

# Arkansas River Recreational Development

## Whitewater Recreational Park

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Many cities have used Whitewater Recreational Parks to enhance their river frontage and promote economic development. These parks typically cost between \$200k and \$500k, and generate millions of dollars for the local economies. A signature project like this could be a significant economic development opportunity for both KDWP and the City of Wichita.

A Whitewater Recreational Park would compliment our existing "Water Walk" project and our annual River Festival. It would be the only whitewater park in existence for many miles. It could be used for regional competition, whitewater training and entertainment. This project will attract thousands in the warm season and hundreds year round.

Our Whitewater Recreational Park would be used by paddlers of all skill levels. It could also be used for Olympic C1, C2, K1 & K2 training. It would triple as a river access point, portage and a fish ladder to permit fish movement upstream.

Some parks require large pumps and incur enormous electric expense. We already have the water, and it is FREE! Even in our dry season, the Arkansas River has plenty of water to feed whitewater park project.

The project would divert water through a specially shaped concrete channel or depression with multiple levels or drops and bottom features. These features would simulate real river rapids. Each level would begin with a rapid followed by a pool with recirculating eddies.

Each rapid would provide a wave for running, surfing and playboating. Gates would be optionally used for a slalom races and Olympic training. Each pool would provide a recovery area and boater access for the next lower level rapid. The difficulty would decrease with each lower level. Boaters could easily enter any pool to run the rapids below, making it possible to avoid the upper rapids that might be above their skill level.

Three potential sites for this project have been located in Wichita, KS. One makes use of the existing Lincoln Street dam. Selecting this site would help hold construction costs to a minimum and would provide the best whitewater. The second site would be immediately below the confluence of the Little Arkansas River. This site would require construction of a new diversion dam. The location has better parking and would complement the view from Exploration Place. The third site would make use of the existing 21<sup>st</sup> Street dam. Parking and access are pretty good but the drop is less and the public exposure for the project and the sport would be lower.

Chris Collins is an active paddler, promoter of the sport and a volunteer consultant with respect to this project. He can be contacted at 316-942-4339 during the workday.

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