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## **Parks, Playgrounds and Trails – Oh My!**

*Arapahoe County joins cities to celebrate several open space grant projects*

**Arapahoe County, Colo.** --- During the past month, residents across Arapahoe County celebrated the completion of three park, playground and trail projects that were awarded Arapahoe County Open Space grants last year. Since 2004, the competitive grant program has invested more than \$13 million into community projects that has been leveraged by more than \$27 million in matching funds contributed by grant recipients.

“We are excited to see our cities and districts putting these open space dollars to work and creating parks and trails that make it easier than ever for families to get outside and enjoy the outdoors,” said Commissioner Rod Bockenfeld, who serves as Board Chair. “Through these partnerships we are working to protect our treasured parks, trails and open spaces for residents to enjoy today and forever. “

Residents in Aurora can now touch, taste, feel, smell and see their way through new Larkspur Park, 22551 E. Davies Dr. This 7-acre neighborhood park invites children and adults to experience the outdoors using all five senses. Arapahoe County awarded the City of Aurora with \$250,000 open space grant to complete the project.

There's improved pedestrian safety for residents in Greenwood Village now that the undercrossing and trail beneath Orchard Road connecting Tommy Davis Park to Orchard Hills Park is complete. The City received two County Open Space grants totaling \$500,000 to complete the trail and enhance the pond and park experience.

Youth in Littleton now have easy access to the highest slide in all of the South Suburban Park & Recreation District, thanks to the completion of the East Elementary Park Playground project. Arapahoe County awarded the city with \$133,600 to renovate three playgrounds at the school, which is heavily used as a neighborhood park and organized sports facility during non-school hours. This project was a great partnership example where students, parents, teachers, businesses, Littleton and the Recreation District worked together to turn their vision into reality.

All of these projects would not have been possible without the voters of Arapahoe County, who generously approved the Arapahoe County Open Space sales and use tax in 2003. Since then, the County has protected more than 15,500 acres of land that preserve natural habitats and wildlife corridors, connected miles of trail and enhanced parks that provide outdoor recreation for residents of all ages.

The tax collection began Jan. 1, 2004 and is set to expire Dec. 31, 2013 unless citizens vote “yes” to continue the program during a future ballot question reauthorization.

To learn more about Arapahoe County Open Space, visit [www.co.arapahoe.co.us](http://www.co.arapahoe.co.us) and download the 2010 Community Guide “*Mapping Out a Greener Future*” and/or sign up to receive the [Arapahoe County Open Space e-newsletter](#).

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**To download photos click on the link:**

[ftp://www.co.arapahoe.co.us/Pub/CM/Photos/Hills\\_CherryCreek/](ftp://www.co.arapahoe.co.us/Pub/CM/Photos/Hills_CherryCreek/)

*LarkspurParkTightRope2010*: Kids love the new playground and amenities created by the City of Aurora in partnership with Arapahoe County Open Space.

*LarkspurParkRock*: Kids and adults alike are invited to use all five senses at the new Larkspur Park thanks to the City of Aurora and Arapahoe County Open Space.

*OrchardUndercrossing2010*: Greenwood Village’s new undercrossing and trail beneath Orchard Road connecting Tommy Davis Park to Orchard Hills Park keeps pedestrians safe and minimizes traffic congestion, thanks in part to Arapahoe County Open Space grants.

*Beckman&ClarkeEEElementary2010*: Kids just love the highest slide of the South Suburban Park & Rec District thanks to an Arapahoe County Open Space grant to Littleton for the East Elementary Playground project (pictured: Littleton Mayor Doug Clarke and County Commissioner Susan Beckman)

*EEElementarySlide2010*: The new playground at East Elementary invites kids from the entire neighborhood to get outdoors and have fun. The City of Littleton was awarded an Arapahoe County Open Space grant for the project in 2009.