



OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY  
**U.S. Department  
of the Interior**

www.doi.gov

## News Release

Date: May 4, 2012

Contact: Adam Fetcher (Interior) 202-208-6416

Megan Castle (Hickenlooper) 303-513-2713

### **Secretary Salazar, Governor Hickenlooper Sign Agreement to Establish Rocky Mountain Greenway as America's Next Great Urban Park**

*Udall, Perlmutter, Hancock join meeting with local and regional planners to discuss progress of Rocky Mountain Greenway*

DENVER, CO— Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar and Colorado Governor John Hickenlooper today formalized an agreement to implement conservation and recreation projects throughout the Denver and Front Range metropolitan area. Today's action builds on President Obama's America's Great Outdoors Initiative to support locally-driven projects and strengthen economies and communities with greater access to open spaces and outdoor recreation.

The agreement, signed today at the Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge, establishes a 10-person steering committee to implement the Rocky Mountain Greenway Project – a federal, state, local and stakeholder partnership to create uninterrupted trails/transportation linkages connecting the Denver metro area's trail systems, the three National Wildlife Refuges in the metro region, Rocky Mountain National Park, and community trails systems in between. A copy of the agreement is available [here](#).

“The Denver and Front Range metropolitan Area is already rich with a strong system of trails, parks and open spaces – but we can do more. If we think beyond our fences, leverage our resources and align our visions, we can make this America's next great urban park,” Secretary Salazar said. “Today's agreement on the Rocky Mountain Greenway Project is significant because it means that there is a sustainable structure to turn this vision into reality. Senators Udall and Bennet, and Congressmen Perlmutter and DeGette have been great champions of conservation and recreation in the Denver metropolitan area and their support of this great urban park will be key to its success.”

“The Rocky Mountain Greenway Project is a model of state and federal collaboration. By working with local communities to connect a national park, regional open space, city trails and wildlife habitat into one continuous corridor, we will help to create new ways that urban

populations experience and enjoy Colorado's great outdoors," said Hickenlooper. "This is what the America's Great Outdoor initiative is all about—connecting communities to the open spaces and the natural wonders they contain while enhancing recreational opportunities and amenities."

Today's signing ceremony followed a meeting on the initiative's progress with Senator Mark Udall, Congressman Ed Perlmutter, Denver Mayor Michael B. Hancock and other elected officials, local and regional planners, and open space leaders throughout the metropolitan area.

"Outdoor recreation is a tremendous boost to the state, contributing over \$10 billion a year to our economy, supporting over 100,000 Colorado jobs and generating \$500 million in state tax revenue," noted Senator Udall.

"This partnership among stakeholders exemplifies the great things we can do in our country when we work together," Congressman Perlmutter said. "From Rocky Mountain Arsenal to Rocky Mountain National Park and everything in between, this agreement encourages the development of even more sustainable ways to link our communities together."

"This federal, state and local partnership will have a significant impact on focusing resources to improve the ecological health and sustainability for our South Platte River Corridor," Mayor Hancock said. "With this level of engagement, we will be able to ensure the goals for our River Corridor become a reality and that no matter where you live you can access this regional asset, this great urban park."

Last May, Gov. Hickenlooper and Sec. Salazar [announced](#) the Rocky Mountain Greenway Project as one of three conservation initiatives in Colorado as part of the [America's Great Outdoors](#) Initiative, a nationwide effort to encourage and support community-driven conservation and recreation projects around the country.

As envisioned, the Rocky Mountain Greenway will connect the following areas to serve the over 3 million resident of the Front Range area and the millions of visitors that come to Colorado every year:

- The Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge, which comprises 27 square miles between the Denver International Area and downtown Denver and is one of the largest urban national wildlife refuges in the nation;
- The Two Ponds National Wildlife Refuge in Arvada, Colorado;
- The 6,200 acre Rocky Flats National Wildlife Refuge located at the foothills of the Rocky Mountains;
- Rocky Mountain National Park, which is the sixth-most visited park in the nation with over 3.1 million visitors per year; and
- The hundreds of miles of trails, parks, and open spaces along the South Platte River and its tributaries throughout the Denver/Front Range metropolitan area.

A conceptual map of the Rocky Mountain Greenway is available [here](#) and [here](#).

The general agreement signed today memorializes a partnership between the Secretary of the Interior and Governor of Colorado to promote and establish the Rocky Mountain Greenway. The 10-person steering committee will be composed of one representative for the Governor, one representative for the Secretary, and four representatives of Denver/Front Range metropolitan area local governments (two county government and two city government representatives), and four representatives of local government-private sector area partnerships and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) engaged in the development of parks, open spaces, wildlife areas, river corridors, and trails systems. The steering committee will be expected to submit a report on the initiative to the Secretary and the Governor by the end of each calendar year.

Salazar, Hickenlooper, Udall, Perlmutter and Hancock also unveiled a Colorado Department of Transportation directional sign for the Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge. The signage will join new highway and roadway signage that will increase the refuge's visibility and direct visitors to the site. A former chemical weapons manufacturing facility, the site has since been transformed into an urban conservation gateway and sanctuary for residents, visitors and wildlife.

For more information on the refuge, please visit <http://www.fws.gov/rockymountainarsenal/>.

###