

Without a Paddle Kayakers worry about the future of their water park if Glade is built

By Aaron Rognstad
Fort Collins Now

The U. S. Army Corps of Engineers' analysis of how a proposed new reservoir would impact the Poudre River has more than just environmentalists up in arms—the possibility that water flows in the river could be massively impacted also has the city's kayakers more than a little irked. For years, plans for a proposed kayak park have been in the works for the area around North College Avenue. But if the reservoir is built, those plans may be up a creek. "I've been looking forward to the park for some time," said Lee Mitchell, a Fort Collins kayaker of 15 years. "It would be a shame to see the course, as well as the river, dried up certain summers." The proposed Glade Reservoir, part of the Northern Integrated Supply Project, would reduce the Poudre's May flows through Fort Collins by as much as 71 percent in an average year and 26 percent in August during dry years, according to the Corps' draft environmental impact statement released two weeks ago. The document singled out the kayak park as likely suffering if the reservoir is built.

"A water-craft course is currently being planned ... and has a preliminary minimum design streamflow of 150 (cubic feet per second)," the report reads. "All action alternatives would reduce the streamflow on this reach, therefore reducing the boating season for the proposed water craft course."

Some worry that it would eliminate it completely in dry years, but one of the park's biggest proponents said that's not necessarily the case.

"The reservoir won't necessarily kill the kayak park certain years, but it will affect it," said Matt Evans, co-chair of the River Task Force for UniverCity Connections and a board member of Friends of the Poudre. He has been a driving force behind the design and funding of the park for more than 10 years.

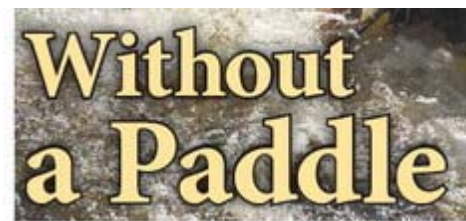
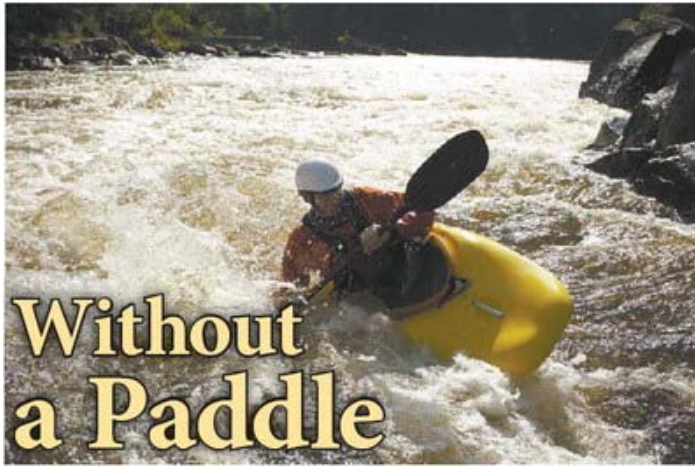
"It can be navigated at pretty low flows, but saying that it will be eliminated some years is incorrect," he said. "This project is still on the drawing board and it has to be worked out along with all the possibilities that Glade Reservoir presents."

Matt Koenig has been kayaking the Poudre for 12 years and would like to see the kayak course materialize. "We've been hearing about this for years now, but what's the point of setting up this course if it's not going to be navigable?"

Koenig said. "You know, Fort Collins is the last major city in the state without a kayak course. Even Berthoud and Pueblo have courses." Seth Murphy, manager of The Mountain Shop in Old Town and an avid kayaker said it would be a loss if the reservoir ruined the chances for a kayak park. "It would be a big bummer to the kayakers," Murphy said. "Aside from that though, it would be a big bummer for the community as well to have no water flowing through town."

By diverting a lot of water down to 140 (cubic feet per second) in the summertime like they do now, then down to half of that with the Glade proposal, would heavily affect recreation on the river." The River Task Force for UniverCity Connections and Friends of the Poudre are currently pursuing talks with the Army Corps of Engineers concerning this issue.

"The last thing we want is a glorified irrigation ditch running through town," Evans said.



Powered by [TECNAVIA](#)

All Contents Copyright © 2008 fortcollinsnow.com 05/07/2008