

# Kayakertown



## Buena Vista housing project a boon for boaters

In first proposing a new development that would add one-third to the size of their town, Jed Selby didn't exactly wow the Buena Vista, Colo., town council. "I'll never forget the first public meeting we had," says David Farrar, Buena Vista's town planner. "Jed stood up in his baggy shorts and T-shirt and said, 'I'm Jed Selby. I'm a professional kayaker.' No one knew what he was talking about."

It didn't take long, however, for Selby, 25, and his sister, Katie, 27, to turn public opinion around on their South Main project, a 40-acre development along the Arkansas River that will eventually put 800 residents within walking distance of downtown. With no previous development experience, the siblings held public meetings where citizens were encouraged to share their vision for South Main. Most of the requests, which included plenty of greenspace and river access, will be met. In addition, the Selbys will implement their own standards, which include a pedestrian-friendly layout, green-certified construction, and a three-quarter-mile-long whitewater park that will be the world's longest.

The Selbys became involved in Buena Vista development when they realized that the tract was under consideration for a development that would have barred public access to the river. Instead, the Selbys secured the land with funds from a family plot that had recently been sold in Vail, Colo., and set out to create a more environmentally friendly solution. They toured the region looking for models for their project and stumbled upon the New Urban development of Prospect New Town in Longmont, Colo. Prospect New Town matched the Selbys' goals for community and environmental values, and they knew they could do something similar in Buena Vista. "Fortunately, the developer Kiki Wallace took us under his wing," says Jed, who paddles for Team Wave Sport. With Wallace's guidance, the kayakers were able to marshal the planners, builders and financiers necessary to make their dream a reality.

"They're such likeable young people," says Jerry Lestrangle, Buena Vista's town administrator. "They want this to be a real asset to the community and they are passionate about it." Jed also reports that while the venture has been a "huge education," it hasn't cramped his recreational or professional style. Because he and his sister share duties, it's possible for one of them to slip out for road trips or river time while the other keeps the project in motion. Says Jed, "We're equally committed to maintaining our lifestyle as paddlers."

Info: [www.southmainriverpark.com](http://www.southmainriverpark.com)

—Frederick Reimers



photos courtesy of Jed Selby (left inset and right)

**Of Donkey Flips and Development:** The Selby's (top left), and the site of their property's playhole (above).