

For Immediate Release

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Save The Poudre: Poudre Waterkeeper

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Water Developers Try To Hijack Governor Hickenlooper's State Water Plan

Metropolitan Colorado water developers propose to drain and destroy every river in the state, including the Cache la Poudre and Colorado Rivers

Fort Collins, CO – Today Save The Poudre: Poudre Waterkeeper issues a stinging rebuke of a proposed Colorado “State Water Plan” put forward by water developers on the East Slope of Colorado who claim to represent the growing Denver area metropolis from Pueblo to Colorado Springs to Denver to Loveland and Greeley. The developers created a draft document titled, “Filling The East Slope Municipal Water Supply Gap,” that lays out a stunning array of dam, pipeline, and reservoir schemes that would basically re-route endangered rivers across Colorado, pointing all of their last free-flowing water to the Denver area.

The draft document is [posted here](#).

The proposed plan is in response to an [Executive Order](#) in May of 2013, in which Governor Hickenlooper required that Colorado create a “State Water Plan.” Prior to the Order, in his January State of the State address, Hickenlooper soundly endorsed water conservation, not new dam and pipeline projects, when he said, “Every discussion about water should start with conservation.” ([see the video of his statement here](#))

Openly defying Governor Hickenlooper, the draft document from the water developers endorses every proposed dam and reservoir project on the East Slope, including extremely controversial projects such as the Northern Integrated Supply Project (NISP), the Windy Gap Firming Project, and the Moffat Collection System Project. All of these projects would further drain and destroy the Colorado River. Others, such as NISP and other projects, would also drain and destroy the Cache la Poudre River of Northern Colorado.

“This water developer plan further destroys Colorado’s rivers to fuel and subsidize population growth and fracking in Denver region from Pueblo to Greeley,” said Gary Wockner, Director of Save The Poudre and a river activist in the Southwest U.S. “The plan also basically endorses billions of dollars in public debt and paves over tens-of-thousands of acres farms when easier, faster, cheaper alternatives have already been put forward.”

In addition to endorsing all proposed projects, the plan lays out a spaghetti-like maze of diversion and pipeline schemes all across the state, with the end-point of every pipeline

being the rapidly growing Denver metropolitan area. Water that used to flow in the South Platte River to Nebraska, and in the Arkansas River to Kansas, and in the Green/Yampa/Gunnison/Colorado Rivers to Utah/Nevada/Arizona/California, all gets re-routed to Denver and the East Slope. Over a million acre feet of water could be diverted, most of it from the Colorado River system. And, these diversions completely ignore the severe drought and climate change that just last week forced the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation to curtail Colorado River flows downstream to Nevada/Arizona/California ([see this Wall Street Journal article](#)).

“Just laying out this scheme of diversions and pipelines on a map enflames the political chaos around the Colorado River water supply crisis,” said Wockner. “This water developer plan openly and publicly defies Governor Hickenlooper’s directive to ‘start every discussion about water with conservation’ and would basically ignite the next water war in the Southwest U.S. Will Governor Hickenlooper let his State Water Plan get hijacked? Or will he keep his word and start with conservation?”

The map of the spaghetti-like maze where nearly all Colorado rivers are diverted to Denver is [posted here](#).

The draft plan was created by “Roundtable” members from the South Platte River, Arkansas River, and Metro-Denver areas. These members are not accountable to the public, and have only token membership from the environmental community. In fact the 50-person “South Platte Roundtable” has zero environmental members, and a mere [2 out of 50](#) members representing hunting/fishing groups, the other 48 members represent cities and farm ditch companies. The members of the “Roundtables” actually did a “self poll” to decide what they thought so they could create the draft document. That “poll” is [posted here](#).

“When you ask people who make their living off of dams, reservoirs, and pipelines what they want to do, they want to build more dams, reservoirs, and pipelines – there’s no surprise in this silly poll,” said Wockner.

But, other actual scientific polls in Colorado paint a very different picture, like this [one in January of 2013](#) which showed that 76% of Colorado citizens believe that conservation and reducing waste is the right path forward, and [this poll done by the State of Colorado](#) itself which showed (page 21-24) that citizens prioritize conservation and environmental needs first and second, respectively, as important steps to take in addressing water supply challenges.

“The Roundtable members simply don’t represent the public,” Wockner said. “Further, they have proposed massive new dams, diversions, and pipelines, but have not addressed the impact on the environment or restoring healthy flows to the public’s rivers at all.”

The draft plan currently has been sent out for review to all of the Roundtable members.

The environmental community has put forward alternatives to the new projects, including this alternative for the Cache la Poudre River titled, “[A Better Future For the](#)

[Poudre River: Alternative to the Northern Integrated Supply Project](#),” which lays out a broad array of solutions including conservation, efficiency, recycling, and water sharing agreements with farmers. The devastation to farmland if NISP gets built is discussed in [this technical document](#) here.

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This press release is posted here: <http://savethepoudre.org/documents/STP-State-Water-Plan-Sham-8-20-2013-web.htm>