Our Whitewater Story
Cedar River
Charles City, Iowa
Charles City endured many floods through the years and after each one more homes/businesses were damaged ... land was given back to the City to maintain.
2006: Park and Rec wanted to do something big; to focus on one location/project. Flood mitigation gave 28 acres along the river.
Capitalizing on the river’s natural features to help prevent future flooding, Charles City could turn the river from an obstacle into an ecological and social benefit.
THE PLAN: Contacted architects. Choose a plan with small whitewater feature below dam. Met with boaters; researched demographics. Focused on making a destination point!
2007: City Council approved overall park. Do whitewater first as it’s the draw, then the park.

2008: June - 500 year flood put brakes on project.
2009: Fall - dusted off and got busy fundraising.

2010: Fall - construction began.
Working on dam
December 2010
2011: July - course passed inspection and opened to whitewater paddlers.
Ribbon cutting at grand opening
Grand opening
Charles City’s park on the Cedar River is constructed for all types of river enthusiasts. The ¼ mile course is rated at Class II and III levels with three distinct features for paddlers of all levels.
RIVER ENTHUSIASTS
Kayakers
SUPers
Tubers
Fishermen
Kayaking
Tubing
PARK FEATURES
New boat launch
Ravine play area
Stone amphitheatre
Stormwater fountain
Labyrinth
Ravine play area
Amphitheatre
Stormwater fountain area
Labyrinth
REVENUE/PARTNERS
DNR
Great Places
Private Fundraising

$0 tax dollars used other than Hotel/Motel
OBSTACLES
Fishermen
Public
Skeptics on draw for boaters
HURDLES
DNR approval
Army Corp. of Engineers
ecological study
IMPACT: $746,000 established economic impact for our area. Hotels, campground, restaurants, convenience, grocery

NEW BUSINESS
NEW GROWTH (outside of plan): Permeable pavement, labyrinth, Eagle Scout projects, disc golf, Girl Scout fitness stations, memorial gazebo/garden, shower change room. P&R adds include 3 shelters, new trails as more access is needed, prairie planting area.
EVENTS:
Charles City Challenge
Iowa Games
June 6th-8th
ccwhitewater.com
Iowa Games: June 21st
EPA Award
Smart Growth Achievement
Plazas, Parks & Public Places

Video Here
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