



# Concerns about water quality may delay reservoir project

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By Jerd Smith

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The state health department said significant water quality problems should be addressed before the proposed Glade and Galeton reservoirs project in northern Colorado moves forward.

The state's concerns, outlined in a Sept. 12 letter to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, are likely to delay the reservoirs, several officials said.

The Northern Colorado Water Conservancy District, which is sponsoring the reservoirs, had hoped to have the federal approvals necessary to begin design work by early next year.

"We have raised substantive questions that will need to be answered," said Steve Gunderson, director of the water quality control division at the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment.

The reservoirs would store water from the Cache La Poudre and South Platte rivers to serve small, fast-growing communities including Dacono, Erie and Frederick, among others.

Key concerns are that the project, because it reduces flows, could increase concentrations of selenium, a metal that can be toxic to fish. Lower stream flows also could make it more difficult for Fort Collins to treat its water, the state said.

The reservoirs already have drawn sharp criticism from the Save The Poudre coalition, and Fort Collins and Greeley, despite a new poll by the water district that indicates more than half the residents of Larimer and Weld counties support the proposal.

"We have committed to address water quality concerns," said Brian Werner, a spokesman for district. "They want some additional information and analysis. This is how it's supposed to work. It could definitely slow the process down, but it doesn't change the fact that the people in these communities still need the water."

Gary Wockner, a spokesman for Save The Poudre, said the water quality problems will cost millions of dollars to fix, if they can be fixed at all. "We don't believe they can be mitigated," he said.

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