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Release of Glade Reservoir environmental study delayed a year

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Preparing a revised environmental study of Glade Reservoir and the controversial Northern Integrated Supply Project is likely to take a year longer than originally expected, officials say.

The supplemental draft Environmental Impact Statement, or EIS, for the project, which would draw water from the Poudre River, is now projected to be ready for public review in summer 2011.

The final EIS is expected to be completed a year later, said Chandler Peter of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

The delay is good news, said Gary Wockner of Save the Poudre Coalition, which is opposed to the project.

"This is a holiday present for the Poudre River," Wockner said in a prepared statement. "The Poudre now has at least one more year of life, and the Save the Poudre Coalition has another year to grow stronger to save this beautiful river."

The Northern Integrated Supply Project, or NISP, proposed by the Northern Colorado Water Conservancy District would store water in Glade, which would be built north of Ted's Place, and Galeton Reservoir near Ault. Galeton would draw water from the South Platte River.

A draft EIS on the project was released in April 2008. The document elicited hundreds of comments from members of the public and government agencies, including the city of Fort Collins.

Because of the complexity and number of comments, the Corps announced in February it and a third-party contractor would craft a supplemental draft EIS with an eye toward releasing it next year.

But more time is needed to collect data and work on computer modeling of the river's flows and how it would be affected by various projects, Peter said.

The delay is tied in part to the Corps' effort to use a "common technical platform" when evaluating several water projects proposed for the Poudre, including the expansion of Halligan and Seaman reservoirs, said Brian Werner, spokesman for Northern Water.

NISP would be funded by 15 regional municipalities and water districts. Participants in the project are frustrated by how long the federal EIS process is taking, Werner said, but still support the project.

"The unity of the participants is as strong as ever," he said.

Building NISP would cost \$400 million to \$500 million, Werner said.

So far the process of crafting an EIS for the project has taken nearly six years and cost more than \$5 million.