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[Home](#) / [news](#) / [local](#) /

City of Conover gets grant for project

By Sharon McBrayer

The city of Conover is getting another grant for its ongoing effort to create a multi-use complex downtown.

The grant is for \$415,719 and comes from the state's Clean Water Management Trust Fund. The grant is intended to protect water quality and will be used to create a stormwater feature located at the headwaters of McLin Creek on the former Broyhill factory site, according to information from the city.

Conover City Manager Donald Duncan said the grant will help restore the natural flow of a water stream that runs through the 27-acre property.

Stormwater running off pavement such as roads tends to have oil and other contaminants that end up in water streams.

Duncan said the banks of the creek have eroded over time. A creek with straight banks, Duncan explained, is like a water pipe — it carries the water faster to its destination. The grant will be used to restore the banks to its natural meandering flow, he said. That will slow down the flow of the stream which will help clean the water naturally of sediment, nutrients and contaminants.

The stormwater feature also will inform folks about the impacts that polluted stormwater runoff can have on water quality, say officials.

The stormwater feature will be part of a park on the property that city officials say will include walking trails and other park amenities.

The feature is part of the overall plans that calls for buildings on the site to be renovated to include a library branch, rail depot and administrative offices for the Western Piedmont Regional Transit Authority.

The Clean Water Management Trust Fund grant is the latest one the city has received for the project. Duncan said the city so far has received around \$3.5 million in grants for the site. Since 2005, the city has spent about \$1.5 million on the site, which included the cost of the property, engineering, design and demolition of some buildings on the site, Duncan said.

Conover Mayor Lee Moritz said city staff has done a good job going after available grants and the city has been fortunate to be awarded a number of grants for the project. The grants will help the city reach its long-term goals for the site, he said.

Moritz encourages city residents to stop in city hall to take a look at the plans for the site.

The park portion of the project is expected to be completed in 2012, Duncan said.