



February 5, 2009

Glade Reservoir project to get a second look

Supplement likely to delay plan

BY KEVIN DUGGAN

KevinDuggan @coloradoan.com

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers plans to take a deeper look into environmental issues raised by the proposed Northern Integrated Supply Project and Glade Reservoir.

Corps officials announced Wednesday they will prepare a supplemental draft Environmental Impact Statement on NISP, which would draw from the Poudre River to meet the future water needs of growing Northern Colorado communities.

The decision is likely to delay the water project.

The draft EIS for the project issued in April 2008 drew sharp criticism from environmentalists as well as the cities of Fort Collins and Greeley. Critics said the document did an inadequate job of analyzing the various environmental and economic impacts of the proposed project.

Officials from the Environmental Protection Agency, which has veto authority over federal permits needed to build the project, also questioned the document and whether NISP would violate the Clean Water Act.

The number, complexity and significance of comments on the draft EIS prompted the decision to pursue a supplemental study, Corps officials said.

The project as proposed by the Northern Colorado Water Conservation District requires additional analysis in areas such as hydrology modeling, water quality, vegetation and aquatic resources, said Col. David Press, commander of the Corps' Omaha District.

"This next stage will also give us the opportunity to broaden and encourage public participation, which is an extremely important part of this process," Press said in a prepared statement.

The supplemental is expected to be released around June 2010, said Chandler Peter, who is heading up the EIS process for the Corps. Peter said he couldn't say when a final decision on permitting the project would be made.

The Corps also announced Wednesday it will require that the same baseline information be used in the NISP study and a separate analysis being conducted for the expansions of Halligan and Seaman reservoirs as proposed by Fort Collins and Greeley.

Using the same data will ensure consistency in making decisions about the projects, Corps officials said.

Brian Werner, spokesman for Northern Water, said the 15 municipalities and water districts that are participating in NISP welcome the additional analysis that will come with the supplemental document.

"The supplement will allow further clarification on some issues," he said. "We think the science will show this is a good project."

To date, the draft EIS process has taken five years and about \$6 million. How much the supplemental will cost NISP participants is not clear, he said.

Construction on the project, if it's approved, is not likely to be completed before 2017, he said.

The draft EIS looks at four alternatives, including not building the project. The alternative preferred by Northern Water includes building Glade Reservoir near Ted's Place and Galeton Reservoir near Ault.

Glade would hold 40,000 acre feet of water. An acre foot would meet the annual water needs of one or two urban families.

The supplemental document should include consideration of the "Healthy Rivers Alternative" proposed by the anti-Glade group Save the Poudre Coalition, spokesman Gary Wockner said.

The group's proposal calls for storing water in alluvial aquifers and gravel pits rather than a large reservoir. It also calls for increased water conservation by NISP participants.

The alternative is "cheaper, better for farms and better for the Poudre River," he said.

"If the supplemental draft EIS just re-analyzes the fatally flawed Glade Reservoir scheme, it will probably be a waste of time and a waste of money," Wockner said.

Peter said some elements of the group's proposal were already studied and were eliminated because they are not practicable.

But other elements will be included as part of increased analysis of the "no action" alternative, he said.

Wockner said the original draft EIS "was so scientifically flawed that every element of it is cast in doubt."

Additional Facts



[Glade Reservoir Proposal and the Poudre River](#)

The proposed Glade Reservoir northwest of Fort Collins has sparked a debate between those who say the project will decimate the Poudre River and those who say it's necessary water storage for drought and growth.
