

MAR 30 1984

Subject: Narrows Project, South Platte River, Morgan  
County, Colorado

Irrigationists Association opposes funding for the  
"Narrows" Project.

Irrigationists Association is a non-profit organization composed of 15 Irrigation Ditches and Irrigation Systems located in District I of the South Platte Basin and serves 100,000 acres of irrigated land. Water District I encompasses the area on the main-stem of the South Platte River beginning near the confluence of the Poudre River with the South Platte River and extends downstream thru Morgan County into Logan County. Every year this area generally diverts two-thirds of the total flow of the entire South Platte River for irrigation purposes.

The 1983 Definite Plan Report, Narrows Project, Bureau of Reclamation, states that the project would supply 108,000 acre feet of irrigation water annually, but does not address the economic and social impact that the loss of well augmentation water used annually for well augmentation, in the South Platte Basin, will have on Northeastern Colorado. Currently member ditches and irrigation systems along with individual irrigators of Water District I are using more than 100,000 acre feet of water from the South Platte River for well augmentation annually. Upstream from Water District I an additional 40,000 acre feet of water from the South Platte River is used for the same purpose.

At present, this water is available for well augmentation with no cost other than that incurred in the actual diversion and delivery process.

Colorado water law provides for the diversion of water from the various rivers by the priority system which, in effect, states that the water right with the earliest date of adjudication shall receive its entire decreed amount before a water right with a later date of adjudication may intercept or receive any water.

If "Narrows" is built, these Irrigators practicing well augmentation will lose this water because the huge Conditional Decree for "Narrows" of 700,000 acre feet of water annually, with an adjudication date of 1957, will be senior to that of the well augmentation. Therefore, those practicing well augmentation would be forced to purchase this amount of water from the Narrows Project, in order to continue their current operations. At the Bureau's suggested price of \$15 per acre foot of water, these pump irrigators would have to pay \$2,100,000 annually, to

the Narrows Project, for the same amount of water they now receive for diversion costs only.

Please refer to the attached copy of a letter from the Bureau of Reclamation which substantiates the above statement.

Subtract the loss inflicted upon well augmentation annually from the supposed benefits of the Narrows Project ---the cost---benefit ratio is negative.

The Augmentation Plans and procedures have developed within the fourteen years past, through the cooperative efforts of the Irrigators, the Colorado State Engineer and the Water Court, have improved the efficiency and extended the use of existing water structures and facilities; and with a minimum of increased cost; and generally, have supplied the increased water needs of the irrigated areas; and at a price the irrigator can afford to pay.

The Addendum No. 2 to the Narrows Project Definite Plan Report, Bureau of Reclamation 1983 includes several subscribers for water from the Narrows Project. Regardless of the number of subscribers to date, there are no binding agreements or commitments signed to purchase a specific quantity of water.

Again refer to the attached letter wherein the Bureau of Reclamation verifies this fact.

The Irrigationists Association is convinced and maintains that binding contracts for the purchase of "Narrows" water have not and will not be signed in the foreseeable future.

The adverse impact of the Narrows Project, as presently planned on the current irrigation of Northeastern Colorado, is enormous. The Narrows Conditional Decree was and is a mistake. It has slowed and to a large degree, inhibited development of the waters of the South Platte River. The Irrigators of Water District I and of the entire south Platte Basin must not be penalized for progressively and efficiently applying the waters of the South Platte River to beneficial use.

The Narrows project must be deauthorized in order that worthy water projects in the South Platte Basin may move forward, without interrupting current practices, systems, policies and projects that have been developed on the local and regional level the past fourteen years, and which have proved themselves successful and efficient in both cost and use.

Future development of the waters of the South Platte River and its tributaries must be in such manner that will benefit ALL of Northeastern Colorado.

The Narrows Project has been funded by some source of tax revenue for 45 years and is still no closer to being built now than it was then. Not only are millions of federal tax monies being used, but local people have been taxed over 2 million dollars, through the formation of the Lower South Platte Water Conservancy District some 20 years ago. We have been told of all the benefits that the Narrows Unit will do for the State, the people and agriculture. If it was built now at the cost of 410 million (new estimate by the Bureau of Reclamation), the water available for sale would be so high that the project could never be paid for by agriculture or municipal users.

The Lower South Platte Water Conservancy District was formed for the purpose of providing an entity through which construction of the Narrows could be coordinated. After some two decades of frustration, caused by the lack of support of the people in the district because of damages that the Narrows Decree would cause to existing water rights and water management policies, the Lower South Platte Water Conservancy's District main purpose and policy has become that of objecting or fighting all and any kind of new studies, augmentation, construction, or any beneficial projects of the South Platte River Basin that are being started.

The anticipation of the construction of the Narrows is causing more hardships on the economic welfare of the area than the Narrows will provide benefits. The State of Colorado, ditch systems, private users, agriculture, municipal and industrial development have been working to provide and protect existing water rights and uses of the South Platte River through new off-stream storage and new studies for potential development of the total South Platte Basin. They are being hindered by all the controversy and hard feelings that have been created over the past years by the Bureau of Reclamation and the Lower South Platte Water Conservancy District through the Narrows Project.

We feel that it is the responsibility of every citizen to pursue development of our very precious natural resource, the water of the South Platte River, but this can only be done with an open mind and the cooperation of everyone.

Conservation of the water of the South Platte River can be and must be accomplished, not only by "on-stream" storage, but by off-stream storage, augmentation programs, better well pumping conservation practices, new management policies, and new ideas and programs that can be funded and implemented by state and local entities.

The hardships that the extremely protracted construction period of the Narrows has had on the people living within the project area could be stopped by the deauthorization of this

project so new avenues could be investigated and implemented.

Monies that have been and will be funded to the Bureau of Reclamation for preliminary construction studies of the Narrows Unit, could be put to much better use by the State and local levels for studies of new and better use of the South Platte River Basin water.

Also, the deauthorization of the Narrows Project would cause the policies and direction of management and leadership of the Lower South Platte Water Conservancy District to change so that all people of the District can be represented and not just a few selected ones.

Big Horn Irrigation District  
Lawrence F. Tomkey - President

*Western Slope and direction  
Department of Public*

Paul Snyder Improvement Co.  
E. L. Casanova, Pres.

*Lower South Platte District  
Department of Public*

Flatside Irrigation District  
E. L. Casanova, President

Big Horn Irrigation Co.  
Jacob Kosman Jr. President

Weldon Valley Ditch Co.  
Maurice Jones President

Riverside Reservoir and Land Co.  
Glen A. Christensen, President

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*Paterson*