

CDOT OKs "rock cut" reroute of U.S. 287 for Glade reservoir project

By Monte Whaley *The Denver Post* *The Denver Post*

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About 5 miles of U.S. 287 north of Ted's Place in Larimer County will be rerouted through some local landmarks as part of a controversial proposed \$490 million dual dam project.

Backers of the [Northern Integrated Supply Project](#) say the Colorado Department of Transportation has approved the so-called "rock cut route" for U.S. 287 if the two dams are built.

NISP calls for the Cache La Poudre River to be diverted during high-flow periods to fill Glade Reservoir northwest of Fort Collins and Galeton, east of Ault.

The new 7-mile route will send traffic through the decommissioned Holcim cement plant — just north of the intersection of Overland Trail Road and U.S. 287 — then go west through the hogback ridge and back to the existing route the north end of Glade Reservoir, Northern Water spokesman Brian Werner said.

The new route will cut about 2 miles from the current alignment, Werner said. Passing lanes will also be built as will a new intersection at U.S. 287 and Colorado 14 at [Ted's Place](#) — a renowned convenience store for motorists heading to Wyoming.

The highway north of Ted's Place is considered one of the most [dangerous roadways in the United States](#) and a new intersection will help increase safety, Werner said.

"People lose their lives there and if we move forward with this project, this will help from the safety standpoint," Werner said.

The second, or northern route, is slightly longer and would continue north and tie in with Owl Canyon Road, County Road 72, before returning to the current alignment.

Either route would cost about \$40 million, which will be included in the total price of the reservoir project, Werner said.

The project still has major hurdles to cross, including a supplemental draft Environmental Impact Statement being conducted by the Army Corps of Engineers that is likely to be released in the first half of 2014.

Public hearings will follow and a final decision on the entire project will probably arrive in 2016, Werner said.

NISP is supported by several municipalities and farming groups who say it will conserve valuable water that otherwise would flow out of state.

But environmental groups say NISP will cause heavy damage to the Poudre River and surrounding areas.

Gary Wockner, executive director of the activist group Save The Poudre, said the road alignment is almost a non-issue since NISP's problems will stop it from being built.

"Because the dam/reservoir project will drain and destroy the Poudre River, the project will never be built," Wockner said, "and this road never constructed, so where CDOT chooses to place a non-existent road is arbitrary."

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