



PLAN Jeffco

Working to conserve Jefferson County Open Spaces since 1972



Earth Day 2026 volunteers at South Table

The PLAN Jeffco Monthly April 2026

April 2026 – Happy Earth Day month to all who celebrate, and even to those who do not. It’s our only planet, so taking care of it is truly important. Three PLAN Jeffco Board members took the opportunity to volunteer at the Stiles African American Heritage Center gardens (Open Space volunteer opportunities were filled up by the time we tried to register). It was a fun day. I hope yours was, also.

A quick reminder: April will see the awakening of our furred and reptilian friends who live in our parks, and the return of many of our feathered friends from southern climes. While you’re trekking or cycling, anticipate encountering all of them. Keep your earbuds out, make sure you’ve got the proper equipment and don’t forget your sunscreen!

Jeffco Open Space Parks are open one hour before sunrise until one hour after sunset, so use these hours to enjoy the park experience.

PLAN Jeffco is now a part of Colorado Gives...
<https://www.coloradogives.org/organization/PLANJeffco>

... and we want to thank every reader, and especially those who have

donated to the cause, so that we can continue to advocate for acquisition and protection of open spaces and Jeffco Open Space, in particular.

Don't forget to follow us on Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Threads or BlueSky – or all five! The team will continue to write articles at <https://planjeffco.org/blog/>

JOIN US AT

What's New in the Blogosphere?



SLASH 2026

The 2025 SLASH (Sustainable Lands and Safer Homes) season is upon us. From May 15th to October 25th, four SLASH collection sites will be open for business, mostly Thursday thru Sunday, 9AM to 4PM, unless otherwise posted. You should plan to arrive no later than 30 minutes prior to closing... [Read more.](#)



Boettcher Mansion Gardens Re-emerge with the Spring

By Victoria Gits, PLAN Jeffco Staff Writer and Board Secretary

Three years ago, the lovely, historic Boettcher Mansion on Lookout

Mountain was surrounded by a mostly neglected landscape of overgrown grasses and weeds not really in keeping with the grand Arts and Crafts home known as a popular wedding venue.

Thanks to volunteer gardeners, today the grounds on three sides of the house are full of thriving annuals, perennials, shade-or-sun loving plants, flowering shrubs and vines. Even in mid-September one can peruse the zinnias, sunflowers, impatiens, daisies and mums – and petunias, calibrachoa, and sweet potato vine – lots and lots of them.

Instead of forgettable space, the outdoors is now a horticultural showcase and a destination worthy of taking visitors for a peaceful walk any time of day for free, with or without a wedding to attend. [Read more](#)



Information Specialist Judy Smetana, Volunteer Program Coordinator Ronnie Terry, and Volunteer Gardeners Michelle Poole and Sandy Bates stand in front of the Boettcher Mansion display at this year's Volunteer Recruitment Fair, which was held at JCPOS Headquarters in Golden.

OPEN SPACE VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT FAIR 2026

Volunteerism isn't anything new – it's been around for hundreds if not thousands of years. Officially, volunteerism can be traced back to the 12th century in Britain, where more than 500 hospitals were staffed by volunteers.

The word "volunteer" stems from the Latin voluntarius – "willing, of one's own free will". It became part of the English language via Middle French, initially referring to someone who willingly offered themselves for military duty. Today, it has evolved to mean anyone entering service freely, whether military or community service.

Every year, Jeffco Parks & Open Space (JCPOS) hosts a Volunteer Recruitment Fair, during which time folks who are interested in becoming more engaged with our parks can investigate what being a hands-on part of Open Space might be like, i.e. entering service freely. [Read more](#).

Upcoming Events

<https://planjeffco.org/plan-jeffco-board-meeting-schedule/>

If you would like to attend a PLAN Jeffco Board meeting, please contact us at ContactUs@PlanJeffco.org prior to the day of the meeting.

Did you forget to send your annual donation?
Click on the button below and get caught up!

I'd Like to Help

Other New Stuff on the Website

Stay up-to-date with what's happening at the PJ Board meetings

PLAN Jeffco April Board Meeting Minutes 4/16/2026 – DRAFT

<https://planjeffco.org/portfolio-item/pj-board-meeting-minutes-4-16-2026-draft/>

PLAN Jeffco March Board Meeting Minutes 3/19/2026 – FINAL

<https://planjeffco.org/portfolio-item/pj-board-meeting-minutes-3-19-2026-final/>

PLAN Jeffco February Board Meeting Minutes 2/19/2026 – FINAL

<https://planjeffco.org/portfolio-item/pj-board-meeting-minutes-2-19-2026-final/>

Missed a PLAN Jeffco Monthly newsletter? Find them here...

PLAN Jeffco Monthly – March 2026

<https://planjeffco.org/portfolio-item/plan-jeffco-monthly-march-2026/>

PLAN Jeffco Monthly – February 2026

<https://planjeffco.org/portfolio-item/plan-jeffco-monthly-february-2026/>

PLAN Jeffco Monthly – January 2026

<https://planjeffco.org/portfolio-item/10607/>

What's been happening at the Open Space Advisory Committee (OSAC) meetings...

Regular Open Space Advisory Committee in-office meetings are generally held on the first Thursday of every other month, starting at 6:00 PM.

<https://www.jeffco.us/1581/Advisory-Committee>

Alternate month meetings are in the field. We have been assured that these in-the-field meetings are open to the public; the times and locations should be published on the County calendar.

OSAC at Open Space Headquarters – April 2, 2026

The Open Space Advisory Committee's recent field trip included a Westtracks Shuttle Pilot Program update, updates on the rock work and trail improvements with the help of volunteers, and natural resource information.

Committee members hiked to get a view of the 347-acre Bruan property adjacent to Matthews/Winters Park. Open Space will close on this property on April 22 with the help of The Conservation Fund.

Check the calendar for upcoming agendas

<https://www.jeffco.us/1541/Event-Calendar>

Find all available past meeting documents & videos at

<https://www.jeffco.us/4528/Past-Meeting-Videos-and-Documents>



Volunteer planting a seedling tree, Earth Day 2026

Know Before You Go - JCOS Alerts & Closures

Always check this page before heading out to the Open Space parks for current information on Park and Trail closures, openings, and other operations that may impact your Jeffco Open Space Park experience...

NOTICE: [Clear Creek Canyon Park - CCR Trailhead to Tunnel 1 closed for improvements from Monday, April 27-Friday, May 8.](#)

NOTICE: [Beaver Ranch Park and Trailhead Improvements Begin May 7](#)

CLOSED: [As of 3/30, the top of Jenkins Peak Trail at Elk Meadow Park is closed for mountain pine beetle treatment.](#)

CLOSED: [The northeast segment of the Two Brands Trail at Hildebrand Ranch Park will be closed beginning Monday, January 19, for trail maintenance.](#)

CLOSED: [The West Trailhead at Alderfer/Three Sisters Park is closed for scheduled improvements beginning May 5 through spring 2026.](#)

SEASONAL CLOSURES: [Wildlife Closures at multiple parks Feb 1- July 31](#)

- **Centennial Cone Park:** Elk Range Trail at Centennial Cone Park, including the interior of the park, is closed from February 1 through mid-June to protect elk during their calving season. All other trails are open.
 - **Clear Creek Canyon Park:** Portions of Clear Creek Canyon Park near Mile Marker 270 are closed to all public use uphill of US Highway 6 from February 1 through July 31 to protect nesting eagles. This closure includes the following rock-climbing sites: Bumbling Stock, Stumbling Block, Skinny Legs, Blonde Formation, and Ghost Crag. The Fault Caves are also included in this closure. Portions of Clear Creek Canyon Park, near Tunnel 2, are closed to all public use uphill of US Highway 6 from February 1 through July 31 to protect nesting eagles. This closure includes the following rock climbing sites: Highlander, Evil Area, and Tetanus Garden.
 - **Deer Creek Canyon Park/Hildebrand Ranch Park:** The entirety of Black Bear Trail, which connects Deer Creek Canyon Park and Hildebrand Ranch Park, is closed from February 1 through July 31 to protect nesting birds of prey.
 - **North Table Mountain Park:** Rim Rock Trail at North Table Mountain Park is closed from February 1 through July 31 to protect ground-nesting bird habitat and nesting birds of prey.
 - **South Table Mountain Park:** Lava Loop trail at South Table Mountain Park is closed from February 1 through July 31 to protect ground-nesting bird habitat and nesting eagles.
 - **Cathedral Spires Park:** The entirety of Cathedral Spires Park is closed from March 1 through July 31 to protect nesting birds of prey.
 - **Crown Hill Park:** The Crown Hill Park Wildlife Sanctuary is closed from March 1 through June 30 to protect nesting and brooding waterfowl, as well as creating a critical refuge for all kinds of wildlife including deer, bobcats, coyotes, and others birds, during a critical time in their seasonal life cycle.
- REMINDER:** [Some JCPOS Parks have designated-use trails or alternating use days](#)

JEFFCO PARKS & OPEN SPACE

Thank you message from Shelby Johnson, JCPOS Volunteer Services Specialist:

First, a huge thank you to everyone who participated in our annual Earth Day Celebration on Saturday, April 18th! It was wonderful to see everyone enjoying the beautiful sunshine and celebrating our planet, reminding us of the reason behind our work: YOU! During the celebration, attendees learned about the sustainability efforts which have been happening throughout Jefferson County through engaging discussions with staff, community members, regular volunteers, and CSU Extension.

Jeffco Commissioner Rachel Zenzinger joined 17 Trails staff and 50 volunteers to prepare the new T. rex Tooth Trail on South Table Mountain for its grand opening later this spring, completing 210 feet of finished tread. Meanwhile, the Natural Resources Team led 59 volunteers in planting 850 native grasses and shrubs at Van Bibber Park, and Prospect Park staff planted six trees on their adjacent property.

Saturday's event always generates excitement for our work. This gathering is one of our larger educational outreach events, and this year's turnout was fantastic, even with the snowy ground and wet kneecaps!

Thank you to all the families, individuals, and company groups who came out to celebrate Earth Day and Commissioner Andy Kerr for stopping by. This is why our efforts are worthwhile. Seeing everyone come together brought me so much joy! Thank you again and have a wonderful spring. *For more information on volunteer events please see our volunteer calendar.*

ACQUISITION: Braun Ranch, Rare Wildlife Habitat Near Red Rocks, Conserved!

JCPOS and The Conservation Fund have protected the 347-acre Braun Ranch, a high-priority conservation property in the Front Range along the western edge of the Denver metro area. The conservation win secures a critical gap between existing public lands, protecting rare habitat from development.

Located along the western edge of Red Rocks and Matthews Winters Park, the property is surrounded by existing public open space, including three high-biodiversity conservation areas identified by the Colorado Natural Heritage Program.

The Property includes portions of three Potential Conservation Areas and is an important wildlife linkage for big game species, including elk, mule deer, black bear and mountain lion. Additionally, several State Wildlife Action Plan Tier 1 and 2 species occur on or within one mile of the Property, including Hops Azure Butterfly, Preble's Meadow Jumping Mouse, Mottled Dusky Wing Bat, and the Fiddleleaf Twinpod, a rare, low-growing native perennial plant endemic to the foothills of central Colorado.

Conservation of the property preserves a highly visible and scenic viewshed, maintains important big game habitat, and enhances connectivity to established recreational trails near Red Rocks Amphitheater.

In addition to its recreational and scenic values, Braun Ranch plays a key role in climate adaptation and wildfire resilience. By conserving intact foothill forests, the project enables proactive forest and watershed management in a region facing elevated wildfire risk.

Welcome Center Volunteers Make a Big Impact in 2025

In 2025, Welcome Center volunteers generously contributed 1,005.5 hours

—the equivalent of 25 full-time work weeks. Those hours include 85.5 hours spent supporting teams across the organization with projects such as preparing materials for Hiwan Museum and Lookout Mountain Nature Center, assembling booklets, and assisting with mailings and permit cards.

Fifteen dedicated volunteers made this possible, and their support frees up valuable time for Administrative Assistants, other staff, and Supervisor Teddy Newman to focus on additional responsibilities.

"Am I boasting? Yes, I am. I'm so honored to work with such a dedicated, competent, and well-informed team of volunteers." -Teddy Newman

Free Shuttle Starts Memorial Day Weekend

The Westracks Shuttle Pilot Program will be rolling out over the Memorial Day weekend, connecting some of our most popular outdoor destinations, from Matthews/Winters Park to Dinosaur Ridge and beyond. This project, partnered by JCPOS and regional transportation entities, will run every 15 minutes on weekends and holidays through Labor Day. The shuttle aims to make these iconic destinations easier to reach without a car while also helping to ease congestion and reducing single-occupancy vehicle trips in support of broader climate goals.

ALD West Trailhead - Progress Report

Despite weather delays, construction at Alderfer/Three Sisters Park west trailhead is moving forward, with these key milestones completed:

- the new bathrooms have been framed, weather barrier and exterior siding are being installed, while drywall, paint and polymer paneling are being added to the inside;
- four picnic shelters have the trusses and beams placed on their steel columns, with tongue-and-groove roof decking going in;
- the kiosk roof was installed; stonework is progressing.

The deadline for completion of the kiosk, shelters and restroom facilities is June 1st; look for the reopening of this trailhead shortly afterward.

Boettcher Mansion Gets A New Roof

After 20 years, the Boettcher Mansion is getting a new roof. Originally called the Lorraine Lodge, the mansion was constructed in 1917 by Charles Boettcher, one of Colorado's serial entrepreneurs. Boettcher's Ideal Cement Company donated the cement that "Cement Bill" Williams used to create what is now known as the Lariat Loop, connecting Golden to the top of Lookout Mountain. Boettcher admired Lookout Mountain so much that he purchased acreage and had the arts and crafts-style mansion designed by Fisher and Fisher, the architectural firm that designed and built many public buildings in the Denver area.

The Boettcher Mansion was donated to Jefferson County by Boettcher's granddaughter, Charline Humphreys Breeden, who raised her family there. The mansion is listed on the [National Register of Historic Places](https://www.nationalregisterofhistoricplaces.com/CO/Jefferson/state.html), <https://www.nationalregisterofhistoricplaces.com/CO/Jefferson/state.html>

Most of the mansion's roof is flat; this project will replace that section while leaving the slate tiles in place. Construction began in early April and is planned to wrap up in early summer.

Ranger and OSWFT Training Completed, For Now

Last month, Park Rangers and OSWFT members completed their federally required RT-130 Wildland Annual Refresher Training. Topics included 2025 Season Recap and OSWFT Incident Response Summary, 2026 Seasonal and Weather Outlook, airborne resource integration, developments at the federal level, and after-action reviews with lessons learned. Hands-on skills included radio communications, incident management in the WUI, progressive packs and hose lay, drafting from portable water supplies, tool order and sharpening, and the required shelter deployments.

Being a park ranger is a tough job. Be grateful that they're so well-trained, and the next time you see a ranger in the park, remember to thank them for being there.

Mini Naturalists in the Making

One of our Park Rangers spent an afternoon at Free Horizon Montessori in early April with over 100 primary students teaching them about JCPOS. With help from a mystery box of taxidermy, the kids learned about winter adaptations and strategies for the wildlife that call our county home. Many questions were answered and many tales were told. Look for a new batch of inspired Ranger hires in 15-20 years.

Lookout Mountain Nature Center Rolls Out a New Program

There's a new backpack checkout program at the Lookout Mountain Nature Center for visitor use. These backpacks contain sunglasses, headphones, weighted caterpillar, Bird Bingo game, a clipboard, fidget toys, and a journal to keep. These packs not only provide an inclusive option for kids and adults with sensory needs but also continue the JCPOS mission of providing healthy, nature-based activities for all. Please [contact the Nature Center](#) for additional information on these backpacks and their availability.

Trail Improvements on Red Rocks Trail

Crews have been hard at work improving a section of the Red Rocks Trail in Matthews/Winter Park. The project includes restoring and rerouting segments of trail to enhance the visitor experience while improving drainage and long-term sustainability.

By redesigning the trail alignment, the team is also helping guide visitors to stay on designated routes. These improvements will create a safer, more enjoyable hike while preserving the landscape for years to come.

Windy Saddle Park Tiers of Zion Get a Refresh

The Tiers of Zion climbing area, situated on the north side of Lookout Mountain near Golden, got a refresh in early April. Enthusiastic volunteers built six new rock steps and a 25-foot rock retaining wall. The junction of Upper Tier and Lower Tier was widened. All you rock climbers, enjoy the climb.

Wednesday Forum - Rattlesnake Safety & Awareness with Andrew DuBois - 4.15.2026

The warm, dry spring weather is bringing an early surge of recreational

visitors to trails across Jefferson County. It's also bringing our reptilian residents out of their winter homes. Learn from JCPOS' Natural Resources Specialist Andrew DuBois how to safely recognize and navigate when you encounter a rattlesnake on the Open Space trails. Video: <https://youtu.be/VOruDtuplL4>

Open Space Projects	Status	Expected Completion
Alderfer/West Trailhead improvements	under construction	Spring 2026
Bail Out Trail improvements	completed	Reopened March 13th
Beaver Ranch park improvements	permitting	Spring 2027
Boettcher Mansion roof repairs	under construction	Spring 2026
Clear Creek Canyon Huntsman Segment	under construction	Fall 2026
Clear Creek Canyon Central Segment	design	TBD
North Table Mountain trailhead improvements	design	Summer 2027
Settlers Drive SLASH site	design	TBD
Stafford Hogback new trailhead	planning	Summer 2028
Van Bibber - Indiana to the Fairmont trail	under construction	Spring 2027

For additional information on Open Space events go to the [Open Space Event Calendar](#)



COLORADO
Wildfire
Resiliency
Code Board

Senate Bill 23-166 established a Wildfire Resiliency Code Board in the Division of Fire Prevention and Control to help enhance community safety and resiliency from wildfires through the adoption of codes and standards.

Defensible space and structure hardening requirements will apply to mountain areas and parts of the plains per the proposed Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) map.

For more information go to <https://www.jeffco.us/2613/Regulation-Updates>



Tools laid out, ready for trail work. Earth Day 2026.

ARTICLES OF INTEREST

Denver Mountain Parks to Take Helm on Mount Blue Sky This Summer (Denver, CO, April 14, 2026) – The road to the top of Mount Blue Sky, one of Colorado’s most popular fourteeners, will reopen Memorial Day Weekend 2026, weather permitting. America’s highest paved road has been closed since Labor Day 2024 while crews rebuilt portions of the high-alpine road to address severe buckling and water drainage issues.

The surrounding Mount Blue Sky Recreation Area includes a nature center, parking lots, restrooms, scenic views and trails through native gardens and ancient forests and sees more than 100,000 visitors annually. When the snow is cleared and the gates swing open this year, it will be Denver Mountain Parks’ employees greeting guests at the welcome station for the first time. Denver Mountain Parks will lead operations at the Mount Blue Sky Recreation Area through new agreements with the Arapaho National Forest and Denver Mountain Parks Foundation.

Under the new agreement, Denver Mountain Parks, in partnership with the Denver Mountain Parks Foundation, will collect fees, manage the reservation system and set operating hours. Fees collected will help fund

the maintenance and upkeep of facilities in the recreation area. The Forest Service will maintain a presence in the area as well, supporting visitor information, managing wilderness and trails, and supporting fire suppression and prevention.

Reservations are expected to go live on [recreation.gov](https://www.recreation.gov) from early to mid-May, with the first reservations available beginning Friday, May 22, 2026. For more information, visit <http://www.denvergov.org/parksandrecreation>.

Huge remodel of Beaver Ranch Park kicks off in May

jane@cotln.org Mar 25, 2026 Updated Apr 9, 2026, Canyon Courier

"A long-awaited \$9-million remodel of Conifer's Beaver Ranch Park begins in May, bringing plenty of fun stuff, like a \$1-million-plus accessible adventure playground, a new dog park, and an off-leash hiking area. And lots of not-as-fun, but long-needed improvements, including restrooms, better parking, and easier access." [Read the article from Canyon Courier](#)

Rattlesnakes, packed parking, poop bags greet summer-like crowds hitting hiking trails

Evan Kruegel, 2:05 PM MDT 3/24/26, Channel 9NEWS

Unseasonably warm, dry weather is bringing an early surge of recreational visitors to trails across Jefferson County, park rangers said conditions feel more like July than March. [Read the 9News Story](#).

Time to Get Ready for the Upcoming 2026 SLASH Season

The much-anticipated SLASH season is just around the corner! With the calendar now released and warmer weather on the horizon, it's the perfect time to start clearing your property and preparing for drop-offs. Fees are based on 6 cubic yards (162 cubic feet) of material per load, at a rate of \$24 per load (credit cards only). For accepted vs. nonaccepted material and all other information, [please visit the county SLASH website](#). For a downloadable copy of the SLASH summer schedule, please go to <https://planjeffco.org/slash-2026/>.

Feds Want to Cut Back Water Releases from Lake Powell In Response to Colorado River Drought

by Shannon Mullane 4:07 AM MDT on Apr 20, 2026

The Bureau of Reclamation announced Friday it will likely reduce Lake Powell water releases to 6 million acre-feet, the lowest amount in decades. It also intends to release additional water from Flaming Gorge, an upstream reservoir, to help elevate the water level in Lake Powell. The decisions could raise the specter of forced water cuts in states including Colorado, impact endangered fish populations and affect communities and economies. [Read the full story at the Colorado Sun](#).

Forest Service Shake-up Will Boost States' Role — But Even Supporters Have Concerns

by Alex Brown - April 15, 2026 4:00 am

A sweeping reorganization of the U.S. Forest Service signals that the agency is planning to lean heavily on states to help manage millions of acres of federal land, foresters across the West say.

State officials and timber industry leaders say they've been given scant details about the plan, which will move the agency's headquarters from Washington, D.C. to Salt Lake City, restructure its regional management, and close scores of research stations in dozens of states.

While waiting for the dust to settle, they're preparing for the Forest Service — with its workforce slashed by the Trump administration — to ask more of its partners under the new model. [Read the full story at ColoradoNewsOnline.](#)

Get Wild: What is Rewilding?

Opinion | Frank Lilly, Apr 18, 2026

Rewilding is, in part, an effort to reestablish vital ecological processes by restoring key native species. That sentence is packed with meaningful concepts, including “key native species.” Obviously, the species we are restoring should be native. We are all familiar with the problems associated with invasive species, some of which were introduced as ornamentals, for ground cover, etc.

But it goes deeper than that. It touches on the concept of keystone species. [Read the full story at the SummitDaily.](#)

A Super El Niño Is In the Forecast; Here's What That Means for Colorado

by Shannon Mullane 4:10 AM MDT on Apr 14, 2026

As Coloradans grapple with a record low snowpack heading into summer, the super El Niño and strong monsoon season in the forecast could provide some late summer relief.

Colorado's weather is impacted by everything from temperature changes in the Pacific Ocean to pressure patterns over Texas — not to mention rising temperatures around the globe. This year's La Niña conditions, created by cooler water temperatures in the Pacific, should have brought snow to Colorado's northern mountains. Instead, the state ended the winter a month early with record hot days and a rapid snowmelt, prompting drought restrictions and water cutbacks around Colorado.

As of last week, the La Niña is over and the odds are increasingly good for a super El Niño later in 2026 — a climate pattern that has historically brought wetter winter conditions to Colorado, according to the National Weather Service. [Read the full story at the Colorado Sun.](#)

Colorado Lawmakers Had A Chance To Protect Homes From Wildfires, But Turned It Down

by Nicholas Scritchfield 1:30 AM MDT on Apr 9, 2026

Last month, Colorado lawmakers were handed a simple, science-backed opportunity: shift a fraction of wildfire funding toward the one strategy most consistently shown to protect homes: home hardening and defensible space grants. However, they said no to House Bill 1310, what was also known as the Wildfire Resiliency Grant Money bill.

Let's be clear about what this bill was and wasn't. It did not defund “fuels reduction” or fire suppression strategies. It did not challenge the logging-heavy system that already receives nearly all wildfire mitigation dollars. It was a compromise that simply asked: If we know what actually determines

whether a home burns, why aren't we funding it?

The science is not ambiguous. Homes do not ignite primarily from a wall of flames. They ignite from embers — wind-driven firebrands that travel ahead of the fire front — and from small ignitions within the immediate surroundings of the structure. This is the foundation of decades of undisputed wildfire research, including work by then U.S. Forest Service scientist Jack Cohen on the “home ignition zone.” *[Read the full story in the Opinion column of The Colorado Sun.](#)*



Breaking Trail, Earth Day 2026

COUNTY NEWS & HAPPENING

JEFFCO Sheriff'S Office LEA Report

<https://www.jeffcosheriffco.gov/news>

TOGETHER JEFFCO

<https://togetherjeffco.com/>

The Jefferson County Planning Commission adopted the updates to the Comprehensive Plan on Wednesday, April 8, 2026.. Details are on the Comprehensive Plan page <https://togetherjeffco.com/cp>

OUR CONSERVATION PARTNERS

NOCO PLACES - A Common Voice for Public Lands

<https://www.nocoplaces.com/>

Nine county, state, and federal public land agencies from north-central Colorado are actively collaborating to address the challenges the mountains and foothills in this region are facing from high visitation and a growing population. We are committed to sustainable solutions, equitable actions, and beneficial land management practices for the long-term conservation of Colorado's public lands and the quality of the visitor experience.

Conservation and Recreation Vision <https://www.nocoplaces.com/conservation-and-recreation-vision/>

Programs and Workshops <https://www.nocoplaces.com/unauthorized-trail-rehabilitation/>

2025 Annual Report <https://www.nocoplaces.com/reports/>

Colorado Parks and Wildlife

<https://cpw.state.co.us>

News & Media <https://cpw.state.co.us/aboutus/Pages/NewsMedia.aspx>

CPW Podcasts <https://cpw.state.co.us/CPW-podcast>

eNews & Social Media <https://cpw.state.co.us/enews-and-social-media>

News Releases <https://cpw.state.co.us/aboutus/Pages/NewsReleases.aspx>

Governor Polis and Colorado Parks and Wildlife announce first investments from SB24-230 for Wildlife and Land Protection Funds

4/3/26 DENVER — Today, Governor Polis and Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) announced the first round of wildlife and habitat projects funded through Senate Bill 24-230, which created new production fees on oil and gas development to mitigate the adverse impacts of oil and gas operations on wildlife and habitats.

CPW's initial allocation of SB24-230 revenue will fund seven wildlife and habitat initiatives designed to address the impacts of habitat fragmentation, climate change and ecosystem degradation.

Spring is here and bear activity is increasing, keep food sources secured to reduce conflicts this year

4/22/26 - CPW has already received 98 reports of bear activity in 22 Colorado counties this year (compared to 127 reports in 22 counties last year) and that number is expected to increase substantially in the coming months. As bear activity increases, wildlife officials urge residents to secure any and all food and scent attractants. Bears should NOT eat from trash receptacles, bird feeders, or other human-provided food sources around homes or businesses.

If you have questions or need to report bear problems, call your nearest [CPW office](#).

Collared Gray Wolf Activity Map for April Released

The [April 2026 Collared Gray Wolf Activity Map](#) displays the wolves' activity throughout the state during this reporting period. This map indicates watersheds where at least one GPS point from a collared wolf was recorded

within the last 30 days.

Colorado Parks and Wildlife approves 2026 fish salvage for Antero Reservoir

PARK COUNTY, Colo. — In order to minimize imminent fish loss due to *Denver Water's planned reservoir drawdown*, Colorado Parks and Wildlife has authorized an emergency public fish salvage for *Antero Reservoir in Park County*. Effective immediately, all bag and possession limits for all fish species will be lifted through sunset on May 13, after which Denver Water will close public access to the property. All other regulations, including a valid Colorado fishing license and legal methods of take, will be enforced. Motorized boating and commercialized fishing will not be allowed. Hand-launched vessels and shoreline angling are permitted.

Celebrating the power of volunteers to protect Colorado state parks and wildlife

4/20/26 DENVER — CPW celebrated National Volunteer Week, April 19-25, 2026, to thank the individuals who generously give their time and compassion to advance the agency's mission of protecting Colorado's natural resources. CPW has nearly 5,000 volunteers who contribute more than 283,000 hours annually — a staggering economic impact of over \$10 million and an equivalent capacity of 136 full-time employees.

Colorado Parks and Wildlife launches Otter Y.E.A.R. iNaturalist project and invites the public to help track river otters statewide

4/13/26 DENVER — Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) is asking the public to help document river otter distribution across the state through a new community science project on the iNaturalist platform, part of the agency's 2026 Otter Y.E.A.R. (Yearlong Engagement and Assessment of River Otters).

The project marks the 50th anniversary of river otter reintroduction in Colorado. Otters once occupied the major rivers of the state, but they were wiped out by the early 1900s due to the absence of any rules governing the take of wildlife or water pollution. Colorado Division of Wildlife reintroduced 120 river otters between 1976 and 1991.

Jefferson Conservation District

<https://www.jeffersoncd.com/news-events>

JCD assists private forest landowners in planning and implementing projects with the shared goals of wildfire mitigation and forest ecosystem restoration. JCD helps landowners plan and manage forestry projects on their land to reduce wildfire hazard and restore ecological integrity.

Bird Conservancy of the Rockies

<https://www.birdconservancy.org>

Bird Surveys Conducted 26,114	Products Informing
Conservation 105	Landowners Supported 638
Acres Restored/Enhanced 33,901	People Reached via Education 41,641

Monitor Migration: <https://www.birdconservancy.org/nfc-lightsout/>

Bird Banding Results: <https://www.birdconservancy.org/what-we-do/education/bird-banding/>

Register for Bird Camps 2026: <https://www.birdconservancy.org/what-we-do/education/bird-camps>

Publications: <https://www.birdconservancy.org/resource-center/publications/>

Save the Date: A Night For The Birds annual fundraiser

When: October 16, 2026, from 6 – 9 p.m.

Where: Denver Museum of Nature and Science, 2001 Colorado Blvd, Denver, CO 80205

Tickets will be available in August

Denver Audubon

<https://denveraudubon.org>

What We're About: <https://denveraudubon.org/about-us/>

Denver Audubon Blog: <https://denveraudubon.org/blog/>

Where To Go Birding: <https://www.denveraudubon.org/resources/#WheretogoBirding>

Native Plants for Birds: <https://www.denveraudubon.org/colorado-native-plant-resources/#NativePlantsforBirds>

Conservation & Research: <https://www.denveraudubon.org/conservation-and-research/#ConservationandResearch>

Upcoming Classes, Programs & Events: <https://www.denveraudubon.org/calendar>

Colorado Open Lands

<https://coloradoopenlands.org/>

724,902 acres of land

3471 miles of waterways

812 projects in 50

counties

Waterman Property

Located south of Pagosa Springs in Archuleta County along the Rio Blanco, this 330-acre property borders the river to the north, National Forest to the south, and sits adjacent to another conservation easement, with sweeping views of the San Juan Mountains in the background. Its protection strengthens an already connected landscape in this important corridor.

This highly scenic property features over a mile of riparian habitat along the Rio Blanco and half a mile along Leche Creek. It includes irrigated native grass meadows and pastures, supports livestock grazing, and provides critical habitat for bald eagle, northern leopard frog, and big game species including elk, mule deer, mountain lion, and black bear. Adjacent to San Juan National Forest and the El Rancho Pinoso conservation easement, the property contributes to a highly protected and ecologically connected landscape while remaining visible from several local roads.

This conservation success builds on the legacy of Southwest Land Alliance, whose exceptional portfolio of conserved lands in Archuleta County is now stewarded by Colorado Open Lands after our 2020 merger.

Conservation Leadership Series 2026 kicked off in April. This program was created for early- to mid-career professionals in any field (no prior conservation knowledge required) who are interested in engaging with land and water conservation and who want to bring their learning into their communities as conservation leaders. [Learn more about the 2027 Conservation Leadership Series here.](#)

New Episode of Landlines podcast: Landlines travels to Pueblo, Colorado, to the home of Dr. Henry Pollock and Dr. Judith Westveer, the executive director and associate director of Southern Plains Land Trust. SPLT owns and manages land in Bent, Baca, and Prowers counties in southeastern Colorado. They partner with Colorado Open Lands to permanently protect their land holdings through conservation easements currently totaling over 50,000 acres. Find Landlines by COL at RSS.com, Apple and Spotify, or stream it directly from <https://rss.com/podcasts/landlines>.

History and Mergers: <https://coloradoopenlands.org/history-and-mergers/>
Stay connected with COL via text messaging – simply text PROTECT to 303-988-2373.

Fall 2025 Newsletter: <https://coloradoopenlands.org/publications/>

More Conservation Updates <https://coloradoopenlands.org/latest-news/>

Mountain Area Land Trust

<https://savetheland.org/news/>

over 27,000 acres of land in its 6-county area

Read about more News and Success Stories at <https://savetheland.org/news/>

Sign up for MALT's newsletter at <https://savetheland.org/category/newsletter/>

Earth Day at MALT: Floyd Hill Meadow Grows by 11 Acres

MALT is proud to announce the addition of 11 acres of conserved land at Floyd Hill Meadow, generously donated by Nate Peterson, owner of Vederra Modular. This gift expands upon the original 18-acre Homestead Parcel, donated in 2023 by Albert Frei & Sons, Inc., permanently protected in partnership with Colorado Open Lands and supported by more than 100 community members.

71 Acres near Fairplay

MALT is pleased to announce the permanent protection of 71 acres along the Eastern Mosquito Range in Park County. Adjoining Pike National Forest this voluntary conservation agreement safeguards a remarkable mix of habitats, including coniferous forests, natural grasslands, alpine meadows, and 14 acres of wetlands along Fourmile Creek.

Save the Date: Preserving Our Planet: A Curated Conversation with Mountain Area Land Trust

Where: Colorado School of Mines, Mines Museum of Earth Science

When: Thursday, May 21st at 5:30 PM

Why: initial 2026 fundraiser, a private museum experience featuring behind-the-scenes tours and engaging conversations that connect science, conservation, and Colorado's natural legacy. The evening will include drinks and heavy hors d'oeuvres, a live auction and paddle raise, and inspiring discussion about how we can shape conservation together. [Purchase tickets here.](#)

Keep It Colorado

<https://www.keepitco.org/>

Our mission is to unite, elevate and empower Colorado's conservation community to protect the lands and waters that define our state.

<https://www.keepitco.org/whats-new>

Policy Update: Extending the Conservation Easement Tax Credit:

Approximately \$55 million in tax credits remain under the 2031 sunset of the program, and we are working with coalition members and others to understand when this impact will hit. Without an extension, we anticipate that all credits will be reserved this year, effectively sunsetting the program five years early and postponing new conservation projects indefinitely. [Read more here.](#)

Montezuma County - Keep It Colorado joined with the Montezuma Land Conservancy to conserve 165 acres of ecologically significant land along 1.5 miles of the West Fork of the West Mancos River. KIC granted \$55,000 from their Conservation Easement Transaction Cost Assistance Program.

Spring Summit Registration:

Where: Colorado Mountain College's Spring Valley campus in Glenwood Springs

When: May 27-29, 2026

Why: This event is designed for those who work in land conservation, especially using voluntary agreements called conservation easements. Land trust staff, interns, fellows, board members, public agency staff, conservation professionals, land stewards, funders, partners, students, AmeriCorps volunteers, and others with an interest in land conservation are all welcome and encouraged to attend. Registration will be closing for both [the Summit](#) and [the Dorm Rooms](#) on Friday, May 8.

News & Press Releases at <https://www.keepitco.org/whats-new>

Event Highlights at <https://www.keepitco.org/out-and-about-event-highlights>

Land Trust Events at <https://www.keepitco.org/out-and-about-event-highlights>

Coalition & Industry Events at <https://www.keepitco.org/coalition-industry-events>

The Source Newsletter at <https://www.keepitco.org/the-source-newsletter>

Douglas Land Conservancy

<https://douglaslandconservancy.org/>

over 28,000 acres of land in Douglas, Jefferson & Elbert Counties
Annual Photo Contest at <https://douglaslandconservancy.org/annual-photo-contest/>

News at <https://douglaslandconservancy.org/news/>

Save the Date: 2026 Under a Wild Sky Fundraiser

Where: Maytag Ranch, Larkspur, CO

When: Saturday, August 29th, 2026

Why: annual fund-raiser, Retro Cowboy theme

Tickets on Sale Soon

Save the Date: 2026 Oak Leaf Symposium

Where: PACE Center, Parker, CO

When: October 22, 10am-3pm

Why: Each year, DLC presents the Oak Leaf Award to a regional conservation hero. We also recognize outstanding land stewardship with the Mel Sorensen Stewardship Award. This year's awards will be part of a half-day educational symposium inspired by our award recipients, who will be announced soon. The inaugural Oak Leaf Symposium is open to conservation professionals, DLC volunteers, and the public. The program includes a keynote and breakout sessions. We'll conclude with lunch and an awards ceremony for our honorees, whose dedication exemplifies our mission of land conservation and stewardship.

Tickets on Sale Soon

Stewards of Golden Open Space

<https://stewardsofgolden.org/>

Map of the Golden Open Space Parks – [click here](#).

[Biological Survey of Golden Open Space Survey, Colorado Natural Heritage Program \(pdf\)](#)

[Common Native Plants of the Greater Golden Area \(pdf\)](#)

[Golden Rocks: The Geology and Mining History of Golden, Colorado \(pdf\)](#)

<https://stewardsofgolden.org/accomplishments>

Front Range Trails Conservancy

<https://frtrails.org/>

A nonprofit that protects and advances public lands along Colorado's Front Range by effecting equitable, effective, and lasting change through trail and advocacy projects.

Trail building schedule: <https://frtrails.org/projects>

SOLVE (Save Open Lands, Vistas and the Environment)

PLAN Jeffco's sister organization in Clear Creek County

<http://www.solveccc.org>

Links: <https://www.solveccc.org/Links.html>

Library: <https://www.solveccc.org/Library.html>

**Follow the postings from other conservation groups, listed
at the bottom of each of our web pages**

<https://www.PLANJeffco.org>

[Colorado Open Space Alliance \(COSA\)](#)

[Colorado Native Plant Society](#)

[Colorado Cattlemen's Agricultural Land Trust](#)

WANT TO SUPPORT OUR WORK?

I'd Like To Support Your Work



Making a difference on Earth Day 2026

WATCH THIS SPACE...Local Goings-on

Gross Reservoir Updates

The Gross Reservoir Expansion Project has the safety motto of "people first, safety always." To reinforce this mindset, we begin each project meeting with a safety moment.

Use Only What You Need!

The 2025–26 water year began with historically low snowpack, and severe drought persists across the state. Snowpack — which we depend on for our water supply — remains among the worst on record in our two primary watersheds: 55% of normal in the Colorado River Basin, the worst on record, and 42% of normal in the South Platte River Basin, the worst on record.

Given these conditions, the Denver Board of Water Commissioners today declared a Stage 1 drought on March 25, which includes mandatory limits on outdoor watering. [Read more here.](#)

Stage 1 watering restrictions are mandatory, and we are asking customers to keep sprinklers off until mid- to late-May or later, depending on local conditions.

The board has approved temporary drought charges that place a premium on higher-volume outdoor water use, while keeping the cost per gallon for essential indoor water use, such as drinking, cooking and bathing, unchanged.

To help reduce demand, we offer resources for those who want to improve indoor and outdoor efficiency, including discounts on Garden In A Box and up to \$750 in turfgrass removal rebates, along with other tools that support resilient landscapes.

Customers must also follow Denver Water's standard summer watering rules and can expect to see increased enforcement of watering restrictions.

PROJECT UPDATES

Beginning the week of April 20, Denver Water and its contractor, Kiewit Barnard, will resume placing roller-compacted concrete (RCC) to raise Gross Dam. This year, we will complete the final 22 feet of the dam raise.

For general project information, please email grossreservoir@denverwater.org or call 303-628-6348.

Visit the [Project My Map](#) for the most current information.

Stay up to date at <https://www.denverwater.org/grossreservoir/news>

Project Information & Impact: <https://www.denverwater.org/grossreservoir>

Is there a project in your neighborhood that you'd like more information on? Here's a link to Jeffco Planning and Zoning, where the new interactive map showing ongoing applications and active permits is located (scroll down to the bottom of the page): <https://www.jeffco.us/786/Planning-Zoning>

PLAN Jeffco, a dedicated non-profit organization staffed completely by volunteers, has been at the forefront of conserving Jefferson County's open spaces for over five decades.

Our foundational purpose from our bylaws remains clear - to advocate for and take actions to conserve and preserve open space lands in Jefferson County, while educating our visitors about the open spaces and their inhabitants.

The "Open Space Resolution" we fought for and championed in 1972 has not only preserved our natural landscapes but has also enhanced recreational opportunities for residents and visitors alike.

[Download the Enabling Resolution](#)

We remain committed to these efforts and encourage community engagement to ensure the health and beauty of our local ecosystems.

Support conservation in Jeffco, donate here so we can keep doing what we do!

JOIN or RENEW

Know someone who might be interested in this newsletter? Subscribe, like, share - forward this to them, and thank you!



About PLAN Jeffco

In 1972, PLAN Jeffco launched the citizen's initiative which created the Jeffco Open Space Program, protecting more than 70,000 acres comprising 27 parks and more than 270 miles of trails.

Follow us on [FACEBOOK](#)

Enjoy our postings on [INSTAGRAM](#)

Part of [LINKEDIN](#)? So are we!

Like [THREADS](#)? They're fun!

Reach for the sky, join us on [BLUESKY!](#)

PLAN Jeffco | 24395 Cody Park Road | Golden, CO 80401 US

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