



Parks & Community Services Department

2024 Action Plan



INTRODUCTION

The 2024 Community Services Department Action Plan includes specific objectives that will be completed by our respective divisions to address El Paso County's core principles, vision, purpose, values, and objective.

Core Principles

1. **LOW TAXES -LOW COSTS**
Our community prefers low taxes and limited government that focuses on providing essential and cost-effective public services.
2. **QUALITY PUBLIC SERVICES**
To consistently deliver high-quality services, we standardize, innovate, measure, remove waste, continually improve, collaborate, and tell our story.
3. **TRUST THROUGH TRANSPARENCY**
We build community trust by transparently publishing data and analytics on our finances, the condition of infrastructure, and our progress towards our strategic objectives.

Vision

El Paso County will be a trusted regional leader known for excellence in county service delivery.

Purpose

We provide essential public services to the Pikes Peak region in support of our residents, businesses, and communities, enhancing the freedom for all to thrive.

Values

1. **SERVICE FOCUSED**
We make a difference in our community by serving the residents of El Paso County.
2. **ACCOUNTABLE**
We are responsive to community needs. We are good stewards of County resources.
3. **COLLABORATIVE**
We foster a county government that works for all. We inspire employees to passionately give their best while leveraging community partnerships for the meaningful benefit of our residents.
4. **TRUSTWORTHY**
We listen to our community and act with honesty and respect in our interactions with co-workers and those we serve. We adhere to laws, policies, procedures, and professional standards.
5. **TRANSPARENT**

ENVIRONMENTAL DIVISION

Household Hazardous Waste Facility (HHWF)

1. Offer a Very Small Quantity Generator (VSQG) program to local businesses.

To better serve our community, provide limited hazardous waste consolidation and disposal services to businesses within El Paso and Teller counties that meet the state definition of a very small quantity generator (VSQG) of hazardous waste. There will be a fee for this service.

2. Eliminate the Appointment System

Provide a more convenient and less restrictive drop-off experience for El Paso and Teller County citizens. Return to stated hours of operation. Schedule technicians appropriately and provide a smooth and enjoyable encounter.

3. Assist neighboring Counties with Household Hazardous Waste

Many of the Counties and jurisdictions surrounding El Paso do not provide a program for proper hazardous waste disposal. Offer intake of materials from households of neighboring counties with a fee to recover cost-of-services.

4. Reuse Program

Return a limited reuse material program to serve citizens and keep paint and materials out of the landfill and out of groundwater. The best way to dispose of certain products is to use them up as they were originally intended to be used, which is just what this program does. And, of course, it's free to El Paso and Teller County residents.

Natural Resources

1. Update Paint Mines Plant Surveys

Compile plant transect data from the September 2023 Paint Mines vegetations survey. Analyze trends and new developments and prepare a report for Palmer Land Trust Conservancy.

2. Update the ARC GIS Pro Maps in each Conservation Easement

Over the years of data collection, the conservation easement maps have developed glitches. Update all maps map or layers based on new requirements or additional information.

Noxious Weeds

1. Update the El Paso County Noxious Weed Book

This booklet is a favorite of citizens and lists the most common noxious weeds found in El Paso County and their controls as recommended by the Colorado Department of Agriculture (CDA). Update the book to reflect the most recent Noxious Weeds in listed under the Colorado Noxious Weed Act

RECREATION AND CULTURAL SERVICES DIVISION

Employee	Name	Due Date	GOAL / NOTES	COUNTY STRATEGIC PLAN / CORE PRINCIPLES	COUNTY STRATEGIC PLAN / VALUES
Theresa Odello	Fox Run Nature Center Fundraising	7/31/2024	Fox Run Nature Center Fundraising: Spearhead the Northern Nature Center Fundraising campaign through 2024	Low Taxes - Low Costs: This helps save by not having taxpayers pay for all of this new nature center.	Accountable: we are stewards of County resources and are looking for funds elsewhere. And Collaborative: working with others to fund this project.
Andschana Aljets	Mid-Week County Fair Attendance	7/31/2024	Work on increasing mid-week fair attendance by offering day specific programming. This will be shown to be complete if attendance numbers are higher for Tuesday-Thursday attendance in 2024 than in 2023.	Quality Public Services: encouraging our community to participate in this amazing public event: the largest the County puts on!	Service Focused
Andschana Aljets	Execute three larger events at Fairgrounds	7/31/2024	Non-Fair Events - Execute three or more larger, financially profitable non-fair program events in 2024.	Quality Public Services: putting on quality entertainment.	Service Focused
Mary Jo Lewis	Signage Update and Design at BCNC	7/31/2024	For special events, staff need to create and put up signs that direct participants to the overflow lot. These signs are laminated and do not look great but serve a purpose. This goal is to design and install permanent signage directing to the overflow lot, and directing foot traffic from overflow lot to the nature center entrance, and to review and redesign the entrance sign to the nature trails that includes the rules and directs those with dogs to the Regional Trail.	Quality Public Services: signage will enable nature center visitors to have a clear understanding of directions and traffic.	Service Focused
Jessica Miller	Teen Volunteers at FCNC	7/31/2024	Increase the number of new Teen Volunteers we have at Fountain Creek Nature Center by 100%. Teen volunteers are valued by assisting with summer camp and special events, and it also helps develop an interest and a passion in nature and as a possible future profession.	Quality Public Services: this program is already successful and has received great reviews, so expand it to more participants.	Service Focused
Victoria Dinkel	FCNC Field Guide	7/31/2024	Design, print, and assemble a custom, site-specific field guide for Fountain Creek Regional Park. This guide will be made available to the public for free checkout at the Nature Center's front desk. The guide will also be incorporated into volunteer trainings and nature camps. Success will be determined by (1) the completion of at least one guide, (2) its use in at least one volunteer training or camp lesson, and (3) it being borrowed at least 5 times by site visitors.	Quality Public Services: this field guide will allow visitors to explore the natural surroundings at FCNC and gain a better understanding of the great resource that is in their community.	Service Focused
Kylee Taylor	Volunteer Restoration Days	7/31/2024	Coordinate at least one volunteer day per quarter to tackle restoration/ conservation projects at the nature center.	Low Taxes and Low costs (saving park operations time and effort by completing work through volunteers) and Quality Public Services (providing a great program).	Service Focused, Accountable
Kylee Taylor	Trail Cameras	7/31/2024	Research trail cameras and purchase at least one that would be a good fit for our location and needs. Possibly set up screen in nature center to highlight sightings.	Quality Public Services: trail cameras will let the community see what amazing nature is in their community!	Service Focused
Theresa Odello	Fairgrounds Corp Bylaws	6/30/2024	Update Fairgrounds Corporation Bylaws	Trust Through Transparency: updating the by-laws will help all understand the direction and purpose of this Corporation.	Transparent

PARK OPERATIONS DIVISION

1. Hammock Post Design and Installation

Develop plans and specifications for designated hammock posts in County regional parks to provide park patrons the opportunity to utilize hammocks in parks.

2. Stratmoor Valley Forestry

Mastication of 36 acres along Fountain Creek and the Fountain Creek Regional Trail near Stratmoor Valley Park.

3. Pineries Open Space Mountain Pine Beetle (MPB) Assessment

Assess current Mountain Pine Beetle conditions in Pineries and develop treatment plan if needed.

4. Pineries Open Space Forestry

Masticate dead, burnt timber in the SW corner of the property for future trail development and park patron safety.

5. Vegetation Management

Expand pre-emergent vegetation management program to control vegetation in landscape beds and areas we want to remain clean of weeds and undesirable vegetation.

6. Homestead Ranch Regional Park Playground Improvements

Remove and replace the poured-in-place (PIP) safety surfacing.

7. Fox Run Regional Park Entrance Improvements – Stella Drive

Remove existing vegetation and renovate entry landscape island.

8. Pineries Open Space Drainage Improvements

Install puncheons / boardwalks across 3 – 4 drainages.

9. Bear Creek Dog Park Trail Improvements

Grading and trail surfacing improvements within the dog park.

10. Bear Creek Regional Park Entrance Improvements – Argus Drive

Remove existing vegetation and renovate entry landscape island.

11. Bear Creek Regional Park Bridge Improvements

Renovate existing foot bridge across Bear Creek near the Park Administration Building. The wood decking and railings need replacement due to age and weathering.

12. Homestead Ranch Regional Park Facility Improvements

Paint pavilions and restroom / shop facility.

13. Fairgrounds Audio Improvements

Perform an assessment of current audio system, develop new design and upgrade the audio system. Project will be a phased approach if needed based on available needs and funding.

14. Fountain Creek Regional Park Landscape Improvements

Renovate the main parking lot landscape beds near large pavilion.

15. Fountain Creek Regional Park Entry Improvements

Install new El Paso County Parks entry sign and new rules signage.

PARK PLANNING DIVISION

1. Fountain Creek Regional Park Sidewalks, ADA, Parking Improvements

Planned work includes completing parking lot, sidewalk, and ADA improvements around the Duckwood active use area. El Paso County received a Community Development Block Grant to fund ADA access to the Fountain Creek Nature Center which will include reconstruction of the main entrance and ramp between the parking lot and building.

2. Fox Run Nature Center

The design of the Fox Run Nature Center will continue into 2024. This includes development of plans and specifications for the building, tower, canopy walk, and surrounding site. The capital fundraising campaign and community outreach will also continue. Partnerships and grant opportunities will also be pursued.

3. Fox Run Regional Park Improvements

Design to replace the Oak Meadows and Pine Meadows restroom was completed in 2023. Planned 2024 work includes converting the restrooms to flushable facilities, building updates, and ADA improvements. Surrounding sidewalks will also be improved.

4. Homestead Ranch Regional Park Improvements

This project includes grading poor condition trails and construction of drainage structures in key areas. Site grading around the main building and stormwater improvements will also be completed.

5. Paint Mines Interpretive Park Master Plan

In recent years the number of visitors to the park has increased leading to several management challenges which include vehicle congestion, user-created social trails, climbing on the formations, and overall site degradation. In response to these challenges, the County is looking to create a master plan which will provide a long-term plan to manage park visitors while also protecting the formations.

6. Pineries Open Space Phase II Trail Construction

This project includes the development of a single-track trail loop in the southwest area of the open space totaling approximately 3.5 miles. This work will be completed in conjunction with planned forestry work.

7. Santa Fe Open Space Trail Construction

The first phase of trail construction was completed in 2022 and included 1.75 mile of single-track trail. This project includes construction of an overlook trail and meadow loop trail which will total approximately 0.50 miles.

8. Ute Pass Regional Trail Phase II Construction

This project includes construction of a 1.5-mile portion of the Ute Pass Regional Trail from Winnemucca Road to Fountain Avenue. The design package is under final revisions and is

anticipated to be completed in early 2024. This project is a partnership between El Paso County and the Colorado Department of Transportation.

9. June 2023 Flood Repairs

Damage to several park locations was incurred from June 2023 storms. Coordination with Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), and Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is ongoing. Project scopes, budgets, and timelines will be developed in 2024.

Colorado State University EXTENSION

For over 100 years, CSU Extension has been providing reliable, researched-based information, resources, and educational programming to support communities across Colorado including El Paso County. This is accomplished by our 3 main principles to:

- Educate: Engaged teaching, providing consultation, and technical assistance.
- Create: Applied, participatory research, and engaged scholarship.
- Connect: Community and partner co-created, inclusive engagement.

1. Horticulture Programming will:

- Increase volunteer program by 30% for the Colorado Master Gardener Program in El Paso County to collaborate with more community partners and provide more services.
- Apply for grants for native plant demonstration garden and collaborate with El Paso County Parks department for installation should funding be secured.

2. Food Systems and Natural Resources will:

- Increase program offerings in Food System Work Force Development by a minimum of 50%.

3. Family and Consumer Science will:

- Increase small business development program certifications by 20% for the Colorado Cottage Foods Small Business Program.
- Increase in chronic disease prevention and mental health quality of life programming by 30% in El Paso County. Providing these services through collaboration with county, city, and nonprofit resources.

4. Youth Development/4-H will:

- Increase 4-H Youth Development Club Program membership by 5%
- Increase 4-H Youth Development Programming by other delivery modes such as school enrichment, camps and other community programs by 25% while increasing our audience/program participants diversity (Race, Ethnicity and Gender) to better represent the county's demographics by reaching 80% parity representation.
- Increase 4-H entries in the county fair by 5%

5. Agriculture/Small Acreage Management will:

- Demonstrate that 60% of program participants have gained knowledge, changed behavior and/or experienced a positive impact due to their involvement in CSU Extension programming.

6. Community Development will:

- Seek out 2-3 new partnerships to increase collaborations from the community and or stakeholders.