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For release: December 1, 2009

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Residents identify open space needs in eastern Arapahoe County *Citizens provide input during Arapahoe County's 2nd Parks, Trails and Open Space Master Plan Open House*

Littleton, CO. --- Arapahoe County spent an evening gathering ideas and listening to feedback about the future of Arapahoe County's parks, trails and open spaces during a Nov. 19 open house in Byers.

"We are thrilled that so many residents took the time to attend and identify their community's needs for parks, trails and open space," said Arapahoe County Commissioner Rod Bockenfeld. "All the feedback from this meeting will be used to help prepare a countywide *Open Space Master Plan* which will serve as a guide for making strategic decisions about the program's future."

Safety concerns for foot and bicycle use were frequently identified by residents, most of which were representing cities and towns that make up the eastern part of the County including Byers, Bennett, Watkins and Deer Trail.

"I'd like to see trails or bike paths that are off the road," said Ron Miller as he pointed out areas of Byers. "Right now all [car, bike and foot] traffic crosses under I-70 at the same location. I'd really like to see if we could separate the traffic."

Sheryl Wailes was impressed with the work by the County to create and support the South Platte Working Group. She also suggested an idea where the County could partner with the Deer Trail and East Adams Conservation Districts to create demonstration conservation lots on one of its open space properties.

"The program could provide educational opportunities for small acreage farmers (those with 40 acre lots)," said Wailes. "We could host hands-on workshops that demonstrate how to best handle noxious weeds, manage grazing and wildlife impacts."

Residents who were unable to attend the open house can provide comments through Jan. 15 online at www.greenways.com/arapahoe. The web site also hosts a variety of resources that provide additional information about the master planning process and the progress to date. A third open house where citizens can comment on the final draft of the master plan will be held in March.

The County already has protected more than 15,000 acres of land that preserves natural habitats and wildlife corridors, protects sweeping vistas and provides outdoor recreation for residents of all ages in just the past five years. This would not be possible without 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; provide, maintain and improve

neighborhood parks, sports fields, picnic facilities and multi-use trails; protect wildlife habitat and corridors; preserve agriculture and ranchlands; and enhance and maintain designated 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 about the open house, open space program and master plan, go to www.greenways.com/arapahoe or call Bob Finch with Arapahoe County Open Space at 720-874-6734.

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To download photos click on the link: ftp://www.co.arapahoe.co.us/Pub/CM/Photos/OpenHouse/ACprojects_explainedByersOpenHouse2009 – Greenways Inc. consultant Bob Searns explains some of Arapahoe County’s recent open space projects to a resident during the master plan open house in Byers.

CitizensWriteIdeas_ByersOpenHouse2009 – Arapahoe County’s second open house in Byers gave residents the opportunity to share their ideas on the future needs for parks, trails and open space along the eastern portion of the county.

RonMillerTalksTrails_ByersOpenHouse2009 – Byers resident Ron Miller points out suggested locations for bike trails during the Arapahoe County open space master plan open house.