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From the Ground Up...

Arapahoe County distributes nearly \$11.6 million in tax revenues to cities and towns for Open Space projects

On Thursday, the Arapahoe County Board of County Commissioners distributed approximately \$9.2 million in Open Space Shareback funds to 13 cities and towns, and nearly \$2.4 million in grants for 15 Open Space projects.

"We are excited to give back these tax dollars to our cities and towns for projects that will not only improve our recreational corridors, but protect our heritage and our wildlife areas as well," said Commissioner Rod Bockenfeld, Board Chair. "Through the Open Space program, Arapahoe County is working in partnership with our cities and towns and special districts to protect, plan and preserve the community we call home."

In November 2003, voters approved a countywide .25 percent sales and use tax for the preservation of open space in Arapahoe County. As part of the program, participating incorporated cities and towns within Arapahoe County are eligible each year to receive 50 percent of the total tax collected, divided by the population within the incorporated portion of the County. In addition, a pool of money is set aside each year for grants to special districts and incorporated cities and towns for open space projects.

The County distributed \$9.2 million in Shareback funds, which was divided among the following cities and towns based on population:

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|--------------------------------|-------------|-----------------------------|-----------|
| • City of Aurora | \$5 million | • Town of Foxfield | \$15,360 |
| • Town of Bennett | \$6,124 | • City of Glendale | \$96,542 |
| • City of Centennial | \$2 million | • City of Greenwood Village | \$252,722 |
| • City of Cherry Hills Village | \$122,265 | • City of Littleton | \$784,652 |
| • Town of Columbine Valley | \$23,432 | • City of Sheridan | \$109,574 |
| • Town of Deer Trail | \$11,545 | • Town of Watkins | \$27,207 |
| • City of Englewood | \$652,407 | | |

Arapahoe County also awarded nearly \$2.4 million in grants for 15 open space projects. The projects receiving funding Thursday include:

Arapahoe Park and Recreation District, \$250,000, Spring Creek Park Project

Spring Creek Park consists of 29 acres of partially developed open space. The park was designated as one of the District's two largest "community parks" in the early 1980s. Upon completion, this multi-faceted park will include trails, 16 acres of natural open space with wetlands, five playfields, a playground, off-street parking, a pavilion with restrooms and picnic facilities. The Arapahoe Park and Recreation District is contributing \$318,000 in matching funds toward this \$568,000 project.

City of Aurora, \$250,000, Coal Creek - Adventure Park

This grant will acquire approximately 54 acres along the Sand/Coal/Murphy Creek open space corridor. The parcel includes natural riparian growth along the creeks and substantial non-native grassland extending from the creek corridor to Sixth Avenue. The acquisition of this parcel is important to eliminate most of the habitat destruction associated with development adjacent to riparian corridors. The future conceptual park and open space use of this property is for improvement as an "Adventure Park" featuring boating, fishing, canoeing, wildlife observation, trails, wetlands and bird/photo blinds and native study opportunities such as staffed adventure camps and boating/fishing instruction. Aurora's match for this grant is \$1.1 million.

City of Aurora, \$23,500, AWQUA Lounge Watershed Education Project

This grant will be used to fabricate and install displays related to watershed education programs offered by Aurora at the Aurora Reservoir. The new water quality center, Aurora Water Quality Understanding and Appreciation Lounge will provide exhibits and programming related to drinking water, storm water and watershed protection, storm water quality and management. The displays include information panels at the Center, a "talking storm drain" and education signage located along the trail system adjacent to water quality/storm water detention ponds. Aurora's match for this grant is \$20,000 for a total project cost of \$43,500.

City of Cherry Hills Village, \$50,000, Asphalt Trail Overlay Trail Project

These funds are for an asphalt overlay project to enhance and improve the major arterial asphalt trails throughout Cherry Hills Village. The Parks and Public Works Departments have purchased the equipment to perform the work in-house saving approximately \$24,500 per mile over the cost of subcontracting the work to outside sources. Grant funds will be used to purchase the asphalt materials for this trail improvement project. These improvements will take place on the trails that parallel Clarkson Street, Quincy Avenue and Colorado Boulevard. Cherry Hills Village is providing matching funds of \$89,059 for a total project cost of \$139,059.

City of Cherry Hills Village, \$11,000, Volunteer Park Project

This grant is funding park improvements at Volunteer Park located at Cherry Lane Drive and Parkway Drive south of Hampden Avenue. Improvements include trees, flower beds, irrigation improvements, benches, a trail and a water fountain and will make this park a desirable destination for families to come and enjoy the views and the open spaces afforded by the area. The park has superior mountain and city views and is currently under used because of the lack of amenities. Cherry Hills Village is matching this grant with \$14,275 for a total project cost of \$25,275.

Town of Deer Trail, \$4,020, Centennial Park Well

Centennial Park is Deer Trail's only public park with playground facilities and a covered picnic area. The park's 24,000 square foot lawn is currently irrigated with the Town's treated chlorinated water. The grant funds will be used to install a shallow well which will allow the town to irrigate the park's lawn with less expensive untreated water. Deer Trail is matching this grant with \$480 for the total project cost of \$4,500.

City of Englewood, \$250,000, South Platte River Oxbow Habitat/Wetlands

This grant is for the acquisition of approximately 2.6 acres adjacent to the South Platte River. A 2.21 acre parcel is in the City of Englewood and a .39 acre parcel is in the City of Littleton. This property includes the historic course of the river and retains the characteristic oxbow landform, wetlands, trees, vegetation and ponds. The proposed dual trail system of the Mary Carter Greenway will provide public access to the Oxbow. Future recreational and educational amenities may include a trailhead, interpretive trail depicting

formation of an oxbow, descriptions of riparian habitat and the role of wetlands in water quality. The purchase of this property will prevent development of the site. The City of Englewood is matching this grant with \$62,500 for a total project cost of \$312,500.

City of Glendale, \$250,000, Seminary Park Project

This grant is for the development of the recently purchased property at the corner of Mississippi and Cherry Street into a city park and build one regulation high use grass rugby soccer field plus a half size field. In addition to the play fields, an open space commons area with vegetative landscaping will be added and include benches and picnic tables. Glendale is providing a match of \$501,300 for the completion of this project.

Greenwood Village, \$92,000, Alexander Lane Equestrian Park Project

This grant is for the development of a year-round riding facility that meets the needs of multiple riding disciplines such as dressage, trail riding, cross country and show jumping. The vision for the park is to provide a safe educational recreation facility for riders to learn about and enjoy horsemanship as well as to carry on the rural heritage of the area. The property is located at 2501 East Alexander Land. There is easy access to the park off the regional High Line Canal trail and both Little and Big Dry Creek trails. Greenwood Village is providing a match of \$37,800 in in-kind services and cash for this \$129,800 project.

Greenwood Village, \$250,000, Marjorie Perry Nature Preserve Inholdings Open Space Acquisition

This grant will assist with the acquisition of a 4 acre inholding within the Marjorie Perry Nature Preserve adjacent to the Highline Canal. The preservation of this property provides both a local and a regional benefit. The acquisition of this property will prevent it from potential residential development and protect the wildlife habitat of the area. Greenwood Village is providing a match of \$2 million for a total project cost of \$2.25 million.

Hills at Cherry Creek Metropolitan District, \$79,000, Hills Playground/Picnic Facilities Replacement

This grant will be used to replace 27-year-old playground equipment. The project consists of expanding the play areas, installing safe ground covering and border material under the equipment, improving drainage, tearing out all old equipment and installing newly designed playground equipment designed to meet ADA standards. The larger play area will be designed primarily for children ages 5-12 and the second smaller play area will be for children 2 – 5. The existing two picnic facilities will be replaced with modern safe tables and the addition of electrical service. The Metro District will match the County's grant with \$79,000 for a total cost of \$158,000.

South Suburban Parks and Recreation District, \$250,000, Big Dry Creek Trail Project

This grant is to complete a vital segment of the Big Dry Creek Trail from Greenwood Point to South Washington Street. This trail segment includes continuing the Big Dry Creek Trail by providing a 10 foot wide, multi-use trail along a steep creek bank requiring retaining walls, reinforcement and stabilization. This is a critical phase to link the Mary Carter Greenway to the High Line Canal Trail and tie together a number of major parks and recreation facilities including Cornerstone Regional Park. This will help complete a 14 mile loop trail via Big Dry, the High Line, Lee Gulch and the Mary Cater Greenway Trails. South Suburban and its partners including the GOCO/State Trails grant are providing \$400,800 in matching funds for this \$650,800 project.

South Suburban Parks and Recreation District, \$250,000, Ketring Park, Phase 3

Ketring Park is located at 6000 S. Gallup Street in Littleton. Last year, South Suburban received a grant of \$250,000 for Phase 2 of Ketring Park for wetland improvements. The 2006 grant will provide funds for the replacement of trail, parking lot improvements, construction of a handicapped-accessible fishing and overlook plaza and installation of shade trees, irrigation and park benches. South Suburban will provide a match of \$62,500 toward this \$312,500 project.

Strasburg Metro Parks and Recreation District, \$224,560, Lyons, 5-Acres & Turner Parks

This grant is for the development and upgrading of three parks located in the Arapahoe County portion of the recreation district. The projects include development of a soccer field, the town's first and other

amenities at 5 Acre Park. The grant also will upgrade the irrigation system and other infrastructure at Lyons Park, one of the town's oldest recreational facilities and develop trails and other facilities at the Turner Park site, a new recreational site that is adjacent to a future school site. These projects will serve approximately 800 children participating in softball, baseball, soccer, football and other recreational and independent play activities. Strasburg is providing a match of \$20,000 for this \$244,560 project.

Town of Watkins, \$205,500, Central Park Land Acquisition

This grant will be used to acquire approximately 50 acres for the future Central Park for the Town of Watkins. Before development occurs, the Town would like to acquire this property for a Central Park. The area would include space for both open space and a developed municipal park that could potentially include baseball/softball fields, soccer fields, trails, recreation center, pools, tennis courts, a town square with gazebo and amphitheater, parking, a skate park, outdoor hockey areas, picnic shelters, playgrounds and farmer's market. This would be the signature park for the Town and would provide a central location. Watkins is providing \$94,500 in cash and in-kind contributions as a match for this \$300,000 project.

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