

Reporter-Herald

Reporter-Herald: October 25, 2011

By Pamela Dickman

Ag board endorses NISP

FORT COLLINS -- Farmers who advise the Larimer County commissioners on agricultural issues say the proposed Glade and Galeton reservoirs would not dry up farmland as a group against the reservoirs has claimed.

The Agricultural Advisory Board, made up of several working farmers, released a report to the commissioners Tuesday saying the Northern Integrated Supply Project reservoirs would not dry up farmland and would not harm productive crops with increased salinity.

The report was in response to an April release from Save the Poudre, the environmental advocacy group leading opposition to the proposed reservoirs.

"You guys are the ones that are experts," Commissioner Steve Johnson said to three advisory

Read the report from Larimer County's Agriculture Advisory Board.

board members who attended the elected board's Tuesday meeting.

"You are the ones dealing with this every day. It's not just debate. It's your livelihood."

Northern Water has proposed the largest reservoir storage and distribution project in six decades on behalf of 11 cities and towns and four water districts called Northern Integrated Supply Project or NISP. The largest of the two reservoirs, Glade, would hold 170,000 acre-feet of water northeast of Ted's Placing, which would force U.S. 287 to be rerouted.

The proposal, still in the permitting process, has been opposed by Save the Poudre, which argues it will dry up the Poudre River and associated recreation, tourism and business and affect family farms. The group's farm facts report, released in April, alleges the reservoirs would speed up the sale and subdivision of irrigated farmland, pull water from farms and accelerate salinity of productive farmland.

The agricultural advisory board disagrees, saying:

The region will need additional water supply for growth with or without the reservoir projects. NISP will meet those needs and take pressure off farmers' water, according to the report.

There is no evidence that shows salinity will increase on farmland despite the fact that eastern Colorado farmers will be receiving effluent water. The dirtier water will be diluted enough that farmland should not be affected.

The water to initially fill, and to maintain the reservoirs, would be extra water above that already claimed from the Poudre River and would not come out of allocations to farmers. The water would be, in essence, extra water during wet years that would flow out of state if not captured.

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