
Larimer commissioners take in NISP comments

BY [REBECCA BOYLE](#),

BY REBECCA BOYLE

rboyle@fortcollinsnow.com

FORT COLLINS -- Karen Roth didn't plan to say anything Wednesday about Glade Reservoir.

But she thought about the importance of the Cache la Poudre River to her city, so the Fort Collins resident and 20-year kayaker finally decided to talk to the Larimer County commissioners about the proposed Northern Integrated Supply Project.

The commissioners, she said, have to balance the needs of all Larimer communities.

"Estes Park has Rocky Mountain National Park, we all know that. Loveland has sculptures and Centerra. Fort Collins used to have shopping, that's gone over to Loveland. I think Fort Collins' resource, that will keep it a growing community, is the Poudre River," she said.

As a public hearing about the controversial Glade-Galeton reservoir project returned to Larimer County Wednesday, people opposing the plan again outnumbered those in support.

The Northern Colorado Water Conservancy District wants to build Glade along the Great Hogback north of Ted's Place and a companion reservoir, Galeton, in eastern Weld County. The more than \$400 million project involves 15 entities and is designed to provide enough water to accommodate population growth and agricultural interests throughout northern Colorado in the next 40 years. Opponents say the harm to the Poudre would be too great.

Larimer commissioners will consider the final proposal in more detail after the Army Corps of Engineers reviews the multitudinous public comments about NISP and issues a decision. At this point, the review centers on the Corps' Environmental Impact Statement.

Similarly, public comments about the project are meant to raise concerns about the EIS and information it may lack, not to air beefs with the proposal.

But that was often what happened, with people questioning the need for new water storage; the prudence of building a reservoir in a potentially tectonically active area; and the likelihood of major growth.

Loveland resident and count commissioner candidate Roger Hoffman noted that the EIS does not estimate how much land would be absorbed by population growth if the reservoir is built.

"There's been no real look at how many acres of ag land would be consumed by the development which would be made necessary by the communities who would have to pay for their subscriptions to this," he said.

But Richard Leffler, representing the town of Frederick, said his town is reacting to anticipated growth.

"We're not looking at NISP as a way to encourage growth," he said.

Other residents said storage would help ensure the county's future.

Mel Hilgenberg of Fort Collins, said with Glade, other regional reservoir expansion plans and existing water diversions, "water could become the economic driver Colorado has sought since the gold rush."

County officials said in a report prepared for Wednesday's meeting that the EIS needs to dig deeper into the project's impacts on natural resources, transportation and land use, as well as the consequences of not building it.

Commissioners plan to hold a work session on the project in August and will take a position on the project sometime before Sept. 13.

About NISP

« The Northern Integrated Supply Project includes Glade and Galeton reservoirs. Glade Reservoir, at 170,000 acre-feet capacity, is slightly larger than Horsetooth Reservoir.

« Construction of Glade will require the relocation of seven miles of U.S. Highway 287 northwest of Fort Collins.

« Galeton Reservoir, located northeast of Greeley, will provide local farmers with new water from the South Platte River. In exchange, the farmers will allow Glade Reservoir to use Poudre River water to which they are entitled.

« The project includes 15 communities and water districts and is estimated at more than \$400 million.

« If given the green light, the Northern Colorado Water Conservancy District estimates Glade could be finished by 2015.

« For More Information

www.savethepoudre.org

www.NorthernWater.org

What's Next

« Aug. 21

Larimer County commissioners work session on NISP, 9:30 a.m., commissioners' hearing room, 200 W. Oak St., Fort Collins

« Sept. 13

Deadline to submit comments about NISP

<http://www.greeleytribune.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20080710/NEWS/813801151/1002&parentprofile=1001&template=printart>

Copyright 2008 All Rights Reserved