



## COLORADO OPEN LANDS

# NEWS

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### **Funding Secured for Rio Grande Healthy Living Park**

The Trust for Public Land (TPL), the San Luis Valley Local Foods Coalition (LFC), and Colorado Open Lands (COL) will complete the permanent acquisition and protection of the 38-acre Polston School property in Alamosa, Colorado as the site of the Rio Grande Healthy Living Park, thanks to two significant grants announced today. Specifically, the Trust for Public Land has secured \$700,000 from the LOR Foundation and \$254,000 from the Great Outdoors Colorado Trust Fund (GOCO).

“After working on this concept and opportunity for over five years, we finally have the resources to realize the community’s vision for the Rio Grande Healthy Living Park,” said Jim Petterson, The Trust for Public Land’s Colorado State Director. “The work of committed community activists from the San Luis Valley, a state-wide land trust, a national conservation group, and two innovative funding partners will be combined to give the people of Alamosa and the San Luis Valley a remarkable asset that is much more than a conventional park.”

“The Rio Grande Healthy Living Park embodies what can happen when a community rallies to protect and enhance its character and way of life,” said Jake Caldwell, Program Officer with the LOR Foundation. “From LOR’s perspective, an investment in advancing this effort to truly achieve the community’s vision will have an immediate and measurable impact for its current citizens and for generations to come,” adds Caldwell. “LOR is proud to have worked with such a diverse group of partners in assuring the community of Alamosa and surrounding communities in the San Luis Valley will have a treasure they can learn from and enjoy,” concludes Caldwell.

The two grants will pay off a temporary bridge loan allowing The Trust for Public Land to transfer ownership of the property to the Local Foods Coalition, and fund the purchase of a conservation easement (which will be held by Colorado Open Lands) which ensures that the property remains a public, agriculturally themed, park in perpetuity.

“We are thrilled to have secured the funding needed to purchase the property free and clear in the coming months, to finish the planning process, and give the City of Alamosa a trail easement over the public trails on the property,” said Julie Mordecai, Director of the Rio Grande Healthy Living Park. “Next we’ll begin the capital campaign for the future development of this beautiful place that will serve to demonstrate sustainable agriculture, environmental stewardship, recreation and green/solar building!”

“The Trust for Public Land, the San Luis Valley Local Foods Coalition, and Colorado Open Lands have all demonstrated an impressive dedication to make the Rio Grande Healthy Living Park a hub for the Alamosa community that will leave a long-lasting legacy for local residents and their families,” said Lise Aangeenbrug, GOCO’s Executive Director. “We are thrilled and honored to support this project and look forward to seeing it become a reality.”

The Trust for Public Land and the Local Foods Coalition are moving forward with the public planning process to create a master plan for the park that meets the needs of the communities in Alamosa and the San Luis Valley. Outreach and planning are scheduled to conclude in September 2015, allowing LFC to move forward with the development of the site as the Rio Grande Healthy Living Park immediately after they take ownership of the land.

“This project benefits so many, and is a wonderful opportunity for the partnering organizations to work with the community to benefit local food production, open space protection, and public recreation. Colorado Open Lands is very happy to be involved,” said Amanda Nims, Senior Conservation Project Manager for Colorado Open Lands.

*The Trust for Public Land creates parks and protects land for people, ensuring healthy, livable communities for generations to come. Nearly ten million people live within a ten-minute walk of a Trust for Public Land park, garden, or natural area, and millions more visit these sites every year. Learn more at [tpl.org](http://tpl.org).*

*The San Luis Valley Local Foods Coalition works to foster an equitable local food system that restores the health of the people, community, economy and ecosystem.*

*Colorado Open Lands (COL) is a non-profit organization that exists to protect the treasure of Colorado’s land and water resources. COL works primarily with private landowners to place voluntary agreements called conservation easements on their property; their ranch stays their ranch, their farm stays their farm. The process is driven by the wishes of the landowner with the goal of protecting open space, water, and wildlife habitat – forever.*

*The LOR Foundation works communities to enhance livability and quality of life. LOR partners with rural communities in Montana, Idaho, Wyoming, Colorado and New Mexico to support their vision for livability – by protecting the landscapes they occupy and improving their access to nature, recreation, clean water, transportation options, cultural experiences and economic stability.*

*Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) invests a portion of Colorado Lottery proceeds to help preserve and enhance the state’s parks, trails, wildlife, rivers and open spaces. GOCO’s independent board awards competitive grants to local governments and land trusts, and makes investments through Colorado Parks and Wildlife. Created by voters in 1992, GOCO has funded more than 3,500 projects in all 64 counties without any tax dollar support. The grants are funded by GOCO’s share of Colorado Lottery revenues, which are divided between GOCO, Colorado Parks and Wildlife, the Conservation Trust Fund and school construction.*