



## **Over the River work would be unforgettable**

***Longmont Times-Call Editorial***

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In 2013, a long stretch of the Arkansas River was transformed by a stunning work of art. The world-famous artist Christo hung six miles of translucent fabric above the running water, and the thousands of visitors who came to see the outdoor masterpiece were treated to a brilliant show as the material shimmered in the wind and changed colors in the shifting light. The project is now remembered as one of the cultural highlights of Colorado history.

When considering matters of public interest, it's helpful to imagine what future generations might think. Fifty years from now, assessment of the artwork proposed by Christo, if his plans are approved, will sound like the above passage.

Christo wants to suspend 5.9 miles of fabric panels above a 42-mile stretch of the Arkansas River between Salida and Cañon City. The artwork would be up for two weeks, possibly in 2013, at the earliest. He and his late wife, Jeanne-Claude, conceived of the project in the early 1990s. They have become famous for other temporary fabric-based works of art, for example in New York's Central Park and at the Reichstag in Berlin.

The Colorado project, called Over the River, has vocal opponents. They're concerned about safety, traffic, wildlife and other issues. The Bureau of Land Management has final say on approval of the project, and the agency last week released a draft environmental impact statement that acknowledges concerns and suggests alternatives to Christo's proposal, such as shortening the stretch of fabric from six miles to five or four.

It was encouraging, however, to see the draft EIS state that "the applicants' proposal appears to be broadly consistent" with BLM objectives.

We hope that's a precursor to final approval of at least most of what Christo proposes. Over the River promises to be an unforgettable work of art and important addition to Colorado's cultural legacy.