

## **EMBARGOED UNTIL APRIL 17**

For details on the NISP/Glade project, please go to [http://savethepoudre.org/angered\\_river.html](http://savethepoudre.org/angered_river.html).

Photos and video available upon request.

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## **“Best Place to Live in America” now has “Most Endangered River in America”**

*NISP/Glade project leads American Rivers to issue its “endangered” ranking;  
Fort Collins’ reputation tarnished*

**Fort Collins, CO (April 17, 2008)**—Northern Colorado’s sterling standing as a great place to live and a thriving economic region took a significant hit today as American Rivers, the leading organization dedicated to the protection and restoration of North America’s waterways, named the Cache la Poudre River one of **America’s Most Endangered Rivers**.

The Poudre, which is the ecological heart of Fort Collins and Colorado’s only Wild and Scenic River, faces an imminent threat to its future from the Northern Integrated Supply Project (NISP)/Glade Reservoir—a water diversion scheme that would severely degrade the ecological health of the river, dry up farmland, and threaten both the quality of life and economy of the region. The project is also a debt disaster in the making, with ballooning expenses burdening generations to come for decades

“Because of the NISP/Glade project, Fort Collins has been saddled with a very dubious distinction,” said Gary Wockner of the Save The Poudre Coalition. “Fort Collins and the region have been called the ‘Best Place to Live in America’ by Money Magazine and a ‘New American Dream Town’ by Outside Magazine. We can’t let the proposed Glade Reservoir drown our city’s reputation. We need to stop this project.”

The NISP/Glade project, a massive dam-and-reservoir project that would include the 177,000 acre-foot Glade Reservoir, is the largest engineering project proposed along Colorado’s Front Range in a quarter century. If built, the project would divert about 35% of the water out of the Poudre River as it flows through Fort Collins—and that is in addition to the 60% of water that is already diverted out of the Poudre. It would also wipe out a scenic valley just north of Fort Collins and require the relocation of part of Highway 287 at an enormous cost to ratepayers.

The ecological costs are even higher. Besides draining the Poudre to a trickle and threatening a variety of plant and animal species, the NISP/Glade project would severely deplete the already beleaguered “June Rise,” the natural increase in stream flows that occurs during snowmelt that is critical to the overall health of the Poudre River ecosystem.

“The Poudre is already stretched by the many demands we place upon it and is often dry during parts of the year,” said Becky Long of the Colorado Environmental Coalition. “Any large new development on the river is going to have substantial impacts on all users.”

With its massive size and price tag, the NISP/Glade project also puts at risk downtown Fort Collins businesses and the multi-million dollar investment citizens have made in the public land corridor that runs along the river and through the city.

- Fort Collins calls the environment one of its “economic engines,” and cultural and recreational resources such as the Downtown River District, Beet Street, and UniverCity Connections all benefit from a healthy river flowing through town.
- Tens of millions of dollars have been allocated to natural areas and bike paths along the Poudre River corridor to preserve and enhance recreational, aesthetic, and ecological assets for the citizens of Fort Collins, Larimer County, and Colorado.

For farmers, the NISP/Glade project represents an additional challenge as at least 20,000 acres of farm land will have to be cleared, paved over, and converted into residential housing in order to finance the project.

“If NISP is completed, we may well be giving a parched kiss goodbye to our cultural, economic, and ecological heritage,” said Mark Easter of the Sierra Club Poudre Canyon Group. “The price is simply too high.”

Originally designed as a spigot to fuel future growth, the NISP/Glade project faces increasing challenges to its viability, given the nation’s protracted mortgage crisis and a housing downturn rolling across the state. According to data recently released by the Northern Colorado Homebuilders Association, housing starts in Northern Colorado have plummeted by two-thirds from 2006 and 2007 levels, raising even more uncertainty about the project’s finances.

“Instead of projects like NISP, we should implement proven and effective water-saving measures,” said Wockner. “We also need to work proactively with farmers to find flexible solutions for the benefit of the region – that’s the best solution to meeting our water needs, not further draining our rivers.”

An upcoming comment period on the project’s Environmental Impact Statement—expected to be released late this month—will give citizens a voice in the process, and Wockner encourages residents across Northern Colorado to let their voices be heard. Opportunities include:

- Sign the Save The Poudre Petition:  
[http://www.savethepoudre.org/sign\\_our\\_joint\\_resolution.html](http://www.savethepoudre.org/sign_our_joint_resolution.html)

- Contact local media and voice your opinion:  
[http://savethepoudre.org/voice\\_your\\_opinion.html](http://savethepoudre.org/voice_your_opinion.html)
- Contact local government:  
[http://www.savethepoudre.org/write\\_your\\_representatives.html](http://www.savethepoudre.org/write_your_representatives.html)

“The Poudre River is a crucial component of the area’s great quality of life and thriving economy,” Wockner said. “American Rivers’ condemnation of the Poudre as one of America’s Most Endangered Rivers is a reminder that it’s time to stop the NISP/Glade project before our city’s good name—and our river—dries up and turns to dust.”

**On Thursday, April 17 at 10:30 a.m., the Save The Poudre Coalition will hold a press conference and rally at Legacy Park along the Poudre River in downtown Fort Collins to address the American Rivers “Most Endangered River” designation and discuss ways for citizens to fight the NISP/Glade project.**

**About Save The Poudre Coalition:**

The Save The Poudre Coalition ([www.savethepoudre.org](http://www.savethepoudre.org)) is committed to positive, balanced solutions for the long-term health of the Poudre River and for the sustainability of our communities. The Coalition believes that what’s good for the land, air, water, and wildlife is good for people and good for our economy. Member groups include Poudre Paddlers, Cache la Poudre River Foundation, Friends of the Poudre, Sierra Club Poudre Canyon Group, Fort Collins Audubon Society, Citizen Planners, Wolverine Farm Publishing, American Rivers, Defenders of Wildlife, The Bean Cycle and Matter Bookstore, and the Colorado Environmental Coalition.

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