

Painting, protecting the Poudre

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Paint the Poudre

When: Show on display Friday through Sunday; there will be an artists reception from 5 to 9 p.m. Friday. Register to win an original artwork by Diane Edwards at http://mariemassey.com/?page_id=81 (participants must be at Friday's reception to win). **Where:** Artists Association of Northern Colorado Gallery, 148 W. Oak St., Fort Collins **Cost:** Admission is free **Information:** Paint the Poudre Facebook page and www.communityfunded.com *Artists can be viewed plein air painting through Thursday (visit the Paint the Poudre Facebook page for artist locations)*

This week, more than 40 artists from throughout Colorado and the nation will get out their brushes and take to the winding Poudre River not only to capture its beauty but to protect it, as well.

Invited "plein air" (French for "open air") artists will spend the week painting along the Poudre River and in Old Town Fort Collins as part of Paint the Poudre, a new event focused on bringing attention to plein air painting and raising funds for Save the Poudre, a nonprofit organization that works to protect and restore the Poudre River. The event also is working with Community Funded, a local company that assists start-up companies and nonprofit organizations that need capital to connect them with people and companies in their community that want to fund them directly.

At the end of the week, the artist's works will be showcased in an art show and sale at AANC Gallery running Friday through Sunday.

For Marie Massey — who organized the event along with fellow local plein air painter Diane Edwards — the challenge of dealing with shifting light, wind, bugs and scouting territory while carrying a travel easel in order to paint in the outdoors is more of an opportunity.

"It's like a sport," she said. "You just have to be prepared for anything."

And while other artists have weeks and even months to work on a piece, plein air artists have about a maximum of three hours, Massey said. After that, the light changes too much to accurately capture the original image. So why not take a photo?

"You get so much more information and life from painting in real situations (as opposed to painting from a photograph)," she said.

"You would never get these colors from a photograph," Massey added, pointing to the rich blues and greens of her canvas after painting a scene from Watson Lake.