

## **For Immediate Release**

Save The Poudre Coalition

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[www.SaveThePoudre.org](http://www.SaveThePoudre.org)

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## **Save The Poudre Coalition Gives Presentation To Fort Morgan City Council**

### **Fort Morgan's population is declining; Council worries about cost of NISP/Glade**

**Fort Morgan, CO** -- Expressing concern over the delay and cost escalations of the proposed NISP/Glade scheme, the City of Fort Morgan requested a presentation by the Save The Poudre Coalition. At the October 27th Fort Morgan City Council meeting, the Coalition presented "The Dam Truth and the Healthy Rivers Alternative" and handed out copies of the Healthy Rivers Alternative ([downloadable here](#)).

Fort Morgan Mayor, Jack Darnell, said the Coalition was invited so that the Council could hear all sides of the issue. He also stated that Fort Morgan needs to make some hard decisions about the project, and he was concerned that NISP/Glade would take forever and become too expensive.

During the presentation, the Coalition discussed Fort Morgan's financial and population growth situation. Fort Morgan proposes to pay for NISP/Glade by charging new growth, but its population growth rate over the last 7 years has been negative -- the State Demographer's office reports that from 2000 to 2007 Fort Morgan's population has declined by 156 residents, a -1.4% growth rate. Additionally, the City and the U.S. Census Bureau report that Fort Morgan has only averaged 9 new-home building permits over the last 12 years, while the NISP/Glade financing plan calls for a minimum of 34 per year in order for Fort Morgan to be able to pay for the project.

"We are extremely concerned with how Fort Morgan will pay for NISP/Glade," said Gary Wockner of the Save The Poudre Coalition. "If they charge new growth, NISP/Glade will be an additional charge of at least \$175,000 per house if the City's building permits stay at the 12-year average. If they charge current residents, NISP/Glade will cost at least \$9,175 to every homeowner in Fort Morgan."

During the presentation, Wockner pointed out that if NISP/Glade would have been built on its original time frame (3 years ago), its debt burden would have coincided with the recession and could have been a financial disaster for the City of Fort Morgan.

Fort Morgan will continue to study alternatives to NISP/Glade. The alternatives presented at the Council meeting included:

- Using realistic growth projections -- The NISP DEIS claims Fort Morgan's population will double; that does not appear to be likely.

- Using water from farm land that the City plans to grow over and displace
- Strengthening the City's water conservation programs
- Buying more water from the Colorado-Big Thompson project
- Using well water (this is the "No Action" option presented in the DEIS)

The Council also seemed unaware that the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency stated that the version of NISP/Glade described in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement would violate the Clean Water Act.

"Fort Morgan is the only NISP participant that has invited us to speak to their Council," said Wockner. "We thank the City of Fort Morgan for the opportunity to discuss this critically important financial and environmental issue."

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.