

PLAY IT SAFE

WEAR A LIFE VEST

- Use proper flotation devices
- Wear shoes
- Wear a helmet
- Don't tie anything to yourself or your tube

SAFE TO GO?

- Know the weather and water conditions
- This water is melted snow—it's always cold
- Avoid logs, branches, rocks and debris

KNOW WHERE YOU ARE

- Take a map
- Plan your take-out location before you get in

FLOAT SOBER, FLOAT SAFE

- Alcohol and drugs impair judgement

BE COURTEOUS

- Pack it in; pack it out
- Share the river

WHAT IF YOU FLIP?

- Don't stand up in the river; avoid foot entrapment
- Float on your back with feet pointing downstream and toes out of the water
- Use your arms to paddle to shore

UNFOLD FOR MAP

FURTHER INFORMATION

Visit us online at
PoudreHeritage.org/play-it-safe

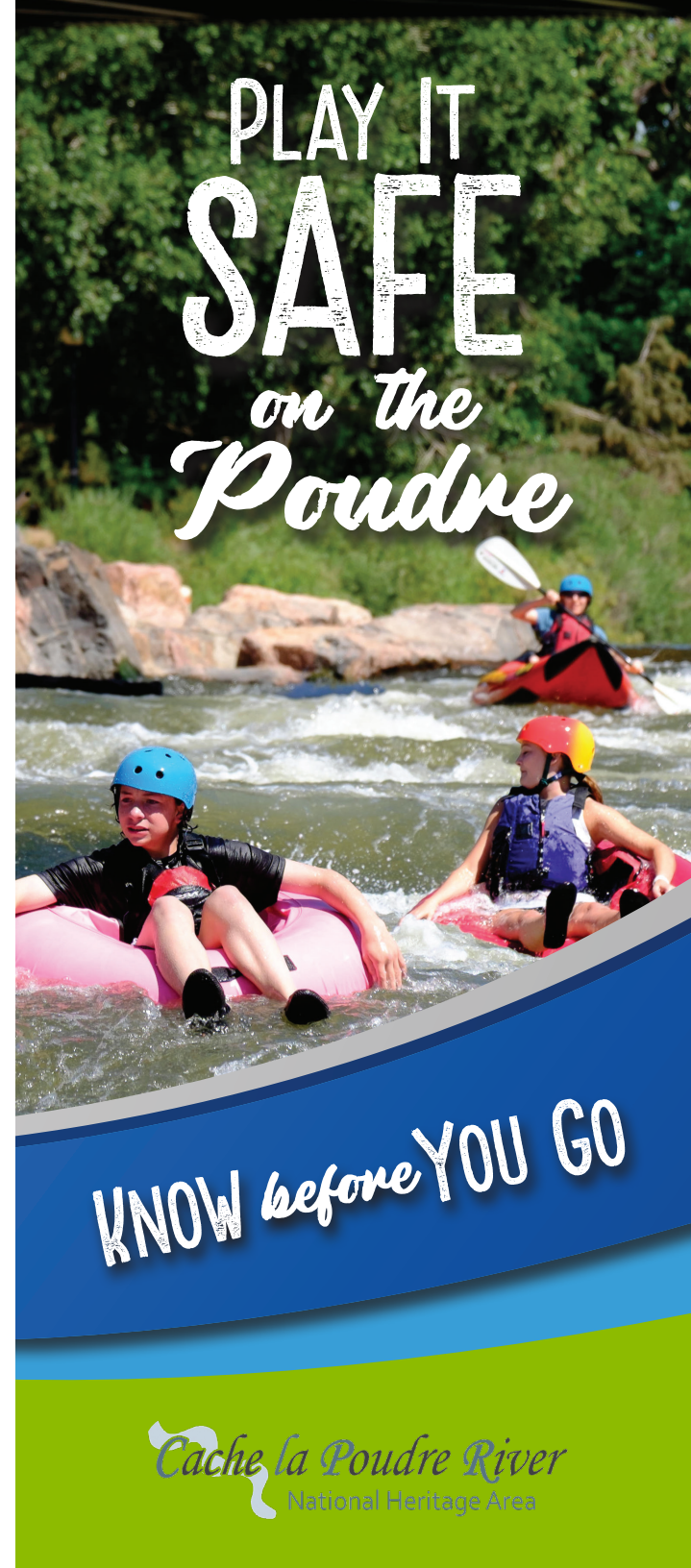
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Poudre Fire Authority:
www.poudre-fire.org

PARTNERSHIP

Play It Safe on the Poudre is a partnership between the Cache la Poudre River National Heritage Area, City of Fort Collins, Larimer County, Poudre Fire Authority, and Larimer County Dive Rescue Team. We seek to raise awareness about recreating on the river in safe and sustainable ways, and to help build capacity of the Poudre Fire Authority and Larimer County's rescue teams to meet increasing search and rescue demands. The program also calls attention to the history of in-river structures that represent hazards to recreation.

You can support this program by donating to the Poudre Heritage Alliance at
poudreheritage.org/donate



KNOW *before* YOU GO



A River of Many Uses

THE CACHE LA POUDE RIVER NATIONAL *Heritage* AREA

The Cache la Poudre River National Heritage Area (CALA) is a cultural and natural landscape that has been set aside by Congress as an irreplaceable source of life and inspiration. National Heritage Areas are large, lived-in landscapes that do not own the land that they encompass, and operate by collaboration with local communities.

CALA follows 45 miles of the lower “working Cache.” Within CALA there are reservoirs, pipelines, diversion ditches, pumps – all reminders of the struggle to sustain a viable agricultural economy, and meet the growing needs of an expanding population, while conserving the river’s health.

History OF THE CACHE LA POUDE RIVER

The Cache la Poudre River means different things to different people, and their perceptions have changed over time. In fact, the Cache la Poudre River was the engine for an agricultural society whose success lured settlers to Northern Colorado from all over the world.

In the 1880s and 1890s, irrigators built large canals along the Poudre. The concrete structures and low-head dams you see in the river today are steeped in a long history of agriculture and industry on the Poudre. In fact, these structures on the Poudre River are still used to divert water for local agriculture and municipal use. Low-head dams usually span the entire river and, although necessary, present a safety hazard to recreators because of dangerous recirculating currents, large hydraulic forces, and other hazardous conditions.

The Poudre River has also played a pivotal role in the development of western water law. One of the key aspects of this legal system is its emphasis on prior appropriation (or first in time, first in right) as the main factor in determining water rights ownership. Most western states use a form of this “Colorado doctrine” in their water law systems today.



Gradually, towns around the river grew into cities; colleges became universities; and businesses and suburbs flourished where irrigated fields and farmhouses once stood. By the 1980s, much of the Poudre was easily accessible by trails and paved roads. It was surrounded by a national park, national forests, private and municipal land. Its waters were scrupulously divided and extensively used by farmers, municipalities, industries and, increasingly, recreators.

The upper Poudre became a Wild and Scenic River in 1986, and the lower Poudre became the Cache la Poudre River National Heritage Area in 1996. Today, the Poudre River remains a “working river” that also provides ample recreation opportunities for Northern Colorado’s growing population.

The story of this evolution is being interpreted, documented and told through efforts of the Poudre Heritage Alliance.



PLAY IT SAFE on the Poudre

RIVER ACCESS MAP

- Wear a life vest
- Know if conditions are safe
- Know where you are
- Float sober, float safe
- Be courteous
- Know what to do if you flip

Look for signs like this one at river access points to plan your trip and **Play It Safe!**



Dam/Intake Hazard Signs

