Here--the spark point of the greenway movement--30 years of public-private leadership and a resulting series of open spaces and greenways have revitalized the South Platte and attracted over $2 billion in reinvestment in adjacent communities. Experience this system’s legacy of development, from its southern limits through downtown Denver.

**Overview**
This field session will walk attendees through the history and revitalization of the South Platte River, Denver’s only river! Speakers include some of the original planners, landscape architects and engineers for the Platte River Greenway, which began 30 years ago, along with the next generation of landscape architects who are currently engaged in projects along the river. Each stop along the tour will provide attendees with a unique perspective in greenway and park development, multi-discipline planning, public/private partnerships and innovative design solutions.

**Learning Objectives:**
- Understand the role parks and greenways can play in catalyzing reinvestment and developing a sense of community.
- The success of public/private partnerships and strong government in creating and implementing a comprehensive open space and greenway system.
- Combining stream stabilization improvements with aesthetic, recreation and conservation benefits.
- Examples of difficult sites and the construction solutions and techniques to make innovative parks, urban trails and white water boating features.
Field Session Co-leader
Scott Jordan, Civitas Inc ASLA
As a Principal at Civitas Inc. a Denver based Landscape Architecture and Urban Design firm, Scott has led large-scale, complex projects in some of the most contentious areas of the country, and has developed a passion for engaging the public in the design process. Regardless of the project’s scale, Scott’s approach is the same: build upon a city’s authentic and unique attributes to create rich and diverse public spaces. Scott’s recent projects include the North Embarcadero Vision Plan, which is regenerating San Diego’s port into a world-class waterfront, and the design of 6 parks totaling 70 acres for the Stapleton Redevelopment in Denver. For the past 5 years, Scott has been an invited lecturer and guest critic at universities across the country and has presented at numerous national landscape architecture and planning conferences.

Field Session Co-leader
Bill Neumann, DHM Design Corporation, ASLA
Bill Neumann, RLA, ASLA is Vice President of DHM Design Corporation of Denver with 28 years of experience focusing on the planning and design of parks, trails and greenways. Bill has worked on dozens of award winning greenway projects across the country including the recently completed Witherspoon Greenway- Anchorage, KY, Sand Creek Regional Greenway- Commerce City, CO.

Additional Presenters (In order of presentation)
Robert Searns, The Greenway Team
For over 35 years, Robert Searns has specialized in the planning and development of trails, greenways, bicycle and open space projects. He was Project Director of Denver’s Platte River Greenway and developed the national award-winning Mary Carter Greenway in Littleton, CO. He serves as the National Chair Emeritus of the Board of Trustees of American Trails, Inc.—the nation’s leading recreational trails advocacy organization. He also co-authored Greenways: A Guide to Planning, Design and Development and Trails for the Twenty First Century (Island Press).

John Pflaum, Urban Drainage/City of Littleton
John Pflaum, PE, has more than 40 years of experience as a Consulting Engineer in the planning, design and construction of multiple-use drainage and flood control improvements includes project management and project engineering for the $8.6 million multi-use Little Dry Creek Flood Control and Greenway Improvements in Englewood, Colorado, and numerous Greenway projects that combine trail design with stream stabilization measures, notably trail and stream improvements along the South Platte River, Big Dry Creek, Lee Gulch, Little Dry Creek and Cherry Creek in the Denver Metropolitan Area.

Mark Wilcox, DHM Design Corporation
Mark Wilcox, RLA, ASLA, a vice president at DHM Design, has 20 years of experience working along Colorado’s rivers. In 2012, Mark assisted the City of Denver write and win a $4.6 million grant from Great Outdoors Colorado. Mark has worked on numerous river and greenway projects in Colorado, including the Sand Creek Trail and Greenway— Commerce City, CO; Blue River Trail and Greenway— Silverthorne, CO; and the South Platte River Trail and Greenway— Denver, CO.

Jeff Shoemaker, The Greenway Foundation
Jeff Shoemaker, Executive Director of The Greenway Foundation Since, 1982, Jeff Shoemaker has been the Executive Director of The Greenway Foundation – the non-profit organization that initiated the reclamation of the Denver’s South Platte River and its tributaries. Since its’ founding in 1974, The Greenway Foundation has collaborated with countless public and private partners to create over $100 Million of environmental and recreational enhancements to these urban waterways which has in turn, created over $10 Billion of economic benefits to the surrounding area.

Bar Chadwick, City and County of Denver / The Greenway Foundation
Bar Chadwick began working for the City and County of Denver in 1988, in the Office of Community Planning and Development. In April 1991, Bar became the City’s Redevelopment Specialist focusing on Lower Downtown and the Central Platte Valley. In that position she was the lead planner in the Comprehensive Plan Amendment for the Central Platte Valley. In 1999, Bar was named Director of the Mayor’s South Platte River Initiative, a $65 million river restoration and park development project. Concurrently, she negotiated with Xcel Energy for the removal of the Platte Sub-station, a utility power sub-station at the confluence of the South Platte River and Cherry Creek, the birthplace of Denver. The sub-station site has since been transformed into a park at the Confluence and 15th Street.

Mark Naylor, Parsons Brinkerhoff
During his 32 years in the landscape architecture profession, Mark Naylor has developed a wide portfolio of experience in urban design, project management, construction oversight, operations, and technology. During his long tenure with Civitas, Mark managed the firm’s efforts in the planning and construction of Commons Park, the centerpiece of Denver’s Riverfront Park system along the South Platte River. His work in the UAE, Japan, and throughout the United States has given him a broad view of the profession, and an appreciation for the impact landscape architecture can make in transforming our cities into vibrant, livable places.

Nicole Horst, Principal Wenk Associates
Nicole Horst is a Licensed Landscape Architect and Principal at Wenk Associates, Inc., a Denver-based landscape architectural firm. For over 14 years Nicole has been the lead on many of the firm’s parks, trails, recreation and open space planning, design and construction projects. She is the firm’s Practice Leader for Parks and Open Space. She is currently working on the Confluence Park Redesign Project as the lead Project Manager.

Field Session Outline

1. **Tour Overview and History of the South Platte River at Convention Center**
   a. Tour Co-leaders Scott Jordan and Bill Neumann to present a general overview of tour
   b. John Pflaum and Bob Searns – History, vision and development of the greenway

   1) Genesis & Rebirth from Adversity
      a. 1965 flooding of the South Platte River
      b. Conflict among various interest groups
      c. Working with limited resources and blighted river

   2) Leadership Precipitates Transformation
      a. Partnership of Mayor and State Senator
      b. Organizing principles for the Platte River Development Group (PRDG)
      c. Overcoming institutional resistance

   3) Catalytic Steps Toward Implementation
      a. Building partnerships
      b. Public/private partnering to raise money
      c. Demonstration projects

   4) Vision Goes Viral
      a. Spreads to surrounding communities and tributaries, metro wide system
      b. Development of Central Platte Valley
      c. Continuing upgrade and enhancements to the original greenway

2. **South Platte Park Carson Nature Center**
The South Platte Park in Littleton includes a nature center, 800 acres of preserved open space and 5 lakes open to fishing along the South Platte River. With over 300 species of wildlife, this destination park is an excellent place for wildlife viewing, photography, bird watching, hiking and biking.

Tour Guides: Bill Neumann, ASLA-DHM Design, John Pflaum, PE
1) Engaging the Community
   a. Educational opportunities
   b. Stewardship- “10,000 Trees”
2) River Restoration
   a. Recently completed river enhancements
   b. Restore natural function to the river by narrowing base flow and creating more pool and riffle sequences.
   c. Revegetation to create more plant diversity
3) Greenway traffic Calming
   a. Round about
   b. Dual Trail

3. South Platte River/ Big Dry Creek Confluence Trailhead at Union Avenue
The South Platte River Greenway which was renamed to the Mary Carter Greenway through the cities of Littleton, Sheridan and Englewood is the spine of the greenway system through the southern suburbs of Denver. Developed in the early 1980’s, as an extension of Denver’s greenway, this eight-mile multi-use trail and whitewater facility is visited annually by nearly a million visitors. The vision for the greenway was not only to provide a recreational resource by implementing an interconnected trail system throughout this north south spine, but to enhance the natural features and wildlife that coexist in such a unique urban environment.

Tour Guide: Bill Neumann, ASLA-DHM Design, Robert Searns- Greenway Team
1) Strategic Planning
   a. Public Private Partnerships
   b. Right of Way/ Land Acquisition
   c. Current planning and improvements
2) Challenges along the East Bank Trail
   a. Floodway requirements
   b. Underpass design
   c. Existing utility and land use challenges
   d. Accessibility, Safety and trail traffic
   e. Cleanup and restoration

4. Weir Gulch
Weir Gulch is a tributary to the South Platte River near downtown Denver which was recently redesigned and constructed to provide stronger river access, recreational opportunities, safety, social gathering areas, and improved water quality. The project is one of 5 major projects along the Platte River identified by the City of Denver and The Greenway Foundation as part of the River Revitalization Improvement Plan.

Tour Guide: Mark Wilcox, ASLA-DHM Design
1) Discussion of River Vision and Implementation Plan (RVIP) priorities
2) Water Quality
   a. Use of level spreaders
   b. Wetland improvements
3) Flood Control
   a. Regrading river banks
   b. Realignment
   c. Use of natural solutions
4) Habitat Improvements
   a. Wetlands/ Riparian Plants
5) Recreational Access
   a. Custom bridge
   b. Sculpted concrete jetties
   c. ADA
   d. Updated trail section

5. Formal Educational Session at CU Denver
   Jeff Shoemaker of the Greenway Foundation will present the history, vision and development of the South Platte Greenway greenway.
   a. A brief understanding of the development of the South Platte River Greenway
   b. Background and organization-Shoemaker
   c. Mission/ Planning and Design Challenges
   d. Initiating Implementation
   e. Today- Our Focus-Shoemaker (video)
   f. The Mary Carter Greenway

Bar Chadwick, Special Projects Manager for the City of Denver and Board of Director for the Greenway Foundation will present the evolution of the Central Platte Valley and the role strong government played in its development.
   a. Role of the Mayor’s Office
   b. Public/Private Partnerships
   c. Open Space as a catalyst to development
   d. Time-lapse images that show the evolution/development since the implementation of Commons Park

6. Confluence Park / REI
   As the birthplace of Denver, Confluence Park marks the place where William Greeneberry Russell discovered gold in 1858. This gold discovery led to the founding of Denver. Located at the confluence of the South Platte River and the Cherry Creek Confluence Park has changed dramatically since it was built as one of the nation’s first riverfront restoration projects and urban whitewater courses in the 1970’s. Since its construction, the park has been expanded, and new urban neighborhoods, destination retail, and regional entertainment and sports venues have caused a dramatic increase in the use and popularity of the park. As a result of this increased popularity the City of Denver initiated the Confluence Park Master Plan project in 2012.
   Tour Guide: Nicole Horst, ASLA-Wenk Associates
   a. The discussion will focus on the history of the Confluence, the impact of REI’s being located adjacent to the confluence, and the plans currently underway to update Confluence Park to balance the needs of various users groups and mitigate the immense pressure placed on the park as a result of its immense popularity.

7. Commons Park
Commons Park was planned to be a catalyst to reinvestment and to become the heart of a new community on both banks of the river. After years of studies by designers and developers, it became evident that the mixed-use development seen in downtown was the solution to creating healthy and diverse environment as long as it offered an amenity that draws people to live in Denver: the outdoors.

The crown jewel of the Riverfront Park system, Commons Park is a green oasis that connects downtown Denver to the buoyant Platte River. This 19-acre park is designed to appeal to the urban community’s interest in nature and the river. Landscape forms and experiences vary from hills, overlooks, and pathways to areas for informal sports, picnics, contemplation, and general play. Large areas of the park were re-established as riparian zone and riverine wetland. The river itself was also redesigned and rebuilt to be armored against scouring, stable during floods, and to provide healthy aquatic habitat and recreational boating.

Commons Park has been credited for inspiring the redevelopment of Lower Downtown Denver with more than 2,000 new high-end for sale and for rent residential units, retail, restaurants, cafes and common urban amenities so lacking previously. In addition, the surrounding areas have become home to Coors Field, Sports Authority Field at Mile High, Six Flags Amusement Park, Colorado Ocean Journey Aquarium, and the Children’s Museum.

Tour Guides: Scott Jordan, ASLA-Civitas, Mark Naylor, ASLA – Parsons Brinkerhoff

8. City of Cuernavaca Park
City of Cuernavaca Park was the first of the three parks that form Riverfront Park in Denver and restored the Platte River as an urban amenity. The 35-acre site presented a challenging design problem: soils contaminated by heavy metals, surrounded by roads, a factory, and freeways and also divided in half by the river. To reconcile the park with these difficult surroundings, a formal interior and a natural wooded edge was created. A continuous path adds to the security of this once-remote site by creating the opportunity for people to walk the entire park, keeping it active. Athletic fields inside the oval encourage activity while on the other side of the river, Denver residents can picnic on undulating landforms among stone sculptures.

Tour Guides: Scott Jordan, ASLA-Civitas,

9. Central Platte Valley Development
As participants make their way from City of Cuernavaca Park to the 16th Street mall shuttle terminus at Union Station by walking along Little Raven Street, they will experience the densest and most sought after real estate in all of Colorado. The creation of Commons Park has spurred extraordinary and necessary residential and commercial developments that take advantage of the proximity to downtown and the river and the outdoors amenities now offered along its banks. Currently 279 residential units are for sale and 340 for rent. An additional 1,000 are under construction with 700 more proposed. Commercial development includes a market, a bicycle shop, a design-gift store, a fitness facility, dry cleaner, café and wine shop, and a 250,000 sf office building. Plans are underway to redevelop the adjacent Denver Union Station into a major intermodal transit facility with substantial commercial development.

Tour Guides: Scott Jordan, ASLA-Civitas, Mark Naylor, ASLA – Parsons Brinkerhoff, Bar Chadwick, Special Projects Manager for the City of Denver
a. Discussion will focus on the development strategies that were used to catalyze the reinvestment, and how this revitalization has impacted the different parks that will be visited on the tour.