

Poudre's weak pulse needs defense

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Neil Grigg's pro-Northern Integrated Supply Project Soapbox (May 1) stands as a fine example of the doublespeak that dam builders and developers have used for a century to convince us to let them do as they please.

Grigg's repeated use of terms such as "balance" and "reason" is a standard and grossly deceptive practice. We have already "balanced" the lower Poudre River to near-death.

If someone was to come up to you with a machete and hack off one of your arms, would you consider that "balanced" or a "compromise" because you still had one arm left? And if he was to return later and hack off your other arm, would you still consider it "reasonable" because you still had both legs?

Grigg's notion of "balance" applied to a river and its waters is merely a continuation of a destructive process, and Grigg's use of this kind of terminology is as infuriating as it is false. Constructing Glade Reservoir and the rest of the NISP is not a process of compromise. We have done quite enough damage to our river over the past 120-odd years in the name of "balanced" management.

The Poudre already runs nearly dry through Fort Collins for a sizable part of the calendar. Construction of additional diversions and storage capacity is not going to result in an improvement of this condition. Do we really want to expend \$370 million (yes, *your* money, if you happen to reside in a participating community) for the purpose of adding 80,000 new houses and a quarter million more Front Range residents? There is nothing beneficial, for the river or for the human and non-human residents of Northern Colorado, in the NISP. It is little more than yet another giant subsidy for the development industry.

The only part of Grigg's essay with which I find myself in agreement is the last paragraph, in which Grigg attempts to disguise himself as one of the good guys. We should indeed be speaking of restoration of the Poudre and its watershed. But when Grigg says "the public debate ought to be about how we can make the river better, not how to kill a project," he is wrong.

The NISP is not about restoring the Poudre; it is about heaping yet another insult upon our already overtaxed river. If we wish to formulate a compromise plan for the restoration and management of the Poudre, we should be discussing water conservation, development caps and retirement of existing diversions and wastefully used water rights. In short, we should be discussing ways to put water back in the river, not gifts to developers.

The lower Poudre still has a pulse, but it's faint and thready and the NISP will pull the plug on the river's life support. I urge every Northern Coloradan to help in the defense of our river. Please join me in opposing the NISP by commenting on the draft Environmental Impact Statement this spring.

John Korfmacher lives in Fort Collins.

