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Protect. Connect. Enjoy. - Arapahoe County Open Spaces

Arapahoe County distributes \$11.6 million for open space, park and trail projects

Littleton, CO --- Thanks to the generous citizens of Arapahoe County, the Board of County Commissioners Thursday distributed \$11.6 million in Open Space sales tax revenues and awarded the South Suburban Park and Recreation District and the South Suburban Park Foundation with the *Our Progress Takes Flight* Stewardship Award during a ceremony at the Aurora Reservoir.

Grants and awards were distributed to local cities, towns and special districts during the County's Open Spaces Shareback and Grant award ceremony, which is held each June.

"Protect. Connect. Enjoy. These three simple yet powerful words celebrate the true nature of Arapahoe County's Open Spaces program," said Commissioner Rod Bockenfeld, who serves as Board Chair. "With the help of our cities, towns and special districts we are protecting our most treasured resources and connecting a network of trails for our residents to enjoy today and forever."

Funding for these projects is made possible by the generous citizens of Arapahoe County through the voter-approved Arapahoe County Open Space Sales and Use Tax, which is dedicated to preserve open space, enhance parks, build trail connections and protect our heritage areas.

The South Suburban Park and Recreation District and South Suburban Park Foundation were presented with the *Our Progress Takes Flight* Award, which recognizes an individual, local government or organization that displays outstanding leadership, cooperation and stewardship to ensure the conservation and protection of the great outdoors.

As this year's winner, the District and Foundation have been outstanding partners and leaders in efforts to preserve and enhance our regional waterways while serving on various working groups from the South Platte River to the High Line Canal, and continue to provide residents with award-winning programs and services.

Open Space Shareback Awards

In November 2003, Arapahoe County voters approved a countywide quarter-cent sales and use tax for the preservation of open space in Arapahoe County. This tax is equal to 25 cents on every \$100 purchase. Tax collection began Jan. 1, 2004 and is set to expire in Dec. 2013 unless citizens vote "yes" to continue the program on a future ballot question toward reauthorization. Fifty percent of the annual tax revenue is returned to incorporated cities and towns to enhance local parks, trails, recreation and open space.

More than \$66 million from the Open Space Fund has been distributed to municipalities since the program's inception. This year, Arapahoe County distributed nearly 9.1 million in shareback funds, which was divided among the following cities and towns, based on population:

• Aurora	\$5.2 million	• Englewood	\$622,700
• Bennett	\$5,805	• Foxfield	\$15,193
• Centennial	\$1.86 million	• Glendale	\$90,700
• Cherry Hills Village	\$121,196	• Greenwood Village	\$294,862
• Columbine Valley	\$25,022	• Littleton	\$767,798
• Deer Trail	\$10,949	• Sheridan	\$115,244

Arapahoe County Open Space Grants

In addition to Shareback funds, 12 percent of the annual tax revenue is set aside for competitive grants to eligible special districts and municipalities with almost \$16 million in grants awarded since 2004 for 90 projects throughout the County. On June 9, Arapahoe County awarded nearly \$2.5 million in grants for 16 open space, park and trail projects. Recipients are required to raise dollars of their own to use as a funding match.

New this year, was the introduction of three grant categories: standard, small and planning grants. Planning grants emphasize the importance of project planning, helping agencies prepare construction projects to be “shovel ready,” and thereby increasing their chances to receive additional grant funding for future project phases. Offering three categories also allows for similar projects to be evaluated against each other. This has encouraged smaller agencies with smaller budgets to apply. The 2011 projects receiving funding include:

Arapahoe Park and Recreation District – Lowry Trailhead: Grant: \$246,000 Match: \$115,400

With this grant the District will build at trailhead at the northwest corner of E-470 and East Quincy Avenue. The future regional park at this site will serve as a significant amenity for County residents.

Arapahoe Park and Recreation District – Spring Creek Nature Trail: Grant: \$210,000 Match: \$100,500

The District will use this grant to build a trail with boardwalks connecting Spring Creek Park Trail to Aurora's Unnamed Creek Trail, completing a vital missing link to the larger trail system.

City of Aurora – Carson Park Playground and shelter: Grant: \$200,000 Match: \$201,000

This grant will be used to build a playground and picnic shelter at Carson Park located near the intersection of Smoky Hill Road and Quincy Avenue.

Town of Bennett – Antelope Hills Park Plan: Grant: \$5,000 Match: \$3,000

This planning grant will be used to design the 2.5 acre park with input from the local community.

Town of Bennett – Kiowa Bennett Trail Link: Grant: \$168,000 Match: \$78,400

Last year Bennett received a grant to develop a regional trail plan for their community. With completed plan in hand, the Town will use this grant to design and build 1.6 miles of trail along Kiowa Bennett Road to connect Antelope Hills to Kiowa Creek North Open Space Park.

Byers Park and Recreation District – Master Plan: Grant: \$15,000 Match: \$1,800

As a first time grant recipient the District will use this planning grant to produce a master plan that evaluates existing recreational resources, identifies the community's future needs and prioritizes recommendations for future actions.

City of Centennial – Centennial Regional Trail Link Phase II: Grant: \$200,600 Match: \$322,600

This grant will complete the new east/west trail by extending the planned Centennial Regional Trail Link for an additional 1.3 miles (from Colorado Blvd to Holly Street along the Caley/Arapahoe Road corridor).

City of Centennial – Piney Creek Trail Improvements: Grant: \$250,000 Match: \$115,200

The City will use this grant to complete a key section of trail and a water crossing to close the last remaining gap along the Piney Creek Trail system.

Cherry Creek Vista Park and Recreation District– Cottonwood Trail Bridge Replacement: Grant: \$50,000 Match: \$28,000

Their planning grant will allow the District to complete the plans and engineering to replace two “tear-away” pedestrian bridges that cross Cottonwood Creek west of Peoria and north of Caley Avenue.

City of Cherry Hills Village - Quincy Farm Resource Assessment: Grant: \$46,000 Match: \$10,000

In 2008 Catherine Anderson made a generous life estate donation of her property to Cherry Hills Village with a

conservation easement to Colorado Open Lands This planning grant will allow the City to complete a resource assessment that will become the basis for a future management plan.

East Smoky Hill Metro District – Trail Ridge Open Space Plan: Grant: \$49,800 Match: \$10,000

As a first time grant recipient, the District will use the funds to complete a plan that will identify park and trail improvements and connections that will provide students safe access to school.

City of Englewood – Centennial Park Trail Loop Renovation: Grant: \$237,100 Match: \$157,700

With this grant, Englewood will complete improvements including: replacing and widening the concrete trail around Centennial Lake, replacing a bridge for greater American with Disabilities-accessibility and more.

City of Englewood – Riverside Park Planning: Grant \$50,000 Match: \$84,600

This grant will be used to complete a development plan for Riverside Park along the South Platte River next to the Broken Tee Golf Course. Concepts include a park pavilion, playground, American with Disabilities-access to the river, kayak exit point and trailhead.

City of Littleton – Littleton Community Trail Phase II: Grant: \$250,000 Match: \$581,500

Littleton will build 1.2 miles of trail to increase access to valuable open space in the heart of Littleton, including the historic City Ditch and wooded riparian areas.

South Suburban Park and Recreation District - Cornerstone Park Ball Field Improvement: Grant: \$250,000 Match: \$466,000

This grant will be used to renovate dugouts and backstops, increase American with Disabilities-accessibility, build a covered playground, shelter and more.

South Suburban Park and Recreation District – Sheridan Community Park Field Renovation: Grant: \$250,000 Match: \$676,500

The District will use this grant to enhance player safety by replacing ball field lighting and irrigation, installing enclosed dugouts, pitching/batting cages and much more.

To learn more about Arapahoe County Open Space, visit www.co.arapahoe.co.us and download the 2011 Community Guide *150 Ways to Enjoy Open Spaces* and/or sign up to receive the [Arapahoe County Open Space e-newsletter](#).

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