



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Denver Parks and Recreation saves millions of gallons of water in 2011

Tuesday, February 7, 2012 DENVER --- Thanks to the citizen approved Better Denver Bond Program and a partnership with Denver Water, Denver Parks and Recreation saved over 273,497,000 gallons and \$700,000 in water costs in 2011. Denver Parks and Recreation (DPR) upgraded 37 antiquated irrigation systems throughout the Denver Parks system. Denver Water also provided a 10 percent match on all irrigation bond funds equating to approximately \$1.7 million. These funds are largely being used to build out an irrigation central control system to assist with strategic water use goals. To ensure this investment is leveraged even further, DPR staff has worked diligently on improving irrigation management, enhancing irrigation system monitoring and converting of landscapes to more Colorado friendly plant materials.

“Initiatives like this happen because of support from our citizens, dedicated staff and great partners” said Lauri Dannemiller, manager of Denver Parks and Recreation. “The Better Denver Bond program and Denver Water helped drive these improvements in our parks and without that support and staff efforts these upgrades would have taken several more years to complete.”

The 2011 target use was 24-inches of water per irrigated acre based on a normal precipitation year which translated to a target of 1,476,795,000 gallons for 2,834 irrigated acres of both traditional and naturalized landscape. Final usage was 1,203,298,000 gallons used for park and parkway irrigation. This equates to 273,497,000 gallons of water saved.

“Denver Water has partnered with Denver Parks and Recreation to increase awareness of water efficiency and to provide funding incentives to improve irrigation systems and convert traditional grass areas to more water-efficient landscaping”, said Melissa Elliot, manager of conservation for Denver Water. “The result has been dramatic. Over the last 10 years, the Parks department has reduced their water use by more than 25 percent, while continuing to add over 400 acres of additional parks space to the city.”

Other initiatives that have contributed to water and cost savings (beyond the \$700,000 saved in irrigation costs) include the installation of low-flow restroom fixtures in park restroom renovations and new park facility construction.

In 2012, Denver Parks and Recreation will be investing in an improved irrigation control system that allows run-time changes to be made more frequently (to reflect real-time weather) from a central computer, without sending staff to visit every site. Irrigation improvements will also be made at Washington and Harvard Gulch Parks. DPR plans to continue to improve staff training to create greater knowledge of the plant/water/soil relationship and to encourage the Denver Water message to “use only what you need.” Finally, DPR continues to partner with Denver Water on the recycled water program, preparing for conversions at 12 sites to use recycled water. Those conversions are scheduled in 2013. The conversions will add an additional 267 irrigated acres to the current total of 269 acres, expanding the recycled water system to 536 acres. This program continues to be a significant effort to utilize a less expensive irrigation source. Recycled water is 11 percent of the cost of potable water.

Denver Parks + Recreation (DPR) facilities are unrivaled in the Rocky Mountain West. The DPR system spans over a 138-year history from the first park created in 1868 to nearly 15,000 acres of urban parks and mountain parkland today. It embraces nearly 3,000 acres of “traditional” parks and parkways, 2,500 urban natural acres and close to 8,000 acres of urban forest within the city alone.

The City & County of Denver's \$550M **Better Denver Bond Program** works to preserve, renovate and create amenities that touch resident's lives – including roads, libraries, parks, recreation centers, public safety, human services, city buildings and cultural facilities. Approved by voters in 2007, the bond program is infusing millions of dollars into the economy, preserving and creating jobs and making Denver a more attractive place to live, work, and invest in the future. For more information about the Better Denver Bond Program, visit www.denvergov.org/betterdenver.

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