

# Camera

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## Boulder Creek makeover

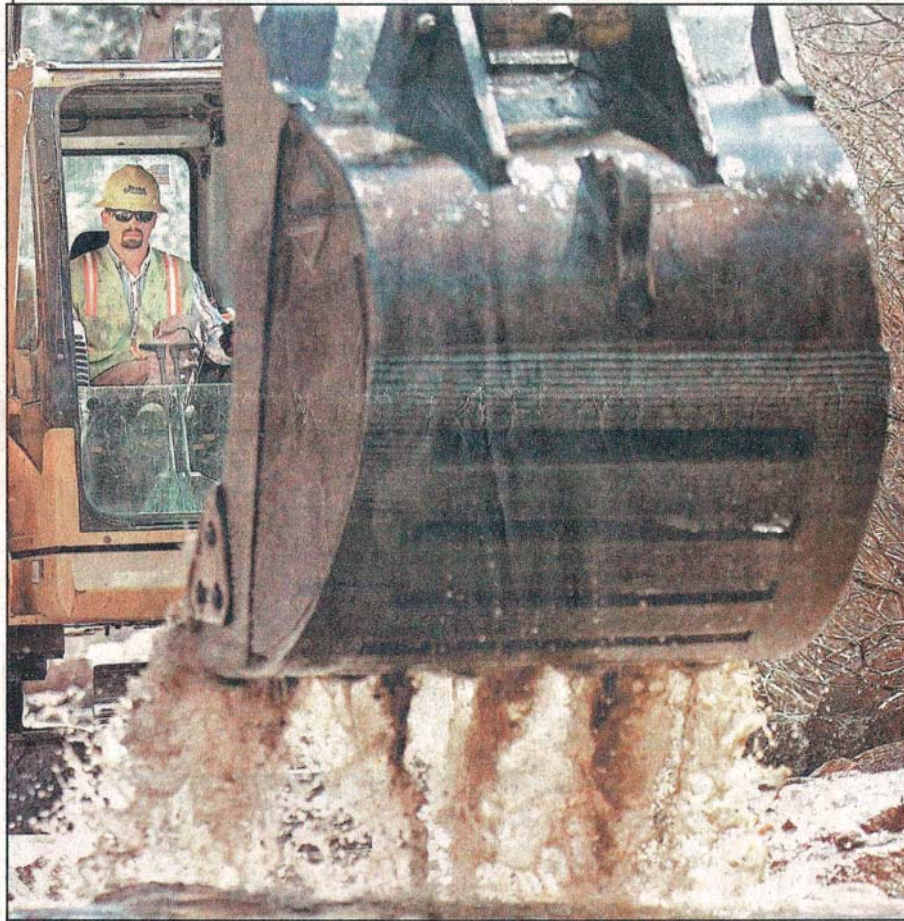


Photo by Shawn McHugh | For The Camera

Jesse Ellis, of Tezak Construction, digs a trench Tuesday down the center of Boulder Creek, about four miles downstream from Nederland's Barker Reservoir. Ellis is part of a crew working on a stream restoration project organized by Boulder Flycasters, the local chapter of Trout Unlimited. See video of the restoration project at [www.dailycamera.com](http://www.dailycamera.com).

### Rogers Park restoration project creates healthy fish habitat

By Laura Snider  
Camera Staff Writer

As David Blauch stepped closer to the creek, he saw a couple of shadows dart under the eave of a big rock.

"That's exactly what you want," he said, pointing to the trout he'd just frightened into the shadows.

The massive rock now sitting in Boulder Creek, parting the frigid waters and creating an eddy of still

water where a trout can hide, is new to the stream. Just a week ago, this section of the creek near the top of Boulder Canyon ran wide and shallow, with uniform ripples stretching for a half mile with barely a boulder in sight.

"All the larger rocks are placed to increase habitat," said Blauch, vice

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# Restoration project increases Boulder Creek fish habitat

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president and senior ecologist for Ecological Resource Coalition in Boulder.

The \$234,000 restoration project is the result of three years of hard work by Boulder Flycasters, the local chapter of Trout Unlimited, to create a fish-friendly section of stream with stable banks, better recreational access and environmental education opportunities.

"The board got frustrated trying to do a number of things at once and not really getting anywhere with any of them," said Roger Svendsen, who is heading the project for the Flycasters. "We said, 'Let's define a flagship project and put all our resources into that.' That was very early in 2006, and now we're inches away from total success."

Over the decades, the area of Boulder Creek called Rogers Park has been damaged by a nearby sawmill, the con-

struction of Colo. 119, flooding and pollution from the highway. And the dam four miles upstream, which creates Barker Reservoir, has altered the natural stream flow, leaving Rogers Park with wide banks, shallow waters and a relatively uniform stream bottom.

In the winter, the stream froze nearly to the bottom, and during droughts the water slowed to a trickle — both scenarios eliminating places where trout can survive. By next week, the stream will have had a total makeover, with deep, calm pools pouring into sections of shallow ripples and quickly moving channels.

On Tuesday, a monstrous trackhoe rolled up Boulder Creek, dredging the creek floor and — with surprising delicacy — using its bucket and extra "bucket thumb" to move bulky rocks from one place to another, manipulating the stream channel to fit carefully engineered plans.

The big equipment will be

out of the water by early next week, and Boulder Flycasters will be left to re-vegetate the banks with the help of volunteers.

The Rogers Park project isn't likely to be the last one for the group, which was formed in 1966 and has been working on stream restoration nearly as long, helping to engineer Boulder Creek's flow through town and building fish passages around ditch-diversion dams.

"Boulder Flycasters has decided for the next 10 years we want to spend a lot of time on Middle Boulder Creek and South Boulder Creek on areas that are damaged," chapter president Larry Quilling said.

The Rogers Park project is funded by Boulder Flycasters, the Fishing is Fun Program, Colorado Trout Unlimited, the Colorado Watershed Restoration Program and Boulder County.

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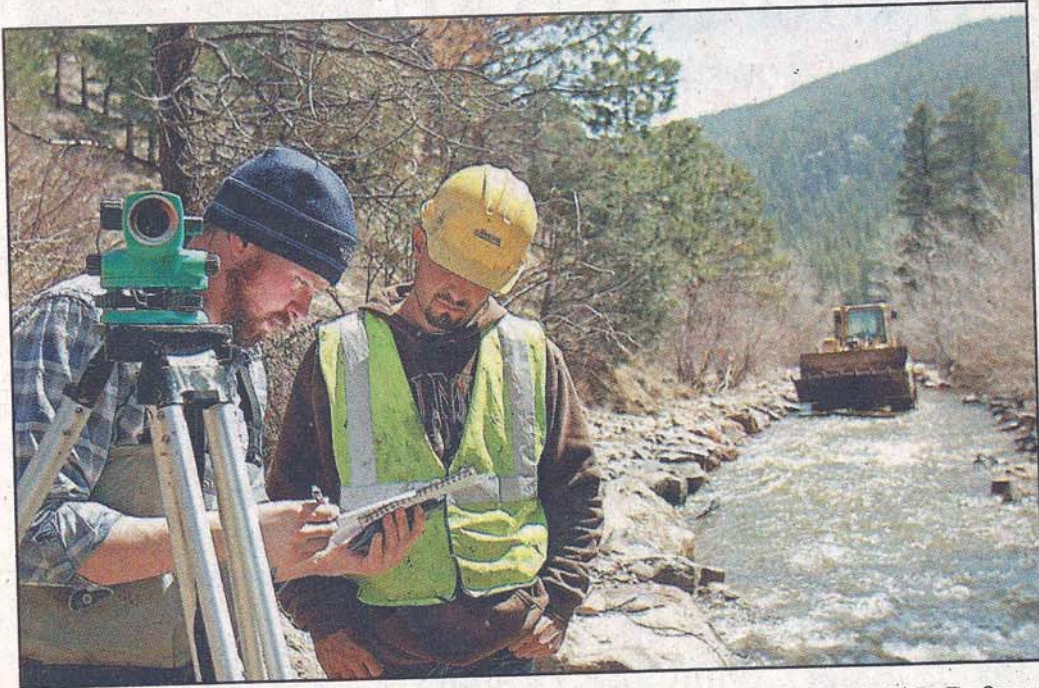


Photo by Shawn McHugh | For The Camera

Todd Street, left, and Keith Martinez, of Tezak Construction, work Tuesday to restore the Rogers Park section of Boulder Creek.