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## Let's uphold responsibility to the river

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Many of us in Fort Collins beamed with pride when Money magazine named our city the "Best Place to Live in America" and Outside magazine deemed our city a "New American Dream Town." But those shining accolades - and dozens of others - lost their luster with our newest distinction: home to the Cache la Poudre River, now one of America's "Most Endangered Rivers."

The upper stretch of the Poudre River is the only "National Wild and Scenic River" in Colorado, as designated by an act of Congress. The lower stretch is a cultural and recreational hub that defines downtown Fort Collins. But due to the proposed massive dam and reservoir scheme called the Northern Integrated Supply Project, our river's future is in serious jeopardy.

The proposed NISP/Glade Reservoir endangers the life of the Poudre and the well-being of our region. Here are the top five reasons why Colorado residents should take swift action against NISP:

- > Ecological degradation to the river: The Poudre is already severely degraded with 60 percent of its water drained before it gets to Fort Collins. NISP/ Glade Reservoir will drain another 35 percent of what's left, leaving only 25 percent of the natural flow.
- > Severe degradation to the investment in the natural areas: Through open space taxes and GOCO grants, residents of Fort Collins, Larimer County and Colorado have invested tens-of-millions of dollars in preserving natural areas and providing bike paths and other access to the Poudre River through Fort Collins. It's ridiculous to drain the river and devalue this investment.
- > Debt disaster in the making: If built, much of NISP/Glade would be debt-funded and would thus necessitate rapid growth to pay back the debt - at a time when housing starts have been dampened by the mortgage crisis. Including the interest on the capital costs, NISP is nearly a billion-dollar debt-ridden project.
- > NISP/Glade will dry up farms and won't solve the water crisis: At least 25,000 acres of farms would have to be paved over and subdivided in order to pay back the debt. Draining the river, which NISP/Glade would do, will only provide a drop in the bucket of the total new water demand in the region.
- > Threat to Fort Collins' economy: Fort Collins calls the environment and the river one of its "economic engines," and the downtown economy is increasingly dependent on the river. The Downtown River District, Beet Street and UniverCity Connections all identify the river as a major driver in the downtown Fort Collins experience.

We Fort Collins residents are passionate about protecting our Poudre River, and that passion is strongly supported by the hard facts of this project's far-reaching negative impacts. In two weeks, the Army Corps of Engineers will release its Draft Environmental Impact Statement about the proposed NISP/Glade Reservoir. The release of the DEIS will be accompanied by a "public comment period" where we residents actually - and finally - get a real voice in this devastating river-destruction scheme.

It's time for action.

Together, let's Save the Poudre, take it off the "Most Endangered Rivers" list and make the next accolade that Colorado receives reflect our residents' commitment to our beautiful natural resources. Please visit [www.SaveThePoudre.org](http://www.SaveThePoudre.org), join our mailing list and we'll keep you posted on how to take action. Let's Save The Poudre now.

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