



MEDIA RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Contact:

*Sara Spaulding, APR
Communications & Engagement Director
970-244-1507*

CITY RECOGNIZED WITH PARKS AND RECREATION ASSOCIATION COLUMBINE AWARD FOR INNOVATION

GRAND JUNCTION, Colo. October 18, 2022 – The City of Grand Junction was recently awarded the Columbine Award for Innovation for the River Park at Las Colonias. The award was presented at the Colorado Parks and Recreation Association (CPRA) conference on October 6, 2022. The CPRA award program is designed to recognize and celebrate the individuals and organizations that contribute to the success and value of parks and recreation in the state of Colorado. The Columbine Award for Innovation was presented to the city in recognition of the years of community collaboration to build the River Park at Las Colonias.

“We are grateful for this statewide recognition. Grand Junction is increasingly on the map for amazing parks and recreation amenities,” said Parks & Recreation Director Ken Sherbenou. “The River Park opens river-based recreation to everyone adding to the quality of life in Grand Junction.”

The River Park at Las Colonias is part of the Riverfront Trail system which spans from Palisade in the east to Fruita in the west. The River Park was built to restore 14 acres of riparian area improving habitat and ecology in the adjacent river. It acts as a side channel for the endangered fish species in the Colorado River.

Planning for the River Park at Las Colonias was launched in 1997 with a vision to transform an area replete with non-native vegetation and traces of former uses as migrant farm housing, a junkyard, and a uranium mill. Guided by strong civic leadership in the 90s, the community remediated the uranium mill, cleaned up the junkyard, and removed the invasive weed species. The project took planning and input from thousands of individuals and a multitude of organizations over many years.

The \$1.2 million River Park project was funded by two grants received from Great Outdoor Colorado and the Colorado Water Conservation Board, and support from the City of Grand Junction, the Colorado Basin Roundtable, Downtown Grand Junction, One Riverfront. The project was made possible through partnerships with many organizations including Colorado Mesa University, the U. S. Department of Energy, and Bonsai.

#