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For release: April 8, 2010

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Residents brave storm to comment on Arapahoe County's parks, trails and open space during Master Plan Open House

Aurora, CO --- Citizens braved the March 23 snowstorm to attend the Arapahoe County Open Space Master Plan open house. The event offered the public the opportunity to view and comment on the final master plan recommendations, which were created after months of citizen and community input,

“The majority of map comments related to the need for more trails, particularly along the E-470 corridor,” said Arapahoe County Commissioner Rod Bockenfeld, who serves as Board Chairman. “Other comments included the need to protect open space and provide more parks in developed and developing areas of the County, specifically around the West Arapahoe Conservation District and the Heather Ridge Metro District golf course in Aurora.”

Key recommendations of the plan include creating an interconnected system of parks, open space and trails countywide and protecting water quality and wildlife habitats of key riparian corridors across the county through varied conservation efforts. The plan supports the County's regional efforts in partnering with cities and special districts to protect key features including the South Platte River, Cherry Creek, Arapahoe Grasslands and High Line Corridor.

A majority of participants felt that open space is a valued asset and that more is needed to meet current and future needs of County residents. Attendees said open space in Eastern Arapahoe County was important to protect and conserve.

“I had a narrow view of open space prior to reviewing the County's Open Space Master Plan, which has broadened my view of what's possible,” said Barry Levene from Aurora. “I'm very impressed with the plan, and I hope to see it fulfilled. Open space and the preservation of riparian corridors are critical to any community.”

The Open Space Master Plan recommendations are a direct result of the feedback from thousands of residents and partners who have participated in the master planning process during the last six months. The Plan will serve as a guide for making strategic decisions about the program's future.

In just five years, the County has protected more than 15,000 acres of land that preserve natural habitats and wildlife corridors, protect sweeping vistas and provide outdoor recreation for residents of all ages, thanks to the voters who generously approved the Arapahoe County Open Space sales and use tax in 2003.

For every \$1 spent in Arapahoe County, a quarter-of-a-penny is used to preserve urban and rural open space and natural areas; protect lands that preserve water quality; improve parks, sports fields, picnic facilities and trails; protect wildlife habitat and corridors; preserve agriculture and ranchlands; and enhance heritage areas.

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.

For more information, go to www.greenways.com/arapahoe or call Bob Toll, Arapahoe County Open Space Manager, at 720-874-6725.

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To download photos click on the link: <ftp://www.co.arapahoe.co.us/Pub/CM/Photos/OpenHouse/>

AC_OpenHouse – Arapahoe County employee explains the recommended location of a future countywide trails system during the open house in Aurora.

MapDiscussion – Residents review and comment on the Arapahoe County Open Space Master Plan recommendations, which were created as a result of months of citizen and community input.