

For Immediate Release

Save The Poudre Coalition

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Save the Poudre: Poudre Waterkeeper

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Windy Gap Firming Project Deal Falls Short of “Fixing” Fatally Flawed Diversion

Fort Collins, CO -- In response to today’s announcement of a “deal” between Grand County and Northern Water regarding the Windy Gap Firming Project (WGFP) and the County’s approval for the project to move ahead, Save The Poudre: Poudre Waterkeeper firmly proclaims that serious concerns about the project remain. The “deal” makes strides towards offsetting the damage done to the Colorado River in Grand County by Northern during a half century of transbasin diversions, but, in the end, does little to help Colorado and the Front Range move toward a sustainable water future.

“The Windy Gap Firming Project would likely be used to fill Glade Reservoir of the Northern Integrated Supply Project, which would also be used to drain and destroy the Poudre River,” said Save The Poudre Director Gary Wockner. “We will do everything we can to stop the Poudre River from being destroyed.”

In addition to the use of WGFP for filling Glade Reservoir, WGFP would also:

- Divert even more Colorado River water across the Continental Divide for sale to municipal and industrial users, including to support the explosion of oil and gas development using fracking along the Front Range.
- Prolong the life of a highly polluting coal-fired power plant north of Fort Collins by providing it with massive amount of pure Colorado River water.
- Further deplete streamflows in the Colorado River, potentially impacting endangered fish species and triggering Federal Endangered Species Act protections.
- Fuel and subsidize a continuation of water-wasting, sprawling development in the non-urban areas of the Front Range.
- Add to the anticipated impacts of climate change on West Slope water availability, potentially threatening traditional Colorado communities.

“We’ve reached out to Northern Water and the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation throughout this process—they are well aware of the flaws of this project,” said Wockner. “We are closely monitoring the permitting process and will be pouring over the Record of Decision when it is made public.”

“It is important for all Coloradans to understand that this “deal” was the result of private negotiations between Grand County, Northern, and a few other parties,” Wockner

continued. “Many of the issues raised during the environmental review process remain —this project is still not a good deal for Colorado.”