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NISP COST INCREASE IN LINE WITH COST INDEXES AND INFLATION

BERTHOUD—The participants, or water providers that are paying for and would receive water from the Northern Integrated Supply Project, recently updated the project’s cost estimate from the 2006 figure, and it rose 15 percent to \$490 million. The 11 cities and four water districts involved in NISP continue to see it as the best and most affordable option for their future water supplies.

NISP is a regional water supply project coordinated by Northern Water on behalf of 15 Northern Front Range water providers. It will provide 40,000 acre feet of new water for Northern Colorado. It includes Glade Reservoir northwest of Fort Collins and Galeton Reservoir northeast of Greeley. The participants are paying for the environmental permitting process, design and construction.

Much of the cost estimate change is based on participants’ decision to add capacity for pump plants and pipelines and increased storage at Galeton Reservoir. These changes would increase project efficiency and, with that, its sustainability. The updated Glade Reservoir cost estimate remains within the current construction cost index and inflation.

Costs have also increased because of participants’ strong commitment to answering questions raised during the public comment period about water quality, hydrology and riparian corridor issues.

“We wanted to make sure, as does the Army Corps [of Engineers] that all questions are being answered,” said NISP Participant Chairwoman Kathy Peterson. “It costs additional dollars and is taking additional time, but we believe it’s necessary.”

The participants are committed to analyzing and building an environmentally sustainable project and thoroughly answering questions along the way. A third party is preparing a supplemental report, called an Environmental Impact Statement, for NISP as a way to help answer public questions.

The cost estimate changes were not surprising, because estimates for projects of this magnitude change over time. The participants are maintaining varied longstanding plans to cover these costs.

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