



Castle Rock
**PARKS &
RECREATION**
Monthly Report:
October 2020



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CRgov.com/ParksandRec



parks@CRgov.com



Upcoming Events

In response to COVID-19, many Town events have been modified, postponed or canceled to ensure the safety of community members. View up-to-date information and register for events at CRgov.com/Events.

NOVEMBER
21

CASTLE ROCK STARLIGHTING

2 - 7 p.m. | Downtown Castle Rock
Three viewing locations at Castle Rock Adventist Hospital, Douglas County Fairgrounds and the Amphitheater at Philip S. Miller Park

NOVEMBER
26

FACILITY CLOSURE

Castle Rock Recreation Center and Miller Activity Complex

DECEMBER
4

STARLIGHT MARKET

3 - 8 p.m.
Festival Park

DECEMBER
5

STARLIGHT MARKET

11 a.m. - 7 p.m.
Festival Park

DECEMBER
5

HOLIDAY DRIVE-IN MOVIE FEATURING NATIONAL LAMPOON'S CHRISTMAS VACATION

5 - 8 p.m. | Philip S. Miller Park

DECEMBER
12

HOLIDAY DRIVE-IN MOVIE FEATURING ELF

5 - 8 p.m.
Philip S. Miller Park

DECEMBER
24

MODIFIED FACILITY HOURS

5 a.m. - 2 p.m.
Castle Rock Recreation Center

DECEMBER
24

MODIFIED FACILITY HOURS

8 a.m. - 2 p.m.
Miller Activity Complex

DECEMBER
25

FACILITY CLOSURE

Castle Rock Recreation Center and Miller Activity Complex

Additionally, the Holiday Light Show will run Dec. 3 through the 19, every Thursday, Friday and Saturday from 5 - 11 p.m. at Philip S. Miller Park. Drive or walk through the park while enjoying holiday decorations. Visit CRgov.com/StarSeason for more information.



Community Outreach

PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT RECEIVES GOLD DAISY AWARD

The votes are in! Macaroni Kids awarded Philip S. Miller Park a 2020 Gold Daisy Award for the Where to Go for Outdoor Fun category in Douglas County. Macaroni Kids hosts this nominations-based contest each year, and award winners have the honor of knowing that local Douglas County families think they are the greatest. The winners are promoted by Macaroni Kids in their weekly e-newsletters and on their website, which features events and activities for moms, kids and families.





Parks, Open Space and Trails

GRANT APPLICATION SUBMITTED TO COLORADO PARKS AND WILDLIFE

In October, Town Council unanimously approved a resolution supporting an application for a Non-Motorized State Trails Grant from Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW). Staff requested the maximum allowable grant amount of \$250,000 for the completion of various trail improvement projects along the Colorado Front Range Trail (CFRT) in Castle Rock. A Town Council resolution in support of the grant was a requirement of the application.

With the support of many communities and stakeholders, the CFRT initiative began in 2003 by Colorado State Parks to offer a multi-purpose trail connecting communities along the Front Range from New Mexico to Wyoming. Castle Rock functions as the southern crossroads: East Plum Creek, Hangman's Gulch, Woodlands and McMurdo Gulch trails will eventually link travelers with the Cherry Creek Regional Trail to the east, and Denver to the north with Colorado Springs to the south.

If awarded the grant, the funding will supplement the replacement of .26 miles of asphalt trail with concrete in Woodlands Bowl Open Space and the construction of a new .21 mile connection from the South Perry Street cul-de-sac to the East Plum Creek Trail. Both projects are identified as priorities within the 2015 Parks and Recreation Master Plan, the 2018-2020 Parks and Recreation Strategic Plan and the 2019-2024 5-Year Capital Improvement Plan. The total cost for both projects is \$364,015.90, and the Town will provide a minimum 30% match of \$114,015.90 as required by the grant.

The department has submitted other grant applications to CPW in previous years that were successfully approved, including:

- East Plum Creek Trail Phase 3 Construction: \$200,000 grant, 2007
- East Plum Creek Trail Corridor Land Acquisition: \$230,000 grant, 2009
- Hangman's Gulch Trail Construction: \$193,166, 2013

Grant awards will be decided by the CPW Commission and announced in March 2021. If awarded, the Town will have 2.5 years from the award date to complete the proposed projects, and the Town will be the primary coordinator of the projects to be initiated in 2021.

COVY COURT CONNECTION COMPLETE

To improve residential access to the Town's existing trail network, a section of sidewalk was constructed connecting Covy Court with Woodlands Bowl Open Space along Ridgetrail Drive. Department staff developed construction and Temporary Erosion Sediment Control plans in-house for this project and submitted the documents to Development Services for approval and permitting. On-call concrete repair contractor SaBell's Civil and Landscape completed 300 feet of 5-foot wide sidewalk within a two-week period.





PARTNERSHIP CONTINUES WITH VOLUNTEERS FOR OUTDOOR COLORADO

Construction continued throughout October on Legacy Trail as four workdays were hosted in partnership with Volunteers for Outdoor Colorado (VOC). On Oct. 3, 4, 10 and 11, 48 total volunteers helped build 1,640 linear-feet of unpaved trail at Gateway Mesa Open Space. COVID-19 limited the size of the daily volunteer groups and public health guidelines were followed to ensure volunteer safety.

VOC is the state's oldest outdoor stewardship nonprofit organization. Since 1984, VOC has been motivating and enabling people to become active stewards of Colorado's natural resources. Each year, VOC engages thousands of people who provide a volunteer workforce for recreation and habitat improvement projects, and 2020 marks the second consecutive year the Town has partnered with VOC to develop Legacy Trail.

An additional 3,000 feet have yet to be constructed to complete Legacy Trail, and this newly developed segment will remain closed from public use until full completion. Staff have already submitted another stewardship application to VOC to request assistance to fully complete it in 2021. The first mile of Legacy Trail constructed in 2019, however, will continue to remain open.

Information on future workdays will be available online at CRgov.com/LegacyTrail in the spring.





2020 COLORADO BLUEBIRD PROJECT IN CASTLE ROCK

In 2007, the Town of Castle Rock Parks and Recreation Department joined the Colorado Bluebird Project. Under the guidance of the Audubon Society of Greater Denver, this volunteer-run project improves the vitality of native bluebird populations throughout the state and informs and educates the public about the migratory songbird.

As secondary cavity-nesters, bluebirds are dependent on cavities made by other birds or naturally occurring cavities for shelter and raising fledglings. Changes in land-use patterns and the rise of invasive species, which increased competition for nesting sites, caused a decline in populations throughout the 1900s. To address this environmental challenge, the Bluebird Project facilitates nesting through the construction and monitoring of nest boxes.

Providing artificial nest sites is an essential step to strengthen bluebird populations. Nest boxes are placed within public open space areas along fence lines or near existing trails, creating a bluebird trail. Through Castle Rock's POST Partners Volunteer Program, students and volunteers monitor 190 nest boxes each year.

For more than a decade, student and adult volunteers have assisted with box construction, installation and repair and year-end maintenance, as well as monitoring and data entry. These community members play an integral role in ensuring the bluebird has a place to return home to each and every spring. To track the success of the program, volunteers monitor breeding activity and report data as citizen scientists to help gauge population trends.

In 2020, many volunteers had positive encounters with the public due to the COVID-19 quarantine in early spring, which provided a great opportunity to discuss and promote the project to potential future volunteers. Also unique to this year, was that the NestWatch app was used by volunteers for the first time at seven sites to record monitoring data. In past years, all of this data was typically recorded at the end of the season, but staff hope to streamline data entry processes going forward.

Despite a late April freeze affecting several of the nests with eggs, over 100 volunteers successfully recorded 789 total fledglings of House Wrens, Mountain Bluebirds, Mountain Chickadees, Tree Swallows, Violet-green Swallows and Western Bluebirds. House Wrens nested in Castle Rock's boxes for the second year in a row, after multiple dummy wren nests were found, and a Mountain Chickadee pair returned to nest in the exact same spot as last year. The program also experienced its latest recorded fledge date of Aug. 29.





Community Events

FALL FESTIVAL

Due to weather, the Fall Festival at Festival Park was rescheduled from Sunday, Oct. 25 to Saturday, Oct. 31. Beginning at 10 a.m., families enjoyed activities and candy from the LOCAL Colorado, the organizer of the Sunday Farmers Market at Festival Park, such as pumpkin painting, giant tic-tac-toe, guessing games and a decorated photo station. Nature Educators also presented Creepy Crawlies Around the Rock from 1-3 p.m. The booth showcased Halloween-themed animals and attendees got up-close views of a Great Horned Owl, a bullsnake, a boa constrictor, a tarantula and a monitor lizard. The event was a huge success with fun festivities and favorable weather.

SPOOKTACULAR

This year's Spooktacular also offered fall fun for the entire family. While the annual event typically hosts thousands at the Miller Activity Complex, this year's celebration was limited and preregistration was required due to COVID-19. Three sessions were offered outdoors at Philip S. Miller Park and each session was capped at 250 attendees; the first session hosted 208, the second 183 and the third 132. Participants enjoyed fun games that could easily be sanitized between users such as skeleton limbo and lil' eyeball toss. A fan favorite was the cake walk, where guests sauntered their spookiest walk and hoped to land on a winning number. Winners were awarded a full box of cookies, cupcakes or donut holes. Fifteen community members volunteered to help ensure the event ran smoothly.

CASTLE ROCK TRAIL FESTIVAL

Castle Rock's very own trail festival hosted 247 officially timed racers on Saturday, Oct. 3. Runners took in the fall colors and enjoyable weather as they paced along the unpaved trails of Philip S. Miller Park and Ridgeline Open Space. While previous years were co-organized by the Town and Colorado Runner Events, the 2020 race was coordinated entirely by department staff and offered distances for all, including a liveBIG Family Adventure Run, the liveBIG 5k, the Ridgeline 10k, the Ridgeline Trail Half Marathon and the Ridgeline Trail 50k.

The event adhered to the recommended social distancing practices while maintaining a level of fun and safe public interaction. From one-way entrances and exits, to separating runners prior to their start time and implementing staggered individual starts, staff made every effort to keep the event rolling with the help of race timer Hal Sports.

Once the Castle Rock Trail Festival got into its event rhythm, it proved to be the challenging outdoor event that everyone looks forward to, and the liveBIG Family Adventure Run and 5k offered BIG fun to families. This annual event will surely continue to grow and bring people together.



Education

FALL BREAK CAMPS

Held between Monday, Oct. 12 and Friday, Oct. 16, the department's fall break camps provided families with a great way to keep kids busy while school was out of session. While camps looked a little different this year, that didn't stop the fun!

Rock Rec and Athletics camps joined forces to offer participants half- and full-day camp options for one exciting week. Ran entirely at the Miller Activity Complex, each day consisted of learning the basic skills of a sport, hiking and spending time outside at Philip S. Miller Park, crafting and swimming or jumping on the trampolines. The last day of camp was officially deemed costume day to celebrate Halloween, and both campers and staff spent the day dressed in Halloween spirit.

Other camp offerings included Dance Exploration, Mad Science and Dungeons & Dragons camps, as well as the Creative Brikster Fall Camp ran through Inspire to Learn and Imagine STEmplicity Games ®.

Every effort was made to keep staff and campers safe with social distancing and public health guidelines:

- All staff and campers were required to wear face masks entering and leaving camp and in common areas.
- High-use touch surfaces were regularly sanitized and campers were reminded and encouraged to practice good hygiene and regular hand washing.
- Campers remained in their same groups of one staff and no more than 15 campers during the entire week.
- Mandatory health screenings were administered on staff and campers each morning.
- All activities were organized to allow for six feet of social distancing.





Arts and Enrichment

TREE OF WINGS DEDICATION

A dedication event was held by the Public Art Commission to celebrate local community character and the arts and formally recognize Tree of Wings, the Town's newest and permanent art installation. On Thursday, Oct. 8 at the Core Plaza of Philip S. Miller Park, people responsibly gathered to hear community members speak about the project and enjoy light refreshments. Speakers included Castle Rock Mayor Jason Gray, Public Art Commission Chair Susan Paulsen, Parks and Recreation Director Jeff Brauer and Mary Williams and John King, the artists commissioned to create the sculpture in 2019.

Williams and King created the vibrant kinetic piece to pay homage to the active nature of the park and inspire locals and visitors alike. The artists have more than 30 years of combined experience in public art, and the Public Art Commission was thrilled to formally honor their work at this event.

The mission of the Town of Castle Rock Public Art Commission is to bring distinctive public art to Castle Rock and to serve as the stewards of the public art program. More information is available at [CRgov.com/PublicArt](https://www.castlerockco.gov/PublicArt).

PUBLIC ART SURVEY

October is National Arts and Humanities Month, and bringing distinctive public art to the community is the mission of the Town's Public Art Commission. To celebrate and stay in touch with the vision of Castle Rock residents, the commission is now asking for the public's input on art.

The Public Art Commission identifies priorities and goals related to acquiring art for public buildings and parks. Thanks to the Commission, residents currently enjoy more than 30 pieces of public art, including murals, sculptures, utility box wraps, paintings and more.

An online survey will be available at [CRgov.com/PublicArt](https://www.castlerockco.gov/PublicArt) through Friday, Nov. 20. Results will help shape the vision and goals of the Public Art Commission and feedback is essential to ensuring the community's public art program reflects the values and preferences of Castle Rock residents. The information will also be used as the Town continues to plan and implement future art initiatives.