

Up Close & Personal as photographer John Fielder raises funds for CCAT

By RACHEL ALEXANDER alexanderr@ canoncitydailyrecord.com Canon City Daily Record

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It's about economy and ecology.

That's what photographer John Fielder said about the Great Outdoors Colorado program for preserving outdoor resources throughout the state. Fielder gave his presentation Saturday during a fundraiser for Colorado Citizens Against ToxicWaste at Pueblo Community College -- Fremont Campus.

"This is a wonderful opportunity for the community in more ways than one," said Mike Fry, who acted as emcee for the evening. "If there is a defining book for our state ... that's what Mr. Fielder has given us."

CCAT was raising funds to be able to hire an independent scientific representation for the community during the next few years as decisions are about the toxic waste in impoundment ponds at Cotter Mill.

Sharyn Cunningham, CCAT co-director, said the group has hired Robert Moran, a geochemist and hydrogeologist, who is now beginning work studying the area.

Fielder gave his presentation "Colorado Great Outdoors: Celebrating 20 Years of Lottery Funded Lands" during the evening.

"We're the only state in the country that does this," he said.

He said by protecting blue sky, clean air, clean water and other outdoor resources the state can draw more companies with more jobs, as well as more tourism.

To celebrate 20 years since the creation of GOCO, Fielder photographed 1,000 sites funded by the organizations and made two books -- a guidebook and a coffee table photo book.

"I went to every county and pretty much every town and every city," he said. "All have benefited from lottery money."

He said GOCO has acted as a catalyst for cities and towns to vote for open space taxes to match the GOCO grants to develop better open space.

"This is what attracts high-paying jobs," Fielder said. "The planet is connected. If you muck up something over there, you muck up something over here."

Fielder sold his books and auctioned one of his photos, with a portion of the profits going to the CCAT project.