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EPA-inspired water quality alliance will share information Cooperation should be model for how to address area issues

Information is power, and a collaboration between a business and government entities intends to make information on the Poudre River's water quality more accessible.

The cities of Fort Collins, Greeley and Windsor, the Boxelder and South Fort Collins sanitation districts and Kodak Colorado have united to create the Cache la Poudre Water Quality Monitoring Agreement.

Currently, all those entities individually collect samples along the Poudre River in compliance with state law. That information is sent to the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, where it generally is not shared.

By agreeing to work together, the alliance will rely on Colorado State University to test water samples from 10 sites located from Fort Collins to Greeley. That information will be provided to the alliance and be made available to the general public via a Web site.

The Poudre River is a waterway of contrasts. The upper portion of the river, where the water flows faster and recreation is coveted, has been designated as "Wild and Scenic," but the lower portion between Fort Collins and Greeley was placed on a list known as 303(d) of the state's dirtiest waters. Some refer to the lower portion of the Poudre as a working river, because that is where agricultural and industrial diversions occur.

The idea for the alliance was prompted through an existing Environmental Protection Agency program that encourages collaboration to improve land, air and water quality.

By working together, the alliance has expanded the opportunity for students to learn and the public's ability to observe the river's status.

The Poudre remains an integral part of our culture, industry, history and future. A clear look at its condition is essential.

Regional cooperation has to start someplace. This enthusiastic effort should serve as a model for addressing other issues, such as transportation.
