



fcgov.com/naturalareas



JUNE-OCTOBER 2023

NATURAL AREAS EXPLORER

YOUR RESOURCE GUIDE TO CONNECTING WITH THE CITY OF FORT COLLINS
NATURAL AREAS THROUGH FREE ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS.

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Kenn Bortert

Pelicans fly over Fossil Creek Reservoir.



Morning on the Ridge by Rick Rizzotto

THREE TANKA

by Erica Reed

Similar to haiku, the Japanese tanka form follows a syllable count: 5-7-5-7-7. This trio of tanka were inspired by natural areas I had not previously visited.

i. Coyote Ridge

hear the land jostling
prairie collides with foothills
& their convergence
sounds like gravel, rabbitbrush,
crush of a warm mid-winter

ii. Cathy Fromme Prairie

under timeless grass
—this land has never been plowed—
ancient coteries

homes allowed to deepen, age
hand-me-down rugs, new windows

iii. Soaring Vista

faint ghost of a farm
phantom bones of hands, seeds, beets

trail like a lasso
to circle its steeds of air
& snare what was never there

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 66-68 or visit fcgov.com/naturalareas.

These natural areas are the traditional lands of the Ute, Cheyenne, Arapaho, and many other tribes and remain important to Indigenous peoples living in northern Colorado and the surrounding areas.

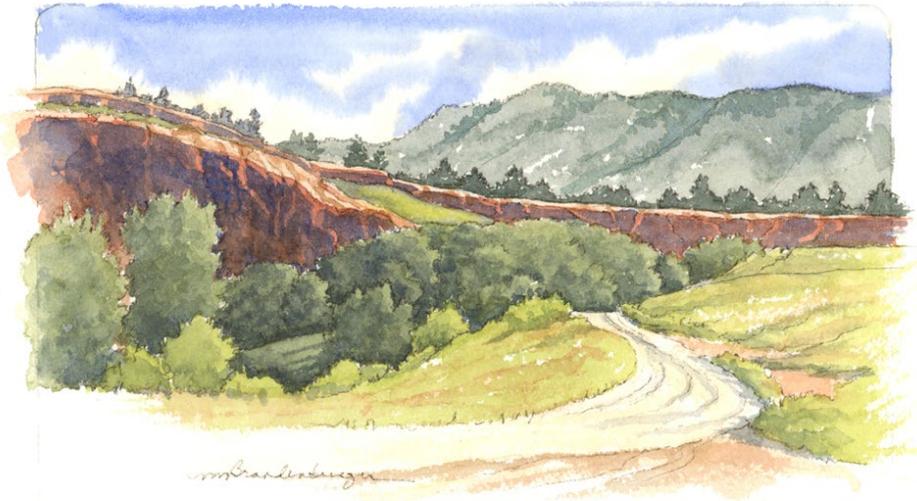
Fort Collins natural areas are open from 5 a.m. until 11 p.m. except for Bobcat Ridge, Gateway, Reservoir Ridge, Fossil Creek Reservoir, and Soapstone Prairie natural areas which are open dawn to dusk. Soapstone Prairie is closed December–February.

THANK YOU, ARTISTS!

Throughout this publication, you will notice artistic contributions by community members, such as poetry, stories, and visual art. These contributions reflect viewpoints and opinions of those individuals and their personal connection with nature. We are proud and honored to feature their work in this year's Natural Areas Explorer!

STAY INFORMED

Subscribe to *Natural Areas Enews*, a monthly email newsletter that includes trail recommendations, updates, and volunteer opportunities at fcgov.com/naturalareas.



Bobcat Ridge by Marilyn Brandenburg
Painted plein air at Bobcat Ridge Natural Area

LANGUAGES AND ACCESSIBILITY

Most Natural Areas activities are delivered in English. If you require interpretation in another language, contact naturalareas@fcgov.com or 970-416-2815 to request an interpreter and we will provide one for you.

La mayoría de las actividades de las Áreas Naturales se realizan en inglés. Si requiere interpretación a otro idioma, comuníquese a naturalareas@fcgov.com o al tel. 970-416-2815 para pedir un intérprete.



**Áreas
Naturales
en español**

ES Any activities delivered partially or entirely in Spanish will be clearly marked with this symbol. *Cualquier actividad ofrecida parcialmente en español se marcará claramente con el símbolo (ES).*

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 fcgov.com/naturalareas and can be requested in large print by e-mailing naturalareas@fcgov.com.

If you have any questions or concerns about the accessibility of an activity, please contact naturalareas@fcgov.com or call 970-416-2815 for more information. People with disabilities are welcome to participate in all activities and we are happy to make appropriate accommodations. Requests for disability-related services can be made during registration through the activity contact or by calling 970-416-2815 at least two weeks prior to the start of the activity.

WHAT THE SYMBOLS MEAN



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



This activity will be delivered partially in Spanish. (ES)
Este actividad se ofrecerá parcialmente en español.



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 partners and require a separate site for registration.

Continued on next page

REGISTERING AND CANCELLATIONS

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



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

- [fcgov.com/register](https://www.fcgov.com/register) for descriptions, registrations, cancellations, and activity updates.
- [fcgov.com/naturalareas](https://www.fcgov.com/naturalareas) for 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 volunteer 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 in natural areas. Due to extremely 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 always 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@fcgov.com.



City of Fort Collins/Gerald Smith

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY
			
4	5	6	7 LGBTQIA+ Community Hike, <i>p. 57</i>
11	12	13 Just Be Yoga and Meditation Series, <i>p. 53</i>	14 Toddler Tracks Storytime, <i>p. 27</i>
COLORADO NATIVE PLANT APPRECIATION WEEK: JUNE 11-17			
18 Drop-in Feedback Opportunity, <i>p. 35</i>	JUNETEENTH 19	20	21
POLLINATOR WEEK: JUNE 19-25			
25	26	27 Just Be Yoga and Meditation Series, <i>p. 53</i>	28 Summer Bike to Work Day, <i>p. 35</i>

Registration is required for most activities and opens 30 days prior to the activity date at fcgov.com/register or 970-416-2815.

THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1	2	3 NATIONAL TRAILS DAY Welcome Bobolinks!, <i>p. 57</i>
8 Junior Naturalist: Magnificent Engineering in the Natural World, <i>p. 29</i> Raptors and Nature Explore and Share, <i>p. 57</i>	9 Primrose Studio Tour, <i>p. 62</i>	10 Astronomy at Bobcat Ridge, <i>p. 40</i>
15 Out and About in the Urban Zone, <i>p. 45</i>	16 Art in the Great Outdoors for Tweens and Teens, <i>p. 27</i>	17 Nature is Where You Find It, <i>p. 58</i>
22 Light Up the Night, <i>p. 37</i>	23 Real Colorado Roots, <i>p. 59</i>	24 Bugs and Blooms, <i>p. 57</i> Wild Fest, <i>p. 62</i> Skygazing at Fossil Creek Reservoir, <i>p. 41</i>
29 Light Up the Night, <i>p. 37</i>	30 Art in the Great Outdoors for Tweens and Teens, <i>p. 27</i>	

Check for cancellations at fcgov.com/naturalareas before you go!



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY
			
2 Just Be Yoga and Meditation Series, p. 53	3	INDEPENDENCE DAY 4	5
9 LGBTQIA+ Community Hike, p. 57	10	11	12 Toddler Tracks Storytime, p. 27
16 Just Be Yoga and Meditation Series, p. 53	17	18	19 Wade the River, p. 58
LATINO CONSERVATION WEEK: JULY 15-23			
23	24	25	26 Journaling the Nature Experience, p. 51
30	31		

THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		1
6 Let's Explore Arapaho Bend, p. 58	7	8 Campfire at Coyote Ridge: Owls and Bats, p. 39
13 Out and About: Pollinators, p. 45	14 Campfire at Nix: Semana de Conservación Latina/Latino, p. 39	15
20 Nature Playdate, p. 29	21	22 Raptors and Nature Explore and Share, p. 57 Astronomy at Bobcat Ridge, p. 40
27	28	29 Skygazing at Fossil Creek Reservoir, p. 41

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 fcgov.com/naturalareas before you go!



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY
 <small>Kevin Berberet</small>		1	2 Junior Naturalists: Tree Secrets: The Incredible Lives of Trees, <i>p. 29</i>
6	7	8 Wade the River, <i>p. 58</i>	9 What's Up at the ELC?, <i>p. 45</i>
13	14	15	16 Toddler Tracks Storytime, <i>p. 27</i>
20	21	22	23 Dakota Hogback— Geologic Hazard?, <i>p. 59</i>
27 Just Be Yoga and Meditation Series, <i>p. 53</i> Skygazing at Fossil Creek Reservoir, <i>p. 41</i>	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.

THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
3 Just Be Yoga and Meditation Series, <i>p. 53</i>	4 Campfire at Nix: Canines of Colorado, <i>p. 39</i>	5 Astronomy at Bobcat Ridge, <i>p. 40</i>
10 Campfire at Coyote Ridge: Canines of Colorado, <i>p. 39</i>	11	12 A Colorful History of the Poudre River, <i>p. 47</i> Poudre River Fest, <i>p. 62</i>
17 LGBTQIA+ Community Hike, <i>p. 57</i>	18 History Underfoot, <i>p. 47</i>	19 Bison-Archaeology Connection, <i>p. 47</i> Wings and Wheels, <i>p. 62</i>
24 Out and About: Conservation Agriculture, <i>p. 45</i>	25 Sights and Sounds of McMurry, <i>p. 58</i>	26
31 Let's Explore Arapaho Bend, <i>p. 58</i>		

Check for cancellations at fcgov.com/naturalareas before you go!

AUGUST 2023

NATURAL AREAS ACTIVITIES



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY
			
3	LABOR DAY 4	5	6
			After the Fire: Recovery and Restoration, <i>p. 45</i>
10	11	12	13
LGBTQIA+ Community Hike, <i>p. 57</i>	Forest Therapy, <i>p. 53</i>		Toddler Tracks Storytime, <i>p. 27</i>
17	18	19	20
			Evening Nature Journaling, <i>p. 51</i>
HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH: SEPT. 15 – OCT. 15			
24	25	26	27
Just Be Yoga and Meditation Retreat, <i>p. 53</i>			

Registration is required for most activities and opens 30 days prior to the activity date at fcgov.com/register or 970-416-2815.

THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1	2
		Smithsonian at Lindenmeier, <i>p. 47</i> Raptors and Nature Explore and Share, <i>p. 57</i> Wade the River, <i>p. 58</i>
7	8	9
	Astronomy at Bobcat Ridge, <i>p. 40</i>	Kestrel Fields Grand Opening, <i>p. 62</i> Skygazing at Soapstone Prairie, <i>p. 41</i>
14	15	16
Out and About: Restoration—Is It For the Birds?, <i>p. 45</i>	Campfire at Coyote Ridge: Beavers!, <i>p. 39</i>	Walk the Gangplank, <i>p. 59</i>
21	22	NAT'L PUBLIC LANDS DAY 23
		O.P.E.N. Fort Collins, <i>p. 62</i>
28	29	30
	Skygazing at Fossil Creek Reservoir, <i>p. 41</i>	Bison-Archaeology Connection, <i>p. 47</i> Campfire: Hispanic Heritage Month/Día de Los Muertos, <i>p. 41</i>

Check for cancellations at fcgov.com/naturalareas before you go!



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY
1 Hike Through the Ages, <i>p. 47</i>	2	3	4 Forest Therapy, <i>p. 53</i>
HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH: SEPT. 15 – OCT. 15			
8	9 INDIGENOUS PEOPLES' DAY	10	11
15	16	17	18
22	23	24	25 Black-footed Ferret Exploration, <i>p. 58</i>
BAT WEEK: OCT. 24-31			
29	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.

THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
5	6 Astronomy at Bobcat Ridge, <i>p. 40</i>	7
12	13 Black-footed Ferret Exploration, <i>p. 58</i>	14 Smithsonian at Lindenmeier, <i>p. 47</i>
19	20	21 Marvelous Migration, <i>p. 58</i> Skygazing at Fossil Creek Reservoir, <i>p. 41</i>
26	27	28
		

Check for cancellations at fcgov.com/naturalareas before you go!

OCTOBER 2023

NATURAL AREAS ACTIVITIES





AT HOME

Besides enjoying your natural areas and spending time outdoors, there are lots of ways you can take action to help our environment. Check out these ideas!



Shop Locally

This generates sales taxes that support natural areas conservation and visitor amenities.



Plant Native Plants

Make your yard an extension of the natural areas network by planting native plants. Visit fcgov.com/naturalareas/native-plants.



Minimize Pollutants

Minimize pesticides and herbicides to prevent runoff that pollutes waterways and protect beneficial pollinators.



Keep Cats Indoors

The great outdoors is no place for cats. Keep cats indoors. Learn more at fcgov.com/naturalareas/wildlife.



Adjust Your Lighting

Dark skies benefit people and wildlife. Light only where you need it. Resources available at fcgov.com/nightssky.



Support Air Quality & Climate

Carpool or use alternative transportation such as biking or walking.



Create a Nature Space

Create a nature space with a *Nature in the City* grant which funds projects for residents, neighborhoods, and communities. Grant submissions are open September through October at fcgov.com/natureinthecity.



Reduce & Reuse

Reduce single-use plastics. These can be ingested by wildlife and they pollute waterways. Opt for reusable, recyclable, or compostable packaging whenever possible.

**THANKS FOR SUPPORTING
YOUR LOCAL NATURE SPACES.**

COMMUNITY SCIENCE



1

Locate / Record

2

Share Sightings

3

Discuss / Track

eBird

Your sightings contribute to hundreds of conservation decisions, peer-reviewed papers, thousands of student projects, and help inform bird research worldwide. ebird.org



The purpose of this project is to continue to find fireflies in the western U.S. in unexpected places. View a map of recorded firefly sightings throughout the west, which continues to grow thanks to participation from everyday community scientists. Little is known about the life cycle of fireflies and every sighting helps researchers learn more. nhmu.utah.edu/citizen-science/fireflies

STILL WANT TO DO MORE?

fcgov.com/naturalareas/community-science

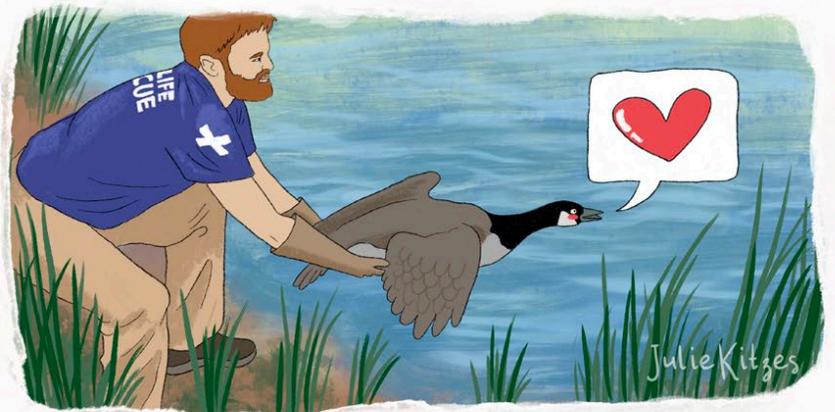
iNaturalist

Every observation can contribute to biodiversity science, from the rarest butterfly to the most common backyard weed. This app shares your findings with scientific data repositories like the Global Biodiversity Information Facility to help scientists find and use your data. All you have to do is observe. inaturalist.org



WESTERN MONARCH
MILKWEED MAPPER

Monarch populations across North America are in serious decline. To preserve and protect populations in western states, we need to better understand where monarchs and their milkweed host plants occur in the landscape. Your help is critical in collecting data to better inform conservation efforts in the western U.S. monarchmilkweedmapper.org



The Story of the Goose, by Julie Kitzes

For more information on non-raptor wildlife rescue in Fort Collins, go to nocowildlife.org.



What's Up in Fort Collins? Migratory Birds!

Hola, mi nombre es lazuli bunting.

I travel as far north as Calgary, Canada, and as far south as Mexico City. Several other species of birds and I rely on places like Fort Collins to rest and recharge on our long journeys.



You can help migratory birds!

Plant Native Plants



fcgov.com/naturalareas/native-plants

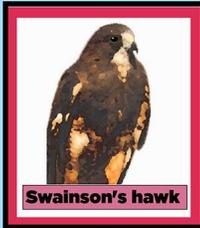
Turn off outdoor lights during migration



birdcast.info

Learn more with Audubon: explorer.audubon.org

Keep an eye out for these migratory birds who frequent Fort Collins. Match the color of their boxes to the corresponding general migration pathway on the map.



Swainson's hawk



Western tanager



House wren



Mountain bluebird

fcgov.com/natureinthecity

ON THE TRAIL YOUR STEWARDSHIP CHECKLIST



There are plenty of ways to give back!



PLAN AHEAD AND PREPARE

- ✓ Use the checklist on page 63. Natural areas can be busy, so check parking lot webcams at fcgov.com/naturalareas/status before you go.
- ✓ Check trail status before you go - sometimes we must close trails. Visit lesser-known natural areas and visit at less crowded times. See trails.colorado.gov or COTREX for closures.
- ✓ Visit in the mornings, evenings, or on weekdays.



TRAVEL ON DURABLE SURFACES

- ✓ Don't create new trails! Using the same path minimizes ecological impacts. If it's muddy, respect trail closures and visit a paved trail instead.



DISPOSE OF WASTE PROPERLY

- ✓ Use the trash and recycling containers at trailheads.
- ✓ If the trash can is full, pack out your own trash.
- ✓ Restrooms are at trailheads and some interior locations.
- ✓ Scoop your pet's poop and deposit in trash can to prevent water pollution.
- ✓ Pick up litter—become a Natural Areas Adopter at fcgov.com/naturalareas/long-term-stewardship-opportunities.



LEAVE WHAT YOU FIND

- ✓ Allow others a sense of discovery. Don't collect any items. Leave everything as you found it.



NO FIRES ARE ALLOWED IN NATURAL AREAS

- ✓ Attend a campfire activity in this guide instead! (See page 39.)



RESPECT WILDLIFE

- ✓ Allow wildlife to thrive in their home and habitat by giving them space and not feeding them.



BE CONSIDERATE OF OTHER VISITORS

- ✓ Be aware of other visitors and follow trail etiquette: Bikers yield to horses and pedestrians. Pedestrians yield to horses.



Protect wetlands, waterways, and riverbanks... they protect you.

City of Fort Collins

AT NATURAL AREAS

Natural areas are yours to enjoy and explore, and as stewards it is our responsibility to care for these special places. With more than 40,000 acres and more than 50 natural areas, there is a lot to care for!

PICK IT UP FOCO

Want to take your impact to the next level? Lead your own trash clean-up.

- Clean up our City before trash makes its way to the Cache la Poudre River.
- Help us better understand issues around trash and single-use plastics in our City.
- Remember—if your group of enthusiastic eco-stewards is larger than 15 people, you'll need a permit. More information on the Pick It Up FoCo website.
- Visit fcgov.com/volunteer/trashpickup for more information.



Kevin Berberich

LITTLE HEARTS

By Anushka E. Vithanage

Little hearts, searching
 Yearning for connection
 To the earth, to the sky
 And craving disconnection,
 From screens, and routines,
 From the four walls that limit them.
 Onto something that's freeing...
 A wonderful expedition!

Little hearts pondering,
 Little scientists outside..
 Observing, and wondering,
 Every season's a surprise!
 Let the magic of the wilderness
 Bloom the artists inside..
 Raise a grounded generation,
 That's compassionate, and wise.

Little hearts soaring
 Like birds in the skies
 Outdoors and beaming,
 Explorers with smiles.
 Learning, and listening,
 Building community ties
 Connecting, conserving,
 In nature they thrive.



Registration is required for most activities and opens 30 days prior to the activity date at fcgov.com/register or 970-416-2815.

Kevin Borchert

YOUNG NATURALISTS

Activities specifically for youth. **Parents/guardians must be present at all times during the program unless otherwise specified by the program leader.**

TODDLER TRACKS STORYTIME **R**

Discover flowers, bugs, tracks, and more in this slow-paced exploratory walk with the Poudre River Library District. Register at read.poudrelibraries.org/events.



- **Weds. June 14, 9:30 a.m. – 10:30 a.m. • Ross**
Meet at Rolland Moore Park Playground.
- **Weds. July 12, 9:30 a.m. – 10:30 a.m. • Red Fox Meadows**
Meet at the trailhead kiosk off Longworth Dr.
- **Weds. Aug. 16, 9:30 a.m. – 10:30 a.m. • Magpie Meander**
Meet at Soft Gold Park.
- **Weds. Sept. 13, 9:30 a.m. – 10:30 a.m. • McMurry**
Meet at small parking lot at the west end of Hemlock St.

ART IN THE GREAT OUTDOORS FOR TWEENS AND TEENS **R**

Let your creativity flow with a mini art workshop and go for a guided hike with a naturalist. For teens and tweens ages 10-18. Register at read.poudrelibraries.org/events.



- **Fri. June 16, 10:00 a.m. – noon • Riverbend Ponds**
Focus: Photography
- **Fri. June 30, 10:00 a.m. – noon • Riverbend Ponds**
Focus: Journaling/Sketching

DO-IT-YOURSELF RESOURCES

fcgov.com/naturalareas/learn

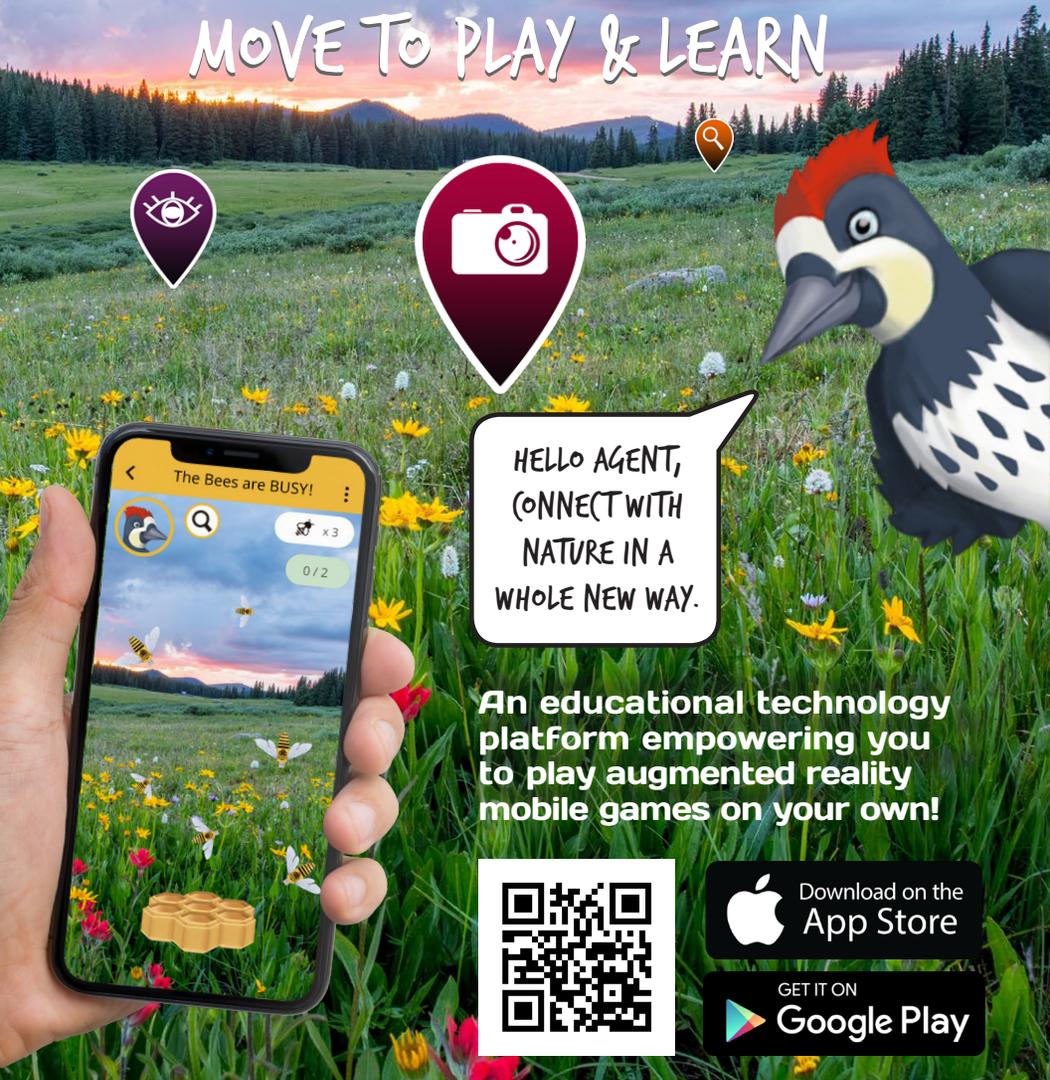


City of Fort Collins/Jahn Robison

Check for cancellations at fcgov.com/naturalareas before you go!

AGENTS OF DISCOVERY

MOVE TO PLAY & LEARN



HELLO AGENT,
CONNECT WITH
NATURE IN A
WHOLE NEW WAY.

An educational technology platform empowering you to play augmented reality mobile games on your own!



PLAY NOW AT COYOTE RIDGE NATURAL AREA!

JUNIOR NATURALISTS AGES 6-12

Become a Junior Naturalist! Explore, learn, and grow your stewardship skills. **Parents/guardians must be present at all times.** Siblings are welcome, but the activities will be geared towards the stated age group.

MAGNIFICENT ENGINEERING IN THE NATURAL WORLD

Birds are incredible designers and engineers, and we can learn a lot from their careful planning and building.

- **Thur. June 8, 10:00 a.m. – noon • Pineridge**
Meet at the Dixon Reservoir lot off of Dixon Canyon Rd.

TREE SECRETS: THE INCREDIBLE LIVES OF TREES

Walking through a forest, it might seem like the trees are still and silent, but there's a lot going on beneath the soil and behind the bark!

- **Weds. Aug. 2, 10:00 a.m. – noon • Gateway**
Meet at Shelter A.

NATURE PLAYDATE AGES 3-7

Come explore nature in a safe and accessible way with your little ones. Snacks and exploration supplies provided.

- **Thur. July 20, 10:00 a.m. – noon • Gateway**

WANT TO KEEP EXPLORING?

Try the Adventure Lab, "The Future of the Poudre River is up to You!"



labs.geocaching.com

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 fcgov.com/naturalareas before you go!



20 IDEAS FOR 20 MINUTES OUTSIDE AT HOME

1. HOST A MUD PARTY

Get the mud and fun flowing. Try mud painting. Make mud pies. Squish mud between your toes. All it takes is a big bucket, dirt, water, and a little imagination.



2. CAMP IN YOUR BACKYARD

Just pitch a tent or sleep under the stars in your yard. Make some s'mores and enjoy an adventure close to home—and indoor toilets!

3. ADD WATER & CHILL

Fish for marbles. Fill a baby pool with ice and water. Then add marbles and try to fish them out with your toes. Or do a frozen t-shirt challenge. Freeze tees and water in plastic bags. See which friend can break the ice to wear one first.

4. GO ON A COLOR SCAVENGER HUNT

Search for things outdoors that match each of the six colors here. Could be flowers, bugs, the sky—whatever catches your eye. Bonus points if you capture a photo or drawing of what you find.

5. MAKE SUN PRINTS

Place colored construction paper outside in the sun. Make a design on top of it with leaves, sticks, rocks and other stuff. Then let it sit out, and in a few hours, the sun will turn it into a wild piece of art. Don't forget to sign your masterpiece!

6. MAKE NATURE FOSSILS

Form clay into circular shapes about a half-inch thick. Find interesting rocks, leaves, sticks and plants that you can press into each piece of clay and remove. Boom! Instant "fossils"!



7. CREATE A WATERSHED

Here's something cool to do on a hot day. Find some natural sand or dirt in your neighborhood or create your own watershed in a tub. Use the sand to create streams and rivers and use a watering can for rain. Can you change the way the water moves? If a water fight happens to break out, it'll be even cooler!

8. PLAY TAG

At dusk, grab some friends and a flashlight, and it's game on! Whoever gets tagged with the light beam is it.

9. TURN LUNCH INTO A REAL PICNIC

Any meal is more fun outdoors. So, grab a blanket, a basket of your favorite snacks, and find a shady patch of grass. To make it extra sweet, cut fruit into flower shapes and munch away.

10. CREATE A BIKE OBSTACLE COURSE

Grab some chalk and draw a curvy track on your sidewalk or driveway. Add a stopwatch and crown a track champion for the fastest lap.

11. MAKE A SUNDIAL

Grab a stick and 12 rocks. Paint numbers 1-12 on each rock. At noon, plant the stick straight up in a sunny spot. Place rock #12 at the end of the stick's shadow. At 1:00 p.m., do the same with rock #1 and repeat every hour until sunset. Return the next morning to mark shadows from the hour from sunrise to noon.



12. GROW VEGGIES FROM SCRAPS

Place the end of some celery or romaine lettuce in a bowl with a little water. Set it in a sunny spot and watch for roots to appear. Then plant it outdoors or in a pot and watch it grow. No seeds necessary!

13. GO ON A SAFARI

Have someone hide toy animals outside and let the search begin. If they're hidden too well, hints like "cold!" "warm!" and "hot!" will help guide you.

14. MAKE LEAF ZOMBIES

Collect rocks and interestingly shaped leaves and make zombie, ghost, and monster faces out of them.

15. PAINT WITH WATER ON YOUR SIDEWALK

Grab a paintbrush and a container of water and get your Van Gogh on. Watch what happens to your painting as the sun heats it up.

16. "COLLECT" SOME BUGS

Grab a camera and explore your yard or local park. See how many bugs you can add to your photo collection. If you're nice, they might even smile for the camera.



17. MAKE A ROLY POLY HABITAT

Get a container that allows for airflow, and fill it with dirt, dead leaves, rotting wood, and moss. Then add some roly-polies. After having some fun watching them, set them free.

18. FEED YOUR BIRD CURIOSITY

Hang up a bird feeder and then sit back and watch the airshow. Keep a list of how many birds visit, make drawings of them and keep it all in a journal.

19. TAKE A MICRO HIKE

Rope off a 3' x 3' area in the grass with string. Then crouch down and use your fingers to move the grass and dig in the dirt. Use a magnifying glass to see what lives there. It's a new, close-up way to see the world.

20. MAKE TREE RUBBINGS

Nature is one amazing artist—and you can be too. Just hold a sheet of paper against a tree trunk and rub over it with crayons or pencils. Try it against different trees to complete your art collection.

For more adventures, join GenerationWild.com

Facebook and Instagram: @GenerationWildColorado
#20MinutesOutside

INTERDEPENDENCIA | INTERDEPENDENCE

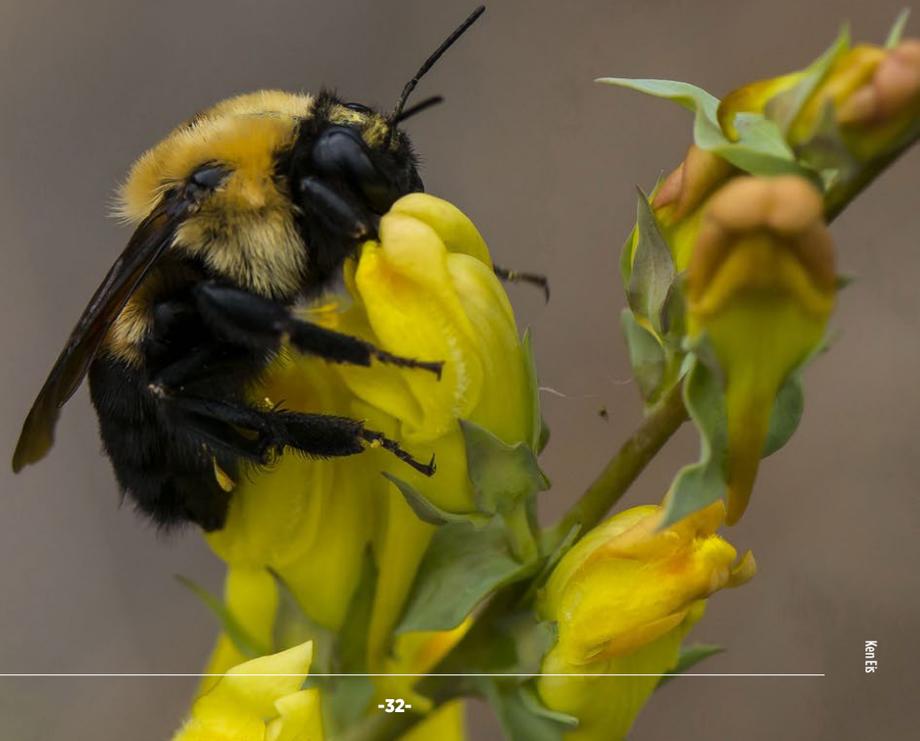
By Andrea Dean

Una de las sensaciones más relajantes en el mundo es reposar en medio de un enjambre de abejas. La experiencia no inspira miedo, sino alegría. Si se lleva una camiseta, se puede sentir el viento creado por 20.000 alas batientes en piel como el latido de un corazón. Aunque son formados por seres individuales, hay una cualidad trascendente a las colmenas de abejas. Y cuando se está entre el enjambre, por un momento, se quita el sentido de identidad y se une con el oro brillante a su alrededor.

Estos son los momentos poéticos de la apicultura... hay algo de trabajo duro también. En la primavera, los apicultores atrapan nuevos enjambres en cajas blancas y ayudan a sus enjambres despertar del largo y oscuro invierno. Durante el verano, comprueban las abejas y se aseguran de que hay suficiente espacio para que las abejas pueden crecer cómodamente. Es importante que las abejas tengan espacio, porque si no, ellos se podrían alejar. En el otoño, los apicultores cosechan miel extra de sus abejas.

Por supuesto, todo es más trabajo para las abejas que los apicultores. Las abejas trabajan todos los días de sus vidas, inmerso en los pétalos de flores fragantes y cielos familiares. Traen polen y néctar a su casa para alimentar a su reina y criar a sus polluelos. En el proceso, polinizan todo tipo de plantas. Con las feromonas y bailes, hablan lenguas que los seres humanos apenas están empezando a entender.

Las complejidades sublimes de la abeja son conmovedor por el conocimiento de que su existencia está en peligro. Las colonias de abejas en todo el país son afectadas por el desorden del colapso de colonias. Por ejemplo, en 2021-22 los apicultores aficionados



Kent's

en los EE. UU. perdieron casi el 60 % de sus colmenas administradas. Un culpable de las muertes será unas pesticidas populares llamadas neonicotinoides. Los humanos han envenenado el ambiente natural para cultivar comida fácilmente, pero la gran ironía es que sin las abejas, nuestra agricultura se deteriorará.

En estos días, es una apuesta para mantener las abejas. Muchas colmenas morirán. Pero algunas sobrevivirán, y a través de las abejas los seres humanos pueden sobrevivir. Quizás esta es la razón por la cual viene tan fácilmente sensación de unidad con las abejas: el destino de los insectos dorados volantes y el destino de los seres humanos son indisolublemente entrelazados.

Standing in the middle of a swarm of bees is one of the most relaxing experiences in the world. It's not frightening, but rather fills you with joy. If you're wearing a t-shirt, you can feel a wind created by 20,000 flapping wings on your skin, like the beating of a heart. Though hives are made up of individual beings, there's a transcendental quality to them. In the swarm, for a moment, your own sense of identity dissolves and you become one with the glittering gold around you.

These are the poetic moments of beekeeping, but there's also hard work involved. In the spring, beekeepers capture new swarms in white boxes and help their colonies awaken from the long, dark winter. During the summer, they check on the bees and ensure there's enough space for them to thrive comfortably. It's crucial to give bees enough room, as without it, they may abandon their hive. In the fall, beekeepers harvest extra honey from the bees.

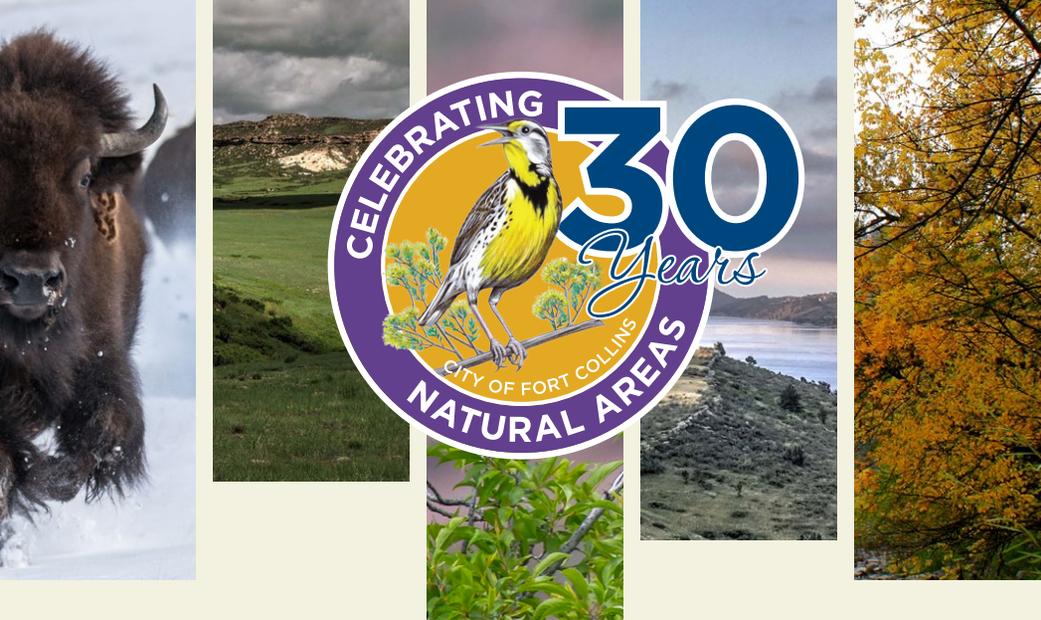
Of course, the bees work much harder than the beekeepers. They toil every day of their lives, surrounded by fragrant flower petals and familiar skies. They bring pollen and nectar home to feed their queens and raise their young. In the process, they pollinate a vast array of plants. With pheromones and dances, they communicate in languages we are only beginning to understand.

The exquisite intricacies of bees are all the more poignant when we consider that their existence is under threat. Honeybee colonies across the country are afflicted by colony collapse disorder. For instance, in 2021-22, backyard beekeepers in the US lost nearly 60% of their managed hives. One culprit of these deaths is the use of neonicotinoid pesticides. We have poisoned the natural environment to facilitate food production, yet the great irony is that without bees, our agriculture will crumble.

Keeping bees is a gamble nowadays. Many colonies will perish. But some will survive, and it's through these bees that humans can continue to exist. Perhaps this is why the feeling of unity with bees comes so easily: the fate of these flying golden insects and that of humans are inextricably intertwined.



From the Natural Areas Department: Actions that are good for honeybees are also good for native bees. Reducing pesticides and adding a diverse variety of native plants to your landscaping benefits all pollinators—particularly native bees and butterflies.



NATURAL AREAS IS LISTENING! ¡ÁREAS NATURALES ESCUCHA!

Aran Meyer

HAPPY 30TH ANNIVERSARY TO THE CITY OF FORT COLLINS NATURAL AREAS!

November 2022 marks 30 years since the first ballot measure was passed to establish dedicated sales tax funding for the conservation of natural areas.

HOW WILL YOU CELEBRATE?

- > 30 Years of Conservation**
 - Attend a *Stewardship Behind the Scenery* activity and dive deeper into the work of City of Fort Collins Natural Areas staff.
 - Participate in a community science project like Western Firefly Watch or recording species on iNaturalist or eBird.
- > 30 Years of Connection**
 - Take a hike or visit a natural area with a friend who has never been there.
 - Go on a mindfulness journey in nature. Slow down, look at the details, and think about what open spaces mean to you.
- > 30 Years of Community**
 - Try some nature journaling. Write, draw, or paint while outdoors. Notice something new.
 - Find your nearest walkable nature space—is it a garden, a park, a natural area?
- > 30 Years of Health**
 - Record the number of hours you spend outdoors this summer. Try for at least an hour a day.
 - Investigate planting native and pollinator friendly plants for a healthier ecosystem!

SHARE YOUR FEEDBACK

Leave your input about management of ten Urban Natural Areas and local natural spaces. Comment on the draft priorities and tactics for 21 natural areas along the Poudre River. Feedback form at fcgov.com/naturalareas/feedback.

COMPARTA SUS COMENTARIOS

Deje sus aportes sobre la gestión de las diez áreas naturales urbanas y los espacios naturales locales. Haga comentarios sobre el borrador de prioridades y estrategias para las 21 áreas naturales a lo largo del río Poudre. Solicitud de comentarios disponible en fcgov.com/naturalareas/feedback y en fcgov.com/naturalareas/espanol.

DROP-IN FEEDBACK OPPORTUNITY

Please share your input on the draft Poudre River Zone Update and how ten Urban Zone natural areas and local natural spaces are managed. Your feedback will influence the final Poudre Zone Update and inform the priorities and tactics that will appear in the draft Urban Zone Update. Stop by anytime between 1 p.m. and 4 p.m. to chat with Natural Areas staff and complete a feedback form. Look for the table and canopy near the parking lot.

- **Sun. June 18, 1 p.m. - 4 p.m.**
Shields Street River Access

SUMMER BIKE TO WORK DAY

Every June, Colorado celebrates Bike Month and here in Fort Collins we love anything that highlights and promotes people who ride bicycles. Stop by the Natural Areas station for a yummy breakfast, 30th anniversary swag, and to share your feedback about natural areas. Staff will be available to hear your input or you can complete a feedback form. The 2023 feedback focus is on the Urban Zone natural areas and the draft Poudre River Zone Update document.

- **Weds. June 28, 6:30 a.m. - 9:30 a.m.**
Poudre Trail between Lemay and Timberline, near Natural Areas Headquarters.

NATURAL AREAS AFTER DARK

Explore and enjoy the natural areas after the sun goes down.

NIGHT WALKS

Bring a headlamp or flashlight for a fun and mellow family friendly walk through a natural area.

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.

- **Thur. June 22, 8:30 p.m. – 10:00 p.m. • Riverbend Ponds**
- **Thur. June 29, 8:30 p.m. – 10:00 p.m. • Riverbend Ponds**

Meet at the Prospect Road parking lot.



Registration is required for most activities and opens 30 days prior to the activity date at fcgov.com/register or 970-416-2815.

Darwin Frichum



City of Fort Collins/John Robson

Check for cancellations at fcgov.com/naturalareas before you go!

GO FOR YOUR OWN NIGHT HIKE!

Have you ever explored nature at night? Take a night walk in a natural space and listen for owls, frogs, and other wildlife. Learn what flowers bloom at night. Here are some tips to keep you safe and learning:

- **Social or Solo?** Hiking at night alone vs. hiking with a group provide very different experiences. Whether you choose to hike alone for solitude or with a group for a social experience, make sure everyone knows the safety tips below.
- **Head out just before sunset:** Heading out before sunset can make it easier to get motivated. Plus, there's still a little light when you start, which will make finding the way back easier.
- **Hike on a full moon:** On full moon nights, there is more natural light. You may not even need your headlamp or flashlight!
- **Take a familiar trail:** Already knowing the trail will make it easier for nighttime travel.
- **Pick the right location:** Some natural areas are closed after dark. Coyote Ridge, Pineridge, and Riverbend Ponds are all great places to try a night hike and they're open until 11 p.m.! Check out fcgov.com/naturalareas for more natural areas that are open late.
- **Slow down and be observant:** Darkness can make terrain challenging and it's easy to get turned around and miss a trail junction. Slow down and pay attention to your surroundings, including signs of wildlife.
- **Bring layers:** If you start before the sun sets, you may want an extra layer of clothing once the night sets in and it cools off.
- **Bring a cellphone or radio for emergencies:** Be aware of the area you are hiking and know if you can get cell service there.
- **Tell someone where you are going:** Always let someone know where you are going and when you expect to be back.



Night hiking tips modified from: rei.com/blog/hike/night-hiking-basics

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.

Campfires at **Coyote Ridge** include a hike on an unpaved trail to the cabin. Please allow 30-40 minutes to reach the cabin. The campfire begins at the time listed below. Bring a flashlight for the walk back. 2 miles; easy.

Campfires at **Nix Farm** do not include a hike and are wheelchair accessible. Bring lawn chairs or blankets to sit on if you like (limited seating available).

OWLS AND BATS

Explore how these fascinating nocturnal creatures survive and live in the darkness of night.

- **Sat. July 8, 8:00 p.m. – 9:30 p.m. • Coyote Ridge Cabin**

LATINO CONSERVATION WEEK

Celebrate the stories and contributions of Latinos to conservation and the outdoors.

SEMANA DE CONSERVACIÓN LATINA

Celebre las historias y contribuciones de los latinos a la conservación y la naturaleza.

- **Fri. July 14, 7:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m. • Nix Farm **

CANINES OF COLORADO

Learn about the canines that call Colorado home, including the largest—the gray wolf!

- **Fri. Aug. 4, 6:30p.m. – 8:00p.m. • Nix Farm **
- **Thur. Aug. 10, 7:30 – 9:00p.m. • Coyote Ridge Cabin**

BEAVERS

Beavers are one of nature's most important engineers. Learn why they are necessary for nature!

- **Fri. Sept. 15, 6:30p.m. – 8:00p.m. • Coyote Ridge Cabin**

HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH/DÍA DE LOS MUERTOS CAMPFIRE

Join a naturalist for an evening of stories centered around Día de los Muertos. All ages welcome!

MES DEL PATRIMONIO HISPANO Y FOGATA DEL DÍA DE LOS MUERTOS

Participe en una noche de historias sobre el Día de los Muertos con un naturalista. ¡Evento apto para todas las edades!

- **Sat. Sept. 30, 5:30 p.m. – 7:00 p.m. • Nix Farm **

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 fcgov.com/naturalareas before you go!



Kevin Borchert

ASTRONOMY AT BOBCAT RIDGE

Enjoy a brief, family-friendly astronomy activity followed by stargazing. 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. **Please arrive on time! Allow for a 10-minute walk to the shelter. The gate closes shortly after start times and parking is not allowed on the road outside the gate.**

- Sat. June 10, 8:30 p.m. – 10:30 p.m. • Topic: Star Stories
- Sat. July 22, 8:30 p.m. – 10:30 p.m. • Topic: Sounds of the Night
- Sat. Aug. 5, 8:15 p.m. – 10:15 p.m. • Topic: Animals Need Dark Skies
- Fri. Sept. 8, 7:30 p.m. – 9:30 p.m. • Topic: Mythology
- Fri. Oct. 6, 6:45 p.m. – 8:45p.m. • Topic: Surprises in the Sky

Registration is required for most activities and opens 30 days prior to the activity date at fcgov.com/register or 970-416-2815.

SKYGAZING AT SOAPSTONE PRAIRIE

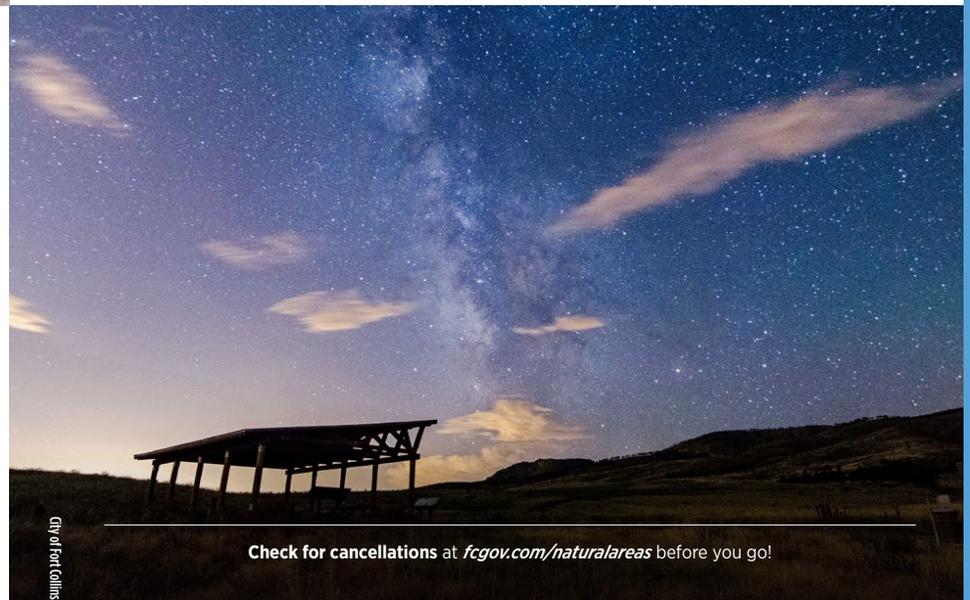
Enjoy a very special night to celebrate dark skies during the new moon at Soapstone Prairie. Learn about the benefits of a dark sky for humans and wildlife. Then enjoy viewing through telescopes with members of the Northern Colorado Astronomical Society. Dress warmly and bring a blanket or chair to sit on. Event will take place in the South Parking Lot. **Gates will close shortly after the start and road parking is not allowed, so please be on time!**

- Sat. Sept. 9, 7:30 p.m. – 10:30 p.m.

SKYGAZING AT FOSSIL CREEK RESERVOIR

Volunteers from the Northern Colorado Astronomical Society provide telescopes and share their knowledge about stars, planets, galaxies, and more. Dress warmly and bring a blanket or chair to sit on. Meet in the parking lot.

- Sat. June 24, 9:00 p.m. – 11:00 p.m.
- Sat. July 29, 9:00 p.m. – 11:00 p.m.
- Sun. Aug. 27, 8:30 p.m. – 10:30 p.m.
- Fri. Sept. 29, 8:00 p.m. – 10:00 p.m.
- Sat. Oct. 21, 7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.
- Fri. Nov. 17, 7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.
- Sat. Dec. 16, 7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.



City of Fort Collins

Check for cancellations at fcgov.com/naturalareas before you go!



Path to New Beginnings by Katy Piotrowski



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.

Registration is required for most activities and opens 30 days prior to the activity date at fcgov.com/register or 970-416-2815.

OUT AND ABOUT IN THE URBAN ZONE

Explore the unique partnership between Natural Areas and the City's Stormwater Utility that resulted in Red Fox Meadows. Register at read.poudrelibraries.org/events.



- **Thurs. June 15, 6:00 p.m. – 7:30 p.m. • Red Fox Meadows**
Register for details.

OUT AND ABOUT: POLLINATORS

Learn how to increase wildlife habitat and make nature more accessible through small urban projects. Register at read.poudrelibraries.org/events.



- **Thurs. July 13, 6:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m. • Sugar Beet Park Pollinator Garden**
Register for details.

WHAT'S UP AT THE ELC?

A partnership between CSU, The City of Fort Collins Natural Areas, and the City of Fort Collins Utilities is preserving water rights AND providing critical habitat!

- **Weds. Aug. 9, 6:00 p.m. – 7:30 p.m. • Environmental Learning Center**
Approximate address is 2400 S. County Rd. 9.

OUT AND ABOUT: CONSERVATION AGRICULTURE

Take a closer look at what's happening in the farm fields and how the City is restoring the surrounding land to support the community, wildlife, and local agriculture. Register at read.poudrelibraries.org/events.



- **Thurs. Aug 24, 6:00 p.m. – 7:30 p.m. • Kestrel Fields**
Register for details.

AFTER THE FIRE: RECOVERY AND RESTORATION

Explore the recovery after the Cameron Peak Fire and get a sneak peek at restoration projects.

- **Weds. Sept. 6, 5:30 p.m. – 7:00 p.m. • Bobcat Ridge**
Meet at the parking lot.

OUT AND ABOUT: RESTORATION— IS IT FOR THE BIRDS?

Discover how biologists, botanists, and restoration staff work together to create healthier plant and animal communities. Register at read.poudrelibraries.org/events.



- **Thurs. Sept. 14, 5:00 p.m. – 6:30 p.m. • McMurry**
Park at the Shields St. River Access. Group will walk to McMurry together.

Check for cancellations at fcgov.com/naturalareas before you go!

VOICES OF THE PAST

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

A COLORFUL HISTORY OF THE POUDBRE RIVER

Join us for a lively stroll through the natural wonders and more than a thousand years of human activity on the Poudre River.

- **Sat. Aug. 12, 9:00 a.m. – 10:30 a.m. • Old FC Heritage Park**

Meet in the parking lot behind the Northside Aztlan Center.

HISTORY UNDERFOOT

Discuss original homesteaders from Paleoindians to the Arapaho/Cheyenne peoples that call the area home.

- **Fri. Aug. 18, 2:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. • Arapaho Bend**

Meet at the Harmony Transit Center parking lot. Meet at the NW end of the lot near the trailhead.

BISON-ARCHAEOLOGY CONNECTION

Learn about the acquisition of Soapstone Prairie, the history of the American bison, and the treasures uncovered at the Lindenmeier archaeological site.

- **Sat. Aug. 19, 9:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. • Soapstone Prairie**
- **Sat. Sept. 30, 9:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. • Soapstone Prairie**

Meet at the south parking lot; approximately a one-hour drive from Fort Collins.

SMITHSONIAN AT LINDENMEIER

Travel back in time to learn how Paleoindians survived the high plains and how Smithsonian Institution archaeologists uncovered their story in the 1930s.

- **Sat. Sept. 2, 10:00 a.m. - noon • Soapstone Prairie**
- **Sat. Oct. 14, 10:00 a.m. - noon • Soapstone Prairie**

Meet at the north parking lot; approximately a one-hour drive from Fort Collins.

HIKE THROUGH THE AGES

Experts in geology, ecology, and history show how Soapstone Prairie was formed, the creatures that keep it functioning, and the homesteading and ranching history that's part of our heritage.

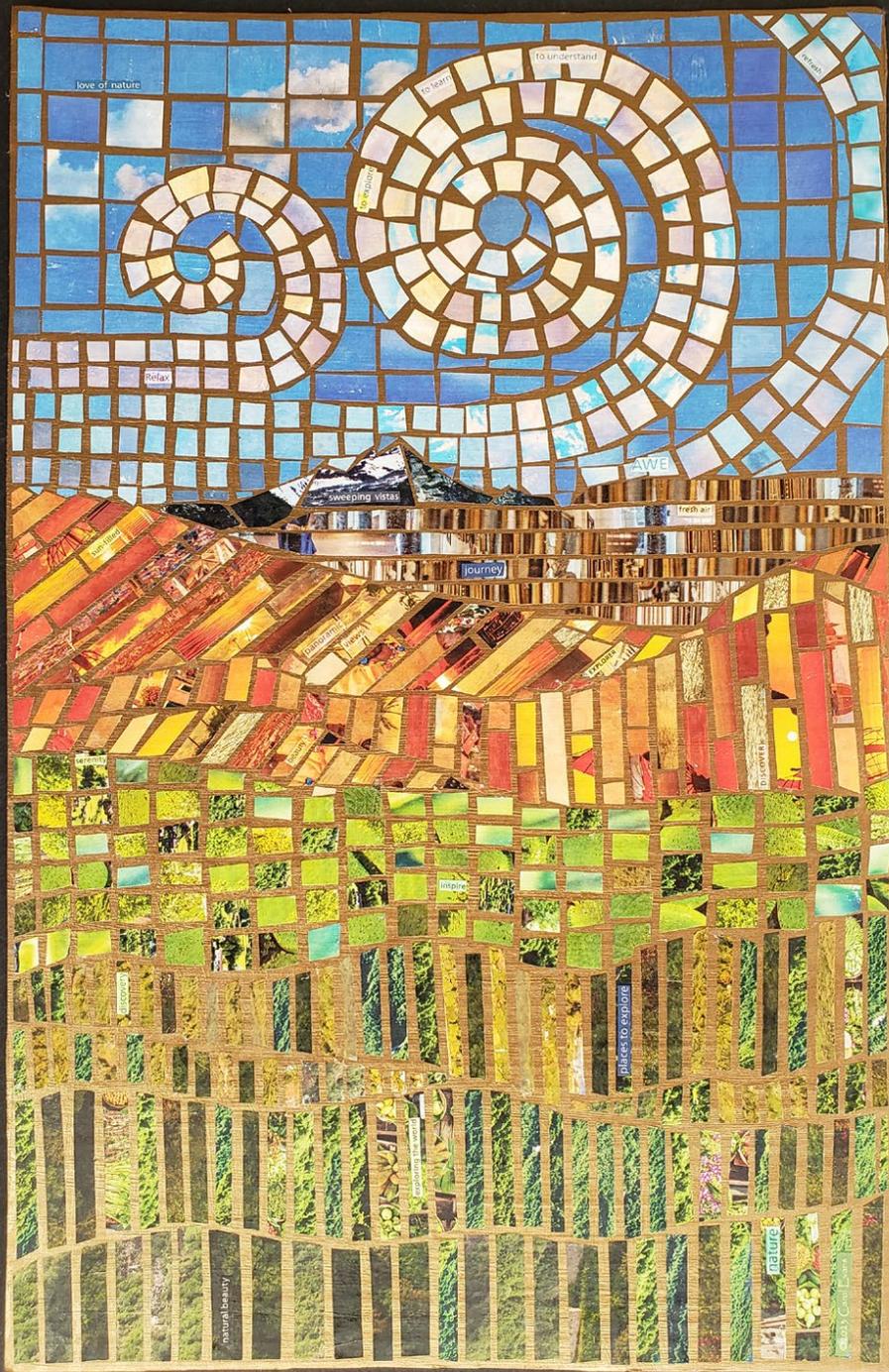
- **Sun. Oct. 1, 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. • Soapstone Prairie**

Meet at the south parking lot; approximately a one-hour drive time from Fort Collins.



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 fcgov.com/naturalareas before you go!



Prairie Winds by Carol Evans

This mosaic was created with items pulled from the artist's recycling bin.

THE FOXES OF SALYER NATURAL AREA

By Grant and Susan Dieterly

(Dedicated to Deklan Dieterly)

Situated along the Poudre River of Fort Collins, Colorado, is Salyer Natural Area. Salyer is abundant with cottonwood trees that greedily cling to the banks of the Poudre River. Their roots siphon water from its shores to satisfy the rapid, tall growth and broad triangular shaped leaves that twist and turn, creating soft rustling sounds in the breeze. Beyond the fast flowing river, with its Cottonwood canopy, our family walks the trail from the Salyer bridge towards Lee Martinez Park. The path crosses through a meadow where the grass has grown tall. It still holds the vibrant green of late spring, just before changing to a deep summer hue. It will eventually turn to gold, when the late summer's heat bears down on the tiny, exposed meadow. This is where a mother fox has decided to locate her den and raise a family of five kits.

The mother fox has chosen an elevated part of the seemingly flat meadow. On a dirt Motte, she sits, thus increasing visibility of the surrounding area. Able to see far and watch all that comes near. Her eyes have vertical pupils, much like a cat's, which remind us of arrow loop slits in a castle wall from a Bastian lookout tower. She is like the queen of a medieval castle and below is her meadow kingdom. The fox, like all foxes, is a solitary creature. The only subjects, her young kits, nap in the donjon keep.

Soon, she appears to be napping, too. It has been an active morning of grass romping, bug sniffing, and pouncing, as they learn the skill of micing. However, her ears flicker and turn at every sound, giving her away. She does not sleep. Sleep would leave her kits vulnerable to birds of prey, coyotes, and mountain lions. Her kingdom is guarded by an acute sense of smell and hearing, while her subjects lay deep in the den, invisible to invaders.

We continue to watch. Suddenly, five sets of tiny ears appear just above the tips of the tall blades. Eyes emerge. For a moment the kits are mesmerized by us, while the mother fox looks on nervously. Soon, they play as if we are not there, continuing to chase one another and nip at each other's fur. It isn't long before they tire and disappear back into the den. The meadow grows quiet once again.

Our fox enticement is interrupted by other trail walkers. They take notice of our curiosity, joining our group of three. This proves to make the mother fox increasingly uncomfortable. Head pulled forward, ears tilt back, we understand and immediately make our way down the path. As we distance ourselves from her castle, her ears flicker, haunches relax, and she once again lies down on the mound, pretending to sleep. She must restore her energy before the kits awake for another raucous round of play in the Salyer meadow kingdom.



Registration is required for most activities and opens 30 days prior to the activity date at fcgov.com/register or 970-416-2815.

CREATIVE BY NATURE

Beginners and veterans welcome! No art experience required. Focused and guided observations, along with drawing, painting, and writing can deepen your connection to nature. Children under 16 must be accompanied by an adult. Bring something to sit on (a stool, jacket, pad, etc.). Feel free to bring your own art supplies or borrow ours.

BUGS AND BLOOMS CAPTURED IN A NATURALIST'S NOTEBOOK

Learn how to use art as a tool for discovering and capturing the details of plants, insects, and other creatures.

- **Sat. June 24, 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. • Primrose Studio**
Meet at the studio at 4300 Michaud Lane near Reservoir Ridge.

JOURNALING THE NATURE EXPERIENCE

Whether capturing the distant mountain landscape or the nearby flora and fauna, nature journaling is a way to enjoy and develop appreciation of nature.

- **Weds. July 26, 9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. • Riverbend Ponds**
Meet at the Cairns Dr. parking lot.

EVENING NATURE JOURNALING

Learn to use nature journaling techniques to capture the magic of a summer evening in a natural area.

- **Weds. Sept. 20, 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. • Bobcat Ridge**
Meet in the parking lot.



Bald Eagle by Jen Barnes



Heron by Kate Moseley

Check for cancellations at fcgov.com/naturalareas before you go!

WELLNESS

Time spent in nature has been linked to reduced stress, improved well-being, and increased social connectedness. These activities are designed to benefit physical and mental wellness through mindful and intentional time spent in nature.

JUST BE YOGA AND MEDITATION SERIES

The asana practice of yoga is designed to prepare the body for meditation. Join Reneca and Duan of InnatelyU for meditation and a light yoga practice for all levels of practitioners.

- **Tues. June 13, 5:30 a.m. – 6:15 a.m. • Red Fox Meadows**
Meet at the kiosk off of Longworth Dr.
- **Tues. June 27, 7:30 p.m. – 8:15 p.m. • Red Fox Meadows**
Meet at the kiosk off of Longworth Dr.
- **Tues. July 2, 5:30 a.m. – 6:15 a.m. • McMurry**
Meet at Shields St. River Access.
- **Sun. July 16, 7:30 p.m. – 8:15 p.m. • McMurry**
Meet at Shields St. River Access.
- **Thur. Aug. 3, 5:30 a.m. – 6:15 a.m. • Fossil Creek Reservoir**
Meet at the outdoor classroom near the parking lot.
- **Sun. Aug. 27, 7:30 p.m. – 8:15 p.m. • Fossil Creek Reservoir**
Meet at the outdoor classroom near the parking lot.

FOREST THERAPY 18+

Experience the Japanese tradition of Shinrin-Yoku on this guided nature walk. Learn to open your senses to nature's healing power.

- **Mon. Sept. 11, 1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. • Primrose Studio**
- **Weds. Oct. 4, 1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. • Primrose Studio**

Meet at the studio at 4300 Michaud Lane near Reservoir Ridge.

JUST BE YOGA AND MEDITATION RETREAT

Continue your sunrise and sunset yoga and meditation practice with Duan and Reneca of InnatelyU at this half-day retreat.

- **Sun. Sept. 24, 9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. • Primrose Studio** 
Meet at the studio at 4300 Michaud Lane near Reservoir Ridge.



Autumn Palette by Rick Rizzotto

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 fcgov.com/naturalareas before you go!



Winter Walking Trail by Chelle Costello

HAIKU INSPIRED BY THE POUVRE RIVER

By Roxanne Griffin

The river mirrors
My reflections on winter's
Splendor in stillness.



From top: Variegated Fritillary, Colorado Hairstreak, Monarch, and Silver Blue by Charli Greer

NATURAL DISCOVERIES

Enjoy a variety of activities and hikes. Organized groups should schedule activities at a separate time; contact naturalareas@fcgov.com.

LGBTQIA+ COMMUNITY HIKES

Explore natural areas and their importance to our local ecosystems and our own mental health and wellness. Topics will vary. Hikes are intended to be a safe and inclusive space for members of the LGBTQIA+ community to gather. Allies are welcome; please be mindful of the safe space. **Location available upon registration.**

- **Weds. June 7, 5:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.** • Topic: Hike with a Planner
- **Sun. July 9, 9:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.** • Topic: Mindfulness Walk
- **Thur. Aug. 17, 8:30 p.m. - 10:00 p.m.** • Topic: Stargazing
- **Sun. Sept. 10, 9:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.** • Topic: Nature Hike

WELCOME BOBOLINKS!

Each year one of Colorado's rare birds visits Reservoir Ridge. Learn about this special animal and take a walk to listen to and hopefully see them!

- **Sat. June 3, 8:30 a.m. - 10:30 a.m.** • Reservoir Ridge
Meet at the parking lot off of Overland Trail Rd.

RAPTORS AND NATURE EXPLORE AND SHARE

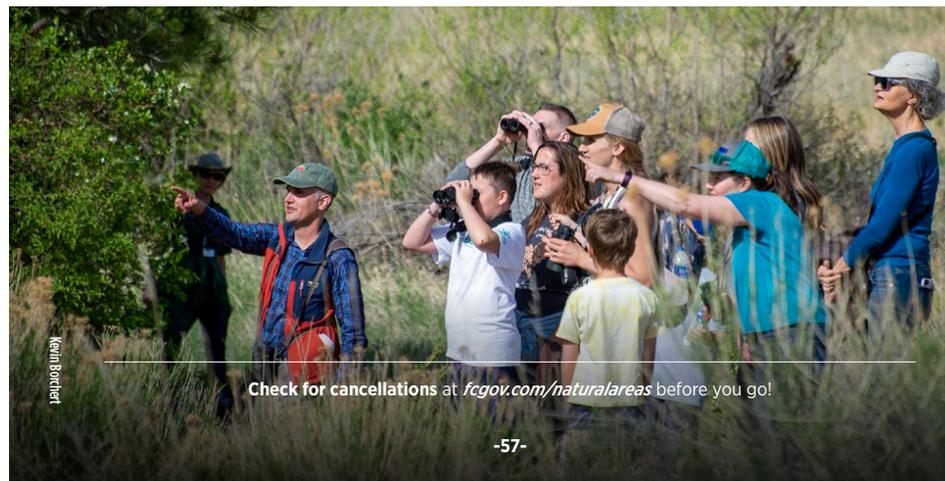
Learn about the amazing raptors that populate Colorado's Front Range and how we can help conserve them. Observe live raptors up close with a visit from special guest, the Rocky Mountain Raptor Program.



- **Thurs. June 8, 6:00 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.** • Coyote Ridge
Meet at the parking lot for a hike to the cabin.
- **Sat. July 22, 9:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.** • Gateway
Meet at Shelter A.
- **Sat. Sept. 2, 9:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.** • Soapstone Prairie
Meet at the north parking lot.

Continued on next page

Registration is required for most activities and opens 30 days prior to the activity date at fcgov.com/register or 970-416-2815.



Kevin Buchner

Check for cancellations at fcgov.com/naturalareas before you go!

Natural Discoveries, continued

NATURE IS WHERE YOU FIND IT

Take an active friendly stroll and view wildlife and plants along the Poudre River.

- **Sat. June 17, 9:30 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. • Lee Martinez Park** 
Meet in the parking lot by the tennis courts.

LET'S EXPLORE ARAPAHO BEND

Discover a special natural area along the Poudre River in southeast Fort Collins and learn about the people, animals, and plants that call this area home.

- **Thur. July 6, 9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. • Arapaho Bend**
- **Thur. Aug. 31, 9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. • Arapaho Bend**

Meet at the parking lot off of Strauss Cabin and E. Horsetooth Roads.

WADE THE RIVER

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.

- **Weds. July 19, 9:30 a.m. – noon • Poudre River Trail**
- **Tues. Aug. 8, 9:30 a.m. – noon • Poudre River Trail**
- **Sat. Sept. 2, 2:30 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. • Poudre River Trail**

Park at the tennis courts at Lee Martinez Park and follow the paved trail west until you come to a small beach on the north side.

SIGHTS AND SOUNDS OF MCMURRY

Discover a special Poudre River Natural Area right in town. We'll look for important plant and insect resources and watch for active animals.

- **Fri. Aug. 25, 10:00 a.m. – noon • McMurry**
Meet at Shields St. River Access.

BLACK-FOOTED FERRET EXPLORATION

Journey together to Soapstone Prairie for a presentation about black-footed ferrets. Hike and search for this elusive resident.

- **Fri. Oct. 13, 5:00 p.m. – 10:00 p.m. • Soapstone Prairie**
- **Weds. Oct. 25, 5:00 p.m. – 10:00 p.m. • Soapstone Prairie**

Meet at the Senior Center, 1200 Raintree Dr. to ride together to Soapstone Prairie.

MARVELOUS MIGRATION

Many migratory birds use Fort Collins as a rest stop on their journeys farther north or south, or as a place to nest and raise a family. Come explore the diversity of avian life and learn identification tips.

- **Sat. Oct. 21, 8:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. • Fossil Creek Reservoir**
Meet at the outdoor classroom near the parking lot.

Registration is required for most activities and opens 30 days prior to the activity date at fcgov.com/register or 970-416-2815.

GEOLOGY AND ECOLOGY EXPLORATIONS

Explore with experts in geology and ecology to uncover the secrets of the oldest to youngest rocks in Fort Collins. Discover how the landscape was shaped by natural forces.

REAL COLORADO ROOTS

Discover Colorado's origins based on plate tectonic evidence seen along the Black Powder Trail.

- **Fri. June 23, 9:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. • Gateway**
Meet at Shelter A.

DAKOTA HOGBACK – GEOLOGIC HAZARD?

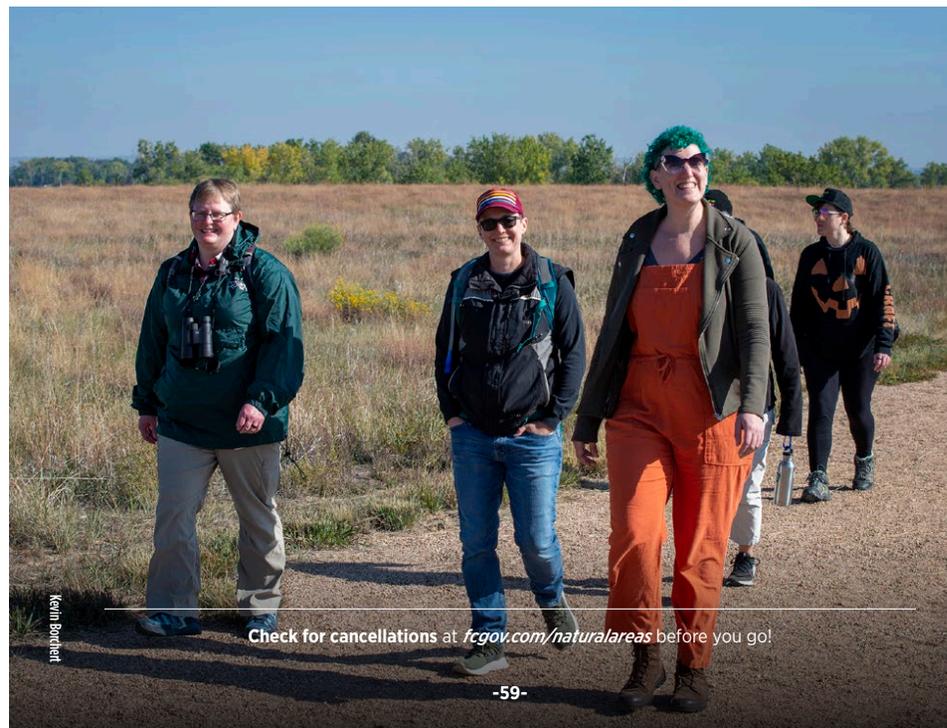
Observe the landscape features at Maxwell. Discuss how rockslides form and the risks they pose.

- **Weds. Aug. 23, 8:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. • Maxwell**
Meet in the parking lot off of Hwy 42C.

WALK THE GANGPLANK

Uncover the geologic secrets of rocks shed from the Rocky Mountains and how these influence humans and wildlife.

- **Sat. Sept. 16, 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. • Soapstone Prairie**
Meet at the north parking lot; approximately a one-hour drive time from Fort Collins.



Kevin Borchert

Check for cancellations at fcgov.com/naturalareas before you go!

PLAY IT SAFE ON THE RIVER

THIS INFORMATION COULD SAVE YOUR LIFE!



WEAR A LIFE VEST

- ✓ No pool toys—they won't hold you up.
- ✓ Wear shoes and a helmet.
- ✓ Don't tie anything to yourself or your vessel. It could drown you.



SAFE TO GO?

- ✓ Know the weather and water conditions. High flows are unsafe. fcgov.com/floodwarning
- ✓ This water is melted snow—it's always cold.
- ✓ Avoid logs, branches, rocks, and debris. They can drag you under.
- ✓ Your risk-taking endangers the lives of rescuers.



KNOW WHERE YOU ARE

- ✓ Take a map!
- ✓ Plan your take-out location before you get in.
- ✓ Pay attention and follow all warning signs.



FLOAT SOBER, FLOAT SAFE

- ✓ Alcohol and drugs including marijuana, impair judgment.



BE COURTEOUS

- ✓ Don't leave trash in or near the river. Look for trash and recycling cans in parking lots.



IF YOU'RE IN THE WATER

- ✓ Don't stand up in the river; avoid foot entrapment.
- ✓ Get on your back with feet pointing downstream. Get your toes out of the water.
- ✓ Use your arms to paddle to shore.



SHARE THE RIVER

- ✓ Give other boaters and anglers plenty of space.

HAVE A SAFE TRIP!

Riverbend Ponds Late Fall by Susan Dieterly

SPECIAL EVENTS

Come see the Natural Areas staff and volunteers at these special events!

PRIMROSE STUDIO TOUR

Experience the magic of Primrose Studio, Natural Areas' secluded event venue within Reservoir Ridge Natural Area. Learn what makes this space special with this private tour. **Registration required.**

- **Fri. June 9, 6:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.**

WILD FEST AT FORT COLLINS MUSEUM OF DISCOVERY

Bring the family and learn about native wildlife species, how we can safely interact with them, and how you can contribute to local wildlife conservation efforts.

- **Sat. June 24, 10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.**

POUDRE RIVERFEST

Join us at New Belgium Brewery for a day of education, restoration, and celebration of the Poudre River! Enjoy live music, exhibitor booths, interactive games, food trucks, tasty beer, and door prizes! Learn about river restoration and how you can help. poudreriverfest.org/schedule

- **Sat. Aug. 12, noon – 6:00 p.m.**

WINGS AND WHEELS

Enjoy a leisurely bike ride along the Poudre Trail. Dive into the relationship between birds and water at education stations between Taft Hill Road and Lee Martinez Park.



- **Sat. Aug. 19, 9:00 a.m. – noon**

SAVE THE DATE FOR KESTREL FIELDS GRAND OPENING!

Join Natural Areas to celebrate the grand opening of Kestrel Fields Natural Area. Check fcgov.com/naturalareas for updated dates and times as September draws near.

- **Sat. Sept. 9, 1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.**

O.P.E.N. FORT COLLINS AT LEE MARTINEZ PARK

Experience the beauty and diversity of nature in Fort Collins with self-guided hikes, scavenger hunts, BIPOC-owned and -led businesses, music, dancing, and more! Celebrate community and nature.

- **Sat. Sept. 23, 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 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 fcgov.com/naturalareas 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 info). A natural areas map is at fcgov.com/naturalareas and at trailhead kiosks.
- 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.
- Layered Clothes and Rain Gear:** Be prepared for sudden changes in weather.
- Flashlight**
- Repair Kit:** This may include duct tape, multi-tool, etc.
- 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. (Call box in parking lot.)
- **Soapstone Prairie Natural Area** has more cell phone coverage towards the north parking lot. (Call box at gatehouse near entrance.)
- **Gateway Natural Area** never has coverage. (Call box before gatehouse upon entry.)

Check for cancellations at fcgov.com/naturalareas before you go!

NATURAL AREAS VISITOR CENTER

Fort Collins Museum of Discovery, 408 Mason Court, Fort Collins

Tues. – Sun., 10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

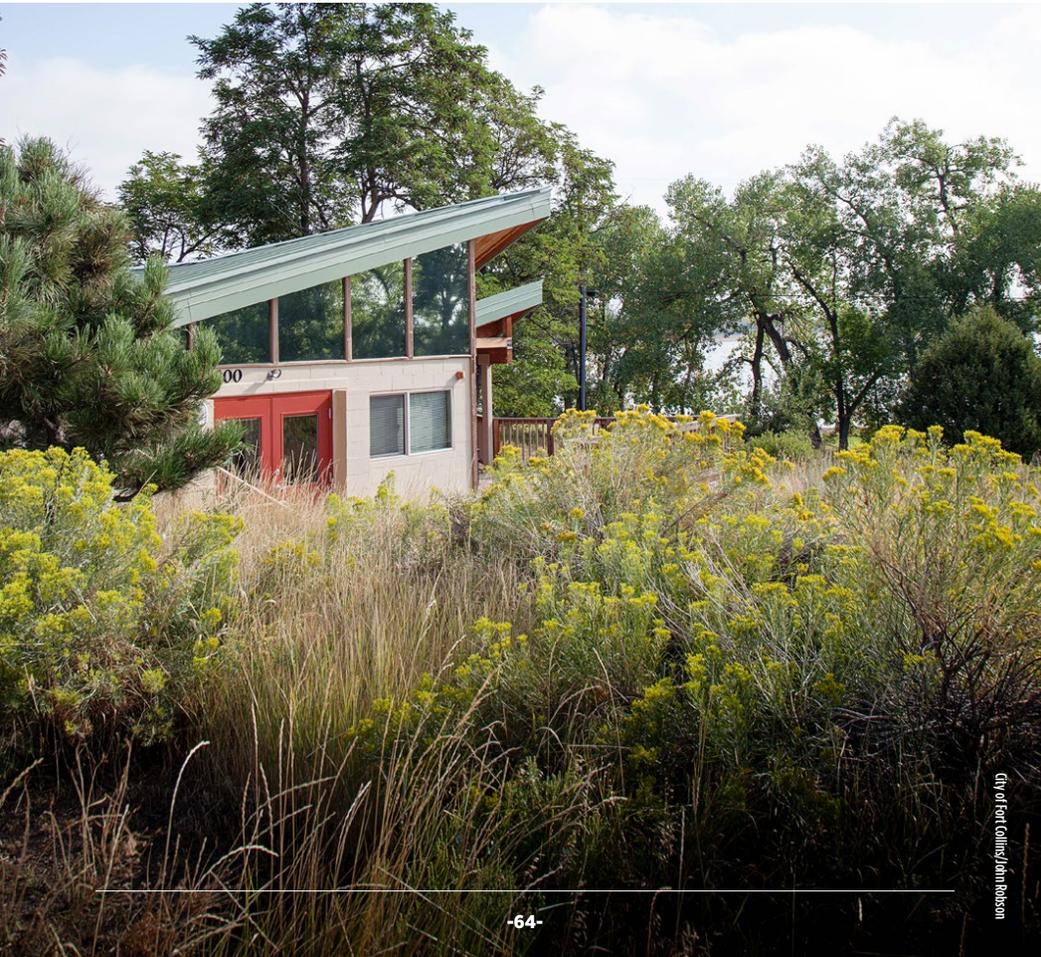
Check out the Natural Areas Visitor Center in the lobby of the museum. Play with the interactive map and watch live endangered black-footed ferrets. Pick up a map or other natural areas information while you're there. *No admission fee!*

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 feeling without sacrificing amenities like reliable WiFi, state of the art audio/visual capabilities, and a full kitchen.

Hours: Mon. – Sat. 8:00 a.m. – 10:00 p.m. Closed Sundays and holidays.

Cost: Standard Rentals: \$50 per hour. Non-profit/Government Rentals: \$30 per hour. Four-hour minimum required for all rentals. Learn more at fcgov.com/naturalareas/primrose or call 970-416-4265.



REDUCED FEE PROGRAM

Reduced fees available for income-qualified participants. Discounted passes and activities! Visit fcgov.com/reducedfee for more information.

PROGRAMA DE TARIFAS REDUCIDAS

Tarifas reducidas basadas en nivel de ingreso para participantes que reúnan los requisitos. Pase de recreación y actividades con descuento. Visite fcgov.com/reducedfee para obtener más información.

Auxiliary aids and services are available for persons with disabilities.

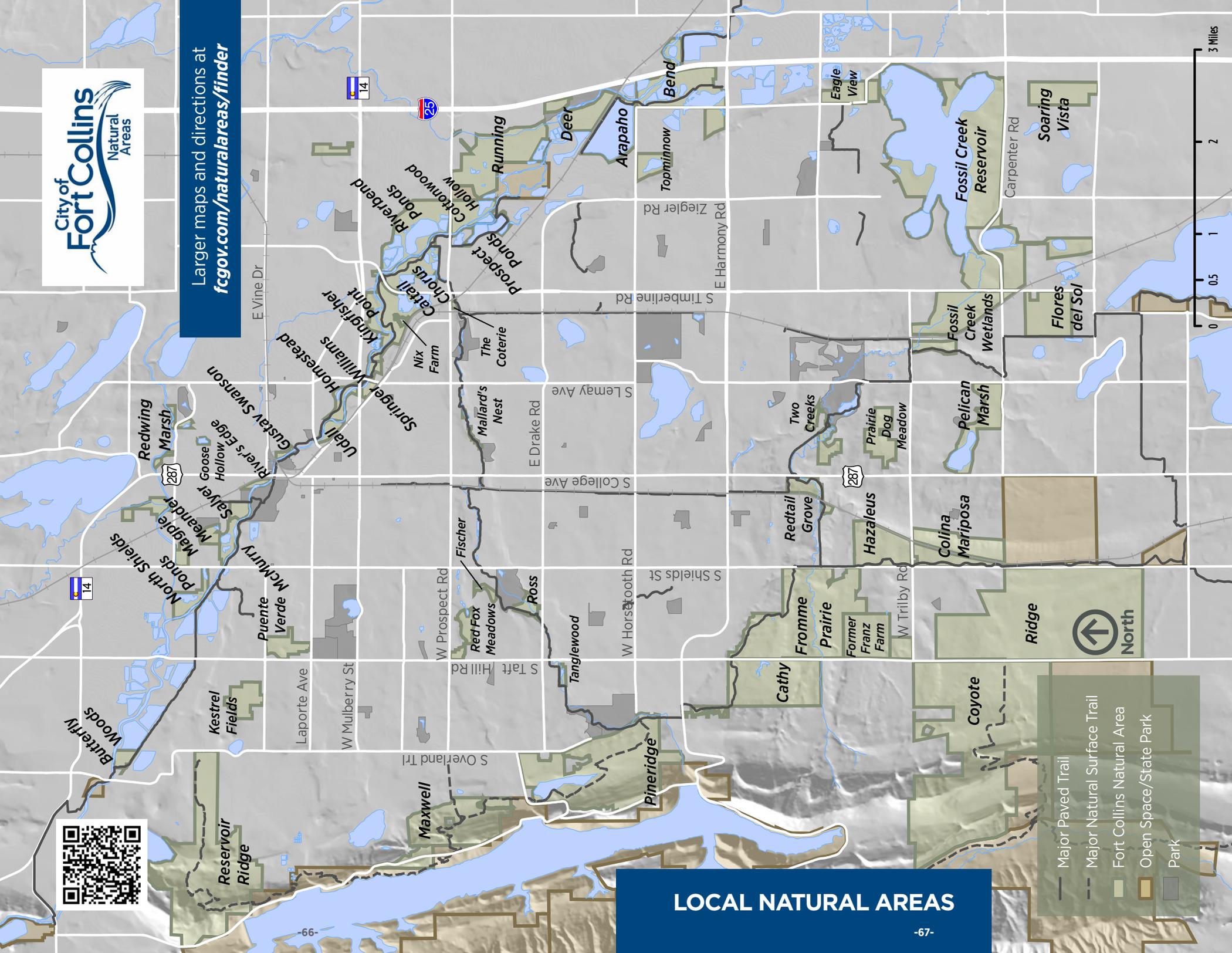
Hay ayudas y servicios auxiliares disponibles para personas con discapacidad. | 23-25200

Larger maps and directions at
fcgov.com/naturalareas/finder

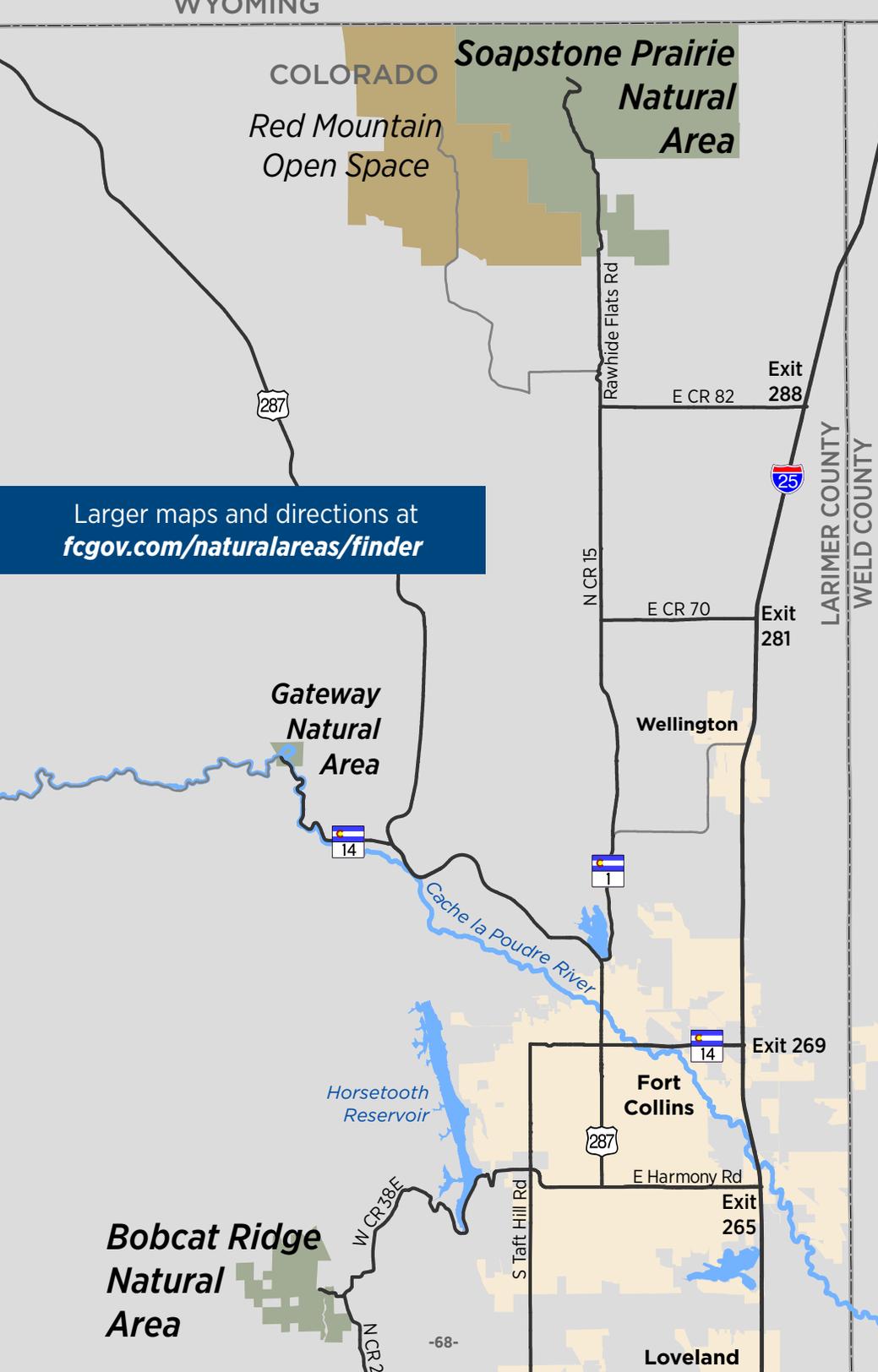


LOCAL NATURAL AREAS

- Major Paved Trail
- - - Major Natural Surface Trail
- Fort Collins Natural Area
- Open Space/State Park
- Park



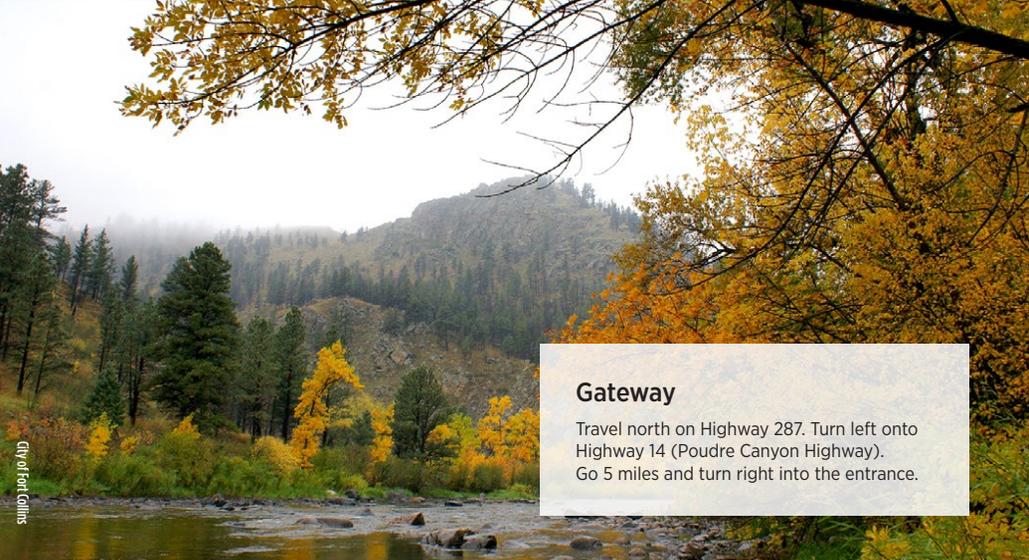
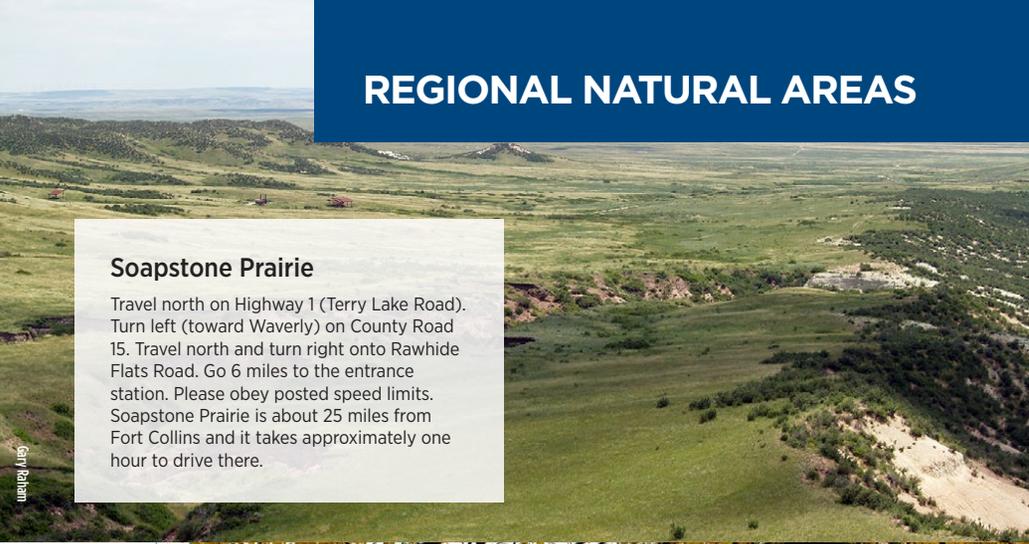
REGIONAL NATURAL AREAS



Larger maps and directions at fcgov.com/naturalareas/finder

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 it takes approximately one hour to drive there.



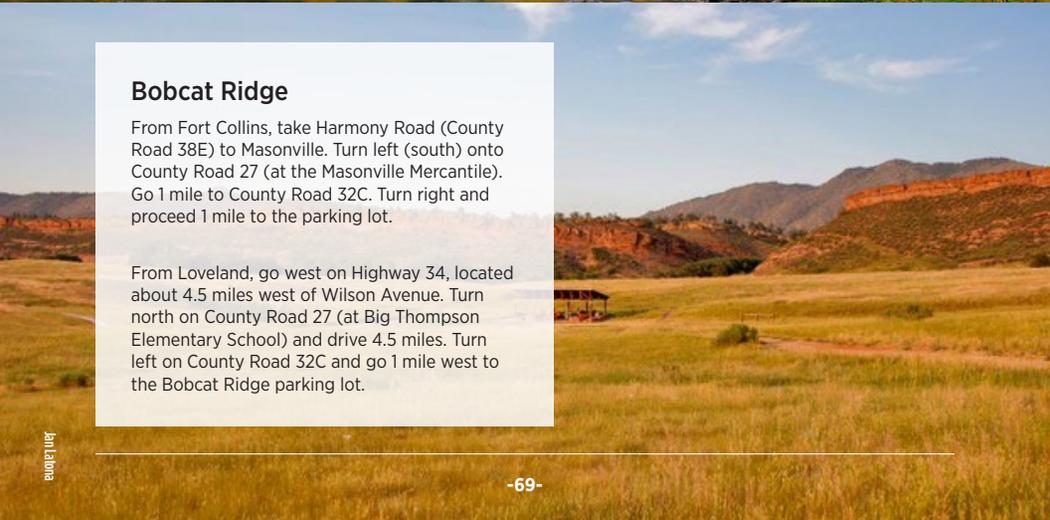
Gateway

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

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.



THANK YOU!

The activities in this booklet and the conservation and stewardship of City of Fort Collins Natural Areas are funded by Fort Collins and Larimer County voters. Your sales tax dollars conserve land and provide funds for trails, shelters, restrooms, parking lots, and educational activities. Thank you!



Natural Areas Department - **970-416-2815**
Rangers - **970-416-2147**
fcgov.com/naturalareas
naturalareas@fcgov.com

Cover photo by Charlie Sturgill



Register for activities at fcgov.com/register

