

# EAGLE RIVER PARK (EAGLE, CO)

BY TOWN OF EAGLE STAFF



Eagle River Park design.  
Photo by Town of Eagle, CO

**T**HE DESIGN AND construction of the Eagle River Park is the first step in implementation of the Town of Eagle's visionary and ambitious River Corridor Master Plan that was adopted by the town in December of 2015 ([www.townofeaglerivercorridorplan.org](http://www.townofeaglerivercorridorplan.org)).

The Eagle River Park has been identified for a section of the Eagle River that was reconfigured and heavily affected by the construction of Interstate 70 in the early 1970s. The area along this particular section of the Eagle River is currently used primarily as a large dirt parking lot for semi-trucks. There is a chain link fence along the dirt parking lot that inhibits access to the river. The current use of this area creates a less than desirable first impression for the Town of Eagle, as well as the Eagle County Fairgrounds. With the construction of the Eagle River Park the gateway for both the Town of Eagle and the County Fairgrounds will be considerably improved.

The primary objective in the design of the Eagle River Park is to create a project that is a win-win for all stakeholders involved. The

town envisions a river park that includes the following:

- World-class in-stream features for beginner to pro-level kayakers, stand-up paddle boarders, and river surfers
- Improved fish passage and habitat
- Preservation of existing, mature areas of riparian vegetation, as well as planting of new riparian vegetation to improve the riparian ecosystem
- Boulder terracing along the riverbank to improve river access and to reinforce and stabilize the riverbank
- Natural depositional areas along the edge of the river that will provide beach areas for residents and visitors to enjoy along the river
- Improved downstream passage for river users, including a bypass channel for those who want to skirt the first two in-stream features

- An ADA accessible route to the river
- A roughly 2.5 acres riverside park that will provide active and passive recreation areas, river overlooks, restrooms, and areas for mobile vendors (e.g., food trucks)
- Amenities for swift water rescue training
- Connections to local and regional trail networks
- A parking area that will accommodate day users of the Eagle River Park, users of the nearby Eagle County Rodeo Arena and Fairgrounds, and semi-trucks during emergency closures of Interstate 70

Preliminary cost estimates provided to the town by S20 Design ([s2odesign.com](http://s2odesign.com)) and studioINSITE ([studio-insite.com](http://studio-insite.com)) for Phase I of the Eagle River Park totaled approximately \$5.6 million. Phase I includes the in-stream features and riverbank improvements, the riverside park, and

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connections to local and regional trails. Being a small community of approximately 6,500 people, the Town of Eagle has limited financial resources to fund a project of this magnitude. Therefore, the town had to investigate a variety of options in order to find a potential source of funding for this project. Ultimately, the town landed on a 0.5% sales tax increase to fund the Phase I improvements. The town intends to leverage a portion of the revenues from this additional sales tax for grants. On April 5, 2016, voters in Eagle will decide whether or not to approve the 0.5% sales tax increase. If voters approve the tax increase, the town anticipates beginning construction of the Eagle River Park in the winter of 2016.

Estimates prepared for the Eagle River Park predict that the river park will attract

anywhere from 17,165 – 32,847 non-commercial river users (i.e., kayakers and stand-up paddle boarders) per year. Assuming that the average expenditure per user is \$35, it is estimated that the town will see an increase in total expenditures of \$600,775 - \$1,149,645. This will equate to \$24,031 - \$45,986 of additional tax revenue for the town. The estimates for the Eagle River Park do not account for the economic impacts of new residents, new businesses, non-river user visits or additional interstate travelers who may be attracted to Eagle as a result of the river park. Based on discussions with other communities that have constructed river parks, the economic impacts that Eagle could realize may be significantly greater than those generated solely by kayakers and stand-up paddle boarders.

The Town of Eagle is excited to have American Whitewater's support for the implementation of the town's River Corridor Master Plan. Partnerships between the town and organizations such as American Whitewater are essential to bringing this plan's bold vision to fruition.

Those interested in learning more about the Eagle River Park project or the Town of Eagle's - River Corridor Plan should contact Matt Farrar (Assistant Town Planner) at the Town of Eagle ([matt.farrar@townofeagle.org](mailto:matt.farrar@townofeagle.org)).



The poster for the Gunnison River Festival 2016 features a central illustration of a kayaker in silhouette navigating white-water rapids. The background is a mix of dark and light blue washes. At the top, a yellow paddle graphic contains the text 'GUNNISON WHITEWATER PARK TAYLOR RIVER CANYON' on the left and '2016 JUNE 24-26' on the right. The main title 'GUNNISON RIVER FESTIVAL' is in large, bold, white letters. Below the title is the website 'www.gunnisonriverfestival.com' and social media icons for Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn. On the right side, there are two circular logos: one for the 'FESTIVAL GUNNISON RIVER' and another for the 'TOWN OF EAGLE'.