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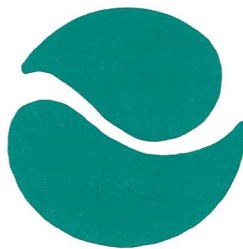
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"A  
river  
is more than  
a amenity  
it is  
a  
treasure."  
Justice Wm. O. Douglas



THE  
GREENWAY  
NEWS

Vol. 10 No. 1

Spring 1988

## A Possible Look Into The Future: The Platte River Greenway In The Year 2025

by Merle D. Grimes, Greenway Project Director

An estimated five thousand Denver area residents joined in the 50th anniversary of the Platte River Greenway at Confluence Park on Saturday, September 9, 2025. The eight hour event was organized by the Platte River Greenway Foundation and featured food, a Dixie Land band and a spectacular laser light show.

"This was the location where it all began a half century ago," explained the mayor in her speech to an attentive audience. "Every citizen of this great city now enjoys a River that was once an eyesore during the early to mid 1900's. We are gathered here today to say thank you to the many dedicated individuals who've made the Platte River Greenway a reality, and to pledge our commitment and resources to ensure that this wonderful amenity be forever preserved."

Indeed, the Platte River had not always been a place deserving celebration. James A. Michner, a popular novelist of the 20th century, once wrote about the Platte, "A sad, bewildered, nothing of a river ... a mean pestiferous bother ... a mile wide and an inch deep - too thick to drink, too thin to plow."

In 1886 the South Platte declined from the "Nile of the Plains" to an open sewer with the introduction of public sewage. For the next ninety years the River satisfied a human need, and was a prime example of the motto: "out of sight, out of mind". By the mid-1960's the major drainage for the metropolitan area was a "flea market" of junkyards, industry and pollution. The River had no public support, no one to look after her, and no one willing to walk along her shores.

"Man attempts to harness nature for his benefit, but seldom achieves this goal, and is often the recipient to her response when pushed beyond limits,"

commented a Platte River Greenway Foundation member. "People can abuse nature only so long before suddenly, without warning, she reasserts supreme domain over her inhabitants."

Such was the case on June 16, 1965 when a heavy rainfall transformed the usually docile River into a vengeful foe, plucking the human discard from the riverbanks, carrying them effortlessly in the raging water, destroying all in her path. As suddenly as the flood came, the water receded, leaving a grim display of broken bridges, buildings and scattered junk. It was almost as if the River were saying, "here it is for you to see, no longer out of sight, no longer out of mind, and you caused it all."

Following the flood, public pressure demanded answers for the cause of so much damage. Local and federal officials responded by initiating several studies that resulted in plans to reconstruct the South Platte River into a green dreamland void of industry and pollution. The price to implement the plan was far too great for society to bear, and the plans found a place on dusty shelves.

No positive progress was made for almost ten years following the 1965 flood, until Mayor William McNichols provided \$1.9 million of public funds and spearheaded the creation of the Platte River Development Committee. The Committee later incorporated as the non-profit Platte River Greenway Foundation so that it could accept donations, large and small, from private citizens and organizations.

The success of that committee was realized here at Confluence Park on a warm Labor Day ribbon-cutting celebration in 1975. "When Confluence Park was completed, the seed for the future of the South Platte River was planted,"



an employee of the Denver Tourist Board said. "The founders of this park certainly must not have realized just how successful they were. Today tourists visiting Colorado have the South Platte River on their itinerary. The local economy benefits from millions of retail and tax dollars generated yearly."

There are myriad attractions to see and activities to enjoy along the South Platte. Each year hundreds of thousands of people visit Riverfront Amusement Park and the Denver Aquarium located near Confluence Park. Wildlife observation on the South Platte is excellent, and was recently rated by the National Audubon Society as the best urban wildlife sanctuary in North America.

For the more adventurous, river rafting provides a thrilling challenge, as does a bike ride on a 200 mile continuous path, consisting of trails along the River and all of its many tributaries, the longest such amenity in the United States. Other activities include fishing, picnicing, jogging, or just a leisurely stroll in any of the hundreds of waterside parks.

The newest addition to the Platte River Greenway is the Cherry Creek canal between Colfax & Confluence Park. A wide variety of specialty shops, professional offices, restaurants, & creekside townhomes are linked together by the boatable waters of Cherry Creek. Thanks to a series of drop structures & locks this amenity can be safely boated and still provide a clean & flood safe drainage-

way for Denver. Gondolas float shoppers up and down the creek and make for a romantic summer evening. Next year, the soon-to-be completed major league baseball stadium will be dedicated and put to long anticipated use.

As the number of amenities continue to grow, the South Platte is expected to increase in popularity, further enticing tourists into the region. "Our family loves to come to Colorado to visit the Platte River Greenway," said a visitor from New York. "We are here for the third time in ten years, and will come back here again."

Another person came all the way from London, England. "We saw a commercial on television promoting Colorado. After seeing all of the great activities and places to visit, we know that this was where we wanted to spend our summer vacation. We've enjoyed ourselves immensely!"

"The Platte River has grown to be a symbol of community pride" commented the mayor. "Whenever our citizens are traveling across the nation or around the globe, people ask us if the South Platte River is really as good as the pictures in magazines illustrate. My answer of course is an unequivocal 'Yes!'."

A sad, bewildered river? A nothing of a river? Not today, because of the dedication of so many great citizens, to whom we owe our gratitude.

## Urban Drainage And Flood Control District Greenway Project Update

by Barb Evans, PE, Project Engineer, UDFCD

The Urban Drainage and Flood Control District began something new in 1987: The South Platte River Program. Funding for this program was authorized during the 1986 session of the Colorado Legislature. The 1988 budget of approximately \$1 million is available for maintenance, engineering, land acquisition, design and construction activities by the

District along the South Platte. The District has planned the following projects along the South Platte River for the rest of 1988:

### 1. Trail Modifications from 8th to 13th.

The trail will be widened in parts, and the existing wooden handrails and decking will be replaced with concrete on grade and steel railing, making the areas that currently are vandalized less susceptible to damage. Trail construction in this stretch of the River is difficult because of narrow right-of-way. Consequently, the trail will be closed during the four month construction period, and trail users will have to detour around the work. Trees, shrubs, grass, vines, and wild flowers will be planted along the new trail after construction equipment moves off the project site. The project does not have scheduled start date at this time, but it is anticipated that construction will begin in 1988.

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**EAST**  
12028 E. Mississippi Av. Aurora at Peoria  
**755-8312**

**NORTHWEST**  
6390 Wadsworth Blvd., Arvada  
next to Soundtrack  
**423-3095**

**BOULDER**  
2445 30th St. at Mapleton  
**442-1832**







## **2. Sewer Line Crossing Downstream (north) from Florida Avenue.**

Rock boulders will be placed in a deep scour hole on the downstream side of the drop structure that occurs at the sewer line. This work should reduce the hazard to boaters. The banks will be revegetated after construction equipment moves off of the job site. Construction has been delayed until the spring runoff period is over, potentially sometime in August.

## **3. Revegetation Program.**

The District is developing a revegetation program for the South Platte River that goes beyond the standard operating practices of the past. Rather than limit the revegetation efforts to seeding and mulching, a program of planting trees, shrubs, and perennials is being implemented. Some of the varieties you'll be seeing the District plant will include cottonwood, willow, sumac, yellow clematis, rabbitbrush, Virginia creeper, and wildflowers.

## **4. Lakewood Gulch Confluence Modification.**

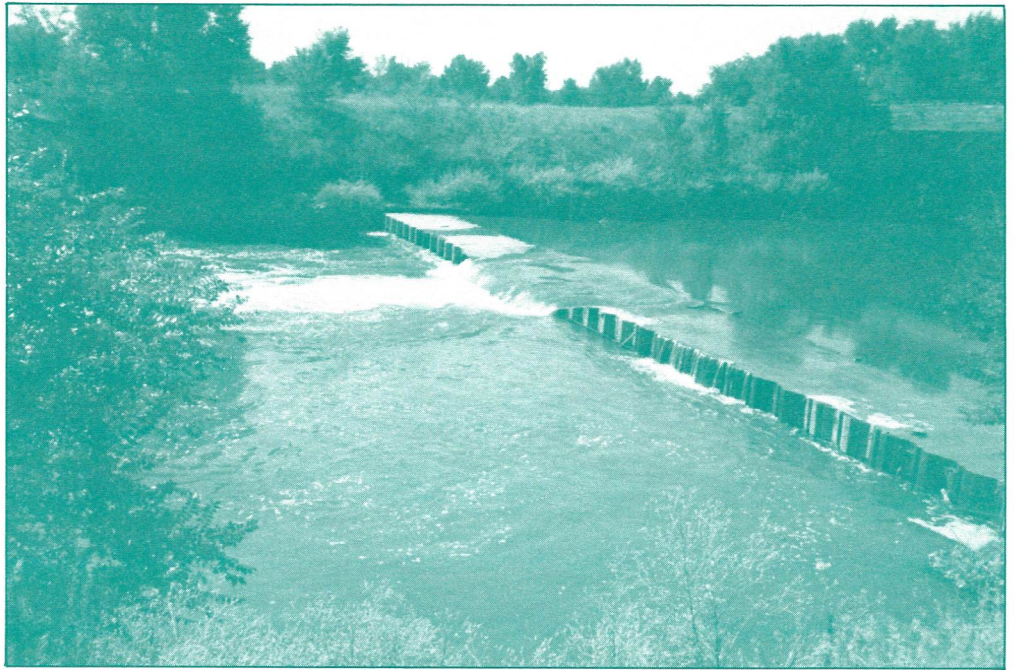
Users of the Greenway near Colfax Avenue probably have witnessed the frequent flooding across the trail where it crosses Lakewood Gulch. The culvert under the trail becomes blocked frequently by urban debris, particularly shopping carts and tires. When this happens the District has some of its maintenance contractors pull out debris and unplug the culvert. Steps are being taken to correct the maintenance problem at Lakewood Gulch by replacing the small culvert with something that will be less prone to blockage, either a small bridge or a much larger culvert.

## **5. Drain Pipe Installation on I-70 Eastbound Ramp Near Washington.**

A pipe was attached to the drains on the highway bridge and suspended from the bridge to carry the highway storm drainage flows over the trail to the River. An existing drain pipe that had silted in under the trail and no longer functioned was cleaned out. In addition, cement was rototilled into the soil under the highway bridge and compacted to reduce erosion.

## **6. Concrete Chute and Pipes at 35th and Arkins Court.**

The Greenway and Denver Parks have reported to us that this site is a frequent maintenance problem, with sediment deposit depths up to two feet on the trail. In the past, concrete rubble was dumped in this area by others in an attempt to provide some erosion protection. This spring the District constructed an earthen berm to intercept storm drainage and to concentrate it in



a concrete chute, conveying the flows down the steep bank to an inlet. From the inlet, the storm drainage is carried beneath the trail to the River. The disturbed area will be revegetated this spring.

Site of future improvements to the boatable drop structure along the River north of Florida Avenue

## **7. Third Avenue to Sixth Avenue Repairs and Improvements.**

Rock riprap, a drainage swale, and storm drainage pipes underneath the trail were installed to correct erosion and drainage problems. The ground immediately adjacent to the trail was also regraded to improve the drainage from the trail. The area was revegetated by the volunteers for Outdoor Colorado who planted cottonwoods, willows, and vines, and also constructed a dry rock retaining wall next to the trail for improved slope stability and drainage.

## **8. Miscellaneous Debris and Trash Removal, Mowing.**

The District hires a contractor every year to remove trash and debris from the banks of the South Platte River and to mow grass and weeds adjacent to the trail. This work is performed three times during the summer months. During 1988, the contractor also will be pruning trees along the trail.

Editor's Note: As you can see the Urban Drainage and Flood Control District continues to be an invaluable friend to the Platte River Greenway. A note of thanks to these true "Friends of the River" is encouraged!

URBAN DRAINAGE & FLOOD CONTROL  
DISTRICT  
2480 W. 26th AVENUE, SUITE 156B  
DENVER, COLORADO 80211  
ATTN.: MS. BARB EVANS



## Concerts On The Green – A Nine Year Tradition



Capacity crowds fill the Confluence Park Amphitheatre at each of the Concerts on the Green

The 1988 Concert on the Green series is back for the 9th consecutive year as the premier **FREE** concert series in the metropolitan area. Due to the ever increasing popularity of this series, we have expanded the series from three evening concerts to four nights of top quality music. This unique series has been titled **JAZZ ON THE RIVER for 1988** and features four outstanding evenings of **FREE** jazz entertainment. Our media sponsors for the series are **KADX radio** and **KMGH T.V.**

Our kick-off concert for 1988 will be held on **Friday, June 10th at 6:30 p.m.** and the featured entertainers will be **CAT'S NIGHT OUT**. Our sponsors for this concert are the **COLORADO LOTTERY** and **KHOW Radio**. This concert is also part of our "Fresh Air on the Greenway" weekend which includes the Park to Park rally (see article on page ), and the ever popular Great Relay Race (see article on page 7 ).

On **Wednesday, June 29th**, begin-

ning at **6:30 p.m.**, the well known talents of the **QUEEN CITY JAZZ BAND** will entertain what promises to be a capacity crowd. Returning as our sponsors for the evening are the **MILE HIGH** and **INTER-STATE KENNEL CLUBS**.

Our third concert will occur on **Wednesday, July 27th at 6:30 p.m.** when those in attendance will enjoy the music of **MOMENT'S NOTICE** featuring **SUZY NELSON**. Our sponsor for this concert, also returning for the second year, will be **MAXFIELD & FRIENDS**, a popular new restaurant near Confluence Park at 15th Street and Platte River Drive.

Our fourth and final Concert for 1988 will take place on **Wednesday, August 31st at 6:30 p.m.** Our sponsor for the evening is our longtime friend – **FIRST COLORADO BANK & TRUST**. As a sponsor of the series for the fifth consecutive year, this continued support will allow the return of another longtime friend as our entertainment for the evening – **IMAGES**. Appearing as a part of the series for the fifth consecutive year, this nationally acclaimed quartet promises a quality finish to this one-of-a-kind series.

**Pepsi Cola Bottling Company of Denver** will again provide complimentary beverages at all four concerts, and all concerts are held at the **Confluence Park Amphitheatre**, located along 15th Street, approximately one mile west of Market Street, behind the Forney Transportation Museum. Thanks to the generosity of our many sponsors and entertainers, we can promise four evenings of incomparable **FREE** entertainment. Arrive early as parking space is very limited. Bring a picnic supper and your friends, family, and neighbors to all four "Concerts on the Green", truly – "The Best Deal in Town!"

## Recreational Equipment, Inc. (REI) To Benefit The Greenway Foundation by Anna Thurston, REI Outreach Coordinator

Recreation Equipment, Inc. (REI) has chosen the Platte River Greenway trail for their 1988 Service Project. Individuals are invited to assist in the renovation and clean-up work along the Platte River Greenway trail.

Clean-up and renovation efforts will be provided by groups of 5 to 15 people, depending on the tasks involved. Volunteers are requested to meet at REI (2200 West Alameda, Denver) on the designated work days. Bring a sack lunch, suntan lotion and extra clothing in case the weather changes.

REI, now celebrating its' 50th Anniversary, is the nation's largest consumer cooperative with more than one million members. Throughout REI's history, there has always been a strong element of community involved. This takes many forms: free clinics on outdoor subjects, lessons on outdoor skills, and programs like the 1988 Service Project on the Platte, developed especially to involve members.

For more information and registration visit REI at 2200 West Alameda in Denver or call 937-0536.



## The Greenway Wildlife Watch

by Merle D. Grimes, Greenway Project Director

The Greenway News proudly introduces: "The Greenway Wildlife Watch". This column will provide our members with interesting facts about wildlife along the Denver reach of the South Platte River.

Today's wildlife discussions are made possible because of the remarkable and successful clean-up of this natural amenity over the past fourteen years. On behalf of our feathered and furry friends, thank you for your continued support.

The South Platte River is geographically located within the western flyway, one of two flyways for migrating birds in the Americas. Many of these migrating birds take refuge along the Greenway. Whether you are a dedicated bird watcher or a passive enthusiast, the South Platte River offers an excellent urban location to stalk these beautiful creatures with eye and camera lens.

In the spring, many species of birds begin their long journey from the warm southern climates to nesting sites in the north. During this odyssey the South Platte River provides an excellent location for food, rest and safe shelter. While some species eventually move on after a short visit, others remain to breed, nest and raise their young.

The peak bird watching season during the spring is from March through May. Since many species begin migration at varied times of the year, you can be assured that different species of birds will be utilizing the Greenway each week during this period.

Some valuable hints to improve your bird watching success are:

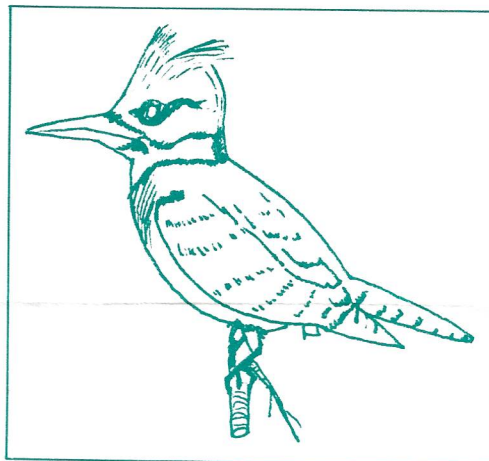
- Cold, stormy weather often provides excellent days for bird observation. Many fowl prefer to settle along the River and conserve energy rather than flying during the storm.
- Early morning hours are the best time of the day to spot birds of other wildlife. Putting yourself between the rising sun and the subject helps you to see the animal while making it difficult for the animal to see you.
- Stay on the hike/bike path whenever possible, while looking for wildlife. Most of the animals are used to humans on the path and do not flee as readily when you approach.
- Water fowl are most often observed near whitewater areas in the river. The aerated water contains a greater abundance of food for the birds to feed on and is less likely to freeze over.

- The many pedestrian bridges are great locations to "look into the River" when trying to find or observe wildlife.
- Bring a bird and mammal identification field guide along to aid in the proper identification of your animal friend. Many books also contain interesting facts on the particular species.
- Keep a list of your sightings and notes which include location, date, time of day, and species observed. Please send a copy of your wildlife sightings list to the Greenway. This information will be valuable for ongoing wildlife research on the South Platte River. Additionally, we will be listing observed wildlife by Greenway users in future columns.

### ANIMALS TO WATCH

Each Greenway News issue, will acquaint our readers with a different and unique wildlife species. The spring issue's animal to watch is the **Belted King Fisher**. This interesting bird can be observed year round on the Greenway within Denver. The Belted King Fisher is unique in that they dive, head first into the River water in pursuit of small, minnow sized fish for food. Their shoulders, neck, head and bill are all designed to aid in this feeding method.

Until the next Greenway News, we hope that your wildlife observation outings are bountiful, pleasurable and educational.



Belted King Fisher



### VOLUNTEER REGISTRATION FORM

Yes, I wish to participate in the 1988 REI Service Project on the Platte!! I have checked below the day(s) that I plan to volunteer my time to beautify and renovate the Platte River corridor.

Dates: \_\_\_\_\_ June 25 \_\_\_\_\_ July 23 \_\_\_\_\_ August 20  
\_\_\_\_\_ July 9 \_\_\_\_\_ August 6 TIME: 9:00 to 3:00

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Parent or Legal Guardian must sign  
for minors under 18 years of age)

Minor's: \_\_\_\_\_

Name(S): \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ HM

\_\_\_\_\_ WK

Please complete and return this form by June 15, 1988 to:  
Recreation Equipment, Inc. 2200 West Alameda Denver, CO 80223



## Urban Drainage, V.O.C. And The Greenway Foundation Sponsor Another South Platte Success



V.O.C. volunteers celebrate the placement of the last stone in the 100 foot long retaining wall.

Saturday, April 9, a crew of 80 V.O.C. (Volunteers for Outdoor Colorado) diehards braved less than perfect Colorado weather to plant more than 150 cottonwood trees, 350 wildflowers, and 1000 willows at three sites along the South Platte River.

The day started out cold, the grass covered with a thin wet crust of snow. Early volunteers sleepily unloaded tools and plants from trucks before 7:00 a.m. As more volunteers arrived, Jacquie Glanz, VOC's intrepid Project Coordinator introduced crew leaders to their shivering crews. We started to work simultaneously at two sites: 88th Avenue in Adams County and 3rd Avenue in Denver near Frog Hollow Park. The third

site in Englewood was tackled by a handful of determined volunteers later in the morning.

Between waves of snow, sleet, wind, and sun the work progressed. Trees popped into freshly dug holes, topsoil spread over a hillside of rocks, and willows along the River gave up shoots to become new trees along the River. Throughout the day, television cameras and reporters visited while newspaper photographers roamed the work sites. The eyes of Denver were on us. Could we complete the work of 125 people with 80 volunteers?

At lunch, hungry volunteers listened while Technical Advisor Merle Grimes gave a history of the South Platte at the Frog Hollow site. The cold made for a short lunch – work was the only way to keep warm!

After lunch things really started to move. Wildflowers appeared on the soil-covered rockpile and were lovingly watered. Chicken wire tied to stakes around each of the 150 new cottonwoods assured that the newly planted trees would not become lunch for the beaver on the Platte. Piles of mulch worked their way around the new plants and trees at 88th Avenue. A stone retaining wall at the work site grew to be nearly 100 feet long, built by VOC's rock czar cuttings began a quest for life in the riverbanks near the water's edge at all three sites.

Miraculously, everyone began to finish at once around mid-afternoon. As the first truckload of tools pulled away, down came the snow – serious snow! That was more than enough to get everyone into their cars and over to the Children's Museum where a huge spaghetti feast was thankfully ready and waiting.

At the Museum, City Councilwoman Cathy Reynolds lauded our success. Volunteers chowed down, listened to the jazz music of Framework, and experienced the attractions at the Children's Museum. More than a few volunteers had a second childhood in the "ball room". (If you missed this you missed an essential part of life!)

Our heartiest thanks to all volunteers and participants in making the South Platte project an unqualified success! Volunteers will remember their contributions for years to come. The birds, wildlife, trees, and plants of the South Platte will appreciate our work, and future visitors to the River will benefit from the enhancements we made April 9, 1988.

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## The 9th Annual Great Relay Race

### The Tradition Continues

by Joan Mason, Great Relay Race Organizer

Taking over the honor of being the longest standing event in Denver, the Great Relay Race enters its 10th year. Organized in 1978 as a public relations event to bring awareness to the original River corridor (with 25 participants!), the event has continued to grow and expand to over 1,200 enthusiastic Greenway supporters.

After the initial two years of running a North and South Course along the River corridor, the Great Relay Race was expanded to include the Cherry Creek Trail and Corridor, followed by the Clear Creek Corridor in Adams County and recently the Bear Creek Trail coming into the Platte River along Hampden Avenue in Englewood.

Without a doubt this event has had wide ramifications in terms of adding support for the creation of the many waterway trails, parks and other recreational improvements, and has resulted in introducing over 100,000 outdoor enthusiasts to the River over the last ten years. The changes on the corridors have been substantial and this year will see the finale of a dream on the North Course with the completion of the Adams County Greenway in its hookup to the Denver Greenway. In addition, the South Course now is completed past Bowles Avenue and well on its way to the Chatfield State Recreation area.

Families, friends, corporations, athletic teams, schools, non profit organizations, the Mayor and Governor's offices; all have participated and expressed their love of the city of Denver and **its Only**

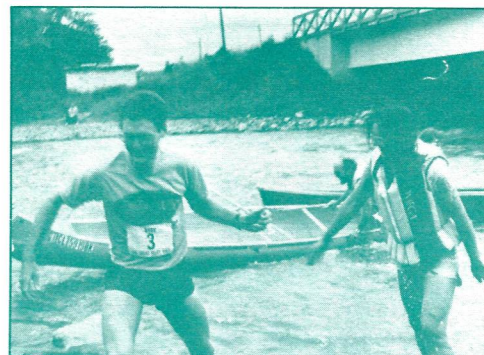
**River – the South Platte** by continuing to support this event.

This year the Great Relay Race will be held on **Sunday June 12th** and will continue to thrive thanks to the generosity of such sponsors at THE COLORADO LOTTERY, THE ADOLPH COORS COMPANY, and others by the development of an entire weekend celebration on the River. Also included in the weekend is a free concert at Confluence park (see page 4 ) and the Park-to-Park Bike Rally. Your support and participation is encouraged to assure that this great event can continue. Please consider one of the following:

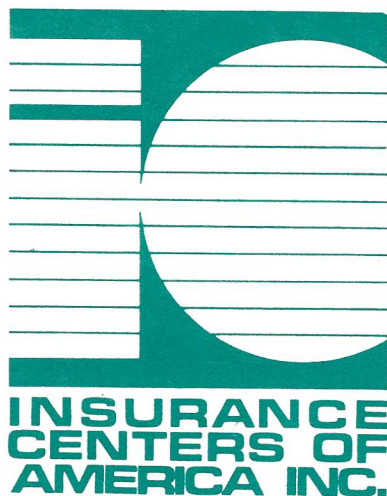
- Individual participation in the event (we'll help you organize your team) = \$30
- Team participation (teams on the five race courses range from 7 to 10 members x \$30 for each participant)
- Super Star (person to negotiate entire course individually) = \$50
- Supporter of the Great Relay as a non participant (receive participant benefits of gift and food) = \$50
- Volunteer for the event = \$10 ... receives complimentary t-shirt, lunch and free beer as well as participant prizes

As always, all above amounts are tax deductible and checks should be made payable to:

THE GREAT RELAY RACE, 1776 SOUTH JACKSON STREET, #1102, DENVER, COLORADO 80210. For more information contact the Mason Consulting Group, Great Relay Race organizers at 753-9077.



This year's Great Relay Race promises continued competition and enjoyment



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### ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP

\$30.00 for you or a friend.

Included in the membership is a Membership Card entitling you to:

- Notice of upcoming special events held along the Greenway during the year.

- All new members will receive a copy of our book "Returning the Platte to the People".

- A 20% discount on food and spirits for up to 4 persons at Zang's Brewing Co. (offer applies to any one evening anytime during that year).

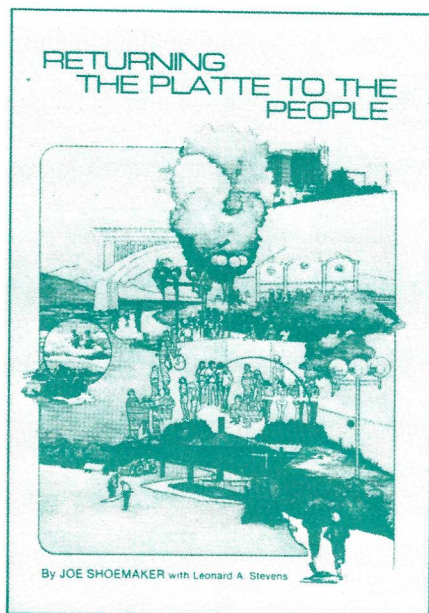
- All copies of the newsletter printed in the year you are a member.

### COMMEMORATING MEMBER

For \$100.00, have a contribution made towards the Greenway Tree Fund in the name of a friend or loved one. (Also includes all privileges of an Annual Member).

### CORPORATE MEMBER

\$250.00 includes a limited edition print by well known artist William Condit entitled "Seasons Along the Platte." All prints are signed and numbered by the artist (also includes all privileges of an Annual Member).



THE GREENWAY FOUNDATION  
1666 SOUTH UNIVERSITY BOULEVARD  
DENVER, COLORADO 80210  
(303)698-1322

### 1988 GREENWAY CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Monday, May 23rd

Summertime Greenway Trail Ranger Program begins

Friday, June 10th

Concert on the Green #1  
6:30 p.m. at Confluence Park

Saturday, June 11th

Urban Design Forum Park-to-Park Bike Rally

Sunday, June 12th

Ninth Annual Great Relay Race

Wednesday, June 29th

Concert on the Green #2  
6:30 p.m. at Confluence Park

Wednesday, July 27th

Concert on the Green #3  
6:30 p.m. at Confluence Park

Wednesday, August 31st

Concert on the Green #4  
6:30 p.m. at Confluence Park

Sunday, September 11th

1988 Friends of the River Award Party

Monday, September 12th

Summertime Trail Ranger Program ends

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