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Arkansas River Trust gains \$5,000.00 grant
By, Betty Plotz Mail Staff Reporter

The Upper Arkansas Water Conservancy District recently awarded a \$5,000 grant to the Arkansas River Trust to support a downtown Salida park along the north side of the river.

Terry Scanga of the UAWCD said, "The directors believe that this park will serve as a living memorial to the legacy of all the individuals and organizations in the water community who have devoted their lives to preservation and improvement of the upper river."

Scanga said the river has been cleaned up tremendously since the days when raw sewage was dumped in and suckers were the only fish.

"Through the Fryingpan and Arkansas Project and the continued watchdog efforts of the UAWCD, the river is now an improved resource- a true-life blood of the upper Arkansas area," he said.

Michael Harvey, Executive Director of the Arkansas River Trust, said the grant would stay in the community to be used for river park planning, design and kids' programs.

"The \$5,000 is huge because we are such a small organization," he said. " Sponsorship by the UAWCD is significant."

The Arkansas River Trust is a non-profit corporation formed in the spring of 1999.

It is an organization committed to improving the ecological health of the Arkansas River, enhancing and creating open space and parks along the river corridor and promoting youth participation in whitewater paddle sports.

The trust is working with the City of Salida in development of the Arkansas River Whitewater Park to revitalize and integrate the Arkansas River corridor.

Plans include cleaning and stabilizing the banks of the river, building a river walk along the corridor and enhancing the whitewater capabilities of the Arkansas as it passes through Salida.

Harvey said, "In addition, the whitewater rafting industry has a \$50 million dollar regional economic impact."

Last year, the Arkansas River Trust rebuilt the whitewater park in the river upstream from the F Street bridge with \$40,000 in donated materials and labor.

"Through in-stream and bank improvements, the Arkansas River Trust created a more appealing and accessible site for both spectators and whitewater paddlers alike." Harvey said.

He said, the success of that first project prompted the Arkansas River Trust to make additional improvements on other parts of the river corridor within Salida.