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Save the Poudre gets \$40,000 from New Belgium

BY BOBBY MAGILL

BobbyMagill@coloradoan.com

New Belgium Brewing Co. has donated \$40,000 - one of the largest donations in the brewery's history - to a Fort Collins environmental group to help it prevent dams from being built on the Poudre River.

The brewery gave the Save the Poudre Coalition the money after the group was named a "waterkeeper" by the Waterkeeper Alliance, an environmental group formed by Robert F. Kennedy Jr.

"This will be a sizable grant for us," New Belgium spokesman Bryan Simpson said.

Most of the brewery's larger donations are about \$10,000, and few have ever reached the level of its donation to Save the Poudre, he said.

"Because we are obviously in the watershed of the Poudre River, this one is very important to us," he said.

Save the Poudre's goals are to stop any dam building on the river and prevent Glade Reservoir, part of the Northern Colorado Water Conservancy District's Northern Integrated Supply Project, from being built.

Save the Poudre's Gary Wockner said the New Belgium money will be used to fight against Northern Water and its plans for the Poudre.

"We're outgunned financially by Northern Colorado Water Conservancy District," Wockner said. "The money helps us hire our own scientific and legal consultants. They can drop 50 grand at anytime they want on anything they want. We need the money to fight this project and save the Poudre."

The Waterkeeper Alliance will help provide the coalition with consultation on fundraising and how to obtain legal representation to uphold the federal Clean Water Act.

That won't be enough to derail NISP, said Northern Water spokesman Brian Werner, adding he wishes New Belgium would examine the need for the project a bit more closely considering the brewery uses a great deal of water.

"It's a \$400 million to \$500 million project and we've been working on it now - the formal permitting process - for eight years," he said. "It's going to continue. The participants need the water. It doesn't eliminate the need for water if the project is not permitted."

"Northern Colorado looks a lot better with NISP than without NISP," he said.