

# Soapbox: Speak out to save the Poudre

Gary Wockner 11:46 a.m. MDT September 9, 2014



(Photo: Courtesy photo)

What an amazing trip! A few weeks ago, I threw my inflatable standup paddleboard in the Poudre River at Lyons Park on Overland Trail and I paddled through much of Fort Collins, taking out at Timberline Road.

Yes, I had to portage around a couple of dams, and, yes, the Poudre through Fort Collins ain't exactly a pristine wilderness area. But the trip reminded me of what an amazing gem the Poudre is. The water was clean and flowing well, deer grazed alongside the banks, and great blue heron fished alongside me as my paddle dipped into the water. The Poudre is an amazing river and absolutely worth saving.

That's why we need you all to come speak out to help save the Poudre on Wednesday, Sept. 17.

Here's what's up: Over a year ago, Gov. John Hickenlooper wrote an executive order requiring that the state prepare a Colorado Water Plan. Over the past 12 months, an appointed group of people has been writing a draft of the plan for the Poudre and South Platte rivers, and now that plan is out for public comment. But here's the big problem — many of the very same people who were appointed to write the draft plan are the same people who are trying to build the Northern Integrated Supply Project, or NISP, and its Glade Reservoir.

No one — not one person — representing Save The Poudre or any river-protection organization was allowed to help write the draft plan even though there were 50 people appointed to write it. Save The Poudre was purposely excluded from the process. In other words, so far this Colorado Water Plan process is a corrupt, river-destroying scam that stinks to high heaven.

And now the draft of the plan for the Poudre and South Platte rivers is out for public comment and it's as bad as you might expect. The draft plan endorses every proposed dam and reservoir scheme, including the billion-dollar NISP boondoggle, and even uses phrases and quotes directly out of the completely debunked 2008 Environmental Impact Statement for NISP, which was so flawed that the Army Corps of Engineers has now spent over six years redoing it.

Help! Only you can speak out to fix this problem!

Under the strong environmental leadership of state Rep. Randy Fischer, the state Legislature's water committee is holding a public hearing for the Colorado Water Plan from 1 to 4 p.m. Wednesday, Sept. 17 at the Fort Collins Senior Center. Please come and speak at 1 p.m. Here's what I will tell the legislators at the hearing:

- The Colorado Water Plan process is corrupt — the same people who want to destroy the Poudre River are writing the plan.
- The plan should not endorse any new dam and reservoir schemes.
- The plan should focus on alternatives to dam and reservoir schemes including water conservation, recycling and water-sharing agreements with farmers.
- The plan should focus on river restoration — putting more water back in our rivers, not taking more water out.

As I floated along on my standup paddleboard enjoying the sights and sounds, I was struck by how quiet and natural the Poudre River still is and how wonderful an amenity it is flowing right through this community. The Poudre is your river, and it is worth saving.

See you at the hearing.

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