



CITY COUNCIL ACTION FORM

DEPARTMENT Planning	PRESENTED BY Bill Almquist - Community Development Director	DATE February 20, 2024
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ITEM

Resolution No. 2024-17: A Resolution of the City Council for the City of Salida, Colorado, Supporting the Upper Arkansas Watershed Partnership’s Application for the National Park Service Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program to Assist with Ecological Restoration of a 1.2-mile Stretch of the South Arkansas River, Including a .25-mile City-Owned Portion Within the South Ark Neighborhood Planned Development Area.

BACKGROUND

The South Arkansas River, especially within the stretch between CR 107 and the confluence with the Arkansas River, is a particularly beautiful and ecologically important part of the river that is a mix of public and private ownership and access. The area is also prone to flooding, has been impacted by human development (inc. recent trenching of the river and tree removal), and has seen its banks denuded and eroded from past grazing. Healthy watersheds are vital for water quality, resiliency from floods and fires, wildlife habitat, and other ecological processes and social/recreational uses. The Upper Arkansas Watership Partnership, which consists of representatives from Trout Unlimited, Central Colorado Conservancy, Upper Arkansas Conservation District, Chaffee County, and others,



PUBLICLY-OWNED STRETCH	
PRIVATELY-OWNED STRETCH	
SPLIT-OWNED STRETCH	

PED BRIDGE (EXISTING)	
PED BRIDGE (PLANNED)	





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is interested in putting together an action plan to enhance the ecological health of that particular 1.2-mile stretch of the South Arkansas with the assistance of the National Park Service’s RTCA program, and is submitting an application for such grant-funded assistance due March 1, 2024.

The City owns an approximately quarter-mile stretch of the river which also happens to serve as the northern edge of the future Vandaveer Open Space and Regional Park, which was approved through the South Ark Neighborhood Master Plan process. Fishing, hiking, swimming, bird watching, are just some of the activities anticipated near the site of the future ~400-unit South Ark Neighborhood. The Planned Development modification that codified the master plan notes that:

“This 11.3-acre area of open space in VPA-8 within the Vandaveer Regional Park is intended to be one of the most undisturbed and natural open spaces in the area. It should be the backbone of a South Arkansas River sanctuary, in which trees, naturally shifting channels, wetlands, beaver ponds, etc. are all preserved, and only supplemented with environmentally sensitive trails. This area should remain an area for birding and wildlife habitat and should include opportunities for environmental education along the river corridor. *Initiatives by local environmental groups for grants to design and build river restoration projects should be encouraged.*” (emphasis added)

Members of UAWP and City staff did a site visit with representatives of the National Park Service the week of 2/5 and discussed some of the possibilities for collaboration amongst the various entities. The planning process would look at opportunities for enhancing both public and private stretches of the river (with support of individual landowners, of course). These efforts would be in line with many of the public comments that were collected throughout the South Ark Neighborhood master plan process. Furthermore, a plan put together this year for ecological restoration purposes may allow for coordination around anticipated infrastructure installation through the City-owned site (which could avoid the need to duplicate efforts). The plan is expected to identify specific goals, action items, up to 30% design for the project, and funding opportunities to pursue.

FISCAL NOTE

There is no financial commitment currently, other than a few hours monthly of staff time. It is anticipated that, once a plan is created, the UAWP will pursue grant funding for the project which the City could potentially participate in.

SUGGESTED MOTION

A Council person should move to “approve Resolution 2024-17 Supporting the Upper Arkansas Watershed Partnership’s Application for the National Park Service Rivers, Trails, and Conservation



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DEPARTMENT	PRESENTED BY	DATE
Planning	Bill Almquist - Community Development Director	February 20, 2024

Assistance Program to Assist with Ecological Restoration of a 1.2-mile Stretch of the South Arkansas River, Including a .25-mile City-Owned Portion Within the South Ark Neighborhood Planned Development Area.”

Attachments:

Resolution No. 2024-17

CITY OF SALIDA, COLORADO
RESOLUTION NO. 17
(Series of 2024)

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SALIDA, COLORADO, SUPPORTING THE UPPER ARKANSAS WATERSHED PARTNERSHIP'S APPLICATION FOR THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE RIVERS, TRAILS, AND CONSERVATION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM TO ASSIST WITH ECOLOGICAL RESTORATION OF A 1.2-MILE STRETCH OF THE SOUTH ARKANSAS RIVER, INCLUDING A .25-MILE CITY-OWNED PORTION WITHIN THE SOUTH ARK NEIGHBORHOOD PLANNED DEVELOPMENT AREA.

WHEREAS, healthy local watersheds are essential to City residents and others for clean and available water, fresh air, resilient forests and habitat, as well as recreational enjoyment and economic vitality; and

WHEREAS, the South Arkansas River is an arterial waterway that both defines and enhances the southern stretch of our city; and

WHEREAS, the restoration of portions of the South Arkansas River will promote water quality, habitat enhancement, the proliferation of natural processes, and resiliency of the surrounding watershed; and

WHEREAS, the Upper Arkansas Watershed Partnership ("UAWP") is pursuing planning assistance from the National Park Service Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program to create a plan for such restoration of certain stretches; and

WHEREAS, the City of Salida recently completed and approved the South Ark Neighborhood Master Plan which acknowledges the value of natural features and processes within the River Corridor Area (VPA-8) and states that "Initiatives by local environmental groups for grants to design and build river restoration projects should be encouraged."; and

WHEREAS, the area is planned to be part of the future Vandaveer Open Space and Regional Park that will draw residents and visitors alike for recreational purposes; and

WHEREAS, such planning may allow for coordination between entities for the installation of basic infrastructure within the site and restoration of impacted lands; and

WHEREAS, the City of Salida desires to partner with the UAWP and assist with coordination of such efforts, especially on public lands and approves the Grant application, attached hereto as Exhibit A.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SALIDA, COLORADO AS FOLLOWS:

Section 1. The Salida City Council incorporates the foregoing recitals as its conclusions, facts, determinations and findings.

Section 2. The Salida City Council hereby approves and authorizes the City to enter into the Grant

application, attached hereto as Exhibit A.

Section 3. The Salida City Council hereby approves and authorizes the Mayor to sign any further documents associated with Grant application, attached hereto as Exhibit A.

RESOLVED, APPROVED AND ADOPTED this 20th day of February, 2024.

CITY OF SALIDA, COLORADO

Dan Shore, Mayor

[SEAL]

ATTEST:

City Clerk/Deputy City Clerk



Application Guidelines & Form



About Us

The National Park Service – Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance program (RTCA) supports community-led natural resource conservation and outdoor recreation projects across the nation. Our conservation and recreation planning professionals partner with community groups, nonprofit organizations, tribes, and government agencies. This partnership assists local communities in realizing their conservation and outdoor recreation vision and goals by providing a broad range of services and skills. National Park Service (NPS) staff share their expertise to help your team turn an idea into reality. We offer this assistance on an annual basis with extensions based on mutual agreement. *No monetary grants are made.*

National Park Service Mission

The National Park Service preserves unimpaired the natural and cultural resources and values of the National Park System for the enjoyment, education, and inspiration of this and future generations. The Park Service cooperates with partners to extend the benefits of natural and cultural resource conservation and outdoor recreation throughout this country and the world.

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Our Focus Areas

Our projects typically fall within five focus areas, although we consider other projects that fall outside of these categories:

- **Build healthy communities through parks, trails, and outdoor opportunities:**
Improve access to outdoor recreation and park amenities on land and water that support healthy lifestyles for all users
- **Conserve natural lands, rivers, and watersheds:**
Strengthen the conservation and stewardship of public lands, waterways, and wildlife habitat
- **Engage youth in outdoor recreation and stewardship:**
Connect young people to the outdoors to develop a lifelong appreciation of recreation and nature
- **Strengthen the organizational capacity of project partners:**
Develop and strengthen effective and sustainable community organizations and partner groups
- **Support National Park Service and community networks:**
Facilitate strategic planning and collaboration between national parks and communities to achieve shared goals



Our Services

Our assistance is tailored to your needs. Examples of the types of assistance we provide are listed below. Visit our website to learn about current projects: <https://www.nps.gov/orgs/rtca/current-projects.htm>

- Define project vision and goals
- Inventory and map community resources
- Identify and analyze key issues and opportunities
- Engage collaborative partners and stakeholders
- Design community outreach and participation strategies
- Develop concept plans for trails, parks, and natural areas
- Set priorities and build consensus
- Identify funding strategies
- Develop a sustainable organizational framework to support the project
- Create project management and strategic action plans
- Coach teams, groups, and partnership networks

Application Process and Timeline

The application deadline is March 1. Consulting a program manager prior to the application deadline is *a requirement* to help identify how our expertise can complement your project and to answer questions regarding the application. Please see the contact list at the end of this application to identify the program manager who serves your state.

- Please contact the program manager for your state to discuss the proposed project and current application timeline.
- Email completed applications to the program manager who serves your state or contact them for guidance on mailing a printed version (*see list at the end of the application*)
- Please include the following in your Application Package:
 1. Completed application form
 2. Site location map
 3. A minimum of three commitment letters that describe each partner's role, responsibility, and contribution to the project
 4. Optional supplemental information that can help us learn more about your project (for example, background documents, media coverage, additional maps, list of links to resources, project photos, etc.)
- Project start times will be coordinated with applicants who have been selected for assistance.

Project Selection Criteria

Applications for support from the Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance program are competitively evaluated based on the following criteria:

- The project is expected to accomplish noticeable results that promote natural resource conservation or outdoor recreation in the near future.
- Roles and contributions of project partners are significant and well-defined.
- There is evidence of broad community support for the project.
- The project fits with our focus areas (although proposals falling outside these areas are considered).



Application Form

Date: March 1, 2024

Project Name: South Arkansas River Concept Design

City and State: Salida, Colorado

Congressional District(s) Number(s): Colorado Fifth District

Primary Applicant Organization(s): Upper Arkansas Watershed Partnership

Primary Contact: Chris Lamson

Title: CPCTU President

Street Address: 81 Kathy Drive

City: Buena Vista

State/Territory: CO

Zip Code: 81211

Email: corkandcaddis@gmail.com

Daytime Phone: 720-233-4114

Website (if applicable): www.uawp.org

Please review focus area descriptions (on page 1) and project selection criteria (on page 2) for guidance on addressing the following questions. If additional space is needed for your responses, please use the extra pages at the end of this document. Contact the program manager for your state with questions or for additional information.

1. Project Summary

Address the following points concisely:

- a. Summary of project - Tell us about your project idea and the specific outcomes you would like to achieve:

Our goal is re-naturalization of in-stream habitat and the riparian corridor along a 1.2-mile stretch of the South Arkansas River between County Road 107 and the confluence with the Arkansas River through Salida, Colorado. The City of Salida owns a 0.25-mile portion of the targeted reach and has created a master plan for the city-owned portion of the Vandaveer planned development. The city and other landowners are supportive of river re-naturalization and protection on their properties. We envision a holistic re-naturalization plan for the entire 1.2-mile reach so that when implementation occurs within each property, the result is coherent and ensures an intact, functional river corridor throughout the entire reach, restores habitat connectivity, and serves as a wildlife migration corridor. We envision an "Ecosystems Learning Center" located on the Southwest Conservation Corps property that would be utilized for Trout Unlimited and other community education programs. The City of Salida has expressed support for including an environmental education focus along their section of river. An environmentally sensitive, accessible trail with sustainable river access points will be a priority. Permanently affordable workforce housing is planned within walking distance of the river, providing improved outdoor recreation access for these residents and the community at large. Much of the South Arkansas River watershed is identified as highest wildfire risk zone. A functional riparian corridor will act as a fire break and mitigate future fire-caused sedimentation. We believe this reach of the South Arkansas will be a place of pride and a natural sanctuary for city residents.

1. Project Summary (continued)

- b. Describe any specific results anticipated within 5 years of project start-up (for example, greenway plan development or implementation, community events, land acquisition, sustainable organization formed, miles of trails developed, acres of land preserved/conserved, etc.).

Within 5 years we will be well underway with implementing restoration work along the 1.2-mile reach. We expect to have concept designs and cost estimates in hand by the end of 2024. Utilizing those plans, we will immediately transition to acquiring implementation funding and permitting. One of our top priorities is to include the community throughout the design and implementation process, with public input meetings during the design phase, and volunteer opportunities open to the public for riparian planting and other participatory events. We see this as a demonstration project that will engage the community, improve access to outdoor recreation, instill pride in the new restored river corridor, and inspire more public involvement in conservation.

- c. Describe any major project accomplishments to date:

Stakeholder outreach to landowners along the target reach has been ongoing for several years, and a large majority of the landowners support our project and have written letters of support. Collegiate Peaks Chapter of Trout Unlimited (CPCTU) have secured a \$10,000 grant from Colorado Trout Unlimited to acquire concept designs. A grant application to the Colorado Water Conservation Board for a further \$62,700 for concept design and outreach is pending, with a decision expected in March 2024. CPCTU has another \$20,000 in cash for matching funds. A strong coalition of organizations including the City of Salida has been formed to support the project.

Multiple stream assessments for the target reach, including Fluvial Hazard Zone mapping, have been commissioned which demonstrate the feasibility and positive impacts of this project. These assessments are included in the additional materials for Section 6 of the application. Water quality monitoring in partnership with River Watch is ongoing.

- d. Describe anticipated benefits to the community (for example, recreational, social, environmental, economic, health, etc.):

This will be a multi-benefit project because of the vision of the City of Salida planners other project organizers. It will provide public access to sustainable outdoor recreation within the city limits through an innovative mixing of naturalized space and adjacent developed park areas. Public education will be a focus of the design, utilizing educational signage along trails on the City of Salida property and perhaps along the existing trail through the Two Rivers development. The envisioned Ecosystems Learning Center will be the hub of youth education programs for CPCTU and other groups. The restored river corridor will provide layers of ecological benefits including wildfire resilience, superior aquatic and riparian habitat, improved habitat connectivity, and a wildlife migration corridor. It will provide opportunities for citizen participation in the restoration process as well as immersion in a natural ecosystem. It will inspire and educate new generations of conservationists and improve equity in access to the outdoors. See Additional Text below.

2. Roles

- a. Describe your organization, its role in the project, and the time and resources that will be contributed:

The Upper Arkansas Watershed Partnership formed in 2020 to foster communication and collaboration among agencies, organizations, government, and landowners in the Upper Arkansas Basin to build a healthy and resilient watershed. The UAWP Leadership Team includes the Arkansas River Watershed Collaborative, Central Colorado Conservancy, Greater Arkansas River Nature Association, Trout Unlimited, and the Upper Arkansas Conservation District. The group engages diverse stakeholders to: (1) protect water quality and quantity; (2) support agricultural operators with protection of water rights and improvement of irrigation infrastructure; (3) provide community education about the value of the watershed and ecosystem functions; (4) build watershed resilience to drought, fire, and flooding; and (5) maintain and restore the health of the Arkansas River, its tributaries, fisheries, and wildlife habitat.

- b. In the chart below, describe each partner’s role, responsibility, and contribution to the project (please include partners providing letters of commitment):

Organization Name	Partner’s Role, Responsibility, and Contribution
Upper Arkansas Watershed Partnership (UAWP) See additional text for specific partner organization roles	Lead organization: Project management, contractor selection and liaison, grant management, public and stakeholder outreach, Collaborate with the City regarding existing and future utility, transportation, and future river crossing installations
City of Salida	Fundraising, Contractor selection, permitting, design integration and workflow coordination with larger South Ark Neighborhood Master Plan development and infrastructure installation, public outreach
Southwest Conservation Corps (SCC)	Landowner within project reach: provide guidance on design and implementation on SCC property, public outreach, provide manpower as appropriate for implementation work, e.g. planting

3. Community Support & Engagement

- a. Describe project support to date, including support from the general public, organizations, coalitions, government agencies, and elected officials. Share any relevant news media articles, sections of plans that propose the project, and/or government resolutions that illustrate this support:

We have a broad base of support for our project vision, including from landowners within the project area, Chaffee County officials, and the Salida City Council. Letters of support are included in the attached documents for Section 6. During their planning process for the South Ark Neighborhood Master Plan, the City of Salida held several public meetings to gather input on a variety of possible land uses. Public support for a naturalized river corridor was strong. That data is included in the attached documents. In their South Ark Neighborhood Plan, the City of Salida encoded support for a naturalized river corridor and cooperating with local environmental groups to realize it. See Additional Text. The Upper Arkansas Watershed Partnership (UAWP) is an ongoing collaboration of organizations with overlapping conservation goals. See Additional Text below for more details.

- b. Describe plans for future public outreach and engagement:

Public outreach during the design phase will be robust, with multiple public input meetings planned. In addition, the City of Salida has already convened several public input meetings for the overall Vandaveer property development (see results in Attachment X). Interest in the project is strong, as evidenced by the packed house attendance at the city's meetings. We intend to engage Salida residents as much as possible in volunteer work days to assist in riparian planting and other appropriate parts of the restoration process. The portion of the project reach situated on the Southwest Conservation Corps and Salida properties will be the hub of future youth education programs for CPCTU, GARNA, and Salida schools. Educational signage will be included along the accessible trails within the natural areas on the city-owned property.

4. NPS Support Requested

- a. What are the major project challenges your organization faces?

We recognize the ambitious scale and complexity of our project, which is why we have developed a coalition of supportive organizations who provide differing perspectives and expertise. The target reach spans eight properties both publicly and privately owned, with multiple landowners and varied land uses among properties. We anticipate stakeholder outreach and engagement will require significant time and effort. The large project scale and complexity means raising funds for construction and obtaining the required permits will be a long process requiring expert assistance. Coordinating with the City of Salida on their larger South Ark Neighborhood and Vandaveer Regional Park Development will require strong lines of communication and fostering a shared vision from the outset. Creating a design that successfully transitions from the naturalized river corridor to the more developed adjacent recreational and residential spaces will require innovative engineering and landscape architecture. We intend to prioritize restoration treatments that do not impact downstream water users, but water rights administration may be required for some design aspects and will require water law expertise.

4. NPS Support Requested (continued)

- b. Describe the types of assistance and specific deliverables you are seeking from the NPS staff that would complement your team. *For examples, see the description of "Our Services" on page 2.*

We have organized a long-term partnership of like-minded organizations to work toward realizing this and other multi-benefit conservation projects. The Upper Arkansas Watershed Partnership (UAWP) would benefit from assistance with creating a collaboration charter specific to this project that includes the City of Salida and outlines the roles and responsibilities of each member. Public and stakeholder outreach will be an ongoing focus throughout design and construction. Assistance with outreach event planning and strategies will facilitate strengthening public and stakeholder support. Integrating plans for the naturalized river corridor with the adjacent built environment and creating effective transitions between the two presents a unique landscape architecture problem that may be outside the experience of our river engineering team.

5. How Did You Hear About Us?

Have you worked with Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance in the past? If not, how did you hear about our program (for example, from a colleague, online search, NPS website, grants.gov, social media, email, or other)?

Several staff members of our UAWP partner organizations have worked with NPS-RTCA in the past.

6. Attachments

Please include the following attachments with this completed application:

- Site location map
- Commitment letters from 3 or more project partners
- Optional supplemental information that can help us learn more about your project (background documents, examples of media coverage, additional maps, list of links to resources, project photos, etc.)

Reminder: Ensure you have initiated contact with your individual state program manager for guidance prior to submittal (see below for contact information - for a list of current program managers, please visit: www.nps.gov/orgs/rtca/contactus.htm).

Submitting Your Application

After the application is completed, email your application materials to the program manager for your state, or contact them for guidance on mailing a printed version.

American Samoa – pwr_rtca@nps.gov

Alabama – ser_rtca@nps.gov

Alaska – akr_rtca@nps.gov

Arizona – rtca_apps_imr@nps.gov

Arkansas – mwr_rtca@nps.gov

California – pwr_rtca@nps.gov

Colorado – rtca_apps_imr@nps.gov

Connecticut – ner_rtca@nps.gov

Delaware – ner_rtca@nps.gov

District of Columbia (and metropolitan area) –
ncr_rtca@nps.gov

Florida – ser_rtca@nps.gov

Georgia – ser_rtca@nps.gov

Guam – pwr_rtca@nps.gov

Hawaii – pwr_rtca@nps.gov

Idaho – pwr_rtca@nps.gov

Illinois – mwr_rtca@nps.gov

Indiana – mwr_rtca@nps.gov

Iowa – mwr_rtca@nps.gov

Kansas – mwr_rtca@nps.gov

Kentucky – ser_rtca@nps.gov

Louisiana – ser_rtca@nps.gov

Maine – ner_rtca@nps.gov

Maryland – ner_rtca@nps.gov

Massachusetts – ner_rtca@nps.gov

Michigan – mwr_rtca@nps.gov

Minnesota – mwr_rtca@nps.gov

Mississippi – ser_rtca@nps.gov

Missouri – mwr_rtca@nps.gov

Montana – rtca_apps_imr@nps.gov

Nebraska – mwr_rtca@nps.gov

Nevada – pwr_rtca@nps.gov

New Hampshire – ner_rtca@nps.gov

New Jersey – ner_rtca@nps.gov

New Mexico – rtca_apps_imr@nps.gov

New York – ner_rtca@nps.gov

North Carolina – ser_rtca@nps.gov

North Dakota – mwr_rtca@nps.gov

Northern Mariana Islands - pwr_rtca@nps.gov

Ohio – mwr_rtca@nps.gov

Oklahoma – rtca_apps_imr@nps.gov

Oregon – pwr_rtca@nps.gov

Pennsylvania – ner_rtca@nps.gov

Puerto Rico – ser_rtca@nps.gov

Rhode Island – ner_rtca@nps.gov

South Carolina – ser_rtca@nps.gov

South Dakota – mwr_rtca@nps.gov

Tennessee – ser_rtca@nps.gov

Texas – rtca_apps_imr@nps.gov

Utah – rtca_apps_imr@nps.gov

Vermont – ner_rtca@nps.gov

U.S. Virgin Islands – ser_rtca@nps.gov

Virginia – ner_rtca@nps.gov

Washington – pwr_rtca@nps.gov

West Virginia – ner_rtca@nps.gov

Wisconsin – mwr_rtca@nps.gov

Wyoming – rtca_apps_imr@nps.gov

Additional Text

Please use the space below for any additional text if needed.

Section 1d. continued:

The target reach of the South Arkansas is located in an urbanized area of Salida, close to Salida High School and U.S. Highway 50, the major commercial thoroughfare for the southern part of the city. The city plans to provide pedestrian access from Highway 50 at both ends of their property via existing easements and pedestrian bridges. The project reach is within walking distance of the populated core of Salida, the commercial strip, the high school, and up to 200 permanent affordable housing units in the planned South Ark Neighborhood Development. It will dramatically increase outdoor recreation opportunities for Salida citizens, and will improve outdoor access equity for underserved community members.

Section 2b.

UAWP partner organization roles and responsibilities:

--Collegiate Peaks Chapter of Trout Unlimited (CPCTU): Fundraising, Contractor selection and management, grant management, permitting

--Colorado Trout Unlimited (CTU): Fundraising, Contractor selection and management, grant management, permitting

--Central Colorado Conservancy (CCC): Public and stakeholder outreach, Contractor selection

--Greater Arkansas River Nature Association (GARNA): Volunteer participation planning, recruitment, and coordination; outreach to underserved communities, contractor selection

--Upper Arkansas Conservation District (UACD): Stakeholder outreach

Section 3a. continued:

As part of their South Ark Neighborhood Master Plan and Vandaveer Regional Park planning process, the City of Salida performed extensive public outreach, including open houses/presentations, two design charettes, several on-site tours, several public hearings, an online survey, among other informational events. Data from these events is included as an attachment for Section 6.

The following text is excerpted from the City of Salida's Vandaveer Ranch Overall Development Plan, which includes the city-owned portion of the project reach. By including this language in their Development Plan, the city has expressed their desire for a natural river corridor and for partnering with local environmental groups to achieve it:

"This 11.3 acre area of open space in VPA-8 within the Vandaveer Regional Park is intended to be one of the most undisturbed and natural open spaces in the area. It should be the backbone of a South Arkansas River sanctuary, in which trees, naturally shifting channels, wetlands, beaver ponds, etc. are all preserved, and only supplemented with environmentally sensitive trails. This area should remain an area for birding and wildlife habitat and should include opportunities for environmental education along the river corridor. Initiatives by local environmental groups for grants to design and build river restoration projects should be encouraged."

Additional Text

Please use the space below for any additional text if needed.