



For Immediate Release

Save the Poudre: Poudre Waterkeeper

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SAVE THE POUUDRE ENDORSES "CASH FOR GRASS"

Fort Collins, CO -- With three large new reservoir projects proposed to take even more water out of one of the most endangered rivers in America -- the Cache la Poudre -- Save the Poudre is endorsing "Cash For Grass," an innovative program used by other Colorado and southwestern American cities to conserve water used for irrigating lawns. The "Cash For Grass" program was highlighted in this July 26, 2010 Denver CBS News 4 story and video:

<http://cbs4denver.com/news/fraser.denver.water.2.1826940.html>

"Between 30% and 50% of all water used by the cities that want to build NISP, Halligan, and Seaman is used for three months in the summer to keep lawns green," said Gary Wockner of Save the Poudre: Poudre Waterkeeper. "It makes no sense to destroy the Cache la Poudre River and put farmers out of business to grow grass in our very dry climate."

As one example of northern Colorado water use, the City of Greeley recently stated in the *Greeley Tribune* that half of its water is used for summer landscape irrigation:

<http://www.greeleytribune.com/article/20100619/NEWS/100619624/1002&parentprofile=1001>

The Northern Integrated Supply Project (NISP) is proposed by 15 small towns in the Denver suburbs and northern Colorado. Halligan is a project proposed by the City of Fort Collins. Seaman is a project proposed by the City of Greeley. All three projects are proposing to put new larger dams in the Poudre River basin and remove even more water from the Poudre River. All three proposed projects are solely for new population growth. None of the project participants currently use the "Cash for Grass" program.

The "Cash For Grass" program gives homeowners money to remove irrigated grass and replace it with xeriscaped (no- or very low-water) landscapes. The going rate for the program is roughly \$1/square foot, where a city would pay a homeowner \$1 for each square foot of irrigated lawn replaced by non-irrigated xeriscaping.

As an example of the potential financial and environmental trade-offs, the City of Fort Collins' proposed Halligan project would cost roughly \$30 million. With that same \$30 million, approximately one square mile of irrigated lawns could be converted to xeriscaping. NISP is proposed to cost up to \$1 billion including interest on debt -- with that same money, roughly 36 square miles of irrigated lawns could be converted to non-irrigated xeriscaping.

"Before we further drain the Poudre River and dry up farms, we should conserve," said Wockner. "Water is extremely expensive and extremely precious -- wasting it is not responsible and not sustainable."

In addition to the "Cash for Grass" program, Save the Poudre has created the "Healthy Rivers Alternative" (HRA) to the new projects:

http://poudreriver.home.comcast.net/%7Epoudreriver/Healthy_Rivers_Alternative.pdf.

The HRA focuses on water conservation and cooperation with farmers to achieve new water supply.

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Save The Poudre: Poudre Waterkeeper is made up of 19 national, state, and regional groups including: Waterkeeper Alliance, National Wildlife Federation, Clean Water Action, Wild Earth Guardians, the Xerces Society, Defenders of Wildlife, American Rivers, American Whitewater Association, Western Resource Advocates, Colorado Environmental Coalition, Lighthawk, Environment Colorado, Sierra Club – Rocky Mountain Chapter, Fort Collins Audubon Society, Citizen Planners, Wolverine Farm Publishing, Poudre Paddlers, Friends of the Poudre, and the Cache la Poudre River Foundation. Membership in these groups totals over 3 million American citizens.