

For Immediate Release

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POUDRE RIVER DRY AGAIN
NISP/Glade EIS IMMINENT
Pending Legislative Bill Threatens Water District Board of Directors

“The Northern Colorado Water Conservancy District is using Orwellian double-speak, and they're desperately trying to greenwash this dam-and-reservoir project which will devastate the river.” -- Gary Wockner, Save The Poudre.

A bill going through State House of Representatives (HB 1330) would require election of water district directors. “Our water district needs a wake-up call,” said Wockner. “They’re making false statements, and there’s nothing we can do about it. We have no vote, no representation, no democracy.”

Fort Collins, CO – The Northern Colorado Water Conservation District (NCWCD) is on the brink of releasing their much-awaited EIS for the Northern Integrated Supply Project, a massive new dam-and-reservoir project that would include the 177,000 acre-foot Glade Reservoir. If built, the project would divert about 35% of the water out of the Poudre River as it flows through Fort Collins, and that is in addition to the 60% of water that is already diverted out of the Poudre.

While running along the river on February 13th, 2008, Gary Wockner, spokesperson for the Save The Poudre Coalition, saw a sight that he often sees along the Poudre through downtown Fort Collins – a nearly dry Poudre River. There was merely a trickle of water in the river, and Wockner straddled the trickle and snapped a photo of the river. (photo below)

“The District has the audacity to state publicly and on their website: ‘This project will not dry up the Poudre.’ (http://www.ncwcd.org/project_features/nisp_main.asp) They're deceiving the public and taxpayers,” said Wockner, “The Poudre is already frequently dry. They're using Orwellian double-speak and they're desperately trying to greenwash this dam-and-reservoir project which will devastate the river.”

The Poudre River historically had about 300,000 acre-feet of water running through Fort Collins. The spot where Wockner is standing would have been calf-deep with water and 20 feet across even during the winter.

At the very same time, a bill is working its way through the Colorado House of Representatives that would require public elections for the board of directors of Colorado water districts. Currently, directors are appointed by an arcane process where county judges cherry-pick applicants, often from an old-boy network of water developers and farmers who often stand to make money from water projects.

The bill, [HB 08-1330 click to read bill, pdf](#), was introduced by Representative Paul Weissmann (D-Boulder) and co-sponsored by other Front Range legislators.

“This bill needs strong consideration,” said Gary Wockner. “Our water district needs a wake-up call. They’re making false statements, and there’s nothing we can do about it. We have no vote, no representation, no democracy. It’s taxation without representation.”

The problems associated with the Poudre River and the NISP/Glade project are now becoming wide-spread. Among others:

1. The Poudre is set to be named one of the state’s most polluted rivers by the Colorado Water Quality Control Commission ([click for story](#)). Diverting yet more water out of the Poudre will only make water quality worse.
2. If built, NISP/Glade would take a substantial amount of water out of the river as it flows through Fort Collins and it will compensate the river and Fort Collins with absolutely nothing. The damage is an "externalized cost" that nobody pays and everyone suffers.
3. If built, NISP/Glade would permanently threaten the downtown Fort Collins economy, UniverCity connections, Beet Street, the DDA/DBA, and the Stryker amphitheater among other economic issues, while the City calls the river one of its "economic engines."
4. If built, NISP/Glade would devalue the millions of dollars that have been spent on the natural areas and bike paths that run along the river through Fort Collins.
5. If built, NISP/Glade would degrade the recreational and aesthetic experiences the river offers.
6. If built, NISP/Glade would severely degrade the ecological health of the river, and the health of the associated natural areas, wetlands, and riparian forests.
7. If built, NISP Glade would force new growth to occur in outlying counties and the north Denver suburbs.
8. If built, NISP/Glade would increase the rate of agricultural land being paved over and converted to subdivisions and shopping centers.

“All of this is thanks to our water district,” said Gary Wockner. “We need to stop NISP, Save The Poudre, and we need public elections of our water district board of directors. HB 08-1330 isn't perfect, but it is a step in the right direction.”

HB 08-1330 will be heard Tuesday, February 19th, in the House Agriculture, Livestock, and Natural Resources committee in the Capitol building. The Save The Poudre coalition will be on hand to testify in support of public elections for the NCWCD board.



Photo also available in high resolution by clicking here:

http://garywockner.home.comcast.net/~garywockner/dry_poudre_fort_collins.jpg

To read more examples of NCWCD's public deception, read this *Fort Collins Weekly* article:

<http://garywockner.home.comcast.net/~garywockner/applegate.htm>

The Save The Poudre Coalition is made up of the following groups: Sierra Club Poudre Canyon Group, Colorado Environmental Coalition, Poudre Paddlers, Citizen Planners, Fort Collins Audubon Society, The Bean Cycle/Matter Bookstore, and Friends of the Poudre. The Coalition also partners with additional regional and national groups.

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