

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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Contact: Gary Wockner, Save the Poudre: Poudre Waterkeeper, 970-218-8310

<http://SaveThePoudre.org>

## **Save the Poudre Has Serious Concerns About The Windy Gap Firming Project**

**Fort Collins, CO** -- Yesterday (November 29, 2011), the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation released the long-awaited Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for the Windy Gap Firming Project (WGFP). WGFP proposes to pump and pipe more water from the Colorado River near Grand Lake, Colorado, over to the northern Front Range to slake the thirst of future population growth. In comments to the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, Save the Poudre: Poudre Waterkeeper has expressed serious concerns about the project over the past three years. Those concerns include:

1. WGFP would supply more water to the Rawhide Station coal-fired powerplant north of Fort Collins. Save the Poudre has serious concerns about continuing to fuel and subsidize coal power when Colorado should be switching to cleaner fuels.
2. WGFP would supply water to cities and districts that sell water for fracking including Longmont, Greeley, and the Central Weld County Water District. Save the Poudre is concerned that selling water for fracking may not be adequately addressed in the permitting process.
3. WGFP may have significant negative ecological impacts on the Colorado River and on Grand Lake. Save the Poudre has serious concerns about Colorado water supply projects that further deplete rivers and ecosystems.
4. WGFP water from the Colorado River would be used to fill the proposed Northern Integrated Supply Project's Glade Reservoir. Save the Poudre is opposed to NISP and has serious concerns about any project that would intersect with NISP.
5. WGFP may rely on a flawed understanding of climate change. Save the Poudre is concerned that hundreds of millions of dollars could be spent on a project that could see its junior water rights dry up due to the impacts of climate change.
6. Some WGFP participants proposed water use rates as high as 230 gallons per person per day for sprawl-type development primarily to water lawns. (As a comparison, the City of Fort Collins and the City of Boulder water use rates are around 150 gpcd.) Save the Poudre cannot support this precedent and believes it is an irresponsible use of scarce and precious water resources.

7. The WGFP permitting process may not have properly evaluated alternatives to the project. Save the Poudre is actively promoting alternatives including water conservation, water recycling, and water-sharing agreements with farmers.

"In the next few weeks, we will read the document and carefully evaluate the science," said Gary Wockner of Save Poudre. "We have very serious concerns about this project and its intersection with projects and participants in the Poudre River watershed as well as its potential negative impacts on the Colorado River and Grand Lake."

The WGFP FEIS is available here: [http://www.usbr.gov/gp/eca/wgfp\\_feis/index.html](http://www.usbr.gov/gp/eca/wgfp_feis/index.html)