

For Immediate Release

Save The Poudre Coalition

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www.SaveThePoudre.org

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STP Coalition Gives Presentation to State Legislature's Water Committee

Dry-up of ag land a hot topic at meeting

Denver, CO -- On Wednesday morning, September 30th, at the invitation of the State of Colorado Legislature's Water Resources Review Committee, the Save The Poudre Coalition presented the flaws in the NISP/Glade scheme, and also presented the Healthy Rivers Alternative, to the nine-member committee comprised of the leaders of the House and Senate Agricultural Committees at the State Capitol.

Specifically, the Coalition presented information about the 100,000 acres of ag-land dry-up that NISP/Glade will cause (some of it on the West Slope), and presented information about the 200% cost-escalation of the project in the last five years.

"The Committee asked excellent questions," said Gary Wockner, spokesperson for the Save The Poudre Coalition. "They seemed very interested in the fact that NISP/Glade would force rapid population growth and force the dry-up of 100,000 acres of irrigated ag land in northern Colorado and the West Slope."

The NISP/Glade scheme would force small, struggling towns to borrow up to \$800 million dollars that could only be paid back by rapid population growth that would occur on top of farms near these towns. In addition, the NISP/Glade scheme hopes to do an "Initial Fill" of the reservoir by buying, renting, or leasing 100,000 acre feet of water from farmers in northern Colorado and the West Slope (Colorado River water). The Draft Environmental Impact Statement (see below) quite clearly describes how and why the 100,000 acre feet of water will be procured from farmers.

"This project can't move forward unless 100,000 acre feet of farm water are transferred to Glade Reservoir for the Initial Fill," said Wockner. "The senators and representatives on the Committee seemed very concerned about this transfer. I suspect that most farmers are unaware of this ag-water transfer, but it was quite publicly brought to the legislature's attention today."

In addition to the "Initial Fill" of the reservoir of 100,000 acre feet of farm water, the project will also force the dry-up of:

- 48,000 acres of irrigated farmland that the NISP cities will cover with new housing growth

- 3,000 acres of irrigated farmland that will become to saline to farm
- 14,000 acres of irrigated farmland that are currently using the Grey Mtn. Water Right.

"We strongly encourage farmers and elected officials to read the fine print of the NISP/Glade scheme. It's buyer beware," said Wockner. "This project is probably the most devastating nail in the coffin for agriculture in northern Colorado's history."

Sources of water for the "Initial Fill" include water from the Colorado-Big Thompson project, the Windy Gap project, and the Grand River Ditch -- all currently used by farmers.

(read below)

A summary of the Healthy Rivers Alternative is here: http://poudreriver.home.comcast.net/%7Epoudreriver/Healthy_Rivers_Alternative.pdf

Excerpt from the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for NISP/Glade

[The full DEIS is here: <http://www.nwo.usace.army.mil/html/od-tl/eis/nisp-eis.html>]

2.4.1.3 Sources of Water for Initial Fill of Glade Reservoir

The EIS evaluations of Glade Reservoir are based on a planned initial fill volume of approximately 100,000 AF at the time of project start-up. However, the anticipated sequence of NISP construction is to build the Glade Reservoir complex followed by the SPWCP. Until the SPWCP is online, Glade Reservoir will be wholly dependent on the Grey Mountain water right. This water right has the capability of yielding water in about 4 out of 10 years. Modeling indicates that there can be several years in a row of divertible flow followed by as many as 8 years with no flow available. Therefore, it is possible that divertible flows from the Poudre River may not be available under the Grey Mountain water right to fill Glade Reservoir at the start of NISP. The Participants could choose to wait to fill Glade Reservoir until divertible flows became available under the Grey Mountain water right or find other interim sources of water to fill Glade Reservoir. At the time of project start-up, NISP Participants will need approximately 10,000 to 15,000 AF of yield. If water is not available from the Grey Mountain water right, then other water sources could be considered by NISP Participants as interim supplies. It is assumed that these sources would already be decreed for municipal use or have an approved substitute water supply plan, thereby eliminating the temporary transfer of native agricultural water rights. The following sources would likely serve as an alternate source of supply if water was not available from the Grey Mountain water right at project start-up (NCWCD 2007):

- C-BT units—C-BT units could be rented by NISP Participants. There is presently a very active rental market of C-BT water, generally from municipal to agricultural use. NISP Participants could either collectively or separately rent C-BT water. If the rented C-BT water is greater than the Participant's need in that year, the water could be delivered into Glade Reservoir. The water would be delivered to the Project from

Horsetooth Reservoir through the Windsor Extension into the Poudre Valley Canal.

- Windy Gap—Windy Gap water could be rented by NISP Participants. NISP Participants can either collectively or separately rent Windy Gap water from Windy Gap Participants. If the rented Windy Gap water is greater than the Participant's need in that year, the water could be delivered into Glade Reservoir. The water would be delivered to the Project from Horsetooth Reservoir through the Windsor Extension into the Poudre Valley Canal.
- Grand River Ditch—The Grand River Ditch diverts water from the Colorado River drainage for the use by Water Supply and Storage Company (WSSC). These diversions average approximately 18,000 AF per year. WSSC serves an area roughly parallel to State Highway 14 from northeast of Fort Collins to several miles past the Town of Ault via the Larimer County Ditch. Because the water is transmountain, no return flow obligations are necessary and the water can be rented directly from WSSC shareholders. The water is presently diverted at the Larimer County Canal headgate above Laporte, and would be diverted for the Project at the Poudre Valley Canal.

The Save The Poudre Coalition is made up of 16 national, state, and regional groups including: National Wildlife Federation, Clean Water Action, Defenders of Wildlife, American Rivers, American Whitewater Association, Western Resource Advocates, Colorado Environmental Coalition, Lighthawk, Environment Colorado, Sierra Club – Rocky Mountain Chapter, Fort Collins Audubon Society, Citizen Planners, Wolverine Farm Publishing, Poudre Paddlers, Friends of the Poudre, and the Cache la Poudre River Foundation. Membership in these groups totals over 3 million American citizens.