



GREAT OUTDOORS
COLORADO

Quarterly Update

WINTER 2005

GOCO Board's Decision Yields Protection of 80,000 Acres of Remarkable Land

An exhaustive process by the Great Outdoors Colorado Board has resulted in the award of \$60 million for 18 projects. \$48 million of that total will help preserve 80,000 acres including dramatic landscapes in Northern Colorado's Laramie Foothills, Jefferson County's Front Range Mountain Backdrop, and southwest Colorado's San Juan Skyway. The remaining \$12 million will advance work on two new State Parks, trails, and regional outdoor recreation areas.



Over 55,000 acres north of Fort Collins will be preserved as part of the Laramie Foothills/Mountain to Plains Project sponsored by Larimer County. The project area extends from the native grasslands along I-25 to the Roosevelt National Forest. (GOCO photo)

Governor Bill Owens made the announcement of the grants at a State Capitol news conference surrounded by members of the GOCO Board and project sponsors. "With broad support from communities across the state, large expanses of open space that define the rich beauty of Colorado will now be preserved. This unprece-

dent investment by GOCO to protect open space is good for Colorado's wildlife, our citizens and economy," Owens said.

The \$60 million will go to 18 projects that had been competing for the money since June 2004. The grant cycle was offered by GOCO to address large-scale land preser-

vation needs that were brought forward by local governments, land trusts and state agencies. This was part of an extensive stakeholder process the board conducted when it was deciding whether to exercise bonding authority granted to it by the voters in 2001.

"The approach the GOCO Board has chosen fulfills the voters intent without going into debt," said GOCO Board chairman T. Wright Dickinson of Maybell. "These grants meet the most urgent land preservation

needs at this time. And, if additional projects of the same urgency come forward in the future, GOCO still has preserved its option to bond." The Governor, who supported the effort to give GOCO bonding authority, said the board had taken a "common sense approach" by using lottery pro-

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GREAT OUTDOORS COLORADO TRUST FUND

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From the Board

Lottery On Track With A Big Payout for Colorado's Great Outdoors

by: State Senator Norma Anderson (R)/GOCO
Board Member
Peggy Gordon, Director, Colorado Lottery



Senator Norma Anderson Peggy Gordon

During the last legislative session, the Colorado General Assembly and the Department of Revenue worked together to enact legislation to reform the way the Colorado Lottery does business so that proceeds from the games can be maximized to benefit Colorado's outdoors. In addition to working on the legislation, the

Lottery Division has worked hard on implementing administrative changes resulting in nearly \$1 million in cost savings in the last year.

Winning a jackpot would be great; it's also great to enjoy the open space, wildlife and outdoor recreation assets paid for by the proceeds. In December, such a payback was reaped when the Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) Board, which distributes up to half of proceeds, awarded \$60 million to 18 projects. \$48 million will preserve some 80,000 acres of the state's most special lands. The remainder will enhance outdoor recreation opportunities for our very active citizenry. Because of Lottery's strong performance, GOCO can make this investment without incurring debt associated with bonding, saving \$33 million.

Projects funded include (also see page 1):

- The protection of the Dawson Butte and Penley Ranch properties in Douglas County resulting in more than 2000 acres that will provide excellent recreational and environmental education opportunities and link to already protected properties and the existing trail network
- The San Juan Skyway Land Conservation & Recreation Initiative sponsored by the Montezuma Land Conservancy located in Montezuma, Ouray, San Juan and San Miguel counties. More than 3500 acres will be preserved that will protect and enhance the scenic, agricultural, and outdoor recreation amenities of the Skyway, a 236-mile scenic byway in southwest Colorado.
- The Beaver Brook Watershed Project in Clear Creek County where GOCO has made a loan that will allow the County to complete the purchase and conservation of 1781 acres in the watershed providing additional time to seek federal appropriations for the project with the

(Continued on Page 4)

Large Scale Grants

(Continued from Page 1)

ceeds to fund the projects.

Members of the GOCO Board spent much of the month of September touring the 21 projects that had been invited to apply for the funds. They also participated in two days of presentations by project sponsors.

Grants awarded for land preservation include:

\$11.6 million to the Laramie Foothills/Mountain to Plains Project sponsored by Larimer County, Fort Collins, The Nature Conservancy, and the Legacy Land Trust. The project will protect 55,400

acres north of Fort Collins creating a mountain to plains conservation zone of approximately 140,000 acres. The protected area is a contiguous band extending 22 miles across, from native grasslands along I-25 to the foothills and lower reaches of the Roosevelt National Forest. It is rich in wildlife and working landscapes. Sponsors will construct 30 miles of trail in an area that has previously been inaccessible to the public. The landscape, where sweeping grasslands merge with red buttes, remains as it was when early settlers first arrived. On December 30, the purchase of the centerpiece of the project, Red Mountain Ranch, was completed with \$7.8 million of the \$11.6 million GOCO grant and \$1.4 million from Larimer County's 1/4% Help

Preserve Open Spaces sales tax fund.

\$3 million to the City of Durango for the Jacob's Cliffs Open Space Acquisition. The property lies at the base of Animas



Surrounded by GOCO Board Members, Governor Bill Owens announces the recipients of GOCO's Legacy grants from the State Capitol. (GOCO photo)

Mountain and advances the City's goal of the mountain being a fully protected resource for the community. The 176 acres of Jacob's Cliffs provides scenic vistas and a heavily wooded mountainside with a mix of steep terrain and large rock outcrops and cliffs. The area also provides critical winter-range for deer and elk, as well as passive recreational opportunities such as hiking and rock climbing.

\$5 million for Jefferson County's South Table Mountain Acquisitions. Four million dollars will be used by the County toward the purchase of the 730-acre Coors property. The remaining \$1 million can be used for future purchases in the same area. The preservation of South Table

Mountain, one of the most recognizable landmarks on the Front Range, has been a priority for the County since voters approved an open space sales tax in 1972. Home to many wildlife, the area will also be available for hiking, mountain biking and horse-back riding.

\$3.7 million to the Saguache Creek Corridor Project sponsored by the Colorado Cattlemen's Agricultural Land Trust (CCALT). The Saguache Creek Corridor is defined by a narrow, but unbroken chain of irrigated agricultural lands stretching west from Saguache, bordered on both sides by sagebrush-covered BLM uplands, and framed in the distance by the forested mountaintops of the Rio Grande National Forest.

GOCO funds will allow CCALT to assist willing landowners, many of who have been in the area for four generations, in the perpetual protection of agricultural, wildlife and scenic values in the corridor through below market purchases of conservation easements. CCALT envisions purchasing easements on 17 ranches, permanently protecting 18,400 acres, with this grant assisting with the first eight. All of the proposed conservation easement ranches include stretches of Saguache Creek or its primary tributaries.

\$4.2 million to the Colorado Division of Wildlife (DOW) for the Colorado Species Conservation Partnership (CSCP)/Phase 2. This partnership

(Continued on Page 4)

Large Scale Grants

(Continued from Page 3)

is advancing the goals of Governor Owens and DOW to prevent the further decline of wildlife species, recover declining species, reduce the necessity of further listing of species under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) and down-listing and de-listing species listed as threatened and endangered under the ESA. Significant success has already been achieved by the CSCP partnership between DOW, the United States Department of the Interior, land trusts, and landowners through the permanent protection of 4600 acres for Gunnison Sage Grouse habitat in Gunnison County. Colorado currently has 16 species of vertebrates listed as federally threatened or endangered. Five additional species (Gunnison sage-grouse, boreal toad, black-tailed prairie dog, Arkansas darter and lesser

prairie-chicken) are in various stages of review for federal listing.

Grants awarded to recreation projects from the remaining \$12 million include:

\$820,000 for the Continental Divide Trail Alliance to construct four segments of Colorado's portion of the Continental Divide Trail, an effort to create a primitive and challenging backcountry trail on or near the Continental Divide from the Canadian to the Mexican border. Colorado's portion of the trail is approximately 800 miles long; it is estimated that 487 miles of that is complete, leaving 258 miles of planning and new construction and 55 miles of reconstruction. This grant will construct 56 miles of new trail and reconstruct 17 miles in Chaffee, Clear Creek, Grand, Gunnison, Hinsdale, Jackson, Lake and San Juan counties.

\$4 million to Colorado State Parks for continued development of St. Vrain State Park in Weld and Boulder counties and \$2.5 million for development of Cheyenne Mountain State Park in El Paso County. Work at St. Vrain will include infrastructure development and construction and improvement of more than 160 campsites. The park, formerly known as Barbour Ponds, is within 20 miles of downtown Denver and will serve as an important outdoor resource for urban populations.

Board Chairman Dickinson thanked the project sponsors for "their vision, creativity and for working in partnership to preserve critical wildlife habitat, our working landscapes, and scenic vistas" and said he knew this investment of dollars is sound and will be well spent to preserve the character of Colorado. 

Lottery


(Continued from Page 2)

goal of transferring the property to the U.S. Forest Service.

- The Minnequa Lake Park project in Pueblo where the City will acquire the 243-acre lake property, associated water rights to fill the lake, and a 4.3-mile ditch right-of-way that may provide an opportunity to extend the Colorado Front Range Trail south of Pueblo along the I-25 corridor. Pueblo will restore the lake and develop the property for open space and recreation.

- The Blue River Experience in Silverthorne which will result in river corridor enhancement and management to provide recreational use of the river while preserving its natural resources and the town's river heritage. GOCO funds will be used to purchase three river-front parcels totaling 16.34 acres and two trail easements with the largest parcel containing a lake.
- Manitou Section 16 where GOCO will make lease payments on behalf of Colorado Springs to the State Land Board until the City is able to

resolve problems with its open space tax and achieve their goal of purchasing this 640 acres that is contiguous to Pike National Forest, Bear Creek Canyon Park and the Red Rock Canyon Open Space

The voters created the Great Outdoors Colorado program and that support continues when people buy lottery tickets. A big thank you is due to those buyers for sustaining a fund that protects and enhances our outdoors and our quality of life and that is envied by most other states. 

The GOCO Board's \$60 million Investment (in order by grant award)

\$11.6 million to the Laramie Foothills/Mountain to Plains Project sponsored by Larimer County, Fort Collins, The Nature Conservancy, and the Legacy Land Trust

\$6.3 million to the West Plum Creek Valley Project sponsored by Douglas County

\$5.7 million to the San Juan Skyway Land Conservation & Recreation Initiative sponsored by the Montezuma Land Conservancy (Montezuma, Ouray, San Juan and San Miguel counties)

\$5.2 million loan to the Beaver Brook Watershed Project sponsored by Clear Creek County

\$5 million for Jefferson County's South Table Mountain Acquisitions

\$4.2 million to the Colorado Division of Wildlife for the Colorado Species Conservation Partnership (CSCP)/Phase 2

\$4 million to Colorado State Parks for continued development of St. Vrain State Park in Weld and Boulder counties

\$3.7 million to the Saguache Creek Corridor Project sponsored by the Colorado Cattlemen's Agricultural Land Trust (CCALT)

\$3 million to the City of Durango for the Jacob's Cliffs Open Space Acquisition

\$2.5 million to Cheyenne Mountain State Park Development sponsored by Colorado State Parks

\$2.3 million to Minnequa Lake Park sponsored by the City of Pueblo

\$1.67 million to the Blue River Experience sponsored by the Town of Silverthorne

\$1.25 million to the Colorado River Trail sponsored by Garfield County

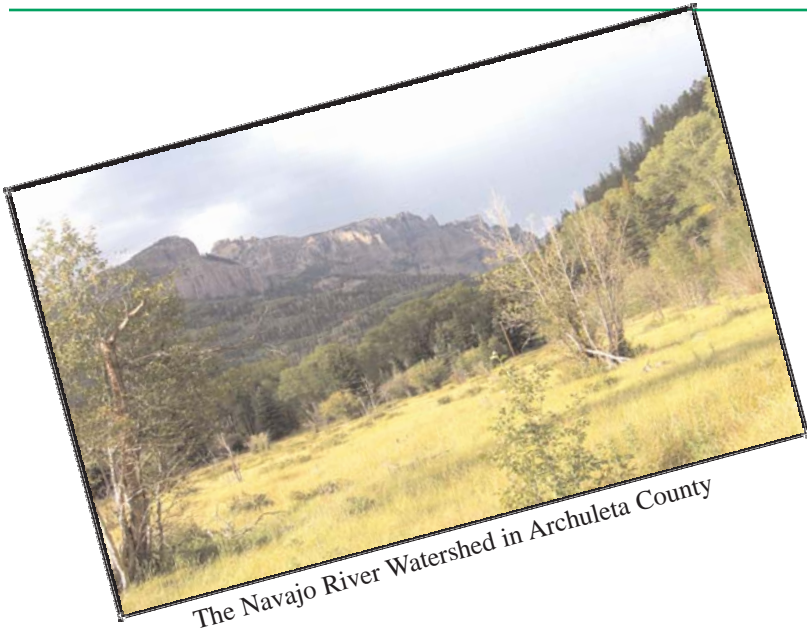
\$1.1 million to the Navajo River Watershed Project sponsored by The Conservation Fund (Archuleta County)

\$820,000 to construct four segments of Colorado's portion of the Continental Divide Trail sponsored by Colorado State Parks (Chaffee, Clear Creek, Grand, Gunnison, Hinsdale, Jackson, Lake and San Juan counties)

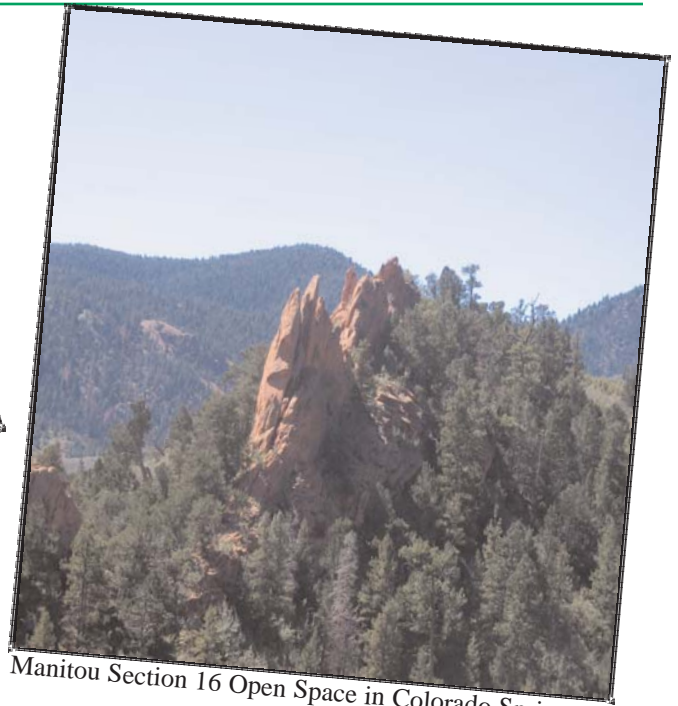
\$800,000 to the Colorado Outdoor Education & Recreation Complex sponsored by the Colorado Division of Wildlife

\$700,000 to Robert A. Easton Regional Park in Jefferson County sponsored by the Foothills Park & Recreation District

\$200,000 for Manitou Section 16 lease payments sponsored by the City of Colorado Springs

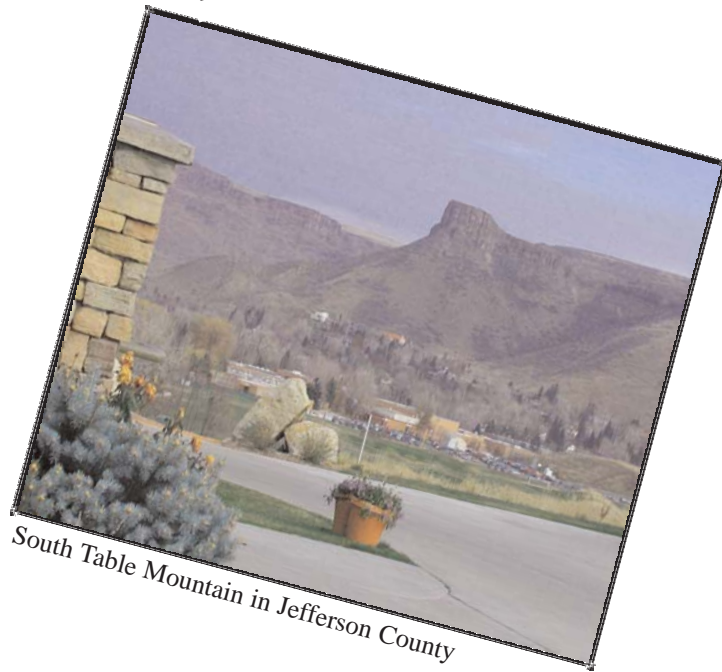


The Navajo River Watershed in Archuleta County



Manitou Section 16 Open Space in Colorado Springs

2004 Legacy Pr



South Table Mountain in Jefferson County



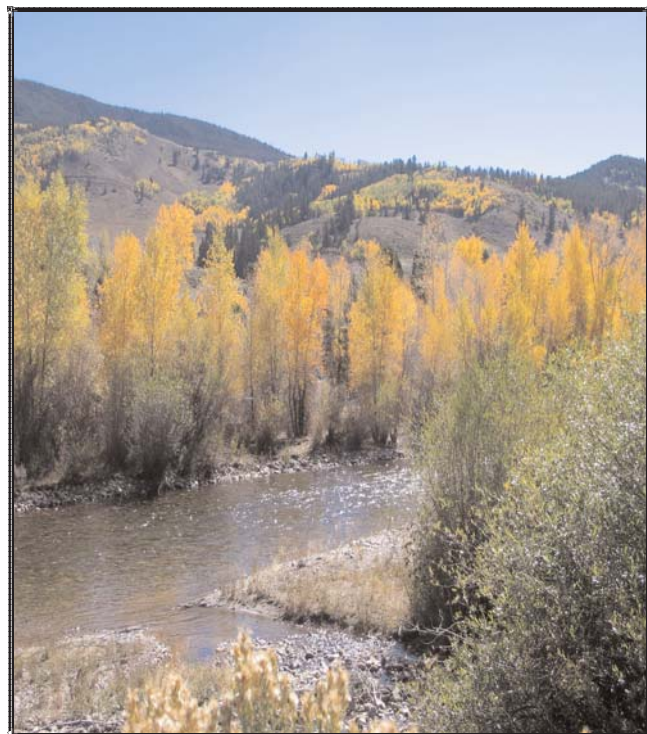
Briefing at the Sagauche Creek Corridor project site



One of the 22 site visits GOCO Board Members and staff



Board Member Kae Rader at Jacobs Cliffs in Durango



The Blue River Experience in Silverthorne

Project Site Visits



Staff participated in during September



The Beaver Brook Watershed located in Clear Creek County

Communities Continue to Improve Park & Outdoor Recreation Facilities with Help from GOCO

Silver Plume will be able to replace 50-year old playground equipment, Holyoke will update their ballfields for the first time in 20 years, and Louisville will develop a new 13.5 acre park with the help of \$4.2 million in local government park and outdoor recreation grants awarded by the GOCO Board in December.

Thirty-seven projects in 28 communities benefited from the grants including:

The City of Rifle received \$136,543 to build the Rifle Action Park.

Located in the center of town at the existing Metro Park, the facility will provide recreational amenities for skateboarders, BMX bikers, rollerbladers, and mountain bikers. Consisting of three large bowls and a street course, the park will feature fun boxes, benches, ledges, rails, and a carving corner. The Rifle Skate Park Association has been involved in all aspects of the project, from attending council meetings to fundraising.

Moffat County will use a \$31,420 grant to make upgrades at the Moffat County Fairgrounds in Craig.

Improvements will include the construction of a new sitting area, the installation of modern playground equipment, and the addi-

tion of a walking path. Several benches, picnic tables, and a water fountain will also be added. Solar lights will illuminate the playground area and paths.



Many playgrounds like this one located at Paintbrush Park in Douglas County benefit from funding through GOCO's local park and outdoor recreation program. (Photo courtesy of the Town of Castle Rock)

The City of Walsenburg will use \$400,000 in lottery funds to convert its closed community pool into a multi-use water park.

Currently a nonfunctioning eyesore, the pool will be converted into a community asset. The new facility will include an 8,000 square foot water park featuring a large slide, lap lanes, and interactive water play area. Additional amenities such as a pool house and restroom/changing area will also be constructed. Walsenburg citizens voted to support this project in November approving a \$400,000 allocation from the City's Utility Trust Fund.

The Town of Peetz was awarded \$24,302 to enhance the Peetz Community Ballpark.


Used by nearly 500 athletes annually, the facility serves as the primary recreational amenity for Peetz and

surrounding areas including parts of Nebraska.

The main components of the project include: the addition of two dugouts to aid in the prevention of weather exposure, separation from spectators, and the safety of participants; two bull-pens to provide for necessary warm-up facilities; and the construction of a storage building.

The Town of Wray received a \$82,467 grant to renovate the Wray Tennis Courts.

Improvements will include pouring a base for the courts; installing new galvanized posts and fencing around the perimeter; adding new posts and nets; and finishing the surfaces with 2-color competition surfacing. A wind-screen and a 6-fixture court lighting system will also be installed to allow for night play. Located on school grounds, the new facility is easily accessible from any location within the community.

For this cycle, GOCO reviewed 69 local government grant applications requesting a total of \$7.9 million. GOCO's next local government grants will be awarded in June 2005. 

December Open Space Grants Will Protect More Than 3,900 Acres

Costilla County in southern Colorado, where 99% of the land is privately owned and no state or federal lands exist, is getting a boost from a \$609,375 GOCO grant award that will help preserve 1,227 acres of open space near San Luis. This open space grant is one of ten to which the GOCO Board awarded a total of \$4.8 million in December. The conservation of these lands are in addition to the 80,000 acres protected in GOCO's latest Legacy round (see page 1).



Costilla County's preservation of 1,227 acres next to the San Luis Vega Commons represents a substantial gain for a county that contains virtually no public open space. GOCO awarded \$609,000 to the project. (Photo courtesy of Costilla County)

The Costilla County project is located adjacent to the San Luis Vega Commons, the only actively managed Commons area in the nation. The property will allow for the improvement of wildlife habitat and the restoration and protection of important wetlands. There will also be public trail access and the land will be managed as a public area for grazing cattle.

Other open space projects funded include:


The Camp Rollandet Open Space Acquisition sponsored by the City and County of Denver which received a \$450,000 grant for a six-acre parcel of upland prairie open space located at the northwest corner of 51st Avenue

and Sheridan Boulevard. One of the few remaining "natural areas" over two acres in size within Denver's boundaries, the Camp Rollandet acquisition will protect riparian, wildlife and plant habitat for the benefit of the Inspiration Point neighborhood. The property was previously owned by the Campfire Girls and Boys and has been the site of nature programs sponsored by that organization for more than 65 years.

The Wolf Mountain Ranch in the Yampa River Valley in Routt County where The Nature Conservancy will use an \$885,000 grant to purchase a conservation easement over 950 acres. This phase of the project will conserve approximately one-half mile of the Yampa River, 100

acres of riparian bottomland, and 850 acres of upland sagebrush and oak shrubland. The ranch includes nesting and brood rearing habitat for two Colorado Species of Concern: the Greater sage grouse and Columbian sharp-tailed grouse. In addition, the property contains cottonwood forests and meadows that support nesting sandhill cranes. The project is part of a multi-phase/multi-year effort to eventually protect 6,300 acres of the 22,000-acre ranch.

The Seven Star Ranch located in Brush Creek Valley for which Pitkin County received \$753,000 to acquire 232 acres. Representing the last portion of the ranch to be protected, this acquisition will tie together another 800 acres of open space. It will preserve a significant wildlife corridor that traverses some of the most prized real estate in the Roaring Fork Valley where fragmentation of the habitat could have caused significant harm to the resident elk herd. Purchased primarily for its wildlife values and passive open space, the property will also include a public trail that will provide a link to the Rio Grande Trail.

GOCO's next open space grants will be awarded in June. 

Milestones

First Phase of Sand Creek Legacy Project Complete

Phase I of the Sand Creek Legacy Project was completed in October 2004. GOCO's investment of \$2.7 million was leveraged by more than \$4.6 million in matching funds and aided the purchase of 45.8 acres of land. Funds also contributed to the construction of 10.3 miles of new trail and bridges spanning Sand Creek and Toll Creek in Aurora's Sand Creek Park. Running through Aurora, Denver, and Commerce City, the Sand Creek Regional Greenway links the Highline Canal with the Platte River Greenway creating a unique circuit of streamside trails that connects urban neighborhoods to a 200-mile metro trail system and nearly 800 acres of natural areas and parks.

Lake County Pool Renovated

After 25 years as one of one the area's most important recreational amenities, the Lake

County Pool was forced to close in 2000. A \$200,000 GOCO grant awarded in December 2003 helped Lake County complete the necessary upgrades and improvements to make the pool functional. Reopened in November 2004, the pool again serves more than 3,000 county residents per month. Due to its proximity to the senior center, softball fields, skate park, and Colorado Mountain College, the

facility promises to be an important and popular amenity for years to come.

LaFarge Property Preserved

After a decade of working to acquire and protect the LaFarge parcel near Steamboat Springs, the City of Steamboat Springs, Routt County, and the Colorado Division of Wildlife have successfully completed a deal to preserve the 103-acre property. Located on the



The newly improved Lake County Pool opened to rave reviews this past fall. The facility was awarded \$677,016 by GOCO in 2003. (GOCO photo)

banks of the Yampa River, the project protects open space and expands the adjacent Chuck Lewis State Wildlife Area for enhanced fishing and waterfowl hunting. GOCO contributed \$677,016 to the project.

Grand Community Recreation Project Complete

The Forward Motion West Grand Community Recreation Project,

which received a total of \$345,000 from GOCO in three different grant cycles, was completed this fall. Amenities installed with GOCO's help include an eight-lane all weather track, stations for track and field events, two all-purpose grass playing fields, a complete walking/bike path, playground structure, lighting system, extended parking lot, electronic signage and fencing. Constructed at the West Grand High School in

Kremmling, the facility provides recreation for a significant part of southwestern Grand County.

Wildlife Hospital Acquired by Division of Wildlife

Using a \$1,200,000 GOCO grant, the Division of Wildlife has taken formal possession of the Frisco Creek Wildlife Hospital and Rehabilitation Center, a facility that has played a key role in Colorado's lynx recovery effort.

Located near Del Norte, the hospital is considered among the state's

best for treating large native species and has cared for 3,000 individual animals including 100 black bears and 50 eagles since it opened in 1989. The 12-acre facility is located on 243 acres in Rio Grande County amid prime wildlife habitat. Dr. Herman and Susan Dieterich originally began the facility. Legislation allowing the transfer to DOW was sponsored by State Senator Lewis Entz.



GOCO to Invest \$9 Million in Wildlife Projects in FY 2005-2006

Colorado Division of Wildlife (DOW) projects aimed at conserving native wildlife species and their habitats, improving education programs, and creating new wildlife viewing sites around the state were awarded \$9 million by GOCO for Fiscal Year 2005-2006. These dollars are in addition to the \$6 million the Division received as part of the \$60 million in Legacy grants awarded by the Board in December (see page 1.)

The DOW leveraged the GOCO funds with at least \$15 million of its own funds for a total investment of more than \$30 million over the next several years.


“This level of funding will make a profound impact upon protecting

Colorado’s declining species and their habitat for future generations,” said Rich Larson, DOW’s GOCO liaison.

“Because of the GOCO funds, the DOW has developed partnerships it has never had before. We have expanded our traditional constituency base of hunters and anglers, and are immersed in positive relationships with many of the 40 land trusts around the state,” Larson said.

Over the past 10 years, the GOCO Board has awarded nearly \$100 million to the DOW for ongoing species and habitat conservation programs and popular education and wildlife watching programs.

Some of the GOCO funds will be allocated to ongoing species conservation efforts, including those to reintroduce Canadian lynx, black-footed ferrets, bald eagles, and other Rocky Mountain native species.

Also, a portion of the lottery proceeds will be used during the 2005-2006 fiscal year on river stewardship and youth education programs, including one that will train kindergarten through 12th grade school teachers and provide them with materials they can use in classrooms. GOCO funds will also be used for the DOW’s Colorado Watchable Wildlife program, which supports the development of wildlife viewing sites and workshops. 

Renovation of State Parks to Continue with GOCO Funds

In addition to the Legacy grants (see page 1) it received to advance construction at Cheyenne Mountain and St. Vrain State Parks, Colorado State Parks will use an additional \$8.75 million from GOCO, in part, to continue investing in the renovation of state parks.

Funds will be used in two cost-share efforts with the federal government:


Bureau of Reclamation Partnership: GOCO funds will

continue to be used as a match for BOR funds for rehabilitation of western slope parks. Major renovations have already taken place at Crawford, Vega and Navajo State Parks. Work will continue at Rifle and Paonia.

Corps of Engineers Cost Share: A 50% cost share agreement will be used to rehabilitate Cherry Creek, Trinidad and Chatfield State Parks over a 10-year period. Renovations will include road repairs, upgrades to campgrounds, maintenance of trails, new picnics

shelters and providing adequate visitor centers.

Renovations will also take place at Elkhead Reservoir, part of the Yampa River State Park in Routt and Moffat counties.

In addition to the enhancements at these parks, State Parks \$8.75 million in GOCO funds will be used for acquisition of buffers to state parks, water leases, Colorado Youth Corps and projects through the State Trails Program. 

2005 GOCO Board Meeting Schedule

<u>DATE</u>	<u>MEETING</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>
Friday - March 4	Finance/Projects Committees	Denver Metro
Friday - March 18	Board Meeting	Denver Metro
Wednesday - May 25	Finance/Projects Committees	Colorado Springs
Wednesday - June 15	Board Meeting	Sterling
Wednesday - August 24	Finance/Projects Committees	To be Announced
Thursday - September 29 and Friday - September 30	Board Meeting/ Retreat	Grand Junction
Wednesday - November 16	Finance/Projects Committees	Adams County
Friday - December 2	Board Meeting	Greeley

Check GOCO's website for additional information about these meetings at www.goco.org

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