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CONTACT:

Cynthia Gleason  
For Parker Jordan Metropolitan District  
(303) 548-5158  
[cgkostka@gmail.com](mailto:cgkostka@gmail.com)

Ciandra Jackson-Mills  
City of Centennial  
(303) 754-3443  
[cjackson-mills@centennialcolorado.com](mailto:cjackson-mills@centennialcolorado.com)

**New Section of Cherry Creek Trail, Broncos Parkway Trailhead, Tagawa Road**

**Parker Jordan Metropolitan District and Centennial  
Break Ground to Create New Open Space Improvements**

Construction is underway on three, long-anticipated improvements related to the new, 107-acre Parker Jordan/Centennial Open Space to open later this year to hikers, runners, cyclists, naturalists, picnickers and other outdoors enthusiasts.

At a groundbreaking ceremony Wednesday, the Parker Jordan Metropolitan District and the City of Centennial initiated three projects: a new, one-mile section of Cherry Creek Regional Trail, the new Broncos Parkway Trailhead, and the new Tagawa Road, providing access to the trailhead from Broncos Parkway. Work on the concrete trail is in progress and revegetation along the trail also is planned.

The new trail section represents one of the last missing pieces of a permanent regional trail in a 40-mile stretch from Castlewood Canyon State Park in Douglas County to Confluence Park in lower downtown Denver.

**Regional Trail Connections**

Purchased last year by the District, the area was formerly private open space land - some of it homesteaded in 1864 - along Cherry Creek in the City of Centennial. The new section of regional trail will connect with the Cherry Creek Valley Ecological Park to the north and with 17-Mile House Farm Park to the south.

“We are very pleased to preserve a natural and historical area which has been inaccessible to the public, and to offer it to Denver metro area residents for a host of new outdoor experiences,” said Norman Sheldon, District president. “The area is a wonderful complement to the 75-acre Cherry Creek Valley Ecological Park which was first initiated by the District.”

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Cherry Creek Valley Ecological Park, an educational nature park at 7600 E. Jasper Ct. in Centennial, was constructed as the result of a partnership that began in 2000 between the District and Arapahoe County, which owns and manages the Park. The District began the process that led to final approval of the Park's design and was a principal funding partner, contributing approximately \$800,000 to its construction. This unique park offers residents a glimpse into the plant and wildlife riparian habitat native to this area.

The new Broncos Parkway Trailhead will provide much needed and improved access to the Cherry Creek Trail. As part of this project, the District received more than \$360,000 in Arapahoe County open space grant and trail development funds that will be used to develop multiple parking spaces, a picnic shelter, rest rooms and the trail connection to the ecological park.

The land acquired by the District for Parker Jordan/Centennial Open Space was annexed to the City of Centennial in 2006.

"We have so few opportunities to preserve a major section of original farmland," said Centennial Mayor Cathy Noon. "This is the right project at the right time to protect open space and complete a major section of the Cherry Creek Regional Trail. The District is committed to seeing this become a reality and we are proud to be a partner."

With completion of initial Parker Jordan/Centennial Open Space improvements, the area will open to public use later this year. The District is committed to providing future state-of-the-art public education amenities – such as a computer kiosk with touch-screen access – that focus on three topics: Native American History, homesteader history and the natural change in the Cherry Creek corridor.

#### **Open Space Features**

Plans slated for bidding and construction beginning in 2011 may include low-impact secondary and tertiary trail routes guiding pedestrians to areas for picnics, wildlife viewing and outdoor fitness stations. A 5km running course also is planned as part of the trail network.

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Visitors will be able to learn about the history of the site through strategically located educational and interpretive design elements such as boulder rock-art etchings and colored and patterned concrete to fit within the natural setting of the open space.

The natural habitat area includes the meandering Cherry Creek with the sounds of riffle drops of water over rock, open meadows, heavily wooded areas, old trees and fallen logs. Its inhabitants include deer, raccoon, fox, skunks, coyotes, blue-crowned heron, swainson's and red-tail hawks, occasional nesting bald eagles and crawdads in the Creek waters. Vegetation includes the native boxelder trees, wild plum, chokecherry bushes, willow trees, cottonwood and hops.

Cherry Creek is the unifying theme of the area. The surrounding land was used by the Arapaho Tribe for trade routes that moved along trails once located in this area. In the mid- to late-1800s, homesteaders began to settle in the Cherry Creek Valley along present-day S. Parker Rd., historically known as the Cherokee Trail.

The Parker Jordan/Centennial Open Space site was purchased last year for \$2.18 million from the family of Joanne Dransfeldt Feters and John Feters Jr., which had owned and farmed the land since 1939. Funding for acquisition of the site was provided by the District. In addition to the District, other major funding contributors to the various improvements include Arapahoe County Open Space Sales Tax Funds and the City of Centennial.

Project design for the site is being conducted by J3 Engineering Consultants with Valerian LLC and includes hydraulic, structural, environmental, sociological and regulatory factors. General contractor for the first phase is L&M Enterprises Inc. of Berthoud and construction management is provided by Grant Street Ventures.

Public agencies, nonprofit organizations and other interested groups that have participated in the planning in addition to the City of Centennial and the District include: Arapahoe County, Cherry Creek Basin Working Group, Cherry Creek Stewardship Partners, Cherry Creek Basin Water Quality Authority, Southeast Metro Stormwater Authority, Arapahoe County Water and Wastewater Authority, Urban Drainage and Flood Control District, U.S. Fish and Wildlife, Great Outdoors Colorado and Tagawa Gardens.

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**About Parker Jordan Metropolitan District:** The District is a quasi-municipal corporation and a political subdivision of the State of Colorado created in 1985 for the purpose of providing streets, safety protection controls, park and recreation facilities, storm, flood and drainage facilities and transportation facilities for the property owners within the District. It encompasses approximately 1,080 acres in southern Arapahoe County. It is bounded by Parker Road (east), Arapahoe Road (north), Jordan Road (west) and the Arapahoe/Douglas County line (south).

**Arapahoe County.** For questions related to Arapahoe County, please contact Nichole Parmelly, Communications Services, at 720-874-6669 (office), 303-710-7893 (cell) or [nparmelly@co.arapahoe.co.us](mailto:nparmelly@co.arapahoe.co.us).