

Study: NISP issues aren't significant obstacles

By Greeley Tribune Staff

The Northern Colorado Water Conservancy District released a new study Wednesday that it says answers all the water quality issues raised by the city of Fort Collins and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency concerning the proposed Northern Integrated Supply Project.

Eric Wilkinson, general manager of the district, said the study concludes that the issues are not significant and can be easily addressed. The study was conducted by Black & Veatch, a nationally known engineering firm.

NISP is a water storage project that includes the Glade Reservoir northwest of Fort Collins and the Galeton Reservoir east of Ault. It is designed to provide an additional 40,000 acre-feet of water annually to the 15 participants in the project, which include cities, towns and water districts in northern Colorado, while freeing up irrigation water for two irrigation companies.

An acre-foot is enough to provide two families with a year's supply of water.

Wilkinson, in a press release from the district, said the 15 participants in the project authorized the study to cooperate with and help expedite the ongoing Environmental Impact Statement process being conducted by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

The study has been provided to the Corps, the EPA, the Colorado Department of Health and Environment, and other interested parties. It addressed three issues:

- Any increase in total organic carbon levels in Horsetooth Reservoir caused by introducing Glade Reservoir water would be very small. Fort Collins' own research shows the city can treat the concentration and improvements of \$50-\$90 million in infrastructure would not be required, nor would the \$3 million in annual operating costs, as Fort Collins officials have said.
- NISP will have no impact on existing or future infrastructure or operating requirements for Fort Collins' wastewater treatment operations and the city would not have to spend \$75-\$125 million in upgrades based on less dilution capability of the Poudre River.
- The concentration of trichloroethylene in the groundwater near Glade would be so low that even without any collection and treatment system, levels would be undetectable in either Glade or Horsetooth.

Gary Wockner, spokesman for the Save the Poudre Coalition, said more data will be collected regarding the study. The coalition opposes the activation of the Northern Integrated Supply Project.

"We have a team of scientists who will be analyzing this report. Until we have done that, we have no comment," Wockner said.

Wilkinson said the participants are fully committed to ensuring that the project is carefully designed and environmentally sensitive.

"The participants represent more than 200,000 residents in northern Colorado and believe that NISP is the best way for their communities to meet their future water needs," Wilkinson said.