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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Extreme Bridge Make-over

Glenwood Springs, CO, August 4th, 2010 – What happens when you take a weekend closure time constraint and combine a Pitkin County bridge in dire need of repair with an engineering firm looking for a service project? Extreme Pearl Pass Bridge Makeover!

Over a year ago, Pitkin County had contacted Schmueser Gordon Meyer (SGM) to review the deteriorating bridge and provide a proposal for rebuilding Pearl Pass Bridge on the popular Upper Castle Creek Road Trail, but had to shelve the project because of financial limitations. Meanwhile, the Grassroots Committee at SGM had been grappling with how to give back to the community when charitable funds were lower than in the past, due to the current challenging economic environment. The size and scope of the Pearl Pass Bridge remodel seemed a perfect fit.

Nathan Torres mobilized the Structural Team at SGM who quickly embraced the challenges of the project: a remote site over 10,500' high, challenging 4x4 roads, and the need to use nearby timber resources to create the new structure. What started as a team idea swelled to a company-wide volunteer project, enabling the group of over 20 volunteers to remove and rebuild the bridge in a weekend.

Pearl Pass Bridge

Pearl Pass is a popular high country trail connecting Aspen to Crested Butte and sees moderate travel from hikers, back-country skiers, and off-road vehicles throughout the year. Spring run-offs from recent above-average snowpacks had compromised the Pearl Pass Bridge, and the insufficient span length required extensive annual maintenance to keep the road passable for vehicles. According to GR Fielding, Pitkin County Engineer, "The bridge needed significant rehabilitation. SGM was instrumental in improving the structure to weather major spring runoff events, and increase the life of the structure."

Spirit of Giving

“The employees of SGM were able to put their various skill sets together to design, remove, and construct a new bridge for public use in the Roaring Fork Valley. As engineers, we are usually on the sidelines during the construction phase of projects. This community service project allowed us to take this project from conception through construction and onto completion. It was a great team building project for everyone involved,” said Nathan Torres. “Thanks again to all of the volunteers from SGM, GR Fielding of Pitkin County, the Aspen Ranger Station of the Forest Service, Amos Mace of Aspen, and Carl Buckingham of Aspen.”

For additional information regarding the Upper Castle Creek Road Trail and other popular backcountry trails, visit www.fs.fed.us/r2/whiteriver .