

Adams County Open Space Program 2004 Annual Report





Preserving open space while providing and enhancing trails, parks and recreational facilities is similar to an artist's unfinished canvas. It looks lovely, but it needs more work. Through the commitment of the Open Space Advisory Board, the support of the county commissioners and the efforts of the parks department, residents are able to find more enjoyment and beauty within their county.

Last November, Adams County voters agreed that the Open Space Sales Tax should be extended for 20 more years. Without that affirmation, there would be little or no possibility of open space projects in the future. Thanks to the foresight of the voters of Adams County, more of the canvas can become reality. During the grant cycles of 2004, \$4,786,166 in open space funds were awarded to the cities, recreation districts and the county to move toward their open space goals.

We can all be proud of what has been and will be preserved for those who come after us. All of the projects add to our ability to say, "I'm glad I live in Adams County!"

The canvas is by no means complete, but the painting continues to become more beautiful.

Sincerely,
Ann N. Merkel
Open Space Advisory Board Chairman

Adams County Open Space Sales Tax Facts

- Tax (of 1/5th of one cent) passed on November 2, 1999; to expire on December 31, 2006.
- November 2, 2004, voters approved a tax increase to 1/4th of one cent; starting Jan. 1 2007.
- The newly approved tax will expire on December 31, 2026.
- 68 percent of the tax goes into a fund for grants.
- 30 percent is returned to the cities and the county where it is collected.
- Two percent is to be used for administration.
- A seven-member Open Space Advisory Board, consisting of three members representing cities and four members representing unincorporated Adams County, reviews grants and makes funding recommendations to the Board of County Commissioners.
- Uses include preservation of land for open space, wildlife habitat, rivers, creeks, trails, conservation easements for farmland, parks, ballfields, recreation and environmental education projects.
- Revenues collected in 2004 totaled \$6,935,323.



This sign is displayed on project locations funded with Adams County Open Space Sales Tax dollars.



Left to right: Open Space Advisory Board Members Patricia Bisant, Arthur Mander, Gloria Rudden, Lance Grothe, Tim Ferrell and Ed Hickel.

Allocation of Awarded Open Space Funds since January 1, 2000

Conservation Easements

\$4,885,000 has been awarded to the preservation of working farms and ranches in Adams County.

Land Acquisitions

\$10,630,760 has been awarded for land acquisitions. Lands are acquired for the following uses: parks, trails, ballfields, wildlife habitat and preservation of working farms and ranches.

Park & Trail Projects

\$6,990,005 has been used towards the development and renovation of parks and trails.

Other

\$110,268 has been available for many small projects such as environmental education, historic preservation, park improvements and planning projects.





Barr Lake State Park



“Adams County’s support was instrumental in making improvements to Ruston Park and we greatly appreciate the program.”

Chuck Reid, Federal Heights City Manager

Land Preservation

Adams County was funded for three land preservation projects:

1) The Berry Patch Farms project was awarded \$285,000 to protect this organic farming operation with a conservation easement. Berry Patch Farms is a 37.12-acre organic vegetable farm and store. The farm is open to the public and is located on Potomac Street, between 136th and 144th Avenues in Brighton.

Working farm in Adams County

2) The South Platte River Corridor project was awarded an additional \$800,000 for a conservation easement to protect a 155-acre working farm located in the South Platte River corridor, adjacent to previously protected parcels.

3) Fukaye Farm Aquisition. A \$1 million grant was awarded to protect 130 acres of farmland. This award is contiguous with two other previous projects, the South Platte Fishing Lakes and the Eppinger Farm. This property will remain a working farm and may provide a future trail connection to the Thornton Grange Hall Creek Trail and South Platte River Trail.

The City of Commerce City received \$80,000 for a 34.09-acre parcel at 2nd Creek Community Park, which will be kept as open space. It will preserve the natural prairie alongside a future planned park with amenities.



“To forget how to dig the earth and to tend the soil is to forget ourselves.”

Mohandas K. Gandhi

The City of Thornton was awarded \$200,000 for the purchase of the 46-acre Gahagen property located north of 144th Ave. and York Street. This land provides wildlife habitat corridors, agricultural and riparian areas, and future recreational trails.

The City of Westminster received \$500,000 toward the purchase of the Metzger Farm. In the future, it will be open to the public for tours. This picturesque acquisition consists of the original home, outbuildings, two ponds and fertile farmland. Located at 120th Ave. and Lowell Blvd., it will eventually connect to the Big Dry Creek Regional Trail. This was the third grant awarded for this project.

“Westminster citizens and leaders clearly recognize the value of open space in our community and the key role that sales tax revenues play in funding open space purchases. Revenue from Adams County’s and Westminster’s open space sales tax has allowed us to continue to preserve high-priority recreational and view corridors throughout the city for residents and future generations to enjoy.”

Mayor Nancy McNally

Berry Patch Farms, Brighton





Eagle banding with Commissioner Larry W. Pace



Grandview Fishing Lakes, Thornton



Barr Lake Nature Center Trail

Parks and Recreation

Hyland Hills Parks and Recreation District was the recipient of three open space grants in 2004.

1) **Westfield Park**, a 25-acre site located at 115th Ave. and Wolff Street. A \$600,000 grant will be used for the development of a multi-use park that serves the district, the city of Westminster and surrounding neighborhoods.

2) **Carroll Butts Parks** is a community park located at 96th Ave. and Perry Street. The \$150,000 award received in 2004 will go toward improvements to this older park. Improvements include a new picnic shelter, playground and tennis and basketball courts, as well as landscaping that will be added to the north end of this facility.

3) **The Kalcevic Reservoir** project was awarded \$399,863 to make safety improvements to the

existing dam. Multi-purpose fields, trails and a small irrigation pond are all part of the amenities to be added to this 18-acre multi-jurisdictional park.

120th Avenue Underpass Project, Cities of Northglenn and Thornton. This combined project was awarded \$600,000 for the design and installation of a pedestrian underpass at 120th Ave., east of Grant Street. This will connect the existing Farmer's Highline Trail north of 120th Ave. and ensure a safe crossing for trail users.

Grandview Ponds, City of Thornton
This project, located at 104th Ave. and Riverdale Road, received \$150,000 for improvements. The grant will be used to make the property ADA accessible and provide upgrades such as fencing for open space identification, shade structures, picnic tables, benches, trail materials, replacement bridges, spillway improvements and pond excavation to improve the fish habitat.

Mini Grants funded in 2004

Adams County
Benches along 124th Ave. - \$4,982

City of Brighton
Brighton's Mitchell Lakes Master Plan - \$5,000

City of Commerce City
Sand Creek Regional Greenway - \$4,500

Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory
Education Programs - \$3,600

Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory
Bird Banding Station - \$3,161

30% Open Space Sales Tax Distribution

Adams County - \$514,372.84
The county's funds were used to preserve two working farms totaling 200 acres located along Riverdale Road and the South Platte River area.



Morrison Nature Center, Aurora



Tot Lot, Northglenn



Adams County maintains over 25 miles of trails

Arvada - \$19,195.90

The city continues to save these funds and look at future possibilities in land acquisition or park development in the Adams County portion of Arvada.

Aurora - \$191,934.88

The city has reserved the funds to complete General's Park, located at Colfax Ave. and Peoria Street.

Bennett - \$3,810.72

The town plans to use its open space funds for the construction of the new Brothers Four Park.

Brighton - \$147,905.48

Funds received in 2004 will be appropriated in the budget for the future purchase of open space.

Commerce City - \$189,523.53

The city has applied their 30 percent distribution toward construction of trails in the Commerce City portion of the Sand Creek Regional Greenway Trail System.

Federal Heights - \$57,721.21

The city has used Adams County Open Space funds, along with Great Outdoor Colorado funds, to rehabilitate Ruston Park.

Northglenn - \$203,086.61

The city plans to use their 30 percent allocation for park improvements to the Northwest Open Space area.

Thornton - \$457,230.90

The city has spent their 30 percent funds on constructing improvements and maintaining park lands and facilities used for public benefit.

Watkins - \$509.42

Funds collected will be saved for future projects.

Westminster - \$223,614.57

Open Space funds received by the city will be applied to anticipated land acquisitions and trail improvements along the Big Dry Creek. These funds will also be used for the completion of the new Irving Street Park located at 72nd Ave. and Irving Street in Westminster.

“The city of Brighton is pleased the Open Space Sales Tax was extended by the voters in 2004 because the residents of Brighton and Adams County will benefit immensely as additional land is purchased for open space and parks.”

John M. Bramble, City Manager



“The richness I achieve comes from nature, the source of my inspiration.”

Claude Monet

“Several years ago, we asked ourselves if our farm could somehow be protected from the encroachment of urbanization. After all, we had no heirs who had interests in agriculture, and wondered what would happen to our farm once we die. After researching conservation easements through Adams County, the answer was easy: we would preserve our land as a farm.”

Tim & Claudia Ferrell,
Owners of Berry Patch Farms

Tim and Claudia Ferrell contacted the Adams County Open Space office for information on how to preserve their farm. Through Adams County and The Conservation Fund, the Ferrell’s were able to fulfill their wish to preserve their farm by benefiting from a conservation easement placed on their farm.

For more information about Adams County’s Open Space program and the efforts to preserve working farms and ranches, wildlife habitat and quality of life in Adams County, call 303.637.8004, or go to www.co.adams.co.us.

