

2011/2012 COSA Leadership Program Description

Goal:

Offer a leadership experience within the conservation community that will give participants a broader understanding of issues facing local government open space programs and the candidate's ability to be a future leader within those organizations.

Objectives:

Participants will work with mentor throughout the 18 months (January, 2011 through June, 2012) to obtain additional experience in addressing selected leadership topics and/or learning modules. (Suggested topics are listed below.)

75% of the participants rate the program satisfactory or better by completing an evaluation at the end of the program. (Poor, Fair, Satisfactory, Good, Exceptional)

Participants are provided opportunity to meet/network/interact with a minimum of three open space program managers/directors outside of their own Department or Agency within Colorado.

Candidates will be able to establish a network of peer professionals throughout the State.

Time Commitment:

- 6 half-day to day long meetings (spaced throughout the year) to learn about open space programs throughout the state. (One session will be at the COSA annual conference.)
- 16 hours with mentor
- 3 days at conferences associated with open space or addressing open space issues in Colorado. (CCLT, LTA, COSA or other as determined appropriate by mentor.)
- 1 day attending GOCO Board Meeting, Legislative Session on Open Space Issue or other policy meeting at Statewide level.

TOTAL - Minimum commitment 13 - 14 days

In addition the mentors, candidates and selected trainers will be communicating on a regular basis, asking questions, and offering other learning and networking opportunities.

Although program participation is voluntary, candidate attendance is expected to be 100%. Absences due to emergencies are understood but candidate will be expected to work with mentor to "make-up" for the time and find ways to obtain the information missed. Candidates may be dismissed from the program for lack of participation. If the mentor/candidate relationship is not working for either party, a re-assignment can be discussed. Leadership programs will run for 12 months, beginning and completing at the annual COSA conference held each fall.

Group Leadership Workshops:

Presentations will be scheduled to help candidates learn about the differences between open space organizations in Colorado. The presentations will be developed by the participants/mentors and designed to look at open space related non-governmental organizations, large and small County programs and large and small City programs. Leadership Topics that may be addressed at these presentations and to be used for independent study by candidates include:

Leadership Topics/Learning Modules: Areas of interest that we'll use to better match participants with mentors:

Budgeting/Funding

Public process/Politics

Land Management/Stewardship Plans

Networking/Partnering/Developing Relationships

Public/Visitor Management

Working with Elected/Citizen/Advisory Boards
Public information/media relations/Marketing
Law Enforcement Philosophy
Acquisition Strategy (Fee Simple and Conservation Easements)
Strategic Positioning at the Local, Regional and State Level – Conservation in Colorado
Role of Non-profits/Land Trusts
Open Space System and Site Planning – use of GIS
Environmental Education/Interpretation
Volunteers

The workshop days may include a panel discussion, presentation and/or a site tour providing an example of a management technique that has proven to be successful. The panel will include representatives from a wide variety of open space organizations and provide time for questions and interaction with the leadership candidates. The sessions will be located throughout the state at a site appropriate to demonstrate the topics selected for the panel discussion.

Criteria/Credentials for Participants: The COSA Leadership/Mentoring Program is available to professionals within public agencies in Colorado that specialize in the management of open space properties and/or programs. Candidates should have a minimum of one year of supervisory experience. (Informal supervisory experience may be considered upon recommendation of candidate's supervisor. Types of experience might include serving as a team leader on a large project, managing a consultant or work with volunteers.) Program candidates will be selected by application. Applicants must be at a level within their career where the next logical step would be to a Program Manager, Division Manager, or Director level within the open space profession. Applicants must have a letter of support from their immediate Supervisor and a letter of recommendation from one other professional in the open space profession. (The program will be limited to 10 candidates/mentors.)

Candidates will be paired with mentors based on interests listed on the Leadership Program Application.

Criteria for Mentors/Agencies: Mentors must be program managers or directors within public agencies or non-profits that specialize in the management of open space properties and/or programs. Mentors must be available to spend a minimum of 16 hours with the candidates, willing to work with the participants to organize one of the half-day/day long presentations, able to recommend and provide contacts for candidates to complete work on chosen leadership skill topics, attend the COSA conference, and be willing to provide guidance by phone or e-mail on a regular basis throughout the year long program. (See mentor job description.)

Costs: (To be paid by agency and/or candidate as determined by agency.)

Travel – gas and lodging
Books or other materials
Fees for speakers (if necessary)
COSA (or other) conference fees