



For Immediate Release
April 24, 2024

Contact: Meghan Dougherty
720-688-0037
Meghan.Dougherty@state.co.us

Colorado Lottery Doubles its 2024 Starburst Award Winners Demonstrating Excellence in the Use of Lottery Funds

Nearly \$9 million is represented in 13 projects that include outdoor equity, conservation, restoration, parks, trails, and wildlife projects

Pueblo, Colo. - This year's Colorado Lottery Starburst Awards recognize 13 projects, representing nearly \$9 million, for their excellence in the use of Lottery funds. The diverse projects were chosen from across the state, based on the creativity of the project, economic and social impact on the community, and the goals achieved.

Lottery proceeds are distributed statewide through grants distributed by Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO), the Conservation Trust Fund (CTF), Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW), the Outdoor Equity Fund, and Building Excellent Schools Today (BEST). The 13 projects are located near Salida, Castle Rock, Colorado Springs, El Jebel, La Junta, Erie, Grand County, Delhi, and Larimer and Hinsdale Counties.

"The incredibly impactful projects represented here showcase critical funding for everything from important planning grants and connecting communities through trails, to open space conservation and the protection of vistas, and demonstrate how Lottery dollars have helped make Colorado what it is today," said Tom Seaver, director of the Colorado Lottery. "This year's Starburst winners are exemplary advocates for their communities, making a difference one project at a time."

This year the Lottery received more submissions than ever for the award, which included programs and projects funded with Lottery revenue like parks, playgrounds, outdoor recreation facilities, land conservation, trail enhancement, open space acquisition, wildlife natural resource preservation, outdoor equity projects, and public school capital improvements.

This year's 2024 Starburst Award winners include:

1. [Arkansas Headwaters Recreation Area - AHRA Rec Ranger Program](#) - \$23,768 (GOCO)

In response to the unprecedented number of people recreating in the Upper Arkansas River Valley, the Bureau of Land Management, United States Forest Service, Colorado Parks and Wildlife/AHRA, the National Forest Foundation, and Envision Chaffee County partnered to





develop the Rec Ranger Program to help mitigate negative effects on the environment. Because of the increased enjoyment of this popular area, it was determined that more field presence and education was needed to help curb destructive behaviors. The program created a pathway for young professionals to gain experience in a natural resources career. Thanks to this Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) grant, this summer of 2023, new rec rangers contacted more than 1,600 dispersed campers, broke down 150 illegal fire rings, removed 189 contractor bags of trash and 54 bags of human waste, and distributed housing resource information to over 100 residential camps. [Photo](#)

2. [Town of Castle Rock & Meadows Metropolitan District No. 1 \(Castle Rock\) - Butterfield Crossing and Possibilities Playground](#) - \$421,196 (CTF)

Inclusivity is at the heart of the Butterfield Crossing and Possibilities Playground in Castle Rock. A total \$5.98 million project, the Town of Castle Rock created this vibrant and welcoming space that transcends the traditional barriers to access to outdoor play. Every feature was crafted to ensure that individuals of all abilities can fully engage and enjoy the park experience including wheelchair-accessible fitness courts, sensory walls with built-in tactile elements and American Sign Language (ASL) alphabets, a Roller-Table offering sensory stimulation through deep-muscle pressure, and the We-Go-Swing which promotes social interaction and provides visual and vestibular stimulation, including for those in wheelchairs. [Photo](#)

3. [City of Colorado Springs - Panorama Park](#) - \$350,000 (GOCO)

Panorama Park, a 13.5-acre park in Colorado Springs, was redesigned in 2022 to expand recreational equity and improve wellness for people who live in the area. With a planning grant from GOCO, and collaborative planning with RISE|Southeast and Trust for Public Land (TPL), the park's redesign created more opportunity for recreation for this diverse and underserved community. The \$7.2 million project is now the largest recreation area near Colorado Springs. [Photo](#)

4. [Crown Mountain Park & Recreation District - Crown Mountain Bike Park](#) - \$239,783 (GOCO \$168,091, CTF \$71,692)

The new Crown Mountain Bike Park in El Jebel, which boasts more than 10 different features for all levels of experience, was an ambitious project that repurposed underutilized space into a world-class bike park. The Crown Mountain Park & Recreation District was committed to building a bike park, reviving the land, and transforming it into a space that would serve





thousands of people. This year-round, affordable, and multigenerational community amenity offers vast health and recreation opportunities that eliminates barriers to biking by also offering free access to equipment and facilities. [Photo](#)

5. [The Town of La Junta - Brick and Tile Park](#) - \$2,702,796 (GOCO \$350,000 CTF \$84,017)

The La Junta Brick & Tile Park project transformed a once-overrun 2.5-acre city-owned space into a vibrant and inclusive recreational area. Addressing the community's need for inclusive fitness and play options, the park offers innovative design features that include playgrounds for various age groups, freestanding events, and fitness equipment. Special features like a Cedar Arbor Swing for wheelchair users make this park fun and accessible for everyone in the community. Beyond recreation, the park incorporates educational elements such as signage that details local history, flora, fauna, and conservation efforts. [Post](#)

6. [Town of Erie - Coal Creek Park](#) - \$555,596 (GOCO)

Coal Creek Park in Old Town Erie underwent extensive redevelopment starting in 2017, transforming the 6.1-acre park into a vibrant community asset. With this most recent grant, the town was able to add 163 new trees, a turf multi-use and event lawn, a 10,000 sq. ft. playground, a loop trail with interactive music elements, and a 2,800 sq. ft. recirculating splash pad that transforms into an ice rink during winter months. One of the park's crowning jewels in this \$7.86 million project and year-round destination is Maddie's Playground. It was planned by park employees and by a family who lost a child to SIDS, Maddie. Created in 2021, the park was created to memorialize Maddie and to commemorate the lives of all children lost too soon. Visitors to the butterfly-themed playground experience colorful butterflies that lead them to the painted path and a custom butterfly play structure, with a message of hope and remembrance. A celebration plaza memorializes children who left this world too soon with pavers carved with the child's name. [Photo](#)

7. [Colorado Parks and Wildlife - Winter Wildlife Conservation Initiative \(WWCI\)](#) - \$32,500 (GOCO)

Unique to Starburst Awards this year, the Winter Wildlife Conservation Initiative (WWCI), initiated by Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW), was awarded a Starburst for this program that addresses the lack of awareness surrounding the challenges wildlife face during winter due to increasing outdoor recreation. The WWCI developed a comprehensive educational campaign to educate the public on the impacts of winter recreation on wildlife and to promote responsible behavior. With this funding, CPW hired a team to assist with outreach and develop





a dedicated website featuring educational resources, educational materials, a social media toolkit, and two animated videos highlighting responsible winter recreation practices. [Photo](#)

8. [The Town of Castle Rock - Colorado Front Range Trail \(CFRT\)](#) - \$2,000,000 (GOCO)

The Castle Rock Colorado Front Range Trail (CFRT) is part of a statewide multi-use trail envisioned since 2003. The goal was to complete nearly five miles of new 10-foot-wide concrete trail, connecting Denver through southern Douglas County. This \$7 million project helped open a major recreational corridor and regional trail alternative, which now connects Castle Rock to Colorado Springs to Pueblo. [Photo](#)

9. [Vibe Tribe Adventures - Black Girls Hike, Urban Trekker, and American Adventure Sports Club](#) - \$65,000 (OEGP)

Vibe Tribe Adventures is a Denver nonprofit that works to expand adventure sports opportunities for BIPOC individuals and friends. Programs within Vibe Tribe, like Black Girls Hike, Urban Trekker, and the American Adventure Sports Club, offer diverse outdoor experiences centered in helping the urban community connect, reconnect, or deepen their access to the outdoors. In 2023, Black Girls Hike promoted responsible outdoor recreation, benefiting 480 participants. The American Adventure Sports Club engaged over 600 youth in nature-based activities, emphasizing conservation and outdoor industry training. [Photo](#)

10. [Larimer County Conservation Corps - Elkhorn Creek Forest Health Initiative](#) - \$65,275 (GOCO)

This grant, as part of a total \$75,678 project, was critical in helping to mitigate fire risk near Red Feather Lakes by reducing forest densities and hazardous fuels, as well as restoring forest structure. Over six weeks, a crew of one leader and seven AmeriCorps members completed 24 acres of fire mitigation. The project helped contribute to fire prevention efforts following the costly 2020 Cameron Peak Fire and protects the Poudre River watershed, which provides drinking water for over 300,000 people. The Elkhorn Creek Forest Health Initiative, a collaboration between Larimer County Conservation Corps, The Coalition for the Poudre River Watershed, and Ben Delatour Scout Ranch, were integral partners in requesting this GOCO grant to continue fire mitigation work in this area. [Photo](#)





11. [Great Outdoors Colorado & National Fish & Wildlife Foundation - RESTORE Colorado](#) - \$1 million annual/\$4.5 million to-date (GOCO)

GOCO funds the restoration of Colorado's rivers, streams, wetlands, and critical habitat through the RESTORE Colorado Program (Restoration and Stewardship of Outdoor Resources and the Environment). Established in 2019 in collaboration with the National Fish & Wildlife Foundation (NFWF), RESTORE is a strategic partnership designed to fund large-scale habitat restoration and stewardship projects across prioritized habitats. Funding partners include GOCO, NFWF, Gates Family Foundation, Colorado Department of Natural Resources, Colorado Parks and Wildlife, and the Colorado Water Conservation Board, which have helped improve 219 miles of fencing across the Colorado landscape. Since its inception, nearly 300,000 acres of rangelands and grasslands now have improved management practices, and over 443 acres of wetlands have been restored to support a broad range of species, as well as migratory waterfowl. [Photo](#)

12. [Hinsdale County - Lake San Cristobal Island Acquisition](#) - \$1,305,464 (GOCO)

Hinsdale County, along with The Trust for Public Land and Friends of Lake San Cristobal, acquired a peninsula and island at Lake San Cristobal in Colorado - the state's 2nd highest alpine lake. This acquisition, funded in-part by a grassroots campaign and a land acquisition grant from GOCO, helped create much-needed recreational access to the lake in one of the state's most remote, popular, natural settings. The property was opened to the public, offering views of the lake and surrounding mountains, with plans for an ADA-accessible pier to enhance accessibility. The project received support from various stakeholders, highlighting the importance of community involvement in conservation efforts. There is also Lottery funding in the ADA Fishing Pier already on the lake. [Photo](#)

13. [Colorado Cattlemen's Agricultural Land Trust - Delhi Ranch Conservation Easement](#)

The Delhi Ranch Conservation Easement consists of approximately 27,340-acres of land and spans Las Animas, Otero, and Pueblo counties. The Delhi Ranch is located within the expansive native shortgrass prairie of the Great Plains, rich with canyons and bluffs. The combined protected ranches grant travelers of U.S. Highway 350 unobstructed views of Timpas Creek, the open prairie, canyon systems, and bluffs, for nearly 15 miles. The property also provides an opportunity to experience portions of the historic Santa Fe Trail that bisects the Property. The conservation easement was made possible through a GOCO grant through partnership with The Colorado Cattlemen's Agricultural Land Trust (CCALT), Walter and Lynda Hall, and Gary and Havilah Hall. The partnerships help conserve the UE and the Iron Springs ranches of Delhi, Colo., under the Delhi Ranch Conservation Easement. [Photo](#)





About Colorado Lottery:

Since 1983, the Colorado Lottery has returned more than \$4 billion to outdoor projects and schools through Great Outdoors Colorado, the Conservation Trust Fund, Colorado Parks and Wildlife, and Building Excellent Schools Today. Proceeds from sales of Colorado Lottery games - Scratch, Powerball, Mega Millions, Colorado Lotto+, Lucky for Life, Cash 5, and Pick 3 - enhance, protect, and improve parks, trails, and open space in Colorado. For more information, visit coloradolottery.com.

###

