



September 4, 2008

Council right to oppose NISP

Involvement must continue as project moves forward

The Fort Collins City Council wisely relied on data Tuesday when it voted unanimously to oppose the Northern Integrated Supply Project.

Fort Collins city staff and paid consultants found that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement was incomplete and inaccurate in addressing issues related to the city's water quality and potential costs to its wastewater treatment project. NISP would include construction of Glade Reservoir in Larimer County, which would draw water from the Poudre River.

Comments from the city of Fort Collins, along with the City Council resolution, will be forwarded to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The Corps will review all comments and eventually determine whether the project will proceed.

While the City Council vote was predictable in light of the city studies, the resolution should not be the city's final note of participation. If Fort Collins wants to be heard and retain its credibility, it must be open to mitigation discussions with the Northern Colorado Water Conservancy District, which is proposing the project for 13 communities. Brian Werner, a NCWCD spokesman, noted Tuesday that dialogue with the city has been difficult while Fort Collins prepared its comments on the draft EIS.

Now that the step is complete, communication between the city and the water district must occur in good faith. Fort Collins is not one of the 13 communities participating in the project, but City Council and many residents want the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to understand NISP's potential impacts here. The best route to do so is by transparent communication between the city and water district.
