

ANNUAL REVIEW 2022

COLORADO SPRINGS
PARKS • RECREATION • CULTURAL SERVICES



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CULTURAL SERVICES
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BRITT HALEY

DIRECTOR- PARKS, RECREATION AND CULTURAL SERVICES

Our Department of Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services (PRCS) was off to a flying start in 2022, when I was asked to serve as the acting director upon the departure of our leader and champion for the past ten years, Karen Palus. What an undertaking that was! Staff in the department and numerous external partners offered and gave their assistance. Thank you so much for that great support and a sincere thank you to Karen for her leadership. It turns out that I could not resist this world class system of parkland, golf courses, cemetery, and Pikes Peak – America’s Mountain enterprise operations, teamed up with our history, cultural resources, trails, open spaces, sports programs, and community centers. I was, and will remain, simply hooked.

In this new role as Director, I feel a powerful responsibility to be a conscientious steward of Colorado Springs’ beloved parks, recreation, and cultural treasures as well as to support our incredible park professionals. They put their hearts into providing the best overall system for our community and our visitors every day.

I also take strong personal pride in having been chosen by Mayor John Suthers for this responsibility. Mayor Suthers has guided Colorado Springs and the Parks Department steadily and with statesmanship for nearly eight years at this writing. He has supported stronger partnerships, honored our history, and elevated the mission of the department.

The two things I admire most are his intentional practice of reminding us that parks, trails, and open spaces are critical City infrastructure and that he shows true appreciation for the passionate, hardworking employees who fuel our department.

2022 was certainly an extraordinary year and it brought the equally extraordinary projects you will read about in this report. Here are a few highlights deserving special recognition. We celebrated the Trails, Open Space and Parks (TOPS) Program’s 25th Anniversary. TOPS has conserved more than 7,500 acres of open space, built or enhanced 67 parks and constructed over 53 miles of trails. Our citizens and visitors have invested significantly in our trails, open spaces and parks, even if they didn’t realize it when they paid that one penny on their ten-dollar purchases. Don’t you love the idea of investing in something precious without even thinking about it? You can read more about the TOPS Program on pages 13 and 14.

2022 proved again that our park system is one of a kind through the achievement of the Leave No Trace - Gold Standard Site Designation for sixteen of our wonderful sites. Achieving Gold Standard status means that our parks and people have set the bar for responsible recreation across our community. We join an elite group of 13 parks nationwide to earn this national recognition for leadership in outdoor stewardship. Colorado Springs is the first municipality and the first multi-site system to receive this designation. Read more about Leave No Trace on page 8.

In partnership with Trust for Public Land, we celebrated the reopening of Panorama Park which was the largest neighborhood park renovation in our City’s history. It still brings tears to my eyes to recall what the park used to look like, and how our community in southeast Colorado Springs helped Trust for Public Land and our department transform this 13.5-acre park. The sound of the happy squeals of children playing, while we were enjoying the reopening ceremony, still rings in my ears today. The Panorama Park story is found on pages 9 and 10.

Looking ahead, I commit to work with our team to identify a fiscally responsible approach to taking care of Colorado Springs’ incredible park system which has boosted the City of Colorado Springs high on the national rankings for the most desirable places to live and play.



THE PRCS DEPARTMENT



PARK OPERATIONS

Regional Parks, Trails and Open Space
Special Improvement Maintenance Districts
Urban Parks and Athletic Fields
Historic Downtown Medians and Horticulture



PARK DEVELOPMENT

Planning and Design
Capital Improvement Projects
Trails, Open Space and Parks (TOPS) Program



RECREATION AND ADMINISTRATION

Administration
Community Centers
Sertich Ice Center
Special Events
Therapeutic Recreation Program
Volunteers
Youth and Adult Sports



CULTURAL SERVICES

Colorado Springs Pioneers Museum
Garden of the Gods
Helen Hunt Falls Visitor and Nature Center
Rock Ledge Ranch Historic Site
Starsmore Visitor and Nature Center



ENTERPRISE OPERATIONS

Pikes Peak - America's Mountain
Patty Jewett Golf Course
Valley Hi Golf Course
Evergreen Cemetery
Fairview Cemetery

DEPARTMENT NEWS

This year, City Forestry transferred from the Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Services department to the Public Works Department. As a result, City Forestry can now take advantage of various Public Works efficiencies such as aligned budgets, shared personnel, shared equipment, and the ability to respond to storms and roadway emergencies.



On June 1, 2022, the Colorado Springs Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Department began operating the Westside Community Center as a public-private partnership. This new operational model, which integrates recommendations resulting from a robust dialogue and visioning process with residents, includes City staffing and operational funding and provides partnership and revenue-generating opportunities with external entities. The Department believes the long-term success of the community center will occur through the provision of this balanced set of programs, services and businesses that will benefit the entire community.

The Colorado Springs Pioneers Museum (CSPM) secured funding to complete a transformative capital improvement project that will replace the old and failing HVAC equipment in the 1903 El Paso County Courthouse.

Because of water leaks and equipment failures, the museum has had to close galleries and cancel exhibits in order to protect collections and visitors. The \$6.5 million project is funded by the City General Fund, LART Fund, Conservation Trust Fund, CSPM Board, CSPM Foundation, Edith Jackson Trust, and Gates Family Foundation. Construction will begin in mid-2023 and last approximately 8 months.



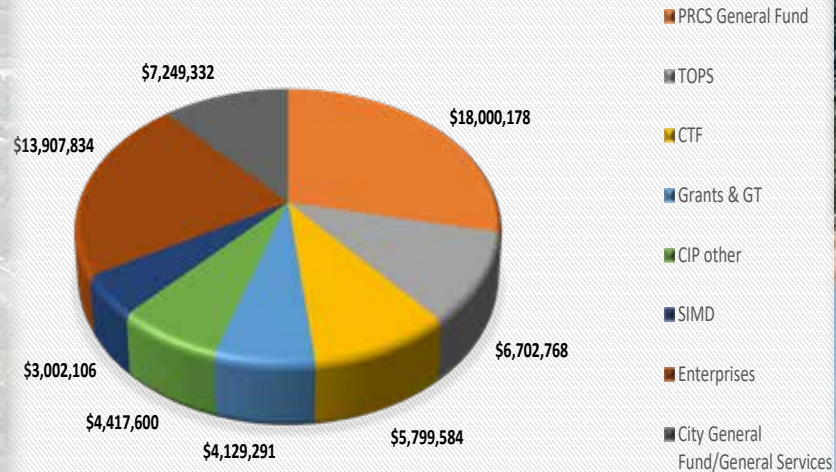
2022 FUNDING

2022 BUDGETED FUNDING SOURCES

Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services General Fund	\$18,000,178
Trails, Open Space and Parks Tax (TOPS)	\$6,702,768
Conservation Trust Fund (CTF)	\$5,799,584
Grants and Gift Trust	\$4,129,291
Capital Improvement Projects (CIP)	\$417,600
Special Improvement Maintenance Districts (SIMD)	\$3,002,106
Enterprises	\$13,907,834
City General Fund/General Services	\$7,249,332

TOTAL \$63,208,693

2022 BUDGETED FUNDING SOURCES

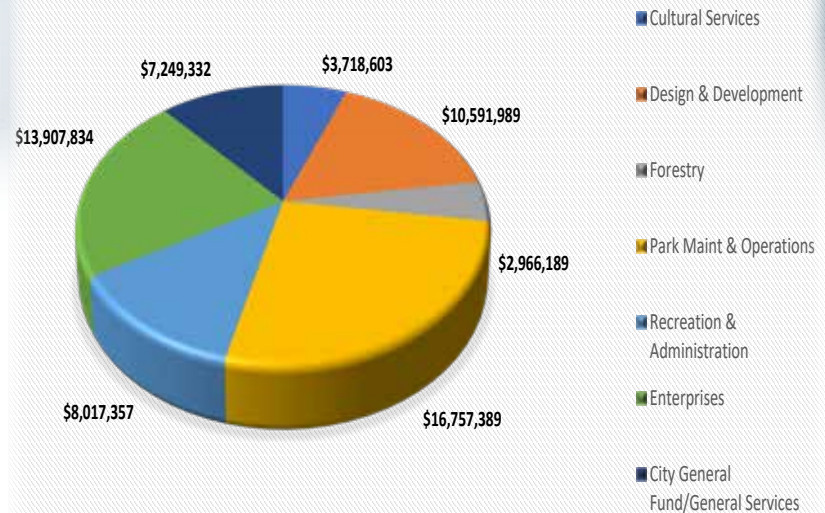


2022 FUNDING BY DIVISION

Cultural Services	\$3,718,603
Design and Development	\$10,591,989
Forestry	\$2,966,189
Park Maintenance and Operations	\$16,757,389
Recreation and Administration	\$8,017,357
Enterprises	\$13,907,834
City General Fund/General Services	\$7,249,332

TOTAL \$63,208,693

2022 PRCS FUNDING BY DIVISION





2022 TOTAL POSITIONS BY FUND							
	General Fund	TOPS	CTF	Grants	SIMD	Enterprises	Totals
Cultural Services	19.5	1	1.5	0	0	0	22
Design and Development	6	2	0	0	0	0	8
Forestry	12	0	1	0	0	0	13
Park Maintenance and Operations	20	14.5	40.5	0	10.5	0	85.5
Recreation and Administration	37	1	0	1	0	0	39
Enterprises	0	0	0	0	0	35	35
Total	94.5	18.5	43	1	10.5	35	201.5

TRAILS, OPEN SPACE AND PARKS (TOPS)

TOPS revenue is generated from a 0.1% sales tax that was adopted by voters in April 1997, and is set to expire in 2025.

The majority of funds are designated for open space purchases and associated stewardship (min. of 60%); construction, acquisition and maintenance of new trails (max. of 20%); and construction and acquisition (but not maintenance) of new parks (max. of 20%).

2022 REVENUE TOTAL \$11,624,500

CONSERVATION TRUST FUND (CTF)

Local governments receive 40% of the total revenue generated by the State Lottery, with our city share distributed based on population.

CTF funds can be used for the acquisition, development, and maintenance of new conservation sites and for capital improvements or maintenance for recreational purposes on any public site.

2022 REVENUE TOTAL \$5,191,270

SPECIAL IMPROVEMENT MAINTENANCE DISTRICTS (SIMD)

Assessments against real properties within established districts provide for maintenance of specific improvements in these areas.

SIMD areas include Norwood, Old Colorado City, Platte Avenue, Colorado Avenue, Gateway, Woodstone, Stetson Hills, and Briargate.

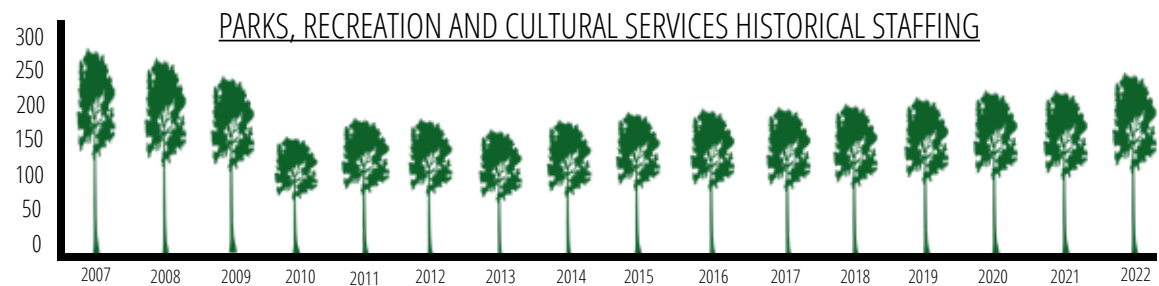
2022 REVENUE TOTAL \$2,860,476

ENTERPRISES

Enterprises enable the city to offer numerous cost-effective services since they are predominantly supported by user fees and do not receive support from the general fund.

Enterprises include Patty Jewett and Valley Hi Golf Courses, Evergreen and Fairview Cemeteries, and Pikes Peak – America’s Mountain in partnership with the US Forest Service.

2022 REVENUE TOTAL \$13,941,710



ENJOYING THE CITY'S PARKS AND PROGRAMS

Colorado Springs offers many wonderful programs and amenities throughout the city. Here are just a few examples of how the community engaged with PRCS in 2022.

Patty Jewett and
Valley Hi Golf Courses
148,000 Rounds



Regional Parks and TOPS
Interpretive Programs
6,000 Contacts



Pikes Peak -
America's Mountain
**476,000 Highway
Travelers**



Garden of the Gods
3,500,000 Visitors



Sertich Ice Center and
Acacia Ice Rink
270,000 Visitors



Youth and Adult Sports
183,000 Participants



Garden of the Gods
Visitor and Nature Center
1,120,000 Visitors



Therapeutic
Recreation Program
4,500 Participants



Rock Ledge Ranch
Historic Site
75,000 Visitors



Water Conservation
**87,000 sf of Grass
Converted to Native**



Volunteers
**118,700
Volunteer Hours**



Manitou Incline Trail
162,385 Visitors



Colorado Springs
Pioneers Museum
83,248 Visitors



EXCELLENCE IN OUTDOOR STEWARDSHIP

GOLD STANDARD

Sixteen of our beautiful parks, trails and open spaces received the Leave No Trace Gold Standard Designation, a nationally recognized award given for leadership in outdoor stewardship. This is the first time that it was given to an entire park system. It is also the first time a municipal park, trail, or open space received the designation.



GOLD STANDARD CRITERIA

- ✓ Demonstrate successful implementation of Leave No Trace outdoor skills and ethics into management, programming, outreach, and education efforts at the site
- ✓ Formally train staff and community partners in Leave No Trace Outdoor Ethics
- ✓ Include Leave No Trace language and messaging on signs at trailheads, visitor centers and campgrounds as well as in pamphlets, maps and other distributed materials for visitors
- ✓ Facilitate Leave No Trace interpretive programs including ranger talks and trail outings for visitors

7 PRINCIPLES OF LEAVE NO TRACE

#1: PLAN AHEAD AND PREPARE

A little preparation goes a long way! Checking the forecast, planning your route, and reviewing the Rules and Regulations will help prepare you for your Regional Parks, Trails and Open Space adventure.

#2: TRAVEL ON DURABLE SURFACES

Stay on designated trails to minimize soil erosion and preserve vegetation. Muddy trails? Hike right through them or stick to the urban trail system during heavy mud conditions.

#3: DISPOSE OF WASTE PROPERLY

Please pack out all trash, including bagged dog waste and food items, or place it into trash cans before leaving the park. This keeps our park system healthy and litter free!

#4: LEAVE WHAT YOU FIND

Our plains to peaks community is home to a variety of natural and cultural resources. Remember to take pictures of these fun finds and leave them where they are for other park users to discover.

#5: BE CAREFUL WITH FIRE

A little spark can go a long way. Smoking, open fires, and charcoal grills are prohibited in our Regional Parks, Trails and Open Spaces. Help us protect these natural areas from wildfires.

#6: RESPECT WILDLIFE

Observe wildlife from a distance and never approach, feed, or follow them. Human food is unhealthy for all wildlife and feeding them starts bad habits. Keep our critters safe by keeping your snacks to yourself!

#7: BE CONSIDERATE OF OTHER VISITORS

Practice recreational empathy! Be sure the fun you have outdoors does not bother others. Be considerate when passing others on the trail. Keep your pet on a leash to protect it, other visitors, and wildlife.

PANORAMA PARK

In 2022 we completed Panorama Park, a catalytic project in Southeast Colorado Springs. The park has had overwhelmingly positive impacts for Colorado Springs residents.

YOUTH LEADERSHIP

A Youth Advisory Council (YAC) worked directly with the design team to help create Panorama Park.

UNIVERSALLY ACCESSIBLE

Panorama Park's design considers the wide spectrum of human abilities and strives to meet the needs of all.

HEALTHY PEOPLE

Panorama Park provides a place for all to exercise and enjoy a healthy lifestyle.





**WATER
EFFICIENT
DESIGN**

Native and synthetic turf was intentionally designed for lower maintenance and water use.



**GREEN
FOUNDATION**

Panorama Park is designed to effectively manage stormwater to improve water quality and increase connections to nature within the urban fabric.



**TREE
CANOPY**

Over 250 trees were planted to improve tree canopy coverage in Southeast Colorado Springs.



**COMMUNITY
CONNECTIVITY**

The Youth Advisory Council worked with the Trails and Open Space Coalition to examine pedestrian and bicycle connections between the park and Sand Creek Trail.



**ART
AND CULTURE**

The Southeast is a lively and creative community. Panorama Park is a great place for people to gather and celebrate the culture and talents of this diverse community.



RECOGNITION

GAZETTE, BEST OF THE SPRINGS 2022

Museum

Colorado Springs
Pioneers Museum
Silver

Ice Rink

Ice Rink at Acacia Park
Gold
Sertich Ice Center
Silver

Trail

Garden of the Gods
Gold
Section 16 Trail
Silver

Neighborhood Park

John Venezia Community Park
Bronze

City Park

Garden of the Gods
Gold
Palmer Park
Bronze

Place to Gaze at Pikes Peak

Garden of the Gods
Gold
Palmer Park
Bronze

Dog Park

Rampart Dog Park
Bronze

Place to Propose

Garden of the Gods
Silver

Golf Course

Patty Jewett Golf Course
Gold

Prime Rib

Patty Jewett Bar and Grill
Silver

Impressive Outing

Garden of the Gods
Silver

Restroom

Garden of the Gods
Gold
Old Colorado City Bancroft Park
Silver

Lunch Time / After Work Hike

Garden of the Gods
Gold
Palmer Park
Silver
Ute Valley Park
Bronze

Day Trip

Garden of the Gods
Bronze

COLORADO SPRINGS INDEPENDENT, BEST OF 2022

Tourist Attraction

Garden of the Gods
Gold

Outdoor Family Fun

Garden of the Gods
Silver

Museum

Colorado Springs Pioneers Museum
Gold

Place for Adrenaline Junkies

Manitou Incline
Gold
Pikes Peak - America's Mountain
Silver

COLORADO SPRINGS BUSINESS JOURNAL, BEST IN BUSINESS 2022

Golf Course

Patty Jewett
Silver

Museum and Art Gallery

Colorado Springs Pioneers Museum
Silver

Tourist Attraction

Pikes Peak - America's Mountain
Silver

TRIP ADVISOR

Garden of the Gods

#9 Attraction in the World

OTHER DEPARTMENT AWARDS

PIKES PEAK - AMERICA'S MOUNTAIN SUMMIT VISITOR CENTER AWARDS

- Colorado Parks and Recreation Association Columbine Award – Renovated Facility Design
- Colorado Professional Award presented by ASLA (American Society of Landscape Architects)
- Meeting the Challenge of a Difficult Job (Subcontractor) – Silver– ICI, LLC
- PCI Design Award: Special Award: All-Precast Concrete Solution Award
- Precast/Prestressed Concrete Institute (PCI) Design Award: Special Award: All-Precast Concrete Solution Award

Madison Peddy and Michael Bowman
Rocky Mountain Ranger Association's
Distinguished Service Award



Kim King
Recreation and Administration Manager
City Employee of the Year



TOPS IN 2023

TRAILS, OPEN SPACES AND PARKS (TOPS)

TOPS is a sales tax program for the city that plays a vital role in the protection and conservation of Trails, Open Spaces and Parks. TOPS has been working hard protecting the spaces we love since it was first approved by Colorado Springs voters in April 1997. In 2003, voters chose to extend the 0.10% tax, 1 penny on every \$10 purchase, through 2025.

TOPS

TOPS has created a legacy and it's not nearly done! There are big plans for TOPS in 2023.

Below are some goals for the coming year.

- Chamberlain Trail design and construction
- Corral Bluffs Open Space cultural study
- Grey Hawk Park Master Plan
- Black Canyon Open Space quarry reclamation
- Oak Meadows Park playground replacement
- Blodgett/Pikeview Open Space Master and Management Plan implementation
- Memorial Park (west side of Prospect Lake) water conservation project
- Greenways at Sand Creek Park Bridge project
- Boulder Park landscaping project
- Legacy Loop Trail grant match with Public Works Department

WHAT DOES TOPS DO?

- ✓ Conserve land threatened by development
- ✓ Protect wildlife habitat
- ✓ Reduce the risk of wildfires
- ✓ Conserve land that protects water quality
- ✓ Protect our quality of life

WHO OVERSEES TOPS?

- ✓ Administered by the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Department
- ✓ Oversight from the TOPS Working Committee (local residents)
- ✓ Purchases approved by City Council
- ✓ Audited every two years

25 YEARS OF TOPS!

WHAT HAS TOPS ACHIEVED?

- ✓ Over 7,500 acres of open space acquired for the community
- ✓ 67 parks built or improved
- ✓ Over 53 miles of trail constructed

TOPS IN 2022

- ✓ Completed acquisition of Fishers Canyon Open Space
- ✓ Open Space wayfinding plan and implementation
- ✓ Stewardship education and community outreach through programming

FUNDING AND FUNDRAISING PARTNERS

THANK YOU TO OUR PARTNERS FOR GENEROUSLY SUPPORTING OUR PROJECTS, PROGRAMS AND OPERATIONS!

Friends of Garden of the Gods

New Park Kiosks

\$8,100



ADA Division

Sidewalk Grinding Project

\$50,000



Medicine Wheel Trail Advocates

Cresta Park Open Space Pump Track

\$65,000



Living History Association

Rock Ledge Ranch Historic Ranch Operations

\$75,000



Garden of the Gods Foundation

Equipment Replacement and Bear Safe Trashcans

\$100,000



Garden of the Gods Trading Post

Garden of the Gods Support

\$100,000



PARTNER CONTRIBUTIONS

First Tee of the Pikes Peak Region

395 Youth Participated in Life Skills and Golf Development Programming

United States Forest Service

Holiday Tree Giveaway Program at Pikes Peak - America's Mountain - 108 trees distributed

Saluting Branches

Organized Five Companies to Donate a Full Day of Pruning Trees and Clean Up at Evergreen Cemetery

Pikes Peak Library District

Supported Over 96 Participants of the TOPS Junior Ranger Nature Program

2022 Colorado Trails Symposium

Connecting with Erie, Boulder, Ft. Collins, US Forest Service, Jefferson County, Rocky Mountain Field Institute, Trails and Open Space Coalition, and Colorado Springs Regional Parks

Denver Broncos

Provided Sportsmanship Awards for the 2022 Youth Football Seasons

Olympic City USA Taskforce Secured Donations from the Daniels Fund, Dakota Foundation, Boeing, the Chapman Foundations, Children's Hospital Colorado, Colorado Springs Utilities, Comcast, Gazette Charities Foundation and the Schuck Foundation

Free Soccer for 900 Kids

2022 GRANTS - AWARDED OR IN PROCESS

Colorado Parks and Wildlife - \$17,782

Outdoor Equity Grant Awarded to
Therapeutic Recreation Program for Track Chairs

Colorado DOLA - Swimming Pools Initiative with YMCA - \$13,000

Awarded to Support Operations Surrounding Pools and
Access to Pools

REALIZED BENEFITS IN 2022 - PRIOR GRANTS IN USE NOW

Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO)

Panorama Park - **\$350,000**

Daniels Pass Trail Network - **\$250,000**

North Cheyenne Cañon Stewardship - **\$94,000**

Open Space Stewardship with Rocky Mountain Field Institute - **\$340,000**

El Pomar Foundation - \$255,000

Acacia and Alamo Park Improvements

Colorado Health Foundation - \$50,000

Meadows Park Community Center

Harrison School District Two - \$724,000

Community Centers Before and After School Care

National Endowment for the Arts - \$40,000

Panorama Park Artwork

Lyda Hill Foundation - \$402,500

Monument Valley Park Stonework

LOOKING BACK ON 2022

- Jimmy Camp Creek Park Cultural Survey Complete
- Historic Bridges Replacement in North Cheyenne Cañon Complete
- Meadows Park Community Center 40th Anniversary Celebration Complete
- Panorama Park Renovation Complete
- Pikes Peak - America's Mountain Summit Visitor Center and Roadway Improvements Complete
- Fishers Canyon Open Space Phase II Acquisition Complete
- Boulder and Thorndale Parks Court Renovations Complete
- Cresta Park Open Space Pump Track Complete
- Irrigation Design and Installation Projects at Cemeteries In Process
- Monument Valley Park Ponds Restoration In Process
- Memorial Park Prospect Lake Aeration Design and Installation In Process
- Roundabout at Garden of the Gods Park Entrance In Process
- Irrigation Design and Replacement Projects at Golf Courses In Process
- ADA Improvements at Starsmore Visitor and Nature Center Restrooms In Process
- Red Rock Canyon and Ute Valley Open Space Wayfinding In Process
- Open Space Trailhead Kiosks (Blodgett, Bluestem Prairie, High Chaparral, North Cheyenne Canon, Palmer Park, Red Rock Canyon, Stratton and Ute Valley) In Process



LOOKING FORWARD TO 2023

- Development of Antler's Park Dog Park
- Memorial Park Security Improvements
- Blodgett Open Space Master Plan
- Pulpit Rock Trailhead at Austin Bluffs Open Space
- Coleman Community Park Master Plan
- Fishers Canyon Fuel Mitigation
- Free Sports for 1,300 Kids
- Fishers Canyon Open Space Master Plan
- Red Rock Canyon Trail Improvements
- Ute Valley Trail Improvements
- Rock Island Trail Improvements
- Wild Horse Ranch Open Space Acquisition
- Skyview Sports Complex Infield Turf Replacement



VISION

Building community and preserving our legacy to make Colorado Springs the finest place to live and visit.

MISSION

Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services is the steward of a diverse park system that enriches the community through healthy, active opportunities that engage and inspire.



ADMINISTRATION
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coloradosprings.gov/parks

OUR CORE VALUES - EPPIC

EXCELLENCE

Consistently strives to deliver superior service and results with integrity; maximizes potential through continuous improvements; sets, achieves, and maintains a high level of performance.

PASSION

Motivated to provide remarkable service and dedication to the community and the Department.

PROFESSIONALISM

Highly skilled and adaptable subject matter experts that embrace lifelong learning and improvements.

INNOVATION

Pursues creative ways to better deliver services both within the Department and with external partners, while anticipating future needs.

COLLABORATION

Inspires others to succeed and develop; thinks and acts beyond the scope of individual responsibilities; puts Department goals in front of division or individual objectives; recognizes outstanding performance and is accountable to one another.