

September 2009

# NISP NEWS

For more information visit [www.gladereservoir.org](http://www.gladereservoir.org) or contact Brian Werner at [bwerner@ncwcd.org](mailto:bwerner@ncwcd.org) or 970.622.2229.

## NISP could have captured nearly 56,000 acre feet in 2009

The 2009 water year was the best in a decade and the numbers bear this out. With C-BT reservoirs and many local storage reservoirs near capacity and area rivers running higher longer, it's no surprise that the "call" on the South Platte River was off well into August.

A "call" occurs when there is a shortage of water to meet all the water needs along the river to the Nebraska state line. The later in the season the call is off, the more water is available, including for many of those with junior rights that are not able to divert in drier years due to lower flows. In 2009, with the call off for all of June and much of July and August, many water users who hadn't been able to divert water in recent dry years were finally able to.

With the NISP water right being a junior right, in some years there may be little or no water available for diversion to storage in Glade Reservoir. However, a year such as 2009 can be a blessing to water providers as they replenish storage reserves depleted through years of below normal water supplies.

Using Colorado Division of Water Resources flow data, the potential water diversions for NISP this year would have neared 36,000 acre feet of water. Combined with the nearly 20,000 acre feet available from the South Platte River for diversion to Galeton Reservoir, NISP could have stored more than 55,000 acre feet. That amounts to almost one-third of the capacity of Glade Reservoir and more than one year's estimated NISP yield of 40,000 acre feet.

Rafters, kayakers and recreationists also enjoyed Mother Nature's bounty this year as the recreational boating season extended well into September.



Poudre River water flows high in the summer, near Overland Trail in northwest Fort Collins

Former Congressman and Senator Hank Brown is a supporter of keeping Colorado's water in Colorado for the benefit of its citizens. He has spoken often about how important it is to store water when it is available so that it can be used during the next dry period.

"It is essential that Colorado utilize what's rightfully ours. That means we store Poudre and South Platte water at every opportunity. If we don't it flows to Nebraska and we've lost it."

In a year like 2009 Brown's words are even more compelling.



Glade Reservoir would be located in the center of this photo, between the two ridges presently dissected by U.S. Highway 287. Ted's Place, at the intersection of U.S. Highways 14 and 287, is at the lower left side of the photo.

# Farmers for NISP Rally shows agriculture backs project

An enthusiastic crowd of 350 farmers, legislators, county commissioners and city officials congregated near Eaton on June 30 to voice their overwhelming support for the Northern Integrated Supply Project. The Farmers for NISP Rally at the Leffler family farm west of Eaton was coordinated by the Colorado Farm Bureau, principally to show that the agricultural community is solidly behind the project.

A dozen speakers told the attendees that when built, NISP will help save tens of thousands of irrigated acres in Northern Colorado that otherwise would be lost as cities and towns acquire necessary water supplies to meet their future needs. Without NISP the cities' options narrow, which brings additional pressure on farmers to sell their water.

Many of the state's leading agricultural voices spoke to



**Troy Bredenkamp, Colorado Farm Bureau, said NISP would save farm lands and production.**

Mark Sponsler with the Colorado Corn Growers Association added, "Without this project, there will be an accelerated dry up of thousands and thousands of acres of farmland. You can quibble about the number of acres, but what



this issue at the rally.

Troy Bredenkamp, executive vice-president of the Colorado Farm Bureau, stated emphatically, "Glade Reservoir would actually save 40,000 to 60,000 acres of farmland and \$27 million in ag production per year.

"If they are able to store water in a reservoir, then they're going to be less apt to go out and have to try to purchase farm ground and then dry it up to bring water right back to the community."

matters is they're going away without NISP."

The project maintains nearly unanimous support from Colorado's agricultural organizations. Those who have formally endorsed NISP are:

- Colorado Farm Bureau
- Rocky Mountain Farmers Union
- Colorado Corn Growers Association
- Colorado State Grange
- Colorado Livestock Association
- Colorado Dairy Producers
- Colorado Pork Producers Council
- Colorado Egg Producers
- Colorado Sugarbeet Growers Association
- Rocky Mountain Agribusiness Association
- Western Sugar Cooperative
- GreenCO
- Agland, Inc.
- Valley Irrigation of Greeley
- Eaton Local Sugarbeet Growers

In addition to the agricultural organizations represented, a bipartisan group of elected officials attended the rally to show their support for NISP. State Sen. Mary Hodge (D-Brighton) and Rep. Jerry Sonnenberg (R-Sterling) spoke for about a dozen state legislators who attended.

Hodge echoed the feeling of many supporters by saying,

“this project will address the needs of a growing population and protect agriculture.”

Sonnenberg, one of the few remaining active farmers in the state legislature, said the project was absolutely essential for the future of the state’s agricultural economy.

Weld County Commissioner Sean Conway and former legislator and Colorado Agriculture Commissioner Don Ament co-emceed the

event, which included remarks from the presidents of the two local ditch companies that would exchange water with the project.

Mike Hugenberg with New Cache la Poudre Irrigating and Barry Anderson with Larimer and Weld Irrigation companies both expressed their support for NISP.

Hugenberg addressed the idea that water currently flowing out of state and available to Colorado must be used. “If we don’t build this, it will be taking a step back. We’ve got to save for short years and this has to be the most environmentally friendly project ever.”

Anderson said, “It really does an older farmer’s heart good to see so many of you here today. If this project is not built our water in Northern Colorado will go to Denver. That’s a guarantee.”

The final speaker was long-time Northern Colorado farmer and owner of Sakata Farms near Brighton, Bob Sakata.



All four Denver news stations attended and ran stories on the night’s newscasts.

A farmer for more than 60 years, Sakata reminded those present that surviving in the semi-arid west and the dry years requires water storage.

“Through all the lean years we’ve had a few exceptional ones where we invested in our future. That is what NISP is all about. We are investing in our future.”

It couldn’t be stated any better. NISP is indeed an investment for our future generations.

NISP Participants Committee Chair Kathy Peterson closed the rally by thanking everyone who attended to show their support for the project.

To read news coverage go to [www.gladereservoir.org](http://www.gladereservoir.org) and click on ag rally in the upper right corner.



Sen. Mary Hodge voiced strong support for NISP’s role in maintaining irrigated ag land in Northern Colorado.

## Public support remains strong

The majority of Northern Colorado voters strongly support NISP. Efforts such as the Farmers for NISP Rally illustrate huge public support. Nearly 350 people attended the rally – almost double what organizers had anticipated.

The growing support list is updated daily as elected officials and a wide variety of agricultural and business related organizations formally endorse NISP. These politicians and organizations view NISP as an essential piece of Northern Colorado’s future and a step that must be taken to ensure the economic vitality of the region.

A Floyd Ciruli poll conducted in 2008 also indicated widespread support for NISP among Northern Colorado voters. More than 80 percent of Weld County

voters and 63 percent of Larimer County voters support construction of Glade Reservoir. Voters also overwhelmingly support maintaining agricultural open space and the farm economy, both of which are cornerstones of NISP. For complete survey results go to [www.gladereservoir.org](http://www.gladereservoir.org) and click on survey results in the upper right hand corner.

A few of the recent additions to the endorsement list include:

Gubernatorial candidates Josh Penry and Scott McInnis; the chambers of commerce of Longmont, Berthoud and Carbon Valley; and Progressive 15 – an organization providing a voice for 15 Eastern Colorado plains counties.

For the complete list go to [www.gladereservoir.org](http://www.gladereservoir.org) and click on latest news.

**The Draft Environmental Impact Statement analysis included a no action alternative which studied what the 15 NISP participants would do to meet their future water demands if NISP were not built. The draft EIS determined that without NISP those water providers would require water from nearly 60,000 acres in Northern Colorado to replace the 40,000 acre foot yield of NISP.**

**While a certain amount of ag water will always move from the farmers to cities as growth continues, Northern Water and the 15 participants believe strongly in maintaining enough water for those farmers who wish to continue to farm.**

**“The Northern Water Board has a long held philosophy of protecting a strong agricultural economy. The only way to do so is to pursue water supply alternatives that do not involve the dry up of irrigated agriculture,” said Northern Water’s General Manager Eric Wilkinson.**

# What is NISP?

NISP is a regional water supply project coordinated by Northern Water on behalf of 15 Northern Front Range water providers. Its goal is to provide participating water providers with approximately 45,000 acre feet of new, reliable water supply each year.

The NISP participants currently supply water to more than 200,000 Northern Colorado residents. These 15 local and regional water agencies and municipalities are dedicated to providing a sustainable and environmentally sound supply of water to today's and future generations.

At its most basic, NISP would store excess water currently leaving the state in years of abundance for use in meeting future water supply needs.

The proposed Northern Integrated Supply Project would include:

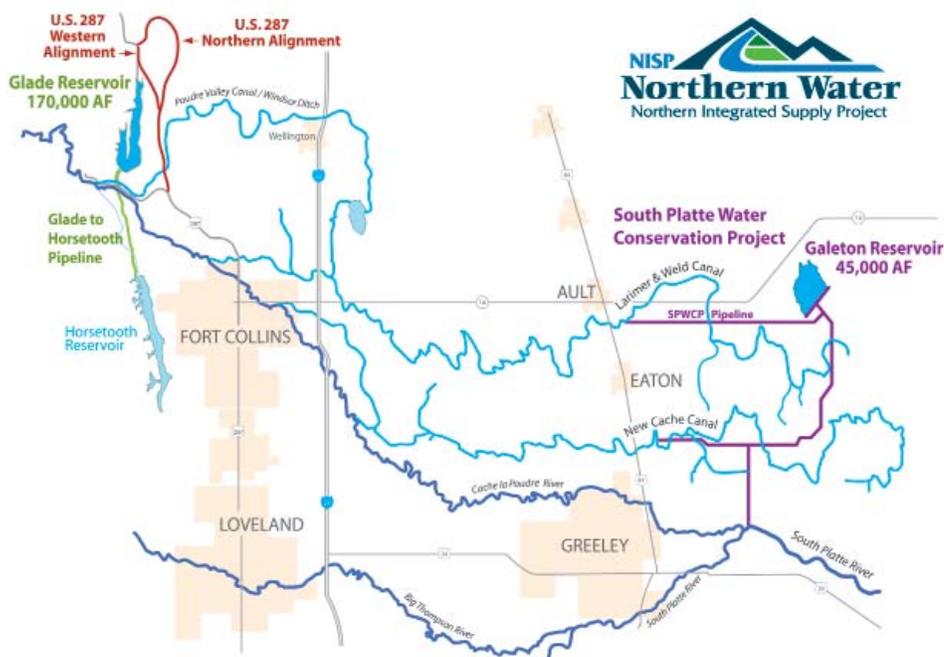
## Glade Reservoir

This reservoir would be located northwest of Fort Collins along a current stretch of U.S. Highway 287 north of Ted's Place (the intersection of Highway 287 and Highway 14). It would be 5 miles long, 260 feet deep and have a capacity to store 170,000

acre feet of water, or slightly more than Horsetooth Reservoir, which holds about 156,000 acre feet. The water to fill Glade would be diverted from the Poudre River during periods of high flow using the already existing Poudre Valley Canal. No new structures will be on the river and no project facilities would be built within the wild and scenic Poudre Canyon. About seven miles of Highway 287 would be relocated for Glade Reservoir construction.

## South Platte Water Conservation Project (Galeton Reservoir)

Galeton Reservoir would be located east of Ault and northeast of Greeley. It would hold approximately 45,000 acre feet of water at capacity. The diversion at the South Platte River downstream of Greeley would have a pumping capacity of 200 cfs. Galeton water would be delivered to two agricultural irrigation companies (New Cache la Poudre Irrigating and Larimer and Weld) in exchange for a portion of the Poudre River water they currently use. This exchange would provide approximately 60 percent of the NISP yield and is water that has historically been diverted.



## Project status

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers continues to move forward with its Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement.

The Corps is working closely with ERO Resources to revise and clarify certain sections of the draft EIS originally released in April 2008. The supplemental DEIS is conducting additional study on water quality, aquatics, vegetation, the no action alternative and hydrologic modeling.

The no action alternative is an EIS requirement to examine what the 15 participants would do to meet their growing water needs in the event NISP were not permitted. The hydrologic modeling involves the creation of a common technical platform.

The common technical platform required by the Corps is an attempt to provide a hydrologic model usable by all current permitting efforts underway within the Poudre basin. Northern Water, Greeley and Fort Collins are combining efforts in this regard to develop one set of flow data and information for NISP and the Halligan/Seaman projects.

"They are basically asking us to compare apples to apples, which makes a lot of sense," said NISP Project Manager Carl Brouwer.

The Corps anticipates completing the SDEIS during 2010 with a final decision in 2011. To date the 15 NISP participants have spent more than \$7 million on the permitting process and related studies.