



Seven-year pitch

City makes annual NISP payment

By Gene Sears

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Fort Lupton continues to pay for the rain dance that will, some day, bring a large reservoir of water to communities throughout northern Colorado's Front Range.

Voting in the affirmative, Fort Lupton City Councilors approved the seventh in a series of payments for the Northern Integrated Supply Project Feb. 13.

For 2012, the prorated portion for the city comes to \$75,000, the amount necessary to retain a stake in the water supply project

The overall 2012 price tag for NISP among all participants is \$1.5 million for some 40,000 acre-feet, 3,000 of which is earmarked for the city upon completion. That amount is in addition to \$10.8 million already spent by all participants on the project since inception, the majority of which centers around permitting preparations and cost.

Plagued by opposition from environmental groups such as Save The Poudre, final permitting and construction has repeatedly been pushed back until 2025 and possibly farther in the event of lawsuits, likely as the project gains ground.

While there are no guarantees that NISP will ever move past the planning stages, if the city dropped its payment schedule, any monies invested in the project thus far would be forfeited. For Fort Lupton, that total before the upcoming payment is approximately \$825,000

According to information supplied by the Northern Water Conservancy District, this year's money is earmarked for ongoing work on Phase 3A of the project, which consists of "further agency consultation, permitting with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and other agencies, compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act and other requirements for federal permitting, field work and analysis for permitting, modeling, and other activities related to designing and permitting the project."

Phase 1 of the project consisted of preliminary studies to evaluate potential Poudre reservoir sites and the South Platte Water Conservation Project. Phase 2 of the project added additional reservoir site evaluations, alternatives analysis, environmental studies, financial analyses, and other related work. Phase 3 began in 2004, consisting of agency consultation, commencement of permitting with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and other agencies, commencement of compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act and other requirements for federal permitting, commencement of field work and analysis for permitting, modeling, and other activities related to designing and permitting the Project, continued on into the current series of steps, Phase 3A.

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