

2011 Annual Report



South Suburban  
PARKS AND RECREATION



# The ART of Recreation


Every artist has a passion. Picasso loved tennis. VanGogh was nuts about ice skating. Munch thought mini-golf was a scream. And for the artist in you, South Suburban has created a masterpiece of recreational opportunities. From green parks and picture-perfect open space and trails to vibrant classes and fun-filled facilities, there's something extraordinary to excite your passion.

We invite you to learn more about how we serve nearly 140,000 residents living in Littleton, Sheridan, Columbine Valley, Lone Tree west of I-25, Bow Mar, Centennial and portions of Jefferson, Douglas and Arapahoe counties. Please enjoy our annual report featuring highlights from 2011.

Visit [www.sspr.org](http://www.sspr.org) for additional information.

Recreation is the ART of living.

# Imagine if We Didn't Have Green Parks?



A neighborhood park that turned brown would be very scary, indeed. *Green* parks are the pride of our community, and every day they are South Suburban's priority. From soil prep, fertilizer and weed control, to mowing, tree trimming and trash pickup, we understand the art of maintaining beautiful parks. Well-planned parks do more than increase your property values by 28%, they provide wonderful places for children to run and play, and for adults to stay active.

In 2011, to enhance how we care for over 3700 acres of parkland and 100 sports fields, we relocated our main Service Facility. The new centralized location improves efficiencies to dispatch crews and heavy-duty equipment for irrigation, turf, open space, construction, signs, preventative maintenance and playground safety.



*We Know Why She's Smiling...*

**It's no secret. The artistry of Mother Nature inspires us, and South Suburban acquires and protects open space for the benefit of residents. By partnering with cities and other agencies, including Arapahoe County Open Spaces and Great Outdoors Colorado, we maximize the potential to preserve land. Utilizing best practices, we plan opportunities for the public to enjoy these outdoor adventures, while managing issues such as safeguarding wildlife habitat and controlling noxious weeds that crowd vital grasses and trees.**

**This past year, South Suburban acquired more land for open space for a total of over 2000 acres of open space that we manage. We also improved access to open space at South Platte Park, owned by the City of Littleton and managed by South Suburban. An ADA fishing pier was added to the park's Blackrock Lake, and another river access point was built near the Carson Nature Center.**



## *You're Connected with Our Trails*

We have planned, built and currently maintain over 80 miles of trails that connect to schools, places of employment, local businesses, recreation centers, parks and open space.

Collaboration led to the construction of additional trail connections in 2011. The East Bank Trail was built along the Mary Carter Greenway, funded by South Suburban, City of Littleton, Great Outdoors Colorado and Arapahoe County Open Spaces. The Arapahoe Road Trail was added from E. Euclid to Big Dry Creek Trail. A dual trail connection was completed from Mary Carter Greenway to the new ADA accessible restroom and parking at the South Platte entry near C-470. Phase 1 of the Centennial Link Trail from deKoevend Park to the High Line Canal opened, funded by City of Littleton, Arapahoe County Open Spaces and Great Outdoors Colorado. West Belleview Trailhead was added to the Ackerman property, and a bridge at Progress Park was installed to access the ADA fishing pier.



## *Flying is Easy With the Right Wings*

Combining play with technology entices children to take a break from sedentary activities like watching TV. Our new eXerGame Zone at Family Sports Center incorporates a virtual reality atmosphere with cutting edge techno games. Kids get up and get moving to Rock Band, Light Space Floor and Makoto. These interactive games challenge dance skills, sharpen BMX or skate board manoeuvres and test speed and agility.

We also launched a new Fitness Van in 2011. The entire van is a mobile playground equipped with a portable Wii and hi-def sound system. This is a great way to bring new exercise experiences to neighborhood parks. Kids get active with tech games, as well as timeless favorites—hula hoops and Frisbees. The van was funded through a partnership with Littleton Rotary and the Arapahoe County Sheriff's Department.



## Get Rockin'!

73% of adults think being physically fit is the key to staying healthy. From aerobics to Zumba, group fitness classes have grown dramatically as a means for aging "boomers" to boost strength, energy, and flexibility. And regular exercise will prevent a number of chronic diseases.

South Suburban provides four recreation centers that are conveniently located in Sheridan, Lone Tree, Littleton and Centennial. Fitness classes, swimming, basketball, racquetball, cardio-vascular equipment, indoor running and weight rooms are available. A 30-visit "punch pass" offers a great value for South Suburban residents and seniors can receive an additional discount. Punch pass holders only pay for the days they use and the pre-purchased visits never expire, an option private health clubs do not offer.

Several improvements were made at the recreation centers in 2011, including new basketball backboards at Sheridan Recreation Center and locker room and racquetball court improvements and new spinning bikes at Goodson.





*Skating is the Coolest!*

Hockey and figure skaters glide onto the ice as early as 5 am. From beginner lessons to tournaments and competitions, the action is non-stop, seven days a week. Combined, the four sheets of ice have nearly 1 million visits each year.

In 2011, more public skating sessions were added, and the learn to skate program was redesigned to provide expanded lessons on a monthly basis. A Great Skate program provided free skating lessons every Saturday in November. Year round on Friday and Saturday nights, the disco ball was brought back, along with a DJ to spin tunes, to create a really cool place for teens to hangout.

# We're Careful with Your Money

We utilize fiscally sound management practices and balance our expenses to revenue. In 2011, this was harder than usual due to tight revenue streams, increasing demands for maintenance and higher costs for water, and fuel for equipment, trucks and heating. One of our tougher decisions was to close the Rocking Horse Child Care Center in Sheridan. The program's revenues had declined for several years, despite efforts to increase attendance. A number of vacant job positions in the park district were also not filled to save money. On the bright side, for the 10th consecutive year, South Suburban was recognized by the Government Finance Officers Association for Excellence in Financial Reporting. Additionally, early reports for revenue in 2012, show signs of improvement.

## How are my South Suburban property tax dollars spent?



Based on a \$100,000 home value, a homeowner pays \$55 a year to South Suburban.

Parks, Trails, Open Space..	\$20	
Capital Outlay & Maintenance .....	\$23	
Subsidy & Overhead for fee-based programs .....	\$7	
Administration .....	\$4	
Hudson Gardens .....	\$1	



# Future impressions

To prepare for the future, South Suburban is in the process of updating its strategic plan. Additionally, a number of projects are scheduled for 2012.

- Two new bridges across Big Dry Creek on the South Suburban Golf Course Par 3.
- Improvements to deKoevend Park, including a flush restroom, shelter and ballfield renovations
- New roof at South Suburban Ice Arena.
- New pedestrian bridge to access the Murray Property Open Space from Big Dry Creek Trail.
- Improvements to Arapaho Park, including a flush restroom, shelter and ballfield renovation.
- Cornerstone Park ballfield renovations, new playground and new shelter.
- Multi-purpose field and repairs to existing fields at Lorenz Regional Park.
- Clubhouse and halfway restroom renovations at South Suburban Golf Course.
- South Platte Park River enhancements to reestablish wetlands, stabilize river banks and provide fish habitat for improved fishing.
- Sheridan ballfield improvements.
- Holly Pool and tennis court upgrades.





**South Suburban**  
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Thanks to Grant Wood, Edvard Munch, Leonardo DaVinci, Michelangelo, Raphael,  
James Whistler, Edgar Degas, Claude Monet and Norman Rockwell.