

Location: Turkey River | Elkader, Iowa
Project Duration: 2009-2013



Removal of the low head dam in downtown Elkader to create a whitewater wave feature and canoe passage channel

ELKADER, IOWA DAM REMOVAL AND RECREATION ENHANCEMENT





Soon after construction the Gobbler whitewater feature is shown at low flows on river right with the canoe and drift boat channel on river left.



Project advocate, Tom Gifford, was the first to paddle on the Gobbler.



Collapsing river access steps and high floodwalls will be modified in the Spring of 2014 to better connect the community to the new river enhancements.

The idea for a whitewater park in Elkader was first pitched to local officials days before record flooding on the Turkey River. In recovering from the flooding the city and local organizations realized the value of what they had flowing through town. Thus the recreation project became a priority and has made Elkader a mecca for water sports enthusiasts.

The Gobbler, the whitewater wave feature, may be the centerpiece of the project, but the Elkader restoration benefits canoeists, drift boaters, fishermen and the public's access to the river. The obsolete low head dam was removed and in its place a river right side channel for whitewater paddlers and river left side channel for downstream canoe passage and upstream fish passage were built.

From the momentum of the river restoration project, Elkader is planning new parks to turn the river that cause massive flood damage into an asset for the future.

RiverRestoration was the principal engineer for the comprehensive removal of the low head dam and stabilization of the channel grade. Hydrographic survey, alternatives analysis, cost opinions, floodplain analysis and mapping, permit preparation, 2 dimensional modeling, final plans and specifications, construction bid review and observation were all performed by RiverRestoration. The construction of the wave was completed in the fall of 2013 and bank stabilization and access are set to be completed in the spring of 2014.

