A Letter from the Open Space Advisory Board Chairman

The projects funded in 2006 brought to a close the original Open Space Sales Tax passed by Adams County voters in 1999. The voters have given Adams County an opportunity to continue to pursue land preservation by extending the sales tax for another 20 years.

In these times of pressure from development and growth, there is even more urgency than before to preserve the nature and character of Adams County to ensure that future generations will know firsthand the beauty and importance that open space provides. Please join us in our land preservation efforts. You can participate by attending our monthly advisory board meetings, visiting the trails and open spaces in your communities and becoming a voice for the wildlife inhabiting these unique spaces that truly depend on our concern and generosity for their survival.

Sincerely,
Tim Ferrell
Chairman

PAST OPEN SPACE ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERS

Robert Sakata, City of Brighton
Steve Bernard, City of Thornton
Art Mander, City of Thornton
Ken Eichel, City of Westminster
Ann Merkel, City of Westminster
Lois Buckman, Unincorporated Adams County
Robert Welte, Unincorporated Adams County
Number of Acres Preserved from the Open Space Sales Tax 2000-2006

- Adams County: 1,941 acres
- Barr Lake State Park*: 123 acres
- City of Aurora: 70 acres
- City of Brighton: 42 acres
- City of Broomfield: 3 acres
- City of Commerce City: 118 acres
- City of Thornton: 358 acres
- City of Westminster: 379 acres

Special Districts:
- Hyland Hills Parks & Recreation District**: 70 acres
- Strasburg Metro Parks & Recreation District*: 5 acres

Total: 3,109 acres

*In partnership with Adams County
**In partnership with Adams County and the City of Westminster
Adams County Open Space Accomplishments 2000-2006

LAND PRESERVATION
A conservation easement transfers the development rights of a property to the grant recipient such as the county or a city. The property remains in the same ownership and is forever preserved from development.

In 2000, Adams County completed its first conservation easement with the McIntosh Dairy, located on historic Riverdale Road along the South Platte River. Since 2000, an additional five conservation easements have been negotiated with county landowners.

LAND PURCHASES
The Open Space Sales Tax preserves natural areas by providing grants to acquire land that will be dedicated to preserving working farms and protecting natural areas, neighborhood parks and community buffers to limit sprawl.

Forty-nine projects have received funding from the grant funds for land purchases. Since the beginning of the Open Space program, $15,619,360 has been used to preserve 1,886 acres for open space purposes. An additional $8,981,675 has been used to protect 1,223 acres through conservation easements (see definitions on page 22).

Adams County Open Space, north side of Barr Lake
Other Funded Projects

Funding has gone to the cities and towns throughout Adams County for a wide variety of projects. The projects include new construction and development of parks and trails, as well as renovation of existing neighborhood parks. Shown here is a summary of these projects. Eleven other projects received $101,595 in funding for planning, trail signage, tree planting, ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) access and historic preservation.

- NEW PARK CONSTRUCTION
  Thirty-six new projects received $4,816,462 for the development of new parks and multi-use athletic fields.

- RENOVATION OF EXISTING PARKS
  Fourteen projects received $1,613,506 to make improvements to existing parks and public amenities.

- TRAIL CONSTRUCTION
  Eight projects received $1,696,050 to construct new trails and make safety improvements to existing trail crossings.

- ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION
  Nine projects received $35,076 for environmental education.
The Adams County Open Space Sales Tax began January 1, 2000. The tax was reauthorized in 2004 for 20 years and increased to 1/4th of one cent effective January 1, 2007. The sales tax is distributed three ways. Sixty-eight percent of the revenue goes into a competitive grant process for Adams County and its cities. A seven-member Open Space Advisory Board reviews grant applications and recommends funding to the Board of County Commissioners. Three advisory board members come from cities and four members from unincorporated Adams County. Thirty percent of the sales tax revenue is returned to the jurisdiction where the tax is collected. Two percent is retained to administer the Open Space Sales Tax program. See charts below for a breakdown of the 30% distribution for 2006 and of the 30% distribution that was collected and distributed from 2000 – 2006.

### 30% Distribution January 1 - December 31, 2006

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### 30% Distribution January 1, 2000 - December 31, 2006

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### Adams County
- **Riverdale Horse Property** - $396,675
- **US 85 Farmland Corridor Preservation** - $3,600,000
- **South Platte Trail, 120th Ave. to 124th Ave.** - $255,850

### City of Brighton
- **Trees for Water Tower Park** - $5,000
- **Bromley Hishinuma Farm Acquisition** - $50,000
- **Brighton Skate Park** - $50,000

### City of Commerce City
- **Pioneer Park Phase 2** - $766,474
- **Pioneer Park ADA Access** - $2,589
- **Gifford Park ADA Access** - $1,200
- **Belle Creek Multi-purpose Field** - $10,000

### City of Northglenn
- **Croke Reservoir Nature Area Improvements** - $470,500

### City of Thornton
- **Eastlake Open Space Acquisition** - $500,000

### City of Westminster
- **Big Dry Creek Park** - $500,000
- **Cheyenne Ridge Park** - $80,000

### SPONSORED PROJECTS
- **Wonders of Wildlife Camp (City of Brighton)**
  - Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory - $5,000
- **Jim Baker Statue Base & Signage (City of Westminster)**
  - Westminster Historical Society - $4,200
- **Prairie Dog Action (City of Westminster)**
  - Front Range Community College - $5,000

### 68% Distribution
Open Space Grant Projects Funded in 2006
Conservation Options for Landowners

Many landowners in Adams County would like to conserve their lands, but do not know how. There are a variety of conservation options available to landowners that enable them to protect their land in a manner that meets their specific needs. Below are brief descriptions of just some of the conservation options available to landowners.

Conservation Easements
A conservation easement is a legal agreement between a landowner and a local government agency or land trust that permanently restricts the uses of the land in order to protect the land’s conservation values. Conservation easements allow the landowner to conserve important aspects of the land without taking away the landowner’s right to use the land, sell the land or pass the land on to heirs. In addition, conservation easements are flexible and can be written to meet the specific needs of the landowner.

Landowners who place conservation easements on their land are compensated financially for voluntarily agreeing to place restrictions on their land. Landowners can either sell or donate a conservation easement. Significant state and federal tax incentives are given to landowners who donate all or a portion of the conservation easement.

Land Donation
Donating land for conservation purposes is a conservation tool that ensures long-term protection of the land and relieves the landowner of management responsibilities and payment of property taxes. In addition, a donation can provide the landowner with substantial income tax deductions and estate tax benefits, as well as relief from any capital gain taxes that would result from selling the property.

Bargain Sale of Land
Bargain sales are a good conservation tool for landowners who would like to protect their land, yet need to realize some immediate income from selling their land. In a bargain sale, the landowner sells the land to a land trust or local government agency for less than its fair market value. As a result, the land is protected and the landowner receives cash, avoids some capital gains tax and is entitled to receive a charitable income tax deduction based on the difference between the bargain sale price and fair market value of the land.

Retained Life Estate
A landowner may wish to donate property to ensure that it will be protected in its natural state, but may also desire to retain possession and use the property for his or her lifetime.

By donating a retained life estate, the landowner can continue to enjoy the land. The retained possession may be for the landowner’s lifetime or for a fixed number of years. In addition, a landowner who donates a retained life estate may be eligible for a tax deduction when the gift is made.

Transfer of Development Rights (TDRs)
In addition to the land preservation techniques listed, Adams County also administers a Transfer of Development Rights program that operates in a complementary fashion with the purchase of conservation easements. For more information on TDRs, contact the Adams County Planning and Development Department at 303.453.8000.

For more information about the Adams County Open Space program and the efforts to preserve working farms and ranches, wildlife habitat and quality of life in Adams County, contact:

Adams County Open Space
9755 Henderson Road
Brighton, CO 80601
303.637.8004

Visit us at
www.co.adams.co.us