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Proposed Glade Reservoir would be half full

NORTHERN COLORADO – It's been a wet spring and many of the region's rivers have been raging for the past week, especially the Poudre River. Much of that water could have been conserved for later use if additional storage were available.

The proposed Northern Integrated Supply Project includes 215,000 acre feet of storage. Diversions for this storage would mostly be available during high runoff years. Galeton would have filled during the past fall and winter and remained full with the huge spring runoff.

“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,” said NISP Manager Carl Brouwer. “And Galeton Reservoir would have been full.”

Glade and Galeton reservoirs are the key components to NISP, which is proposed by 15 Northern Front Range cities, towns and water districts and is currently 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,” said Northern Water General Manager Eric Wilkinson. “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.”

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

“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 said.

The Poudre River peaked on 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. While the river’s flow has slowed the past few days there is the possibility of another peak flow with rain in the forecast this weekend.

It’s a good year for water supplies throughout Northeastern Colorado and years like 2010 illustrate the reason storage reservoirs are a practical, prudent and responsible method to provide water to Colorado’s 5 million residents.

Additional information about NISP can be found at gladereservoir.org.

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