



Parks & Open Space

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PARKS & OPEN SPACE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

Time/Date of Meeting: 6:30 p.m., Thursday, August 28, 2025

Location: Boulder County Courthouse

1325 Pearl Street, Third Floor, Boulder

TO:	Parks & Open Space Advisory Committee
FROM/PRESENTER:	Tina Nielsen, Special Projects Coordinator and Foundation Board Vice Chair
AGENDA ITEM:	50th Anniversary Celebration and Fundraiser hosted by Boulder County Parks & Open Space Foundation
ACTION REQUESTED:	Information Only

The Boulder County Parks & Open Space Foundation is a supporting non-profit organization. The Foundation's Mission is to strengthen the connections between the public and the Boulder County Parks & Open Space Department by raising private funds, supporting innovative projects, fostering partnerships, and increasing community involvement. The attached article, to be published in Images Magazine this fall, highlights many of the Foundation's contributions.

The Foundation has generously supported the Parks & Open Space Department's 50th anniversary celebratory events. For example, the Foundation sponsored beverages at the staff appreciation party at Left Hand Brewing in June.

To round out this milestone anniversary year, the Foundation is hosting a party:

Rooted and Reaching: 50th Anniversary Celebration!

- Thursday, Oct. 9, 5-8 pm. at Chautauqua Dining Hall, 900 Baseline Rd., Boulder
- Event tickets are \$50 available at: PreserveBoulderCounty.org/50-event
- Cocktails and heavy appetizers
- Expo highlighting projects made possible by the Foundation
- Silent auction with unique open space-themed items and experiences and a raffle for a special prize

The Foundation Board is hard at work to create this special celebration. We hope you will help us spread the word and join us for this unforgettable evening of community, conservation, and celebration.

Images Magazine Article, Fall 2025

Ripple Effect: Boulder County Parks & Open Space Foundation Extends the Reach of Conservation and Community

By Tina Nielsen

The story of Boulder County's beloved parks, open spaces, and agricultural lands is a story of foresight, commitment, and community. For 50 years, the Boulder County Parks & Open Space Department has worked to protect the region's natural landscapes and heritage. And behind the scenes for the last 20 years, quietly and powerfully amplifying that mission, is the Boulder County Parks & Open Space Foundation—a small but mighty organization making a big impact.

Just like a stone cast into a still pond, the Foundation creates ripples—small acts of support that extend outward, touching people, programs, and partnerships that otherwise might not flourish. From cultural celebrations to nature-based education, the Foundation extends the reach of the county's open space program by funding collaborations for tangible programs that deepen our connection to the land.

Collaborating for Inclusion and Connection

One of the most powerful ways the Foundation creates impact is by collaborating with community-based nonprofit organizations. These partnerships open doors—often literally—for underrepresented groups to feel welcome in public spaces and (re)connected to nature. Take *Explorando Senderos*, for example. This grassroots initiative creates safe, welcoming hiking experiences for Latinx families in Boulder County. Through Foundation support, Explorando Senderos has been able to expand its offerings of guided hikes, led by bilingual leaders who help families explore local trails while building confidence and community. These hikes aren't just outdoor recreation—they're moments of belonging, empowerment, and joy.

Similarly, through its work with *Harvest of All First Nations*, the Foundation has helped elevate Indigenous voices and traditions in Boulder County. With Foundation support, Harvest of All First Nations hosts the annual *Corn Festival* at the Agricultural Heritage Center. The event celebrates corn as a unifying ancestral food that connects many Native and Indigenous communities. It weaves storytelling, music, and traditional dance into a family-friendly, educational experience. It's more than a festival—it's a reclamation of space and an invitation to learn with original peoples of the land.

Helping Students Experience the Land

The Foundation also plays a crucial role in educational access. For many elementary school children, the chance to see a working farm, pet a sheep, or watch a blacksmith at work can be life changing. But those experiences often depend on one simple, overlooked detail: how to get them there.

That's why the Foundation helps fund school bus transportation for elementary classes visiting the Agricultural Heritage Center. These field trips connect young students to Boulder County's agricultural history through immersive, hands-on learning. Thanks to Foundation

support, financial barriers are removed for schools with limited resources, ensuring all children—regardless of background—can experience the magic of learning outdoors.

Expanding Naturalist Programming for All Abilities

Another ripple of impact comes through a partnership with *Environment for the Americas*, a nonprofit dedicated to increasing diversity in the conservation field. With the Foundation's support, the two organizations have launched "train-the-trainer" naturalist programs designed for differently abled individuals and the professionals who serve them.

This work is about more than compliance—it's about creating authentic, enriching outdoor experiences for people of all abilities. By training educators and caregivers to adapt programming, interpretive signs, and outdoor experiences, the Foundation is helping ensure that Boulder County's open spaces are truly for everyone.

A Golden Year: Celebrating 50 Years of Parks & Open Space

This year marks a major milestone: the 50th anniversary of the Boulder County Parks & Open Space Department (learn more at boco.org/OpenSpace50). In honor of this golden year, the Foundation is sponsoring a special *cocktail party on Oct. 9*, bringing together founders, volunteers, and current supporters to honor a half-century of stewardship.

This festive event will celebrate and pay tribute to those whose vision created the department in 1975 and to the residents who fought—through three separate elections—to secure the county's first open space sales tax, finally passing in 1993. Their persistence and voters' continued support for supporting sales taxes shaped the open space legacy that now defines Boulder County.

Join the Ripple Effect

The Boulder County Parks & Open Space Foundation is not a household name—but its work is felt across the county, in every community hike, every child's delighted laugh on a field trip, and every event that celebrates the deep cultural connections to land.

As the department looks to the next 50 years, the Foundation's role will only grow more important. Your support can help make sure those ripples continue to spread.

To donate or learn more about the Foundation's work, visit preservebouldercounty.org.

Whether your passion lies in equity, education, conservation, or celebration, your gift helps ensure that Boulder County's parks and open spaces remain not just protected, but truly shared.