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## Freestone Aquatics improves McGraw Memorial Park

North Fork of the South Platte in Bailey also tackled

Douglas Stephens, Correspondent

Littleton-based Freestone Aquatics Inc. has successfully completed the paths, restroom, new parking area and Keystone Bridge at McGraw Memorial Park in downtown Bailey.

After having previously completed the fishing area and kayak launch at McGraw, Freestone contracted for the other projects in August 2010, started the work in the spring of 2011, and finished the work last month as part of a Great Outdoors Colorado grant that stipulated that the project was to be completed by the end of 2011.



**Near McGraw Park**

As seen from the Keystone Railroad Bridge in McGraw Memorial Park, the work of Freestone Aquatics building fish habitat has involved some heavy equipment. Photo by Arthur Hall, president of the Park County Historical Society

Corps of Engineers, sought to reestablish fishing habitat without hampering Denver Water's need for flow.

To accomplish this, habitat additions were made along 600 feet of the river, said Stuart. Two hundred tons of material, some from the Arkansas River, were used to build 15 new habitat areas. Habitats include pools deep enough to support wintering fish, cross stream riffle crests, low flow channels, and boulder structures that create pools and allow the high volume flow to continue over the boulders and pools, leaving slower water to support the fish.

One pool also benefits kayakers and fishermen, as it allows easy put-in, and kayakers have expressed enthusiasm about that addition, the new parking area, and the restrooms.

The concept that the improvements to the park and river are expected to benefit Bailey residents, businesses, and visitors for years to come is a common theme heard at the Platte Canyon Area Chamber of Commerce meetings and in speaking to individual business owners such as Barbara Jerome-Behl, owner of Deer Creek Realty and The Shawnee Tea Room.

The projects brought together civic organizations, the Park County tourism office, contractors, businesses and individuals who volunteered their time and money in an effort to preserve, improve, promote and beautify McGraw Memorial Park, Morrow Mountain (which is part of the park), and the North Fork of the South Platte River.

During the course of the project, Freestone contributed more than \$35,600 in in-kind contributions to the project in the form of labor reductions from normal rates, according to Toby Stuart, vice president and senior aquatic biologist with Freestone.

The fishing area and kayak launch have already generated traffic to McGraw Memorial Park and surrounding businesses. The restrooms are the only public restrooms between the Pine Country Store in Pine Junction and Grant Country Store in Grant.

Subsequent to finishing the GOCO grant work, Freestone undertook fishing habitat work in the North Fork of the South Platte River just downriver from the Keystone Bridge.

With the completion of the Roberts Tunnel in 1962 after 16 years of construction, Denver Water dredged and opened the channel to accommodate the increased water volume the tunnel flow provided.

Freestone, with the approval of Denver Water, the Park County Historical Society, and the U.S. Army



**Keystone bridge, deck and handrail**

This view of the Keystone Bridge in McGraw Memorial Park on Nov. 11 shows the reinstallation of the handrail and construction of new stairs leading to the fishing areas adjacent to the North Fork of the South Platte River and to the Morrow Mountain Trail System. Photo by Douglas Stephens/The Flume



### **Crow Creek Bridge**

The Crow Creek Bridge, designed and built by Freestone Aquatics, is shown here as it appeared in McGraw Memorial Park before staining. Photo by Arthur Hall, Park County Historical Society president

The Crow Creek Bridge is between the Platte Canyon High School Annex building and McGraw Memorial Park. Hall said he has received many compliments on the Crow Creek Bridge.

"He (Packo) is honest and straightforward, which helped make it very easy to work with him," said Hall.

"Freestone Aquatics is excited about the positive impact the restored fish habitat and new McGraw Memorial Park amenities will have on the local businesses and surrounding community," said Stuart.

Park County Historical Society President Arthur Hall praised Freestone's contributions to the project. "Freestone Aquatics and Clint Packo were great to work with," he said. "A contract was signed between Park County Historical Society and Freestone Aquatics to complete the construction of the restrooms and do re-work on the Keystone Bridge, stairway and railing. There were numerous issues that needed special attention. It was a pleasure working with Clint as he was always open to discussions to solve problems."

"His (Packo's) workmanship is of very high quality as Clint is a perfectionist," Hall added.

"He completed all parts of the contract and donated much time and some expense to upgrade the quality of work on both the Keystone Bridge and the restrooms. He designed and built the Crow Creek Bridge."