A MURAL
AND A FUTURE

Our History and Testimonials
The idea of a regional greenway corridor along Sand Creek to link the High Line Canal in Aurora with the South Platte River Greenway in Commerce City was first described in the Emerald Strands Plan. This multi-jurisdictional planning project consisted of the cities of Aurora, Denver, and Commerce City, as well as Adams and Arapahoe counties.

In 1993, the Stapleton Redevelopment Foundation commissioned a concept plan for the Emerald Strands committee, which described the opportunities for and constraints on a Sand Creek greenway.

Four of the original partners, encouraged by Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) form a 30 member steering committee of community leaders to guide the planning process. GOCO designates Sand Creek Regional Greenway as a Legacy Project and awarded $1.75 million in funding for land acquisition and trail construction.

Sand Creek is recognized as a 501c3 nonprofit by the IRS, now led by an Executive Director and Board of Directors, and continues to raise funds to develop the Greenway, working hand-in-hand with the cities of Aurora, Denver and Commerce City and other partners and individual and business donors.

The Greenway formally opens to the public.

Sand Creek Greenway
Sand Creek Greenway

2003-10
A period of growth as major segments and features of the Greenway open, including Morrison Nature Center at Star K Ranch and Sand Creek Park in Aurora as well as Dahlia trailhead in Commerce City. For the first time, all 14 miles of off-road trail is open to the public. The organization develops vibrant public programming, volunteer efforts and outreach events supported by the local communities and businesses. Sand Creek Greenway celebrates 5th anniversary of public access.

2011-12
Next Generation Environmental Partners is launched, a highly successful effort to engage youth in habitat restoration and volunteer work on the Greenway. Natural Resource Damage Funds are awarded — $4.65 million — for land purchases, development and habitat restoration work. In celebrating Sand Creek’s 10th anniversary, it is recognized four parks are open—Pepper Riparian Area and Wetland Park in Commerce City, and Sand Creek Park and Star K Ranch in Aurora and the trail has grown from 8.4 to 14 miles.

2013-16
Though high water incidents impacted the Greenway throughout its development, significant floods in 2013 and 2015 focused the organization’s work on raising funds and facilitating projects to repair damage from high water. Volunteers worked many hours to restore the Greenway. Public engagement programs such as Race for Open Space and Foto contests were held.

2017-2019
Sand Creek launches new environmental education programs for underserved youth as part of GOCO’s Generation Wild Northeast Metro Coalition, new volunteer opportunities such as civic science and public and private work days. Major infrastructure construction projects impact the trail, and Sand Creek works for stronger communication between officials and trail users, including better detour signage.

2020
Sand Creek Regional Greenway Partnership celebrates its 20th anniversary as a nonprofit organization, its 18th anniversary of the trail opening to the public, and the launch of the Future Fund. Sand Creek begins a strategic planning process. With sufficient funding, Sand Creek will install a mural on a remnant wall from Denver’s original airport to celebrate the natural resources of Sand Creek and riparian habitats.
Milestones and Service 2019

VOLUNTEERS MOVE US FORWARD
14 volunteer efforts including civic science training, public and private work days and service learning days for schools

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION IN THE COMMUNITY
70 Education/Outreach events and programs
- Field trips to the Greenway
- Learning prey-predator relationships by dissecting owl pellets
- Survival of the species games on creek-restoration principles
- Pollinators and flower structures
- Bird adaptions - "What do you eat with that beak?"
- Dirt vs. soil
- Invertebrates and water quality

Evolution of species games on the Greenway principles
Survival of the species games on creek-restoration principles
Pollinators and flower structures
Bird adaptions - "What do you eat with that beak?"
Dirt vs. soil
Invertebrates and water quality

Moorhead Recreation Center
Kenton Elementary School
Montbello Recreation Center
Pioneer Park, Commerce City
Vickers Boys & Girls Club
Montview Boys & Girls Club
Suncor Boys & Girls Club
Broncos Boys & Girls Club
Peoria Elementary School
Fronterra Park
Boston Boys & Girls Club
Hanson Elementary School
Dupont Elementary School
Boettcher Boys & Girls Club
MacAuliffe International School
and other parks, COMPASS and afterschool programs and recreation centers
Pivoting Service in 2020

VOLUNTEER WORK CONTINUES

During the initial months of the COVID crisis, we crafted individual volunteer efforts such as Thistle Watch; and as small groups are allowed, we're offering scaled-down volunteer workdays.

VIRTUAL ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Video lessons broadcast virtually through education partners in all three cities.

“AT HOME OR ON YOUR OWN” EBLASTS

10 eblasts sent to our entire audience, with activities, videos, and online resources geared towards greater enjoyment of Sand Creek Greenway's assets.

CONTINGENCY PLANNING FOR PROGRAMS

Programs for the latter half of 2020 have dual possibilities to keep our friends safe—for scaled down in-person and virtual experiences—hike/nature book club, smaller group bike rides, etc.
You can make a difference

With close collaboration among city partners, dedicated volunteers and funding, the Sand Creek Regional Greenway will be enhanced, habitat will be restored and neighbors will have a stronger community resource.
“What I like most about the Sand Creek Regional Greenway is the way it connects multiple underserved neighborhoods in three different cities to an abundance of nature and green space. One does not need wealth or great resources to access this natural waterway, only the willingness to go for a walk on foot, or take a leisurely bike ride on one of the many trails leading to and through the Greenway. My support continues because I want many others to learn about this great natural amenity, which is readily accessible to residents of Aurora, Commerce City and Denver.”

Bob LeGare, Retired Aurora Mayor and City Council Member, At-large Director, Sand Creek Regional Greenway Partnership

“The Sand Creek Greenway is a beloved feature of our community. My daughters love to run along the trail, particularly in the autumn. I’m grateful not only for a bit of wilderness in the city, but also the outreach and educational opportunities that the Partnership provides beyond the Greenway’s 14 miles.”

Geoff Horsfall, Vice President SUN

“The Greenway provides a great opportunity to connect with nature without traveling far from home. Running on the trail, exploring the river banks and looking for wildlife have helped my family stay happy and healthy as we stay close to home — I love supporting an organization that provides this resource to the greater Denver community.”

Ann Prouty, Sand Creek Regional Greenway Board of Directors
“Every day during the summer I see firsthand what a great resource and teaching tool Sand Creek can be. I believe having experiences like catching crawdads in a creek is a basic human right of passage and is one of the best ways to share a love of the environment with future generations.”

--Rachel Crouch
Executive Director Bluff Lake Nature Center
and Sand Creek Board of Directors

Important confluences occur on Sand Creek, geographic ones, like Westerly Creek’s merger into Sand Creek, and, of course, Sand Creek’s joiner with the South Platte, but human confluences too. Our urban selves meet Wilderness in the City and leave our daily routine, if only for a few moments. I support Sand Creek for the opportunity to improve my community, adding my contribution to those of others; a confluence we all can make.

--Jim Thomas
Sand Creek Regional Greenway Partnership
Board of Directors
"This was a way to get out of the house and benefit my community, by not allowing weeds to overtake our open space – which seems more important than ever.

-NORA HORTON

DENVER RESIDENT
CITIZEN SCIENTIST VOLUNTEER
WORKING ON THISTLE WATCH
DURING COVID-19

"I’ve been riding the Sand Creek Greenway multiple times per week since moving to Park Hill in 2018. The trail is diverse with both paved and gravel sections, beautiful landscapes and vistas, plus it’s 12 feet wide for almost the entire duration making it a safe escape during COVID-19 isolation. This trail is essential for me and my family to recreate close to home while also getting a taste for the wilderness within the city."

-RYAN AMIRault

FOUNDER AND OWNER
KICKSTAND DIGITAL
When I need a quick escape from the city I often find myself hiking or more often biking along the Sand Creek Regional Greenway. I’m never disappointed. The Greenway seems a world away. Far less crowded most of the other bike paths in the area, I often encounter wildlife, such as foxes, coyotes, mule deer, ground squirrels, prairie dogs, wild turkeys, bald eagles, beavers, ducks, snakes, and much, much more! I love it! I urge you to come and discover this little known jewel for yourself.

---Rich Reading
Butterfly Pavilion and Sand Creek Regional Greenway Partnership
Board of Directors

I enjoy the contrast between nature and industry. And I enjoy the fairly untouched natural areas. I’m thankful for Sand Creek Greenway and miles of trails for exploration.

---Rob Price
Sand Creek Regional Greenway Partnership
Board of Directors
So we may be resilient and continue to improve this precious resource.

PLEASE SUPPORT THE FUTURE FUND
FRIENDS, YOUR SUPPORT IS NECESSARY

WWW.SANDCREEKGREENWAY.ORG/DONATE
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