



SDA 2011 Special District Collaboration Award

Special Districts have a long history of collaboration with local governments, and SDA recognizes the value of those successful working relationships. To honor those districts who have effectively and efficiently partnered with other entities, **2011 will mark the 2nd year of the “Special District Collaboration Award.”** The award will be presented at the annual awards ceremony at the SDA Annual Conference September 14-16, 2011.

The award recipient will be highlighted in an awards booklet and with the presentation of the award at the General Luncheon, Friday, September 16.

Press releases will be sent to the winners’ local newspapers.

In order to be considered for the “Special District Collaboration Award,” a district must fill out the application form and return it to Krys Gillespie at krys@sdaco.org **no later than FRIDAY, JUNE 24, 2011.**

2011 Special District Collaboration Award

Nomination Form

Attach additional pages as needed.

Name of District:

Southeast Metro Stormwater Authority

Name of the other Local Government(s) involved in the collaboration:

East Cherry Creek Valley Water and Sanitation District; Arapahoe Parks and Recreation District

How long has the collaboration been in place? :

The Southeast Metro Stormwater Authority (SEMSWA) collaboration with East Cherry Creek Valley Water and Sanitation District (ECCV) and Arapahoe Parks and Recreation District (APRD) has been in place since 2007, when SEMSWA actively began managing stormwater in the southeast Metro Denver area.

History of how the partnership came to be:

When SEMSWA was formed via an Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) in 2006 to provide stormwater management services, one of the formation IGA Partners, ECCV, had a partnership with APRD based on mutual goals for managing the multiple-purpose waterways in ECCV's service area. This partnership expanded to include SEMSWA during the process of taking ownership of ECCV's stormwater management parcels, including the waterways, as required in the formation IGA. Property transfer efforts with ECCV have been carried out in various phases since 2007, culminating in complete formal transfer agreements in early 2011.

During the ECCV property transfer activities, many opportunities were identified for joint use, maintenance and management of the waterways with APRD. These opportunities culminated in formal easements granted to APRD as well as negotiated agreements as to the responsibility of SEMSWA and APRD for a particular parcel's short and long-term maintenance, planned constructed improvements, and overall management for public use. The agreements form the basis for a working partnership between APRD and SEMSWA for a myriad of activities. This partnership covers everything from routine mowing and weed control maintenance, to assistance in design for park amenities and trail connections and crossings, to bank and channel stabilization measures necessary to minimize property damage to parks, open space and trails, and maximize water quality in the riparian areas along the waterways.

How has this collaboration served the citizens of the district? :

Since SEMSWA's formation, APRD and SEMSWA have collaborated extensively on trail, open space and park maintenance activities, bank and channel improvements in APRD parks and open space, and development of additional trail amenities for APRD members, like horse crossings along the creek for equestrian enthusiasts in the Piney Creek watershed.

Trail, Open Space and Park Maintenance.

SEMSWA collaborates with APRD on the more routine maintenance efforts for trails, open spaces and parks, and the two special districts have worked extensively together to delineate who is responsible for scheduled mowing, trash and debris removal on the waterways during the growing season. In addition, the SEMSWA Maintenance Program addresses the maintenance of SEMSWA-owned waterways in APRD boundaries with removal of sediment in major and minor conveyance channels, and removal of sediment and maintenance of Piney Creek, West Toll Gate Creek, and No Name Creek regional detention and water quality ponds. One example of regional stormwater maintenance is the removal of sediment at APRD's Fox Hollow Park conveyance channel located next to a segment of the Piney Creek trail system.



As part of the coordinated maintenance program, SEMSWA also conducts routine surveillance of APRD areas that are impacted locally by significant rain and hail events as well as conducting an annual inspection of drainage and erosion control components in APRD areas to identify and schedule future maintenance efforts. Additionally, all waterways in the Denver metro area are at risk of invasive weed infestations resulting from uncontrolled upstream populations of these weed species that travel downstream with the creek flows. This requires a concentrated maintenance effort during those times of seed release, and APRD and SEMSWA have worked cooperatively to develop a weed management plan for the park and open space parcels, and along trail corridors, that compliment the other maintenance program activities.

Bank and Channel Improvements.

Natural areas bring great value to a community, and the special appeal of West Toll Gate Creek, No Name Creek, and Piney Creek parks, trails and open space available for walkers, joggers, bikers, bird watchers, and wildlife viewers, is no exception. However, all waterways in the Metro Denver area are impacted by increased stormwater runoff and often times exhibit localized problems that require constructed improvements. SEMSWA, as the stormwater management provider within the APRD boundaries, constructs several types of bank and channel improvements, including those that address local erosion problems that impact trails or park/open space property. Solutions may include smaller projects to enhance stream stability

and maintainability to preserve existing APRD trails, and larger projects to restore channel slopes and banks to enhance or increase conveyance capabilities and protect private property and park amenities.

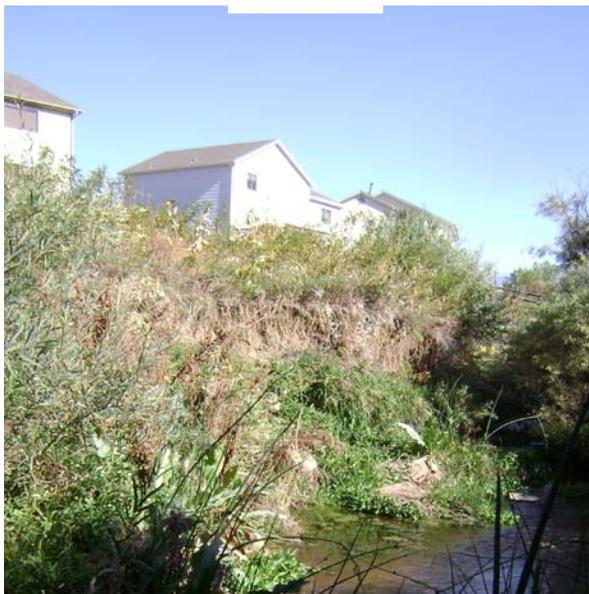
One of the more recent collaborative large-scale stream improvement projects between APRD and SEMSWA is the SEMSWA/Urban Drainage and Flood Control District (UDFCD) West Toll Gate Creek project at APRD's Fox Hill Park, where private property and APRD Fox Hill Park amenities and property were being adversely affected by active erosion in West Toll Gate Creek. This project identified a series of grade control structures and areas requiring bank stabilization necessary to lower the erosive velocities in the channel and to reduce erosion of the stream bank. The primary purpose of this project was stream stabilization to mitigate the erosion threatening private and park property by reducing the flow velocities with a series of grade control structures and stilling basins to dissipate energy, mitigate erosion and control sediment transport. Major bank protection was provided where erosion existed, and along bends where erosion was expected in the future. The project results indicate a stable slope and channel banks that will protect Fox Hill Park for the residents to enjoy without the worry of steep vertical banks adjacent to their playground area and the loss of park and private property.



Before



After



On a smaller scale, a project in 2010 constructed by the SEMSWA Maintenance crew restored stability to a Piney Creek channel bank that had eroded adjacent to the APRD Piney Creek Regional Trail just east of Parker Road. This project preserved the trail within the existing easement, and the bank stabilization effort is anticipated to protect the trail and provide safe passage for the trail users for many years to come.



Development of trail amenities.

SEMSWA and APRD actively collaborated during the design of APRD equestrian amenities along Piney Creek, including several horse crossings that meet the needs of the horse and the rider as well as the floodplain and water quality. Initially, APRD's concept for the Piney Creek Horse Trail Crossing project would have impacted the floodplain and would have required additional planning, design, and permitting for water quality concerns. As a result of collaboration with SEMSWA, the final design incorporated articulating steel mats connected by cable for flexibility, placed on the surface and pushed into the sandy creek bed, resulting in a stable surface for the horse to cross the creek. The mats are level with the creek bed so there is no impedance to flow, solving floodplain conveyance issues, and the lack of extensive construction typically associated with creek crossings, eliminated water quality permitting.



What are the long term plans of this partnership? :

SEMSWA's goal of this partnership is to ensure functional waterways that meet flood conveyance needs, water quality goals, and recreational needs. This kind of design approach exemplifies the importance of multi-use open space in urban communities. It offers the citizens of SEMSWA and APRD the opportunity for passive and active play, urban hikes, bicycling, and horseback riding in neighborhood open space and parks with extensive trail and bridge connections. This approach is highlighted by the 2004 Arapahoe County (pre-SEMSWA, same staff) and UDFCD stream stabilization project that included APRD's 1-acre skate park located in the Piney Creek floodway. This park amenity provides for everyday use by APRD members with an engineering design that limited impacts from the smaller, more frequent flood events, yet provides no impediment to stormwater conveyance in the larger storm events. The project serves as a model to demonstrate that thoughtful engineering and collaborative partnering, like that between SEMSWA and APRD, can solve problems that require going beyond just stormwater management engineering for the waterway, and towards engineering for the entire community.

**Nomination submitted by:**

John A. McCarty, SEMSWA Executive Director

Name of Local news agencies (for Press Release):

The Villager, 303-773-8313 www.villagerpublishing.com

Centennial Citizen, 303-566-4080 www.ourcentennialnews.com

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