

Officials: NISP reservoirs would have eased flooding

Greeley Tribune staff

BERTHOUD — Two reservoirs under the proposed Northern Integrated Supply Project would have contained a lot of runoff from the snowmelt this year and last, and would have eased flooding along the Poudre River this spring had they been built, according to officials with the Northern Colorado Water Conservancy District.

With NISP online, some of the recent regional flooding concerns would have been alleviated and the floodwaters would have been stored for future use, according to Northern Water.

The proposed project includes two reservoirs, the Glade Reservoir off the Poudre River north of Fort Collins and the Galeton Reservoir east of Ault. The two would provide storage for 215,000 acre-feet of water — an acre-foot is enough to provide two families with a year's supply of water.

Diversions off the Poudre to fill the two reservoirs would mostly be available during high runoff years, according to Carl Brouwer, manager of the proposed project at the district.

Galeton would have filled during the past fall and winter and remained full with the huge

spring runoff this year, Brouwer said in a news release.

“More than 50,000 acre-feet of water from this spring could have been stored in Glade Reservoir were it built, in addition to water during 2009,” Brouwer said.

Glade and Galeton reservoirs are the key components to NISP, which is proposed by 15 northern Front Range cities, towns and water districts. The project is under review by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. When full, Glade would store 170,000 acre-feet of water and Galeton would hold 45,000 acre-feet.

“This is one of those years when you wish we had these projects in place so the water could be saved for the citizens of northern Colorado,” Eric Wilkinson said. He is Northern Water's general manager.

“It also means a lot of water that Colorado is entitled to is flowing out of state to Nebraska over and above our legal requirements,” he said.

“NISP could be storing water right now and we could be pumping 2,000 acre-feet a day to storage and still have a significant amount flowing downstream to Nebraska,” Brouwer added.

The Poudre River peaked Tuesday at more than 4,300 cubic feet per second at the canyon mouth. The average peak for the river is a little more than 2,900 cfs.