

For Immediate Release

April 15, 2010

Contact: Dr. Gary Wockner, 970-218-8310

Save the Poudre: Poudre Waterkeeper

www.SaveThePoudre.org

FORT MORGAN GAMBLES WITH RATEPAYERS' MONEY

Growth has stopped. City may raise water rates to pay for NISP anyway -- new rates would be the 2nd highest in Colorado.

Fort Collins, CO - On Tuesday, April 13, the City of Fort Morgan considered proposals to raise water rates 17.6% over the next 4 years and 22.5% more in ten years, as well as raise tap fees and plant investment fees, all to help pay for the Northern Integrated Supply Project. But when the conversation turned to the discussing the need for NISP, the City also heard that growth in Fort Morgan had almost completely stopped.

The story appeared in the Fort Morgan Times on April 14th here: http://www.fortmorgantimes.com/ci_14881477

The Council appears to be willing to gamble with ratepayers' money for NISP, hoping that rapid population growth rates will come back to Fort Morgan to pay off the NISP debt. Unfortunately, the article also states that "**...population growth has slowed to a virtual standstill over the last 15 years.**"

In addition, the Council and hired consultant seem to accept the idea that Poudre River advocates might stop NISP, but then they consider other alternatives to meet their phantom water supply needs:

In any case, the city should "hang in with NISP through permitting at least," Ullman, said, because the city will always be able to sell any excess water its has. He noted that "environmentalists" continue to fight the building of NISP, and if it is not constructed the city will need money for more water elsewhere.

"It seems like a 'if you build it they will come' strategy," said Gary Wockner of Save the Poudre. "Fort Morgan is proposing to raise rates and gamble with ratepayers' money -- including borrowing \$40 million -- in the worst recession since the Great Depression and then hope that rapid population growth will come back to pay the debt off."

"Fort Morgan should consider alternatives," continued Wockner. "Their best alternative might be no alternative at all -- they don't appear to need any water."

The Save The Poudre Coalition: Poudre Waterkeeper is made up of 19 national, state, and regional groups including: National Wildlife Federation, Clean Water Action, Waterkeeper Alliance, Wild Earth Guardians, Xerces Society, 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.**