

## Section 4: Parks and Recreation



Riverbottom Park



#### The river corridor currently includes several parks:

- Clifford E. Baldrige Regional Park (which is the collective acreage of Cerise Park)
  - Riverbottom Park
  - Sunset Mesa Youth Sports Complex
  - Ute Park/McNeil fields (managed by Montrose Recreation District)
- Taviwach Park
- Chipeta Lake, Division of Wildlife property
- Undeveloped North 9th Street and Grand Avenue Park
- Uncompahgre River Park

#### Vision for a Continuous Public Park Corridor

Adding parks to the river corridor system will contribute to the value of the entire corridor as a regional amenity. Each new park provides an opportunity for additional open space and recreation opportunities featuring the river and the associated riparian setting accessible from different locations. Much of the park system can be developed within the larger floodplain where development is restricted due to flooding and environmental constraints. In addition to the scenic, social and recreational benefits of parks, an expanded park system along the river will be an economic benefit to Montrose as seen in many towns that have invested in a river corridor park system. A future comprehensive series of parks along the river corridor can raise the land value of adjacent businesses and neighborhoods.

Future parks contributing to the river corridor are expected to be primarily neighborhood and open space parks. New neighborhood parks which generally range from 2-15 acres should provide benches, shade structures, picnic tables, a restroom, drinking fountain and other small scale recreational amenities that fit the area needs and site constraints. While neighborhood parks primarily host walk-in use, adequate public parking is important for use of the park and larger trail network.

Open space parks have the potential to preserve sensitive habitat. These parks should locate improvements and facilities and route trails to minimize impacts such as social trailing and river bank erosion through fencing, planting, and signage. Patrol, emergency access, identification of property boundaries that respect adjacent private land, and regular clean up are important basic elements to consider in the design of natural open space parks.

With increased use of an expanded river corridor, there will be a need for expanded trail heads. These trail head locations could act as small transit hubs providing parking for boaters and trailers, trail users, and other transit oriented uses, such as ride sharing, overflow event parking, bus and/or shuttle stop.

The recently acquired properties at North 9th Street and Grand Avenue Park and the Taviwach Park offer the opportunity to provide additional parks to the community that also complement the river corridor. The concepts in this plan were developed as part of the master planning process. Both sites are ideal locations for future pedestrian bridges for connections to neighborhoods on the west side of the river. Both sites offer access to the stream, new recreation opportunities and restoration potential.

#### Recreation

The public outreach process for this plan included collecting input on the types of recreation desired along the river corridor. The highest requested uses included trails for bikes and pedestrians, white water park, nature observation/studies opportunities, boating, fishing and dog walking. A full list of requested recreational activities is included with community input documentation in the appendix.

While many of the desired uses are compatible, some are not. The length of the corridor provides the opportunity to separate contrasting uses. Wildlife observation areas for example are suggested in areas buffered from noise, lights and adjacent activity.

Stormwater management elements have the opportunity to be designed to accommodate a variety of park and recreational uses. Flexible play lawn areas may also act as shallow flood event detention volume for less frequent storms such as 50 or 100 year storm events. Water quality improvements can be integrated into open space and ecological enhancements.



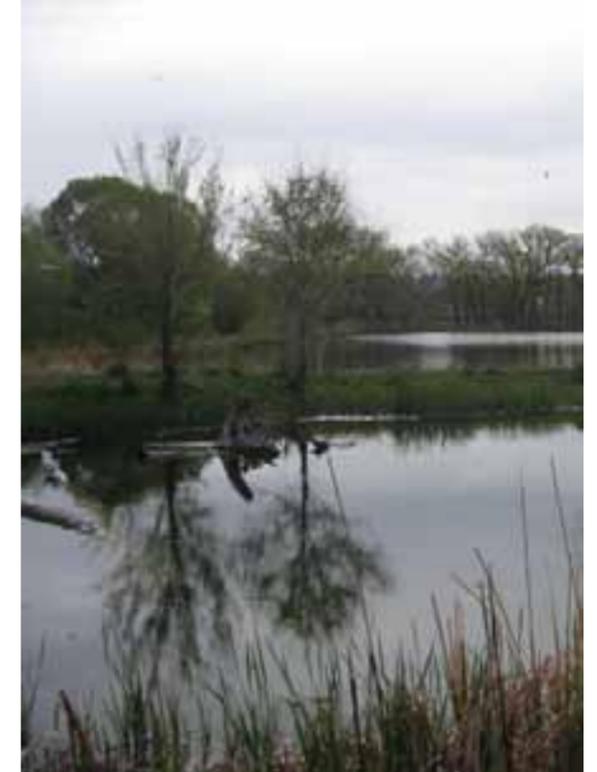
Playground at Riverbottom Park



Frisbee golfers in Cerise Park near pedestrian bridge



Riverbottom Park



Chipeta Lake



Cerise Park



Chipeta Lake



Cerise Park/ Ute Museum



Sunset Mesa Ute Sports Fields



Kayak park in Reno, NV; restorations included two channels, an amphitheater, a trail system, grassy park areas, streamside terraced seating and a fantastic freestyle competition center.



Fish biologists can tailor kayak park designs to enhance fish habitat and preservation.

### Whitewater Park Site Potential

The Uncompahgre River provides several ideal locations for whitewater parks in and near the City of Montrose. S2O Design and Engineering, a Colorado based specialist whitewater park design firm, inspected the corridor with the master plan team and found several locations that combine adequate flow and drop with public access and ownership.

These parks have been a growing trend in cities and towns throughout the country and the inclusion of such a park was repeatedly requested by the public during the master planning process. The rising trend of whitewater parks is in part due to the rising popularity of river sports on a local and regional level and is also attributed to the economic impacts associated with attracting tourists to inner-city paddling locations. Some municipalities, such as Durango, CO or Reno, NV, have seen yearly multi-million dollar impacts due to boaters visiting, participating in events, and staying and eating within the local community. The range of options found included subtle whitewater enhancements that could augment an existing city park, such as Riverbottom Park, as well as options in which a commercial rafting amenity could eventually be created as a regional attraction to the City of Montrose.

### Riverbottom Park

Riverbottom Park could be an ideal and cost-effective whitewater park site as it contains many of the required site amenities necessary for this type of park including ample on-site parking, trail networks, picnic and pavilion areas, restrooms, and other on-site recreational opportunities. The construction of the whitewater park would create recreational opportunities in this corridor for kayakers, floaters, and streamside spectators. A whitewater park at this location would be a subtle adaptation of an existing amenity.

### Selig Canal diversion

A more ambitious opportunity would be a park designed to take advantage of the large amount of drop located at the Selig diversion. This location would require a very significant amount of capital investment. A project of this type would also have the added benefit of providing a route for fish passage up this diversion structure. However, a park at this site would require extensive earthworks and would necessitate the construction of all of the amenities that currently exist in Riverbottom Park. A cost-benefit analysis would be required to compare the economic benefits of one of these sites vs. the other.

Regardless of the site chosen, the park should be designed to function as a community park as well as a kayaking park. In-stream features should be designed to accommodate beginner through expert level paddling as well as events and competitions. The banks and accesses should be designed to accommodate spectators on busy days.

### Fishing

Design of the whitewater elements must accommodate existing fishing uses as well as provide for enhanced fish habitat, riparian zone and fish passage. The completed park would then provide a recreational attraction to visitors while enhancing the in-stream and streamside habitat.

Whitewater park elements have the potential to adversely impact fishing and aquatic habitat during installation and with increased activity in the river. Considering that there are currently limited stretches of the river near town that are publicly owned, and additionally that fishing improvements were recently completed in Riverbottom Park, installation of whitewater park improvements must anticipate potential impacts. Any proposed whitewater elements within the vicinity of the "Fishing is Fun" improvements recently installed in Riverbottom Park must be coordinated with the Division of Wildlife to ensure protection of legal obligations associated with the constructed fishing improvements.

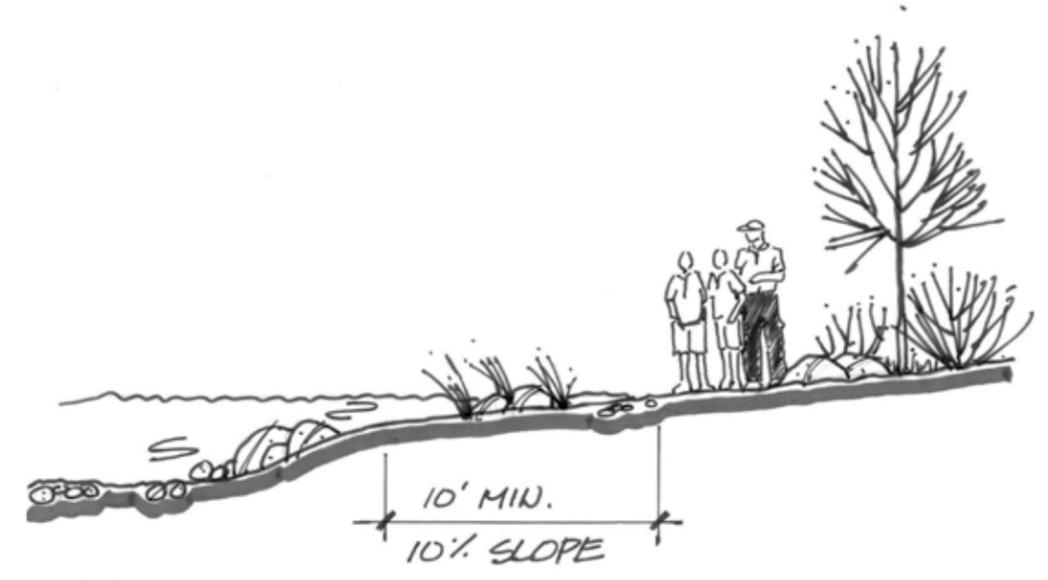
Additionally, the installation of improvements along other segments of the river, especially locations that are accessible from City owned properties and parking areas, would help improve overall quality of fish habitat and expand opportunities for fishing. Refer to section 2.3 River Corridor Ecology for suggested enhancements.



Existing park site at Taviwach includes a parking lot and site furnishings. The existing pond is a remnant from gravel mining.



River crossing pedestrian bridge in Montrose, CO



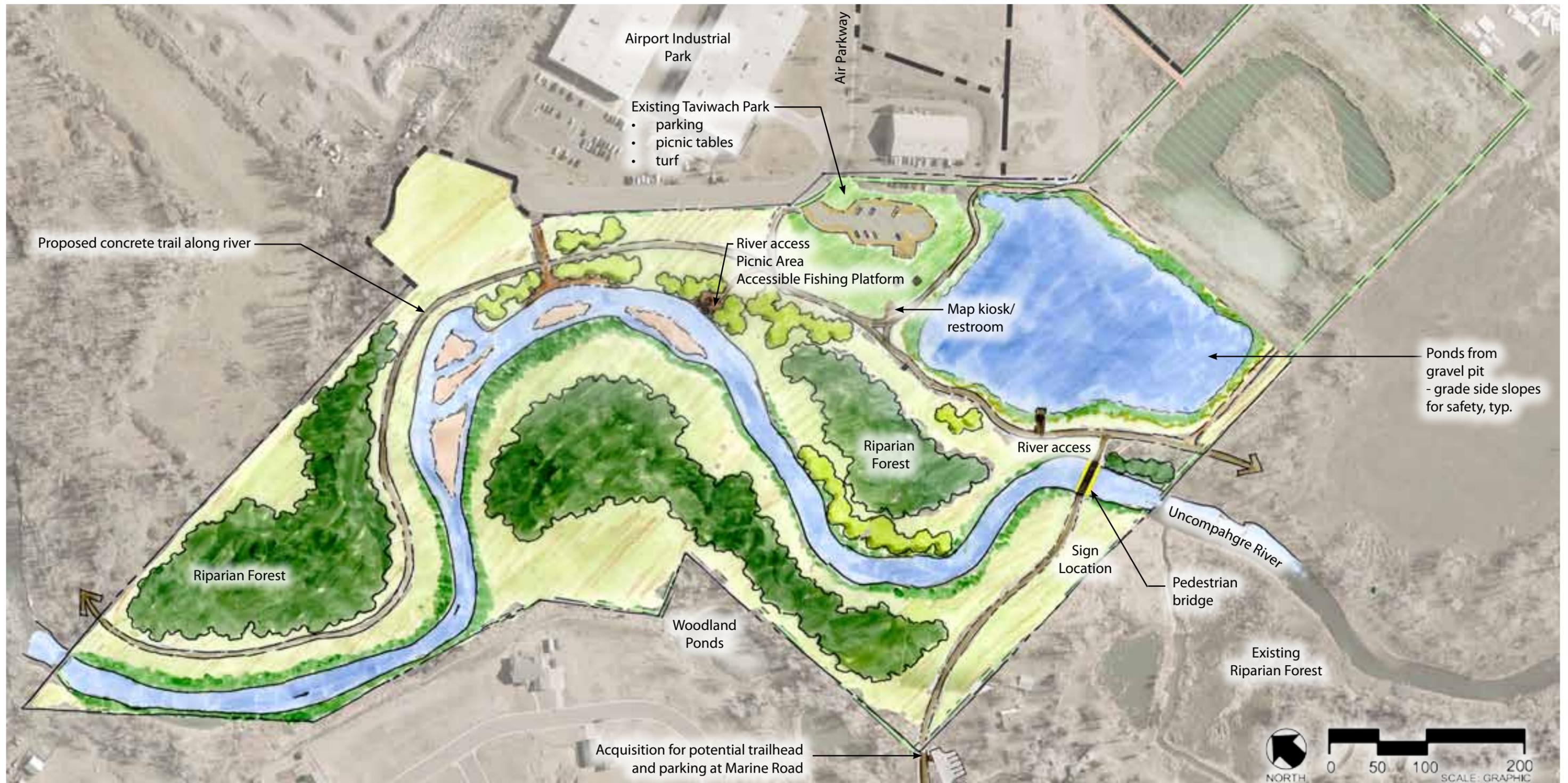
Pond edge section



The pond within Taviwach was created by gravel mining. The banks of the pond are steep. The pond can be improved for safety by grading the bank edge, enhancing planting, and providing signage. Safe shallow areas should have a slope of a maximum 10% grade for a minimum 10' in width under water. This standard allows a child that falls the ability to stand up above the water surface. Remaining pond edges can be vegetated to discourage access to steeper areas. The pond and River corridor within Taviwach are good locations for ADA accessible fishing piers.



River access in Durango, CO. This is a good example of a natural looking constructed ramp.



## Taviwach Park Concept Plan

Taviwach park is located in the Airport Industrial Park. The current facility includes 16 parking spaces, picnic tables, pedestrian lights, and a small lawn area. Proposed improvements at this location include improvements to the river edge for fishing and access to the waters edge. The acquisition of additional property west of the river and a pedestrian bridge and trail extension would provide the opportunity to link the park to Marine Road.



Existing conditions at North 9th and Grand



River access Salida, CO



Constructed water quality treatment, Jenny Adair Park, Roaring Fork River



Existing conditions at North 9th and Grand



Animas River Trail, Durango, CO



Riverside Park amphitheater Salida, CO



## North 9th Street and Grand Avenue Park Area Concept Plan

The North 9th St and Grand Avenue Park site has a central location with the potential to serve a high number of surrounding residents, workers, and visitors. The construction of the round-a-bout will make this area highly visible and create a strong connection from the City to the River. This park site has been previously developed and is generally void of vegetation and topsoil. The development of a park offers a great opportunity to provide for many uses including a central gathering space with a large picnic pavilion and event location, a stream access point, lawn and trees, and restoration of riparian vegetation. An opportunity exists to incorporate drainage elements addressing an existing drainage problem at North 9th St and Grand Avenue Park noted in the Montrose Stormwater Master Plan. A surface system of swales and basins has the potential to additionally support restoration and infiltration benefitting the river system.

With a high level of anticipated use, park improvements in this area should be designed for durability. Proposed lawn areas will handle foot traffic from events and heavy use better with a significant investment in quality topsoil and an automatic irrigation system. The plan includes a restroom and drinking fountain that can serve the park and trail users.

