



Poudre River Projects

\$375,000 Needed to remove the Josh Ames Diversion

Working with multiple partners, the community of Fort Collins is undertaking a large scale restoration of the Poudre River through the heart of Fort Collins. This ambitious community vision enhances the connections between the Poudre River, business community, CSU campus, pedestrians and visitors.

The multi-purpose Poudre River Projects include myriad benefits to downtown businesses, stream flow, water quality, parks, recreation, natural areas, wildlife, riparian & aquatic health, floodplain improvements, roadway and pedestrian safety. Very preliminary cost estimates for the Poudre River projects over five years are about \$25 million.

The first projects are almost ready for construction! This includes a suite of three projects totaling \$8.5 Million. While much of the larger vision is just beginning planning & design, the first projects are scheduled to begin construction in November 2013 pending final fundraising for Josh Ames diversion removal. This encompasses the North Shields Avenue Bridge Replacement, (\$5.1 M) by Larimer County, the West Vine Stormwater Outfall, (\$2M) and the Sterling Project, (\$1.4M) by City of Fort Collins and Colorado Water Trust. The Sterling/Josh Ames project includes the restoration of the North Shields Ponds Natural Areas, the restoration of ½ mile of the riparian corridor, wetlands and aquatic habitat as well as reconnection of the floodplain to the river and the removal of the Josh Ames Diversion, an unused diversion structure that spans the Poudre River.



The Josh Ames Diversion and check structure is located just upstream of the North Shields Avenue Bridge. The structure has been unused since the point of diversion was moved upstream over 30 years ago. The check structure stretches from bank to bank, creating a dam approximately six feet high. This dam collects sediment and backs up water, increasing water temperatures and evaporative water loss and creating a barrier to fish passage. It will cost about \$375,000 to \$400,000 to remove and is the only element of this first group of projects that is not yet fully funded.

The City of Fort Collins is partnering with the Colorado Water Trust to facilitate the fundraising, engineering and final deconstruction of this structure. This final increment of funding is being sought from a mix of private and public sources to enable the Josh Ames removal simultaneously with the other project elements in November 2013.



STERLING / JOSH AMES PROJECT SUMMARY

The goal of the Sterling/Josh Ames Project is to restore the riparian community along this .5 mile segment of the Poudre River and improve the habitat in the river, on the Sterling Parcel and in the North Shields Ponds Natural Area. This will be accomplished by lowering the levee on the left/north bank of the Poudre River to enable the stream to reconnect with the floodplain during high water in the North Shields Ponds Natural Area and removing the abandoned diversion structure. This includes extensive restoration of the river channel, as well as the riparian and wetland habitat throughout this site which will provide a range of water resource benefits to the community. This is just one large step in a series of major Poudre River restoration projects anticipated by the City of Fort Collins through downtown.

WHO	The City of Fort Collins is the lead sponsor of the Sterling and the West Vine Stormwater project elements. Larimer County is the lead on the bridge replacement and trailhead construction. The deconstruction and removal of the Josh Ames Diversion is the specific portion of the project that the Colorado Water Trust is facilitating.
WHAT	Removal of large concrete diversion structure and associated riparian restoration.
WHERE	South Platte Basin in Fort Collins on Poudre River downstream of Larimer-Weld Canal.
WHEN	Proposed November 2013 construction pending permitting and fundraising.
HOW MUCH	The Sterling project is about \$1.3-1.4 million which includes the estimate of \$375,000 to \$400,000 for the Josh Ames deconstruction and site restoration. Additional leverage includes the \$2 million West Vine stormwater project and \$5.1 million N Shields Bridge replacement and trailhead parking on parcels adjacent to the Sterling Project.
FUNDING	The City of Fort Collins has committed \$1 million for the Sterling Project. Colorado Water Trust is seeking \$75,000 from South Platte Roundtable Basin funds, \$25,000 from Metro Basin funds and about \$200,000 from Statewide Water Supply Reserve Account Funds with the balance of about \$100,000 from other local partners. Over \$7 million in City, County and Federal funds have been secured for the stormwater, bridge and trailhead parking projects.
PERMITS	All appropriate permits are being sought and will be available for review.

MULTI-PURPOSE BENEFITS WITH DECONSTRUCTION OF THE DIVERSION

- **The diversion removal will lower water temperatures and minimize evaporative losses** now experienced because of the shallower ponding of water stored behind the dam.
- **The diversion removal will eliminate the barrier to fish migration as well as lower the water level to enable the restoration of three additional riffle-pool sequences** to the natural stream channel. A healthy substrate will result which will improve macro-invertebrate habitat and ensure the streambed will no longer be encased with fine sediments.
- **The diversion removal will provide cost savings and material efficiencies** to the restoration of the North Shields Ponds Natural Areas. The extensive sediment load deposited behind the six foot high, bank to bank concrete check structure will not wash downstream. Sediment will be excavated and used as fill material in the adjacent North Shields Pond Area wetland restoration thus reducing the cost of securing appropriate fill and wetland planting material for the Pond area.
- **The diversion removal will enhance public safety for recreational float boating.** The dam is a serious safety obstacle that requires portaging to avoid injury to floaters. Because of the thick, deep sediments and cobbles, egress from the stream during portage is awkward and hazardous.
- **The diversion removal will enable seamless expansion of the Sterling parcel project onto a downstream parcel owned by Larimer County.** Plans for the parcel include new recreational trailhead parking access and most significantly, the replacement of the N. Shields Avenue Bridge.
- **The N. Shields Bridge replacement will provide significant reduction in flood risks** to public and private property in the area. With the addition of 42 trailhead parking spaces, there will likely be an increase in recreational use of the pedestrian paths and stream by river and fishing enthusiasts.