

For release: July 2, 2018

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Arapahoe County distributes \$13 million in Open Space tax dollars for parks, trails and open spaces in 12 cities and towns

Great Outdoors Colorado, Colorado Lottery win annual Stewardship Award

Littleton, Colo. — The Board of County Commissioners celebrated the distribution of \$13 million in Arapahoe County Open Space program funds during a June 29 ceremony at Hudson Gardens – funding ONLY made possible by the generous voters of Arapahoe County.

Arapahoe County citizens first had the vision to approve the Open Space Sales and Use Tax in 2003 and again in 2011 securing the program through 2023. The quarter-of-a-penny sales and use tax is dedicated to preserve open space, enhance parks, build trail connections and protect heritage areas.

Since 2004, the Open Space program has built and improved 60 miles of trail; participated in more than 100 parks and 30 trailhead projects; supported improvements to dozens of playgrounds and ballfields; and conserved more than 31,000 acres of open space.

“Collaboration is the centerpiece of the Arapahoe County Open Spaces program,” said Commissioner Jeff Baker, who serves as Board Chair. “Throughout the history of our program, we have worked in partnership with our local cities, towns and special districts to make dramatic changes to the landscape of our county. The result has been remarkable.”

Participating cities and towns receive 50 percent of the total tax collected, which is distributed by population. As of June 1, Arapahoe County distributed more than \$13 million in Open Space Shareback funds to 12 participating cities and towns to build community parks, open spaces and trail systems for all citizens to enjoy.

Later this summer, the Board of County Commissioners will award another \$4 million in 2018 Open Space grant awards for additional parks, trails and open space investments throughout Arapahoe County.

Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) and The Colorado Lottery were recognized with the County's *Our Progress Takes Flight Stewardship Award*, which is given annually to a person, local government or organization that displays the leadership, cooperation and stewardship of the great outdoors.

Since 1992, GOCO has distributed approximately \$1 billion in grants for projects to improve communities in Colorado's 64 counties, with at least \$30 million invested in projects throughout Arapahoe County.

The Colorado Lottery, through the Conservation Trust Fund, has distributed nearly \$1 billion for the acquisition, development and maintenance of new park and conservation sites for the public. At least \$137 million in these funds have been invested in Arapahoe County.

Between GOCO and the Conservation Trust Fund, \$170 million has been invested in Arapahoe County to improve the High Line Canal, River Run Trailhead on the South Platte, Buckley Air Force Base Buffer Project, Triple Creek Trail Project in Aurora and the Inspire Initiative in Sheridan, just to name a few.

“The imprint that Great Outdoors Colorado and The Colorado Lottery have made on Arapahoe County will be felt by current and future generations to come,” said Commissioner Nancy Sharpe in announcing the Stewardship Award recipients. “We appreciate our partnership and look forward to future collaborations to conserve and improve the spaces and places our kids and grandkids will be able to enjoy for many years to come.”

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Photos: <ftp://ftp.arapahoegov.com/Pub/Communication%20Services/OpenSpace/Shareback/>

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