STEINHART PARK

Community ...

Nebraska City's Steinhart Park is the city's largest and most-used park. About 54.4 acres in size, it features baseball diamonds, basketball and tennis courts, horseshoe pits, outdoor ice skating rink, playgrounds, restrooms, a shelter, sledding slide and swimming pool. In the early 1900s, a 1.6-acre pond was created on site by building an earthen dam.

Challenges ...

By 2000, the maximum depth of the pond was just five feet. To prevent winter fish kills, a fountain was installed to prevent freezing. The fountain was only a temporary solution to the depth problem. More intensive modifications were needed to make the pond sustainable for fish and to prevent sediment from further decreasing depth. Modifications to areas surrounding the pond were needed, as well. Much of the shoreline was too steep, with several near-vertical drop-offs of six to 10 feet. These steep areas had eroded, impairing water clarity and creating a safety hazard for those accessing the pond.

Solutions ...

In 2000, funding to restore the pond was received through the CLEAR program. To create a more sustainable fishery, the pond was excavated to depths of 12 feet over approximately half its area. More than 9,000 cubic yards of sediment were removed to achieve these depths. In conjunction with renovating the pond bottom, 600 hundred feet of shoreline was stabilized using 280 tons of rock, 490 linear feet of sheet piling and two retaining

walls. Some steep areas were graded to decrease slope, providing the added benefit of expanding the pond surface area from 1.6 acres to two acres. All surrounding land was seeded to native grasses to help prevent soil erosion. The final project step was stocking largemouth bass, bluegill, channel catfish and rainbow trout.

Results ...

Water quality improvements paved the way for other improvements to the area, including a handicap-accessible fishing pier and extensive landscaping by TreesAmerica. The revitalized pond is now used more for a multitude of recreational purposes and community events. The total cost of the two-year project was approximately $230,000. Of this amount, $172,000 was provided by the CLEAR program, $45,000 was provided by Nebraska City, $2,000 was provided by the Nemaha Natural Resources District, and $2,000 was provided by the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission. Other project partners include TreesAmerica, The American Meter Company, and the Richard P. Kimmel and Laurene Kimmel Foundation. Engineering services were provided by JEO Consultants.