

## Middle South Platte River Alliance

For IMMEDIATE RELEASE (March 15 2019)

The Middle South Platte River Alliance (MSPRA) today announced the near-completion of a rare and unprecedented project – a collaborative effort between a major ditch company, a river coalition, and the federal government – to highlight the people and successes of recent flood-recovery efforts along the South Platte River. This type of partnership such as this has never occurred in Weld County.

“We were initially unsure about tearing out a structure that has been working for 100 years,” said Jim Park of the Latham Ditch Board. “However, we weighed the pros and cons and have been very pleased with how smooth the partnership has been. This new diversion structure will be a great asset to us because of the greater efficiency it allows.”

This Project kicked off in 2018 as an effort to replace a flood-damaged ditch diversion while allowing for environmental habitat improvements and flood mitigation. MSPRA led the negotiations that brought the largest ditch company in the region to the table with the federal government to turn a simple replacement into both an economic asset and a structure that is beneficial to the environment. The program capitalizes on innovative partnerships between local, state, and federal organizations to assist shareholders in this process.

Benefits of the Lower Latham Ditch Project include:

- Maintaining senior water rights

- Managing high stream flows with greater efficiency
- Reducing sediment into the ditch, thus reducing maintenance costs
- Expanding floodplain capacity for lower water surface elevations during flood events
- Allowing for upstream migration of fish - the first of its kind to provide safe fish passage along a stretch of the South Platte that has impeded fish migration for more than one hundred years.

“The success of the Lower Latham Ditch Project stems directly from the people who have been an integral part of the process. We are incredibly proud to have supported this partnership with the great folks at the Lower Latham Ditch Company and USHUD and the Colorado Department of Local Affairs since its inception,” said MSPRA President John Barnett. “This collaborative effort provides real-time evidence that the interests of many river users can be combined successfully to the benefit of this major river corridor.”

Funded by a Community Development Block Grants-Disaster Relief Program from USHUD and sponsored by MSPRA, the project is managed by the CO Dept of Local Affairs. The project demonstrates exemplary partnerships between a coalition, a ditch company and the federal government that have been critical in transforming river function and improving habitat.

**\*\*EVENT: Ribbon Cutting on May 14, 2019\*\***

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**The Middle South Platte River Alliance (MSPRA)** The MSPRA is a non-profit coalition of landowners and stakeholders dedicated to resilient and sustainable uses of the South Platte River from the confluence of the St Vrain to the confluence of the Cache la Poudre. It supports long-term agricultural irrigation diversions while improving environmental and recreational uses of the river.

– [www.middlesouthplatte.org](http://www.middlesouthplatte.org)