



RECREATION ENGINEERING AND PLANNING
485 ARAPAHOE AVENUE
BOULDER, CO 80302
(303) 545-5883 (PHONE AND FAX)

May 31, 2013

Benton County Planning and Environmental
c/o Rinkey Singh, AICP
905 NW 8th St.
Bentonville, AR 72712

Re: Site Plan Review Application Narrative

Dear Mrs. Singh,

Recreation Engineering and Planning (REP), as a representative for the City of Siloam Springs (City) and the Walton Family Foundation (WFF), is proud to submit the enclosed application for permitting through the Benton County Site Planning process (County). We have worked closely with the above entities in an attempt to provide a comprehensive application.

At this time, WFF is the owner of the property (under the Limited Liability Corporation Fisher Ford, LLC). WFF plans to transfer ownership of the land and responsibility for maintenance/operations to the City. The particulars are outlined in an agreement dated June 19, 2012 and included as an attachment. WFF authorizes the City to apply for the permit. In addition, WFF authorizes REP and Crist Engineers, Inc. to act as the agent for the WFF during the permitting process. WFF understands that all correspondence from the County will be made with the authorized agent. An affidavit from the Walton Family Foundation is included at the bottom of this narrative.

The park will be free and open to the public, and designed to accommodate all levels of outdoor enthusiasts from bankside users that appreciate a quiet book by the river, to aggressive whitewater paddlers seeking adventure and excitement in the hydraulic features. The amenities are divided and spaced to promote separation of use and minimize user conflicts.

WFF and REP staff explored alternative sites, but found no location that had the amenities and geographic characteristics needed to create whitewater features. Because the site is located in, and near, the Illinois River, there is inherent possibility of flooding and erosion damage. This is a unique site that contains a natural bedrock ledge that can be enhanced to create two whitewater features. In addition, Fisher Ford Road is directly adjacent to the site, providing public access. Apart from this site, and the associated natural bedrock ledge, there are no known locations near Siloam Springs on the Illinois River, that are suitable for engineered whitewater features, but not subject to flooding and potential erosion damage.

It is understood the project area may experience flooding up to an elevation of 946.5 ft. above sea level. In areas of the parking lot, this may equate to a water depth of approximately 6.5 feet. Because of this, design elements and improvement include measures to minimize maintenance and damage due to flooding. The instream structures are built with 2-4 diameter boulders that

are anchored into bedrock and finished with concrete grout to create a large mass of boulders and concrete within the river. The banks are armored with similar sized boulders to protect the toe from erosion and scour. All trails are specified as concrete to ensure they are not washed away during floods. The picnic tables are built from concrete and steel, in addition to anchoring to concrete slabs. The changing facilities, portable toilets, and trash receptacles will be placed on concrete pads, with appropriate anchoring systems to hold the facilities during flooding. The climbing boulder will be a natural boulder of approximately 10-feet in diameter. The boulder will be set in concrete. Finally, all revegetation and planting will be installed with flooding in mind. This includes monitoring and replacement as needed to ensure the vegetation can establish and withstand future flooding events. Finally, WFF, REP, and the City have worked together to create a project with minimal maintenance and on-going capital improvements. WFF plans to grant the park to the City, and the City has pledged maintenance, policing, and fire services at the park (see attached letter). Lastly, the park will have gated access that will be monitored by the City police department and the current plan is to close the park from 1 hour after sunset to 1 hour before sunrise, in addition to times of flooding where there is danger to life and property.

The project includes two major components. The first is whitewater and habitat improvements waterward of the ordinary high water mark. These improvements are designed to create whitewater recreation, improved fishing habitat, increased stability near the banks, and additional opportunities for bankside use. REP has designed an intimate bankside trail designed to allow the public access to the banks and the instream features. It caters to all ability levels from handicapped users to aggressive whitewater kayakers and canoeists. This portion of the project has gone through the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACOE) 404 Permitting process (see attached permit and associated drawings). This process included notification of a number of agencies and potentially interested parties. The letters associated with this process were submitted to Rinkey Singh, Planning Division Manager.

The second component of the project is upland improvements for access and recreation. These improvements include paved access and parking adjacent to Fisher Ford Road, trash and portable toilets, picnicking and bouldering attractions, and other amenities.

REP understands the Fisher Ford Road Bridge (just south of the proposed parking lot) will be replaced allowing for access from both the north and south. REP has consulted with Benton County Judge Robert Clinard, Cindy Jones of the County Roads Department, and Chuck Wipf of Crafton Tull on the bridge project. None of the proposed park improvements are inside of the County right-of-way and none of the bridge improvements are outside of the right-of-way.

Because construction on the bridge may occur as soon as September of 2012, the County plans to close Fisher Ford Road on the north side of the bridge approximately ¼ mile north of the bridge. A temporary access road will be constructed near the diversion. The road will divert park traffic to the west of the existing county road (that will be closed), and onto project owner's land. It is anticipated that the temporary road will be closed once the bridge project is complete and Fisher Ford Road is opened. Conversations with Cindy Jones suggest the County will maintain the temporary road until the bridge project is complete.

Within the parking area, there will be welcome and information signage, in addition to gated access controlled and policed by the City. Once in the parking area, users will have access to a number of trails that lead to the instream amenities, restroom facilities, changing facilities, picnicking facilities and a bouldering rock. The trails provide users the ability to interact with the river at set access points, experience existing flora and fauna associated with the park, gain a deeper understanding and care for our river corridors, and experience the river and environment in a user-friendly environment.

Based on over twenty years of experience with this type of park, REP has experienced multiple parks without proper changing facilities. This has resulted in users changing into river apparel in public, and causing disturbance and problems. Because of this, REP recommends complete restrooms with changing facilities. Because the upland areas of the project are located within the floodplain, REP consulted with county staff on both the restroom options and the changing facility options. Based on recommendations from County staff and Arkansas Department of health staff, REP has included portable toilets in the design. These toilets will be properly anchored to withstand flooding, and may be removed during anticipated flooding events. Since stakeholders felt changing facilities are necessary to maintain decency in the park, we designed a flood resistant structure that includes a 1-foot open section at the base of all walls to allow water and debris to flow through the structure, in addition to more substantial anchoring into a concrete foundation, and flood resistant materials. We request a waiver on the requirements for structures built in the floodplain, so the facilities may be included in the project. If not, the project can be built without the changing facilities.

Based on REP's experience with past projects, we anticipate a significant number of visitors on an annual basis. Similar parks, in more remote areas such as Lawson, Colorado will experience daily average use of up to 50 persons during the peak season on weekdays and 75 persons on weekends. Approximately 3 of 4 users at REP designed parks are bank users and not instream users such as kayakers, canoeists, tubers, and fisherman. The parking area is designed to accommodate approximately 5 times the current average use, and the project proponents doubled the size of the lot to over 65 spaces, based on recommendations from County staff.

County staff requested that REP research the water quality at the site and the potential for sickness and disease from primary contact with the water during instream activities. Our findings suggest the US EPA has approved the project stretch of the Illinois River for primary and secondary contact. Additional information, and a reference, are included below.

“Section Ten, Illinois River Watershed, 2006-2010 Nonpoint Source Pollution Management Update, ‘All waters within this segment have been designated as suitable for the propagation of fish and wildlife, primary and secondary contact recreation as well as public, industrial and agricultural water supplies (APCEC, 2001)’”

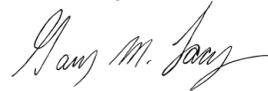
The stormwater management plan contains runoff calculations assuming the parking areas and trails will be constructed with a non-permeable surface. REP has researched potential alternative surfaces that will be reviewed during final design. If possible, these surfaces will be used as an alternative.

County staff suggested project proponents research the potential to use permeable paving as an alternative to concrete or asphalt surfaces within the park. In addition to our experience with permeable paving, we researched options and availability in the northern Arkansas area. While no manufacturers were found in the immediate area, we believe permeable pavers can be found and could be used at the site for a reasonable price. Unfortunately, all researched and know pavers are finished with either earth fill or gravel fines. These materials are highly susceptible to erosion during flooding and would likely require regular maintenance and replacement at the park. The end result would likely be an unstable and constantly degraded surface. Because of the likelihood of flooding damage, permeable paving was not included in the project.

Solid waste disposal will be managed by the City. The park has multiple locations with concrete pads, and secured 50-gallon waste disposal facilities.

Please notify me if you have questions or concerns.

Sincerely,



Gary Lacy, P.E.
Recreation Engineering and Planning

Attachments:

Attachment B- Variance/Waiver Request

Agreement between WFF and the City of Siloam Springs

Services letter from the City of Siloam Springs

US Army Corps of Engineers (USACOE) 404 Permit and associated drawings

Affidavit from the Walton Family Foundation

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Signed _____

Notary Public _____