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For release: November 4, 2009

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Shape the future of Arapahoe County parks, trails and open space *Arapahoe County hosts second open house for citizen input on Parks, Trails and Open Space Master Plan*

ARAPAHOE COUNTY, CO. --- Arapahoe County invites residents to drop by a public open house 4 – 8 p.m., Nov. 19 at the Byers High School, Byers, to learn about and provide input on the needs for parks, trails and open space in Arapahoe County. Residents can stop by anytime between 4 and 8 p.m.

“So far, opinion polling has shown that many residents have a strong interest in preserving open space to protect natural ecosystems and wildlife habitats,” said Arapahoe County Commissioner Rod Bockenfeld. “This information helps to identify future opportunities for the program and those findings will be introduced to citizens for further input.”

This is the second of three opportunities for the public to share their opinions. The feedback will be used to help prepare a countywide *Open Space Master Plan* which will serve as a guide for making strategic decisions about the program’s future. Residents who are unable to attend can provide comments online through January 31 at www.greenways.com/arapahoe.

“Many of our urban residents don’t realize that the County is 72 miles wide and not only includes much of the southeast Denver metro area with cities such as Littleton, Centennial and Aurora but also many rural towns as you head east including Deer Trail, Byers and Bennett,” said Commissioner Bockenfeld who represents the eastern communities in District 3. “This open house gives our rural residents an opportunity to provide feedback specific to their community.”

The County already has protected more than 15,000 acres of land that preserves natural habitats and wildlife corridors, protects sweeping vistas and provides outdoor recreation in just the past five years. This would not be possible without the voters who generously approved the Arapahoe County open space sales and use tax in 2003.

For every \$1 spent in Arapahoe County, a quarter-of-a-penny is used to preserve urban and rural open space and natural areas; protect lands that preserve water quality; provide, maintain and improve neighborhood parks, sports fields, picnic facilities and multi-use trails; protect wildlife habitat and corridors; preserve agriculture and ranchlands; and enhance and maintain designated heritage areas.

The tax collection began Jan. 1, 2004 and is set to expire Dec. 31, 2013 unless citizens vote “yes” to continue the program during a future ballot question reauthorization.

For more information, go to www.greenways.com/arapahoe or call Bob Finch with Arapahoe County Open Space at 720-874-6734.

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To download photos click on the link: <ftp://www.co.arapahoe.co.us/Pub/CM/Photos/OpenHouse/>

OpenHouse1_map – Residents point out where they'd like to see trail connections in Arapahoe County during the first open house in Centennial.

OpenHouse1_Bob&group – Arapahoe County Open Space Manager Bob Toll provides citizens with an overview of the county and the accomplishments of the Open Space program during the first open house in Centennial.

OpenHouse1_AngelaBern – Angela Bern, from Centennial, shares her ideas for the future of parks, trails and open space in Arapahoe County during the first Open House in Centennial.