing SaveThePoudre's claim that the water will be used to fuel new growth, he says that the NISP subscriber towns are all growing anyway, implying that Glade Res. won't change that. However, in the next paragraph he goes on to say, that "Glade [will be] invaluable to the growth of these communities and the Front Range."

Well which is it? I think that latter statement suggests he already knows the truth...which is that growth FOLLOWS the enabling infrastructure and resources (such as water development). This is precisely why developers and others in the population growth-dependent real estate development industry almost always advocate for ALL such infrastructure development. (Especially when the costs can be distributed to a broader, existing population.) To argue otherwise is to ignore the facts.

Looking at the reverse, if we were forced to live within our means, i.e. to live without further depleting the natural resource base (including the health of the river network and the riparian ecosystem), then what would we have to do?

Might we then start looking more seriously at carrying capacity of human populations, and how to maximize and sustain that capacity through conservation and other efficiencies?

Let me be clear: the reasons to challenge the building of Glade Reservoir and NISP do not begin nor rest on questions of population growth. There are plenty of other reasons for concern, plenty of alternatives to be explored before NISP.

However, for those who argue that all growth is expedient and good and inevitable, and that we must

continue to supply it, one must simply ask them the following. What happens then, long after you have already turned a living river ecosystem into a dead ditch and conveyor system for a commodity, and after you have already drained the last drops of snowmelt from the rivers? What will you do then if population growth is both inevitable and necessary?