



OFFICE OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Phone: 970-336-7204 Fax: 970-352-0242
1150 O St., P.O. Box 758, Greeley, CO 80632

NEWS RELEASE

Date: 3/10/16

Contact: Jennifer Finch, 970-336-7203

WELD COUNTY MAKES IMPROVEMENTS TO ISLAND GROVE FACILITIES

WELD COUNTY, CO – Weld County is in the process of installing 42 additional electrical outlets in the Livestock Building at Island Grove Regional Park for a total of \$84,856. "This is quite the enhancement and a much needed upgrade," said Commissioner Chair Mike Freeman. "Exhibitors expressed the need for more outlets to handle the equipment used to prepare their animals for show. The county was happy to make this upgrade to improve the facility."

Weld County and the City of Greeley each own and maintain properties at Island Grove. For the county, that includes the Exhibition Building, 4-H Building, Livestock Barn and half of the Events Center. These county facilities accommodate the Extension Services Department, 4-H activities, the Weld County Fair, the Colorado Farm Show and other community events. In 2004, Weld County and the City of Greeley set up a 20-year Island Grove Capital Improvement Plan, which the commissioners committed a one-time payment of \$1.75 million to the plan. The money was donated with the intent of being used for projects that will benefit Weld County residents including air conditioning in the events center, parking lots and event center meeting rooms.

Prior to 1984, the park was managed separately by the county and the city. However, on October 24, 1984, an Intergovernmental Agreement was signed between Weld County and the City of Greeley to form the Island Grove Regional Park Authority Board, which facilitates the promotion, management, maintenance and operation of county and city facilities. The agreement also gave the City of Greeley the ability to manage the day-to-day operations of the park. For example, in 2016 Weld County will pay the City of Greeley \$398,760 out of the county's 2016 budget for operation and maintenance costs of the county-owned buildings at Island Grove.

Island Grove Regional Park is one of the oldest and most historic areas in Weld County. Due to the location on the banks of the Cache la Poudre River, the area was used as a major campground by the Ute and Arapahoe Indians as they followed game across the plains as well as a meeting place for the Pawnee Indians. In 1869, Nathaniel Meeker founded the Union Colony and Island Grove was one of two parks he established. The park was once surrounded by a canal that brought water to a saw mill southeast of the park, and as the City of Greeley grew, the park served as the main source of recreation for residents in northern Weld County. Eventually, Island Grove took on an additional role as the county's fairgrounds. At one time, Island Grove had a racetrack and a zoo in the park. The racetrack was removed after the grandstands burned to the ground, and the zoo was removed due to the high maintenance costs. In its later years, Island Grove became home to the first county hospital and Greeley's first City Hall.

Island Grove Regional Park is located at 501 North 14th Avenue in Greeley and is approximately 145 acres with nearly 135 acres south of the Cache la Poudre River and small portion of the park is just north of the river.

For more information about Island Grove Regional Park, visit www.weldgov.com and click on the county buildings tab under the about section.

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