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What Progress has Preserved

Arapahoe County distributes \$11.6 million for open space, parks, recreation projects

Littleton, CO — Thanks to the generous citizens of Arapahoe County, the Arapahoe County Board of County Commissioners Thursday distributed \$11.6 million in Open Space sales tax revenues and awarded the City of Glendale with the *Our Progress Takes Flight Stewardship* award during a ceremony at Cherry Creek State Park.

The grants and awards were distributed to local cities, towns, parks and recreation and special districts during the County's Open Space Shareback and Grant award ceremony, which is held each June.

"It's incredible to see what Arapahoe County in partnership with our cities and towns has accomplished in the five years our open space program has been in existence," said Commissioner Jim Dyer. "We've helped to protect more than 15,000 acres of open space, connected trails and renovated dozens of parks."

These funds are 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 and natural areas; protect lands that preserve water quality in rivers, lake and streams; provide, maintain and improve neighborhood parks, open space, 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 City of Glendale was presented with the *Our Progress Takes Flight Stewardship* award, which recognizes an individual, local government or organization that displays leadership, cooperation and stewardship to ensure the preservation and protection of the great outdoors.

Over the last few years the City of Glendale, which is located in one of the most urbanized areas of the Arapahoe County, has made great strides to provide its residents with open space, parks and recreational amenities, despite being landlocked.

"Our relationship with Arapahoe County has come a long way in the last five years," said Glendale Mayor Larry Harte. "Glendale is such a densely populated urban environment; we value every bit of our parks and open space. Receiving this award is quite an honor, and we appreciate the opportunities that working with Commissioners and staff provide for the preservation of open space and outdoor recreation."

And anyone who uses the Cherry Creek Trail can attest to the improvements seen along the section that runs through Glendale. Recently, the City removed its sewer plant from the edge of the Creek and built a trail along the south side of the creek.

In addition, the City of Glendale has pledged to serve on the Cherry Creek Basin Working Group – a new taskforce that spans three counties (Denver, Arapahoe and Douglas), which is working to conserve and protect the remarkable places in the Cherry Creek Basin Watershed by completing trails, preserving open space, and enhancing parks and recreation for public enjoyment.

“Glendale is acutely aware of the benefits that urban parks provide communities,” said Board Chair Susan Beckman. “They understand that every child deserves to experience a park, no matter where they live. They deserve the gift of nature.”

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. Tax collection began Jan. 1, 2004 and 50 percent of the annual revenue is returned to incorporated cities and towns based upon population to enhance local parks, trails, recreation and open space.

More than \$48 million from the Open Space Fund has been distributed to municipalities since the program’s inception. This year, Arapahoe County distributed \$9.4 million in Shareback Funds, which was divided among the following cities and towns:

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|------------------------|----------------|---------------------|-----------|
| • Aurora | \$5.38 million | • Englewood | \$639,433 |
| • Bennett | \$6,301 | • Foxfield | \$15,544 |
| • Centennial | \$1.98 million | • Glendale | \$94,113 |
| • Cherry Hills Village | \$123,028 | • Greenwood Village | \$279,356 |
| • Columbine Valley | \$25,281 | • Littleton | \$767,537 |
| • Deer Trail | \$11,436 | • Sheridan | \$107,089 |

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 nearly \$11.5 million in grants awarded since 2004. Today, Arapahoe County awarded nearly \$2.2 million in grants for 12 open space, parks and trails projects. The projects receiving funding include:

City of Englewood, Orphan Property Acquisition and Improvements, \$74,200

With this grant and a match of \$24,800, the City of Englewood will purchase .719 acres of land along the South Platte River to create a trailhead, pavilion, and trail connections to Big Dry Creek Trail and the Mary Carter Greenway. This property has been a priority for the City and the South Platte Working Group – a coalition that continues to improve wildlife habitat and enhance connectivity to recreation trails for people in Western Arapahoe County.

City of Englewood, Centennial Park Ball Field Lighting, \$167,400

The ball fields of Centennial Park are consistently booked for youth and adult organized play. Their heavy use demonstrates how critical it is to install lights and allow for an increase in play time in order to meet the needs of community associations. The City of Englewood will contribute \$200,000 to complete the project.

City of Glendale, Creekside Park Addition, \$207,800

Glendale will use the grant and contribute \$51,900 to convert a roughly 3 acre property into a clean landscaped park that will expand the existing Creekside Park immediately to its west. It also will connect with the highly active bike and pedestrian trail on the north side of Cherry Creek. Once completed, the combined park will be nearly 6 acres.

City of Littleton, East Elementary School & Park Project, \$133,600

This project is an intergovernmental/community effort to build three playgrounds to the existing multipurpose playfields of East Elementary School and Park. Heavily used as a neighborhood park and organized sport facility during non-school hours, the need to update the playground facilities for safety and accessibility is apparent. This is a cooperative effort of Littleton Public Schools, South Suburban Parks and Recreation District, the City of Littleton, the East Elementary Parent Teacher Organization and local businesses and service clubs. Littleton will contribute \$76,800.

South Suburban Parks & Recreation District, Puma Park Conservation & Renovation, \$250,000

This grant will help renovate the park’s shelter, ball field backstops, and inefficient sprinkler system. It also will help to replace damaged concrete walkways and install a set of spectator bleachers for the ball fields. South Suburban will contribute \$77,500.

South Suburban Parks & Recreation District, deKoevend Park Renovation, \$250,000

This park also will receive a healthy renovation, replacing the dated wooden playground apparatus with designated age-appropriate equipment and areas and constructing a shelter with picnic tables. South Suburban will contribute \$120,000.

Arapahoe Park and Recreation District, Piney Creek Hollow Park Phase III, \$170,000

With this project, Arapahoe Park and Recreation District will build a large multiuse field, picnic shelter, trail turnaround and plant trees at Piney Creek Hollow Park. This 46-acre community park is adjacent to a major stream corridor with large cottonwood trees, wildlife and natural open space. It provides a variety of active and passive outdoor activities for all ages. The District will contribute \$150,000.

City of Aurora, Red-tailed Hawk Park Phase II, \$250,000

This 35-acre park in southeastern Aurora contains both natural riparian areas with small cottonwood galleries and a large area of upland vegetation. Aurora will contribute more than \$2.2 million to create amenities, such as a sprayground, bocce ball courts, horseshoe pits, picnic shelters, volleyball court and more.

City of Aurora, Larkspur Neighborhood Park, \$250,000

Located within the Saddle Rock neighborhood, this will be the City’s first “sustainable park” creating a unique public park for active and passive uses, while preserving the natural beauty and diversity of the adjacent riparian corridor along Piney Creek. An important feature of the park is the dedicated conservation area with trees, native grasses and wildflowers, which will create an environment that requires less water, chemicals and maintenance. Aurora will contribute \$857,500.

City of Cherry Hills Village, Woodie Hollow Park Horse Arena Restoration, \$25,100

In order to retain the unique equestrian and rural culture of Cherry Hills Village, the city will use this grant with a \$13,500 match to restore a horse arena that with years of wear and tear has created a surface that’s dangerous for both the horse and rider. The funds will restore the arena into a high quality, safe and accessible public horse arena for riders to enjoy.

City of Greenwood Village, Orchard Road Trail Undercrossing, \$250,000

Taking advantage of timing and the leveraging of funds and resources, Greenwood Village will use this grant and contribute \$175,600 to build an undercrossing and trail beneath Orchard Road. Linking Tommy Davis Park and Orchard Hills Park will greatly improve trail circulation, access and safety and allow users to travel north and south without having to cross busy Orchard Road to gain greater access to parks and cultural leisure destinations.

City of Greenwood Village, Master Plan Implementation of the Marjorie Perry Nature Preserve Phase I, \$178,700

This grant allows Greenwood Village to enhance the experience of the Marjorie Perry Nature Preserve by providing a water access point to the High Line Canal, interpretive signage, trail construction and social trail re-vegetation. Greenwood Village will contribute \$44,700.

To learn more about the Arapahoe County Open Space program, visit www.co.arapahoe.co.us or call 720-874-6500.

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