



FOR ASSISTANCE VIEWING OR READING ANY CITY DOCUMENTS,

contact the City's ADA Coordinator via email adacoordinator@fortcollins.gov or phone: 970-416-4254.

[A Request for Reasonable Accommodation](#)
can also be completed online.

For more information about the City's Non-Discrimination policy and Accessibility efforts, visit FortCollins.gov/Non-Discrimination.



NATURAL AREAS EXPLORER

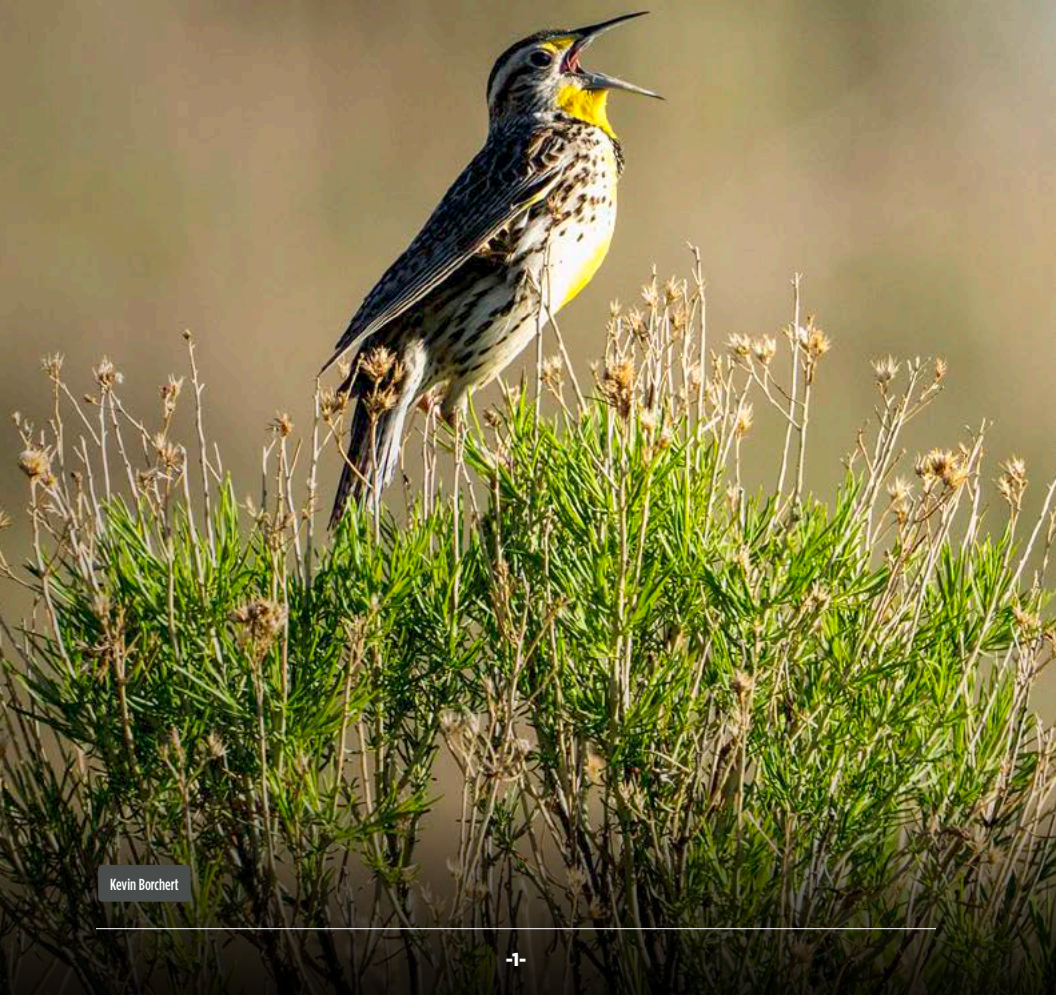
MAY-OCTOBER 2026



fortcollins.gov/naturalareas

- RESOURCES TO CONNECT WITH THE OUTDOORS
- FREE ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS

Western Meadowlark at Fossil Creek
Reservoir Natural Area



Kevin Borchert

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IMPORTANT INFORMATION

DISCOVER YOUR NATURAL AREAS!

Natural areas are special places to explore and treasure. The City of Fort Collins Natural Areas Department manages more than 50 natural areas encompassing over 40,000 acres and 100 miles of trails. Check the maps on pages 61-62 or visit fortcollins.gov.

Fort Collins natural areas are open from 5 a.m. until 11 p.m. except for Bobcat Ridge, Fossil Creek Reservoir, Gateway, and Soapstone Prairie natural areas which are open dawn to dusk. Soapstone Prairie is closed December through February.

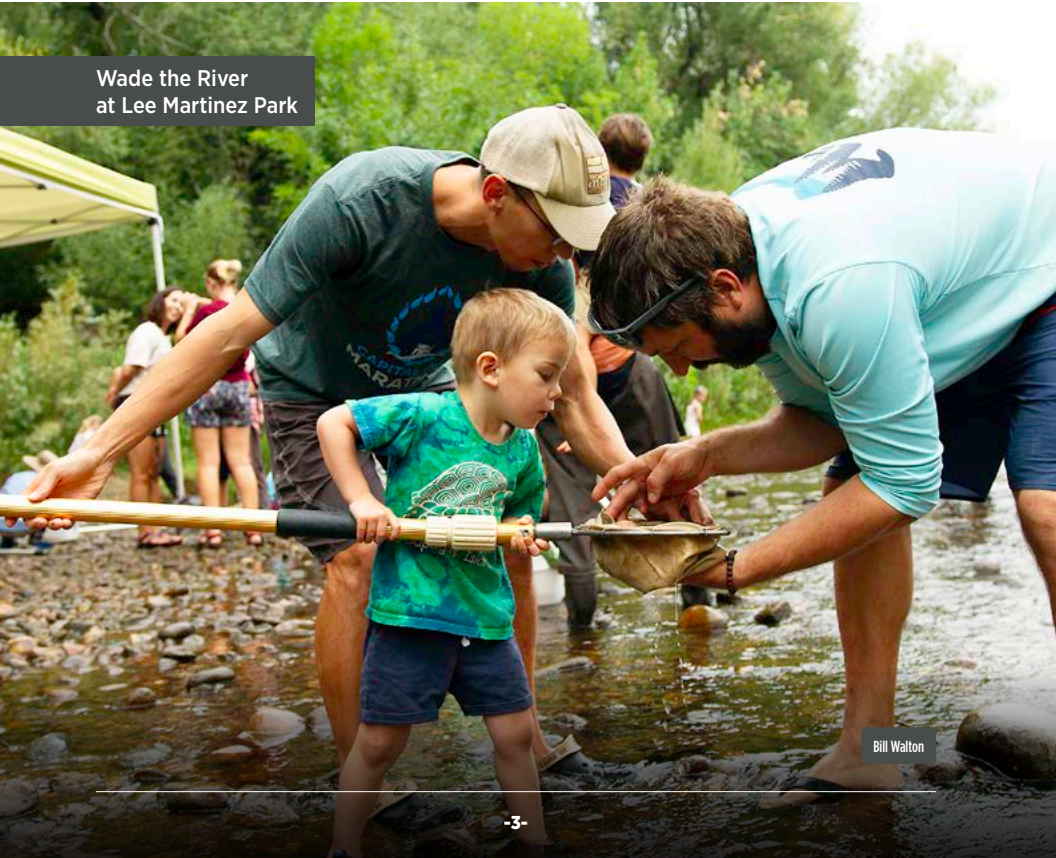
THANK YOU, ARTISTS!

Please check out creative submissions from local artists in the Explorer Art Gallery, located on pages 9-19 of this publication. If you're interested in having art featured in the 2027 Explorer publication, reach out to lhennessey@fortcollins.gov to learn more!

STAY INFORMED

Subscribe to *Natural Areas E-news*, a monthly email newsletter that includes trail recommendations, updates, and volunteer opportunities at fortcollins.gov.

Wade the River
at Lee Martinez Park



Bill Walton

LANGUAGES AND ACCESSIBILITY

While most Natural Areas activities are delivered in English, some activities will offer consecutive or simultaneous Spanish interpretation.

Simultaneous interpretation is facilitated through specialized audio equipment, enabling interpreters to convey speakers' messages in real-time without disrupting the flow of the conversation. Consecutive interpretation occurs when a speaker pauses to allow the interpreter to render their words into another language. Translation is the act of converting written text from one language to another.

If you require interpretation for any additional activity, or in another language, contact **naturalareas@fortcollins.gov** or 970-416-2815 to request an interpreter.

Si bien la mayoría de las actividades en Áreas naturales se realizan en inglés, este verano se ofrecerán algunas actividades con interpretación consecutiva o simultánea al español. También habrá actividades ofrecidas solo en español.

La interpretación simultánea se facilita mediante equipo de audio especializado, lo que permite a los intérpretes transmitir los mensajes del presentador en tiempo real sin interrumpir el flujo de la conversación. La interpretación consecutiva ocurre cuando el presentador hace una pausa para permitir que el intérprete reproduzca sus palabras en otro idioma. La traducción es el acto de convertir texto escrito de un idioma a otro.

*Si necesitas interpretación para cualquier actividad adicional, o en otro idioma, contáctanos en **naturalareas@fortcollins.gov** o al 970-416-2815 para solicitar un intérprete.*

People of all abilities and disabilities are welcome to participate in all activities and we are happy to make any appropriate accommodations. If you'd like to request an accommodation (language interpretation, wheelchair access, etc.), please visit the website at this QR code or email us at **naturalareas@fortcollins.gov**.



If accommodations are needed for an activity, please allow two (2) weeks prior to the event to process your request and arrange the accommodation, if available.

Auxiliary aids and services are available for persons with disabilities.
V/TDD: Dial 711 for Relay Colorado.

This publication is available as an accessible PDF through **[fortcollins.gov](https://www.fortcollins.gov)** and can be requested in large print.

If you have any questions or concerns about the accessibility of an activity, please contact **naturalareas@fortcollins.gov** or call 970-416-2815 for more information.

WHAT THE SYMBOLS MEAN



Accessible; wheelchairs welcome. Paved or hard-packed trails; distance is 1 mile or less with moderate inclines.



Some activities are not suitable for all audiences and have age restrictions. Children must be accompanied by adults on all activities.



Some activities are specifically designed to be family-friendly and welcome all ages. Children must be accompanied by adults for all activities.



These activities are led by Natural Areas community and City partners and require a separate site for registration.

REGISTERING & CANCELLATIONS

Registration is required for most activities and opens 30 days before the activity. Go to fcgov.com/register to register or call 970-416-2815 for more information on a particular event.



Activities may be canceled due to inclement weather. Check before you go! Naturalist leaders may cancel an activity in progress for safety reasons.

Check out:

- fcgov.com/register for descriptions, registrations, cancellations, and updates.
- fortcollins.gov for trail closures and general information.
-  Like City of Fort Collins Natural Areas on **Facebook** for news and information.
-  See photos from your favorite natural areas at [@fcnaturalareas](https://www.instagram.com/fcnaturalareas).
-  Visit trails.colorado.gov or check the COTREX app for trail closures.

ACTIVITY LEADERS

Volunteer Naturalists are highly trained educators who lead many of the activities in this guide. They love to share their enthusiasm, knowledge, and passion for natural areas. You'll have lots of fun and gain a deeper understanding of your natural areas by attending a Volunteer Naturalist-led activity.

DOGS

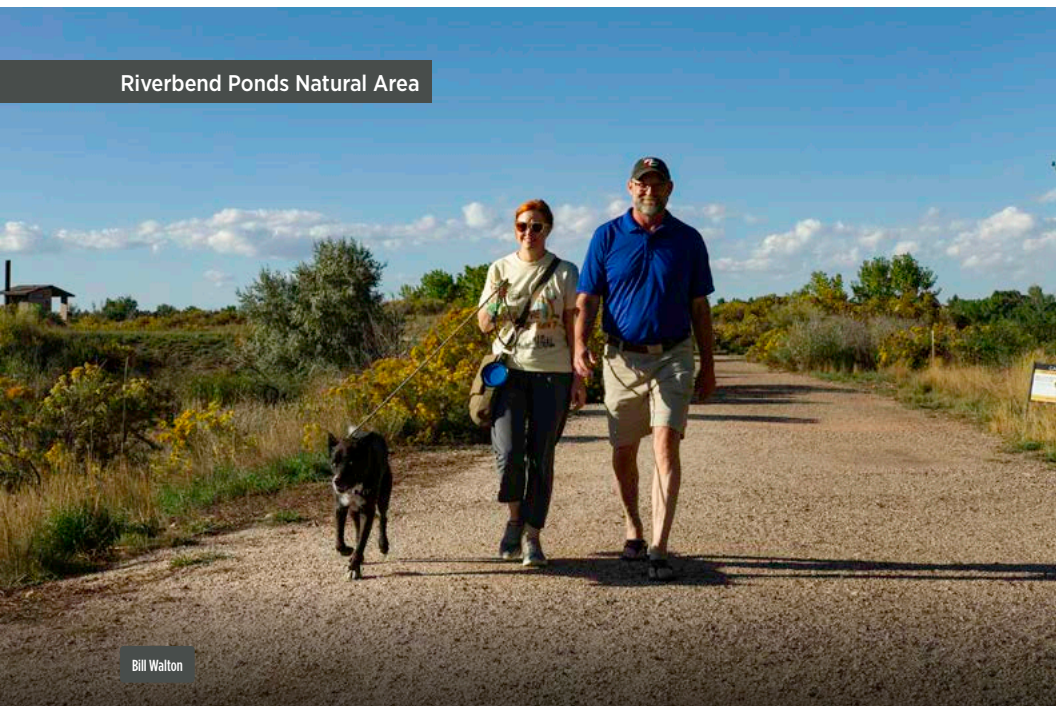
For the comfort of all visitors, dogs are not allowed at any scheduled activities. Please enjoy the natural areas with your dog outside of activity times. To protect natural habitats, dogs must be on leash at all times at natural areas. Due to sensitive wildlife concerns, dogs are not allowed at Bobcat Ridge, Coyote Ridge, Cottonwood Hollow, Fossil Creek Reservoir, Running Deer, and Soapstone Prairie natural areas.

Service animals trained to assist those with a disability are welcome at natural areas and at natural areas activities.

SAFETY

The activities and events offered in this guide often take place in natural areas where you are responsible for your own safety. Outdoor activities include the potential for serious injury, death, or property loss. Choose activities that match your abilities. Be prepared for changing weather conditions. Beware of rattlesnakes, lightning, and high water. If you're not sure how to properly prepare, refer to this guide or contact us at naturalareas@fortcollins.gov.

Riverbend Ponds Natural Area



Bill Walton

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

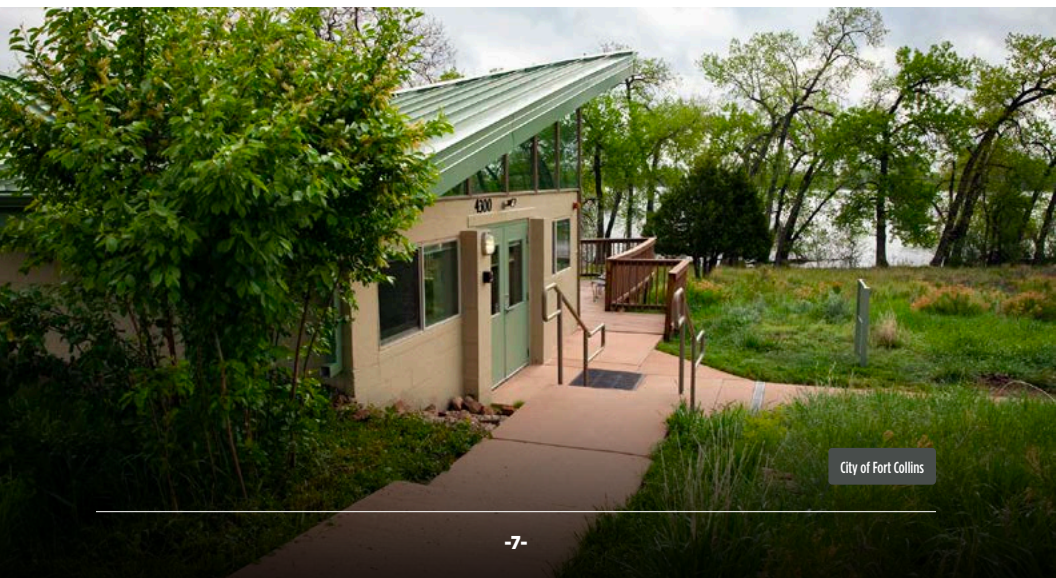
We acknowledge and honor the lands situated within the City of Fort Collins as the original homelands of the Hinono'eiteen (Arapaho), Tsétséhéstàhese (Cheyenne), Námánítá (Comanche), Cáuigú (Kiowa), Čárikš i Čárikš (Pawnee), Sosonih (Shoshone), Oc'eti S'akowin (Lakota) and Núuchiu (Ute) Peoples. This area is an important site of trade, gathering, and healing for these Native Nations. These lands are home to a diverse urban Native community representing multiple Native Nations and Indigenous Peoples. Despite forced removal and land dispossession, they continue to thrive as resilient members of our community. We are grateful for Native community members and honor the rich cultural heritage they bring to our collective community. We further recognize and value their social, intellectual, economic, and cultural contributions. The City of Fort Collins is committed to supporting, partnering, and working with the Native and Indigenous community.

Honramos las tierras originarias de los pueblos Hinono'eiteen (Arapaho), Tsétséhéstàhese (Cheyenne), Námánítá (Comanche), Kiowa (Caiugu), Čárikš i Čárikš (Pawnee), Sosonih (Shoshone), Oc'eti S'akowin (Sioux) y Núuchiu (Ute) dentro de Fort Collins. A pesar del desplazamiento forzado, una comunidad urbana nativa resiliente prospera, contribuyendo con un rico patrimonio cultural. La ciudad está comprometida a apoyar y colaborar con la comunidad nativa e indígena, reconociendo sus valiosas contribuciones.

PRIMROSE STUDIO

Primrose Studio is a secluded lakefront event venue perfect for meetings, retreats, and small classes. With no shortage of beautiful scenery and wildlife viewing opportunities, this special place has a remote feel without sacrificing amenities like reliable Wi-Fi, state-of-the-art audio/visual capabilities, and a full kitchen.

- Standard rental: \$50 per hour.
- Nonprofit / government rental: \$30 per hour.
- Four-hour minimum required.

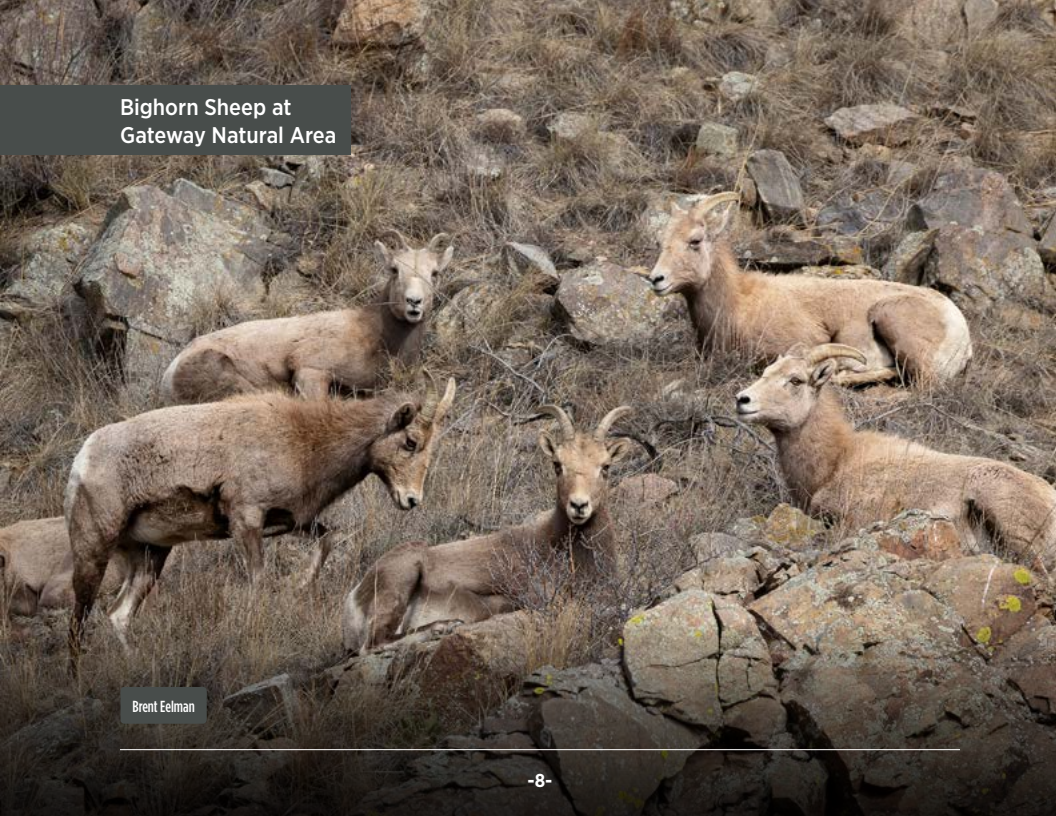


**Bird Watching for Beginners
at Arapaho Bend Natural Area**



Ian Jackson

**Bighorn Sheep at
Gateway Natural Area**



Brent Eelman

EXPLORER ART GALLERY

Thank you, artists, for celebrating natural areas through creative pieces of art. Art featured in the Explorer will be on display at Old Town Library May through June. Visit the library to check it out!

If you're interested in having art featured in the 2027 Explorer publication, reach out to lhennessey@fortcollins.gov to learn more!



Bonnie Lindstrom
Warm Winter Walk



Rick Lydon
Reservoir Ridge



Rick Lydon
Soapstone Bison



Bryce Lee
The Little Forager



Gary Raham
Prairie Partners



Dennis Wilkins

Great Horned Owl in Pineridge Natural Area



Stephen R Lee
Before Sunset



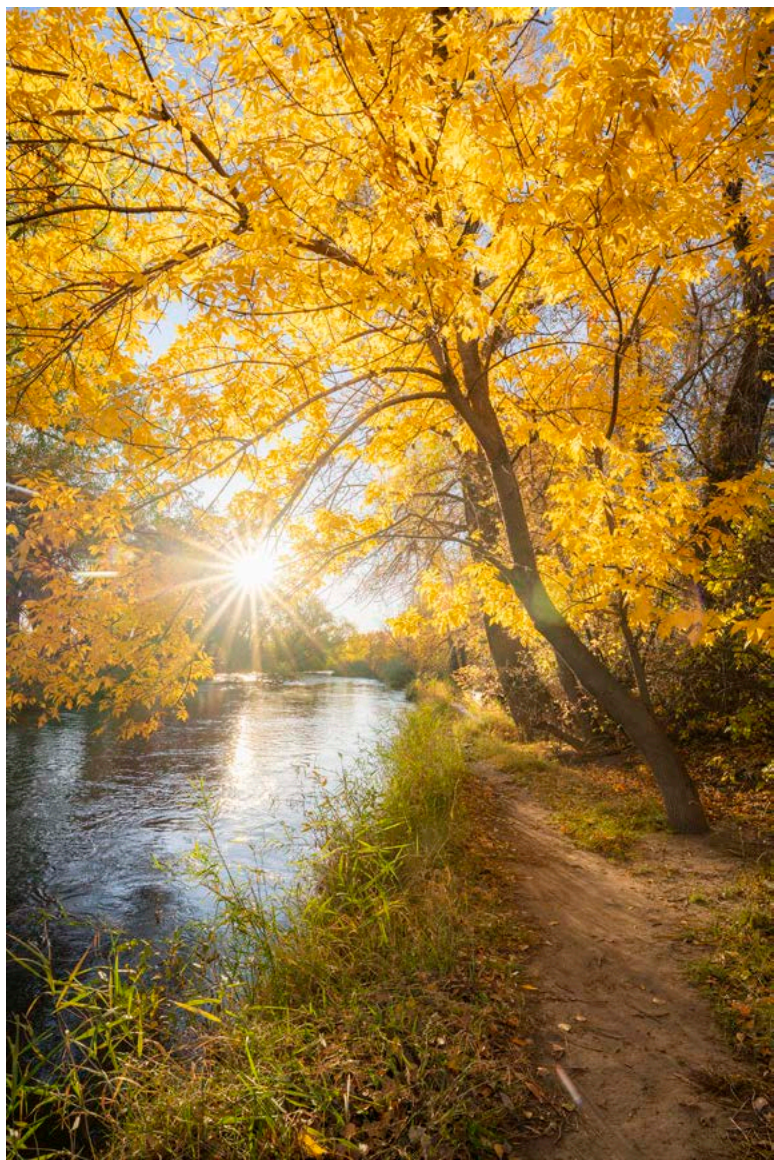
Stephen R Lee
Inverted



Betty Taylor
Running Deer



Jeremy White
American Avocet in Emerald Waters



Jeremy White
Autumn Gold at Arapaho Bend



Bill Walton
Legs



Bill Walton
Tribute to Ludy



Susan Quinnlan

American Dipper Along the Poudre at Gateway Natural Area



Misty Sierra Benavidez

Wild Hooves and Windswept Prairies



Brent Eelman

Kestrel



Brent Eelman

Golden Hour Buck



Recreate your way with a

REC PASS

- 1-month, 6-month or annual passes
- Unlimited access to all rec facilities including
The Farm and City Park Pool
- Discounts on fitness classes
- Free drop-in swimming, pickleball and skating

Learn more at
FortCollins.gov/Recreation



MAY 2026

NATURAL AREAS ACTIVITIES

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
					1	2
3	4	5	6 Skills and Techniques for Nature Photography, p. 44	7	8 World Migratory Bird Day Birding Walks, p. 48	9 MIGRATORY BIRD DAY Coyote Ridge Hike: Explore the Geology, Plants, and Wildlife of this Unique Natural Area, p. 48
10	11	12 Let's Explore: Arapaho Bend's History, Habitat and More, p. 48	13	14	15 Skygazing, p. 37	16 Practice your Nature Photography Skills, p. 44 Homesteaders of Soapstone Prairie, p. 42
17	18	19 Introduction to Nature Journaling, p. 44	20	21	22 Wildflower Hike, p. 48	23 Bird Watching for All Level Birders, p. 48 Bike with a Planner, p. 40
24	MEMORIAL DAY 25	26	27 Reservoir Ridge Hike and Primrose Studio Tour, p. 40	28	29 Our Neighbors the Prairie Rattlesnakes, p. 48	30 Explore with Reptile and Amphibian Center of the Rockies, p. 49
31						

Registration is required for most activities and opens 30 days prior to the activity date at fcgov.com/register or 970-416-2815. Check for cancellations at fortcollins.gov before you go!



JUNE 2026

NATURAL AREAS ACTIVITIES

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1	2 Art and the Great Outdoors, p. 32	3 Natural Areas Inspired Songwriting, p. 44	4	5	NATIONAL TRAILS DAY 6 National Trails Day Volunteer Event, p. 56 Welcome Bobolinks, p. 49
7	8	9 Art and the Great Outdoors, p. 32 Hike with a Planner: Arapaho Bend Restorations, p. 40	10 Toddler Tracks Storytime, p. 32 'Just Be' Yoga and Meditation, p. 46	11 Light Up the Night, p. 36	12 Explore Bobcat Ridge, p. 49	13 Let's Explore: Arapaho Bend's History, Habitat and More, p. 48 Skygazing, p. 37
14	15	16 Art and the Great Outdoors, p. 32	17 It's a Beautiful Day in the Woods, p. 49	18	JUNETEENTH 19 Mountain Lions and Me, p. 50	20 Explore 10,000 Years of History in the Poudre River Basin, p. 42 Raptors and Nature: Rocky Mountain Raptor, p. 50
21	22	23 Drop-in Style Community Nature Journaling, p. 44 Art and the Great Outdoors, p. 32	BIKE TO WORK DAY 24 Bike to Work (or Wherever) Day, p. 56 Toddler Tracks Storytime, p. 32 Light Up the Night, p. 36	25 River Birds of Gateway, p. 50	26 Campfire at Coyote Ridge, p. 36	27
28	29	30				

POLLINATOR WEEK: JUNE 22-28

Registration is required for most activities and opens 30 days prior to the activity date at fcgov.com/register or 970-416-2815. Check for cancellations at fortcollins.gov before you go!



Register Here

JULY 2026

NATURAL AREAS ACTIVITIES

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			1 ‘Just Be’ Yoga and Meditation, p. 46	2	3 Skygazing, p. 37	INDEPENDENCE DAY 4
5	6	7 ARO Nature Exploration, p. 33	8 Toddler Tracks Storytime, p. 32 Hike with a Planner: Arapaho Bend Restorations, p. 40	9	10 ‘Just Be’ Yoga and Meditation, p. 46	11 Hot Dog! How Do Prairie Dogs Survive the Summer?, p. 50
12	13	14 ARO Nature Exploration, p. 33 Listening in the Dark: Bat Biology at Gadwall Ponds, p. 42	15	16	17	18
19	20	21 ARO Nature Exploration, p. 33	22 Wade the River, p. 51 Toddler Tracks Storytime, p. 32	23 Drop-in Style Community Nature Journaling, p. 44	24 Pelican Marsh Natural Area History, Flora, and Fauna, p. 51 Campfire at Coyote Ridge, p. 36	25 Raptors and Nature: Rocky Mountain Raptor, p. 50
26	27	28 ARO Nature Exploration, p. 33	29	30 Beaver Believers: A Nature Walk and Talk to Learn About the Amazing Lives of Beavers, p. 40	31	

Registration is required for most activities and opens 30 days prior to the activity date at fcgov.com/register or 970-416-2815. Check for cancellations at fortcollins.gov before you go!



Register Here

AUGUST 2026

NATURAL AREAS ACTIVITIES

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
						1
TRANS HISTORY MONTH						
2	3	4	5 Toddler Tracks Storytime, p. 32	6	7 Wade the River, p. 51	8 POUDRE RIVER FEST Poudre RiverFest, p. 56
9	10	11	12	13	14 Campfire at Coyote Ridge, p. 36	15 North America's Eagle: The Bald Eagle, p. 51 Skygazing, p. 37
16	17	18 Drop-in Style Community Nature Journaling, p. 44	19	20 'Just Be' Yoga and Meditation, p. 46	21 Flores Del Sol "Behind the Scenes" Farming, p. 40	22 Colorado State University Hike to the "A", p. 56
23	24	25	26	27	28	29 Raptors and Nature: Rocky Mountain Raptor, p. 50
30	31					

Registration is required for most activities and opens 30 days prior to the activity date at fcgov.com/register or 970-416-2815. Check for cancellations at fortcollins.gov before you go!



Register Here

SEPTEMBER 2026

NATURAL AREAS ACTIVITIES

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		1	2	3	4	5 Ghostly Echoes from the Last Ice Age, p. 42
6	LABOR DAY 7	8	9	10 Awestruck: Resetting Our Nervous Systems with Science- Backed Practices in Nature, p. 46	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18 Nature's Magic Hour: Smartphone Photography for Beginners, p. 44 Skygazing, p. 37	19 Lindenmeier: A Gathering Place with a 12,000 Year-Old History, p. 42
LATINO CONSERVATION WEEK: SEPT. 12-20						
LATINÉ & HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH: SEPT. 15 - OCT. 15						
20 'Just Be' Yoga and Meditation Retreat, p. 46	21	22	23 Drop-in Style Community Nature Journaling, p. 44 Forest Therapy, p. 46	24	25	NAT'L PUBLIC LANDS DAY 26 National Public Lands Day Volunteer Event, p. 56
27	28	29	30			

Registration is required for most activities and opens 30 days prior to the activity date at fcgov.com/register or 970-416-2815. Check for cancellations at fortcollins.gov before you go!



Register Here

OCTOBER 2026

NATURAL AREAS ACTIVITIES

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				1 Black-Footed Ferret Exploration, p. 37	2	3
LATINÉ & HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH: SEPT. 15 - OCT. 15						
4	5	6	7 Forest Therapy, p. 46	8	9 Black-Footed Ferret Exploration, p. 37	10 MIGRATORY BIRD DAY The Smithsonian at Lindenmeier, p. 42
11	12 INDIGENOUS PEOPLES' DAY	13	14	15	16	17 Lions, Coyotes, and Bears, Oh, My!, p. 52
18	19	20	21	22	23	24 What a Hoot! The (Screech) Owls Among Us, p. 52
25	26	27	28	29	30 Skygazing, p. 37	31
BAT WEEK: OCT. 24-31						

Registration is required for most activities and opens 30 days prior to the activity date at fcgov.com/register or 970-416-2815. Check for cancellations at fortcollins.gov before you go!



Register Here



Eagles at Arapaho
Bend Natural Area

Brent Eelman

Pelicans at Pineridge
Natural Area

Brent Eelman

STEWARDSHIP AT HOME

DIY

Explore your natural areas with our Do-It-Yourself activity series! Each topic features a downloadable handout with background information, a guide to the best natural areas for your adventure, and ideas for engaging activities you can do on your own. Whether you're spotting songbirds at Riverbend Ponds, practicing mindful listening at Gateway, discovering aquatic insects in the Poudre River, or exploring the ancient rock formations at Bobcat Ridge, these guides will help you connect with nature in new ways.

Find DIY resources online at fortcollins.gov/Activities/Parks-Natural-Areas-and-Trails/Natural-Areas/Learn

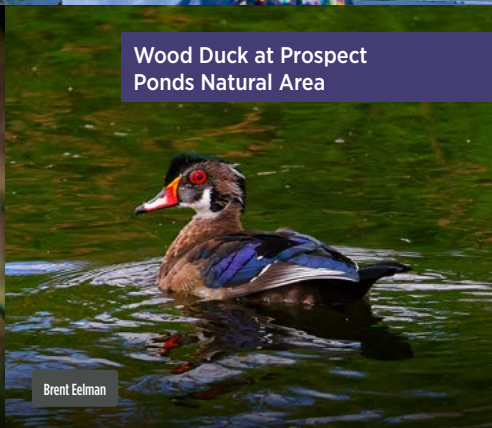


Bird Watching at Fossil Creek Reservoir Natural Area

Kevin Borchert



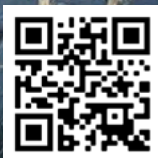
Kevin Borchert



Wood Duck at Prospect Ponds Natural Area

Brent Eelman





YOUNG NATURALISTS

Toddler Tracks Storytime

Discover flowers, bugs, tracks, and more in this slow-paced exploratory walk and storytime in natural areas with the Poudre River Public Library District. For ages 1-3. Parents/guardians must be present at all times. Register at read.poudrelibraries.org/events.



- **Wed., June 10, 9:30-10 a.m. at Ross Natural Area**
Meet at Rolland Moore Park Playground
- **Wed., June 24, 9:30-10 a.m. at McMurry Natural Area**
Meet at the parking lot at the west end of Hemlock St.
- **Wed., July 8, 9:30-10 a.m. at Red Fox Meadows Natural Area**
Meet at the trailhead kiosk off Longworth Dr.
- **Wed., July 22, 9:30-10 a.m. at Magpie Meander Natural Area**
Meet at Soft Gold Park.
- **Wed., Aug. 5, 9:30-10 a.m. at McMurry Natural Area**
Meet at the small parking lot at the west end of Hemlock St.

Art and the Great Outdoors

Let your photography skills shine through a new teen activity series focusing on nature photography! Learn techniques and practice in the field with wildlife photographers and volunteer naturalists.



- **Tues., June 2, 9:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. at Gateway Natural Area**
- **Tues., June 9, 10 a.m. - 12 p.m. at Arapaho Bend Natural Area**
- **Tues., June 16, 10 a.m. - 12 p.m. at Riverbend Ponds Natural Area**
- **Tues., June 23, 10 a.m. - 12 p.m. at Old Town Library**

Registration is required for most activities and opens 30 days prior to the activity date at fcgov.com/register or 970-416-2815. Check for cancellations at fortcollins.gov before you go!

ADAPTIVE RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES

A series of exploratory afternoons for people with disabilities. Transportation is available. Register through fortcollins.gov/Activities/Recreation/Programs/Adaptive-Recreation-Opportunities



ARO Nature Exploration

- Tues., July 7, 10 - 11:30 a.m. at McMurry Natural Area
- Tues., July 14, 10 - 11:30 a.m. at Red Fox Meadows Natural Area
- Tues., July 21, 10 - 11:30 a.m. at Riverbend Ponds Natural Area
- Tues., July 28, 10 - 11:30 a.m. at Primrose Studio



Ross Natural Area



Photos by Bill Walton

MOBILITY FRIENDLY AND ACCESSIBLE EXPERIENCES



All trail mileage shown is one way, unless listed as a “loop” trail.

BOBCAT RIDGE NATURAL AREA:

- **Great for foothills views and historic buildings.**
- **0.25 mile concrete trail** to picnic shelter (Average Grade 2%, Max grade 6% for 300 ft.).
- **1.5 mile crusher fine (gravel) trail** to historic cabin (Average Grade 2%, Max grade 6% for 300 ft.).
- **Accessible parking and bathrooms.**
- **Minimal shade** available on trail.

FOSSIL CREEK RESERVOIR NATURAL AREA:

- **Great for water views and bird watching.**
- **0.5 mile paved loop** to accessible birding platform (Average Grade 1%).
- **0.5 mile and 2 mile road base trail** with some elevation gain to birding blinds (Average Grade 3%, Max Grade 5% for 100ft.).
- **Accessible parking and bathrooms.** Note: bathrooms are accessible, but building doors are not automated.
- **Minimal shade** available on trail.

RIVERBEND PONDS NATURAL AREA:

- **Great for water views, birding, and fishing.**
- **0.2 mile boardwalk** through marsh from Cherly St. trailhead (no restroom at this location, grade is generally flat).
- **Accessible fishing pier** available from Cairns St. lot along short (less than 0.1 mile), paved trail.
- **Accessible parking not available at Prospect parking lot.**

SOAPSTONE PRAIRIE NATURAL AREA:

- **Great for mountain views, prairie views, and solitude**
- **0.3 mile paved Lindenmeier Trail** (Average grade 4%, Max Grade 6% for 200ft.) to shaded overlook with rest stops along the way.
- **Picnic shelters** with short, paved trails available from both parking lots.
- **Accessible parking and bathrooms available at both parking lots.**
- **Minimal shade** available on trail.
- Note: Soapstone Prairie is open from March 1 – December 1.

MOBILITY FRIENDLY means a Natural Area that has:

- ✓ Accessible parking
- ✓ Easy to access trail or walkway
- ✓ Easy to use trail or walkway
- ✓ Accessible bathrooms



ARAPAHO BEND NATURAL AREA:

- **Great for water views, longer paved trails, and bird watching.**
- **1 mile paved section** around Rigden Reservoir connects to **2.1 more miles of paved trail** that extends to behind the Wal-Mart on Harmony Rd. and I-25 (Grade is generally flat).
- **Additional 1 mile Dirt/Gravel section** near Rigden Reservoir.
- Note: **Accessible bathrooms available** at Harmony Transit Center parking lot and at Wal-Mart. **ADA parking available** at Horsetooth Road and Harmony trailheads. Horsetooth parking lot has an **ADA porta-potty** near the parking lot.



NATURAL AREAS AFTER DARK

NIGHT WALKS

Bring a headlamp or flashlight for a fun and mellow family-friendly walk.

Light Up the Night

Find out why Fort Collins is such a great place for fireflies to live and learn fun facts about these amazing beetles. *If you have attended in previous years, please consider letting first timers have priority to attend.* Meet at the Prospect Road parking lot.

- **Thur., June 11, 8:30 - 10 p.m. at Riverbend Ponds Natural Area**
- **Wed., June 24, 8:30 - 10 p.m. at Riverbend Ponds Natural Area**

CAMPFIRES

Spend a cozy evening by the campfire, complete with stories and s'mores! Suitable for all ages. Dress warmly and bring water to drink. Campfire program topics can be found online during registration.

Campfires at **Coyote Ridge** include a 1.1 mile hike on an unpaved trail to the cabin. Please allow 30 to 40 minutes to reach the cabin prior to the program start time. The program begins at the time listed below. Bring a flashlight for the walk back. 2 miles round trip; a few moderate hills each way.

Campfire at Coyote Ridge

- **Fri., June 26, 6:30 - 8 p.m.**
- **Fri., July 24, 6:30 - 8 p.m.**
- **Fri., Aug. 14, 7:30 - 9:30 p.m.**

Registration is required for most activities and opens 30 days prior to the activity date at fcgov.com/register or 970-416-2815. Check for cancellations at fortcollins.gov before you go!

Skygazing at Bobcat Ridge Natural Area



City of Fort Collins

Skygazing

Enjoy a brief, family-friendly astronomy activity followed by skygazing. Volunteers from the Northern Colorado Astronomical Society provide telescopes. Dress warmly, bring water, and a blanket or chair to sit on in the parking lot if you would like. **Please arrive on time! The gate closes shortly after start times and parking is not allowed on the road outside the gate.** Event will start at the pavilion, about a 10-minute walk from the parking lot, and will continue in the parking lot.

- Fri., May 15, 8 - 10 p.m. at Bobcat Ridge Natural Area
- Sat., June 13, 8:30 - 10:30 p.m. at Bobcat Ridge Natural Area
- Fri., July 3, 8:30 - 10:30 p.m. at Bobcat Ridge Natural Area
- Sat., Aug. 15, 8 - 10 p.m. at Bobcat Ridge Natural Area
- Fri., Sept. 18, 7:30 - 9:30 p.m. at Bobcat Ridge Natural Area
- Fri., Oct. 30, 6 - 8 p.m. at Bobcat Ridge Natural Area
- Fri., Nov. 27, 7 - 9 p.m. at Fossil Creek Reservoir Natural Area
- Sat., Dec. 26, 6 - 8 pm. at Fossil Creek Reservoir Natural Area

Black-Footed Ferret Exploration

- Thur., Oct. 1, 5 - 10 p.m. at Soapstone Prairie Natural Area
- Fri., Oct. 9, 5 - 10 p.m. at Soapstone Prairie Natural Area

Learn about North America's rarest mammal. Start at the Fort Collins Museum of Discovery for a presentation about black-footed ferrets and then travel to Soapstone Prairie for a chance to view these critters in the wild.

Registration is required for most activities and opens 30 days prior to the activity date at fcgov.com/register or 970-416-2815. Check for cancellations at fortcollins.gov before you go!

Campfire at Coyote Ridge Natural Area



City of Fort Collins

Firefly Monitoring at Riverbend Ponds Natural Area



Greg Fend

Registration is required for most activities and opens 30 days prior to the activity date at fcgov.com/register or 970-416-2815. Check for cancellations at fortcollins.gov before you go!

Elk Meadows Trail Opening
at Bobcat Ridge Natural Area



Nick Armstrong

STEWARDSHIP BEHIND THE SCENERY

These informative talks are designed for adults to learn more about research in natural areas and how their unique and valuable natural resources are stewarded. Parking is limited—please carpool, bike, or walk.

Bike with a Planner

- **Sat., May 23, 9 - 10:30 a.m. at Fossil Creek Park**

The Natural Areas Department is updating the management plan for the Fossil Creek Zone, and Planners want to hear your thoughts! This will be an exploratory ride through the Fossil Creek Zone with opportunities for education and feedback. Bikes and helmets available on request.

Reservoir Ridge Hike and Primrose Studio Tour

- **Wed., May 27, 6 - 8 p.m.**

Join naturalist volunteers on a hike at Reservoir Ridge, followed by a behind-the-scenes tour of Primrose Studio.

Hike with a Planner: Arapaho Bend Restorations

- **Tues., June 9, 5:30 - 7 p.m. at Arapaho Bend Natural Area**
- **Wed., July 8, 5:30 - 7 p.m. at Arapaho Bend Natural Area**

Learn about restoration and visitor use improvements planned here, and enjoy an evening outdoors.

Bike with a Planner: Fossil Creek Zone

- **Sat., June 18, 6 - 7:30 p.m. at Fossil Creek Reservoir Natural Area**

A leisurely bike ride through some of the Fossil Creek Zone. Provide input that will help shape the future of the zone.

Beaver Believers: A Nature Walk and Talk to Learn About the Amazing Lives of Beavers

- **Fri., July 30, 10 - 11 a.m. at McMurtry Natural Area**

Join local environmental nonprofits and natural resource managers to learn about beavers.

Flores Del Sol “Behind the Scenes” Farming

- **Fri., Aug. 21, 9 - 11:30 a.m.**

Visit Flores Del Sol, learn about the unique farming opportunities on this natural area, and get a behind the scenes tour with an opportunity to try farming for yourself.

Ghostly Echoes from the Last Ice Age
at Soapstone Prairie Natural Area



City of Fort Collins

Soapstone Prairie Natural Area

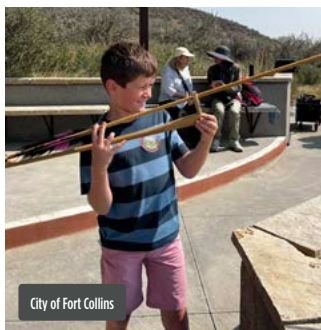


Tina Chandler

VOICES OF THE PAST

For over 10,000 years, northern Colorado has been a great place to be. Discover people of the past that have lived in and shaped our community.

We recognize that the stories we are sharing in these activities are from a dominant European settler cultural perspective, which is not the full story. We continually strive to include the histories and voices of diverse communities. While our knowledge is currently limited, efforts are underway to hear from diverse perspectives that are not yet represented in our activities. These efforts take time, trust, and relationship-building. We hope you will share in a deep connection to this land and contribute to the stewardship of natural areas with a sense of respect and responsibility.



Homesteaders of Soapstone Prairie 16+

- **Sat., May 16, 10 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. at Soapstone Prairie Natural Area**

Learn about the experiences of the pioneer families who lived here.

Once Upon a Time: Explore 10,000 Years of History in the Poudre River Basin

- **Sat., June 20, 9:30 - 11 a.m. at Old Fort Collins Heritage Park**

An easy half-mile stroll that explores the origins of the river, its history and future plans for the only Wild and Scenic-designated River in Colorado.

Ghostly Echoes from the Last Ice Age

- **Sat., Sept. 5, 10 - 11 a.m. at Soapstone Prairie Natural Area**

Explore the fascinating stories of prey who have lost their predators and plants who have lost their pollinators since the days when snow and glaciers dominated the landscape.

Lindenmeier: A Gathering Place with a 12,000 Year-Old History

- **Sat., Sept. 19, 10 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. at Soapstone Prairie Natural Area**

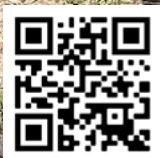
Learn about why Soapstone Prairie has been a remarkable gathering place for people for thousands of years.

The Smithsonian at Lindenmeier

- **Sat., Oct. 10, 10 a.m. - 12 p.m. at Soapstone Prairie Natural Area**

Visit the past and learn about the archeology work done by the Smithsonian Institution and their findings about very early inhabitants of the area.

Registration is required for most activities and opens 30 days prior to the activity date at fcgov.com/register or 970-416-2815. Check for cancellations at fortcollins.gov before you go!



CREATIVE BY NATURE

All skill levels welcome! Instruction, focused and guided observations, and expanding creativity can better connect people with nature. Children under 16 must be accompanied by an adult. Feel free to bring your own art supplies, there may be supplies to borrow.

Skills and Techniques for Nature Photography

- **Wed., May 6, 6 - 7:45 p.m. at Natural Areas Offices**

Learn skills and techniques that photographers can use to enhance their nature photography experiences.

Practice your Nature Photography Skills

- **Sat., May 16, 7:30 - 9:30 a.m. at Pineridge Natural Area**

An opportunity to practice your nature photography skills with Natural Areas volunteer photographers and naturalists.

Introduction to Nature Journaling 16+

- **Tues., May 19, 9 - 11 a.m. at Primrose Studio**

Learn, develop, and enhance skills of observing nature and recording your nature experience.

Natural Areas Inspired Songwriting

- **Wed., June 3, 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. at Primrose Studio**

Any-level songwriters welcome! Come find inspiration for writing lyrics and composing music and melodies inspired by the outdoors.

Drop-in Style Community Nature Journaling

- **Tues., June 23, 9 - 11 a.m. at Fossil Creek Reservoir Natural Area**
- **Thur., July 23, 9 - 11 a.m. at Riverbend Ponds Natural Area**
- **Tues., Aug. 18, 5 - 7 p.m. at Bobcat Ridge Natural Area**
- **Wed., Sept. 23, 9 - 11 a.m. at North Shields Ponds Natural Area**

Drop-in style program, no formal instruction. An opportunity to connect with a volunteer naturalist and other creatives in the community and share observations, experiences, and appreciations for natural areas. Bring your own supplies.

Nature's Magic Hour: Smartphone Photography for Beginners

- **Fri., Sept. 18, 4:30 - 6:30 a.m. at Riverbend Ponds Natural Area**

Learn the basics of nature photography including framing, how to use light and how to take the best photos of people.

Sunset 'Just Be' Yoga
at Gateway Natural Area



Kevin Borchert

WELLNESS

Time spent in nature has been linked to reduced stress, improved well-being, and increased social connectedness.

'Just Be' Yoga and Meditation

- **Wed., June 10, 7:45 – 8:45 p.m. at Gateway Natural Area**
- **Wed., July 1, 7:15 – 8:15 p.m. at McMurry Natural Area**
- **Fri., July 10, 5:15 – 6:15 am. (Sunrise) at Fossil Creek Natural Area**
- **Thur., Aug. 20, 7:30 – 8:30 p.m. at Gateway Natural Area**

Join Reneca and Duan of InnatelyU for meditation and a light yoga practice at sunset for all levels of yoga practitioners.



'Just Be' Yoga and Meditation Retreat

- **Sept. 20, 9 a.m. – 1 p.m. at Primrose Studio**

Join Reneca and Duan of InnatelyU for meditation and a yoga retreat for all levels of yoga practitioners. Join to build community and experience nature together.



Awestruck: Resetting Our Nervous Systems with Science-Backed Practices in Nature **16+**

- **Thur., Sept. 10, 8:30 – 10:30 p.m. at Primrose Studio**

Volunteer Naturalists invite you to slow down, reconnect, wonder, and engage with the natural world through sensory awareness and reflective practices that calm the nervous system, support well being, and foster a sense of connection.

Forest Therapy **16+**

- **Wed., Sept. 23, 1 – 3 p.m. at Gateway Natural Area**
- **Wed., Oct. 7, 1 – 3 p.m. at Gateway Natural Area**

Learn to unplug, slow down, and engage your senses to nature's healing power.

Registration is required for most activities and opens 30 days prior to the activity date at fcgov.com/register or 970-416-2815. Check for cancellations at fortcollins.gov before you go!



Kevin Borchert

NATURAL DISCOVERIES

World Migratory Bird Day Birding Walks

- **Fri., May 8, 6:30 – 9:30 a.m. Riverbend Ponds Natural Area.**

Join volunteer naturalists on birding walks every thirty minutes to learn more about migratory birds.

Coyote Ridge Hike: Explore the Geology, Plants, and Wildlife of this Unique Natural Area

- **Sat., May 9, 9 a.m. - 12 p.m. at Coyote Ridge Natural Area**

Learn about this area's geological history, plants, and wildlife.

Let's Explore: Arapaho Bend's History, Habitat and More

- **Tues., May 12, 5:30 – 7:30 p.m. at Arapaho Bend Natural Area**
- **Sat., June 13, 9 - 11 a.m. at Arapaho Bend Natural Area**

Discover a unique natural area along the Poudre River for people and nature.

Wildflower Hike

- **Fri., May 22, 9 - 11 a.m. at Pineridge Natural Area.**

Learn about the globally rare Bell's twinpod that depends on local geology. Enjoy the wildflowers of Spring.

Bird Watching for All Level Birders

- **Sat., May 23, 7 - 9:30 a.m. at Pineridge Natural Area**

Enjoy a leisurely walk around Dixon Reservoir and identify and observe various bird species.

Our Neighbors the Prairie Rattlesnakes

- **Fri., May 29, 9:30 – 11:30 a.m. at Bobcat Ridge Natural Area**

Learn about truths, myths, and ways to share natural areas with rattlesnakes while staying safe.

Registration is required for most activities and opens 30 days prior to the activity date at [fcgov.com/register](https://www.fcgov.com/register) or 970-416-2815. Check for cancellations at [fortcollins.gov](https://www.fcgov.com/fortcollins.gov) before you go!

World Migratory Bird Day at Fossil Creek Reservoir Natural Area



Explore with Reptile and Amphibian Center of the Rockies

- **Sat., May 30, 9 - 11 a.m. at Riverbend Ponds Natural Area**

Meet the team from the Reptile and Amphibian Center of the Rockies to learn about the critters that call Riverbend Ponds Natural Area home.

Welcome Bobolinks

- **Sat., June 6, 8 - 10 a.m. at Reservoir Ridge Natural Area**

Each year for a short time, we are visited by one of Colorado's rare birds, the bobolink.

Explore Bobcat Ridge

- **Fri., June 12, 9 a.m. - 12 p.m. at Bobcat Ridge Natural Area**

Enjoy wildflowers, geology, and history of this premier hiking location.

It's a Beautiful Day in the Woods

- **Wed., June 17, 9:30 - 11 a.m. at Lee Martinez Park**

Enjoy a leisurely walk in search of birds, animals, and flowers. Observe the dance between the Poudre River and landforms. Catch a glimpse of the animals and plants that share our neighborhood natural areas, like squirrels, wildflowers, nests, etc.

Registration is required for most activities and opens 30 days prior to the activity date at fcgov.com/register or 970-416-2815. Check for cancellations at fortcollins.gov before you go!

Mountain Lions and Me

- **Fri., June 19, 7 - 8:30 p.m. at Bobcat Ridge Natural Area**

Learn about a volunteer naturalist's unique experience studying and working with mountain lions. Learn about mountain lion behavior, habitat, and what to do if you encounter one in the wild.

Raptors and Nature: Rocky Mountain Raptor

- **Sat., June 20, 6 - 8:30 p.m. at Coyote Ridge Natural Area**
- **Sat., July 25, 8 - 10 a.m. at Primrose Studio**
- **Sat., Aug. 29, 9 - 11 a.m. at Bobcat Ridge Natural Area**

Enjoy a presentation featuring live birds from staff and volunteers with Rocky Mountain Raptor Program. Learn about the amazing raptors that populate Colorado's Front Range and how we can help conserve them.

River Birds of Gateway

- **Thur., June 25, 10 a.m. - 12 p.m. at Gateway Natural Area**

Learn about the birds that call the North Fork of the Cache la Poudre River home.

Hot Dog! How Do Prairie Dogs Survive the Summer?

- **Sat., July 11, 8 - 10:30 a.m. at Coyote Ridge Natural Area**

It's hot, dry, and coyotes are hungry. Learn how black tailed prairie dogs survive the summer.



**Wade the River
at Lee Martinez Park**

Bill Walton

Registration is required for most activities and opens 30 days prior to the activity date at fcgov.com/register or 970-416-2815. Check for cancellations at fortcollins.gov before you go!

Wade the River

- **Wed., July 22, 9:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. at Lee Martinez Park**
- **Fri., Aug. 7, 9:30 - 12:30 p.m. at Lee Martinez Park**

Use dip nets and collecting trays to discover what lives beneath the surface of the Cache la Poudre River. Biologists will be on hand to help identify your finds. All dip netting equipment is provided.

Pelican Marsh Natural Area History, Flora, and Fauna

- **Fri., July 24, 10 a.m. - 12 p.m. at Pelican Marsh Natural Area**

Observe, identify, and learn about the history, flora, and fauna of Pelican Marsh and Benson Lake.

North America's Eagle: The Bald Eagle

- **Sat., Aug. 15, 6 - 7:30 p.m. at Running Deer Natural Area**

Explore this majestic raptor's behavior, migration, diet, etc. on a discovery walk.

**Prairie Dogs: February Frenzy
at Coyote Ridge Natural Area**



Erin Pauling

Registration is required for most activities and opens 30 days prior to the activity date at fcgov.com/register or 970-416-2815. Check for cancellations at fortcollins.gov before you go!

Wade the River at Lee Martinez Park



Bill Walton



Bill Walton

Club Outdoors



City of Fort Collins

Lions, Coyotes, and Bears, Oh, My!

- Sat., Oct. 17, 1:30 - 3:30 p.m. at Gateway Natural Area

Discover the hidden lives of Gateway's top predators. Explore their different methods of survival and their place in a healthy ecosystem.

What a Hoot! The (Screech) Owls Among Us

- Sat., Oct. 24, 4 - 6 p.m. at McMurtry Natural Area

Learn about the resident Eastern Screech Owls, their owl cousins, and how they play a part in human health and wellbeing.

Registration is required for most activities and opens 30 days prior to the activity date at fcgov.com/register or 970-416-2815. Check for cancellations at fortcollins.gov before you go!

UNEARTH A STORY

DESENTIERRA
UNA HISTORIA

05/27

Summer Adventure · Aventuras de verano ·



08/14



20
26

More Info / Más información

poudrelibraries.org/summer

poudre libraries

World Migratory Bird Day
at Fossil Creek Reservoir



Kevin Borchert

Welcome, Bobolinks! at
Reservoir Ridge Natural Area



City of Fort Collins

Fishing Education at Gateway Natural Area



SPECIAL EVENTS

National Trails Day Volunteer Event

- **Sat., June 6, 8:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. at Soapstone Prairie Natural Area**

Volunteer to restore trails and improve accessible spaces at Soapstone Prairie Natural Area. Registration is required. Lunch will be provided, and transportation is available upon request.

Natural Areas Station at Bike to Work (or Wherever) Day

- **Wed., June 24, 6:30 - 9:30 a.m. at Lee Martinez Park**

Stop by Lee Martinez Park for a yummy breakfast, swag, and information about Natural Areas.

Poudre RiverFest

- **Sat., Aug. 8, 12 - 6 p.m. at New Belgium Brewing Company**

The Poudre RiverFest is a free, family-friendly festival that celebrates the Poudre River, promotes restoration, and educates people about our river corridor—an important natural resource in our community.

Colorado State University Hike to the “A”

- **Sat., Aug. 22, 8 a.m. - 1 p.m. at Maxwell Natural Area**

CSU has a tradition of welcoming the new freshman class with a hike. Be aware that 800+ students will be using the trail this morning.

National Public Lands Day Volunteer Event

- **Sat., Sept. 26, 8:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. at Location TBD**

Give back to your community through volunteer stewardship projects! Registration is required. Lunch will be provided, and transportation is available upon request.



Volunteer Event

Sue Emond

Registration is required for most activities and opens 30 days prior to the activity date at fcgov.com/register or 970-416-2815. Check for cancellations at fortcollins.gov before you go!

WINTER PROGRAMMING

Natural Areas hosts educational programs all year round! Join us in the winter for exploratory hikes, wildlife adaptation programs, and more! Check out drop-in-style Eagle Watch programs at Fossil Creek Reservoir every Friday and Saturday, December through February, weather permitting. View activities and sign up at fcgov.com/register.

Winter Walk at Coyote
Ridge Natural Area



Erin Pauling

Eagle Watch at Fossil Creek Reservoir Natural Area



Sue Emond

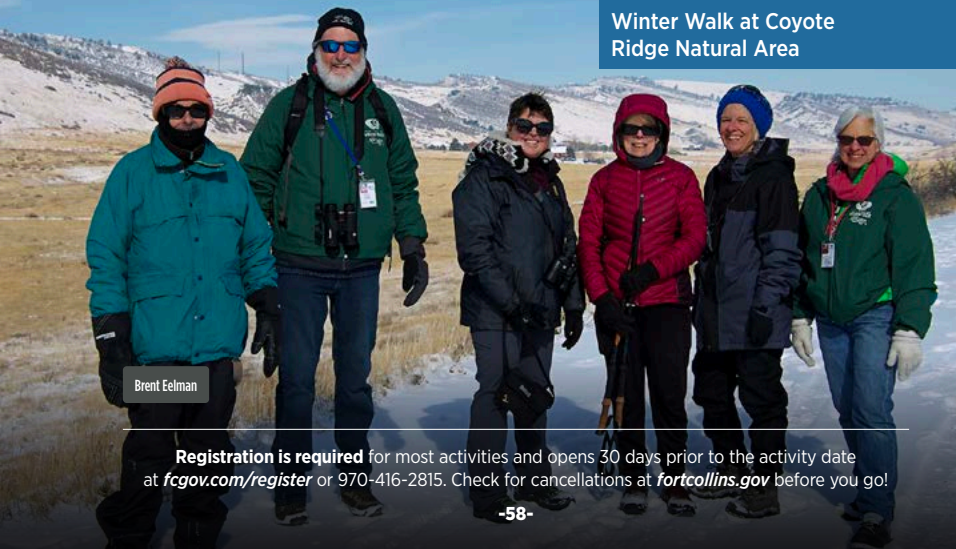


Brent Eelman



Brent Eelman

Winter Walk at Coyote Ridge Natural Area



Brent Eelman

Registration is required for most activities and opens 30 days prior to the activity date at fcgov.com/register or 970-416-2815. Check for cancellations at fortcollins.gov before you go!



WHAT TO BRING

Having the right things with you will help make your natural area visit a success. Use this checklist as a guideline to help you pack for a day outdoors.

- ☐ **Map and Compass, a GPS System, or Your Phone:** Not all natural areas have good reception, see the box below for more information. A natural areas map is at fortcollins.gov/naturalareas and at trailhead kiosks.
- ☐ **Layered Clothes and Rain Gear:** Be prepared for sudden changes in weather.
- ☐ **Repair Kit:** This may include duct tape, multi-tool, etc.
- ☐ **Water:** Pack more than you think you'll need and drink before you feel thirsty.
- ☐ **Trail Food**
- ☐ **First Aid Kit:** Include a space blanket if you have one.
- ☐ **Flashlight**
- ☐ **Sun and Bug Protection**

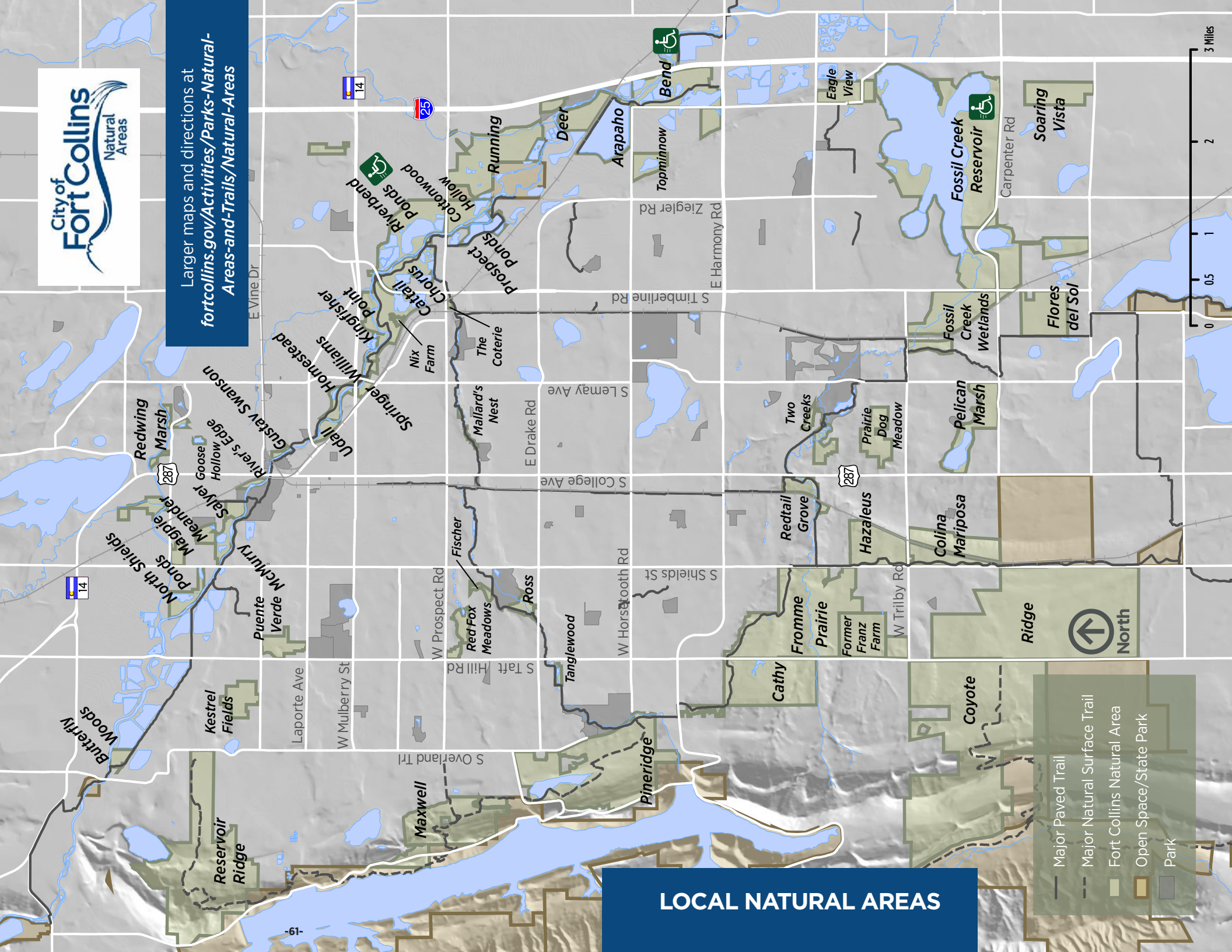


Visitor safety is important to the Natural Areas Department. Bobcat Ridge, Soapstone Prairie, and Gateway natural areas have little to no cell phone coverage. Call boxes are available in case of an emergency. See locations and details below:

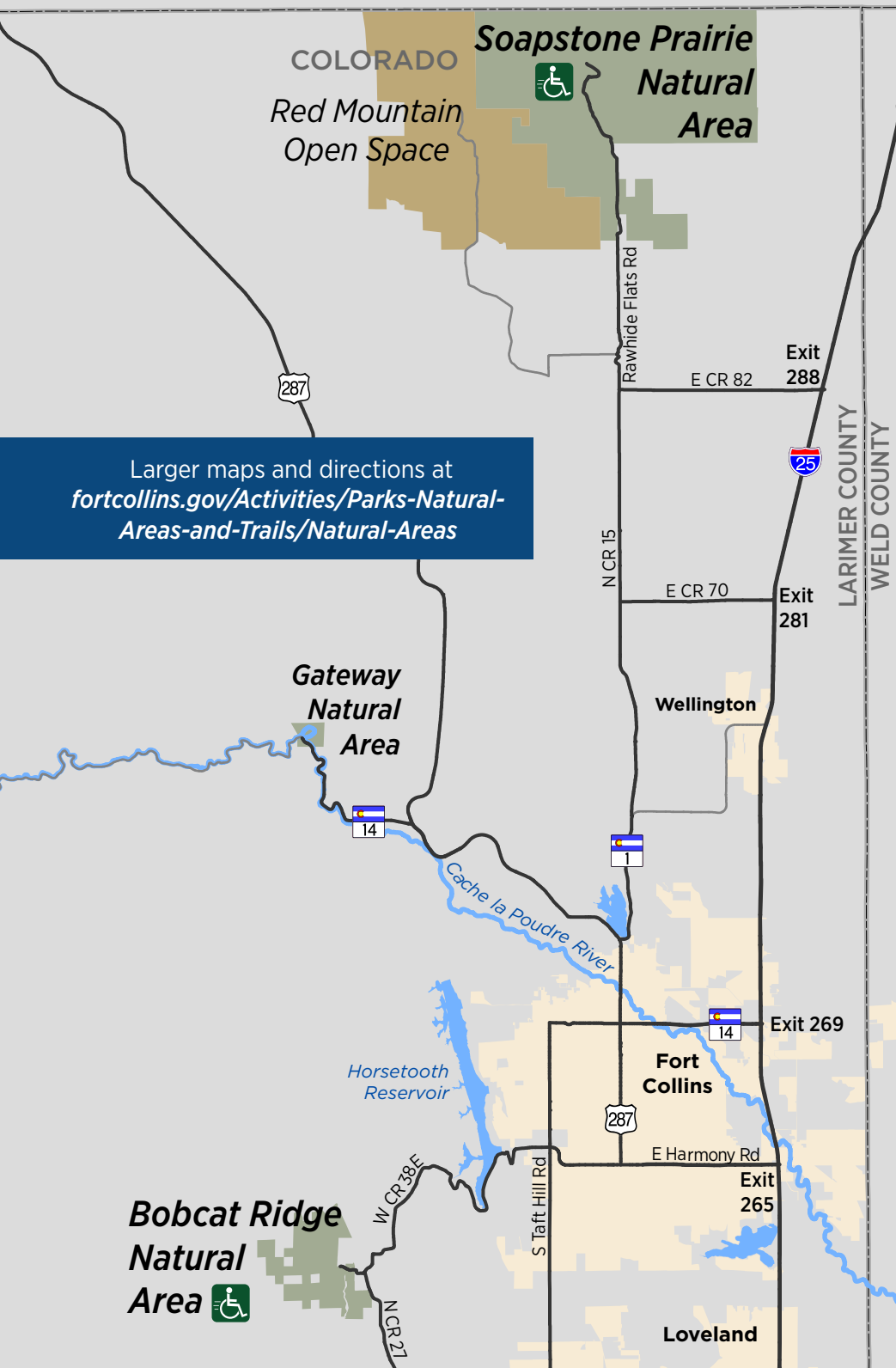
- **Bobcat Ridge Natural Area** usually has cell phone coverage in the higher elevations. The call box is in the parking lot.
- **Soapstone Prairie Natural Area** has more cell phone coverage towards the North Parking Lot. The call box is at the entrance gatehouse near the South Parking Lot.
- **Gateway Natural Area** never has coverage. The call box is located before the gatehouse at the entrance.



Larger maps and directions at
fortcollins.gov/Activities/Parks-Natural-Areas-and-Trails/Natural-Areas



LOCAL NATURAL AREAS



Larger maps and directions at
fortcollins.gov/Activities/Parks-Natural-Areas-and-Trails/Natural-Areas

Soapstone Prairie

Travel north on Highway 1 (Terry Lake Road). Turn left (toward Waverly) on County Road 15. Travel north and turn right onto Rawhide Flats Road. Go 6 miles to the entrance station. Please obey posted speed limits. Soapstone Prairie is about 25 miles from Fort Collins and takes approximately one-hour drive time.

Gary Raham

Gateway

Travel north on Highway 287. Turn left onto Highway 14 (Poudre Canyon Highway). Go 5 miles and turn right into the entrance.

City of Fort Collins

Bobcat Ridge

From Fort Collins, take Harmony Road (County Road 38E) to Masonville. Turn left (south) onto County Road 27 (at the Masonville Mercantile). Go 1 mile to County Road 32C. Turn right and proceed 1 mile to the parking lot.

From Loveland, go west on Highway 34, located about 4.5 miles west of Wilson Avenue. Turn north on County Road 27 (at Big Thompson Elementary School) and drive 4.5 miles. Turn left on County Road 32C and go 1 mile west to the Bobcat Ridge parking lot.

Jan Latona

THANK YOU!

The activities in this booklet and the conservation and stewardship of City of Fort Collins natural areas are made possible by Fort Collins and Larimer County voters. Community-initiated sales tax ballot measures dedicate funds for land conservation, trails, shelters, restrooms, parking lots, and educational activities. Thank you!



Natural Areas Department - **970-416-2815**

Rangers - **970-416-2147**

fortcollins.gov/naturalareas

naturalareas@fortcollins.gov



Kevin Borchert

Fossil Creek Reservoir



Register for activities
at ***fcgov.com/register***

