



## BACKGROUND

Created in 1992 as the result of a citizens' initiative, the Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) Constitutional Amendment—Article XXVII of the Colorado Constitution—redirected a portion of Lottery proceeds to the GOCO Trust Fund for projects that preserve, protect and enhance Colorado's wildlife, park, river, trail and open space heritage. The Amendment also created the GOCO Board to oversee distribution of the funds.

GOCO receives only a portion of Lottery proceeds. The Conservation Trust Fund and the Colorado Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation are allocated 50% of the Colorado Lottery proceeds, while GOCO receives the other 50% of Lottery dollars. Additionally, a cap is placed on the total amount of funding GOCO receives. In Fiscal Year 2008, GOCO reached its cap of \$53.1 million. Therefore, \$8.1 million was contributed to the School Capital Construction Assistance Fund.

## LOTTERY PROCEEDS DISTRIBUTION

The allocation of Lottery proceeds in Fiscal Year 2007-2008:

- \$53.1 million to the Great Outdoors Colorado Trust Fund (50%, up to \$35 million annually adjusted for inflation.)
- 40% (\$48.9 million) to the Conservation Trust Fund for direct distribution to local governments & park and recreation districts on a per capita basis for parks, recreation and open space.
- 10% (\$12.2 million) to Colorado State Parks for state park and outdoor recreation projects.
- \$8.1 million to the State School Capital Construction Assistance Fund for facilities improvements.

## GOCO'S CONSTITUTIONAL DIRECTIVE

The Colorado Constitution requires GOCO to allocate its proceeds substantially equally over time to **four** funding areas:

1. "Investments in the **wildlife resources** of Colorado through the Colorado Division of Wildlife, including the protection and restoration of crucial wildlife habitats, appropriate programs for maintaining Colorado's diverse wildlife heritage, wildlife watching, and educational programs about wildlife and wildlife environment."
2. "Investments in the **outdoor recreation resources** of Colorado through the Colorado Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation, including the State Parks system, trails, public information and environmental education resources, and water for recreational facilities."
3. "Competitive grants to the Colorado Divisions of Parks and Outdoor Recreation, and Wildlife, and to counties, municipalities, or other political subdivisions of the state, or non-profit land conservation organizations, to identify, acquire, and manage **open space** and natural areas of statewide significance."
4. "Competitive matching grants to **local governments** or other entities that are eligible for distributions from the Conservation Trust Fund, to **acquire, develop or manage open lands and parks.**"

## **GOCO'S GRANT PROGRAMS**

From its four constitutionally directed funding areas, GOCO developed a variety of grant programs:

- Legacy Grants for larger projects that combine GOCO's funding purposes, such as the Grand Junction Riverfront Greenway and the South Platte Riverfront Project.
- Local Government Park & Outdoor Recreation Grants for projects that help all size of communities accomplish outdoor recreation projects, including a special program for small communities.
- Open Space Grants for the acquisition of easements or fee title
- Investments through Colo. Division of Wildlife
- Investments through Div. of Parks & Outdoor Recreation
- Trail Grants
- Planning Grants

## **ACCOMPLISHMENTS TO DATE**

- Preservation of land that is providing new recreational opportunities for citizens and visitors in both urban and rural areas.
  - Lands along river corridors in Routt, Adams, Arapahoe, Denver, Boulder, and Mesa counties have been transformed into parks and trails.
  - New state park lands have been acquired in Dolores, El Paso and Jefferson counties.
- Conservation easements are protecting agricultural lands that provide important wildlife corridors and the scenic views that define our western heritage while allowing these lands to remain in agricultural production.
- 994 community parks and outdoor recreation areas created or enhanced including skate parks, ball fields, playgrounds, and fairground projects.
- 43 different threatened/endangered species receiving focused DOW efforts
- 764 miles of trails built or restored
- 7,650 young people enabled to participate in Colorado Youth Corps Association projects
- Construction of environmental education centers and funding for environmental education programs through state agencies to foster the next generation of stewards of Colorado's natural assets.
- \$653.7 million awarded through FY 2008

## **DEMAND FOR GOCO FUNDS**

Demand for GOCO grant moneys continues to be high. In recent grant rounds, applications have outstripped available funds by an almost 2:1 margin. Providing outdoor amenities is more important now than ever, given the down economy and recent tendency of citizens to vacation close to home.

## **GOCO'S BOARD**

GOCO Board members are appointed by the Governor and are subject to confirmation by the Colorado State Senate. The 17-member Board is designed to represent all parts of the state based on population.

- Two members from each of Colorado's seven congressional districts serve – no two members from one congressional district can be from the same political party.
- One member of the GOCO Board must represent agricultural interests.
- Two members of the Board must live west of the Continental Divide.
- The Executive Director of the Colorado Department of Natural Resources, and a representative from the Colorado Board of Parks and Outdoor Recreation and from the Colorado Wildlife Commission are members of the GOCO Board.

GOCO continues to keep its administrative expenses low, including its operating expenses and capital investments. Throughout GOCO's 15 fiscal years, these expenses have totaled 3.59% of total revenues – **substantially** less than interest earned on cash dollars.

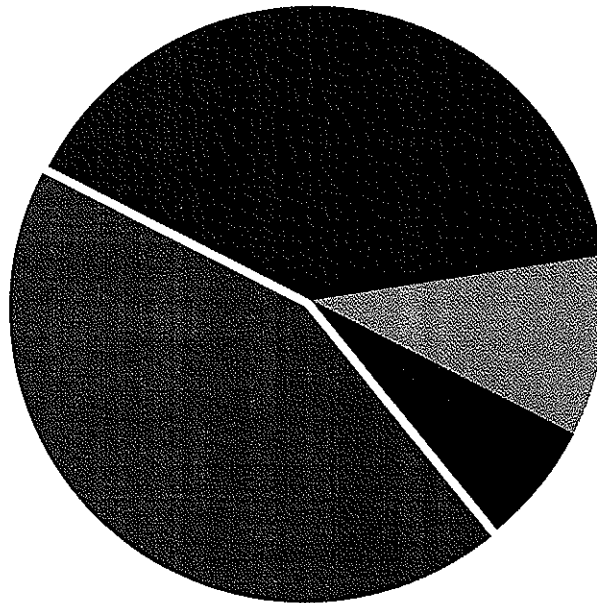
## **GOCO PUBLIC SURVEY**

Every few years, GOCO asks the public and its grantees for anonymous feedback. In June 2008, the GOCO Board commissioned a public opinion survey. Results of public opinion surveys provide the Board with a review of GOCO's performance, priorities, policies and its constitutionally-mandated programs. There were 806 respondents statewide to the survey, and an overwhelming majority (87%) supported the use of Lottery funds for parks, outdoor recreation, wildlife habitat and open space.

The GOCO Board also surveyed its local government and land trust grantees around the state in 2008 to assess the effectiveness of its programs and application processes. According to the customer satisfaction survey, 74% of GOCO's grantees rate the agency as "excellent" or "good."

### **Lottery Proceeds Distributed in FY2008**

July 1, 2007 to June 30, 2008



- Great Outdoors Colorado - Up to 50% - \$53.1 Million
- Conservation Trust Fund - 40% - \$48.9 Million
- Colorado State Parks - 10% - \$12.2 Million
- School Capital Construction Assistance Fund - \$8.1 Million