

## PEDALING THE POUDRE

*"The bicycle, the bicycle surely, should always be the vehicle of novelists and poets."*

- Christopher Morley, American journalist

### OVERVIEW

Pass through in a car and you'll only scratch the surface of what the Cache la Poudre River National Heritage Area (CALA) has to offer. From giant cottonwoods, soaring eagles and hawks, sparkling lakes and rivers, to learning about the history of water use in Colorado, our Biking Adventures are always original and engaging rides that explore CALA's fascinating landmarks and landscapes. The Poudre Heritage Alliance (PHA), the managing entity for CALA, offers a range of guided Biking Adventures that are comfortable for a wide range of cyclists in both Larimer and Weld Counties.

One example is a 15-mile "water history ride" that follows the floodplain of the Cache la Poudre River through a mix of fields, cottonwood trees, lakes, and the river itself. This is a great ride for 5-10 people who might have wondered how water gets from the mountains to the kitchen faucet, or how water laws were formed. During the journey a trained Heritage Culturalist guides riders to locations where significant early water development took place, and where current water facilities still operate. Participants gain a better understanding of how water is distributed among the various users, and why the prior appropriation system is the rule of the river.

Biking Adventures are also perfect for children, even those who have never been on a bicycle before. In 2017, the PHA partnered with the Growing Project's "Nature Rides" initiative, which hosted 25 different guided Biking Adventures for youth from the Boys and Girls Clubs of Larimer County and the Family Center/La Familia. Each session began with a biking "safety circle" to help the youth feel comfortable with the bikes and instructors. Then, off they pedaled, exploring the local watershed and stopping for hands-on activities to learn about ecology, health of the Poudre River, and to remove trash or invasive species.

Surveys showed that 100% of the youth learned about bike safety; 90% shared stories about their rides with family and friends; 90% increased knowledge about plants; 85% increased knowledge about wildlife; and most importantly – they all want to come back for more!

PHA's team of volunteer Heritage Culturalists lead guided Biking Adventures for



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And, for those who prefer to grab their bike and explore on their own, PHA would like to provide more services such as:

- Scout, update, and improve bike route maps and directions within and around the corridor to provide clearer access and information about natural, cultural and historic sites.
- Get historic tour information included on existing bike maps; along with information about availability of water, air, bike repair and restrooms.
- Update the CALA Guidebook to ensure that route mapping includes bike access routes to the corridor, as well as within it.
- Improve bike wayfinding signage in the corridor, especially for history-related tours.

## PARTNERS

- FC Rides
- Colorado Mountain Club
- National Park Foundation
- Boys and Girls Clubs of Larimer County
- The Growing Project
- The Family Center/La Familia

## GOAL & OUTCOMES

Goal:

Provide a network of facilities and guided tours that highlight Colorado's heritage and appeal to bicycle riders of different ages and abilities.

Outcomes:

- Increase public awareness of CALA and river corridor history
- Promote bicycling as a means of connecting to our heritage and improving health
- Develop a connected bicycle network that includes both on-street and off-street facilities, as well as support facilities such as bicycle parking, that provides safe and comfortable accommodations for riders of all ages and abilities.

## BUDGET: \$75,000

Each contribution makes an impact:

- \$50 – Bicycle repair equipment
- \$250 – Bus load of youth on guided bike adventure
- \$2,500 – New interpretative sign along trail
- \$10,000 – Develop location-based smart phone app along bike trail

