

World's Largest Disappearing Waterfall Part II

July 2007 - In response to the designer showcase that ran in the March issue, Fitz Water Designs submitted a ...

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Due to the site's negative slope, a berm was built using rock excavated from the site. In response to the designer showcase that ran in the March issue, Fitz Water Designs submitted a challenge to Rick Bartel's claim to the world's largest disappearing waterfall. Cliff Fitzwater, owner of Fitz Water Designs, said the pondless waterfall that he built for Saddlebrooke Master Planned Community is actually the rightful owner of this title, pumping 400,000 gallons of water per hour.

Several months ago, the developers of Saddlebrooke Master Planned Community wanted to build a water feature to match the quality of their luxury home sites. A chance encounter led Fitzwater and Tyler Lorange, the son of Saddlebrooke's owner, to meet at a home show in Branson, Mo. Two weeks later, Fitzwater and Clyde Lorange, the owner of Saddlebrooke, met to discuss the benefits of installing a pondless waterfall at the master-planned luxury community.

The waterfall measures more than 100 feet in length and is broken up into multiple tiers and focal points. Fitzwater kept several points in mind when it came to the water feature's design. First, he said the waterfall had to compete with the creeks and streams winding through the neighboring countryside.

The waterfall's location, at the community's entrance and near a road, meant that it had to catch the attention of drivers. Fitzwater planned the waterfall to angle at both sides of the traffic. The waterfall's angles then meet at central planting areas to create multiple focal points for viewers as they approach the water feature.

Another key point concerned how to blend the water feature into its location. The Lorances believe in environmentally conscious living, Fitzwater said, so when it came to the waterfall's aesthetics, the Lorances provided Fitzwater with native boulders from the community site that would complement the surrounding landscape.

The water feature is surrounded by the Mark Twain National Forest, which provides breathtaking views for future Saddlebrooke residents and a design challenge for Cliff Fitzwater.

When it came time to build the feature, the existing landscape posed a few challenges. First, the ground beneath the proposed site was solid rock and required excavation to put in the reservoir. The ground also sloped downhill, which meant a berm had to be built to accommodate the elevation change involved with building the waterfall. Fitzwater resolved these challenges by crushing the excavated rock and using the pieces to build the berm.

Despite the size and challenges of the project, Fitzwater and his team finished the feature in three months. Fitzwater said the project has received praise from the clients and visitors.

Saddlebrooke already has received numerous requests to use the water feature for sports and wedding photographs.

SPECIFICATIONS:

Design consultant: Fitz Water Designs

Contact information: Cliff & April Fitzwater, 417-272-0348, 3583 State Hwy. 160,

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Project Location: Saddlebrooke Master Planned Community, Saddlebrooke, Mo.

Construction: Heavy-duty equipment and jack hammers excavated through the rock. Fountain basins were fitted into the ground and the excavated rock was crushed and used to build a berm more than 20 feet tall for the waterfall. The team used Trackhoes and Omaha Rock Slings to arrange the boulders aesthetically.

Components: The waterfall pumps 400,000 gallons of water per hour, cascading and tumbling over multiple 10-ton boulders. The waterfall is more than 100 feet long. With about 90 feet of spillway, the waterfall rushes into a 90-foot-by-32-foot reservoir ranging in depth from 5 feet to 8 feet. 900 AquaBlox help store water underground to re-circulate the water back to two Grindex 58-horsepower pumps.

Equipment used: Bobcat and CAT Skidsteers, CAT 330 Trackhoe for setting boulders, multiple 20,000-pound-rated Omaha Rock Slings, CAT dump trucks and trackloaders, a Sky Track forklift.

Crew: Five

Overall Cost: Not available. More than \$40,000 for AquaBlox alone.

Time to Complete: Three months