



For Immediate Release

April 20, 2021

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Colorado Lottery Recognizes Excellence in the Use of Lottery Funds Across the State with 2021 Starburst Award Winners

Eleven winners include conservation, restoration, parks, trails, and school projects, as Lottery proceeds pass \$3.6 billion

Pueblo, Colo. – Colorado Lottery Starburst Awards recognize excellence in the use of Lottery funds for community and conservation projects. For fiscal year 2021, 11 winning projects were chosen from across the state based on the creativity of the project, economic and social impact on the community, and whether the project achieved its goal. Colorado Lottery proceeds have reached \$3.6 billion since it began in 1983.

More than \$10.5 million in Lottery funds are represented in these 11 winning projects. Lottery proceeds are distributed statewide through grants via Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO), the Conservation Trust Fund (CTF), Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW), and Building Excellent Schools Today (BEST).

"Conservation is a key pillar for the Lottery. It includes not only conserving open space, but also upgrading recreational spaces, creating new places for Coloradans to play, and supporting ecosystems and wildlife," said Tom Seaver, director of the Colorado Lottery. "This year's Starburst Award winners reflect the wide ranging projects that our proceeds support. Now with \$3.6 billion going to our proceeds beneficiaries since the Lottery's inception, we continue to look for new ways to grow revenue responsibly to protect more of Colorado's great outdoors."

Submissions include programs and projects such as parks, playgrounds, outdoor recreation facilities, land conservation, trail enhancement, open space acquisition, wildlife natural resource preservation, and public school capital improvements.

This year's 2021 Starburst Award winners include:

1. **City of Thornton - Big Dry Creek Project: GOCO \$175,000** - The master plan created for this project helps balance the floodplain function and habitat restoration of the area, along with recreation opportunities for Big Dry Creek. Lottery funds helped restore approximately 25 acres of this important natural resource and ecosystem, continuing Thornton's mission to create "pearls of open spaces" along the South Platte River and Niver Creek. The project began in 2016 and was completed in 2020, positively impacting a total 300 acres of open space. [Photo](#)





2. **City of Craig - Breeze Park: GOCO \$150,000** - Significant improvements to Breeze Park include upgrades to a 35-year-old irrigation system, construction of an 820-square-foot ADA concrete trail, addition of a large, covered pavilion and two smaller, sheltered picnic areas and several other outdoor amenities like corn hole game boards and an outdoor workout station. Situated near downtown Craig, this park is highly utilized by the surrounding neighborhood and community as a whole. [Photo](#)
3. **North Fork Recreation District - Crossroads Ball Fields: GOCO \$350,000 CTF \$22,500** - Thanks to Lottery funds, four new multi-use fields were constructed at Crossroads Park. These new fields will serve the recreational needs of the greater North Fork Valley, including the towns of Paonia, Hotchkiss, and Crawford. This project replaced multiple outdated facilities with one modern, centralized location and made the recreation area safer with fields now all located on one side of a busy highway. [Photo](#)
4. **Barr Lake State Park - ADA Fishing Pier: GOCO \$250,000 CPW \$90,736** - Barr Lake is the only state park in Adams County, and this new 90-foot-long pier was constructed to accommodate all park visitors, including those with mobility challenges. Previously, wheelchair inaccessibility for fishing was a frequent complaint at the park, and often required them having to turn people away. When not used for fishing, park visitors can enjoy rich wildlife viewing in off months, including an established eagle nest within view of the pier. [Photo](#)
5. **City of Montrose / Montrose Recreation District - 'Connect Trail': GOCO \$2,000,000 CTF \$150,000** - The Connecting the People to Their Parks and Recreation project helped extend the existing Uncompahgre River Trail by 2.25 miles, connecting residents to parks and recreation facilities previously only accessible by vehicle. The trail also opened up new stretches of the river that the public could not reach by land until now. This project ties into Montrose's larger river restoration plans, which include habitat restoration, stream channelization, and bank stabilization improvements. [Photo](#)
6. **Cañon City Area Recreation and Park District - Rouse Park: GOCO \$157,895 CTF \$25,605** - Rouse Park is the District's most heavily used facility, and the recent renovation helped replace a nearly 30-year-old playground with new equipment designed for children of all ages. This project was majority funded with Lottery dollars, which allowed this small community to dream bigger when reimagining their most popular, but outdated, park. [Photo](#)
7. **Larimer County Department of Natural Resources - Laramie Foothills Expansion: GOCO \$668,000** - The 2020 expansion weaves together nearly 2,000 additional acres that connect to an already vast collection of conserved lands in the Laramie Foothills. An important regional conservation site approximately 25 miles north of Fort Collins, the project helped preserve two adjacent properties, the West Red Mountain Ranch and the





Hawk Canyon Ranch, which provides a critical buffer to existing protected and publicly accessible lands. [Photo](#)

8. **City of Longmont - Garden Acres Park: CTF \$1,984,000** - Nearly 40% of this \$5 million park renovation came from Lottery funds. This location draws local, state, and national tournaments nearly every weekend that the weather allows. The goal for this project was to re-establish a safe, usable, accessible and enjoyable experience at Garden Acres, with a complete renewal of the 32-year-old park and all of its facilities. [Photo](#)
9. **Colorado Fourteeners Initiative - Mount Columbia Trail Restoration: GOCO \$330,009 CPW \$119,991** - Between 2016 and 2020, 1.75 miles of new, sustainably located, durable trail was constructed on Mount Columbia, in addition to the .66 miles of existing trail reconstruction for this popular 14,000-foot peak. All work on the new trail was performed by hand with non-motorized equipment, utilizing native rocks and soil found on the mountain. [Photo](#)
10. **Town of Meeker / Eastern Rio Blanco Metro Recreation & Park District: Circle Park Pond: CPW \$100,000 GOCO \$20,000 CTF \$12,000** - This project was first conceived over ten years ago, and was completed in part thanks to grants from three of the Lottery's four beneficiaries. This one-acre fishing pond was constructed as part of a larger community effort to expand outdoor recreation assets. Not only will the pond offer year-round fishing for residents and visitors, but also opportunities for stand-up paddle boarding and kayaking. [Photo](#)
11. **Eagle County Open Space: Brush Creek Valley Ranch: GOCO \$3,833,160 CPW \$10,000** - Lottery proceeds were instrumental in acquiring the Hardscrabble Ranch and transforming it into a 1,671-acre conserved open space. A decades-long community goal, the open space will help preserve significant wildlife habitat and migration routes, and improve recreational opportunities for generations of nature enthusiasts to come. [Photo](#)

About Colorado Lottery:

Since 1983, the Colorado Lottery has returned more than \$3.6 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, improve parks, trails, and open space in Colorado. For more information, visit coloradolottery.com.

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