



# NISP NEWS

The long-awaited draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Northern Integrated Supply Project has been released.

The document shows this project is:

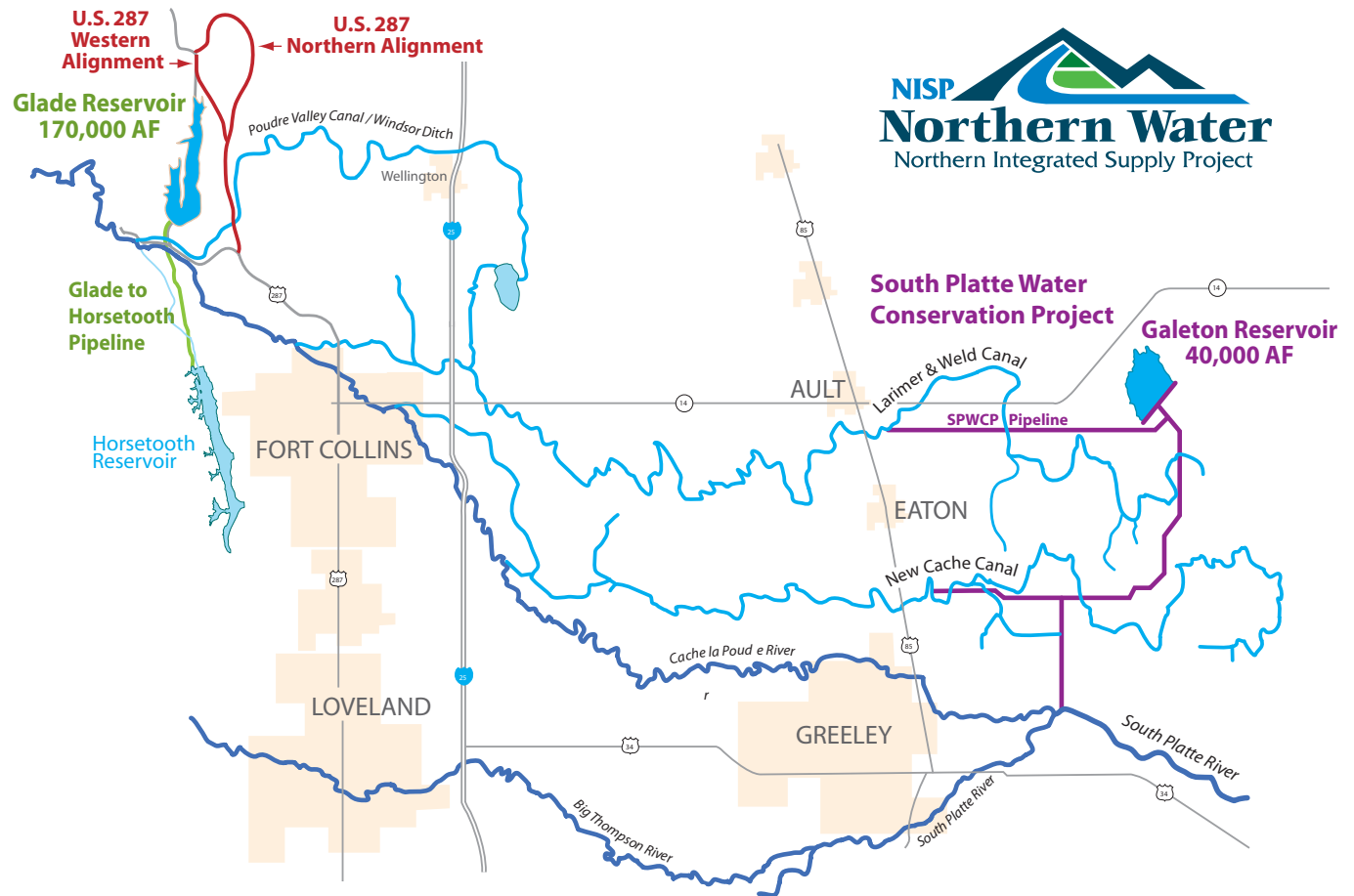
- Needed
- Environmentally sensitive
- Economically viable

A close-up photograph of a young girl with dark hair and eyes, drinking water from a faucet. The water is captured in mid-air, creating a dynamic, sparkling stream that flows from the faucet into her mouth. The background is a soft, out-of-focus green and yellow gradient.

Inside the  
project

# UNDERSTANDING THE PROJECT

NISP is a regional water supply project coordinated by the Northern Colorado Water Conservancy District on behalf of 15 Front Range water providers. Its goal is to provide participating water providers with approximately 40,000 acre-feet of new, reliable water supply.



The proposed Northern Integrated Supply Project would include:

## Glade Reservoir

This reservoir would be located northwest of Fort Collins and north of Horsetooth Reservoir. It would be 5 miles long, 260 feet deep and have the capacity to store 170,000 acre-feet of water. As a point of comparison, Horsetooth holds about 156,000 acre-feet. The water to fill Glade Reservoir would be diverted from the Poudre River using the already existing Poudre Valley Canal. There will be no new structures on the river. U.S. Highway 287 between Fort Collins and the Wyoming border divides the proposed Glade Reservoir site. Therefore, about seven miles of the highway would be relocated.

## South Platte Water Conservation Project *aka Galeton Reservoir*

Galeton would be located east of Ault and northeast of Greeley. It would hold about 40,000 acre-feet of water at full capacity. The water to fill Galeton would be diverted from the South Platte River downstream from Greeley. Galeton water would be delivered to two agricultural irrigation companies in exchange for Poudre River water they currently use. Because of this agricultural exchange, approximately 60 percent of the water that will be taken out of the Poudre River to fill Glade Reservoir is water that has already historically been taken.

## THE NEED

Colorado is growing. The population that the 15 participating water providers serves has increased an average of six percent annually since 1990. The number of people to whom the participants provide water has doubled in less than 20 years. The Colorado state demographer predicts Colorado will gain 2.8 million more residents by 2030 – most of them in the South Platte Basin along the Front Range.

Wise planning requires the ability to serve Colorado's residents. Like school districts and emergency service providers, water providers have to adapt and expand as populations increase. While this region has seen new hospitals and roads and schools constructed during the past several decades, it has been nearly 25 years since a water project was constructed to serve Northern Colorado.

Without NISP, more than three-quarters of the participants will experience water shortages by 2010.

## THE ECONOMICS

Current cost estimates for the project are \$405 million. The cost per unit of water is very competitive compared to the Northern Colorado water market.

The participating water providers are funding the entire cost of NISP. No general Northern Water taxpayer revenues will be used to pay for the project.

An acre-foot of NISP water will cost the participants approximately \$10,000. Comparatively, an acre-foot of Colorado-Big Thompson Project water is valued at approximately \$15,000.

The draft EIS reveals that if NISP is not built, the alternative sources of water the participants will have to pursue will cost twice as much as NISP.

The draft EIS also states that water rates in the participating communities will increase more if NISP is not built vs. if it is built.

## PERSPECTIVES



*Former Colorado Sen. Hank Brown played an instrumental Congressional role in securing the Poudre River's wild and scenic designation in the 1980s. Brown recognized the need to protect*

*this river that is so important to the region, and he worked tirelessly to make the designation a reality.*

*Brown supports NISP and says the project will help protect the region's environment.*

### IN HIS OWN WORDS:

“ This kind of project is very much what we had in mind when we worked out the wild and scenic designation for the Poudre. Part of the compromise that gave us the state's only wild and scenic river was the ability to do a project like this. **This is very much in the spirit of that understanding.** ”

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“ The additional off-stream storage here (Glade Reservoir) will be a big environmental plus because it will give additional security to ensure minimum streamflows through Fort Collins are met, and it will be a help to the State of Colorado in preserving its water rights, which we now end up forgoing to Nebraska.

“It will also lend security to our water storage during drought periods.

“Overall, it's an enormous plus for the environment. ”

# THE DRAFT EIS

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers released the draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Northern Integrated Supply Project on April 30, 2008. With the assistance of an independent, third-party consultant – ERO – the Corps studied the purpose of and need for the proposed project, possible alternatives to NISP and what impacts NISP would have on the environment.

Below are some highlights of the document. The draft EIS is available at <https://www.usace.army.mil/html/od-tl/eis-info.htm>

## IMPACTS ON RIPARIAN RESOURCES

“The reductions in streamflows on the Poudre River associated with the action alternatives are not anticipated to cause a loss of riparian and/or wetland vegetation.”

*Chapter 4, Draft Environmental Impact Statement*

**What this means: Changes to streamflows because of NISP will not harm vegetation along the Poudre River.**

## EFFECT ON POUUDRE RIVER FLOWS

“A number of short segments of the Poudre River dry up during the irrigation season and/or during the winter months. A review of the impacts of the proposed NISP diversions on the dry-up points showed that for all but one location, impacts would be minimal or nonexistent. At several headgates (Little Cache/Terry Lake, Larimer-Weld, and Timnath Reservoir inlet), NISP might actually reduce the length of time that the river is dry during the winter.”

*Chapter 4, Draft Environmental Impact Statement*

**What this means: Segments of the Poudre River have historically dried up during the winter months. NISP will not increase these dry periods in the Poudre River through Fort Collins and may actually shorten the length of the dry periods.**

“Reductions in flows on the Poudre River are not expected to affect aesthetic qualities or riparian habitat of the Poudre or Poudre River trail or the Natural Areas.”

*Table 4-19, Draft Environmental Impact Statement*

**What this means: Reduced flows will not change the aesthetic of the river through Fort Collins significantly – it will still be bank-to-bank during the times NISP diverts.**

## RECREATIONAL BENEFITS

Glade Reservoir is predicted to add approximately \$17 million annually in recreational values to the region.

*Table 4-3, draft Environmental Impact Statement*

**What this means: NISP will add a large net recreation benefit to the region.**

“The alternatives involving Glade Reservoir could increase flows in the 5-mile reach of the Poudre River between the Munroe Canal diversion and the PoudreValley Canal. Increased flows in the range of 38 to 43 cfs would occur in late summer and could extend the boating season into August on the much used Filter Plant segment of the Poudre River.”

*Executive Summary, Draft Environmental Impact Statement*

**What this means: NISP has the potential to increase flows in the lower Poudre Canyon and extend the rafting season into late summer.**

## CONNECTION TO GROWTH

“Implementation of any of the alternatives would not change land use or zoning, increase employment opportunities, or increase other regional growth pressures. Population growth and development in the region served by the Participants would likely continue regardless of whether any of the alternatives are constructed.”

*Chapter 4, Draft Environmental Statement*

**What this means: Growth is going to occur, whether or not NISP is built.**

## IF NISP IS NOT BUILT

“The No Action alternative (not building NISP) would involve the removal of irrigation from up to 69,200 acres of irrigated agricultural lands, about 11 percent of the total irrigated acreage in the region, and would substantially accelerate and contribute to the regional trend of the transfer of agricultural water to M&I (municipal and industrial) uses. The current production value associated with the 69,200 acres is estimated at \$27.1 million or about 4.5 percent of total agricultural output in the region.

The removal of irrigation from up to 69,200 acres of agricultural lands would result in a loss of about 1,384 acres of wetlands, which is substantially greater than any of the other alternatives.”

*Executive Summary, Draft Environmental Statement*

**What this means: If NISP isn't built, tens of thousands of additional acres of farmland in the region will be dried up.**

In the participating communities, water rates are anticipated to increase by an average of 10 percent by the year 2010 if NISP is built and by an average of 38 percent by the year 2010 if NISP is not built.

*Table 4-4, Draft Environmental Impact Statement*

**What this means: Water rates in the participating communities will increase more if NISP is not built vs. if it is built.**

“At a projected total capital cost of about \$830,500,000, the No Action alternative (not building NISP) would cost substantially more than the other alternatives.”

*Executive Summary, Draft Environmental Impact Statement*

**What this means: The water supplies NISP participants will have to acquire if NISP isn't built will cost more than twice as much as the projected cost of NISP.**

“It is likely that the Poudre River flows would be reduced under a different water right if the No Action alternative is implemented.”

*Executive Summary, Draft Environmental Impact Statement*

**What this means: If NISP is not built, another project will take more water out of the Poudre River – a project that may move the water out of Northern Colorado and not include the recreational and economic benefits to the region that NISP does.**

## GET THE FACTS

NISP is **not** a  
dam on the  
Poudre River.

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The project would  
**never take water**  
from the Poudre if  
**it would mean**  
**drying it up.**

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NISP will **not**  
**reduce the flows**  
within the  
**Poudre Canyon.**

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The majority of the  
**water NISP will take**  
**from the Poudre**  
River has **already been**  
**diverted from the**  
**river** for years.

# THE TIMELINE & PARTICIPANTS

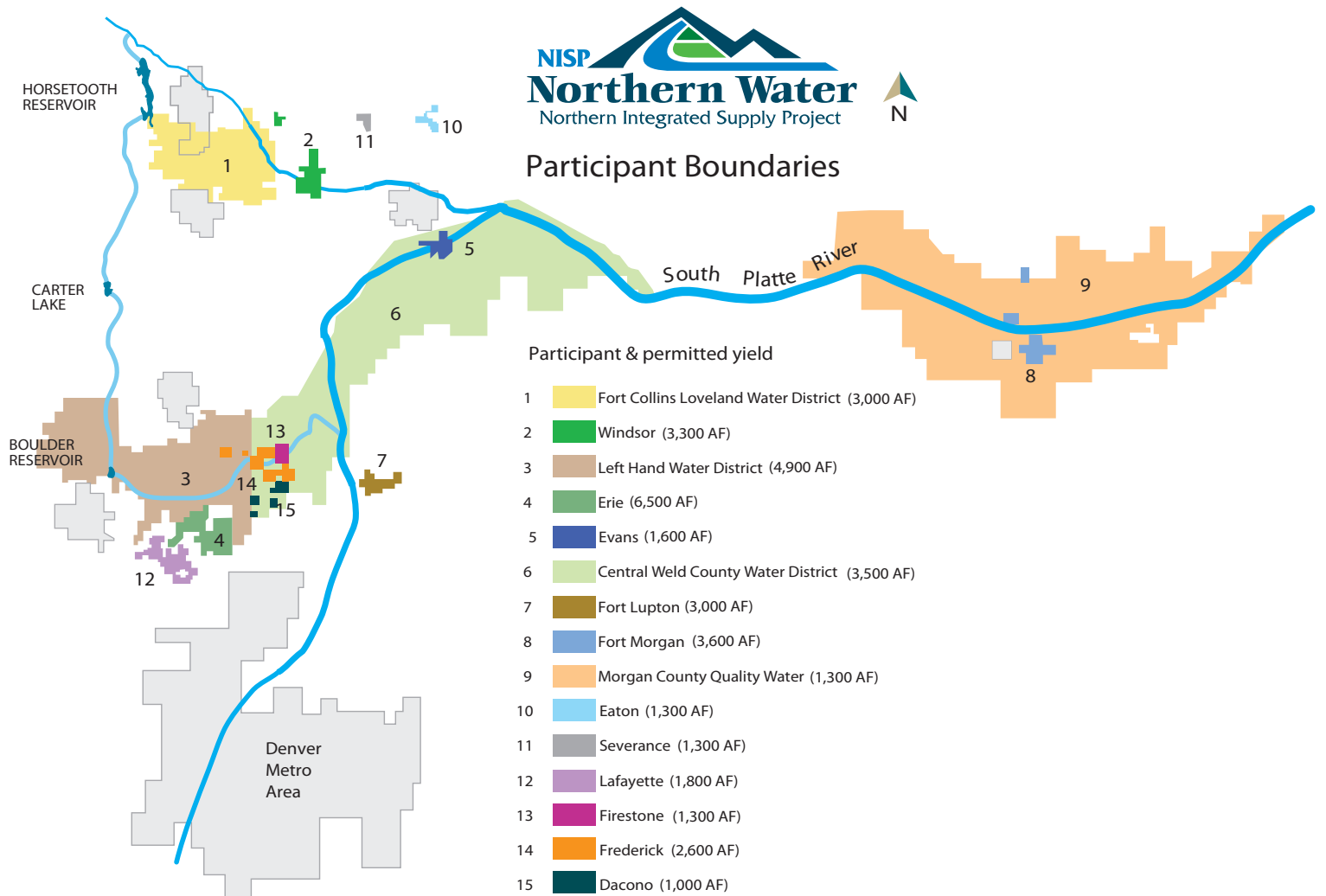
Now that the draft EIS has been released to the public, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers will take public comments on the documents before issuing a final EIS and Record of Decision, which will determine if Northern Water will get a permit to build the project.

The project is funded entirely by 15 Front Range water providers.

## PREDICTED TIMELINE



## THE NISP PARTICIPANTS



# WATER CONSERVATION AND NISP

Northern Water and the 15 water providers participating in NISP realize there is no single method that will meet all of Colorado's water needs. They embrace the 21st century solution of coupling water storage with water conservation.

**“All of the NISP participants have ongoing water conservation programs that have been implemented to educate users about their water supply and discourage unnecessary use of water on a long-term basis.”**

*– draft Environmental Impact Statement*

Between 1998 and 2003, NISP participants' average gallons per capita per day (the amount of water, on average, that a person uses in one day) was 161. Compare that to Denver Water's 201 gallons per capita per day during that same time period. Denver Water is recognized for its extensive and successful water conservation program – and the NISP participants use less water per capita than Denver.

Colorado's Statewide Water Supply Initiative found the statewide average for gallons per capita per day was between 206 and 332. The NISP participants' average is far lower than this range.

**The NISP participants have some of the lowest per-capita water use rates in the region.**

According to the draft Environmental Impact Statement, the NISP participants' water conservation efforts include:

- ◆ Educational programs including newspaper and television ads and school programs
- ◆ Universal metering
- ◆ Increasing block-rate structures (the more water a household uses, the more it gets charged per gallon)
- ◆ Leak detection programs
- ◆ Ordinances limiting how much irrigated area landscapes can include
- ◆ Water audits
- ◆ Systems that reuse wastewater for irrigation

spotlight on  
CONSERVATION



**The Town of Erie**, a NISP participant, provides free irrigation audits to households and businesses through a partnership with the Center for Resource Conservation. The audits show customers ways to use water more efficiently outdoors.



**The Town of Firestone**, a NISP participant, has prepared an extensive Water Conservation Plan that outlines conservation goals. Firestone's aim is to reduce residential water usage to 151 gpcd and has outlined a variety of programs to make this possible.

# VOICE YOUR OPINION

Now is your chance to make your opinion known about the importance of NISP. This project is a crucial part of maintaining Northern Colorado's quality of life.

It's time to speak up.

## U.S. Army Corps of Engineers public hearings

- June 17, Fort Collins Senior Center  
*4 to 6 p.m. open house; 6 p.m. public hearing*
- June 19, UNC University Center, Greeley  
*6 to 7 p.m. open house; 7 p.m. public hearing*

The Corps will take verbal comments from the public at these events. Immediately preceding the hearings, Northern Water will hold open houses to provide additional details and answer questions.

**MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD:** Prepare a comment up to five minutes long to present at the Corps hearing.

## Written comments to Army Corps

The public may also submit comments about NISP to the Corps in writing.

**MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD:** Pen a comment in support of NISP and mail, fax, or e-mail it to:

Mr. Chandler J. Peter  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
Denver Regulatory Office  
9307 South Wadsworth Blvd.  
Littleton, CO 80123-9601  
Fax: 303-979-0602  
E-mail: [chandler.j.peter@usace.army.mil](mailto:chandler.j.peter@usace.army.mil)

## Letters to the editor

Opinion pages in newspapers provide a forum for you to voice your support for NISP.

**MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD:** Send a letter-to-the editor to your local newspaper.



If NISP is not built, an additional 40,000 to 60,000 acres of farmland will be dried up in the region.

