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Fort Collins Audubon Society Resolves to Oppose Glade Reservoir

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The Fort Collins Audubon Society announced today that its Board of Directors has voted unanimously to oppose the building of Glade Reservoir in northern Larimer County. "Glade Reservoir and the proposed Northern Integrated Supply Project (NISP) of which it is a part are the worst threats to the health and ecological integrity of the Cache la Poudre River since the main stem reservoir project proposed some twenty years ago," stated FCAS President Joel Hurmence. "Those of us who value the Poudre need to find a way to defeat this project.

If built, the NISP project will siphon water out of the Cache la Poudre River near the mouth of the Poudre Canyon, diminishing water flows through Laporte, Fort Collins and nearby towns by 35% to 50%. The historic "June rises" which help cleanse the river of sediments and pollutants will largely disappear. "The Poudre River already has severe water quality problems as it flows through Fort Collins," stated FCAS conservation chair Bill Miller. "Reducing water flows will worsen those problems.

The cities of Laporte, Fort Collins and Greeley—and the state of Colorado through GOCO—have spent tens of millions of dollars to purchase natural areas, parks and conservation easements along the Poudre River and to develop dozens of miles of foot and bike trails. These investments are threatened by the proposed reservoir, as is the quality of life of residents who fish, swim, tube, hike and otherwise recreate along the river.

The Fort Collins Audubon Society has nominated a stretch of the river for consideration as a state Important Bird Area due to its importance for area bird life. Water flowing through the Poudre River supports hundreds of acres of adjacent wetlands as well as a mature riparian forest corridor. This key wildlife habitat is also threatened by the proposed reservoir.

The Audubon Society notes that there are fiscally sound alternatives to building NISP for communities that want to secure future water supplies. Rather than degrading a prime natural amenity of our region, FCAS encourages the communities backing the NISP project to instead look to water conservation. Even just putting in place the main conservation measures currently used in Aurora, a leader in water conservation in Colorado, would save these communities 25-30% of their water use—at a fraction of the cost of NISP. Partnerships with farmers could supply all of the rest of these communities' needs for the next fifty years.

In addition to its direct ecological effects on the Poudre River, the NISP project will actually require accelerated population growth and development along the northern Front Range, further degrading the area's environment. This is because small communities buying in to NISP will have to grow rapidly in order to add water ratepayers to pay for the project. Added

Audubon Society member Phil Cafaro: "The most cynical aspect of this proposal is that it is being promoted as a way to keep agriculture in business by doing away with the need to buy water from farms. But in order to pay for the reservoir, communities will have to pave over tens of thousands of acres of land that are currently in agriculture.

The Fort Collins Audubon Society urges area politicians, business leaders, farmers and conservationists to work together to find ecologically and economically sound ways to secure area water supplies. It urges the Army Corps of Engineers to reject the NISP project as ecologically and economically unsound and NISP subscriber communities to drop out of this destructive project.

To learn more about Glade Reservoir and about cheaper, more ecologically sound means to secure area water supplies, go to www.savethepoudre.org.

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