



Science, data key to Glade Reservoir discussion

After years of dialogue and speculation, the public finally gets its chance to more fully understand the scope and impacts of the proposed Northern Integrated Supply Project, which includes the construction of a new reservoir in northern Larimer County.

The Army Corps of Engineers on Tuesday released its Draft Environmental Impact Statement for a 90-day public comment period. Residents, governmental entities, including the Larimer County Board of Commissioners, and organized groups will have the opportunity to study this project and weigh in on its merits.

The Northern Colorado Water Conservancy District proposed this \$405 million project to create water storage and provide about 40,000 acre feet of new water to its 15 project partners each year.

The project includes the construction of two reservoirs, Glade (in Larimer County) and Galeton (in Weld County). The Glade Reservoir would hold up to 170,000 acre feet of water and be slightly larger than neighboring Horsetooth Reservoir. Its construction would require the relocation of seven miles of U.S. Highway 287 northwest of Fort Collins. Galeton will have 40,000 acre feet of water and serve local farmers. Those farmers would exchange the Poudre River water they are currently using for new water from the South Platte River. The Poudre River from the farmers as well as planned diversions would be used to help fill the Glade Reservoir.

NISP, much like the Colorado-Big Thompson Water Project, will change the landscape both figuratively and literally when it comes to water storage.

While the Draft EIS will be as complicated as the proposed project, there are some key topics residents might want to consider in this comprehensive and objective document, including how this project addresses aesthetics and riparian areas, impacts of river flows on habitat and its economic benefits/drawbacks. The Draft EIS also requires the inclusion of the consequences if the project is not built.

This isn't a decision that should be based on rhetoric or sound bytes. Rather, it should be based on science and data, which should be evident in the EIS. The public should look forward to a discussion based on these grounds.

