

DRAFT

Audience: Trail users, anglers and paddlers – people that access the river and will see the sign.

Purpose:

1. Provide realtime flow measurements, year around.
2. Educate the audience on the importance of floods and flushing flows.
3. Introduce the term “healthy, working river”.
4. Encourage the public to support efforts towards a healthy, working river.

Text for River Gage Sign

Go Ahead, Gage the River

How much water is flowing down the Poudre River right now? Here’s a hint, look at the gage on the bridge. The gage translates river depth (measured in feet) to flow (measured in cubic feet per second, cfs). If the water level is up to the 100 cfs line, then 100 cubic feet of water is passing beneath the bridge every second. Estimating flows takes practice, how’d you do?

River Up?

Farmers, anglers, paddlers, stormwater professionals, trail planners – they all watch the Poudre to determine if the river’s up. High water can mean the river may not be safe to paddle, water can be diverted for irrigation, fish aren’t biting or sections of the Poudre River Trail are closed. Get to know when the river’s up and see how flows affect different uses.

High Flows = Improved River Health

A rising river is a good indicator of a healthy Poudre. Healthy rivers **DEPEND** on high flows that flush sediment downstream, spread nutrients across the floodplain, and cue fish to spawn. Cottonwoods, a native Colorado tree, require floods to expose sand bars and spread downy seeds. Flooding creates habitat for aquatic insects, a primary food source for fish, by washing leaves, sticks and trees into the river. Floods may look threatening to humans, but preventing floods poses real threats to the health of the Poudre River.

What You Can Do

Support a “Healthy, Working Poudre River.” This river is essential for delivering water throughout Larimer and Weld County - for agricultural, industrial, and municipal purposes. The Front Range as we know it would not exist without the Poudre working to deliver water for all of us. However, portions of the river are not healthy. Areas dry up and trap fish during low water, and levees prevent flooding during higher flows.

Gage the River, learn how to improve its health and support ideas that share water for human *and* environmental benefit.

Image Possibilities

- 1. Illustration of a flooded riparian corridor.**
- 2. Illustration of the same corridor after the flood recedes and forms new bars/riffles.**
- 3. Sketch of healthy cottonwood gallery.**
- 4. Typical monthly hydrograph for nearest USGS gauging station.**