

# LEARNING BY DOING

## FACTS

### The Fraser Flats River Habitat Project

#### Overview

The Fraser Flats River Habitat Project will greatly benefit aquatic health along a critical section of the Fraser River in Colorado's Grand County.

#### Sponsor

Learning By Doing (LBD), a collaborative effort whose members share a mutual interest in protecting the aquatic environment of the Upper Colorado River Basin. Fraser Flats is LBD's first river restoration collaborative project.

#### Location

The 0.91-mile reach is in the open meadows of Middle Park near the town of Tabernash, just off U.S. Highway 40 and to the south of County Road 83 (*see attached map*).

#### Project Goals

1. **Improve the riparian and aquatic habitat to return the reach to a healthy, vibrant fishery** through:
  - Rechanneling the river to concentrate flows into a narrower section for less solar gain and improved sediment transport
  - Creating habitat features (riffle and pool complexes) for fish and macroinvertebrates (bugs)
  - Revegetating the banks to improve stability, reduce solar influence and provide cover for trout—while maintaining clear casting lines for anglers
2. **Create new public fishing access** by opening a section of the Fraser River to public fishing for generations of anglers to enjoy
3. **Live the mission of Learning By Doing** through showcasing how a group of previously antagonistic parties can solve water issues by working together

#### Project Selection

The LBD partners selected the Fraser Flats project for its environmental benefit, new public fishing access, and public/private partnership advantages. Restoring both the 0.5-mile private section, owned by Devil's Thumb Ranch, and adjacent 0.41-mile public section leased to Grand County by Grand County Water and Sanitation District 1, minimizes the construction impact and maximizes efficiency and costs. Fraser Flats was recommended for instream habitat improvements in Grand County's Stream Management Plan. It builds on a successful adjacent project on the Fraser River, called the North 40, and on a 3-mile river enhancement project upstream in the Town of Fraser.

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#### Timeframe

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September 2016–November 2017. The project will roll out in two phases:

- Phase 1 involves a baseline study, conceptual design and obtaining the required permits from Fall 2016 through late Spring 2017
- Phase 2 includes revegetation efforts (beginning Spring 2017), and river rechanneling and parking lot construction (Fall 2017)
- A public dedication ceremony will take place in Spring 2018.

## **Funding**

The total cost of the Fraser Flats River Habitat Project is approximately \$200,000. The project is funded by a combination of funds committed to the LBD cooperative effort from Grand County, LBD partner contributions, a Fishing Is Fun grant from Colorado Parks and Wildlife and a private landowner.

## **Project Management/Contractor**

The Colorado River Headwaters Chapter of Trout Unlimited will oversee the project on behalf of LBD. Freestone Aquatics, based in Littleton, Colorado, will provide the design-build services. Anna Drexler-Dreis of the Colorado Headwaters Land Trust will spearhead the riparian revegetation effort as part of her Master's thesis at Western State Colorado University.

## **About Learning By Doing**

Learning By Doing is a unique partnership of East and West Slope water stakeholders in Colorado whose goal is to maintain, and where possible, restore or enhance the aquatic environment of the Upper Colorado River and its tributaries in Grand County.

Managing partners include:

- Colorado Parks and Wildlife
- Colorado River Water Conservation District
- Denver Water
- Grand County
- Middle Park Water Conservancy District
- Northern Water
- Trout Unlimited

## **Contacts**

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