

## NORTH FORK / SOUTH PLATTE RIVER FOUNDATION

North Fork Mine Reclamation Support Needed

October 21, 2009

To whom it may concern,

The principles of Freestone Aquatics, Inc. have been involved with the North Fork of the South Platte River drainage for several years. Through developing and evolving relationships with local stakeholders and associated local, state, and federal agencies, it has become clear that the waters of the North Fork are suffering from poor water quality and undermanaged flows. Please refer to the related Total Maximum Daily Load Assessment (TMDL) provided by Park County, CO in 2008 and the TMDL Summary report provided by Freestone Aquatics, Inc.

The North Fork watershed is suffering from poor water quality resulting from mining history and naturally-occurring acidic rock drainage (ARD). The impaired waters of the North Fork has resulted in the drainage being included on the Environmental Protection Agency's 303(d) list which identifies waters containing pollutants at or above critical levels. In 1992 the EPA published the first 303(d) list with the North Fork drainage being included on it and each subsequent list.

Understanding that these water quality concerns are the major limiting factor for the North Fork's aquatic organisms, Freestone Aquatics founders, Clint Packo and Luke Kelly, have been leading a collaborative effort to improve the North Fork watershed. With the support of local stakeholders and agencies, a 501c3 nonprofit known as the *North Fork / South Platte River Foundation* is being formed. Please see the Association's mission statement below.

*"The North Fork/South Platte River Foundation is a grassroots group of stakeholders who are striving to improve and maintain the management of the river's riparian habitat, channel habitat, water quality, and in-stream flows through the collaboration of landowners, local organizations, mine reclamation, and community education. Results of improved management will benefit wildlife, recreationists, and local economies"*

At the top of the priority list for this Foundation is to collect funds and coordinate mining reclamation efforts in the North Fork's Headwaters. Extensive study, planning, and work is necessary for this effort to be successful. Although naturally-occurring acidic rock drainage (ARD) occurs in the North Fork headwaters, the Foundation is confident that mining reclamation efforts will have a significant, positive impact on the water quality of the North Fork drainage. This project will require a great deal of time, effort, and funding to be successful. A completed North Fork headwaters restoration effort will result in

much improved water quality and benefit virtually all landowners, wildlife, and local economies downstream.

Please consider supporting this great cause. It is critical to gain continued support to protect our highly valuable water resources such as this one, and success of this project is directly related to individuals who are willing to contribute. Please feel free to contact Freestone Aquatics, Inc with any questions related to the North Fork drainage or the *North Fork / South Platte River Foundation*.

Thank you,

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