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Anglers stand in Poudre River, saying proposed reservoir would make it disappear

By Pamela Dickman  
The Reporter-Herald

FORT COLLINS — A line of anglers in the Poudre River were trying to draw attention Thursday to what they see as a danger to the river they love.

They stood, thigh deep, in water they say will disappear if Glade Reservoir is built northwest of Fort Collins.

Nearby, others who also are concerned about the river rolled up pant legs and stood in the same water, all hoisting signs: "Save the Poudre."

"The threat to the river is enormous," said Gary Wockner, a Fort Collins resident and spokesman for Save the Poudre Coalition. "It is called the Northern Integrated Supply Project's Glade Reservoir."

The proposed reservoir, if approved, would divert water from the river for use by 15 customers, including the Fort Collins-Loveland Water District, Windsor, Evans and other towns and water districts in Northern Colorado.

Wockner, anglers, rafters, kayakers and other area residents have banded together to fight the reservoir.

On Thursday, their effort received national backing when American Rivers, a national group that works to protect waterways, chose the Poudre as one of the country's 10 most endangered rivers because of the proposed reservoir.

The danger, the national group and local activists say, is real, and the solution is to use less water, not to divert more.

Conservation is only part of the solution, said Brian Werner, spokesman for the Northern Colorado Water Conservancy District, the agency planning to build Glade Reservoir.



Save the Poudre Coalition supporters Ryan McKee, foreground, and Carrie Burger prepare to leave a press conference along the Cache la Poudre River near College Avenue in Fort Collins on Thursday. A national group, American Rivers, has designated the Poudre one of America's 10 most endangered. The designation could help the coalition in its fight against the proposed Glade Reservoir, which would divert water from the river. Reporter-Herald/Christopher Stark

“Twenty-first century solutions aren’t a single solution,” he said. “It will include water conservation, of which I think we are doing a darn good job. It also includes water storage.

“They are missing a piece of the pie. No matter how good of a job we do conserving water, we have to have somewhere to store it.”

Northern Water wants to store up to 177,000 acre-feet of water in Glade Reservoir.

The water will be diverted at the mouth of the canyon, not as it winds through the mountains, where the Cache la Poudre is federally designated as Colorado’s only Wild and Scenic River. So it won’t affect recreation, Werner said.

And with the reservoir, water managers could choose when and how much water to release at any given time, which Werner believes might even increase flows for anglers, rafters and others west of Fort Collins.

Members of Save the Poudre Coalition do not buy that argument and also worry about the stretch of the river that winds through Fort Collins.

The city has invested millions of dollars into natural areas and open space along the river and into downtown development plans that rely on the Poudre River, according to Wockner and Lisa Poppow, a Fort Collins City Council member.

Fort Collins has been named by numerous national magazines as one of the best places to live, to retire, to start a business and to raise a family.

“Glade Reservoir will tarnish our image,” Poppow said. “More important than our image is the threat to this river.”

At the end of the month, April 30, a draft environmental impact statement will be released for the proposed reservoir. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers will take public comment on that report before deciding whether to approve the project.

Werner hopes the corps will agree with Northern Water’s vision and allow the agency to begin building. If it does, officials could begin filling Glade in 2014.

Wockner and others opposed to Glade hope they can stop it now. They encourage residents to speak out against the reservoir at soon-to-be-scheduled public meetings.

“We’ve said this is a sad day and an unfortunate day,” Wockner said, referring to the endangered-river designation.

“It is also a pivotal day, and this is a day for hope. Citizens can speak out and make a difference, and we must do that.

“The most-endangered-river designation is a scar on Fort Collins. We need to heal that as soon as we can.”

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## Comments

Actually Dan they are quite informed. They aren't the ones lying about what will happen to the Poudre when Glade sucks it dry to pave over our farmland and make cardboard subdivisions. This is about fat cat developers thinking they can run a designated Wild and Scenic River in Colorado dry. They aren't "skimming off peak flow" as Brian Werner likes to say. They are taking 46% of the now degraded flow the river gets. Do the math.

[http://www.savethepoudre.org/likely\\_impacts\\_to\\_the\\_river.html](http://www.savethepoudre.org/likely_impacts_to_the_river.html)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9s3MCgFO5vo>

*mark*, fort collins, co 4/18/2008 3:21:15 PM

I would encourage any one who is in favor or opposed to this project--and has the inclination to speak out about it--to first consult with someone who actually has knowledge of how the Poudre River is operated (and how Glade fits into this picture) before doing so. There are reasons to be opposed to this project, but those who are most vocal in opposition do not seem to know what they are, or what they are talking about generally (from a river management standpoint anyway), and as a result are spreading misinformation that does not allow an honest discourse to take place. Please don't add to the problem.

*Dan*, Fort Collins, colorado 4/18/2008 1:15:50 PM

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