

Business for NISP Rally

Media Coverage



Photo by Tom Hacker/Loveland Reporter-Herald

Business for NISP Rally

The Ranch, Loveland

May 19, 2011

TheTribune

Greeley Tribune: May 19, 2011

By Bill Jackson

300 rally in support of NISP water project

LOVELAND — The focus was on providing for future generations Thursday at a business rally to support the Northern Integrated Supply Project, which is designed to give northern Colorado towns and water districts an extra 40,000 acre feet of water annually.

U.S. Rep. Cory Gardner, R-Colo., was the keynote speaker at the rally, moved inside to the Larimer County Conference Center at The Ranch due to inclement weather — which no one at the rally complained about except wishing for a place to store that water instead of watching it run out of the state.

NISP, as it is commonly called, includes a new reservoir, Glade, northwest of Fort Collins off the main stem of the Poudre River. As part of that, a second storage reservoir, Galetton, would be built east of Ault in northern Weld County that would provide two irrigation companies with 40,000 acre-feet of water from the South Platte River in exchange for the 40,000 acre feet they currently use from the Poudre.

The more than \$400 million project is being financed at 15 smaller towns and water districts in northern Colorado and is being coordinated by the Northern Colorado Water Conservancy District, which manages the Colorado-Big Thompson Project. That project brings a supplemental supply of water to northern Colorado from the Colorado River on the Western Slope.

Gardner was one of more than a dozen speakers who addressed the crowd, estimated at about 300 attendees. He said Colorado jobs, its economy and future depends on the state's ability to "store and deliver clean, affordable water." He cited the vision of such water pioneers as W.D. Farr of Greeley and Wayne Aspinall, who represented Colorado's 4th District in the U.S. House from 1947-73.

"They captured the usefulness of our natural resources beyond imagination," he said, noting the present generation is benefiting from their vision. He said the present generation must do the same for future generations, and he quoted Colorado poet laureate Thomas Hornsby Ferril who described Colorado as "a land written in water."

"In May of 2006, we stood in a dry Weld County sugar beet field and talked about water storage," Gardner recalled, and said to meet the water needs of the expected population of the South Platte River Basin in the next 30-40 years "we will need the equivalent of two Colorado Big-Thompson Projects," adding "we need to start building NISP today. It's time to stop talking and get it done."

That sentiment was echoed by mayors of the towns and cities that have spent \$10 million on the environmental impact study of the project to date, as well as from local business people and the

three Larimer County commissioners and the five Weld commissioners.

The Weld commissioners closed the meeting with a chant of “Conserve water, build NISP.”

Severance Mayor Don Brookshire was joined at the meeting by his 3-year-old daughter, Savannah.

“This is why we are here today. Savannah is what this is all about,” Commissioner Sean Conway said.

<http://www.greeleytribune.com/article/20110519/NEWS/705199976/1002&parentprofile=1001>

The Fort Morgan Times

The Fort Morgan Times: May 21, 2011
By Jenni Grubbs



Pictured are many of the people from Morgan County who attended a rally in support of the Northern Integrated Supply Project on Thursday in Loveland. Listening to Congressman Cory Gardner give the keynote address, from left, are: Fort Morgan City Councilman Jim Powers, Water Resources Director Gary Dreessen, Quality Water District General Manager Mark Kokes, Councilman Brent Nation, Water Advisory Board member Bill Baker, and Fort Morgan resident Don Ostwald.

Fort Morgan well represented at NISP rally Congressman gives boost to water storage supporters

LOVELAND -- The organizers of a rally in support of the Northern Integrated Supply Project were expecting between 100 and 150 people to show up.

Then, on Thursday, with the dreary, rainy weather, they figured even fewer people would come to Loveland -- even with the promise of a free lunch.

But come they did.

When the size of the crowd was totaled, more than 300 ventured out to show their support for the proposed water supply project, which would include two new reservoirs for storage and pipelines for delivery, according to Brian Werner of the Northern Water Conservancy District.

The project has been in the works for many years, but it is still in the environmental impact stage of the process.



Congressman Cory Gardner pumps up the crowd at the rally for the Northern Integrated Supply Project, held Thursday in Loveland, by pointing out the project's importance to northeast Colorado. "Construction of NISP will mark when we no longer rely on the past, but create our future," he said.

Fort Morgan, which is one of 15 municipalities and water districts that have helped fund the project thus far, was represented at the rally by Councilmen Jim Powers and Brent Nation.

Also there from Fort Morgan were Water Advisory Board member Bill Baker, Water Resources Director Gary Dreessen, Water Treatment Plant Superintendent John Turner, Quality Water District General Manager Mark Kokes and city resident Don Ostwald, as well as Morgan County resident Brad Wind.

Once at the Budweiser Events Center in Loveland, they dined on a barbecue lunch and settled in to listen to a host of speakers, including Congressman Cory Gardner and state Rep. Jerry Sonnenberg, proclaim the importance of getting NISP built.

Northern Water Conservancy District General Manager Eric Wilkinson kicked things off with some good news for the project, telling the crowd that the latest round of environmental studies "are finding that the impacts of NISP are much less" than previously thought.

"It's advantageous to do it," he said, pointing out that the studies have already cost the participants \$10 million.

Yet, Wilkinson said that the lengthy process is pretty normal for building water storage projects, giving examples of reservoirs going back to the 1950s that took 15 to 25 years to be ready to hold liquid.

"When you think of water projects today, they're not 'think of them today, build them tomorrow,'" he said. "In this regulatory atmosphere that we're in now, there are a lot of other things that need to be done."

Support from legislators

Gardner was the event's keynote speaker, though, and he did not disappoint his audience.

"If we are going to (grow the northeast Colorado economy), the only way to sustain it long term is to build water storage," he said. "That is why NISP is especially important."

The congressman, who spoke at previous rallies for the project when he was in the state legislature, passionately talked about the water that would be stored there helping agricultural communities to thrive while also providing the lifeblood of growing centers.

"Construction of NISP will mark when we no longer rely on the past, but create our future," he told the crowd, adding that the state's business future depends on "a better water future."

Sonnenberg emphasized the importance of NISP to northeast Colorado agriculture.

"It is a wonderful project that should have been done five years ago," he said. "The only way to take pressure off of agriculture is to build storage."

Many more speakers

Other speakers included State Sen. Mary Hodge, D-Brighton, the mayors of Frederick and Windsor and Firestone, the CEO of Agland Inc., the CEO of Stewart Environmental Consultants, former Colorado Economic Development Director Don Marostica and commissioners from Weld and Larimer counties.

Frederick Mayor Eric Doering drew the most applause of these speakers when he declared, "One of the worst things that could happen to this project is if it becomes about R's or D's or anything related to politics."

He implored the crowd to "be proactive" and "be part of the solution."

Agland CEO Mitch Anderson took a darker approach, warning people, "If we don't do things like this, we need to be prepared to send people around the world to fight the unrest caused by food shortages."

His comments found support in the population projection Marostica offered, which would indicate explosive population growth, with five times today's population likely 50 years from now.

Marostica highlighted five things he said NISP is about: jobs, economic development, protecting farmland, quality of life and "total water stewardship."

"I'm preaching to the choir today, but we need to keep talking to people about NISP," Marostica said.

Windsor Mayor John Vazquez pointed out that the Poudre is approaching flood stage, as it often does when the snow melts.

"We should have a place where we can divert that water," he said, which NISP would provide. He tackled opponents' chief concern head on: "It wouldn't dry up the river system, but would allow regulation of a healthy flow."

"Here we have an opportunity, as the Eastern Plains, to finally set our own water destiny," Vazquez said. "It's about time we start listening to sound planning."

Rally reactions

Powers said he was pleased with the turnout at the rally.

"It's encouraging that there's a lot of support other than the 15" participants funding NISP, he said. "I can see the momentum on the project growing. It's kind of snowballing. I'm excited about it."

Baker was also impressed by how many people went, but somewhat pessimistic about the project's timeline.

"It just goes to show that one person can't do it all," he said. "It takes a bunch -- with foresight. But, the bulk of us aren't going to see this thing happen. We're going to be lucky to have water in it in 20 years."

Nation, who noted that Wilkinson had spoken some about negative campaigns against NISP by opponents, said he was glad to know that Fort Morgan is far from the only community dealing with concerns about growth and water storage.

He said he was pleased to see and hear from government officials like Gardner and Sonnenberg at the rally, but, "I'm still very disappointed that the governor's office hasn't stepped up and supported it. I understand there are political reasons, but this project is far enough along."

Kokes said the rally gave him "a renewed enthusiasm for the project and what it offers not only for the economy of northern Colorado, but the opportunities for our children to continue to live and raise their families in northern Colorado."

"It's unfortunate that we've spent \$10 million that we could have spent to build it," he continued, on studies "satisfying the questions of the opposition."

Wilkinson said he was thrilled with the turnout and with the support for the project shown at the rally.

"I think people heard from a variety of viewpoints that it's needed today, not just in the future," he said. "The number of people here demonstrates that."

Plus, he said, "It's always nice when you have a congressman not just doing lip service. (Gardner is) passionate about water and the need for it. He gets it."

"Water is critical to the economic future of our state," Gardner told The Fort Morgan Times after the rally, adding that water in excess of the Colorado's delivery requirements in the Cache la Poudre and South Platte Rivers ends up getting swept downstream to users in other states. "If we can capture that (excess) water, we can help our economy and families have a bright future."

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State Rep. Jerry Sonnenberg stress the importance of water storage to agriculture in northeast Colorado at the rally for the Northern Integrated Supply Project, held Tuesday in Loveland. "It is a wonderful project that should have been done five years ago," he said. "The only way to take pressure off of agriculture is to build storage."

http://www.fortmorgantimes.com/ci_18106465

Fort Collins Coloradoan: May 19, 2011

By *Bobby Magill*

Lawmakers, farmers rally for NISP, Glade Reservoir

LOVELAND – For those keeping an eye on water availability in Colorado, the rain made Thursday a very good day.

Those farmers, lawmakers and water managers reveling in a rainy day also chose Thursday for a Northern Colorado Water Conservancy District rally for the proposed Northern Integrated Supply Project, which could provide growing cities south of Fort Collins with a new source of water.

The rain, they said, was a reminder that the deluge could be helping fill Glade Reservoir if it existed today.

Northern Water holds a rally for NISP once each year to keep the support for the project high among business leaders, local governments and the agricultural community.

If NISP is built, Glade Reservoir would be constructed between two hogback ridges on the edge of the plains north of Fort Collins, siphoning water from the Poudre River when it's running high. The water would be used primarily for growing cities and towns in Larimer, Weld, Morgan and Boulder counties, preventing those towns from having to get additional water supplies from farms and ranches.

As the list of NISP supporters continues to grow, political momentum has reached a tipping point, said Weld County Commissioner Sean Conway.

“We started to achieve critical mass two years ago,” he said, adding that most people in Weld County are tired of seeing farmland dried up so water can go to Thornton and other growing suburban cities and towns.

He said critics of NISP, including Save the Poudre, which claims the project will kill the Poudre River, don't speak for most people in northeast Colorado.

“Save the Poudre does not speak for all of us,” he said. “They may speak for a small minority in Northern Colorado.”

No members of Save the Poudre attended Thursday's rally.

Northern Water General Manager Eric Wilkinson said the project will have less environmental impact than originally expected, but final word on its impacts from the Army Corps of Engineers, which is conducting the environmental review of the project, is expected in 2013.

The project can't be built before it receives the Army Corps' approval.

"This is a shovel-ready project," said U.S. Rep. Cory Gardner, R-Colo. "We could actually start creating jobs today."

Gardner said NISP will create many jobs and spark millions of dollars of investments in the local economy.

"Our state's businesses depend on a brighter water future," he said. "Our state's agricultural economy faces the threat of the buy up and dry up of 60,000 acres of some of the most productive agricultural land in this nation. Our economy, our businesses are linked to water."

State Rep. Jerry Sonnenberg, R-Sterling, railed against the regulatory hoops NISP has to jump through before it's built.

"I'm proud to be here standing up for NISP," he said. "When we talk about taking four to five times as long to permit a water project than it does to actually build the project, we have serious issues. We need to get through that red tape and start building that water storage so the target is not on the back of agriculture."

Don Marostica, a former Loveland lawmaker and former director of the Colorado Office of Economic Development and International Trade, said NISP is about economic development and jobs, which can't be created without water.

"Water storage and water supply allows us to have the quality of life we have today for the growing population in the future," he said.

Save the Poudre Director Gary Wockner said after the rally that the group has published an alternative to NISP that proposes to provide water for growing cities while protecting the Poudre River.

"It has two main components," Wockner said. "One is a very strong focus on water conservation and the second is a new partnership with farmers that focuses on rotational fallowing and water sharing programs."

<http://www.coloradoan.com/article/20110519/UPDATES01/110519019/Lawmakers-farmers-rally-NISP-Glade-Reservoir?odyssey=tab%7Ctopnews%7Ctext%7CFRONTPAGE>

Denver Post: May 20, 2011

By Monte Whaley

Northern Colorado coalition rallies for NISP water project

LOVELAND — Two proposed dams in northern Colorado would preserve the water needed to secure growth and development in a rapidly expanding region of the state, proponents of the Northern Integrated Supply Project said Thursday.

Farmers, business leaders and local officials along with state and federal lawmakers rallied Thursday at The Ranch conference center for the project, called NISP.

They agreed NISP will be needed to keep water that should be used for local businesses and farms from flowing out of state.

"We don't get a thank-you card from Kansas or Nebraska when our water leaves the state," said state Rep. Jerry Sonnenberg, R-Sterling.

The project calls for the Cache La Poudre River to be diverted during high-flow periods to fill two reservoirs, Glade northwest of Fort Collins and Galetton east of Ault. The project is estimated to cost about \$490 million.

NISP is backed by 15 water suppliers and 14 chambers of commerce. They say NISP is needed to bridge an advancing water-supply gap of between 190,000 and 630,000 acre-feet statewide by 2050. One acre-foot of water serves about 2 1/2 families of four for one year.

Several major farm organizations also support NISP. They contend that without NISP, more than 60,000 acres of Colorado farmland could dry up because cities will likely buy up agricultural water rights.

The state cannot afford to wait much longer on protecting its water resources through NISP, said U.S. Rep. Cory Gardner, the keynote speaker at the rally.

"Our state's business development depends on a brighter water future," Gardner said. "Our economy is linked to water. And right now I believe it is high time we stop talking and start working."

NISP is still being studied by the Army Corps of Engineers, which might issue a supplemental draft environmental-impact study by the end of the year.

Environmental groups, including Save the Poudre: Poudre Waterkeeper, have attacked NISP, saying it will damage the Cache La Poudre and cause other environmental problems.

Save the Poudre is touting its Healthy Rivers Alternative, which emphasizes aggressive water conservation programs as a real solution.

"(It's) better for farms and better for the farm economy of northern Colorado," said Gary Wockner of Save the Poudre.

Supporters argue that NISP is the best alternative to provide reliable water in the future, said Weld County Commissioner Sean Conway.

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http://www.denverpost.com/headlines/ci_18101153

reporterherald.com

Loveland Reporter-Herald: May 20, 2011

By Tom Hacker

Loveland rally promotes water storage project

Speaker after speaker at a Thursday rally in support of a regional water storage project made references to the obvious.

They pointed out that the nearly 4 inches of rain that has fallen in Northern Colorado in the past week is all headed for Nebraska and Kansas.

“We don’t get thank-you notes from Kansas and Nebraska,” state Rep. Jerry Sonnenberg, R-Sterling, told an audience of about 200 at the First National Bank Pavilion at The Ranch in Loveland.

“Let’s keep Colorado water in Colorado.”



Rep. Cory Gardner, R-Colo., fires up the faithful at a rally at The Ranch in Loveland on Thursday in support of the Northern Integrated Supply Project, a regional water storage proposal. Reporter-Herald/Tom Hacker

The rally organized by the Northern Colorado Water Conservancy District promoted the Northern Integrated Supply Project, a controversial water storage project.

Backers say it is needed to shore up a regional water supply that demand will outstrip in the next decade, and that failure to build it would doom agriculture.

Critics say it would threaten the free-flowing Cache la Poudre River, degrading water quality and harming wildlife habitat.

But the water-storage faithful ruled on Thursday at “Water, Jobs and the Economy,” a business rally to boost support for NISP.

‘Get it Done’

Featured speaker Rep. Cory Gardner, R-Colo., said that by 2020, water demand in the region will require another project the size of the Colorado-Big Thompson Project, the region’s largest, which began delivering water in the late 1950s.

“It’s time we stop talking and start working,” Gardner said. “Let’s get it done.”

Eric Wilkinson, general manager of the Northern Water agency, warned that the region’s farm and ranch economy would be decimated without NISP.

“The fallback position is the dry-up of irrigated agriculture,” he said. “It would mean the loss of 60,000 acres, or 100 square miles. That’s our heritage. That’s our legacy.”

The NISP plan hinges on diverting a portion of the Poudre River’s flow to fill Glade Reservoir, a proposed 5-mile-long, 260-foot-deep reservoir that would store 170,000 acre-feet of water northwest of Fort Collins.

An acre-foot of water is sufficient to meet the needs of one to two households annually. On hand were the future owners of NISP — 15 municipalities and water districts that have stakes of varying sizes in the project.

Their upfront costs already have been substantial, with more than \$10 million spent on studies since the project was proposed, most of them required to satisfy state and federal regulatory agencies that have criticized the project, Wilkinson said.

“In this regulatory atmosphere, there is a lot more that has to be done than eight years ago,” when the project first was proposed.

‘We Lost It’

Larimer County Commissioner Tom Donnelly said NISP is essential to capture water that is sent downstream each year, most of it during the spring runoff.

“In 2010, the North Platte River Basin saw 600,000 acre-feet of water flowing out of the state,” he said. “We lost it.”

While many of the rally participants urged united — and bipartisan — support for the project, some noted that most elected officials who favor the project are Republicans, and most who

oppose it are Democrats.

“One of the worst things that could happen would be for this project to be about R’s, D’s and other labels,” said Eric Doering, mayor of NISP participant Frederick.

“This project is about people.”

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http://www.reporterherald.com/news_story.asp?ID=32836&pg=2

This article also ran in the Longmont Times-Call.

NISP rally draws supporters

LOVELAND - About 200 business people, farmers, ranchers and government representatives turned out Thursday for a rally to push for the completion of the Northern Integrated Supply Project.

"It's incumbent on each one of us here to get out and make NISP a reality," said Eric Doering, mayor of Frederick, one of 15 cities, towns and water-related entities that have signed up to receive water from the project. NISP includes Glade Reservoir in Larimer County and Galetton Reservoir in Weld County.

"It's going to benefit all of our communities to grow jobs and maintain our ag resources for our farmlands," Doering said.

NISP is proposed by the Northern Colorado Water Conservancy District as a way of ensuring water for future growth in the region while reducing pressure on owners of Northern Colorado farms and ranches to sell off their water rights to municipalities and dry up those farm lands.

Republican Congressman Cory Gardner, representing Colorado's Fourth District, said the NISP project will help ensure continued economic activity in the region. "We have to recognize that jobs and economic development in this state is tied to the ability to store and deliver clean, dependable water," he said.

Eric Wilkinson, Northern Water general manager, said the NISP draft Environmental Impact Statement is under review by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and probably won't be done until early 2012. Wilkinson said that will be followed by public meetings and hearings, with a possible final decision in 2013.

Wilkinson said delays in getting NISP approved have already cost participants about \$10 million to pay for supplemental studies performed in response to criticisms of the project's alleged negative environmental impacts.

Wilkinson said the rally - the third in the last three years - was being held to keep support for the project alive as it continues to slowly move through the approval process.

"It's very important that we have vocal and active support as we go through it," he said. "It's good for jobs, it's good for business, and for the future of this region."

Fort Lupton Press: May 25, 2011

By Gene Sears

NISP proponents rally in Loveland



NCWCD General Manager Eric Wilkerson promotes the advantages of the Northern Integrated Supply Project to a largely pro-NISP crowd in Loveland last week. Fort Lupton Press/Gene Sears

Playing to a standing-room-only crowd at The Ranch in Loveland, U.S. Rep. Cory Gardner, R-Colo., garnered a standing ovation Thursday, all before he uttered a single word.

Pitching water conservation and storage under the auspices of the Northern Colorado Water Conservation District's Northern Integrated Supply Project, Gardner was one of several high profile speakers at the pro-NISP rally promoting the project.

Equating economic longevity with the availability of water, Gardner made the case for a sustainable supply.

"We have to recognize that jobs and economic development across this state are tied to our

ability to store and deliver clean, affordable water. If we are to going move toward a stronger economy, the only way to sustain it long term will be with enough water for our future,” he said.

Opening the rally, NCWCD General Manager Eric Wilkerson petitioned the audience to contact local elected officials and media sources to voice support for the NISP project, a prime goal of the rally effort.

“Really what we need to accomplish today is a vocal support of the Northern Integrated Supply Project,” Wilkerson said, “that this project is needed, and an emphasis that it is supported and necessary for our future.”

Frederick Mayor Eric Doering worked the crowd with the fervor of a Baptist preacher, eliciting more than one “amen” at the conclusion of his high-energy speech.

“It is imperative that we have this water resource available to us,” Doering said. “I said at the ag rally last summer, and I will say it again to you. One of the worst things that can happen is if this project becomes about anything that labels politicians. This is about people. And water is clear, and it runs clear.”

Fifteen communities or water districts, including Fort Lupton, Dacono, Frederick and Firestone, are working with the North Colorado Water Conservancy district to build NISP. As controlling partners, they will share an estimated 40,000-acre-feet of water supplied from a proposed 5-mile long Glade Reservoir filled with water diverted from the Poudre River northwest of Fort Collins and the Galeton Reservoir east of Ault. The water to fill Galeton would be diverted from the South Platte River downstream from Greeley.

Colorado Sen. Mary Hodge, D-Brighton, drew parallels between being pro business, the environment and agriculture by saying support of NISP equals all three.

Espousing the benefits of keeping Colorado water local, Hodge said that the project is key to both conservation and economic development in the region.

Grateful for the rains soaking the state throughout May, state Rep. Jerry Sonnenberg, R-Sterling, said the reservoir plan is essential to preserving the state’s aquatic resources, now lost downstream.

“Unfortunately, much of this water will leave the state,” Sonnenberg said. “And we don’t get a thank you note from Kansas and Nebraska on the water that leaves our state. So what do we have to do? Build storage. We have to be able to keep Colorado water in Colorado.”

Sonnenberg railed against delays in the project, needless stalling he said puts pressure on municipalities to dry up farmland to promote further development.

“When we talk about taking four or five times as long to permit a project than it actually does to build the project, we have serious issues,” Sonnenberg said. “We need to get through that red tape and build that water storage so the target is not on the back of agriculture.”

<http://www.ftluptonpress.com/content/nisp-proponents-rally-loveland>



Associated Press: May 19, 2011

By: Catherine Tsai

Biz leaders, pols back northern Colo. reservoirs

As rain drizzled outside, about 300 business leaders and politicians rallied indoors Thursday to support a plan to build two reservoirs in northern Colorado.

A selection of mayors, state lawmakers and U.S. Rep. Cory Gardner, R-Colo., told supporters at The Ranch in Loveland that the project would help the region's economy and shield farmers' irrigation supplies as demand for drinking water grows, especially during droughts.

The event had been billed as a barbecue, but it was raining, chilly and gray outside. "People in the water community look outside and say this is beautiful weather," said Eric Wilkinson general manager of the Northern Colorado Water Conservancy District.

The district is coordinating the Northern Integrated Supply Project, which would build the Glade Reservoir northwest of Fort Collins and the Galeton Reservoir north of Greeley to serve 15 entities, from the Fort Collins-Loveland Water District to Lafayette to Morgan County.

Glade Reservoir would store up to 170,000 acre-feet of water diverted from the Cache la Poudre River. It would require about seven miles of U.S. 287 between Fort Collins and the Wyoming border to be relocated.

Galeton Reservoir would hold up to 40,000 acre-feet of diversions from the South Platte River to be exchanged with Poudre River water from two irrigation companies.

An acre-foot can serve roughly two households for a year.

The city of Fort Collins is among those that have expressed concerns with the project over the years, and the group Save the Poudre: Poudre Waterkeeper contends it would drain too much of the river. It proposes an alternative that relies heavily on water conservation and a proposal to pay farmers to fallow land on a rotating basis when needed and lease their water to cities.

Third-generation farmer Artie Elmquist of the Frederick area said he supports the project, though, and is most concerned with the time it will take to get it approved. Recent rains have made it difficult to plant corn, but that could easily change, he said. "All of us lived through the 2002 drought and remember planting in the dust, not knowing what you would have come harvest," he said.

The 15 water project participants have paid about \$10 million so far on trying to get a federal permit for it and for related studies. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers plans to release a supplemental draft environmental impact statement on the project this year, with a final decision expected in 2012, Wilkinson said.

Northern Colorado Water Conservancy District spokesman Brian Werner estimated the rally, which included free lunch, cost around \$1,500.

<http://washingtonexaminer.com/news/2011/05/biz-leaders-pols-back-northern-colo-reservoirs>



KUNC: May 19
By Kirk Siegler

Water Project Supporters Rally in Northern Colorado



Congressman Cory Gardner (R-Colo) was among the speakers at a rally in support of the NISP project at the Larimer County Fairground. Photo by Kirk Siegler

Supporters of a large, proposed water storage project in northern Colorado staged what was billed as a jobs and economy rally in Loveland Thursday.

Colorado Republican Congressman Cory Gardner was among the speakers. He said says the Northern Integrated Supply Project, or NISP, would be a boost to the economy of northeastern Colorado.

"We have to recognize that jobs and economic development across this state, are tied to our ability to store and deliver, clean, affordable water," Gardner said.

Gardner said Colorado businesses and farmers are suffering due to a lack of stable water supply in Colorado.

NISP is currently under review by the US Army Corps of Engineers. If approved, the project would divert water from the Poudre River in northern Colorado and then store it in a pair of reservoirs near Fort Collins.

Opponents worry that would have severe ecological impacts on the already-stressed river. The group [Save the Poudre](#) has proposed more conservation and water sharing agreements with farmers as an alternative.

The "Water, Jobs and Economy" rally was organized by [Northern Water](#), which has proposed the project and said conservationists' proposals still won't meet future population demand.

<http://www.kunc.org/post/water-project-supporters-rally-northern-colorado>

Fort Collins Coloradoan: May 19, 2011

By *Cory Gardner*

NISP finally in homestretch

As someone who grew up in a small farm town on the Eastern Plains, I've always been passionate about the issue of water. That probably makes me a bit of an anomaly, and I'm prepared to concede most people don't find water issues as interesting as I do.

But even people who aren't water policy wonks understand water is important and arguably our most valuable resource. Anyone who has lived in Colorado for more than five minutes or ever uttered the phrase "we need the moisture" when it rains will be able to understand where I'm coming from.

Colorado is arid and dry. Water sources are scarce. As one of the fastest-growing states in the nation, with some of the most productive agricultural land in the world, it is critical that we make sure every community in Colorado has access to the water its residents and businesses need. It wouldn't be fair to provide cities and suburbs with water at the expense of farmers or vice versa. It wouldn't be fair for one community to deny another easy and affordable access to clean drinking water.

I strongly believe there is enough water to go around. It is just a matter of planning ahead and managing our water supply and storage appropriately. Without preparing ourselves for future changes in population, Northern Colorado faces environmental and economic disaster.

That is why the Northern Integrated Supply Project, or NISP, is critical to Northern Colorado's future. In fact, it is critical to Colorado's future - because we all grow stronger from each other's success. If our economy is going to expand, it is going to need more water. As we work to attract more jobs to this region, the people who work those jobs are going to need water. If agriculture is to remain vibrant, it, too, must have water.

NISP would construct a water-storage reservoir off stream of the Poudre River and store it in the proposed Glade Reservoir. The project would ensure the river flows year-round by diverting water to the reservoir during periods of high flow and sending water back to the river during periods of low flow.

In addition to protecting and preserving the Poudre River, NISP will help meet the future water needs of the northern Front Range and prevent agricultural dry up in Larimer County.

In fact, there is overwhelming support for the construction of NISP. According to a recent poll, 63 percent of the residents in Larimer County support NISP. A majority of Fort Collins residents - 57 percent - also favor construction of the water-storage reservoir.

Unfortunately, NISP has faced a continuous barrage of attacks and hurdles from opposition that

doesn't understand the region's needs and insists on spreading misinformation. This opposition falsely claims that NISP would hurt agricultural interests in the region, yet NISP has been endorsed by every major agricultural organization in Colorado. If growing urban communities don't get their water from NISP, municipalities will turn to farmers for water, resulting in the dry up and buy up of 60,000-plus acres of farmland.

After a decade of planning, NISP is finally in the homestretch. Please support NISP and ensure that Northern Colorado has the water necessary to accommodate economic growth and remain a top agricultural producer for the United States.

Cory Gardner, a Republican, is the U.S. representative for Colorado's 4th Congressional District.

<http://www.coloradoan.com/article/20110520/OPINION04/105200321/NISP-finally-homestretch?odyssey=mod%7Cnewswell%7Ctext%7CFRONTPAGE%7Cs>

NISP storage will maintain our valuable water supply

My wife and I recently walked the trails along the run-off swollen Poudre River. As we walked, I wondered: How much of this water will be lost because we can't store it?

The water that runs down the Poudre eventually winds up in the Mississippi River, where they don't need more water. However, this water could become very important to our local farmers in the next few years.

The Northern Integrated Supply Project rally, which I attended last week, brought some answers. Larimer County Commissioner Tom Donnelly told the crowd that, during the past two years, 600,000 acre feet of water left Colorado for points east. This year's snowpack is record-setting; the loss of water will be one of the biggest in history. To put things in perspective, Horsetooth Reservoir holds 156,000 acre feet of water. Adding this year's run off, enough water will have gone down the river to fill Horsetooth eight or nine times. That is an incredible amount of water to waste.

It seems very simple to me. Storage is the best way to conserve water.

Storage dams also provide protection from floods that can increase sediment and harm the ecology of the river. In order to avoid a dam on the main stem of the Poudre, the 15 organizations that are working with Northern Water to build NISP decided to construct the reservoir off stream and fill it with water that is diverted from the river during high run-off years. That plan has many environmental benefits, but the bottom line is, NISP will not dam (or damn) the Poudre.

So, what happens if the seemingly misinformed opponents of NISP get their way and stop the project? It is our farmers who will suffer.

The truth is, there is enough water available right now to provide for the anticipated long term growth in the area. The problem is that most of that water is now used for agriculture. Residential and industrial users can afford to pay far more for water than farmers.

Think how sad it would be to see the beautiful surrounding farm and ranch land go dry, and for us to lose the locally raised meat, produce and dairy that we love. In order to get water for municipal and industrial uses, 60,000 acres of farmland would "dry-up" as that water is purchased to quench the thirst of our children and grandchildren.

Grandchildren? Yes, our grandchildren!

During the NISP rally, former state legislator and economic development guru Don Marostica pointed out that the birth rate will almost double the death rate in Colorado in the next 50 years. Even if no one moves here during that time - don't count on it - our population will still increase significantly and our kids and grandkids will need water.

That brings me to the subject of water conservation. We live in a desert and we rely on melting snow as our major water source. To further complicate the situation, snow levels in the mountains vary considerably as we experience wet and dry periods.

The solution is to conserve water when we have it so we will have some set aside for a not-so-rainy day. After all, isn't that what good stewardship and conservation are all about?

John Clarke is a former commissioner, former City Council member, photographer and 600 KCOL host.

<http://www.coloradoan.com/article/20110524/COLUMNISTS56/105240308>