

Gravity Course

by Joe McGrane

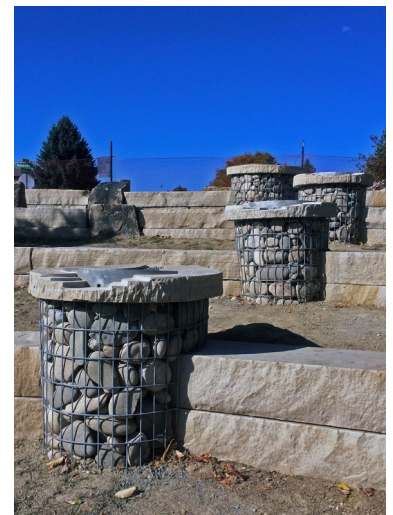


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Wakerobin Lane east of Regency Drive, northwest of Harmony Road and Shields Street



Gravity Course is a public art project in Dragonfly's Lair, a stormwater detention pond and open space in Fort Collins, Colorado. The artwork is located near Webber Middle School on Wakerobin Lane, just east of Regency Drive. It is a collaborative piece by artist Joe McGrane, the City of Fort Collins Utilities Department, Webber Middle School faculty and City of Fort Collins Art in Public Places. It reinforces and complements a nearby interpretive trail and sign system developed collaboratively with Webber Middle School students. The thoughtfully designed site speaks to the storm drainage and water quality functions of the space. *Gravity Course* is interpretive and interactive—an overlook, amphitheater, and gateway to the interpretive trail. It is a pragmatic demonstration of values and techniques the City of Fort Collins Stormwater Utility Department practices and a useful addition to the neighborhood, streetscape, and school curriculum.



Collectively the piece is titled *Gravity Course*. It consists of seat walls and steps broken up with landscape boulders. The top step, adjacent to the walkway, features the graphic cut-steel “Collecting Stone” - a map that illustrates the neighborhood’s storm drain system, collecting storm water and feeding the detention pond. The map can be activated by pouring water over the stone where it flows through drains and channels into a basin. It is a useful tool in demonstrating engineered flood prevention techniques.

Three “Basin Stones” are placed on the remaining steps dropping down to an existing bridge in the detention pond. These stones illustrate the functional values of the detention pond. Each of these stones is activated with water or can be appreciated by studying the carved lines and graphics. The highest stone illustrates detention where storm flows are “detained” behind a small dam. When flooded, it slowly drains downstream through a small hole matching predevelopment flows. The mid-level stone illustrates the concept of infiltration where water is absorbed through the stone in a series of small drill holes. The lowest stone speaks to water quality where a series of steel posts (vegetation) slow water flow, collect debris, and intercept contaminants.



Detention Basin Stone



Infiltration Basin Stone



Water Quality Basin Stone