

PARKS & COMMUNITY SERVICES DEPARTMENT

PARK OPERATIONS ~ ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES ~ RECREATION/CULTURAL SERVICES ~ CSU EXTENSION

Park Advisory Board

Meeting Agenda

Wednesday, September 11, 2024 – 1:30 p.m.

Centennial Hall, 200 S. Cascade, Colorado Springs

<u>Item</u>	<u>Presenter</u>	<u>Recommended Action</u>
1. Call Meeting to Order	Chair	
2. Approval of the Agenda	Chair	Approval
3. Approval of Minutes	Chair	Approval
4. Introductions / Presentations		
A. Fair Partner Summary Report	Andschana Aljets	Information
B. 2024 Creek Week	Dana Nordstrom	Information
C. Bear Creek Restoration Crew	Kylee Taylor	Information
D. Bear Creek Regional Park - Pickleball Shade Structures	Brian Bobeck	Information
5. Citizen Comments / Correspondence on items not on the agenda (limited to three (3) minutes unless extended by Chair)	Chair	
6. Development Applications		
N/A		
7. Information / Action Items		
8. Monthly Reports	Staff	Information



9. Board / Staff Comments

10. Adjournment

*Minutes of the July 10, 2024
El Paso County Park Advisory Board Meeting
Fountain Creek Nature Center
320 Pepper Grass Lane, Fountain, CO 80817*

Members Present:

Thomas Lachocki, Chair
John Wallace, 2nd Vice Chair
Kiersten Steel, 3rd Vice Chair
Vincent Prins
Janna Blanter
Jane Newman

Staff Present:

Todd Marts, Executive Director
Sabine Carter, Administrative Coordinator
Brian Bobeck, Division Manager - Park Operations
Kyle Melvin, Park Operations Manager
Jason Meyer, Division Manager - Park Planning
Theresa Odello, Division Manager – Rec. & Cultural Services
Jessica Miller, Fountain Creek Nature Center Supervisor
Adam Robertson, Park Ops. Supervisor, Central District
Toni Rose, Andrew Kurtchi, Nathan Jahner – Central District

Absent: Susan Jarvis-Weber, Jeremy J. Chatelain, Terry Martinez

The following minutes are a summary of the proceedings. A recording is available upon request at the El Paso County Parks Administration Office.

1. Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 1:30 p.m. by Thomas Lachocki, Chair.
2. Approval of Agenda: **Kiersten Steel made a motion to approve the meeting agenda. Janna Blanter seconded the motion. The motion carried 6 - 0.**
3. Approval of Minutes: **Janna Blanter made a motion to approve the June 12, 2024, meeting minutes. John Wallace seconded the motion. The motion carried 6 – 0.**
4. Introductions and Presentations:

A. Colorado State University Demo Garden Project

Tony Rose, Andrew Kurtchi and Nathan Jahner, Central District Park Maintenance employees, gave a PowerPoint presentation about the successful completion of a water-wise, xeriscape demonstration garden at the CSU Extension building. The project will also create significant water savings and reduce overall lawn maintenance. The team addressed questions by board members regarding water usage, seed types and development/germination etc. The project was well received by the board members.

B. Kite Festival Review

Ryan Dorough provided an overview of the 3rd annual Kite Festival. The festival was held at the Falcon Regional Park and featured kite flying to include 4 large-kite demonstrations,

crafts, music, games, 12 free activity and information booths, merchandise vendors and several food trucks. This year's festival grew from 350 in 2023 to 1050 attendees. The event was honored with the 2024 Achievement Award by the National Association of Counties. Board members congratulated Mr. Dorough on this successful community event.

5. Citizen Comments:

Mike Pach, owner of 3 Peaks Photography stated that he is representing the photography community to express concerns about the Paint Mines management plan. He strongly opposes the proposed fence installations to stop visitors from going off-trail, which will ruin the landscape for photography. He feels that the installation will not stop people from illegal climbing. Mr. Pach stated that more security officers should be hired, and fines should be issued for any violations of park rules. Mr. Pach listed several other areas of concern which included the expansion of the parking lot, a planned visitor center, shade shelters and planned stair installations which will negatively impact the park. He requested a meeting with the planning department and the photography community to voice concerns. Mr. Pach provided a written statement. James and Marjorie Van Hoy, citizens and local photographers also echoed the concerns brought forward by Mr. Pach. Mrs. Van Hoy further stated that enforcement of park rules would be the key to stopping illegal behavior.

Susan Davies, Trails and Open Space Coalition, updated the board on the Class 1 E-bike survey by the City of Colorado Springs. So far 3000 people submitted entries. She encouraged the board to spread the word and to also participate. The city is also amending its Economic Benefits to the Parks & Recreation study. The study is conducted by Trust for Public Land.

Cory Sutela, Medicine Wheel Trail Advocates, thanked staff for their cooperation for trail work which has been done by his organization throughout the County. Mr. Sutela highlighted the E-bike survey conducted by the City of Colorado Springs and its importance. His organization suggested to City Parks & Rec to conduct a pilot study on E-bikes at a park without restrictions or easements to alleviate some of the fears that people might have regarding Class 1 E-bikes. He is encouraging consideration for the same pilot study at a county park property. Chair Thomas Lachocki stated that there is a meeting scheduled in August to have the conversation move forward regarding an E-bike test location. Mr. Sutela asked that his organization be involved as well.

Mr. Marts addressed citizens' concerns on the Paint Mines management plan and encouraged comments, ideas and suggestions to be submitted during the Master Plan process. Mr. Marts stated the importance of the interpretive staff already present at the Paint Mines during peak days and hours, and their role in educating park visitors on the importance of the Paint Mines. Chair Thomas Lachocki also stated the importance of input during the master plan process and for the input to be as specific as possible to identify areas of concern etc. in order to guide the process.

6. Development Applications:

A. **Habitat for Humanity Preliminary Plan**

Jason Meyer provided an overview of the Habitat for Humanity Preliminary Plan and addressed questions by board members.

Janna Blanter recommended that the Planning Commission and the Board of County Commissioners include the following conditions when considering and/or approving Habitat for Humanity Preliminary Plan: (1) provide a Preliminary Plan with an associated Landscape Plan; (2) fees in lieu of land dedication for regional park purposes in the amount of \$20,705 and urban park purposes in the amount of \$12,423 will be required at time of the recording of the forthcoming Final Plat. Jane Newman seconded the motion. The motion passed 6 – 0.

7. Information / Action Items:

A. **Jones Park Open Space Master Plan**

Todd Marts provided history and an overview of the Jones Park Open Space Master Plan. Mr. Marts stated the importance of the role of the Jones Park Master Plan which emphasizes: Compliance with and support of the Jones Park Conservation Easement. The intention of this Plan is not simply to fulfill the Conservation Easement requirement for a Master Plan, but to support the protection, enhancement and enjoyment of the unique natural resources and conservation values that make Jones Park special. The County is required to produce and approve a Master Plan. Master Plans change and this may not be the final version. It is important to note that all community input/comments will be retained for future planning efforts. Amendments and appendixes are always added to Master Plans. As a compromise, an appendix was created and included in this Master Plan regarding guidance for future trails and trail alignments.

Public Comments:

Cory Sutela, Medicine Wheel Trail Advocates stated that it is essential that we get this Master Plan right. The challenges are the trail and fish. When the property was being considered for transfer, the desire for local control and the desire for the County to have control over Jones Park was voiced. Palmer Land Conservancy are local experts in conservation and could provide local oversight. Mr. Sutela provided paperwork on what the organization stated should be included in the appendix.

Mark Miquelon, Colorado Motorcycle Trail Riders Association, stated that the number 1 request by users is to build more trails. He provided examples where trails could be added outside of the watershed without affecting the fish. He feels that the current appendix goes out of its way to shut these suggestions down.

Robert Rickgauer, Pikes Peak Range Rider, citizen, stated his disappointment with a meeting regarding future trails and a US Fish and Wildlife representative/biologist dismissing the trail ideas he brought forward.

Chair Thomas Lachocki stated that he met with Cory Sutela recently regarding the Jones Park topic where Mr. Sutela shared the appendix document which was also provided to staff and shared with the board. Mr. Lachocki stated that the Greenback Cutthroat trout is listed

RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

as an endangered species. The environment for the trout is currently at 1% of its original environment. Mr. Lachocki stated that the one group that isn't here speaking is the fish. If we look back on future generations and if we are responsible for this fish disappearing from this planet forever, then we would be ashamed of ourselves. The Jones Park Master Plan is a 97-page plan which has been worked on for a long period of time with substantial public engagement.

Janna Blanter moved to endorse the Jones Park Open Space Master Plan to then be sent to Palmer Land Conservancy for their approval and then to the El Paso County Board of Commissioners for their approval. Vincent Prins seconded the motion. The motion passed 6 – 0.

8. Monthly Reports:

N/A

9. Board/Staff Comments:

Theresa Odello provided the board with a new County Fair guide. She promoted the Fair VIP reception and the Happy Trails fundraiser event.

10. Adjournment:

Janna Blanter made a motion to adjourn. Jane Newman seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 3:11 p.m.

Susan Jarvis-Weber, Secretary

El Paso County Park Advisory Board

Agenda Item Summary Form

Agenda Item Title: Fair Partner Summary Report

Agenda Date: September 11, 2024

Agenda Item Number: #4 - A

Presenters: Andschana Aljets, Fair & Events Center Supervisor

Information: X **Endorsement:**

Background Information:

The 2024 El Paso County Fair was EPIC! The El Paso County Fair is the county's largest event that celebrates our history and heritage and is an opportunity to celebrate community and achievements of youth in our County. Each year the Marketing & Sponsorship Team provide a Partner Summary Report to Sponsors, the Fair Advisory Board, the Fairgrounds Corporation, the Board of County Commissioners, and to the Park Advisory Board.

The attached presentation highlights the efforts and successes of this year's El Paso County Fair.

Recommended Action:

Information Only



1



2

PURPOSE

THE EL PASO COUNTY FAIR IS A TIMELESS CELEBRATION OF THE COUNTY'S HISTORY AND HERITAGE. THE FAIR IS AN OPPORTUNITY TO CELEBRATE COMMUNITY & ACHIEVEMENTS OF EL PASO COUNTY YOUTH.

3

NEW FOR 2024

Increase in weekday entertainment and engagement opportunities including:

Sensory Day
Petting Zoo
Mustang Ambassador Program
Afternoon & Evening FREE Concerts
Nature Center Interactive Displays
Cowboy Fast Draw Experience

New free weeknight events such as:

Epic Eras Party
Silent Goat Disco
Youth Bull Riding
Roughstock Event featuring Broncs & Bulls



EL PASO COUNTY

FAIR

JULY 13 - 20 | CALHAN, CO

**IT'S
EPIC
OUT HERE**

4



5

AVAILABLE RESOURCES

COUNTY STAFF
Parks & Communications staff will collaborate on marketing initiatives

FAIR QUEEN
Engaging the Fair Queen to provide more general public awareness, creating more opportunities for our partners

PARTNERS
Creating a mutual-benefit relationship allowing for increased collaboration accross networks

VOLUNTEERS
Empowering our volunteers and providing them with opportunities for organic advocacy

6



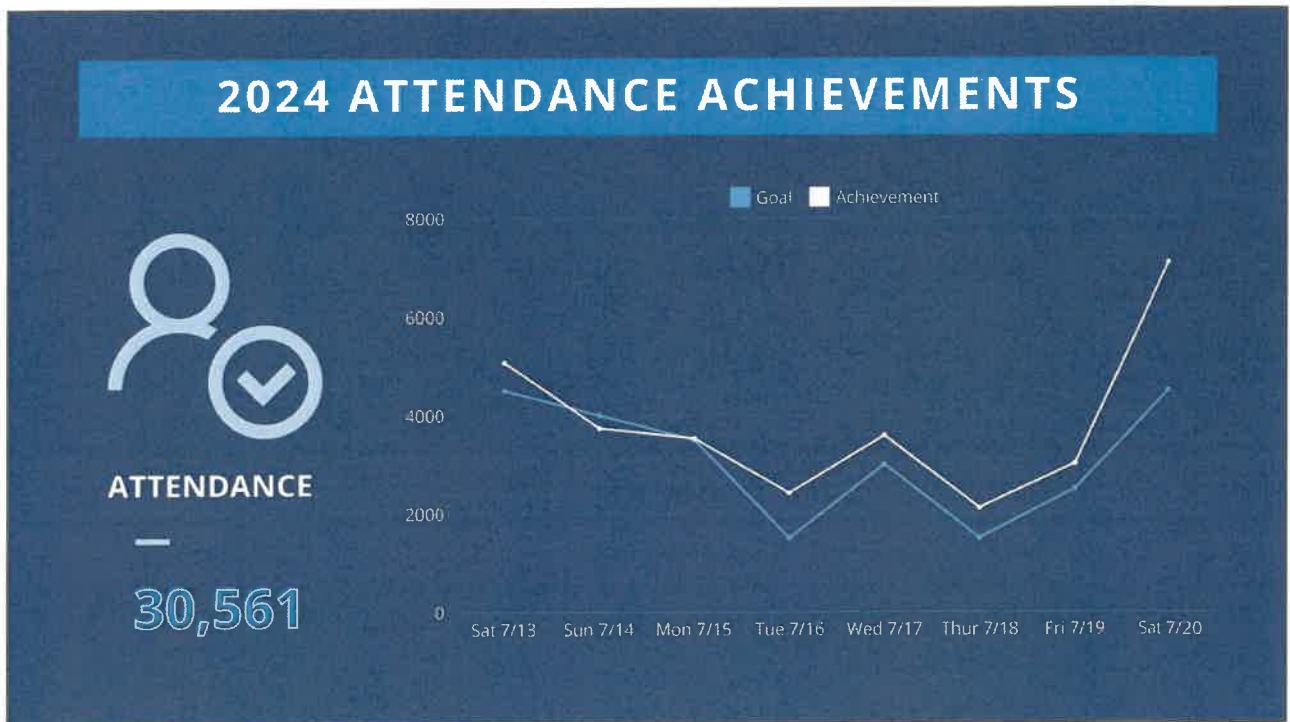
7



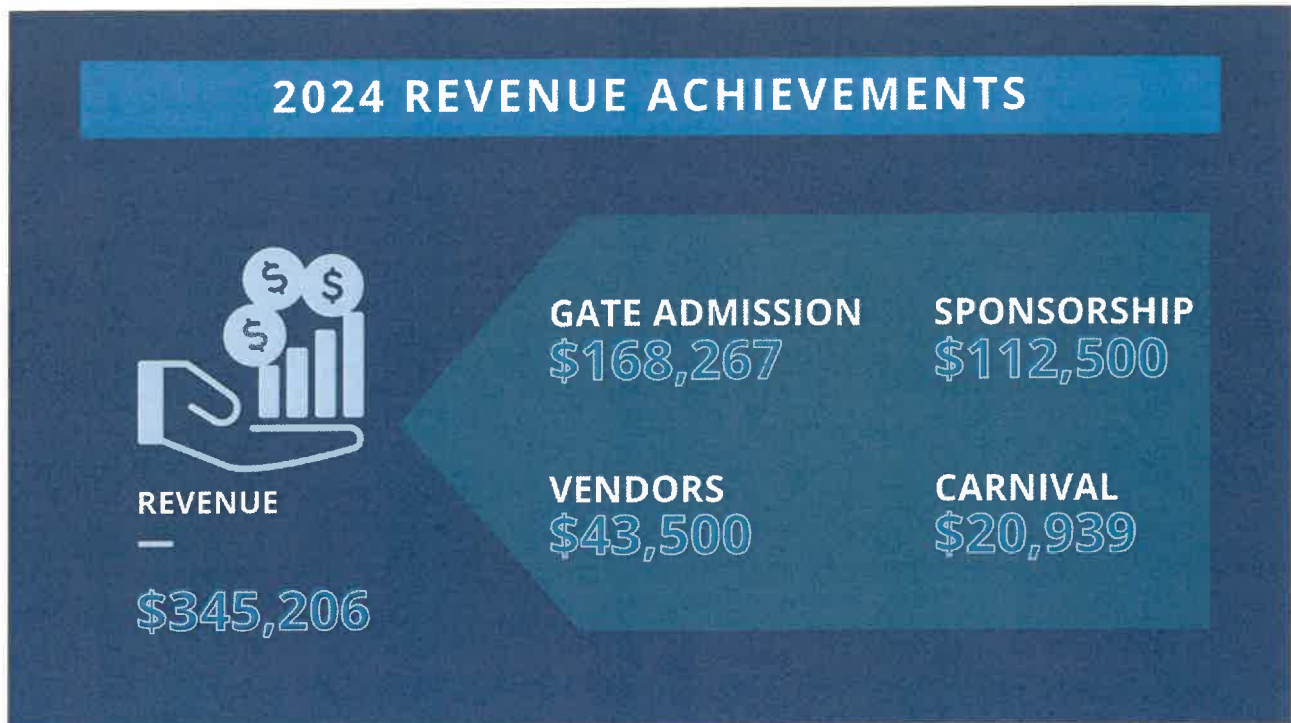
8



9



10



11
















































EL PASO COUNTY

FAIR

THANK YOU SPONSORS

12



13

El Paso County Park Advisory Board

Agenda Item Summary Form

Agenda Item Title: 2024 Creek Week

Agenda Date: September 11, 2024

Agenda Item Number: #4 - B

Presenters: Dana Nordstrom, Community Outreach Specialist

Information:

The Fountain Creek Watershed District, stretching from Palmer Lake to Pueblo, along with numerous community partners, including El Paso County Parks, is excited to announce the 11th Annual Creek Week litter and debris cleanup event, scheduled for September 28 – October 6, 2024. Creek Week is the largest cleanup event in Colorado and offers volunteers the chance to participate in a variety of activities, programs, and events.

We encourage our community members to join us in helping to reduce pollution in our creeks and connecting waterways. By volunteering, you can become a steward of cleaner drinking water and healthier wildlife habitats. Your support is vital to the success of this initiative, which inspires public involvement and makes a lasting impact.

This year's Creek Week Kick-Off event will take place on September 28 at the Fountain Creek Nature Center, concluding at Bear Creek Nature Center, on October 5. Additional County Parks cleanup locations include Fox Run Regional Park, Bear Creek Dog Park, and the Santa Fe Regional Trail.

Choose a Date, Choose a Location, and Make a Difference.

El Paso County Park Advisory Board

Agenda Item Summary Form

Agenda Item Title: Bear Creek Restoration Crew

Agenda Date: September 11, 2024

Agenda Item Number: #4 - C

Presenters: Kylee Taylor, Interpretive Program Coordinator

Information: X **Endorsement:**

Background Information:

In 2023, the Recreation & Cultural Services Division created an Action Plan item to have Volunteer Restoration Days. The task was to coordinate at least one volunteer day per quarter to tackle restoration and conservations projects around Bear Creek Nature Center. Kylee Taylor took on this task and created the Bear Creek Restoration Crew.

The first event was held on October 7 and showed success from the start. In total we have held five (5) Restoration Crew events and have found that is a great way for people to give back and show that they are stewards of our County Parks.

The attached presentation includes more details about the success of this program.



1



Why do we need a Restoration Crew?

- Nature Centers Mission
- Creek health
- Fire mitigation
- Working together

2



Volunteer Workdays

65 total volunteers

~

28 Nature Center volunteers

~

38 community volunteers

5 workdays

~

Stewardship education

~

New volunteers & community!

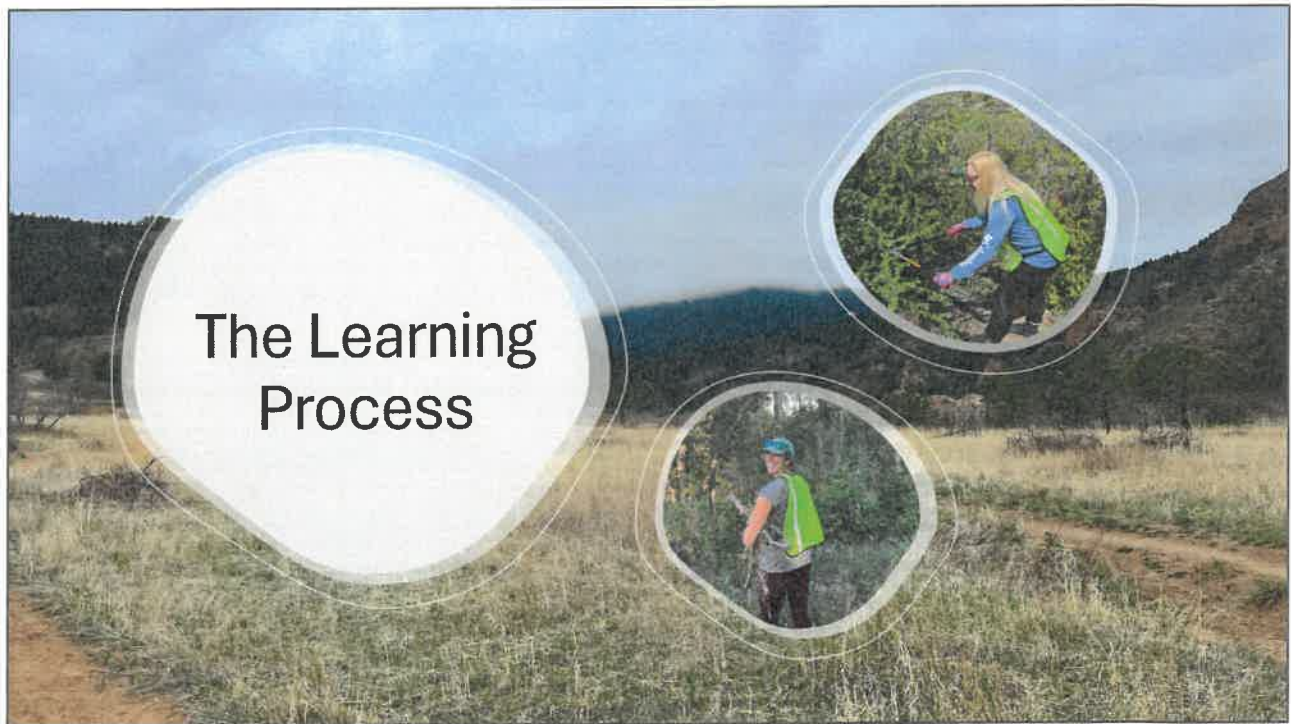
3



Middle School Camp

- Problem: Dams being built in a popular spot
- Solution: 30 Middle School campers competing for 45 minutes

4



5

Partnerships

- Central Maintenance Team
- Food donations
- Creek Week
- Great American Cleanup
- UCCS Global Medical Brigade
- COS Hiking Gals
- Palmer Land Conservancy's Colorado College students

6

Successes & Stats

- Increase in macroinvertebrates
- Increase in fish seen in stream
- Fewer dams built in the stream
- Succession plants on forest floor
- Greater community investment
- ~192 volunteer hours
- \$6,900 in volunteer hours to El Paso County Parks

7

Restoration Crew's Future

- October Birthday Party!
- Winter break- survey and goal alignment
- Trail maintenance
- There's still work to do!

8

Thank you!

Questions?



El Paso County Park Advisory Board

Agenda Item Summary Form

Agenda Item Title: Bear Creek Regional Park - Pickleball Shade Structures

Agenda Date: August 14, 2024

Agenda Item Number: #4 - D

Presenter(s): Brian Bobeck, Division Manager – Park Operations

Information: X **Endorsement:**

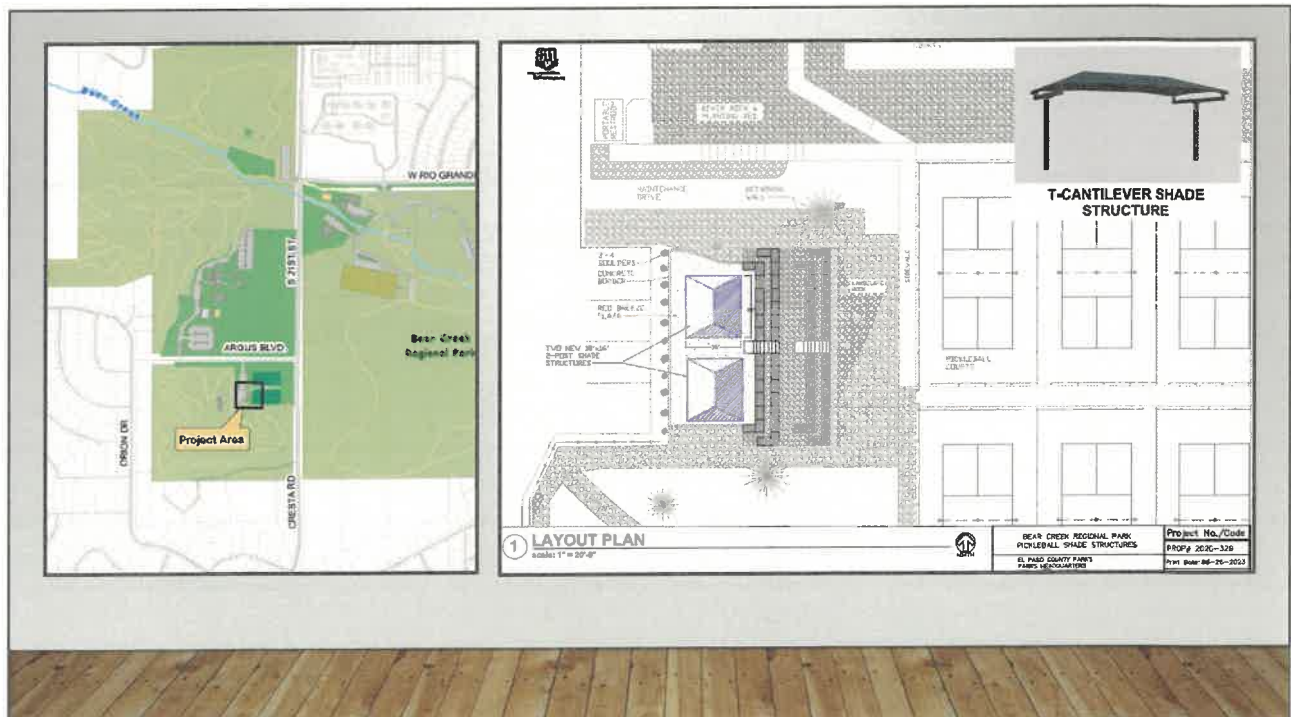
Background Information:

The construction of two new shade structures at Bear Creek Regional Park pickleball courts was recently completed. Presentation will provide a brief project overview, photos, and also recognize the ongoing partnership with Pikes Peak Pickleball Association (PPPA) which provided \$7,000 towards this project.

BEAR CREEK REGIONAL PARK

PICKLEBALL COURT SHADE STRUCTURES

1



2



3



4



5



6



7



8



9



10



11

THANK YOU!

- Pikes Peak Pickleball Association (PPPA) for their ongoing support of Bear Creek Regional Park pickleball courts. Their \$7,000 contribution to this project is greatly appreciated!
- El Paso County Park Planning
- El Paso County Parks Central District

12

**El Paso County Parks
2024 Action Plan**

Recreation / Cultural Services	Project Manager	Priority	Status
Fox Run Nature Center Fundraising	Theresa Odello / Dana Nordstrom	High	In Progress
Mid-Week County Fair Attendance	Andschana Aljets	High	In Progress
Execute three larger events at the Fairgrounds	Andschana Aljets	Medium	In Progress
Signage Update and Design at Bear Creek Nature Center	Mary Jo Lewis	High	In Progress
Teen Volunteers at Fountain Creek Nature Center	Jessica Miller	High	received applications
Fountain Creek Nature Center Field Guide	Victoria Dinkel	High	Design
Volunteer Restoration Days at BCNC	Kylee Taylor		Completed
Trail Camera at BCNC	Kylee Taylor	High	Purchased - Install
Fairgrounds Corporation Bylaws	Theresa Odello	Low	
Park Operations	Project Manager	Priority	Status
Hammock Post Design and Installation	Kyle Melvin	High	In Progress
Stratmoor Valley Forestry	Kyle Melvin		Completed
Pineries Open Space MPB Project	Kyle Melvin		Completed
Pineries Open Space Forestry Trail Corridor	Kyle Melvin		Completed
Vegetation Management	Scott Myers		Completed
Homestead Ranch RP Playground Improvements	Scott Myers		Completed
Fox Run RP Entrance Improvements (Stella Dr)	Ben Dumakowski		Completed
Pineries Open Space Drainage Improvements	Ben Dumakowski	High	In Progress
Bear Creek Dog Park Trail Improvements	Adam Robertson		Completed
Bear Creek RP Entrance Improvements (Argus Dr)	Adam Robertson		Completed
Bear Creek Regional Park Bridge Improvements	Adam Robertson		Completed
Homestead Ranch RP Facility Improvements	Adam Baker		Completed
Fairgrounds Audio Improvements	Adam Baker		Completed
Fountain Creek RP Landscape Improvements	Jamie Haas		Completed
Fountain Creek RP Entry and Rules Signage	Jamie Haas		Completed
Park Planning	Project Manager	Priority	Status
Fountain Creek Nature Center Entrance Ramp	Ross Williams	High	In Progress
Paint Mines Interpretive Park Master Plan	Ross Williams	High	In Progress
Fox Run Regional Park Ponds and Gazebo	Brian Bobeck	Medium	Design
Fox Run Nature Center Design	Jason Meyer	Medium	In Progress
Fox Run Regional Park Restrooms and OWTS	Jason Meyer	High	Construction
Ute Pass Regional Trail Phase II	Jason Meyer	High	In Progress
NRCS Willow Springs and Duckwood Trailhead	Jason Meyer	High	In Progress
FEMA Recovery Projects	Jason Meyer	Medium	In Progress
Administration	Project Manager	Priority	Status
Develop a Department & Divisions Mission Statement	Todd Marts	High	In Progress - June-July
Implement PAY-TRAC	Deb Reid		Completed

Community Services Department								
Parks / Recreation & Cultural Services Divisions								
August 2024 Monthly Report								
Facility Revenue Totals To Date		2024				2023	2022	
		Budget	Current	Balance		Totals to Date	Totals to Date	
Parks Facility Reservation Revenue		\$ 180,000	\$ 188,995	\$ (8,995)		\$ 229,719	\$ 204,212	
County Fair / Fairgrounds		\$ 301,000	\$ 408,139	\$ (107,139)		\$ 268,650	\$ 351,593	
Total		\$ 481,000	\$ 597,134	\$ (116,134)		\$ 498,369	\$ 555,805	
Fundraising Revenue		2024	2024			2023	2022	
	Purpose	Goal	Amount	Balance		Totals to Date	Totals to Date	
County Fair Sponsorships	Fair Operations	\$ 80,000	\$ 112,500	\$ (32,500)		\$ 100,500	\$ 105,000	
Partners in the Park Program	Park Operations	\$ 45,000	\$ 92,500	\$ (47,500)		\$ 75,000	\$ 62,500	
Trust for County Parks	Park Operations	\$ 10,000	\$ 48,083	\$ (38,083)		\$ 22,165	\$ 137,994	
Nature Center Fundraising	Nature Center Support	\$ 25,000	\$ 17,808	\$ 25,000		\$ 15,885	\$ 8,254	
County Fairgrounds Support (Fairgrounds Corp)	Programming/Facility Support	\$ 40,000	\$ 80,000	\$ (40,000)		\$ 70,000.00	\$ 40,000	
Total		\$ 200,000	\$ 350,891	\$ (133,083)		\$ 283,550	\$ 353,748	
Grant / 3rd Party Funding		Awarded						
Parks Division Reservations	2024	2024	2024	2023	2023	2022	2022	
Year to Date	Rentals	Attendance	Evaluation	Rentals	Attendance	Rental	Attendance	
January	10	1072	N/A	11	966	3	510	
February	15	898	N/A	15	778	5	446	
March	15	292	N/A	51	1306	29	702	
April	278	7613	4.3	299	10619	271	8698	
May	491	16030	4.8	448	16919	419	15932	
June	635	23181	4.3	552	20087	489	22916	
July	579	20387	4.2	594	22852	515	22275	
August	502	21409	4.6	445	22024	391	21464	
September								
October								
November								
December								
Total	2525	90882	4.44	2415	95551	2122	92943	

<u>Parks Facility Reservations</u>		2024	2024	2023	2023	2022	2022	
<u>August</u>		<u>Rentals</u>	<u>Attendance</u>	<u>Rentals</u>	<u>Attendance</u>	<u>Rentals</u>	<u>Attendance</u>	
<u>Bear Creek Regional Park</u>								
Archery Lanes		1	10			2	16	
Athletic Fields		46	2665	51	3170	42	2860	
Pavilions		124	6930	122	6561	108	6098	
Trails		2	850	2	650	3	2110	
Vendor		14	36	10	44	4	12	
Tennis Courts		1	2	1	4	2	4	
Pickleball Courts		30	216	17	77			
Vita Course								
Meeting Room		5	32	6	53	7	40	
<u>Black Forest Regional Park</u>								
Athletic Fields		1	100	5	320	6	210	
Pavilions		28	1104	24	1086	22	960	
Vendor								
Tennis Courts / Pickleball Courts		12	45	4	16	4	16	
<u>Falcon Regional Park</u>								
Baseball Fields		14	450	3	60			
Athletic Field								
Vendor								
<u>Fountain Creek Regional Park</u>								
Athletic Fields				2	200			
Pavilions		40	2009	43	2001	32	1855	
Trails								
Disc Golf Course		4	405	1	95	2	140	
Vendor		2	8	1	4	1	4	
<u>Fox Run Regional Park</u>								
Athletic Fields		20	700	32	1384	28	1245	
Gazebo		13	1561	13	1895	11	1091	
Warming Hut		8	137	10	121	5	95	
Pavilions		76	3557	75	3729	87	4425	
Vendor				2	6	6	22	
Trails								
<u>Homestead Ranch Regional Park</u>								
Pavilions		55	533	12	345	8	215	
Athletic Fields								
Trails								
<u>Palmer Lake Recreational Area</u>								
Palmer Lake Santa Fe Trail								
<u>New Santa Fe Trail</u>								
Monument Trail Head New Santa Fe Trail								
Baptist Road Santa Fe Trail								
AFA Santa Fe Trail								
Vendor - Santa Fe Trailheads								
<u>Paint Mines Trail</u>		6	59	9	203	11	46	
<u>Rock Island Trail</u>								
<u>Black Forest Section 16</u>								
<u>Rainbow Falls Historic Site</u>								
<u>Pineries Open Space</u>								
Total Park Facility Reservations		502	21409	445	22024	391	21464	

<u>Fairgrounds Facility Reservations</u>		2024	2024	2024	2023	2023	2022	2022
<u>Year to Date</u>		<u>Rentals</u>	<u>Attendance</u>	<u>Evaluation</u>	<u>Rentals</u>	<u>Attendance</u>	<u>Rentals</u>	<u>Attendance</u>
January		17	385	N/A	8	173	7	150
February		19	770	N/A	14	735	19	726
March		22	1000	N/A	12	1160	13	471
April		26	6873	N/A	18	7161	50	2781
May		26	4657	N/A	23	4150	30	3791
June		50	6639	N/A	17	4490	12	391
July		8	415	N/A	13	280	9	261
August		10	685	N/A	12	3689	38	3496
September								
October								
November								
December								
Total		178	21,424	N/A	117	21,838	178	12,067
<u>Fairgrounds Facility Reservations</u>		2024	2024	2023	2023			
<u>August</u>		<u>Rentals</u>	<u>Attendance</u>	<u>Rentals</u>	<u>Attendance</u>			
<u>Swink Hall - Fairgrounds</u>								
Lion's Club Meeting		1	30	1	30			
Fair Corp Meeting		1	10	1	10			
Fair Advisory Board Meeting		1	20	1	20			
4-H Club Meeting		1	20	1	24			
Jr. Livestock Committee Meeting		1	20	1	20			
Calhan School Traffic Safety Event		1	250	1	15			
<u>Grand Stands Building</u>				2	3000			
<u>FSB Pavilion</u>				1	20			
<u>Grounds</u>				1	150			
<u>New Barn</u>								
<u>Poultry Barn</u>								
<u>Livestock Arena</u>								
4-H Dog Agility		2	150	1	100			
<u>Whittemore - Fairgrounds</u>								
Quinceanera Set up		1	15					
Quinceanera		1	170	1	300			
<u>Arena</u>								
Month Total Fair Facility Reservations		10	685	12	3,689			

<u>Vandalism Report</u>								
<u>Incident</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Area</u>	<u>Cost</u>				
Two new banners stolen	1/23/2024	Bear Creek Dog Park	Central	\$175				
United Flight Memorial - Graffiti removal	1/24/2024	Widefield Park	South	\$200				
Tunnel - Graffiti removal	1/24/2024	Widefield Park	South	\$50				
Fireworks set off in portable restroom	2/22/2024	Black Forest	North	\$900				
"Site of New Northern Nature Center" sign stolen	3/27/2024	Fox Run	North	\$600				
Tunnel - Graffiti removal	3/19/2024	Widefield Park	South	\$1,400				
Tunnel - Graffiti removal	3/19/2024	Cruz Gulch	South	\$200				
Tunnel - Graffiti removal	4/29, 4/30	Carp Lake Tunnel	South	\$400				
Tunnel - Graffiti removal	6/24/2024	Carp Lake Tunnel	South	\$500				
		Total		\$4,425				
						2022		
<u>Volunteerism</u>		2024		2023	Total Hours	Volunteers	Total Hours	
Total for Year	Goal	Volunteers	Total Hours	Volunteers				
January		167	827	138	728	180	609	
February		272	1,259	292	1,302	60	327	
March		234	1,009	229	932	118	682	
April		421	1,724	413	1,701	407	1,830	
May		607	2,617	501	2,225	491	2,021	
June		669	2,831	658	2,263	225	1,606	
July		628	5,290	444	5,200	650	6,517	
August		392	1,870	470	2,296	303	1,676	
September								
October								
November								
December								
Totals		3,390	17,427	3,145	16,647	2,434	15,268	
		2024						
August		Volunteers	Total Hours					
Park Advisory Board		9	35					
Fair Advisory Board		15	45					
Fairgrounds Corporation		5	15					
Fair and Events Center		12	144					
Friends of the Nature Centers		39	353					
Adopt-A-Park/Trail Groups / Volunteer Projects		312	1,278					
Total		392	1,870					

Programming		2024	2024	2024	2023	2023	2022	2022
Totals for Year		Programs	Attendance	Evaluation	Programs	Attendance	Programs	Attendance
January		48	1434	4.98	45	1152	29	452
February		49	1995	4.99	43	2032	37	952
March		79	3920	4.96	89	2376	48	986
April		172	4379	4.97	161	5139	109	3003
May		170	6313	4.97	162	4216	148	5401
June		98	8080	4.96	89	2647	76	1595
July		87	33789	4.98	105	36715	106	28545
August		76	6515	4.99	54	5058	63	4195
September								
October								
November								
December								
Totals	800 / 21,000	779	66425	4.98	748	59335	616	45129
August	Facility	2024	2024	2024				
		Programs	Attendance	Evaluation				
Incredible Insects	BCNC	15	151	5.00				
Trailability	BCNC	13	23					
Kids' Morning Out: Creek Critters	BCNC	1	16					
Group Visit: Homeschool Collaborative	BCNC	1	35					
Happy Trails BBQ Fundraiser	BCNC	1	130					
Nature Explorers: Drawing Nature	BCNC	2	50	5.00				
Active Adults: Ute STEM plants of the foothills	BCNC	1	18	4.96				
Birthday: Bugs & Beasts	BCNC	2	44	5.00				
Little Wonders: Fishy Fun	BCNC	2	50	5.00				
Pikes Peak Mycological Society	BCNC	1	43					
Group Visit: Foundations for Successful Living	BCNC	2	18					
Honey Harvest & Pollinator Celebration Day	BCNC	1	347	4.97				
Birthday Party: Big Bears	BCNC	1	19	5.00				
Awesome Arthropods	FCNC	1	24	4.90				
Nature Adventures: What Big Teeth You Have	FCNC	2	71	5.00				
2s & 3s Outdoors: Toadtastic!	FCNC	2	68	5.00				
Birthday Party: Big Bugs	FCNC	2	40	5.00				
Birthday Party: Rad Reptiles	FCNC	1	24	5.00				
Program Room Rental	FCNC	3	90					
Monarch Magic	FCNC	1	40	5.00				
Nature Camp: Cattail Kids	FCNC	2	60	5.00				
Trailability Program	FCNC	4	11	5.00				
Group Visit: Adult Care Group	FCNC	1	10					
Backpack Bash at Panorama Park	Panorama Park	1	315					
Girl Scout Field Trip	PMIP	1	24	5.00				
Jazz in the Park- Wayne Wilkerson Trio	BCNC	1	175					
Jazz in the Park- Triple Play	BCNC	1	200					
Jazz in the Park- The Falconaires Alumni Band	BCNC	1	310					
Jazz in the Parks- Peak Big Band	BCNC	1	215					
Bunco	BCNC	1	13	5.00				
Guided Interpretive Hike	PMIP	1	13					
Cornhole League	FEC	4	240					
BTS Autoraces	FEC	2	3628					
TOTALS		76	6515	4.99				

Visitor Contacts <i>(does not include programs)</i>	Bear Creek Nature Center	Fountain Creek Nature Center	Paint Mines Interpretive Park	Rainbow Falls Historic Site				
January	604	659	0	0				
February	702	634	0	0				
March	1166	1327	0	0				
April	1137	1197	985	0				
May	1332	1673	0	0				
June	2099	1506	1159	2596				
July	2327	1650	3097	2454				
August	1776	1250	1959	2457				
September								
October								
November								
December								
Totals	11143	9896	7200	7507				

PARKS & COMMUNITY SERVICES DEPARTMENT

PARK OPERATIONS ~ ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES ~ RECREATION/CULTURAL SERVICES ~ CSU EXTENSION

**ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES
MONTHLY REPORT**

August 2024

General Updates:

1. Facility rentals have generated \$188,995 which exceeds our \$180,000 annual revenue goal by 5%.

Special Events:

1. The 13th annual 'HEARS 5K Race/Walk' took place on the east trail system of Bear Creek Regional Park. 150 people attended this year's fundraiser. HEARS is a 30+ year old all-volunteer non-profit that provides new hearing aids to low-income residents of El Paso County.
2. The Widefield Community Park and Pueblo City Parks were host to the Colorado State Disc Golf Championship. This 3-day event saw up to 140-disc golfers battling it out each day. The event received a lot of recognition and was called 'one of the biggest disc golf events in our State'.
3. The US Taekwondo Center invited members and the public to their annual club celebration at Fox Run Regional Park. Several hundred people enjoyed self defense demonstrations, field games, soccer and volleyball tournaments.
4. The Colorado Discs Dogs, a frisbee dog club, held a K9 frisbee competition at Bear Creek Regional Park. Up to 50 participants brought their pups to the park for a good time and great competitions.
5. Several permits were issued to local businesses and organizations to include bounce houses in their events. The US Taekwondo Center invited members and the public to their annual club celebration at Fox Run Regional Park. Several food trucks also applied for vendor permits to sell at events at County Parks.



6. Six commercial photography permits were issued for the Paint Mines Interpretive Park.
7. All athletic fields are seeing a daily high usage by many sports leagues. Baseball, soccer, youth rugby, Lacrosse, Frisbee, flag football and mixed-sports camps are taking place throughout our park system.



Dog Frisbee Competition at Bear Creek

PARKS & COMMUNITY SERVICES DEPARTMENT

PARK OPERATIONS ~ ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES ~ RECREATION/CULTURAL SERVICES ~ CSU EXTENSION

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Monthly Report – August 2024

Creek Week: The Fountain Creek Watershed District, in collaboration with El Paso County Parks and various community partners, proudly announces the 11th annual Creek Week Cleanup, the largest event of its kind in Colorado. Scheduled from September 28 to October 6, this initiative will mobilize thousands of volunteers to remove litter and debris, enhancing the safety and beauty of communities from Palmer Lake to Pueblo. The event kicks off at the Fountain Creek Nature Center on September 28 and wraps up at the Bear Creek Nature Center on October 5. Participants are encouraged to pick a date, pick a location, and pick up litter to make a positive impact. For more information, visit www.fountain-crk.org.

Happy Trails: Congratulations to the Friends of El Paso County Nature Centers, parks staff, and volunteers for making our annual Happy Trails fundraiser a resounding success! The event was both delicious and well-attended, with Nature Center campers mingling among guests, sharing fascinating facts about the local wildlife. We were honored to have Jeremy Chatelain, Ph.D., deliver a heartfelt appeal for donations. Due to the support from our community, we've secured another season for our Trailability Program, which offers a completely free experience at Bear Creek and Fountain Creek Nature Centers. This program, made possible by "Terrain Hoppers," empowers community members and visitors with disabilities to explore once inaccessible trails. One participant beautifully captured the program's impact, saying, "My favorite part was the freedom of seeing new areas and my ability to take myself there."

Our mission at the nature centers is to invest in future generations by inspiring and nurturing stewards of nature in the Pikes Peak Region. We are dedicated to providing a space where individuals of all ages and abilities can discover, learn, and appreciate the wonders of our natural world. Thank you for sharing this vision with us and for celebrating nature together!

As Chief Seattle wisely said, "We don't inherit the earth from our ancestors; we borrow it from our children."

Fox Run Nature Center: Join us for the next **Fox Run Nature Center Public Meeting on October 23** at the Bear Creek Nature Center. This is a great opportunity to learn about our 60% design and share your thoughts on the future of our beloved Fox Run Nature Center. We look forward to seeing you there! To learn more and stay up to date, please visit our project website at www.tdg-frnc.com.



PARKS & COMMUNITY SERVICES DEPARTMENT

PARK OPERATIONS ~ ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES ~ RECREATION/CULTURAL SERVICES ~ CSU EXTENSION

Recreation & Cultural Services Division
MONTHLY REPORT: August 2024

Programs & Special Events:

- El Paso County Nature Center's **Annual Happy Trails BBQ Fundraiser** was a success. Hosted at Bear Creek Nature Center on the evening of August 9th, the event drew over 100 attendees who donned their best western-wear and enjoyed delectable dinner by Buffalo Gals, beer and wine, desserts donated by local businesses and live toe-tapping music by the Manitou Strings. Nature campers from Bear Creek and Fountain Creek mingled with guests, displaying natural history artifacts and the knowledge they have gained at camps. County Leadership and Park Advisory Board members were in attendance, demonstrating their support of County Parks and Nature Centers. Commissioner Stan VanderWerf shared remarks and Park Advisory Board Member Jeremy Chatelain, the event's guest speaker, gave a heartfelt and moving testimonial regarding his personal experience with quadriplegia and how the County's programs support and expand accessibility opportunities for people in our community. Over \$12,500 was raised that will support impactful programs such as the Trailability program, which provides trail access to those with disabilities at no cost to them.
- Bear Creek was abuzz on Saturday, August 24th at our annual **Honey Harvest Celebration**. Around 350 people enjoyed watching honey extraction demonstrations, learning about bees and beekeeping, making bee puppets and learning about pollinators and flowers. Thanks to the Beekeeping Association, Broadmoor Garden Club, and the Xerces Society for all their help!
- The foothills along the Front Range of Colorado contain a wealth of biodiversity! Plants of the foothills have been used since time immemorial by the Ute tribe and others for food, medicine, dyes, culture, and more. Utilizing the Ute Knowledge and STEM kit provided by History Colorado and Ute tribal leaders and elders, 18 adults took part in **Bear Creek's Active Adults** series to learn about the various uses of foothills plants on August 15th. The program began with an introduction to the Ute tribe and comparing Western science with traditional ecological knowledge. Then, participants took to the trails to identify and explore ethnobotany- the study of how people groups interact with and use plants. New ideas were explored and all left with a new perspective on the common plants often seen on our hikes.



- Fountain Creek Nature Center celebrated with its annual **Monarch Magic** program on a beautiful late summer morning. This sold-out and waitlisted program hosted guests to learn about the mystery of monarch migration and their conservation. Searching the milkweed meadow, participants helped find a few eggs for us to bring in and add to our monarch exhibit. Participants finished off the program with a butterfly craft and discovery time in the exhibit room.
- Fountain Creek Nature Center was party central this August! Multiple groups came for the **Big Bugs and Rad Reptiles party themes**. For Big Bugs, guests watched a puppet show about a silly beaver trying to learn his bugs before going on a bug hunt complete with a net sweeping activity in the meadow. For Rad Reptiles, the guests got to meet resident education reptiles Keya the box turtle and Ferdy the bull-snake before hiking the trail in search of wild reptiles. Cake, gifts, AND creepy crawlies? What more could a kid ask for?
- The 40th annual **Jazz in the Park** series at Bear Creek Regional Park wrapped up its last concert for the series on August 28th. Average attendance for the concerts was around 200 people per concert. In total, the series drew in over 1,600 people over the entire series of eight concerts. Rizuto's Ice Cream attended all the concerts to add a new spin to the event. This year was also Laura Davis's last year coordinating the Jazz in the Park series, who has been coordinating the concert series for 40 years. She has been a keystone aspect to this concert series and her dedication to music and the community has been second to none.
- On August 30th, the summer **Bunco Night** was held at Bear Creek Nature Center. Per usual, a nacho bar was provided as part of the program. Many of the players were returning players which included local community members, El Paso County staff from other departments, and a couple volunteers from the Friends of El Paso County Nature Centers. Prizes for the highest score, lowest score, and most wins were awarded. Each of the prize winner had never won before and were very happy to win some great prizes.



Outreach Events and Other Items:

- On August 3rd, two El Paso County Parks staff attended **Backpack Bash at Panorama Park**, which involved more than 70 local churches, businesses, nonprofits, and school and government partners. This event supports thousands of families across El Paso County who are gearing up for the fall school season. The kids and families who came up to the El Paso County Nature Centers booth were extremely happy and were entertained by a fun craft of fox and owl headbands. Free handouts of colored marker packs and Leave No Trace cards were also handed out to the kids who came to participate in the fun craft. This was a great event that allowed El Paso County Parks to support a local community, teach about nature, and provide something fun for kids to do on one of their last Saturdays of summer.



- Fountain Creek Nature Center had a smooth-sailing summer thanks to great **Teen Volunteers!** Seven teens, six of which were former nature campers themselves, helped tremendously by assisting staff with all aspects of camp – they organized and set out supplies, encouraged positivity, hosted a dance party, watched out for safety, bandaged boobos, and set a good example for the children. Each day was made much more fun and easier by their presence. With so many teens to help, staff was able to take turns being away from camp to work on other projects and programs. We love our teens!
- With the acquisition of two new park interpreters in June, programming at **Paint Mines Interpretive Park** has begun to take place once again. This month, two programs took place to restart the series of programming out at the site. The first program was a field trip for a girl scout troop visiting from Fort Collins, in which the two new interpreters shadowed an El Paso County Parks staff. The second, a guided interpretive hike which the two interpreters helped design, and they led on their own. The Paint Mines Interpreters will lead three more hikes and will close out their season at the end of October.



- August was an action-packed month at the **El Paso County Fair & Events Center**. We celebrated the return of Auto Races, adding excitement to our lineup alongside our ongoing weekly cornhole tournaments and community meetings. A significant highlight was the addition of Serenity Recovery Services to our Community Outreach Center, expanding our efforts to support the eastern El Paso County community. We proudly hosted the Annual State 4-H Dog Agility Contest, showcasing the talents of young handlers and their dogs. During our monthly Fair Advisory Board meeting, the Jr. Livestock Sale Committee reported another record-breaking year for the 2024 Jr. Livestock Sale, a testament to the hard work and dedication of all involved. The Fair Advisory Board also held a workshop to evaluate this year's County Fair, focusing on successes and potential improvements for the future. As always, we're committed to fostering community engagement and growth through our diverse events and partnerships.



Special Events and Program Calendar
September 11-October 9, 2024

Date	Day of Week	Program	Location	Target Audience	Notes*
September 11	Wednesday	Rock Island Cornhole	Fair & Events Center	Teens & Adults to Play; All ages welcome	6-10pm, \$10/person
September 12	Thursday	2's & 3's Outdoors: Shades of September	Fountain Creek Nature Center	Children ages 2-3 with an adult	9-10:15am \$3/person
September 13	Friday	2's & 3's Outdoors: Shades of September	Fountain Creek Nature Center	Children ages 2-3 with an adult	9-10:15am \$3/person
September 14	Saturday	Fall Bird Count	Fountain Creek Nature Center	Ages 8+, birders, nature lovers	7-11am, \$5 donation suggested
September 14	Saturday	Forest Bathing Walk	Bear Creek Nature Centers	Adults	1-3:30pm, \$30/person
September 14	Saturday	Paint Mines Interpretive Hike	Paint Mines Interpretive Park	All ages	9:30-11:30am, \$4/person
September 14	Saturday	Auto Races	Fair & Events Center	All Ages	www.bstpromotions.com
September 17	Tuesday	Active Adults: Harvest Moon Hike at Homestead Ranch Regional Park	Homestead Ranch Regional Park	Adults	6:30pm/ \$5 per person
September 17	Tuesday	Cerberus- Raise Hell for a Reason	Cerberus Brewery	Adults	Fundraiser for El Paso County Nature Centers
September 18	Wednesday	Rock Island Cornhole	Fair & Events Center	Teens & Adults to Play; All ages welcome	6-10pm, \$10/person
September 20	Friday	September Lights Fest	Fox Run Regional Park	All ages	4:30-8:30pm/\$16,\$21, & \$26 per package
September 21	Saturday	Fall Harvest Festival at Gold Hill Mesa to benefit Bear Creek Nature Center	Gold Hill Mesa Community Center	All ages	11am-2pm/ Free to attend, children's activity wristbands available for purchase
September 22	Sunday	Fall Demolition Derby	Fair & Events Center	All ages	2-7pm \$15 GA / \$25 Pit Pass https://www.elpasocountyfair.com
September 24	Tuesday	Stay Alive! Womens Wilderness Education Class	Fountain Creek Nature Center	Women 18+	5-7pm, \$30/person
September 27	Friday	Homeschool Fridays: Awesome Arthropods	Fountain Creek Nature Center	Children in grades Pre-k - 2nd with adult	2-4pm, \$4/person
September 28	Saturday	Cool Science Festival	UCCS	All	Free! 10am-4pm
September 28	Saturday	Creek Week Kickoff	Fountain Creek Nature Center	All, ages 5+	Free! 9am-12pm
September 28	Saturday	Paint Mines Interpretive Hike	Paint Mines Interpretive Park	All ages	9:30-11:30am, \$4/person
September 28	Saturday	Auto Races	Fair & Events Center	All Ages	www.bstpromotions.com
October 4	Friday	Nature Adventures: Squeak in the Night	Fountain Creek Nature Center	Children ages 3-6 with an adult	9-10:30am or 2-3:30pm, \$3/person
October 4	Friday	Kids' Night Out: Bat-Tastic	Bear Creek Nature Center	Children ages 7-12	5:30-9pm, \$25 per child includes dinner
October 5	Saturday	Take a Kid Mountain Biking Day	Bear Creek, Fox Run, & Fountain Creek Regional Parks	Children ages 3-17	9-11am, Free
October 5	Saturday	Nature Journaling Guided Walk	Bear Creek Nature Center	Adults	1-3:30pm, \$30 per person
October 5	Saturday	Creek Week Cleanup	Bear Creek Nature Center	Adolescents and adults	9am-12pm

* Nature Center Members may receive an additional discount

PARKS & COMMUNITY SERVICES DEPARTMENT

PARK OPERATIONS ~ ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES ~ RECREATION/CULTURAL SERVICES ~ CSU EXTENSION

PARK PLANNING DIVISION & PARK OPERATIONS DIVISION

**MONTHLY REPORT
AUGUST 2024**

Park Planning

Capital Project Management / Planning:

Bear Creek Regional Park Pickleball Retaining Wall and Shade Structures – The retaining walls directly west of the pickleball courts were dilapidated and needed replacement. A project was developed to remove the old timber walls and construct a new concrete block retaining wall. A crusher fine plaza behind the retaining wall was installed to provide an area for observation, seating, and event space. Timberline Landscaping began construction in April and completed the project in May 2023. Two shade structures have been ordered for the plaza area with anticipated installation in 2024. Geotechnical engineering has been completed and additional structural engineering with helical piers was added to the shade structure footings due to existing soils. Shade structure installation was completed July 2024.

Crews Gulch Regional Trail Paving – The Crews Gulch Primary Regional Trail runs southwest to northeast from Ceresa Park and the Fountain Creek Regional Trail, northeast through Widefield Community Park, to its terminus at Fontaine Boulevard. While some of the trail is paved through Widefield Community Park, the section south of Quebec Street was gravel surfaced. The 2017 Widefield Community Park Master Plan identified the southern section of the Crews Gulch Trail as a candidate for concrete paving, thus allowing for more robust ADA accessibility through the park. El Paso County Parks was awarded a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) to complete this project. A Notice to Proceed was issued to Jarcco Construction in May 2023. Construction began on June 19th. The newly paved trail section was completed and opened to the public in late July. EPC Parks has been awarded a \$195,000 2024 Community Development Block Grant to complete the second phase of the project in late spring or early summer 2025.

Fountain Creek Nature Center Sidewalks – The main sidewalk leading from the parking lot to the main entrance does not meet ADA compliance. Additionally, the current storm drains are not adequately sized to convey stormwater. El Paso County completed the design of this project in 2022-23. El Paso County Parks was awarded a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) for this project in July 2023. A contract was awarded to CMS of Colorado Springs, and pre-construction meeting was held June 3rd, 2024. Demolition and construction is scheduled to begin in early September 2024.

Fox Run Nature Center – A request for proposals was issued in June 2022 seeking architectural and site design services for the new nature center located in Fox Run Regional Park. After a review of four submitted proposals, a team led by TDG Architecture was selected. A project kick-off was held in October.



The El Paso County Commissioners allocated \$1 million in funding towards the project in November. Several site visits and project team meetings have been held to discuss building location and exhibit design. Public and key stakeholder engagement started in May 2023 and included interviews, community events (15+), sign postings, and project website. Conceptual design work continued throughout 2023. Design Development will continue in 2024 with the final design anticipated in summer 2024. Parallel to the design effort, fundraising and public engagement will continue including two public meetings held on February 16 at the Black Forest Community Club, and April 18 at Pikes Peak Brewing.

Fox Run Regional Park Oak and Pine Meadow Restrooms – This project involves renovating the Oak and Pine Meadow restrooms from a pit vault composting system to a flush system. The current pit vault composting waste systems will be removed, and a new on-site wastewater treatment system will be installed with new internal plumbing and fixtures. The project design was completed by Design Edge in 2023. Bids for construction were received in May 2024 and a contract was awarded to IS West. Construction began in early July and is on track for completion in November.

Paint Mines Interpretive Park Master Plan – In recent years the number of visitors to the park has increased leading to several management challenges which includes vehicle congestion, user-created social trails, climbing on the formations, and overall site degradation. In response to these challenges, the County completed two projects in 2020 - 2021 aimed at improving the existing parking areas, resurfacing existing trails, completing minor ditch and drainage improvements, and adding fencing and signage to guide park visitors. El Paso County is now looking to create a Master Plan which will build-upon these improvements and provide a long-term plan to manage park visitors while also protecting the fragile formations. DHM Design has been chosen to facilitate and develop the Master Plan, which will be completed by early 2025. The next public open house will be held on Thursday, September 19th at 6:00-7:30 in Swink Hall at the El Paso County Fair and Events Center.

Pineries Open Space – El Paso County Parks has been awarded a seven-week GOCO / Mile High Youth Corps grant to construct a 2-mile natural surfaced singletrack trail in the southwest corner of the open space property. In support of the project, El Paso County has contracted with Rocky Mountain Field Institute to provide project management and technical assistance. A site visit was held in July and the work is scheduled to be completed between July and September. This trail will create an approximate 3.75-mile loop in addition to the existing 8.5-mile loop. In addition to trail construction, a forest mitigation project is underway to clear the trail corridor and address other dead-standing and pine beetle areas. RMFI/MHYC have constructed approximately half of the trail and are currently constructing puncheons (boardwalks) in wetland areas.

Santa Fe Open Space – The master plan process has been completed with BoCC approval in March 2021. A contract for single-track trail corridor clearing and construction was awarded to Performance Recreation in September 2021. Construction has been completed and the grand opening was held on April 7, 2022. The Phase I Improvement Project was completed in April 2023 through the installation of two new custom information kiosks and Martin Marietta Partners in the Park signs at each entrance of the open space on the New Santa Fe Regional Trail. The 2024 CIP has identified a project to commence in summer 2025, which will involve the construction of approximately 0.35 mile of singletrack trail on the open space's northwest side. Trail corridor forestry work has been completed in preparation for trail construction in fall 2024.

Ute Pass Regional Trail - El Paso County was previously awarded two federal grants to fund design and construction of the remaining 3.75-mile segment of the Ute Pass Regional Trail. An Intergovernmental Agreement with CDOT was approved by the BoCC in April 2019. A revised scope of work was approved in 2022 to reduce the project to 1.5 miles to end at the intersection of US 24 and Fountain Ave. Stantec Consulting Services was selected to complete engineering and design of the Ute

Pass Regional Trail. Permitting and regulatory approvals are ongoing. Review and coordination with several agencies are ongoing. A third grant was awarded to the County in 2022 and other funding options are being pursued. The final design package is under final review and should be completed in 2024.

Other:

June 2023 Flooding Response – El Paso County was notified in August that a presidential declaration was made for the June storm events. FEMA teams visited in October to assist with project development and estimates. FEMA has obligated repair projects in July and staff is coordinating with several other departments to scope and bid repairs. NRCS approved emergency watershed protection program funds for repairs to Duckwood Trailhead and Willow Springs Ponds. A contract for these two projects was awarded to Basis Partners in December. Project meetings began in January and survey and geotechnical data has been collected. 60 % plans were delivered in May. 90% design plans were delivered in June and are under review. Final design plans are due in September with construction planned to start in October with completion by March.

Development Permit Application Reviews - Staff reviewed no development applications for endorsement at the September 2024 meeting and provided internal administrative comments for an additional 9+ applications during August 2024.

Fountain Creek Watershed, Flood Control, and Greenway District - Staff continues to serve on the Technical Advisory Committee. The committee helps develop and implement watershed restoration and enhancement projects. The district has launched the greenway master plan and staff is participating as a stakeholder.

Geographic Information Systems (GIS) - Staff is working with the County Information Technology Department to expand El Paso County Parks' use of GIS for data collection, operational, and planning applications. New regional park maps have been completed or are in process, and new and/or improved datasets have been developed and set into production. Staff received training in the new ArcGIS Pro mapping software program and are migrating existing maps to the new format.

Grants - Great Outdoors Colorado is funding seven weeks of work by the Mile High Youth Corps and Rocky Mountain Field Institute at Pineries Open Space in 2024.

Interdepartmental Coordination- Staff is representing County Parks and providing technical assistance for several projects to ensure compliance with the El Paso County Parks Master Plan and to support advancement of multi-modal opportunities. This includes the Peyton Drainage and Transportation Master Plan, Eastonville Road design project, South Powers Extension Study, the Pikes Peak Area Council of Governments (PPACG) Active Transportation Plan, Jackson Creek Parkway Corridor Plan, and the El Paso County Land Development Code update.

Park Operations

Central District:

District Properties - Bear Creek Regional Park, Bear Creek Dog Park, Bear Creek Nature Center, Rainbow Falls Historic Site, landscape maintenance at eleven (11) County facilities, Ute Pass Regional Trail, Jones Park Open Space

Monthly Summary – Central staff continued their daily efforts to keep all properties clean and safe during the month of August. Irrigated and native turf mowing operations, vegetation management, landscape bed maintenance, irrigation checks and repairs, playground inspections, trail maintenance, daily illegal camping checks, and assistance with the Happy Trails fundraising event were priorities during the reporting period.

The Central team completed a landscape bed restoration project at the Bear Creek Regional Park west entrance. All existing plants / trees and rock were removed from the bed, four inches of topsoil were amended into the existing soil, fifty plants and ornamental grasses were added, drip irrigation was routed to each plant, and five tons of 3/4" rock mulch was placed into the bed. This renovation adds a refreshing new look to the park entrance. Great job team!

The Recreation and Cultural Services Division hosted their annual Happy Trails fundraising event on August 9th at the Bear Creek Nature Center. This year's event was a huge success, raising over \$12,500 for Recreation and Cultural Services programs. Support for the event from the Central team included providing extra attention to the grounds and landscape, removal / re-installation of multiple large exhibits inside the nature center, retrieval of plants from two local nurseries, and helping with other tasks at the center on the day of the event.

Park staff continue their bi-weekly monitoring visits to Rainbow Falls Historic Site to check for graffiti, remove trash, and provide additional maintenance. The team recently removed graffiti from a large boulder, blew off concrete and asphalt pathways, and applied herbicide where necessary.

Heavy rains during the reporting period caused moderate erosion to multiple sections of the Ute Pass Trail system. Staff were required to bring in fifteen tons of trail base for trail repairs at one location, the entire length of the trail was box bladed, and debris removal was performed along the sidewalk portion of the trail.

East District:

District Properties – El Paso County Fair and Events Center, Falcon Regional Park, Falcon Regional Dog Park, Homestead Ranch Regional Park, Paint Mines Interpretive Park, Rock Island Regional Trail, Drake Lake Open Space, Palmer Divide Trail at Wood Lake, Heritage Ranch Open Space, Latigo Trails Open Space, Falcon Vista Open Space, Peyton Pines Open Space, Forest Green Open Space

Monthly Summary – Following the County Fair and the associated cleanup efforts our team returned to normal operations. Auto races continued and staff assisted with the races on the 10th and 24th of this month. The team also supported a Quinceanera in the Whittemore Building as well as a 4H State Agility Contest. The team also continues to work through our summer task list in preparation for fall.

All ADA punch list items were completed in August and the project is now completed. These additions to the fairgrounds are great for our customers with mobility needs.

The parks team continues to work on weekly mowing operations and bed maintenance. The turf areas at our parks are looking great following our irrigation challenges last month. The team is now shifting their focus to procuring the supplies needed for fall aeration, overseeding and fertilization. We will complete those tasks in September.

We recently contracted with Wells & West to paint the pavilions and the shop/restroom building at Homestead Ranch Regional Park. The contractor repaired damaged soffits, replaced vent screens,

repaired stucco, and stained the entire building. They also sanded all the rust off the pavilions and repainted. The park looks great and we are very pleased with the results.

Homestead also has a new ultrasonic buoy installed in the pond to help with water quality and algae issues. The east district team assisted Scott Myers with the construction and installation of a cage to protect the solar powered unit for the buoy.

North District:

District Properties - Fox Run Regional Park, Fox Run Regional Trail, Black Forest Regional Park, Black Forest Section 16, Pineries Open Space, Palmer Lake Recreation Area, Santa Fe Open Space, New Santa Fe Regional Trail, Baptist Road Trailhead, Forest Lakes Regional Trail, Cherry Creek Regional Trail

Monthly Summary – North District projects at Fox Run Regional Park and Pineries Open Space continue to progress during this reporting period. The new Fox Run septic system for the bathrooms has passed initial inspections. The leach field and plumbing rough-in are completed. Portions of the concrete removal and installation are also underway.

Pineries Open Space forestry work is finished, and the focus has shifted to trail construction. Puncheons crossing the wetlands are currently being installed at this point. The North District team has been assisting the contractors by purchasing lumber, mobilizing materials, and repairing any damage caused from delivery of materials.

The irrigation system at Fox Run Regional Park continues to be problematic due to the age of the system. There were six additional mainline leaks that were identified and repaired this month. It has been a challenge to keep the system operational throughout the growing season.

The roads, trails, and drainage structures were repaired for all our North District properties following a storm event this month. Water bars were installed to improve runoff control near the Highway 105 underpass on the New Santa Fe Regional Trail as well. General clean-up was conducted on the trails for Black Forest Section 16 and the Pineries Open Space.

South District:

District Properties - Fountain Creek Regional Park, Fountain Creek Dog Park, Fountain Creek Nature Center, Fountain Creek Regional Trail, Clear Springs Ranch, Christian Open Space, Willow Springs Park, John Ceresa Park, Crews Gulch Trail, Kane Ranch Open Space, Stratmoor Hills Park, Stratmoor Valley Park, Schreder Open Space, Widefield Community Park, Grinnell Boulevard

Monthly Summary – The South District team completed additional work around the disc golf tee boxes in Widefield Park by adding dirt, trail breeze, and other materials around the tee pads to fix erosion issues and to level slopes around the tee boxes. Staff also spent time fixing a list of issues throughout the park to include weed spraying, debris and trash cleanup from flooding, trail maintenance, native area mowing, and landscape bed maintenance.

Our properties suffered moderate flood damage with recent storms and repair efforts were a high priority. There was a bridge undermined and washed out on the west side of Willow Springs ponds. The south team installed a temporary pipe culvert and new trail surfacing over the pipe allowing the regional trail to

remain open. There was also a section of regional trail south of Stratmoor Valley Park along Fountain Creek that was eroded, staff fenced off for public safety and the trail remains open. Staff will continue to monitor the trail for further damage until a permanent fix can be made to the area.

The team continues to focus on irrigation maintenance to assure all systems are up and running properly. We also are doing weekly performance checks of the irrigation systems to assure proper function and coverage.

Mowing has been a huge priority for the team due to the amount of recent rainfall. Grass is growing at a fast rate and is very thick. Our team is preparing for fall aerating, fertilizing, overseeding, and other fall maintenance tasks. Early summer overseeding turf areas has grown in nicely, particularly in the south field at Fountain Creek Regional Park. We will continue to monitor and care for these areas as needed throughout the remainder of the growing season.

The team made efforts to complete high priority trail work to stabilize and repair holes along the Fountain Creek Regional Trail. We added pee gravel in water catchment areas to help with drainage followed by a final layer of red trail surfacing. Our work seems to be paying off as we are noticing significant drainage improvements which is creating a more sustainable trail system. The next phase of work will start on the northern end of the trail system focusing on small washout repairs, trail grading, trail stabilization, and mowing trail aprons as needed.