

Critical Trail Link Completed on St. Vrain Greenway

Public invited to ribbon cutting

OCTOBER 23, 2009 - The Longmont community is invited to celebrate the grand opening of a critical trail connection that links a seven and one half mile segment from Golden Ponds to Sandstone Ranch on Saturday, November 7, 2009, at Sandstone Ranch District Park located at 3001 E. Ken Pratt Blvd. The Longmont City Council will dedicate and officially open the trail at 1 p.m.

The completion of these 3 miles of new trail adds an important piece to Longmont's St. Vrain Greenway. The Greenway is considered the "crown jewel" of Longmont's trail system as it links a variety of parks, schools, other trails and commercial areas along its current 7.5 mile length. The St. Vrain Greenway also is part of the Colorado Front Range Trail (CRFT) plan - a regional trail system that will someday run from Wyoming to New Mexico. That statewide vision for a 876-mile trail will link diverse communities, scenic landscapes, cultural and historic points, parks, open space and other attractions.

The City of Longmont partnered with Boulder County to complete the trail connection and also received a \$500,000 grant from Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO). This is the agency that distributes funds from Colorado Lottery proceeds for projects related to parks, wildlife, open space and recreational resources throughout the state. Boulder County provided land along its preserved agricultural open space as well as funding for the pedestrian underpass below County Line Road.

The new trail alignment includes the three-mile trail extension, two road underpasses - below 119th Street and also below County Line Road - and a bridge crossing the St. Vrain River at Sandstone Ranch.

BALD EAGLE NEST

Another great feature along the trail is a viewing area to an active bald eagle nest north of the Greenway trail, but outside its protective buffer zone. With support from the Colorado Division of Wildlife, the trail was relocated from an original trail configuration to a modified route farther south to protect the bald eagle nest in eastern Longmont.

NO DOGS ALLOWED

This area is extraordinarily rich in wildlife and diverse habitats and requires special protection. In order to provide this protection, dogs on a leash or unleashed will not be allowed on the portion of the trail between County Line Road and Sandstone Ranch. While dogs make great pets at home, they are inherently predators. Unleashed dogs typically will chase wildlife, and even those on a leash have difficulty resisting this natural response. Not able to recognize restraints such as leashes, wildlife views all dogs as predators and will leave the area.

GREENWAY CONNECTIONS

Many miles of concrete bike paths and gravel walking paths, as well as nature trails welcome visitors of all kinds to the Greenway. Several other city parks abut the Greenway, including Golden Ponds, Rogers Grove, Boulder County Fairgrounds, Izaak Walton Pond, a soon to be improved district park just east of Main Street (currently referred to as the Dickens Park site), and Sandstone Ranch. The trail also connects to Lefthand Greenway just east of Main Street with access to the City Museum and Recreation center at Quail Campus and to Kanemoto and Left Hand Creek parks.

Existing trailheads can be found at Golden Ponds, Roger's Grove, Boulder County Fairgrounds and Izaak Walton Pond, the sundial area at South Pratt Parkway, at 1st Avenue near the Fire Training Center (west of Martin Street), the western end of the Harvest Junction North commercial development and at Sandstone Ranch District park. In the near future additional trailheads will be provided.

The greenway promotes conservation awareness, improves habitat wildlife, and provides a variety of recreational opportunities. In addition to the funding provided by Great Outdoors Colorado, the Colorado Lottery and Boulder County, private donors also have contributed to the Greenway, including the Rotary Clubs of Longmont, the Kanemoto Family, V.V. Golden Foundation, The St. Vrain Valley Foundation and the Roger and Roberta Jones Foundation.