

# *Fort Collins Now*

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## **Fort Collins responds to Glade data updates**

*By Rebecca Boyle  
Fort Collins Now*

In the end, the data on Glade Reservoir wasn't good enough for the feds, let alone the city of Fort Collins.

But now that the group hoping to build the Northern Integrated Supply Project is starting some deeper studies, Fort Collins city managers say they are learning new information. Some of it might indicate that things aren't as bad as had been thought, especially related to water rates.

The city still has several concerns about the \$440 million, two-reservoir project, however.

After the Northern Colorado Water Conservancy District agreed to a federal request for a Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement about the proposal, Fort Collins has learned some new things that were not in public records when the city studied Glade's possible impacts last summer.

The federal study won't be done until next year, but in the meantime, Northern Water is already churning out new data.

Three reports in the past month shed more light on drinking water, wastewater and possible contamination from a former Atlas missile site near the proposed reservoir location.

One study, released last month, says the impact to Fort Collins' drinking water quality might not be as severe as originally believed. Nevertheless, city managers continue to worry about potential impacts on the city's drinking water supply, partly because of a pipeline that might be built between Glade and Horsetooth Reservoirs.

Because Glade water will have more debris in it — the lake will be filled by spring runoff from the Poudre River, which often contains dirt and forest detritus — the water might be dirtier than Horsetooth's.

But Northern Water hired researchers who found any increase in that organic debris in Horsetooth would be "very minimal" and would not cause treatment costs to increase. Northern Water contends that Fort Collins' own research shows the city can treat the higher concentration using existing technology already in place.

Northern Water's research also shows the city won't have to make expensive upgrades to its wastewater plants. City managers were concerned the system would have to be improved if there was less water in the Poudre to mix with treated municipal effluent, in order for the city to meet federal clean water standards, but Northern Water said any upgrades would not be the fault of the reservoir project.

The city countered that there's still a concern about water temperatures, which could affect wastewater treatment.

City management hopes the supplemental EIS has more information about those questions, as well as a more detailed analysis of Glade's biological impacts on the Poudre River.

But for now, the city is glad to have the conversation, said Kevin Gertig, the city's Water Resources & Treatment Operations manager. Data-driven discussions have happened from the beginning; now the city is having face-to-face conversations about what it all means, he said.

"The staff level meetings, the new information provided in the drinking water quality report, and the action by the Army Corps to require a Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement, are all steps in the right direction," Gertig said.