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Glade project heats up

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Controversy over the proposed Glade Reservoir and its impact on the Poudre River has simmered in recent months after boiling for much of the year.

All sides in the debate over Glade, which would be part of the Northern Integrated Supply Project, or NISP, are waiting to learn what the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers plans to do with a draft Environmental Impact Statement for the project.

The Corps issued the draft EIS in late April. The massive document looked at four alternatives for the proposed project, which would supply water to 15 regional municipalities and water districts.

The alternative preferred by the Northern Colorado Water Conservancy District and participating entities includes Glade, which would be built north of Ted's Place.

Glade would be about the size of Horsetooth Reservoir. It would draw from the Poudre.

While proponents of the project said the draft EIS showed NISP's environmental impacts could be mitigated, the document drew sharp criticism from local governments as well as environmentalist groups steadfastly opposed to NISP's construction.

An analysis of the project paid for by the city of Fort Collins found decreased flows in the Poudre would severely impact the river through town. The city called for further analysis of the project through a supplemental draft EIS.

The Corps has not indicated when it might release a final EIS for the project or whether it will write a supplemental report, said John Stokes, director of the Fort Collins Natural Resources Department. Corps officials did not return phone calls or e-mails seeking comment.

The most vocal opponent of NISP, the Save the Poudre Coalition, has called on the Corps to completely redo the EIS. The group offered its own alternative, which includes storing water in aquifers.

Northern Water spokesman Brian Werner said NISP is a viable project and can be managed to mitigate its environmental impacts. "The bottom line is Northern Colorado still needs the water," he said. "We think the region looks better with NISP than without NISP."

Comments issued by the Environmental Protection Agency repeated many of the issues raised by the city and some state agencies.

Additional Facts

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