

# *Northern Integrated Supply Project*

**Larimer and Weld Counties Polls**

**Ciruli Associates**

**August 2008**

# Survey Facts

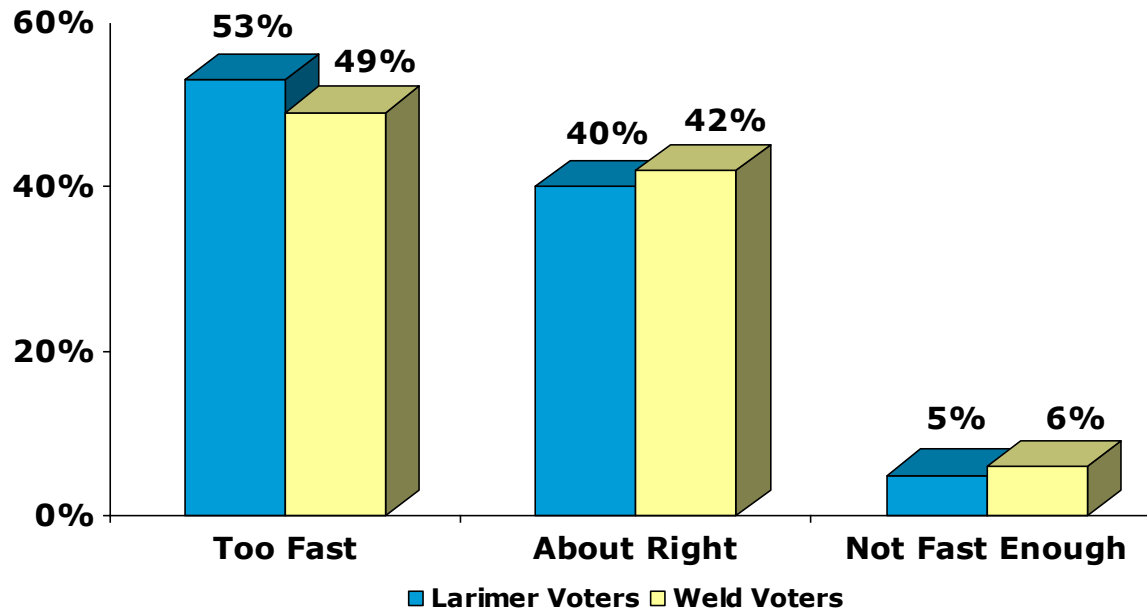
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- Poll sponsored by consortium of water providers proposing the Northern Integrated Supply Project
- Conducted by Ciruli Associates
- Date in field: Larimer: August 8-11, 2008; Weld: August 11-14, 2008
- Telephone poll of 500 Larimer County and 300 Weld County registered voters
- Statistical margin of error is: Larimer sample –  $\pm 4.4$  percentage points in 95 out of 100 cases and Weld sample –  $\pm 5.7$  percentage points

# Growth and Direction of Counties

- Right direction: 64% Larimer; 59% Weld

## Growth Too Fast for About Half of Voters



Ciruli Associates, N500, N300, 2008

*Questions: Thinking about Larimer (Weld) County, would you say the area is growing too fast, about the right amount or not growing fast enough?*

*Generally, would you say things in Larimer (Weld) County are going in the right direction, or do you feel things here have gotten pretty seriously off on the wrong track?*

# Rating Local Government and U.S. Corps

- Local water service excellent/good: 85% Larimer; 72% Weld

## Organization Favorability With Ratio

<u>Organization</u>	<u>Total Favorable</u>	<u>Total Unfavorable</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Ratio Pos. to Neg.</u>
Larimer County	73%	11%	16%	+6.6
Weld County	66	13	21	+5.0
Fort Collins	59	17	24	+3.5
Northern – Larimer	52	10	38	+5.2
Greeley	49	21	30	+2.3
Northern – Weld	47	15	38	+3.1
Corps – Weld	41	8	51	+5.1
Corps – Larimer	39	11	51	+3.5

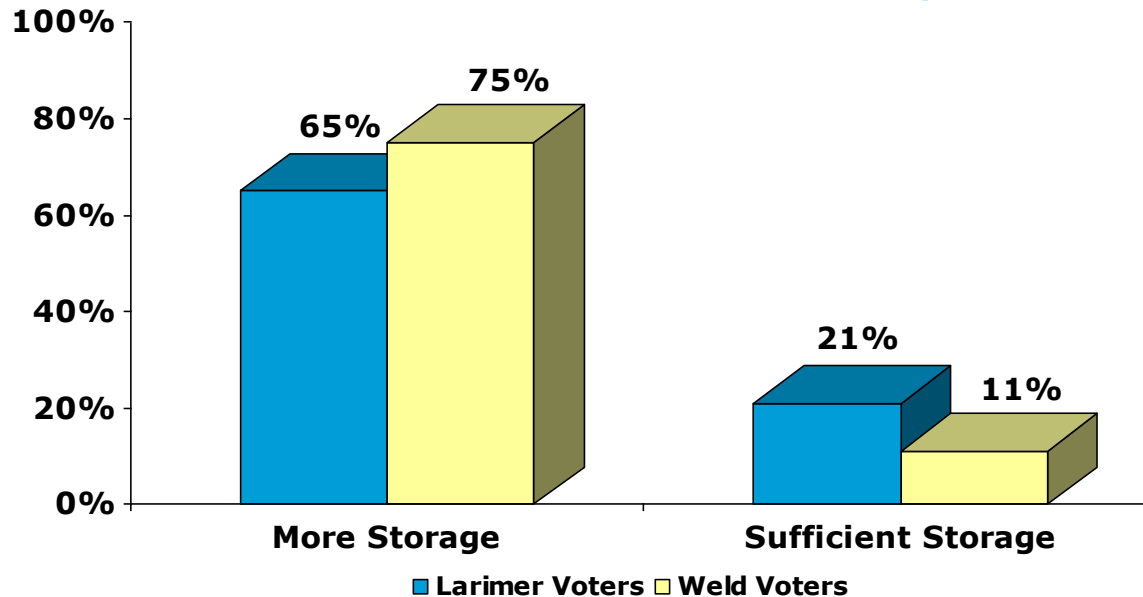
Ciruli Associates, N500, N300, 2008

*Question: As I read the following list of organizations and divisions of government, please tell me your impression of each one as either very favorable, somewhat favorable, somewhat unfavorable or very unfavorable. If you aren't familiar with an organization or don't have an opinion, just say so. [Rotated]*

# Water Supply, Drought and Storage

- Still in drought: 70% Larimer; 73% Weld
- Water shortage in 10 years: 65% Larimer; 71% Weld

## Support for More Storage



Ciruli Associates, N500, N300, 2008

Questions: *Thinking about drought, do you believe we are still in a drought or do you believe the drought has ended?*

*In the next 10 years, do you believe the supply of water to residents in northern Colorado will be adequate or do you believe there will be a shortage of water?*

*In general, do you believe northern Colorado needs more water storage capacity or does it have sufficient storage?*

# Most Important Water Issue

## Top Ten Water Issues in Area

<u>Issues</u>	<u>Larimer</u>	<u>Weld</u>
Water conservation/saving supplies	22%	14%
Water shortage	20	17
More storage	9	6
Glade Reservoir	8	1
Losing water to other areas (Aurora/Denver metro area)	6	6
Drinking water quality/good-tasting water	6	5
Growth in area	6	4
Drought	4	3
Water for agriculture	3	24
Poudre River water quality	3	3

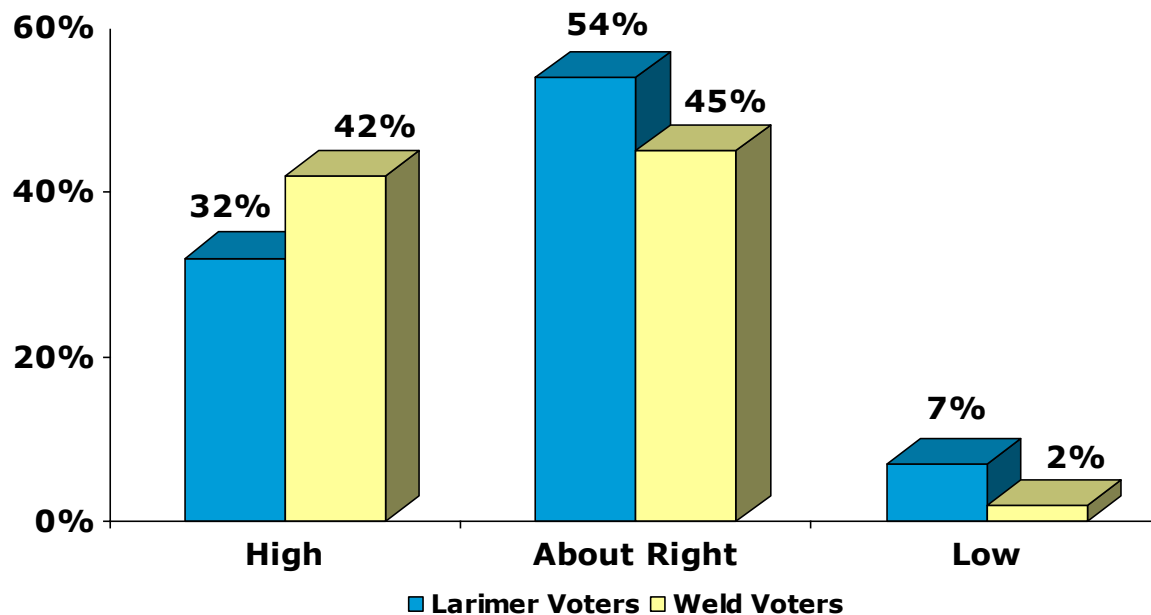
Ciruli Associates, N500, N300, 2008

*Question: Turning our attention to water issues, what do you think are the most important water issues in Larimer (Weld) County? [Multiple answers]*

# Cost of Local Water

- Quality of drinking water excellent: 58% Larimer; 36% Weld

## Cost of Water About Right



Ciruli Associates, N500, N300, 2008

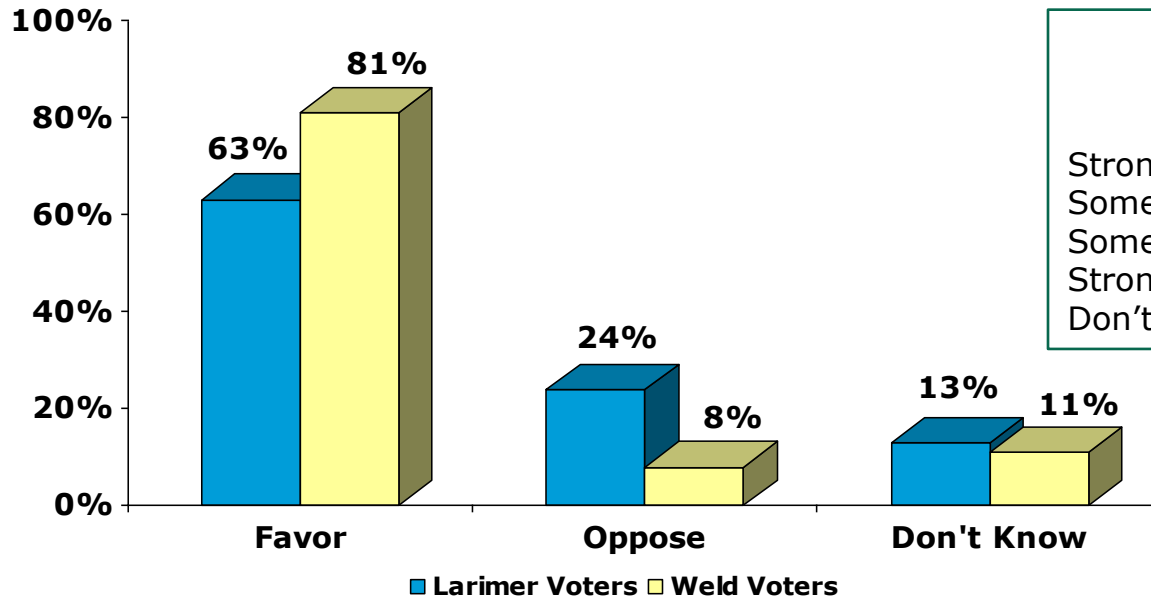
Questions: *Would you describe the cost of your water as very high, high, about right, low or very low? [Alternate]*

*Considering water quality, would you describe the overall quality of your drinking water as excellent, good, fair or poor? [Alternate]*

# Support for NISP

- Awareness of NISP high: 52% Larimer; 28% Weld “great deal”/“some information”
- Favor: 57% Fort Collins; 82% Greeley “strongly”/“somewhat favor”

## NISP Has Support of Majority of Voters



	<u>Larimer</u>	<u>Weld</u>
Strongly favor	28%	39%
Somewhat favor	35	42
Somewhat oppose	11	6
Strongly oppose	13	2
Don't know	13	11

Ciruli Associates, N500, N300, 2008

*Question: NISP has been proposed by 15 water providers in northern Colorado who would build two new water storage reservoirs, called Glade in Larimer County and Galeton in Weld County, and associated pump stations and pipelines. The project's primary purpose is to store excess runoff for use by cities and towns. The project is currently being studied by the U.S. Corps of Engineers in an environmental impact process. Based on what you know at this time, would you say you strongly favor the project, somewhat favor, somewhat oppose or strongly oppose the project?*

# Why Favor/Oppose NISP

## Top Reasons for Favoring or Opposing NISP

<u>Reason</u>	<u>Favor</u>	
	Larimer (63%)	Weld (81%)
Need the water	43%	49%
Need storage	36	32
Area growing	14	9
Water supply must be managed	6	4
Good project	5	7
Save/protect agriculture	2	3

<u>Reason</u>	<u>Oppose</u>	
	Larimer (24%)	Weld (8%)
Dry up the river/ hurt river	44%	28%
Hurts the environment	13	12
Unnecessary	11	--
Inadequate plan	10	--
Will encourage growth	6	--
Stop building dams/ reservoirs	5	16

Ciruli Associates, N500, N300, 2008

Question: IF A PERSON FAVORS OR IS OPPOSED, ASK: Why do you (favor/oppose) the NISP project? [Multiple answers]

# Demographics of Support and Opposition for NISP

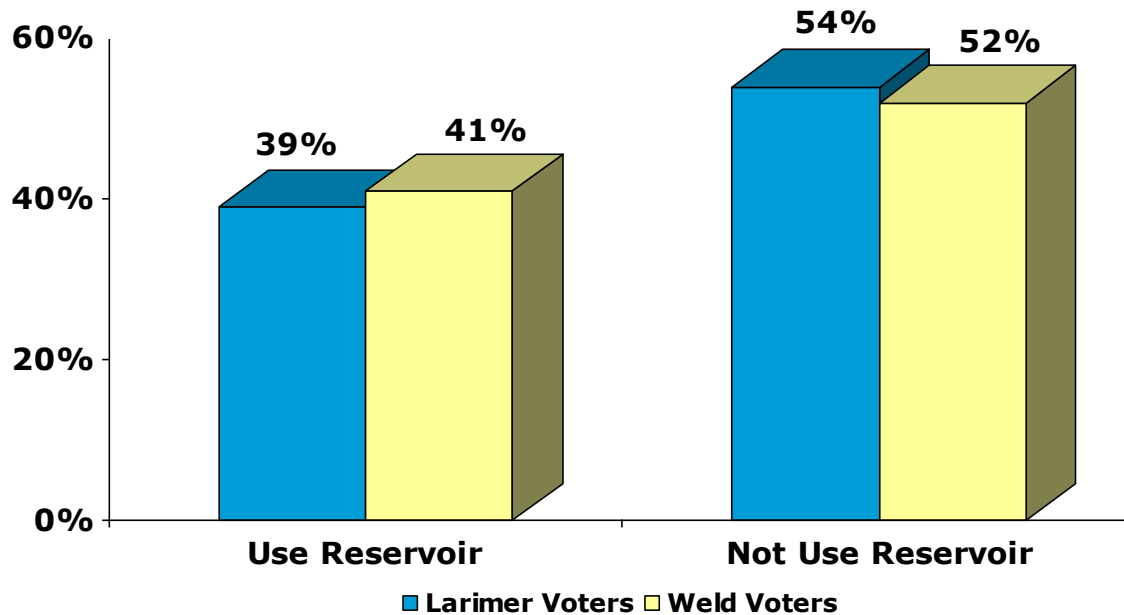
<u>Larimer</u>		
<u>Factor</u>	<u>Support</u>	<u>Oppose</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>63%</b>	<b>24%</b>
High school or less	70%	16%
Some college	64	18
College	65	24
Post college	56	33
Democrat	57%	32%
Unaffiliated	61	25
Republican	71	15
Fort Collins	57%	30%
Loveland	75	13
Unincorporated	57	30

<u>Weld</u>		
<u>Factor</u>	<u>Support</u>	<u>Oppose</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>81%</b>	<b>8%</b>
High school or less	82%	10%
Some college	86	4
College	82	6
Post college	73	16
Democrat	83%	9%
Unaffiliated	71	11
Republican	86	6
Greeley	82%	9%
Windsor	81	5
Evans	84	11
Unincorporated	82	11

# Recreation on Glade Reservoir and Poudre River

- One-third of Larimer voters claim to raft Poudre River Canyon
- Picnicked Poudre River: 73% Larimer; 53% Weld

## Will Use Glade Reservoir for Recreation



Ciruli Associates, N500, N300, 2008

Questions: *If Glade Reservoir is built, do you believe you will use it for recreation?*

*Have you rafted in the Poudre River Canyon?*

*Have you picnicked or hiked along the Poudre River in the City of Fort Collins (in Weld County)?*

# NISP Policy Statements

## Combination of Strongly and Somewhat Agree

<u>Policy Statements</u>	<u>Total Agree</u>	
	<u>Larimer</u>	<u>Weld</u>
Maintain open space and farm economy	93%	98%
Northern/others work to protect supply/quality	93	93
Don't sell water to Denver metro area	89	91
Avoid farm dry up	88	92
Poudre River multi-purpose	83	74
Colorado-Big Thompson good	74	78
NISP is good regional cooperation	73	82
Glade good for drought protection	71	85

Ciruli Associates, N500, N300, 2008

*Question: The following statements are some policy issues discussed about the NISP project. As I read the statements, please tell me if you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree or strongly disagree with the idea. [Rotated]*

# NISP Policy Statements (continued)

## Combination of Strongly and Somewhat Agree

<u>Policy Statements</u>	<u>Total Agree</u>	
	<u>Larimer</u>	<u>Weld</u>
Provide water for Anheuser-Busch/others	79%	--
Pay extra for Poudre River flow	66	--
Good Glade is off-stream	64	--
Glade Reservoir new recreation area	61	--
Glade good for water management	61	--
NISP improves winter flows	56	--
NISP will not impact Poudre Canyon flows	36	--

Ciruli Associates, N500, N300, 2008

*Question: The following statements are some policy issues discussed about the NISP project. As I read the statements, please tell me if you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree or strongly disagree with the idea. [Rotated]*

# Policy Choice Questions

## Agriculture, Conservation and River Dry-up

<u>Choice</u>	<u>Larimer</u>	<u>Weld</u>
Agriculture not sustainable/sell water (A)	10%	9%
Agriculture is sustainable/keep water (B)	84	89
Don't know	6	3
Conservation enough (C)	20%	10%
Conservation not enough/need storage (D)	73	87
Don't know	7	3
NISP not dry up Poudre (E)	49%	50%
NISP will dry up Poudre (F)	23	12
Don't know	27	39

Ciruli Associates, N500, N300, 2008

*Question: As I read the following statements, please tell me which statement comes closest to your personal beliefs on the topic. Also, please tell me whether it is much closer to your personal beliefs than the other statement or somewhat closer to your personal beliefs. [Rotated between the first statement and second statement]*

*[READ FOLLOW-UP AS NEEDED: And would you say that the statement is much closer to your personal beliefs than the other statement or only somewhat closer?]*

# Water Supply Policy

## Combination of Strongly and Somewhat Agree

<u>Policy Statements</u>	<u>Total Support</u>	
	<u>Larimer</u>	<u>Weld</u>
Develop conservation/reuse programs	93%	94%
Water storage for agriculture	87	94
Storage to keep water	87	95
Storage for drought	87	95
Develop future residential supply	77	86

Ciruli Associates, N500, N300, 2008

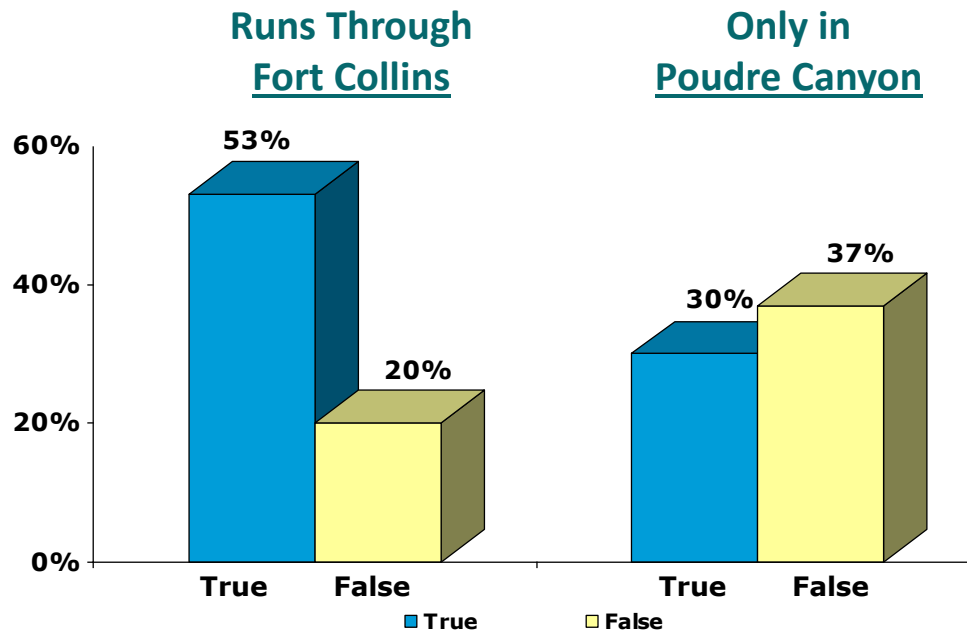
*Question: The following questions concern water supply and planning issues for the next 50 years, or through 2060. As I read the following list of policies, please tell me if you strongly support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose or strongly oppose the policy. [Rotated]*

*READ: Northern Colorado water providers should...*

# Knowledge of Water Facts

- One-third of voters don't know the Colorado-Big Thompson's contribution to Poudre River flows

## Larimer Voters Confused on Wild and Scenic



Ciruli Associates, N500, N300, 2008

*Questions: More than half of the water in the Poudre River flows from the Colorado-Big Thompson project, which brings water from the Western Slope and to the northern Front Range.*

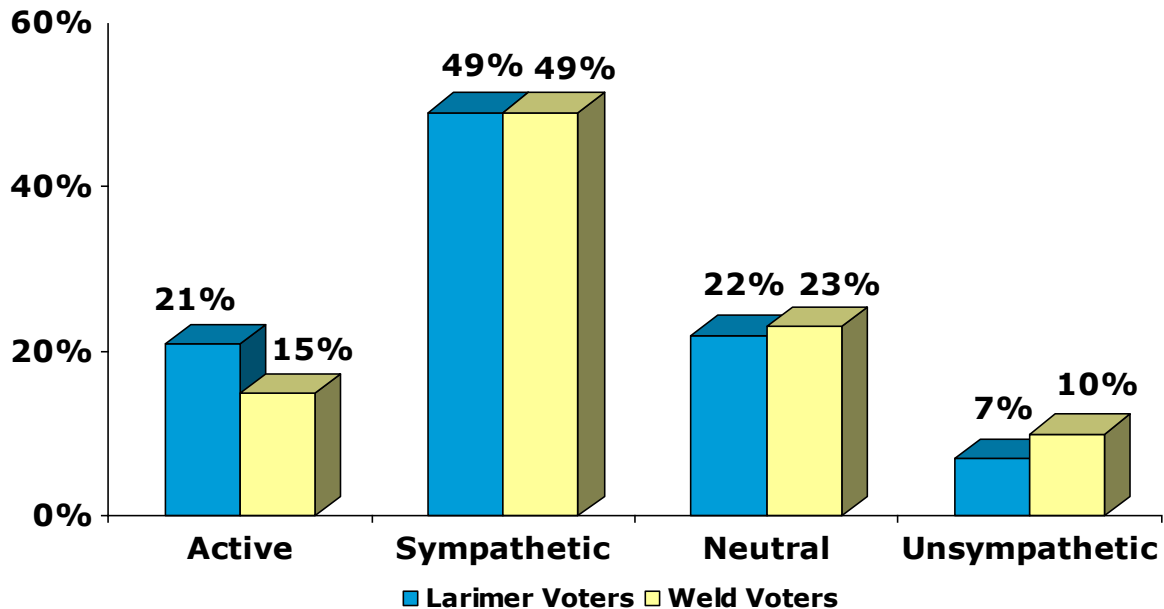
*The Poudre River wild and scenic designation runs all the way through the City of Fort Collins.*

*The Poudre River wild and scenic designation is located entirely within the Poudre Canyon.*

# Environmental Movement

- Most residents active or sympathetic to environmental movement

## Near Majority of Voters are Sympathetic



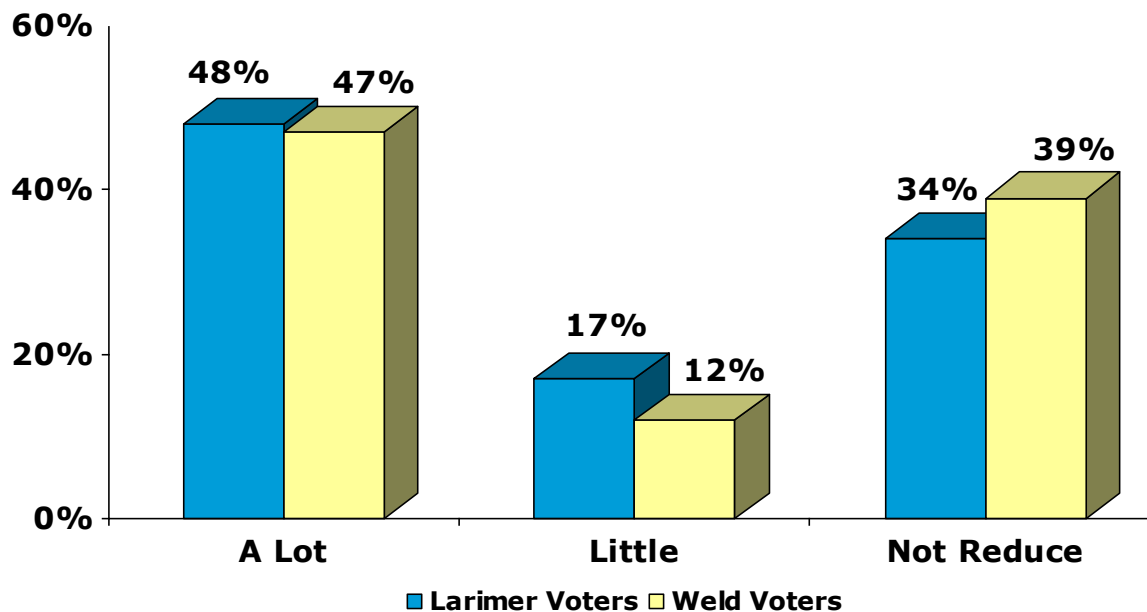
Ciruli Associates, N500, N300, 2008

*Question: Thinking specifically about the environmental movement, do you consider yourself an active participant in the environmental movement, sympathetic toward the movement, but not active, neutral, or unsympathetic toward the environmental movement?*

# Water Usage Reduction

- Why reducing water usage: drought, right thing to do, lower bill

## *How much reduction in water usage...?*



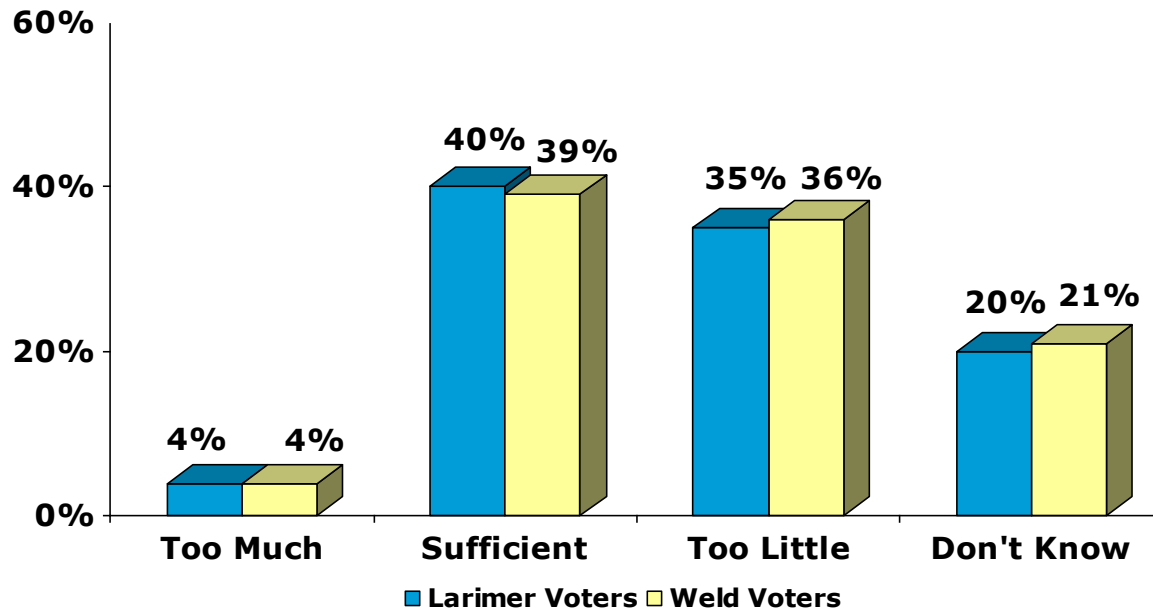
Ciruli Associates, N500, N300, 2008

*Question: The next few questions concern water conservation. In the last two years would you say you have significantly reduced your water usage, somewhat reduced your water usage, lightly reduced your water usage, are using about the same amount of water or are using more water? [Alternated]*

# Water Conservation Goals

- Plurality believe conservation sufficient, but one-third believe too little

## *Right amount of action to deal with water conservation...?*



Ciruli Associates, N500, N300, 2008

*Question: In general, would you say the local water provider is taking sufficient action to deal with conservation of the water supply, is taking too much action or is taking too little action on conserving water?*

# Water Conservation Action

## Combination of Strongly and Somewhat Agree

<u>Conservation Action</u>	<u>Total Agree</u>	
	<u>Larimer</u>	<u>Weld</u>
Public education	89%	89%
Variable rates	80	71
Water regulations	74	80
Limit lawns	72	78
Increase tap fees	60	60

Ciruli Associates, N500, N300, 2008

*Question: The following are a series of actions for conserving the water supply. As I read you a list of possible activities, please tell me if you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree or strongly disagree with the action. [Rotated]*

# Sample Description

	<u>Party ID</u>		<u>Born Out of County</u>	
	<u>Larimer</u>	<u>Weld</u>		
Republican	38%	43%	Move from in-state	38% 60%
Unaffiliated	27	22	Another state	59 38
Democrat	33	34	Another country	2 2

	<u>Ideology</u>		<u>Education</u>	
	<u>Larimer</u>	<u>Weld</u>	<u>Larimer</u>	<u>Weld</u>
Liberal	35%	19%	High school or less	19% 31%
Middle	24	30	Some college	18 24
Conservative	38	48	College	36 28
			Post college	25 15

	<u>Time in County</u>		<u>Residence</u>	
	<u>Larimer</u>	<u>Weld</u>	<u>Larimer</u>	<u>Weld</u>
Less than 5 years	14%	12%	Fort Collins	60%
5-10 years	15	21	Loveland	25
11-20 years	20	16	Unincorporated	7
More than 20 years	42	36	Greeley	42%
Native	8	15	Evans	6
			Windsor	7
			Unincorporated	9

# Conclusions

- Most residents are satisfied with Larimer's and Weld's direction. But about one-half are concerned about growth.
  - 53% growth too fast – Larimer; 40% about right
  - 49% growth too fast – Weld; 42% about right
- Local government is favorably thought of among local residents.
  - Larimer and Weld county governments are highly rated, with more than 5 to 1 positive to negative ratio
  - More than one-third are not familiar with Northern Water, but it has a positive ratio
  - More than one-half don't know the Corps of Engineers
  - Greeley and Fort Collins have positive ratios, but higher negatives
- Most residents believe the drought continues, water shortages threaten area and more storage is needed.
  - Still in drought: 70% Larimer; 73% Weld
  - Water shortage in 10 years: 65% Larimer; 71% Weld
  - Need more storage: 65% Larimer; 75% Weld

# Conclusions (continued)

- Top water issues: water conservation, water shortage and water for agriculture.
  - Water conservation: 22% Larimer; 14% Weld
  - Water shortage: 20% Larimer; 17% Weld
  - Water for agriculture: 3% Larimer; 24% Weld
- Most residents believe the cost of water is about right and service and quality is excellent or good.
  - Weld residents are more concerned about cost, service and quality
- NISP has considerable public awareness (“great deal”/“some information”) and support among residents (“strongly” and “somewhat” favor).
  - 52% awareness – Larimer; 63% favor the project; 24% oppose
  - 28% awareness – Weld; 81% favor the project; 8% oppose

# Conclusions (continued)

- Need for water and storage are top reasons for support, with growth a factor. Opposition concerned about impact on Poudre River, the environment, the necessity and the plan.
- Residents use river for recreation and relaxation. Many will use Glade Reservoir.
  - 73% picnic Poudre River – Larimer; 53% Weld
  - 33% raft Poudre River Canyon – Larimer
  - 39% will use Glade Reservoir – Larimer; 41% Weld
- NISP major policy themes highlighted. Major agreement with:
  - Protecting agriculture, farm economy and open space
  - Cooperation on water issues among communities
  - Protecting northern Colorado water for local purposes
  - Water management aspects of Poudre River and Big Thompson
  - Water management, drought protection and recreation aspects of Glade Reservoir
  - Less agreement and less firm opinion about Poudre River flows

# Conclusions (continued)

- When offered a choice, the public prefers:
  - Sustain agriculture and keep water: 84% Larimer; 89% Weld
  - Conservation not enough, need storage: 73% Larimer; 87% Weld
  - NISP will not dry up Poudre: 49% Larimer; 50% Weld
- Water supply policy main themes. Significant support for:
  - Develop conservation/reuse programs: 93% Larimer; 94% Weld
  - Storage for agriculture: 87% Larimer; 94% Weld
  - Storage to keep water in area and for drought: 87% Larimer; 95% Weld
  - Supply for residential growth: 77% Larimer; 86% Weld
- Public has formed opinions on water policy, but:
  - One-third not aware of Colorado-Big Thompson water contribution to Poudre River flows: 34% Larimer; 38% Weld
  - There is confusion on location of wild and scenic designation among Larimer residents

# Conclusions (continued)

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- About one-fifth of residents are active in environmental movement, and about one-half are sympathetic.
- About one-half of residents in both counties have significantly or somewhat reduced their water usage last two years.
  - Drought, correct behavior and lowering the bill was main motivation
  - One-third believe there should be more conservation action from water providers. Two-fifths believe local conservation action is sufficient.
  - Public supports public education, variable rates, water regulations and lawn limits for conservation. They are more cautious on tap fee increases.