

Group: Glade Reservoir could drain 700 acres of wetlands along Poudre River

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Building Glade Reservoir could drain about 700 acres of wetlands along the Poudre River, environmental group Save the Poudre wrote in a letter to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in December.

The proposed Northern Integrated Supply Project, or NISP, would siphon water from the Poudre River during high flows and store it in the planned Glade Reservoir north of Fort Collins for use by cities and farms.

The Army Corps is in the process of revising its environmental impact analysis of NISP, expected to be released sometime in the next year.

Save the Poudre conducted a study of possible wetland losses if water were diverted from the Poudre River to Glade Reservoir, concluding about 700 acres of wetlands would be drained and up to 2,170 acres of riparian acres would be harmed.

“When the water is higher, there’s more water going out to the land beside it,” said Save the Poudre Executive Director Gary Wockner. “When the water’s lower, there’s less water going out to the land beside it. When you drain the water, you also drain the wetlands.”

Wockner said wetlands along the Poudre River Trail through Fort Collins would be lost, taking wildlife habitat along with it.

Brian Werner, spokesman for Northern Water, which is in charge of building NISP, said the Army Corps is studying NISP’s impact to riparian areas in its environmental review of the project.

Northern Water is confident that the number of acres of wetlands harmed by the project will be less than those Save the Poudre has projected, he said.

“The magnitude of the impact that they’re projecting — we haven’t seen numbers in anything we’ve seen like those numbers,” Werner said.

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