Northeastern Water

Collaborating in a shift away from the ‘buy-and-dry’ approach that has stressed our agriculture communities.

Northern Integrated Supply Project (NISP): Striving to develop a **Water Secure** future for Northern Colorado’s communities and farms.

As part of a long-term strategy that’s consistent with the goals and principles established in the Colorado Water Plan, Northern Water and the NISP participants are working to implement various measures – including a collaborative effort with the New Cache and Larimer & Weld ditch systems – that will provide supplemental water to approximately 500,000 residents in Northern Colorado while also helping preserve tens of thousands of irrigated farm acres.

Without these innovative approaches, the region is on pace to see hundreds of thousands of irrigated acres dried up by mid-century.
The NISP exchanges: A win-win for the farms

The NISP exchanges are designed to be a win-win for the farms in the two ditch systems, in that:

- **Shareholders maintain control of their water, and water will continue flowing to the farms**
- Compensation from the NISP participants will **enhance the long-term viability of those ag operations**
- The ditch systems will receive additional **water later in the growing season**
- These exchanges **will not reduce the value of their water shares**
- These exchanges have been adjudicated and approved by the water court, and **will not subject the two systems’ water rights to a change case**

Furthermore, **without NISP**, the communities participating in the project will most likely be left to purchase more water from existing farms and ranches – needing to **dry up over 64,000 acres** of irrigated farmground to attain the amount of water that NISP would provide.

NISP at a glance

Once constructed, the **Northern Integrated Supply Project** will consist of:

- **Glade Reservoir** northwest of Fort Collins, which will divert water from the Poudre River
- **Galeton Reservoir** east of Ault, which will store water piped from the South Platte River
- Pipelines, pump plants and other infrastructure needed for operations

**40,000 acre-feet** of additional water will be made available annually for

**15 rapidly growing communities and water districts** across northern Colorado

A key component of NISP will be water substitutions and exchanges, in which Northern Water and the NISP participants will work with the New Cache and Larimer & Weld ditch systems. NISP will provide new water supplies to the ditch systems in order to allow Glade Reservoir to store water, by exchange, for the communities in need of those supplies.

In return, the NISP participants will provide compensation for the two participating ditch systems, including:

- Monetary payments
- Additional water supplies from Galeton Reservoir
- Ditch-system improvements

Furthermore, without NISP, the communities participating in the project will most likely be left to purchase more water from existing farms and ranches – needing to **dry up over 64,000 acres** of irrigated farmground to attain the amount of water that NISP would provide.
About 25,000 acre-feet would be exchanged annually between the ditch companies and NISP participants. The exchanges will account for about half of the supplies needed to fill Glade Reservoir.

With this arrangement, the New Cache and Larimer & Weld shareholders could also receive more water for irrigation than they currently receive. However, this is NOT an alternative transfer method, or ATM, as they’re often called. Farms participating in the NISP exchanges will receive water each and every year.

NISP is expected to receive its Record of Decision from the Army Corps of Engineers in 2020, and following final design and construction, the exchanges could be operational by about 2027. However, the exchanges are dependent upon Northern Water and the NISP participants executing agreements with the ditch systems.

The approximately 90,000 irrigated acres under the New Cache and Larimer & Weld systems are estimated to provide more than $300 million in agricultural production annually.

All of northern Colorado will benefit from keeping more irrigated acres in production. Our agriculture industry employs thousands of local residents and feeds even more, while our farms and ranches also offer quality-of-life and environmental enhancements with open space and wildlife habitat— all of which Northern Water and the NISP participants want to preserve for future generations.
Northern Water and the NISP participants are also exploring various options to keep supplies in the ditch systems and available for these exchanges, to help ensure a WaterSecure future for Northern Colorado.

To avoid water permanently leaving farms in the New Cache and Larimer & Weld systems, Northern Water and the NISP participants are exploring purchases of land and water from willing sellers in the two systems, as well as looking at various other avenues to keep water on the farms. This will help ensure those supplies remain available for the NISP exchanges.

Rather than “buy-and-dry,” this is an outside-the-box, “buy-and-supply” approach to address tightening supplies.

Farms in the New Cache and Larimer & Weld systems purchased by Northern Water and the NISP participants will remain in production through:

- Limited land-use easements on the property
- Lease-back agreements
- Other arrangements that will require continued irrigation on those farms

Furthermore, the purchase of any irrigated lands will be done with the goal to eventually return the operations to private ownership.

We are also exploring agreements in which New Cache and Larimer & Weld shareholders could be compensated for giving Northern Water and the NISP participants first priority in buying their land and water assets if they are planning to sell them in the future.

Water quality questions addressed

Water quality and agronomy experts have examined the water quality issues, and with proper water blending, no impacts on crop yields would occur in nearly all anticipated operating conditions, and only minor impacts on specific crops in some instances. NISP participants would certainly factor any such impacts on crops into mitigation and compensation packages, and Northern Water will also continue monitoring water quality long into the future to address any potential issues.

We encourage anyone who wants to learn more to go to www.gladereservoir.org, or contact Greg Dewey at Northern Water at 970-622-2300 or gdewey@northernwater.org.