

## Past, Present & Future Fort Collins



### Route Statistics:

Start - 1457 N Taft Hill Road Trailhead  
End - Northside Aztlan Community Center  
Total Miles - 2.8 miles (one-way)  
Total Biking Time: Approx. 30 min.

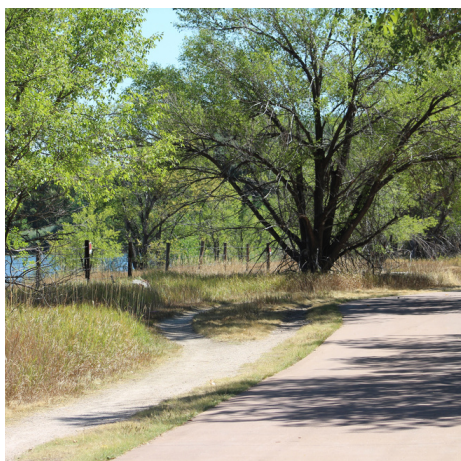


*Be sure to finish your pre-route reflection below before you start!*

1. Describe how you have interacted with the Cache la Poudre River in the past

2. Describe the ecological role of the river and what it provides to the natural environment of the area including a list of all plants and animals that you believe are dependent on the river

**START: Trailhead parking lot at 1457 N. Taft Hill Road, Fort Collins. Head East.**



### POI #1: Trail Crosses Ditch

The Cache la Poudre River National Heritage Area is crisscrossed with numerous canals and ditches. These ditches were created to move water into and out of the river to support human efforts like agriculture, drinking water and mining. Some of these are no longer routinely used, others are still used daily (during certain times of year) to move water to water rights owners and municipalities who use them to grow crops, provide drinking water, irrigate parks, and move unused or reclaimed water back into the river.

### Answer the following questions:

1. On the northside of the trail, on the east side of the ditch there is a "wheel" like object. This is a headgate. Headgates are used to turn off or on water flowing into and out of the ditch. This headgate can be opened to allow water to flow through an area 3 feet wide by 3 feet high by 3 feet long. This area can be filled in approximately 1 second. What is the volume of water that can be moved through this gate in one minute? Can you write out an equation that shows your answer?

2. As you move east from this POI, you will pass between two ponds. Do you think these ponds are human made or were here hundreds of years ago? What leads you to your answer? If you answered they were human made, you're correct! What led to these ponds being created? What is this material used for? How is this material a part of your life?

**Just past the Poudre River Trail mile marker, you will see your next POI.**





## POI #2: National Heritage Area Interpretive Sign

The Cache la Poudre River is designated as a National Heritage Area. As the sign says, this has to do with the role of this river in influencing water law, as well as its influence on the cultural heritage of the region.

1. Can you list some of the different human activities that have been dependent on the Cache la Poudre River for the past thousand years?
2. What six towns shown on this map are part of the Heritage Area?
3. Why do you think humans choose to make their cities by bodies of water?

**After the Bicycle Slow Zone sign, you will see your next POI.**



## POI #3: River Up or River Down Interpretive Sign - McMurry Natural Area River Gage

This site shows a river gauge on the far side of the river on the concrete pillar. It also features an artistic bridge and connection to the McMurry Natural Area which features riparian vegetative zones adjacent to rivers and several reclaimed gravel pits that are now functioning as wetlands.

1. The interpretative sign tells you how the volume of water is calculated. Look at the far river gauge (on the side of the bridge). Regardless of what the flow is today, if there are 200 cfs (cubic feet per second) in the river today. How many gallons of water are flowing by this bridge every second? Show your equation.
2. Note the artwork on the bridge. What does it represent? Do you know what species of fish live in this area of the Cache la Poudre River? Are any of these species native fish?



## POI #4: Interpretive Kiosk near Lee Martinez Park



Lee Martinez is noted for helping to build community in Fort Collins. The Cache la Poudre River has a long history of diverse human cultures who have made and called it their home. Sites around the Cache la Poudre have evidence of some of the oldest human uses in North America! Over the past one hundred years, diverse people from many different cultures have come to the Cache la Poudre to make a home.

1. What does the word "heritage" mean to you? When and why did you and your family come to Fort Collins?





2. Lee Martinez (pictured left with his wife, Eva, on their wedding day in 1924) was celebrated for his work in integrating the communities of Fort Collins. How do you work to build and benefit the community cultivated by the Cache la Poudre River?

3. Look at the ride side kiosk sign - In between which two Fort Collins' Natural Areas are you standing between right now?

**Continue straight on the Poudre River Trail (do not turn towards Lee Martinez Park) until you see an uphill unpaved path. Take this path towards your next POI, you will see up ahead at the top of this hill.**



### POI 5: Lake Canal Wayside Interpretive Sign

This site identifies one of the earliest conflicts over water in Northern Colorado. In Colorado the right to use water is given to individuals, cities, or groups. Every bit of water we drink or use is appropriated (meaning given ownership and purpose).

1. Where did the communities of Fort Collins and Greeley meet to settle the 1874 conflict over the Lake Canal?

2. Do you know who owns the right to the water you and your family use?

**Turn back to the fork on the unpaved path and take a left to continues heading East following the Poudre River. Once you hit the pavement, you are back on the Poudre River Trail. Take a LEFT once you hit the pavement, to cross under the railroad and then under College Ave.**



### POI 6: Whitewater Park-Old Coy Ditch Diversion Structure

This is the site of a former agricultural diversion ditch that was no longer used. The diversion structure was removed and a whitewater park was created for river play, tubing and kayaking. The Poudre Heritage Alliance's Play It Safe on the Poudre program raises awareness about approaches to recreating on the river in safe and sustainable ways. The program also calls attention to the history of in-river structures that represent hazards to recreation.

1. Both recreation like kayaking and tubing, and eating healthy are important for your health and well-being. List several of your favorite physical activities you like to pursue as well as your favorite fruit and vegetables that are grown in Colorado

2. In what ways can locally grown food be better for you and for the environment?



**Seasonal Selfie:**  
Take a selfie with the Whitewater Park in the background.



**Continue straight on the Poudre River Trail East of College Avenue, until you complete the route.**



## POI 7: Informational Kiosk in Heritage Park

During this learning adventure, you have had the opportunity to think about the role the Cache la Poudre River plays in many different parts of the natural and human communities of our area. The water in the river is what makes it a river! Because water is so important to human lives and human endeavors like agriculture and recreation and is essential for wildlife, native plants, and the ecology of the region, there are many different views on water and its use. Water laws work to balance these views and demands on water. These laws, along with technology, continue to change how water is stored, delivered, used, and reused in the Cache la Poudre River, where many of these challenges were first experienced, over 150 years ago and where many of the solutions for the future of rivers and communities throughout the West continue to be discovered.

1. Did you know there are laws about water? Did you know that water is actually owned?
2. If water wasn't protected by laws, and if everyone could just use what they wanted, what do you think would happen?

Rank the following water uses from 1-5 (one being the most important) based on how you feel water should be used:

- \_\_\_\_\_ Recreation
- \_\_\_\_\_ Drinking water for people
- \_\_\_\_\_ Water for wildlife (fish, animals, plants)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Agriculture (Farming, ranching)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Landscaping (lawns, parks, trees around town and in your neighborhood)

## END: Parking lot at Atzlan Community Center, 112 Willow St, Fort Collins

**As you bike back, stop to sit on a bench:** Think about what human uses can you observe alongside the river corridor and in the river from the route you take? Examples might include Recreation (fishing, walking, parks, biking, more!), Housing, Agriculture (farms, ranches), Mining, and Natural Resources Extraction (mining, water diversion).

### Summative reflection\*\*\*

**1. What are two takeaways (things you felt you learned and will remember) from your learning adventure?**

**2. Describe your feelings about the Cache la Poudre River.**

\*\*\*If you were assigned by your teacher to complete this SOLO Field Trip the summative reflection is likely required



# Need more space?



A series of ten horizontal lines for writing, each starting with a small L-shaped bracket on the left and ending with a small arrowhead on the right.