

# Backers expect U.S. verdict next year on reservoirs

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A controversial water storage project proposed for northern Colorado probably will be delayed because it hasn't received a go-ahead from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Officials with the Northern Colorado Water Conservancy District had hoped to get a permit from the corps to start construction of the Northern Integrated Supply Project this year.

But a decision on the project probably won't be made until mid- to late 2009, said Brian Werner, spokesman for the water district. He said such delays are not unusual.

"These things always take longer than you originally thought," Werner said. "We now are looking at 2009 for a decision."

The project, known as NISP, will be designed and built by the water district. It is projected to be a \$420 million undertaking that calls for the construction of two reservoirs. Glade Reservoir, north of Fort Collins, and the Galeton Reservoir, east of Ault, would supply 40,000 acre-feet of water to 15 municipalities and water districts across northern Colorado.

Several agricultural and farm groups, as well as the Greeley Chamber of Commerce, are backing NISP. But it's also drawn the ire of environmental groups, including the Save the Poudre Coalition, claiming the diversion of peak spring and summer flows from the Cache la Poudre River could damage parkland and wildlife habitat.

In September, the Fort Collins City Council voted to oppose NISP, saying construction would force Fort Collins to pay more than \$200 million to upgrade the city's drinking water and wastewater facilities.

Werner said that despite the delay, Glade Reservoir is still scheduled to receive water by 2016.

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