



South Suburban
PARKS AND RECREATION

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
June 4, 2015

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South Suburban to help Commemorate the 50th Anniversary of the 1965 Flood

Fifty years ago on June 16, a massive flash flood swept through Littleton and Denver, changing lives as well as how Littleton developed. The 50th anniversary of that event will be commemorated on Tues., June 16, in the parking area of Aspen Grove Lifestyle Center, starting at 6:30 pm.

A wet, cold spring in 1965 was followed by a stalled storm front that dropped as much as 14 inches of rain in four hours in the Castle Rock and Larkspur area. That water drained to Plum Creek, which formed into a large flash flood wall of water up to a mile wide in places that swept into the Platte River. Littleton had a few hours' notice of the coming floodwaters and successfully evacuated the river valley. On June 16, the water swept through the valley destroying homes, businesses, forests and bridges. In the aftermath, Chatfield Reservoir was created and Littleton embarked on a national precedent-setting effort to change the Army Corps of Engineers plan for a flood channel. Instead, city staff and elected officials lobbied Congress and raised tax funds to be able to purchase the floodplain of the South Platte River to keep the natural environment and to provide for safety for future residents.

Over time, that plan was approved and evolved into today's popular 880-acre open space known as South Platte Park and the Carson Nature Center, an area filled with trails, wildlife and fishing opportunities in the heart of Littleton. The flood control efforts and planning for the Park affected which roads connect to neighborhoods on the west side of the river, where and how housing developments were approved, architectural decisions for the Santa Fe corridor, trail development and connections, and other decisions that impact the character of the City of Littleton.

To commemorate the devastation from the flood and the positive community changes that evolved, South Suburban Parks and Recreation is partnering with Aspen Grove Lifestyle Center and the Alamo Drafthouse Cinema for a family outdoor movie night on June 16. Aspen Grove Lifestyle Center is located at 7301 S Santa Fe Dr., Littleton.

The evening begins with guided hikes to the river in South Platte Park starting at 6:30 pm, as well as a large river model trailer, Hawk Quest with live birds of prey, a bounce house, face-painting and more. At dusk, there will be a brief presentation on the story of the 1965 Flood, followed by a screening of "Singing in the Rain."

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The event is free and open to all ages. Participants can pre-register for the first two free hikes at 6:30 pm and 6:45 pm at www.sspr.org/nature. At 7 pm, the free hikes will be first-come, first-served on site. Questions about the event, or the history of the Flood in Littleton, can be directed to 303-730-1022.

Other events in the area to commemorate the Flood include exhibitions at the Littleton Historical Museum and Sheridan Library, a presentation by the Douglas County Historical Society on June 11, campfire story-telling at the Chatfield State Park campground on June 19 and at Bear Creek Lake Park Amphitheater on June 20, and an event at the future River Run Park near Broken Tee Golf Course in conjunction with Bike-To-Work Day on June 24.

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