

Environmentalists seek protection for insect

Groups working to save Arapahoe snowfly found in Poudre tributaries

BY [BILL JACKSON](#).

FORT COLLINS — A coalition of environmental groups has filed a petition seeking protection for an insect found on two small tributaries of the Poudre River.

The petition, filed with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, seeks protection under the Endangered Species Act for the Arapahoe snowfly, an aquatic insect found on Young Gulch and Elkhorn Creek, which feed the Poudre. The Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation said a survey it conducted found that the insect is critically imperiled and likely on the brink of extinction. Save the Poudre of Fort Collins supported the petition, as did the WildEarth Guardians.

Jon Monson, director of the city of Greeley Water and Sewer Department, said he had not heard of the filing.

“We try to support the environment, because we live in it. But I have not heard of this and don't know at this time if it will have any effect on the expansion of the Milton Seaman Reservoir,” Monson said. The city-owned reservoir is north of the Poudre River in the canyon northwest of Fort Collins and the city has long-range plans to enlarge that facility, which provides drinking water for Greeley.

Brian Werner, spokesman for the Northern Colorado Water Conservancy District, which is administering the building of the proposed Northern Integrated Supply Project that includes reservoirs off the Poudre River and northeast of Greeley, said the survey would have no effect on those projects because the insects are upstream from the Glade Reservoir site.

The Xerces Society claimed the species — sometimes called winter stoneflies — is threatened by habitat damage from intensive recreation, livestock grazing, timbering projects, stream de-watering, insecticide application close to water bodies connected to Elkhorn Creek, sedimentation and runoff from roads and trails, and effluent from residential and destination resort septic systems.

“Our organization's mission is to protect and restore the Poudre River, and that extends to the species and ecosystem in and around it. We have a moral, environmental, and economic obligation to protect the Arapahoe snowfly,” said Gary Wockner, spokesman for Save the Poudre, in a press release.

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