

New research alleviates some Fort Collins concerns about Glade project

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Coloradoan.com*

The potential impacts of Glade Reservoir on Fort Collins' drinking water supply may not be as significant as once feared, city officials say.

But the proposed reservoir, which would draw water from the Poudre River as part of the controversial Northern Integrated Supply Project, still raises many concerns that Fort Collins officials say must be addressed through an extended federal environmental review of the project.

A recent study issued by the Northern Colorado Water Conservancy District, which has proposed NISP, contained illuminating data about the project, said John Stokes, director of Natural Resources. But it didn't provide enough information to alleviate all of the concerns raised by the city's analysis of project.

Fort Collins officials are "pleased" the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has decided to pursue a supplemental draft Environmental Impact Statement for NISP based on issues raised by the city as well as entities such as the city of Greeley and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

"I think it's a testament to the work we did before and the work of others that the Army Corps decided to go ahead," Stokes said.

The study responding to the city's issues was done for Northern Water by the respected engineering firm Black & Veatch, or B&V.

Worries cited by the city included whether bringing water from Glade to Horsetooth Reservoir would affect the quality of water in Horsetooth by raising the level of

total organic carbon, or TOC, in the reservoir.

With Glade drawing on the Poudre during spring runoff, the amount of debris in the water is likely to be higher than what's typically found in Horsetooth and would force the city to ramp up its treatment practices.

The B&V study claims much less water would be transferred from Glade to Horsetooth than the city had assumed in its studies of the project and TOC levels would be significantly lower.

The city didn't have detailed data when preparing its comments on NISP, Stokes said. And it's still looking for answers to some of its questions about how water transfers would be handled.

"We're glad that B&V and Northern have brought to the table some new operational details and some new information to help alleviate our concerns at some level, but we continue to believe that there are a number of issues related to drinking water quality and TOC in particular that need examination," he said.

Northern Water spokesman Brian Werner said the agency is looking forward to working through details of NISP with city staff.

See the full story in Sunday's Coloradoan and on coloradoan.com.