

NISP harms area agriculture

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The farming economy of Northern Colorado is extremely important to the culture and financial backbone of our region. We should try to preserve that economy to protect our landscapes, to protect the heritage that we all enjoy, while also protecting northern Colorado's rivers.

Unfortunately, actions taken by the Northern Colorado Water Conservancy District threaten that farm economy and endanger our rivers.

Additionally, those actions are cloaked in language that misinforms the public and the very farmers that pay taxes to the district.

Analysis completed by scientists from the Save The Poudre Coalition shows that of the nearly 700,000 acres of irrigated farmland in the region, the Northern Integrated Supply Project and its Glade Reservoir will facilitate the loss of at least

100,000 acres. A summary of that analysis shows:

»The NISP-subscribing communities will grow on top of 76,000 acres of farms, of which 48,000 are irrigated. Those 48,000 acres of irrigated farms will be sold to developers, and their water will be sold off.

»Because of the water trade in the South Platte Water Conservation Plan in NISP, at least 3,000 acres of irrigated farmland on the "Larimer and Weld" and "New Cache la Poudre" ditches will become too saline to farm. Additionally, thousands of acres of crops in the South Platte basin will see lower yields because of increased salinity.

»The Grey Mountain Water Right — which includes 20,000 acre feet of new water that will be taken out of the Poudre River for NISP — currently irrigates 14,000 acres of farms and provides return flows on the eastern plains of Colorado. Not only will these farmers no longer get that water, they also will not be paid for the loss of production, and some of them will have to shut down their wells.

»The NISP Draft Environmental Impact Statement states that the Northern District plans to lease and rent all the farm water it can to do an initial 100,000 acre-foot fill of Glade Reservoir's 177,000 acre-foot capacity. That 100,000 acre-feet of water currently irrigates 70,000 acres of farmland in northern Colorado or the Western Slope of Colorado — at least 35,000 acres will be dried up in northern Colorado.

Economic analysis from Colorado State University and state agencies shows that irrigated farming generates roughly \$800 per acre of economic activity to northern Colorado each year.

NISP/Glade thus will facilitate the loss of up to \$80 million per year of agricultural goods and services to our region.

Over the 30-year life of the loans that will be needed to pay for NISP/Glade, billions of dollars worth of agricultural goods, services and jobs will no longer flow into the northern Colorado economy.

There are many, many sides to the NISP/Glade controversy. Unfortunately, the version told by Northern District misinforms the public and farmers. Please help educate the public so that we can all protect northern Colorado from NISP and its destructive Glade Reservoir.

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