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**Gore Creek Access and Stabilization – Bridge Road
Project Description
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The area near the Bridge Rd bridge in East Vail has long served as a watercraft put-in area for kayakers, rafters, stand-up paddleboarders and inner-tubers, as well as commercial raft companies during the spring and summer months. They often used a dirt/gravel pull-off area on Bridge Road as a loading zone and accessed Gore Creek through an informal rocky area downstream of the bridge. The area was on private property, however the owner gave permission to the commercial raft company to use the put-in, and did not seem concerned about the private users. Two consistent complaints from neighbors were 1) people parking in the dirt pull-off and 2) people relieving themselves in the nearby willows.

The Bridge Road bridge is currently being replaced. That work began several weeks ago and should be completed by Thanksgiving. The replacement work will permanently eliminate the existing put-in area due to the nature of the bridge design and a requirement to install a guardrail along the south/west edge of Bridge Rd.

In addition, as part of the East Vail water quality and landscape project, a section of paved recreation trail between Bridge Rd and the parking lot on the north side of Bighorn Road was removed to reduce impervious paved surfaces in the area. A 50'-long section of stream bank along that stretch of Gore Creek is showing bank erosion due to lack of vegetation and heavy use as a secondary put-in area. In 2018, the Town of Vail purchased the .86 acre private parcel to assist with the protection of Gore Creek water quality and for recreational purposes.

The proposed Gore Creek Access and Stabilization project includes the following components:

- Installation of a stone slab put-in area at the existing eroded bank. This is similar to successful access and stabilization projects completed at Stephens Park and behind Lion Square Lodge.
- Construction of a two-space drop-off and loading zone area on Bridge Road. This area was determined through consultation with private and commercial rafting operations, kayakers and standup paddle boarders. It will be signed as a "10 minute loading zone". Users will be directed to park in the existing parking lot north of Bighorn Rd. The drop-off zone is proposed to be constructed of permeable concrete paving blocks.
- The existing dirt/gravel pull off area will be revegetated as part of the bridge replacement project.

- Construction of a gravel trail to reconnect the parking lot with Bridge Road. This will also provide a connection for the neighborhood to the Gore Valley Trail toward Katsos and Vail Village.
- The loading zone, trail and put-in are designed to follow ADA guidelines for USFS recreation facilities
- Installation of numerous native plants between Bighorn Road and Gore Creek as part of the Gore Creek Water Quality Strategic Plan. The new plantings help to filter runoff, provide habitat and reduce sediment entering Gore Creek. More than 6000 plants are being planted along Gore Creek during 2019.
- Two portable toilet units were placed in the East Vail Parking Lot during the summer of 2019. Staff has discussed the possibility of installing permanent facilities in the area with the Vail Town Council. There are maintenance and vandalism concerns associated with permanent facilities adjacent to an I-70 interchange, and the portable units have been installed on a trial basis.
- The town is also working to purchase an additional parcel at the west end of Lupine Drive. If that transaction is completed, staff may look to rezone both parcels from Two-Family Primary/Secondary Residential to a zoning district more appropriate to their use.

If approved, this project will provide some important improvements to the area. First, it will repair the existing eroding streambank while providing a much needed recreational improvement to the area. Boaters will continue to use the area as a launch point to float through Katsos, the Golf Course, Vail Village and beyond whether this project is approved or not. This project will ensure they can do so without further damaging the bank and adjacent vegetation. Second, it will provide a formalized drop-off area and eliminate the existing dirt/mud/gravel area on Bridge Road. It will also provide a soft-surface trail connecting the parking lot/restrooms to the boat launch and drop-off zone. This is also recognized as a neighborhood access to the Gore Valley Trail without having to use Bighorn Road. Finally, revegetation and tree/shrub plantings will improve the riparian buffer, filter sediment from Bighorn Rd and I-70 and improve the landscape aesthetic as one enters East Vail.



Above and below: Location for proposed watercraft put-in. Note the existing erosion, which will be repaired as part of the work.





Above: existing dirt/gravel loading zone to be revegetated

Below: photo from 2017 showing paved trail (since removed). This is the location of the proposed 10-minute loading zone

