

The Scope Of Public Works

COLORADO *Public Works* JOURNAL

Volume 5, Issue 7 – 2009



**Facilities Planning
Keeps Parker On Track**



Beckoned To The River

All Colorado Benefits From Greenway Foundation's 35-Year Effort To Reclaim South Platte Through Denver

Best history repeat itself. Forty years ago – June 22, 1969 – Ohio's Cuyahoga River caught fire – again. At least nine other times, according to Ohio Historical Society, oil and debris floating in the river had ignited, but this fire would be the last. *Time* magazine described the Cuyahoga as “oily” and “bubbling with subsurface gases” and having “no visible life,” and industry and government were both to blame. Such pollution could no longer be justified as a trade-off associated with industrial prowess, and occasionally overflowing sanitary sewers could no longer be acceptable.

Keep America Beautiful Inc., a National Advisory Council formed in 1953, used the polluted Cuyahoga as the impetus for its “Crying Indian” environmental awareness campaign started in early 1970. Featuring the iconic symbol of environmental responsibility, the native American, navigating his canoe through modern-day, post-consumer garbage, the unforgettable television commercial initiated one of the most successful

public service campaigns in history.

There's just no conceivable logic to disposing of anything in a river, yet it was common practice in century-old America to do just that, whether chemical waste from manufacturing or human waste from residents. Compiling garbage alongside rivers and streams makes little sense, as well, yet many a town dump was established within low-

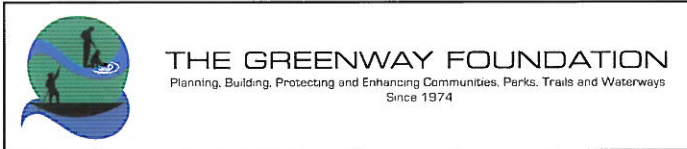
& Reservoir to eliminate the possibility of another disastrous flood within the South Platte basin as occurred in 1965 (28 deaths, \$540 million in estimated losses).

“The South Platte was Denver's privy,” explains Jeff Shoemaker, executive director of The Greenway Foundation, founded in 1974 to lead efforts to enhance and preserve the South Platte River and its tributaries throughout metro Denver.

“When it flooded in 1965, we had to cut our vacation short because Joe needed to get back to Denver. I remember asking him, ‘What river?’”

Shoemaker's father, Joe, was a Colorado State Senator who had served as Manager of Denver Public Works from 1960-62, and he knew well the South Platte's woes. In fact, Joe's 1971 mayoral campaign centered around his pledge to clean-up the river's 10.5 miles that flowed through Denver. Three years after losing to incumbent Mayor Bill McNichols, and with the threat of future flooding from Plum Creek now mitigated by Chatfield, Joe was asked by the Mayor to serve as Chairman of the new Platte River Development Committee, which was being established with \$1.9 million in revenue sharing Federal funds disbursed to Denver. He accepted and, as a lawyer and member of the Colorado General Assembly, co-sponsored and helped draft legislation for PRDC.

“It had been nine years since the flood,” Shoemaker continues, “and nothing had been done to improve the South Platte. Joe reminded the Mayor of that and was immediately asked to lead the effort to reclaim the river through Denver and establish it as an amenity by creating parks, trails and natural areas along its course. Each improvement was

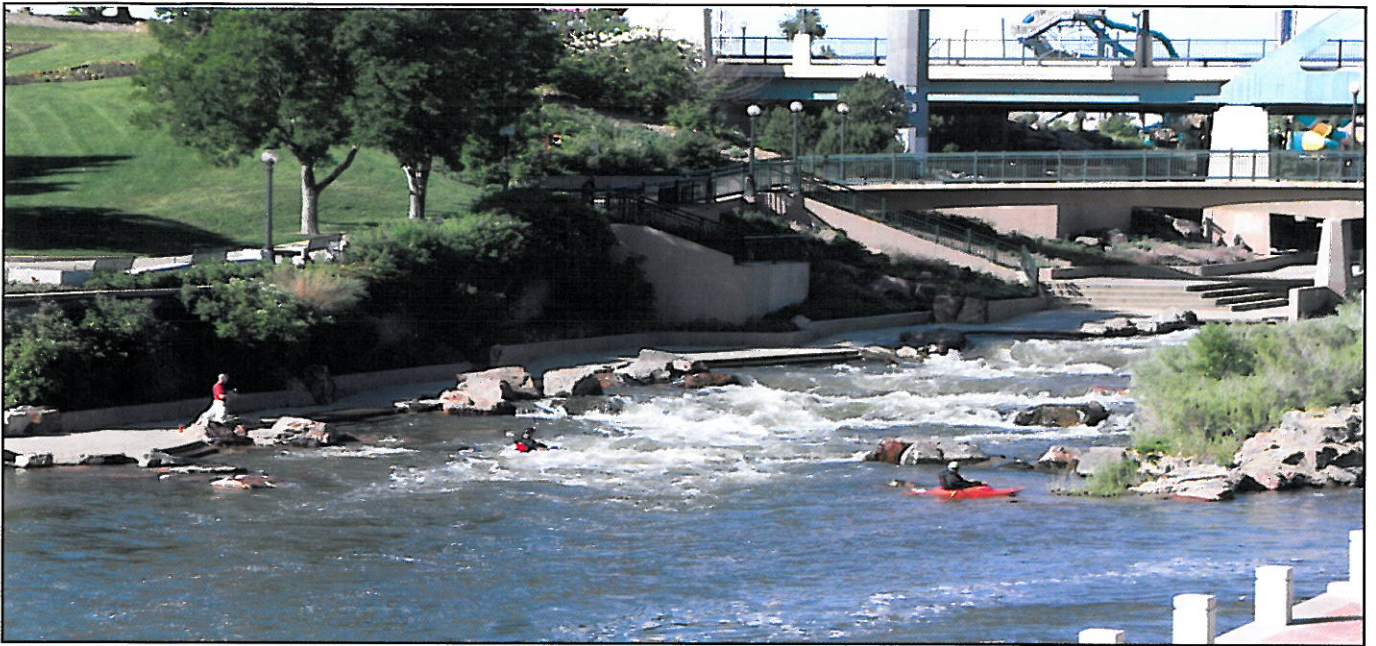


lying natural drainages. Seemingly everyone learned as a child that “down by the river” was no place to go, wisdom that fostered a segregation of city and river that compounded itself well into the 20th century.

Colorado's South Platte River was very much the focus of local and Federal government in 1970, but first and foremost for the purpose of providing flood control – and rightly so. US Army Corps of Engineers was in the third year of its six-year project to construct Chatfield Dam



In 1974, the new Platte River Development Committee identified over 250 sources of pollution dumping directly into the South Platte. Most polluters stopped voluntarily when visited by PRDC, but others had to be sued – successfully – on the City and County's behalf.



Kayaking South Platte River through Denver is a popular summer activity.

required to expand the river's flood-carrying capacity as well as improve its maintenance accessibility."

Four projects in various stages of conception and design were assumed by PRDC, and two – Con-

fluence Park and Globeville Land- ing – were chosen to inaugurate the program. Neither without challenges, both projects would be ideal exam- ples of PRDC's mission. Confluence Park was the birthplace of Denver,

and the Globeville neighborhood, about three miles downstream, was one of metro Denver's earliest in- dustrial areas. By Labor Day 1975, just 15 months after PRDC was formed, both projects were complete

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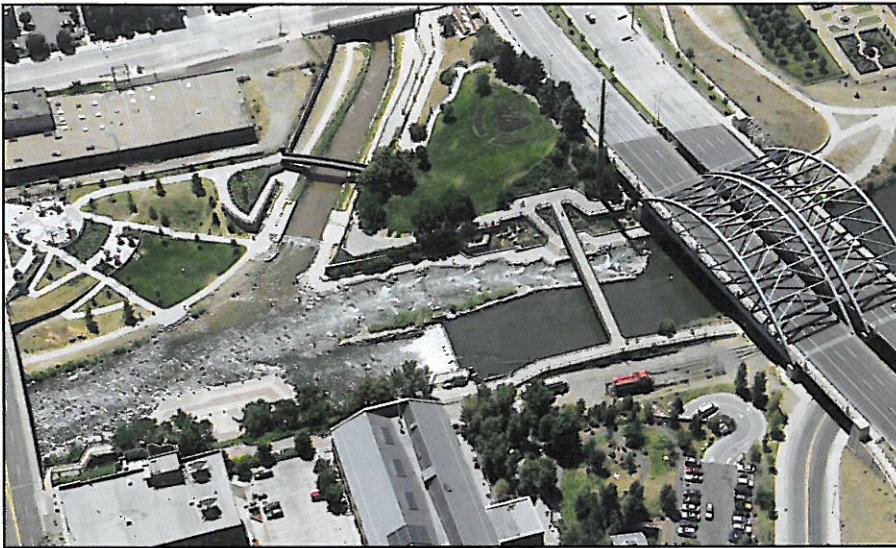
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Confluence Park – where Cherry Creek flows into South Platte River – is the birthplace of Denver.

and open for the public's enjoyment.

Much was learned from those first two projects as PRDC moved forward. Public support of efforts to clean up the South Platte was widespread throughout metro Denver. When locally-based Gates Foundation sought to bestow funds to PRDC in 1976, Joe immediately got to work drawing up bylaws to legally establish PRDC as a private 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, which could then solicit and receive private contributions. The organization formally changed its name to The Greenway Foundation.

"The Gates Foundation, now the Gates Family Foundation, provided the impetus for private donors at numerous levels to begin contributing to the reclamation of the river," says Shoemaker. "Five other local foundations followed suit and in a relatively short time, numerous corporate and individual contributions, as well as additional Federal, State and local funds, were also received. It's common knowledge that if you work for The Greenway Foundation, you're a fundraiser. But we do that by choice; we're in no way mandated to do so."

Shoemaker, who took over as executive director on an interim basis in June 1982, won the Board's confidence over his first six months and was given the reins officially in January 1983.

A financially-secure endowment, the Greenway Preservation Trust, was initiated in 1998 for the purpose of using the accrued interest to partially fund the programs and efforts of the Foundation. By 2005, the goal of \$5 million was reached, with total commitments in excess of \$6 million, which today generates approximately \$200,000 for the Foundation's youth education, youth employment, cultural/community events and on-going environmental and recreational enhancements to South Platte River and its tributaries that flow through metro Denver. The Greenway Preservation Trust is considered "permanent" because all funds raised for the Trust will be invested in a safe and secure long-term manner with only the earnings being used.

It's important to understand that The Greenway Foundation is a private organization with no authority to mandate anything. It is not overseen by any government and has no allegiance to any person or entity. It does, however, influence and facilitate those projects it chooses to support, sometimes as a major partner, other times in a lesser role. The Foundation's 10-person Board determines what projects and programs the Foundation becomes involved with and at what level of commitment.

The Greenway Foundation owns nothing, so it cannot do anything without some government's OK. Foundation involvement can only happen through permission or request, provided funds are available for allocation. Often it is asked to assist in creating a vision or in educating the public to drive awareness and support, helping overcome understandable yet answerable concerns.

Over the course of The Greenway Foundation's 35-year history, there have been numerous improvements along South Platte River as well as Cherry Creek and other tributaries. The Foundation has partnered with multiple public and private agencies, corporations and individuals to create over \$80 million of environmental, aquatic, recreational and open space improvements to metro Denver's urban waterways since its inception. Efforts to reclaim the South Platte through Denver have spurred other communities along the river to begin efforts of their own, extending the reach of connected improvements – now known as South Platte River Greenway – currently over 30 miles from Chatfield State Park in Douglas County, through Arapahoe, Denver and Adams counties to where the South Platte flows into Weld County. And in turn, South Platte River Greenway has helped a vision to create a 876-mile multi-purpose trail from Wyoming to New Mexico, known as Colorado Front Range Trail, that will link diverse communities, scenic landscapes, cultural and historic points, parks, open space and other attractions.

Shoemaker is confident The Greenway Foundation has done as much to improve quality of life in Colorado as any other "second-tier" non-profit.

"There are many non-profits that provide services for direct human need," he says, "which is admittedly a level above us. The Greenway

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Joe Shoemaker: A Public Servant To Be Admired

At 85 years of age, it's highly likely you've sealed your reputation in life. Recognition, whether gained by leading a distinguished or disturbing life, naturally fades from society's collective memory as younger generations usurp older. When a person's cause lives on, though, so can his or her legacy. When your legacy is one of public success and not failure, you're someone very special.

Joe Shoemaker is someone very special to a lot of people – and should be to a lot more in Colorado. You might know of him for his three terms of service as a State Senator, where he chaired the Joint Budget Committee of Colorado's General Assembly between 1972-76. Colorado, however, is far greater for his continuing bipartisan public service, where his energy emanates easily to those he engages.

A US Naval Academy graduate, former Naval officer and practicing attorney, Shoemaker has a long list of accomplishments to his credit. Humble in the face of praise, he remembers first the people he worked with – and sometimes, against. And when you ask him about his successes, he has to explain his failures first.

"I was Denver's manager of Public Works from 1959-62," Shoemaker says, "when I was elected to the Colorado Senate. I realized what we were doing to the South Platte River, and I realized I had been part of the problem. From tires and mattresses to refrigerators and cars, chances are you could find one or a thousand of whatever items you could think of in the South Platte floodplain. It was routine for the City to dump street sweepings and tree branches into the river – and people followed suit with anything else no longer needed."

The devastating flood in June 1965 awoke the City as well as the US Army Corps of Engineers, and local studies were initiated to develop a strategy to improve conditions of

the river and its corridor. While the Corps began initiating important upstream flood control measures, the Colorado Legislature in 1969 was establishing Urban Drainage and Flood Control District, with Shoemaker one of the most-visible proponents of the legislation. Two years later, when Denver's 1972 mayoral campaigns began, little else at the local level had been accomplished to improve the South Platte.

"I decided to run for the Republican nomination for mayor of Denver," continues Shoemaker, "and I made an issue of the continuing neglect of the South Platte, promising to act on the problem if I won. I didn't, and again I felt as if I had failed the river."

In 1974, after a vacation to San Antonio, Shoemaker stopped by Mayor Bill McNichols office, unexpected but hoping for a few minutes with the Mayor. McNichols had time for Senator Shoemaker, who got right to the point. Nothing was happening to improve the South Platte, and Denver would be wise to follow the lead of San Antonio's government officials, who had restored and magnificently blended San Antonio River into the City's everyday life. Funny you should ask, McNichols responded, before explaining that

the City had \$1.9 million it was ready to devote to the South Platte. But first someone was needed to lead a committee that would administer City efforts. The Mayor offered the position to Shoemaker, who accepted on one condition – that he have input on selection of the committee's members that the Mayor would appoint.

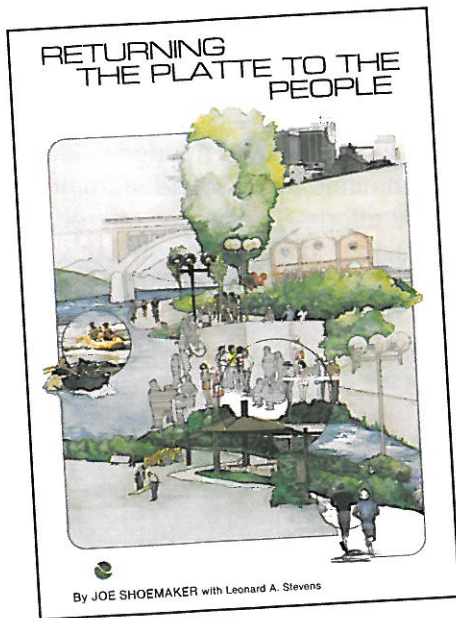
"My years in the Legislature taught me that the most effective committees are those that can argue divergent points of view," Shoemaker says. "Committees of people with like thoughts risk missing important viewpoints."

As chairman of Platte River Development Committee, Shoemaker administered its conversion to a private non-profit corporation, changing the name to The Greenway Foundation. In its 35 years, the Foundation has followed through on its mission, partnering on a multitude of efforts to reclaim the South Platte River and its tributaries through Denver. The cause has motivated communities all along Colorado rivers to work toward achieving the great potential of local waterways.

Joe Shoemaker is arguably the "father of the South Platte," but he's not number 1 in his mind. That honor goes to Mayor McNichols, "the best



Joe Shoemaker says son Jeff is exceptionally skilled as a fundraiser.



Joe Shoemaker authored Returning The Platte To The People in 1981, the story of the transformation of South Platte River "from forgotten sump to source of pride."

man of The Greenway Foundation. As legal counsel for the District, he was a great working partner for the Master Planning program."

"Being able to see the big picture is one of Joe's strengths," adds Scott Tucker, UDFCD's executive director for 32 years, from 1972 to 2004, "but being able to identify potential legal issues within the big picture is a real skill."

Shoemaker, working with a group of metro Denver public works leaders after the 1965 flood, put together the legislation that created Urban Drainage and Flood Control District in 1969, then sponsored the Act in the Senate. With the District formally established, its Board of Directors hired Shoemaker as its legal counsel, and he was instrumental in getting the District up and running until staff could be hired.

"As a startup organization," Tucker continues, "the UDFCD had to develop many policies and procedures from scratch, and Joe's

friend of all to the South Platte."

"Joe is being much too modest," says Ben Urbonas, president and chairman of Urban Watersheds Research Institute, a Colorado non-profit organization he helped found in 2005 after 30 years with Urban Drainage and Flood Control District as manager of its Master Planning program. "If he hadn't been behind the initial push, who knows where we'd be? Certainly much worse off, especially with respect to trails. Joe is a visionary in so many ways, and was a relentless dynamo as chair-

experience was invaluable in this regard. For example, there were no revenues or policies in place to fund construction and maintenance projects until the District, with Joe's help, structured several mill levy requests over a period of several years that were granted by the Legislature. The primary principle of the mill levy is still being followed today, and that is that revenue is logged by where it comes from, then is returned in its entirety to the county from whence it came in the form of flood control and water quality maintenance and improvements."

Shoemaker was also a strong proponent of keeping UDFCD a "contract" district, meaning that it would remain small in terms of staff and would depend on private consultants and contractors to meet its goals. This original concept, too, remains a cornerstone of UDFCD's operation.

"One of the District's fundamental responsibilities was to define floodplains as accurately as possible," Tucker says. "Joe felt strongly that the District had an obligation to inform property owners within floodplains once those floodplains were identified. That led to mailing information once a year to those property owners, encouraging them to purchase flood insurance. Joe was an ideal legal counsel because he not only had a keen sense for drainage legal issues, he also had a public works background, an understanding of what was politically feasible, and strong desire to see the UDFCD succeed."

"Of the hundreds of achievements credited to Joe Shoemaker," says Ken Wright, president of Denver-based Wright Water Engineers, "I will always remember that he returned the Platte River to the people. Thirty-five years ago, Republican Senator Joe Shoemaker threw political caution out the window and joined with Democratic Mayor Bill McNichols to revitalize the 'nothing of a river,' an achievement that was key in restoring economic >>>>



Joe Shoemaker and Ken Wright in 1986.

Green Equals Green: Ecological Improvements Attract Private Investment

What if you cleaned up a river and no one noticed? What if you built parks and trails and no one enjoyed them? What if you converted an unsightly geographical barrier into a peaceful meeting place yet people continued to avoid it like the plague?

If all that happened, you'd be in quite a unique position, for society everywhere has responded exactly to the contrary. When human indiscretion is corrected and natural beauty is reinstated and enriched, society has a forgiving way of forgetting. And capital investment, which always finds opportunity, always follows. Always. Build it and they will come.

Investing in the ecology has proven wise, but 40 years ago, the magnitude of benefit could only be conceived by a select few. It had to first be proved that society itself would change. Ignorance and indifference had to be displaced by awareness and action. Right is might.

In its 35 years, The Greenway Foundation has united public, private and philanthropic interests to reclaim the South Platte River through Denver, and the people have responded and developers have noticed. With memories of the river's defilement fading from older generations and unknown to younger, the Foundation's mission should be almost achieved, yes? We know better – ecological responsibility must continue to be taught by example.

"In the next decade," Executive Director Jeff Shoemaker says, "we plan to broaden the Foundation's advocacy role to new audiences

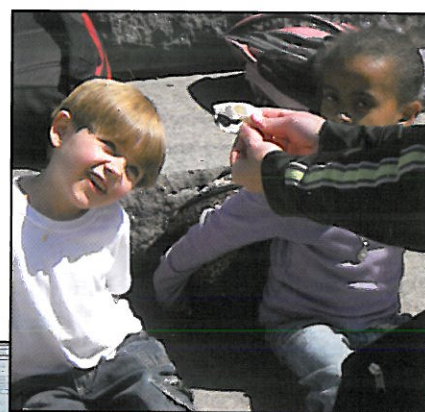
and for additional environmental causes. Every school year, through our SPREE program, the Foundation sponsors events for over 5000 elementary school kids that get them involved in the river and the greenway."

SPREE – South Platte River Environmental Education – is the educational arm of The Greenway Foundation. SPREE's mission is "to inspire meaningful personal connections with nature in order to foster a lifelong sense of pride in, belonging to, and stewardship for our natural world by connecting the children of Denver to the South Platte River through engaging educational experiences."

SPREE has established nine schools where South Platte River is an integral part of each school's mission, vision and curriculum. Every student at these "SPREE Schools," as they are known, visits

the South Platte at least once a year for a SPREE excursion. In addition to these excursions, teachers and staff at SPREE Schools strive to integrate the river into all aspects of their daily learning. From murals of the river on classroom walls to river-inspired writing and art projects, the South Platte provides a constant backdrop for their educational experiences. SPREE Schools also participate in several commu-

Continued on page 14



SPREE, the educational arm of The Greenway Foundation, provides several community enhancement events and other seasonal activities along South Platte River throughout the academic year.

»»»» to downtown Denver."

Shoemaker knew that to realize a new type of river through Denver, the South Platte would need a constituency that would fight for clean water, a riparian corridor, bike and walking trails and floodplain management, and Wright's firm was ready to help. Confluence Park was

created first to show the public what could be done to establish a favorable river environment, and it became a focal point for rallying public support and a river constituency.

"To me, as one who was involved with Joe Shoemaker on public works efforts since 1968 and the South Platte River since 1973, Joe Shoe-

maker is a Denver hero," Wright says. "He has faithfully pulled for the public good in an effective and successful manner. As an old-fashioned politician and civic leader, he knew how to build a consensus for an idea and how to use it to create progress. There is no better example than the Denver Greenway." ●

Continued from page 13

nity enhancement events and other seasonal activities along the river throughout the academic year.

A popular seasonal activity operated by The Greenway Foundation for families and couples is "Venice on the Creek," a relaxing punt ride along Cherry Creek in LoDo. Similar to an Italian gondola, a "punt" is a long and narrow vessel that holds up to six passengers and is propelled and steered by a pole operator at the stern, high school- and college-aged guides who explain the creek's role in shaping the growth of Denver. Punts operate Thursday through Sunday evenings in June through August each year, traveling between Larimer Square and Confluence Park.

Phase I of Venice on the Creek opened in 1996, encompassing the section of the creek from Blake to Delgany streets and included two dams, one lock, four blocks of trail, landscaping and one new access ramp at Wynkoop St. Phase II was completed in 1998 and encompassed the creek from Lawrence to Blake and included one dam, one lock, two blocks of trail, landscaping and a new access ramp at Delgany. Phase III opened in 1999, completing the reach to Confluence Park with two dams, one lock, four blocks

of trail, landscaping and a new access ramp at Confluence Park.

Punts can navigate comfortably in waters as shallow as three feet, making them perfect for Cherry Creek. But once you've taken your punt downstream, how do you get it back upstream again?

"Cherry Creek, in its natural state, provided good conditions for punting because of its shallow waters and slow current," explains Ken Wright, PE, president of Wright Water Engineers. "Boulders were placed on both sides of the creek to help establish channel width and shape. To maintain optimal flows throughout the season, we engineered a series of steel dams. Each is about three feet high, and is raised and lowered using inflatable bladders to increase and monitor the water level and slow the speed of the current."

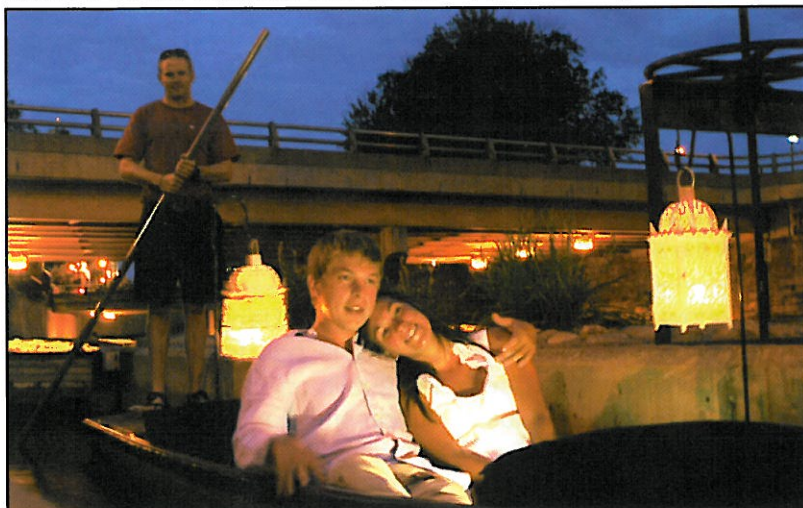
Punts, however, cannot navigate through dams. To bypass the dams, WWE conceived the idea of locks, also called hydraulic elevators, to be built along the creek's banks next to each dam.

"This system of dams and locks is basic in design," Wright adds, "but is unique because of sensors in the dams which prevent the creek from flooding the locks. The sensors are set at 150 cfs, and when creek flow exceeds this level, each dam lowers incrementally. This keeps the body

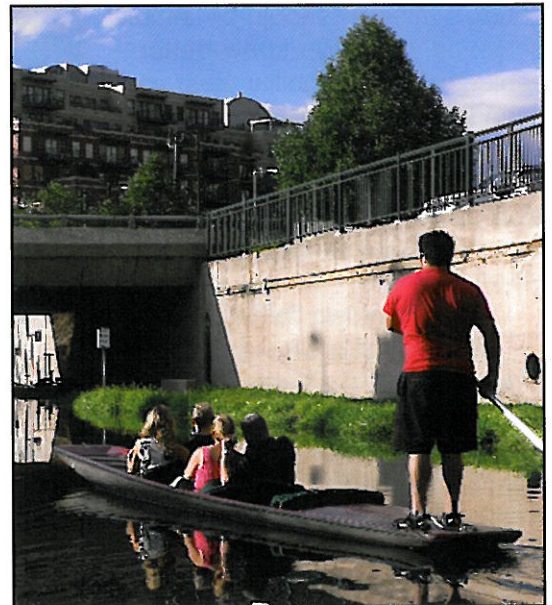
of water upstream of the dam from overflowing by allowing the water to continue downstream. This is the only known system of boat locks and dams in Colorado."

"2009 marks Venice on the Creek's 14th year of historic and romantic boat tours on Cherry Creek in downtown Denver," says J.J. Clark, Venice on the Creek's manager, "Over those 14 years, ridership has consistently grown and the banks have seen nothing short of a booming restoration. Land adjacent to Cherry Creek from Larimer Street to Confluence Park has gone from neglected fields and rail yards to high-end residential buildings, corridors of recreation and even Denver's new Museum of Contemporary Art. Venice on the Creek has grown from a little known amenity to a vital aspect of downtown Denver's active outdoor culture."

Just as keeping rivers clean is a never-ending job, so is engaging the public of all ages about their value through providing education-, recreation- and entertainment-based venues. The Greenway Foundation is committed to reaching out to the metro Denver community and maximizing citizen awareness regarding the invaluable significance of these "liquid jewels" to the genesis, growth and ongoing improvement of the surrounding residential, commercial and retail communities. ●



Comparable to Italian gondolas, Venice on the Creek's punts are built in England and shipped to Denver at a cost of \$10,000 each. These are the only known punts in the United States.



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Foundation's efforts are more for society as a whole. Our various government partners, funded by tax-based revenues, are required to abide by the statutes, ordinances, etc., that created them. But they have flexibility in how they carry out their missions and are always open to ideas that maximize their efforts, which is where we come in."

Often, the Foundation sees things a little differently than its partners. A flood channel access project can be viewed as creating a bike path, for example, just as a flood impediment removal project can be seen as an opportunity to create a boat chute. In these situations, one plus one equals much more than two. And once a project is completed, benefits have a way of snowballing. Shoemaker estimates that making the South Platte an amenity – just in the corridor between Invesco

Field At Mile High and Coors Field – has resulted in development that has created a \$5 billion impact to the local economy.

"Residential land values in 80202 LoDo are second in Colorado only to Aspen," says Shoemaker. "Twenty years ago, that was unfathomable. That says to us that making the river a priority was and continues to be justified. Invest and reap far greater reward through accelerated redevelopment that competes adjacent to a revitalized waterway."

The Foundation is a launching pad to create a new generation of river advocates, overseeing a youth education program known as SPREE (South Platte River Environmental Education), which each year introduces thousands of young people to the river and teaches its significance as it pertains to Denver's past and future. The Foundation also provides employment to between 20-25 high school- and college-age youths each summer through "Venice on

the Creek," a boating concession along Cherry Creek in LoDo. Finally, each year the Foundation's free cultural events introduce thousands of Denver citizens to the City's "Greatest Natural Resource."

In March 2008, The Greenway Foundation, in partnership with City & County of Denver Parks and Recreation Department, initiated the River North (RINO) Greenway Master Plan. The RINO Plan encompasses the approximate three miles of South Platte River between City of Cuernavaca Park at 20th Street and Denver's northern boundary adjacent to Riverside Cemetery. The purpose of the plan is to build upon greenway improvements of the past and identify opportunities to create a renewed vision of how the South Platte River Greenway in Denver can be further enhanced and preserved.

"Property within the RINO reach has been primarily industrial in nature," Shoemaker says, "and now



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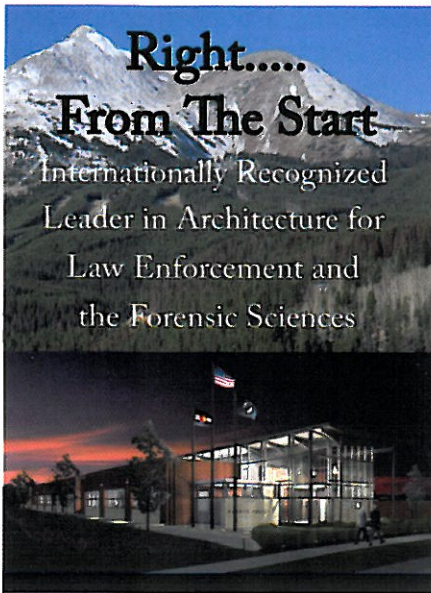
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redevelopment opportunities are spreading through the Central Platte Valley north of Confluence Park and Coors Field. Only minutes from the heart of LoDo, the RINO area has already had mixed-use development success and will no doubt see more.”

New development here provides challenges as well as opportunities, however. In anticipation of increasing development, government must ensure proper management of increased stormwater runoff to reduce flood potential, protect against erosion and prevent reduction of the river’s water quality. Development creates the need, as well as the opportunity, to designate and protect open space and to provide recreational amenities for new residents, and The Greenway Foundation is there to assist.

“The Foundation has been active for 35 years,” Shoemaker reflects, “and we’re just hitting second gear. We’re trying to determine the river’s realistic potential. We can make existing parks better. We can find space for new parks. We can make paths wider to better accommodate bikes, blades and walkers. Is the water quality better than it was? Of course, but it’s not as good as it should be. We want to set aggressive, but attainable, goals. The return on investment is tremendous.”

After completion of the RINO plan earlier this year, The Greenway Foundation initiated the River South (RISO) Greenway Master Plan for the river’s remaining seven miles in Denver, from 20th St. to the City’s southern border. Just as RINO, RISO will provide an updated vision of its reach of the South Platte, providing recommendations to establish new and improve existing amenities. The plan is expected to be complete before the end of the year. By 2011, construction of several of the recommendations within both RINO and RISO plans is hoped to be initiated.

Shoemaker and The Greenway Foundation are also actively pursuing the Chatfield Reservoir Reallo-

cation Project, a feasibility study to investigate the potential for reallocation of reservoir storage space from flood control use to multi-purpose use, with an additional 20,600 acre-feet made available for municipal and agricultural uses. An antecedent flood study was completed and approved by the US Army Corps of Engineers to technically allow for conversion of flood control storage space to water supply storage space. The study demonstrated that the reallocation could take place using technical, administrative and operational techniques without requiring physical changes to the dam or spillway, and without adversely impacting the flood control function of this critical facility. The project enjoys broad support from government agencies, special districts, non-profit interests and elected officials at local, State and Federal levels. If approved and implemented, the reallocation of storage space will assist in addressing water supply needs within the South Platte River basin as identified by the Statewide Water Supply Initiative.

“When the Platte River Development Committee first started,” Shoemaker concludes, “it quickly became evident that increased activity on the South Platte River would at times require more water than the river would normally carry. With no water right whatsoever, PRDC couldn’t call for supplemental releases from Chatfield. At one point, the Committee investigated drilling wells upstream of Denver to draw groundwater from the river’s alluvium to augment the river’s surface flow through Denver. It was instead decided to work with owners of water rights and the officials who released the water, which has been ongoing now for over 30 years. The Corps has been conducting a study of the impacts of storing additional water in the reservoir, and the Draft Environmental Impact Statement is anticipated to be released yet this year.” ●