


BOULDER FLYCASTERS RESTORES MIDDLE BOULDER CREEK




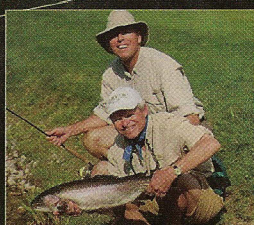
Today, a skilled angler can catch wild trout just about anywhere on Middle Boulder Creek, from the headwaters of the Indian Peak Wilderness through bustling downtown Boulder. Until recently however, one would not have found many fish within this half mile stretch located approximately nine miles up the canyon from Boulder. Purchased in 1994 by Boulder County and designated as Open Space, Platt Rogers Memorial Park was originally owned by the Rogers family. At the time Boulder County acquired the property, the river was severely degraded due to a multi-year sawmill operation, the construction and later widening of Highway 119, as well as floods and pollution. While the surrounding land was intact, the trout habitat was severely compromised and demanded attention.

Following on the heels of two other successful chapter projects, the Boulder Flycasters (BFC) Board of Directors discussed tackling another significant environmental project within our "home waters" on either South or Middle Boulder Creek. After exploring different options, the BFC Board decided to restore Platt Rogers Memorial Park as the chapter's primary conservation effort to close out the decade. Tremendously excited about the project, but blissfully unaware of what was going to be required, Roger Svendsen volunteered to lead the project. When he asked if any of the BFC Board members would join the effort, all hands went up. This was an encouraging start -right away we had thirteen chapter members with a tremendous amount of experience and diverse backgrounds ready to go to work.

Our primary goal for the project was to recreate prime trout habitat that would remain intact for at least a 50-year time period. With that in mind, we quickly realized this was not going to be a humble "rock-rolling" project. Dave Blauch from Environmental Resource Consulting (ERC), and a BFC member, completed the preliminary project design and prepared an estimated budget of \$235K which included cash, materials, and volunteer labor. The project plan






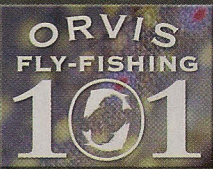
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called for significant bank restoration and protection, ten riffle, pool, glide sequences, 1,000 tons of boulders and cobble, 450 native shrubs and trees, 3,000 native grass plugs, 3,000 volunteer hours and the coordination of a dozen different organizations.

Realizing that most of our funds had to come from grants, we formed a small group dedicated to grant writing. Our experience was typical. We won some and lost some. An early win was a \$129K Fishing is Fun grant. This validated our concept and further energized the group. Additional funding came from the Colorado Water Conservation Board, Boulder County, Trout and Salmon Foundation, and Colorado Trout Unlimited. Boulder Flycasters contributed \$35K from their own treasury. ERC designed the project ion-kind and also donated construction. While planning, design, regulatory permits, grant writing and obtaining funds took over three years, the in-stream construction took only 2 weeks! Construction was completed shortly after ice-out and just before high water in the spring of 2009. Two months after construction, on a hot day in July, over one hundred volunteers installed plants and grasses along the stream bank. BFC kept the plants alive through the summer.

The before and after photos speak for themselves. This section of Boulder Creek was transformed from a featureless stretch of low water and poor trout habitat to one half mile of picturesque riffles, runs and pools. The people at ERC and their partners, Tezak Construction, were true artists. Even though there were track-hoes, front-end loaders and dump trucks running up and down this narrow stream, harm to existing vegetation was minimal. The trout could not have been more pleased. Three days after the equipment left, many had already moved into the section. Rogers Park is now the nicest stretch of trout water on Middle Boulder Creek.

Boulder Flycasters has begun work on Phase II of this project to add educational signs. The signs will focus on the themes of Angler Ethics, Saving the Creek, Know Your Trout Stream, and Native Vegetation. Phase II will be finished in July, 2010. Also, BFC is considering applying for flies-and-lures-only and catch-and-release designations for Rogers Park and some of the creek above and below.

In the meantime, the project has won the 2009 Boulder County Pinnacle Award for Stewardship and Sustainability and the 2010 Boulder County Land Conservation Award. A Colorado Open Space Alliance award called The Blue Grama was also presented to Boulder County and BFC for the Rogers Park project. More kudos came from nature itself. An Open Space park ranger reported in December 2009 that he saw trout in Rogers Park where so few had been seen before. A golden eagle was perched high above the stream "fishing," a fine reward for all of our efforts.

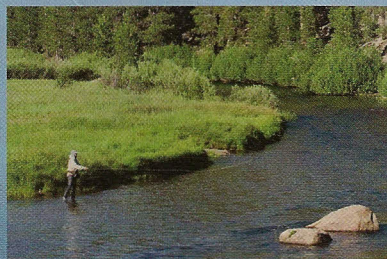
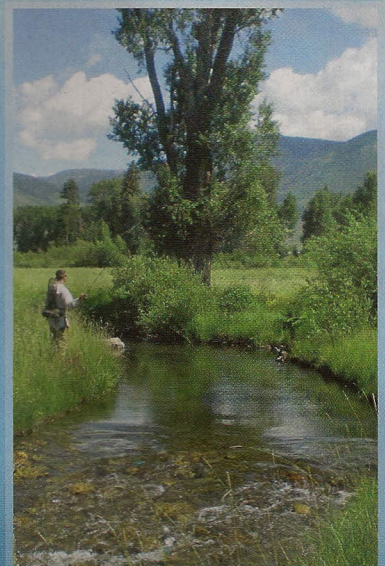
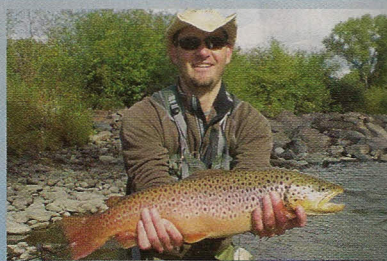
ABOUT THE AUTHOR.

Mark Riley and Roger Svendsen are Board members of Boulder Flycasters, TU's chapter based in Boulder.



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