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IMAGES

The mission of the Boulder County Parks & Open Space Department is to conserve natural, cultural, and agricultural resources and provide public uses that reflect sound resource management and community values.

PHOTOGRAPHS & ILLUSTRATIONS

Cover: Cabin at Hall Ranch, *Carol Beam Conservation Awards*, *Nik Brockman*

Pods photos, *Kelsey Backiewicz*

**Uncredited photos from POS Collection*

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Volume 45, number 4



**Parks &
Open Space**

2023 Conservation Awards

On Sept. 27, the Boulder County Parks & Open Space Department held the annual Conservation Awards ceremony to celebrate the 2023 award winners for their outstanding contributions made to the conservation, preservation, and protection of land-based environmental resources. Here are highlights from the special gathering for this year's recipients:

LAND CONSERVATION AWARD

The Land Conservation Award recognizes contributions that demonstrate notable achievements in preserving Boulder County's open space lands through the sale or donation of land or conservation easements, donation of funds, or through significant activities that resulted in the preservation of open space. In April 2023, the Boulder and White Rock Ditch and Reservoir Company donated a conservation easement over the 403-acre Panama Reservoir to Wetlands America Trust, Inc., the land trust of Ducks Unlimited. The Panama Reservoir has been operated as a reservoir, with associated ditches and canals, for over 100 years. Along with its surrounding wetlands drainages and natural areas, it contributes to the ecological viability of nearby protected lands. This habitat has been designated as critical wildlife habitat and is also part of the East County Environmental Conservation Area in Boulder County's Comprehensive Plan. Its continued existence and operation are integral to preserving the significant conservation values described above. This conservation easement donation ensures that this exceptional scenic area and critical wildlife habitat will be permanently protected from future development.

ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP AWARD

The Environmental Stewardship Award recognizes contributions and activities that have made a significant impact on the conservation, preservation, and/or protection of Boulder County's land-based environmental resources through on-the-ground actions or program management. This year, Boulder County Parks & Open Space bestowed this honor twice.

Keith Owen is honored for his outstanding efforts to restore a tree nursery on his private land to native grassland. His efforts include the implementation of rotational grazing, expanding

wildlife habitat on his property, and holding conservation education events on his land for members of the community. The property is protected by a Boulder County Conservation Easement. This award recognizes the vision that Keith and his late wife Jan had for restoring the land after years of agricultural use, his ongoing excellence of his stewardship efforts to provide a rich wildlife habitat connection to surrounding protected lands, and his example of a successful, local restoration effort in Boulder County. As a result of this work, wildlife presence has steadily increased with the availability of food, shelter, and space, including wild turkeys, black bears, mountain lions, coyotes, bobcats, great horned owls, barn owls, rabbits, other small mammals, and a multitude of songbirds.

The Hepp family and the Rooney family have both given permission to allow the Northern Redbelly Dace Recovery Project to release these rare native Colorado fish back into the environment on their private properties. Multiple St. Vrain Valley students across a range of cultural backgrounds and communities have been engaged in environmental monitoring of both the fish and the pond habitats on these properties. The project started in 2019 in partnership with Boulder County Parks & Open Space, Colorado Parks & Wildlife, St. Vrain Valley School District Innovation Center, Denver Zoo, University of Colorado Boulder, and Ocean First Institute. Students raised and released redbelly dace into Rooney Pond in September 2020 and into Hepp Pond during July 2022. These families have provided invaluable contributions to environmental stewardship and outstanding educational opportunities for local students. Students, teachers, and county and state biologists continue to visit these family ponds to monitor the health and habitat of these “Tier 1 Species of Greatest Conservation Need” fish in Colorado.

OUTSTANDING VOLUNTEER AWARD

Outstanding Volunteer Award honors individuals whose leadership and support of the Parks & Open Space volunteer programs have enhanced our community partnerships and improved public service. This year, Boulder County Parks & Open Space bestowed this honor twice.

Anne Janicki has contributed to CSU Extension and Boulder County 4-H for 13 years as a parent, then volunteer. She has been the 4-H Dog Superintendent, 4-H Adult Advisory Council President, 4-H Dog Advisory Council President, 4-H Carnival Committee member, State 4-H Dog Committee Representative, and frequent Fair volunteer. Her 4-H club takes on leadership of community service projects as well as helps all kids who come to the program. 4-H is an organization focused on growing strong leaders for our future by helping our youth develop confidence, independence, leadership, and real-life skills.

Dave Millhiser is a retired mechanical engineer and one of the longest serving volunteers at Parks & Open Space. He began volunteering at the Nederland Mining Museum in 2019 and has accrued more than 300 hours of volunteer time since then. His career background, education, and interpretive ability enhance the Nederland Mining Museum experience for museum visitors. He is approachable, communicative, and genial. In addition to the assigned duties of a Museum Guide, at his own initiative, he has maintained and lubricated several working artifacts, preserving those items for the benefit of future visitors. Dave imparts visitors with a piece of fascinating knowledge they did not have when they first entered the museum. He continues to inspire, by example, other volunteers, staff, and visitors alike.



Left to right: Parks & Open Space Director Therese Glowacki, Anne Janicki, Brian Hepp, Emma Rooney, President of The Boulder and White Rock Ditch and Reservoir Company Jules Van Thuyne, Dave Millhiser, Keith Owen, and Commissioner Claire Levy.

Museum Mysteries: Behind the Scenes

One of Boulder County Parks & Open Space's goals is to protect and preserve our collective human past since open space properties hold thousands of years of human history. Over the years of numerous archaeological surveys, a diverse assortment of artifacts has been collected and is curated at the Parks & Open Space administrative building. Recent funding opportunities have allowed for a temporary archaeological collection cataloging technician to be hired to catalog and re-house the 5,000-object collection.

Under state law, the State of Colorado holds title to all historical, prehistorical, and archaeological materials collected from areas owned by the state or any of its political subdivisions. Under a trust agreement with the state, Parks & Open Space is permitted to curate these held-in-trust materials collected from open space properties.

Almost all material in the collection is of Indigenous origin and is represented through stone tools, projectile points, grinding slabs, pottery shards, and faunal remains. This material has an extensive ability to help us explore, share, and understand our history.

All archaeological material needs to be properly handled, stored, and cataloged for the immense information it holds. Think about your house in its current state if it were to stay that way for hundreds of years, what would future archaeologists find? Clothing, dirty dishes in the sink, leftover chicken bones in the trash can? All those things could give archaeologists insight into what your daily life was like. This is much the same for sites that are buried beneath our feet throughout Colorado. Even the smallest of objects that we may now consider insignificant can provide insight into how individuals lived in the past.

Museums or state-recognized repositories, like Parks & Open Space, care for their collections in many ways. Housing archaeological material typically requires preparation of different storage options by material type. For example, metal and bone do not have the same housing needs and should be separated to better preserve each material type. The size and shape of artifacts are also taken into consideration. Something too large to fit in an archival plastic bag or a box needs a special foam mount created from acid-free material to protect it from falling off the shelf where it is stored.

Preserving the physical artifacts is only one part of the curation process. The digitization of archival written materials, field paperwork, research, and photographs also needs to be taken into consideration. With the curation of these associated materials in addition to the objects themselves, digitization ensures the preservation of the context for each object and,

therefore, maintains the important meaning of what was found from each archaeological site. If an object is separated from the site where it was initially located, without the benefit of the associated written materials and photographs, it loses much of its meaning and the ability to provide useful information.

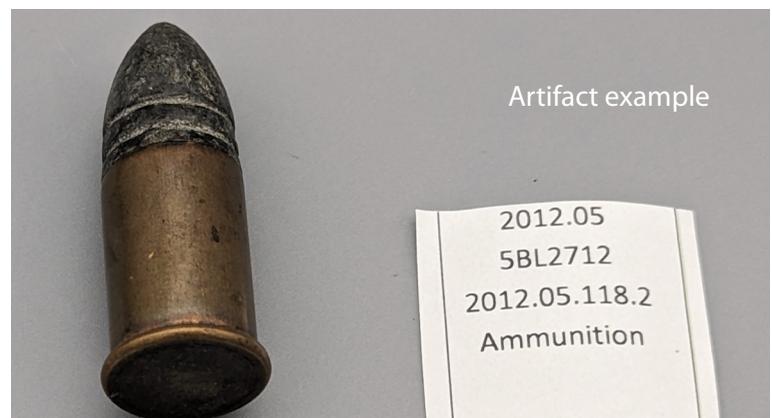
Over the past five months, I have been working as the archaeological collection cataloging technician to preserve the physical and digital data regarding the held-in-trust collection stewarded by Parks & Open Space through the proper cataloging and housing procedures discussed above.



WHY IS ALL THIS WORK IMPORTANT?

Museums and state-recognized repositories have a responsibility to care for their held-in-trust collections in perpetuity. By properly curating the held-in-trust archaeological collection at Parks & Open Space, we are providing an essential service deemed by the state as advantageous for everyone in Colorado.

As a state-approved repository, Parks & Open Space is required to make the held-in-trust collection accessible and free of charge for study by qualified students and researchers. Providing access to held-in-trust collections develops stronger connections between the descendent communities and researchers piecing together our collective past.



Perfect Pods, Spectacular Seeds

by Ann Cooper

Scientists use several technical names — pods, capsules, drupes, and such — to describe nature’s astonishing array of seed containers (fruits). But no matter their shape or how they split open to spread their contents, all these vessels serve a single purpose: to safely house and later disperse seeds to grow next season’s wildflowers.

Think about the fruits in your kitchen. They all come with seeds: the row of green peas in their pod, the cluster of black pips in an apple, the huge “stones” in peaches or avocados, the tiny pits of cherries, and even the external seeds on strawberries. Perhaps that’s a handy way of separating fruits from veggies. If it has seeds, it must be a fruit. Think cucumber, pumpkin, acorn squash, tomato — you get the drift.

Fruits in the wild are equally worth scrutiny, not with an eye to eating them, but to figuring out how they function. Once the flowers have faded away, there’s another world of plant beauty and intrigue awaiting. Fall and winter are an ideal time to have a closer look.

Milkweeds thrive in wetlands. Many insects depend on them for survival, including the increasingly rare Monarch butterfly. The globular pink flowers of showy milkweed give way to bumpy, croissant shaped pods which, when ripe, crack along one side to release a mass of parachute-borne seeds. The wonder is how so many seeds can fit in the pod. The swamp milkweed has longer, thinner, dangling pods that develop from the cluster of dark pink flowers. Both plants rely on wind to disperse their seeds.

Dogbane has paired pods, typically joined at the base, which dry and split along two sides to release seeds in the wind. The hanging pods of Rocky Mountain bee plant split to release a row of pea-like seeds. Try to guess how the seeds are flung out to germinate away from the parent plant.

There are lots of ways that seeds disperse, some are extremely tricky. Wild licorice fruits stick to passing humans and animals, traveling to who knows where, until the seeds find fertile ground. Think of this plant as using nature’s Velcro.



Rocky Mountain
bee plant

The fruits of prickly pear are juicy enough (despite the plant’s protective spines) to tempt animals to bite into them and release the copious seeds, often far away from the parent plant. If you are a small mammal, it makes sense to scurry away to eat your meal in safety!

Yucca fruits split along four seams to reveal rows of angular black seeds inside. Some are partially eaten by moths, the crucial pollinators that ensure the yucca’s survival. The rest? Perhaps the plants’ stiff stems act like giant pepper-pods as they shake in the breeze or are bumped by passing animals. What do you think?

Stork’s bill, or filaree, is easily overlookable (except by wildflower enthusiasts) with its low-to-the-ground form and miniscule pink flowers. The fruits that follow become dry enough to coil and explosively fling seeds into — one hopes — fertile ground. It might seem hit and miss, but the mechanism worked well

enough to spread this non-native into deserts and grasslands. Look for it along any trails at almost any time of year.

These are a few of the perfect pods and spectacular seeds you might find on autumn and winter walks when the bright wildflowers have long gone. They are all worth more than a passing glance!



Showy milkweed



Wild licorice

Boulder County's Winter Hideaways for Kids: Fun in the Snow

by Tatum Figone

As winter comes to Boulder County, it's time for kids and families to enjoy the snowy wonderland. Although some of the activities listed below are great for a trip to an open space, others are perfect for your backyard. Remember, any activity on open space needs to leave no trace. This season is not just about cold and frost — it's an invitation to have fun in the great outdoors. So, put on your warm coats and get ready for a world of snowflakes, laughter, and adventure.

TREASURE HUNTS IN THE SNOW:

Imagine going on a snowy adventure like the characters in a storybook. With a map or compass, kids can search for hidden treasures in the snow. Along the way, they'll discover beautiful snowflakes on leaves, icicles in hidden spots, and enjoy the peaceful snowy meadows. Every step is like a new chapter in their adventure.

SNOW ART:

In this winter wonderland, kids can become artists. They can use sticks, spray bottles, and even edible colors to create art on the snowy canvas. They'll have a blast making unique snow sculptures and adding their own colorful touches. Snow art is a great backyard activity.

LISTENING TO NATURE'S MUSIC:

Winter isn't just about snow; it's also about the sounds of nature. Kids can listen to the crunch of snow under their feet, the wind in the pine trees, and the gentle sound of snowflakes falling. It's like a special music playlist created by nature.

SNOWBALL FUN:

A fresh layer of snow is an opportunity for some snowball fun. Kids can have a snowball fight, build forts, and use their imagination to become heroes, sorcerers, or mythical creatures. It's a chance to create fun stories in the snow.

SNOWY PICNICS:

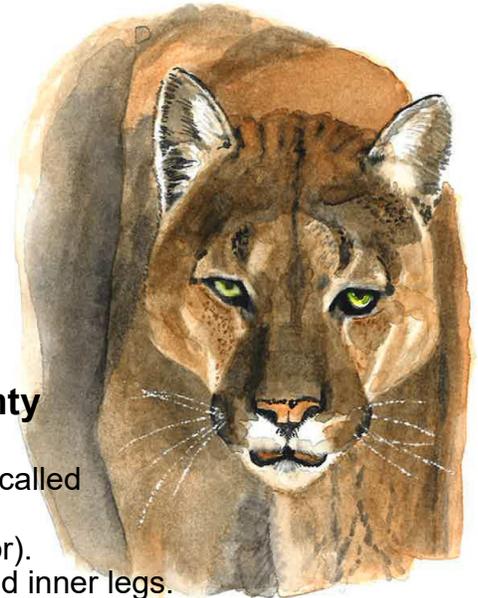
Picnics are not just for warm days. Pack some hot soup, freshly baked bread, and cocoa, and have a picnic on the snow. The laughter of your family, surrounded by snowy trees, will make this picnic a special memory.

In Boulder County, this winter season offers endless opportunities for fun. With a dash of imagination and an eagerness to embrace the season's magic, families can embark on extraordinary journeys that transform chilly days into a treasure trove of cherished memories. So, wrap yourselves in wonder, immerse in the enchantment, and let the snow-kissed playground whisk you into a world of limitless imagination.



NATURE DETECTIVES

Winter 2023



Mountain Lions — the BIG Cats of Boulder County

Mountain lions are mammals with many names — they are called cougar, puma, or panther in our region.

Their scientific name is *Puma concolor* (concolor = one color).

Their coloring is tan-light brown with whitish throat, belly, and inner legs.

The tip of the tail, around their nose, and back of their ears are black.

Their fur is short and coarse.

They are the biggest cat (and predator) in Boulder County. They vary in size and weight — they can be up to thirty inches at the shoulder. Males can weigh from 140 to as much as nearly 200 pounds, females weigh around 100 pounds. From nose to tail they can reach seven to eight feet (the tail is about the length of the body).

They are considered an apex predator, which means they are at the top of the food chain with no natural predators.

Interesting Characteristics about Mountain Lions

Mountain lions don't roar like other big cats; they chirp, growl, shriek and yes, even purr. They are crepuscular — meaning hunting in the dawn and twilight hours, and nocturnal — meaning active at night.

They are intelligent, shy and secretive; they prefer to be left alone.

Like other cats, they are curious.

They have exceptional sight, particularly beneficial for night hunting, and excellent hearing.

They can detect high frequency sounds that help them detect hidden prey.

Their sense of smell is not as good.

They are territorial — they mark their territory with urine and tree scratches.

They lead a solitary life — except during breeding time, which can be any time of the year.

They do not leave claw marks in their tracks like dogs.

They can live up to 12 years in the wild.



Where do They Live?

Over half of Colorado is suitable habitat for mountain lions — including Boulder County and the Front Range. In 2021 Colorado Parks & Wildlife estimated there are between 3,800 and 7,000 mountain lions living in Colorado, many on the western side of the state, but there are a lot in Boulder County. The foothills and mountains are prime habitat with plentiful access to prey; there are also lots of hills, rock outcroppings and shrubs that give enough cover for hiding.

Mountain lions have a huge range — not only Colorado but across North and South America. They have the widest geographical range of any living mammal (besides humans of course) in North and South America.

These big cats are very adaptable and live in many ecosystems, from mountains to forests, deserts, and wetlands. As long as they have enough territory and access to shelter and prey, they adapt.



Strong, Powerful Hunters

Mountain lions are carnivorous, meaning they are meat eaters. They can't survive on anything but meat. They need to eat large mammals in order to survive. They generally hunt elk and deer, and have been known to take moose, bighorn sheep, pronghorn, livestock, and many smaller animals in the absence of their preferred prey. As they share habitat with humans more and more, they also will go for small pets left unattended.

Mountain lions are super strong and fast. They have the largest legs proportionally in the feline family. They can run up to 50 miles per hour for short distances and can jump 19 feet straight up in the air, and leap 45 feet across land.

Mountain lions use a spot-and-stalk technique when hunting. They survey the land looking for unsuspecting prey. Exceptionally good at camouflage, they will see their prey before their prey sees them. Once they spot an animal — they begin to stalk it. They move in quietly so that they don't alarm the animal. Once close enough, they pick up speed and pounce. They don't want to waste energy and do long chases where they may tire and be unsuccessful in their hunt.

Mountain lions can consume 20-30 pounds of meat in a meal, caching their deceased prey. This means they bury it in ground litter to reduce scavenging by other animals and consume the remains over several days.



Family Life

Mountain lions breed year-round, giving birth every two years. Gestation (how long the female is pregnant before giving birth) is about 92 days, their litter size ranges from one-six, (typically they have two-three kittens), birth happens in June or July.

The young are born with blue eyes and spots; their eyes turn yellow within 16 months and the spots on their coat fade after six to nine months.

The mother leaves her young in a den (often a rock overhang or shallow cave) while she hunts to keep them safe from predators. The kittens begin to eat meat when they are around six weeks old.

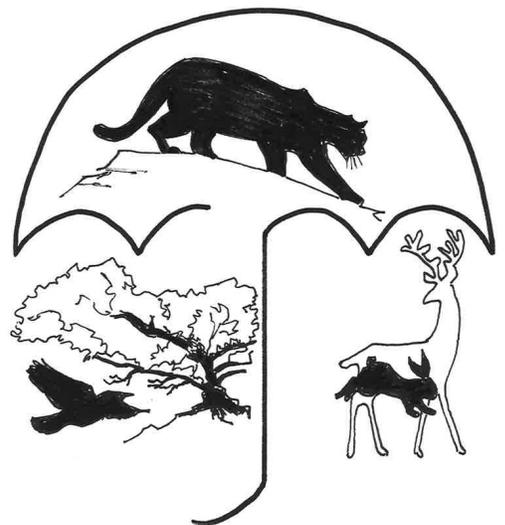
The family (mother and kittens) leaves the den after about three months, traveling together from kill to kill.

Sub-adults leave mothers in spring, between 12-18 months old, maybe as long as 26 months old. Females may stay close; males generally go further away . . . sometimes hundreds of miles away, to establish their own territory.

Umbrella Species . . . What is That?

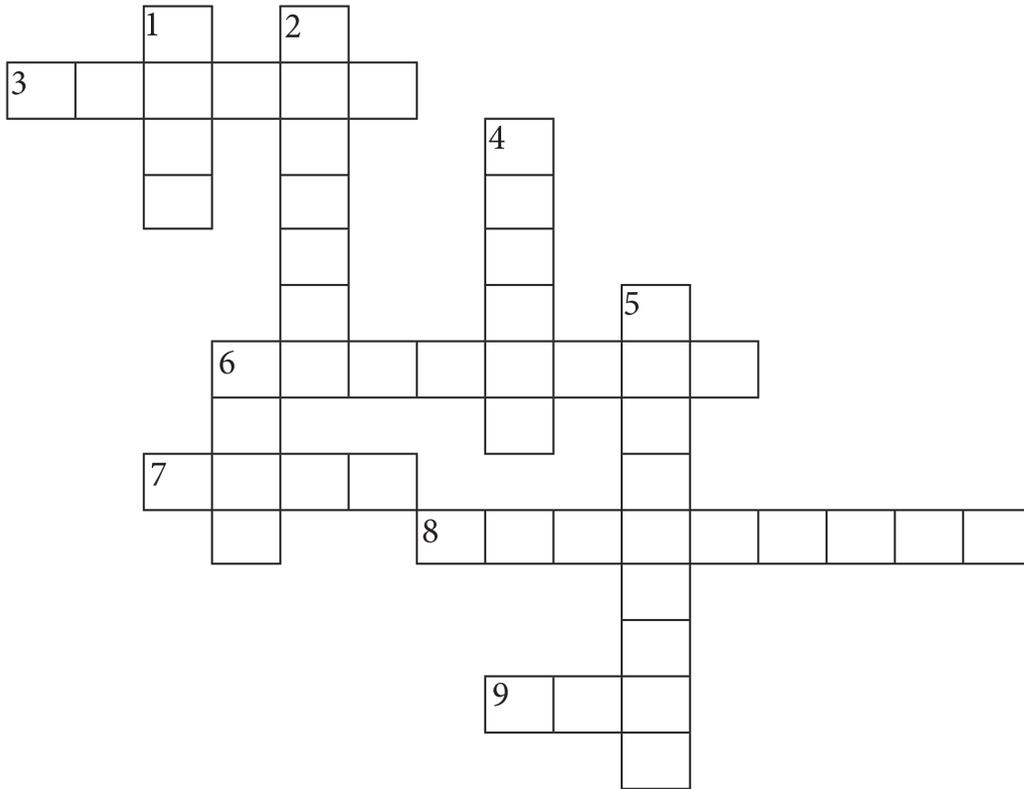
Mountain lions are considered an umbrella species. Their health as a species is dependent on large amounts of habitat. Mountain lions need about 13 times as much area as a black bear or 40 times as much as a bobcat to thrive. If there is enough prime habitat for mountain lions to thrive, this indicates many other plant and animal species that share the same habitat will be “under the umbrella” of mountain lions and will also benefit.

We may not see mountain lions very often, or ever, and that’s ok; but it’s nice to know they are out there, living their big cat lives. They are part of the balance and beauty of our wild spaces in Boulder County and beyond.



Mountain Lions in Boulder County

Use words from the article to complete the crossword puzzle below!



Across

- A name for this big cat
- This big cat is the biggest _____ in Boulder County
- An animal mountain lions hunt and eat
- People often see mountains lions here
- Where do they hide their young?

Down

- Another name, part of their scientific name
- Something else to call a mountain lion
- The class of animal mountain lions are in
- There are plenty of mountain lions here
- What is the category of animals mountain lions hunt?



Answer Key

3-cougar 1-puma
6-predator 2-panther
7-deer 4-mammal
8-foothills 5-mountains
9-den 6-prey

Text by Cindy Hutchins and Pam Sherman
Illustrations by Carol Tuttle

Riverside Ranch Open Space Cultural Resource Survey Project

by Carol Beam

On March 1, 2023, History Colorado awarded Boulder County Parks & Open Space (BCPOS) a \$24,397 grant in partnership with a \$5,000 BCPOS cash match to complete an intensive-level cultural resource survey on the 556-acre Riverside Ranch Open Space property, located at the end of Conifer Hill Rd. west of the Town of Lyons, up Colorado Highway 7.

WHAT ARE CULTURAL RESOURCES?

Cultural resources are an aspect of a cultural system that is valued by, or significantly representative of a culture that contains significant information about a culture. A cultural resource may be a tangible entity or a cultural practice. Tangible cultural resources are categorized as districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects. Archeological resources, cultural landscapes, and ethnographic resources can also be considered cultural resources.

WHY CONDUCT A CULTURAL RESOURCE SURVEY?

As good stewards of its cultural resources, BCPOS considers potential adverse effects to cultural resources prior to ground disturbance projects or other departmental activities. In the case of the Riverside Ranch Open Space, the 2024 forest-thinning project may have potential adverse effects to cultural resources. BCPOS, along with its contractor, Alpine Archaeological Consultants, completed fieldwork in July 2023 to identify any cultural resources over 50 years of age on the property in order to avoid impacts to significant cultural resources during the fuels reduction project or for any future projects, since the information can be utilized for multiple projects.

WHAT IS A CULTURAL RESOURCE SURVEY?

A cultural resource survey is a project that is a combination of fieldwork and post-fieldwork reporting to identify and evaluate all cultural resources over 50 years of age in a specific project area, like Riverside Ranch Open Space.

RIVERSIDE RANCH CULTURAL RESOURCE SURVEY FIELDWORK

The fieldwork for the Riverside Ranch project consisted of a team of two archaeologists walking systematic transects across

the entire property, that is safe to walk, to identify and document any cultural resources on the surface that follow the Colorado Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation's cultural resource survey manual guidelines and also meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Archaeology and Historic Preservation. Fieldwork was completed on July 25, 2023. The fieldwork documented two historic sites that are identified as a historic homestead ruin and a mine site. Several isolated finds include a 1912 General Land Office survey marker and a small concentration of historic metal cans manufactured between 1880-1920.

RIVERSIDE RANCH OPEN SPACE SHORT HISTORY

Boulder County acquired the Riverside Ranch property in 1990 from its owner and property developer, Bill Stasick, as a regulatory requirement for county approval for the then proposed Mountain Ridge subdivision located at Nelson Rd. and Highway 36. That subdivision has since been constructed. The transfer deal stripped all 15 development rights off the Riverside Ranch property and transferred them to the Mountain Ridge subdivision. At the time of the transfer, then Parks & Open Space Director, Carolyn Holmberg, stated in a *Boulder Daily Camera* article that the property it was receiving "has tremendous value as a wildlife habitat." This transfer of development rights was one of the first major land deals to take place that utilized the then newly created county regulation that allowed for the transfer of development rights from one property to another.

HISTORY COLORADO CERTIFIED LOCAL GOVERNMENT GRANT FUNDS

The U.S. Department of Interior's Historic Preservation Fund Program provides funding for a portion of the operation of Colorado's State Historic Preservation Office that resides within History Colorado. The National Park Service specifies that at least 10 percent of these funds be subgranted to Certified Local Governments (CLGs), like Boulder County, through the competitive CLG subgrant grant program. Currently, there are 67 CLGs across Colorado.

Calendar of Events

Registration is required unless otherwise noted. All ages welcome unless otherwise noted. Children must be accompanied by an adult.
NO PETS, PLEASE!



THE WONDER OF WINTER PROGRAM

Thursday, Dec. 14, 2-3:30 p.m. Louisville Public Library, 951 Spruce St., Louisville. Space is limited.

Winter is a great time to explore the natural wonders of Boulder County! Join volunteer naturalists to learn about the many wonders of winter and how plants and animals adapt to snow and cold, from the Great Plains to the Continental Divide. Register on the Louisville Public Library website. boco.org/WonderofWinterProgram



WINTER SOLSTICE AT THE PRESERVE

Thursday, Dec. 21, 1-3 p.m.

Ron Stewart Preserve at Rabbit Mountain (RSP@RM)

Explore one of Boulder County's wildlife preserves during the shortest day of the year. Join us for a moderate 2.5-mile hike along the foothills and learn about the rich biodiversity of RSP@RM and what makes this place a suitable home for many species of plants and animals. Naturalists will share how these species are affected by the solstice and short days.

SUBNEVEAN WILDLIFE: A WORLD BENEATH THE SNOW

Monday, Jan. 8, 12-2:30 p.m.

Bald Mountain Scenic Area

For Ages 8 and Up

Come and explore the fascinating world of subnivean wildlife, the creatures that live beneath the snow in the winter. Learn about the amazing adaptations that allow these animals to survive in such a harsh environment. Discover how they find food and shelter and how they stay warm in the cold winter months. Through fun and interactive activities, your family will learn all about these amazing creatures and the world they inhabit.

WINTERING BIRDS OF BOULDER COUNTY

Wednesday, Jan. 17, 6-7:30 p.m.

Parks & Open Space Building, 5201 St. Vrain, Longmont

When the temperature drops and the snow settles in, what birds stick around and call Boulder County home? The bird species that reside in the area during the winter face risky challenges and have adapted unique behaviors and physiology that help them meet these challenges and survive.

WINTER ECOLOGY HIKE

Sunday, Jan. 21, 10 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

Mud Lake

Winter is a time of magic and wonder for us, but it's also a time of great change and adaptation for plants and animals. How do all the plants and animals survive? Join us for an easy, 3-mile hike around the lake as we explore the complex relationships among different species and the elements they live in during the winter. Discover how winter ecology plays a vital role in the life cycle of many animals and plants that call Boulder County home.

SNOW! FAMILY PROGRAM

Saturday, Feb. 3, 10 a.m.-noon

Meyer's Gulch Trail at Walker Ranch

For Ages 5 and Up

Let's get to "snow" winter a little better. We know snow can be fun, wet, cold, and sometimes even dangerous. We'll dive into the different types of snow, snow layers, and learn who depends on the snow in the Colorado Rockies. And we'll make sure to learn ways to stay safe in the snow and cold as well.

BIRDS OF PREY SLIDESHOW PROGRAM

Tuesday, Feb. 6, 6-7:30 p.m.

Parks & Open Space Building, 5201 St. Vrain, Longmont

Learn to recognize birds of prey, including hawks, eagles, falcons, and owls in the skies above Boulder County during this indoor slide program. Tips will be shared on how to distinguish among different raptors by identifying field marks, behavior, location, and time of year.



Calendar of Events

EXPLORANDO EL INVIERNO EN LAS MONTAÑAS

sábado, 10 de febrero, 11 a.m.-1:30 p.m.

Caribou Ranch

Aprenda cómo los animales silvestres se adaptan al invierno en las montañas. Nuestros naturalistas dirigirán esta caminata para explorar y aprender sobre las diferentes estrategias de invierno empleadas por los animales y plantas silvestres que viven durante todo el año en ecosistemas montanos y alpinos. Caminaremos unas 3 millas y disfrutaremos de un desayuno en grupo en el bosque magnífico de Caribou Ranch.

WINTER ADAPTATIONS HIKE

Sunday, Feb. 11, 10 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

Heil Valley Ranch Main Trailhead

Are you a snoozer, mover, or groover? Learn about the adaptations that animals employ to survive the freezing winters. Some snooze the winter away in their dens, some make the treacherous trip to warmer weather, and some find their groove and tough it out. Join us for a fun 3-mile hike through the foothills of Boulder and learn more about these adaptations and which animals are snoozers, movers or groovers!

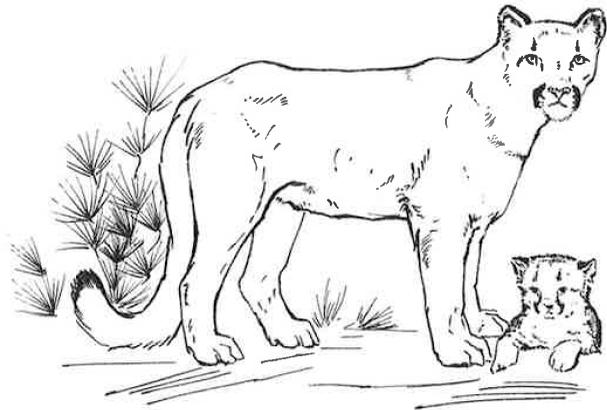


A FOOTHILLS WINTER

Wednesday, Feb. 14, 2-4 p.m.

Betasso Preserve

The foothills are a dynamic ecosystem that transforms in the winter. As the snow falls and the temperatures drop, plants and animals must adapt to survive in the harsh conditions. Join us for a moderate 4-mile hike in the foothills as we look for signs of wildlife and learn about the food chain changes in the winter and unique challenges and opportunities that this season brings. From the majestic elk to the tiny least chipmunk, winter in the foothills is a testament to the resilience of life.



NATURE DETECTIVES IN THE FIELD: MOUNTAIN LIONS POUNCE!

Tuesday, Feb. 20, 12-2:30 p.m.

Hall Ranch

Mountain lions are one of the most fascinating and iconic animals of North America. These powerful predators are known for their grace, agility, and strength. Discover the mountain lions' habitat, diet, and behavior. Explore the unique adaptations that allow them to thrive in the rugged Rocky Mountains. Learn about the important role that mountain lions play in the ecosystem through fun and interactive activities.

Winter Heritage Day at Walker Ranch Homestead

Sunday, Jan. 28, 1-3 p.m.

Walker Ranch Homestead, 7701 Flagstaff Rd., approx. seven miles west of Boulder

What did pioneer settlers do in the winter? Talk with costumed volunteers as they demonstrate late 1800s ranch tasks. You will also be invited to do some chores and play historical games. Free and fun for all ages. Be prepared for cold, windy weather and to walk in snow. Registration not required. No pets or bikes, please. Contact Sheryl Kippen at skippen@bouldercounty.gov or 303-776-8848 for more information.



HIKES FOR SENIORS

Join volunteer naturalists for a moderate hike to explore and learn about the unique geology, history, plants, and wildlife of these beautiful properties. *Groups are encouraged to join!*

WINTER AT THE PONDS

Wednesday, Dec. 27, 1-3 p.m. Pella Crossing

Take a comfortable walk around the ponds this winter and learn more about the flora and fauna that live in the area.

THE PERFECT PAIR

Thursday, Jan. 25, 1-3 p.m.

Carolyn Holmberg Preserve at Rock Creek Farm

Join us for a leisurely walk and afternoon full of observing our resident Bald Eagle nesting pair. Learn about the Bald Eagles of Boulder County and their life cycle.

A FEATHERY WINTER

Wednesday, Feb. 28, 1-3 p.m. Lagerman Reservoir

Open water can be a refuge for many bird species in the winter and early spring. Join us as we walk around one of Boulder County's birding hot spots looking for the open land raptors and winter residents.

BIRDS OF PREY DRIVING TOURS



Near Longmont. Location provided when registering.

Hop in your car with friends and family and join us for a driving tour of some of Boulder County's best areas to view birds of prey. Follow the tour map to designated stops with volunteer naturalist and search the skies for raptors, learn about their habitat and behavior, and work on your observation and identification skills. Space is limited.

Driving tour dates:

- Saturday Dec. 16, 9 a.m.-noon
- Saturday Jan. 6, 9 a.m.-noon
- Saturday Jan. 20, 9 a.m.-noon
- Saturday Jan. 27, 9 a.m.-noon
- Saturday Feb. 10, 9 a.m.-noon
- Saturday Feb. 24, 9 a.m.-noon

Volunteer Ranger Corps Now Recruiting

Members of the Volunteer Ranger Corps hike, bike, or ride a horse at Boulder County's most scenic open spaces while providing park visitors with information about cultural and natural history, recreational opportunities, facilities, and regulations. With additional training and approval, volunteers can hike the trails with their dog to help share information with other dog owners on the trail. Volunteers must be at least 18 or older. For more information and an application, go to boco.org/VolunteerRangerCorps.



Be Prepared for Winter Weather

Make sure you have:

- Waterproof coat, hat, and additional layers
- Fully charged cell phone
- Extra food and water
- Sun protection
- Flashlight or headlamp

Bring supplies for your pet:

- Food, water, layers, and booties

Have in your car:

- Emergency kit, including snow shovel and jumper cables

Plan ahead:

- Visit www.BoulderCountyOpenSpace.org for more information, including trail closures, park maps, and regulations.

Call 303-441-4444 for non-emergency dispatch.

- Keep this number in your contacts

WINTER HOURS

Agricultural Heritage Center



8348 Ute Highway 66, west of Longmont
Open 10 a.m.-5 p.m. the first Saturday of each month
November through March

Come to the farm and learn about the rich agricultural history of Boulder County. The farm includes two barns with interactive exhibits, a milk house, blacksmith shop, and a furnished 1909 farmhouse.

Contact Jim Drew at jdrew@bouldercounty.gov or 303-776-8688 for more information.

Call for 2024 Research Projects

Each year we award small grants for research and biological inventories on Boulder County open space lands. These research projects and inventories provide valuable data to monitor management practices and improve resources and park visitor experiences. We are accepting proposals for grants up to \$10,000 per project. The deadline for proposals is Jan. 16, 2024. Department staff have identified 19 priority needs, including these four topics, but all proposals are considered:

- A lab study manipulating cold stratification periods for various native species requiring long, cold stratification periods and/or from different elevational gradients and implications for long-term success in the face of climate change.
- Estimate seasonal and annual visitation to Boulder County's regional trails (Coal Creek, Rock Creek, and LoBo Trails.)
- How does cheatgrass affect wildfire or prescribed fire behavior?
- How much power could a solar panel array produce and how big would it have to be to offset the cost of the energy used by a center pivot? Also, can we create a habitat beneath the solar panel arrays for wildlife and what would that look like?

Visit the department's website at boco.org/research for a full listing of research topics and proposal guidelines.

Sharing Snowy Trails

The air is cold and crisp. Snowflakes flutter gracefully to the ground, and trails are blanketed with snow. We know you are eager to strap on that new pair of snowshoes, head out to your local trail, and enjoy the crunch of snow beneath your feet. Follow these simple guidelines, communicate with your fellow visitors, and help reduce conflict on the trails in winter.

ETIQUETTE ON SNOWY TRAILS:

- Snowshoers yield to cross-country skiers.
- Whenever possible, snowshoe along the edge of the trail and avoid walking on ski tracks. This may require you to travel single file.
- Before passing another visitor, slow down, politely call out, and pass with care.
- Similarly, if you need a break, step off to the side so as to not block the trail.
- Where to go: consider visiting the Walker Ranch Meyers Homestead Trail, or Mud Lake and Caribou Ranch Open Space — all are great destinations for winter recreation.



Trail Closures & Detours

CRADLEBOARD TRAIL:

At the Stearns Lake trailhead, the Cradleboard Trail detour protects the territorial bald eagles during breeding season. October to February is a critical timeframe for pair bonding and courtship prior to egg-laying in February-March.

Bald eagles prefer nesting near open water where they can feed their offspring with a steady supply of fish, though bald eagles also hunt prairie dogs at the open space property.

The detour will remain in place until the nesting status of the bald eagle pair is clearly confirmed for the 2023/2024 breeding season. The department also has "keep moving" (no stopping) zones along the Mary Miller Trail. Learn more at boco.org/chp.

COALTON:

The Coalton Trailhead, Coalton Trail, and the Meadowlark Trail will be closed Oct. 9 until early 2024 for trail construction and cattle grazing. Learn more at boco.org/coalton.

WALDEN PONDS:

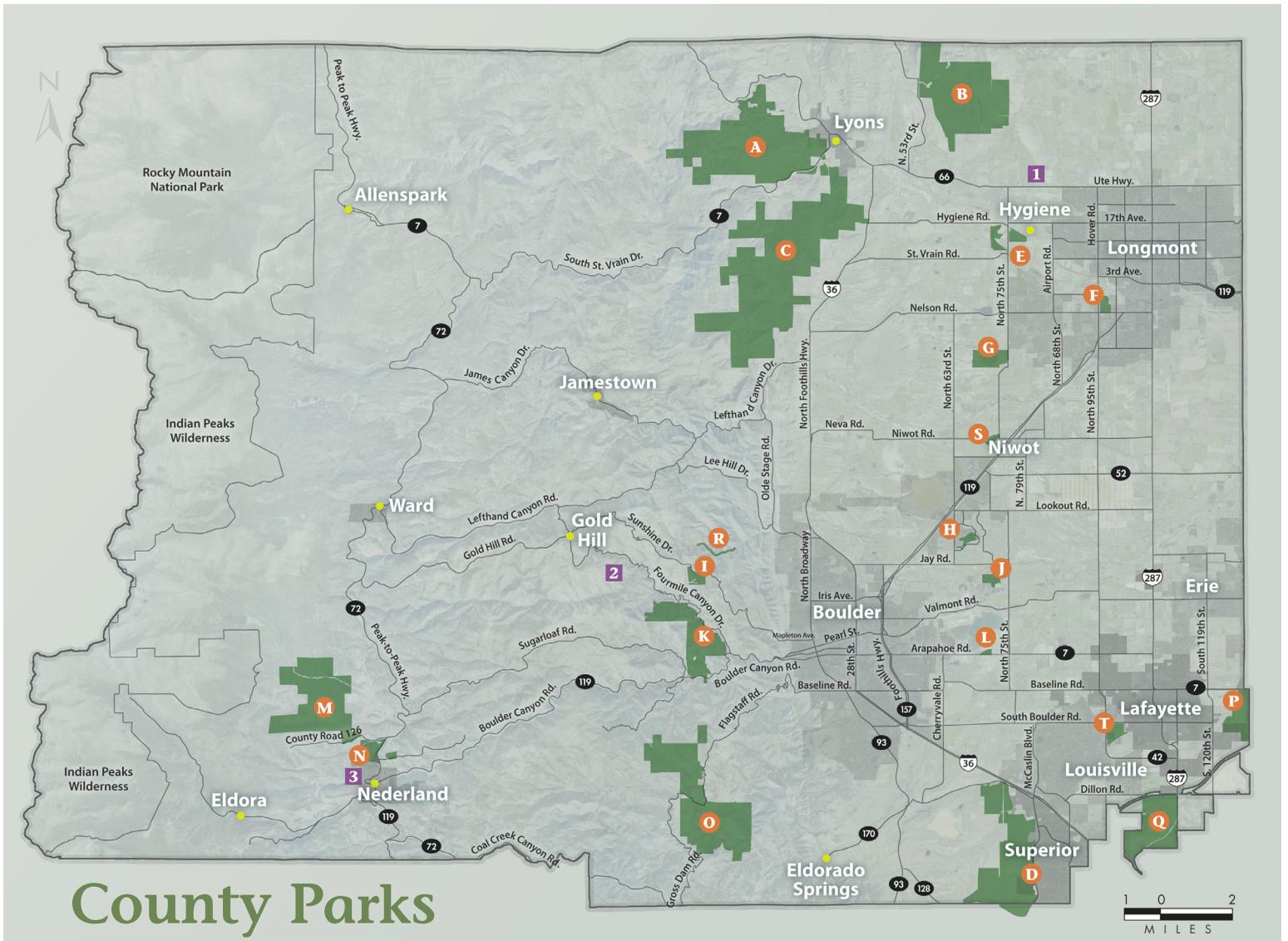
Trails west of Heatherwood Walden Link and west of the boardwalk on Cottonwood Marsh, including the trail around Duck Pond, will be closed Oct. 2 – March 15 because of the City of Boulder's Main Sewer Improvements Project. Learn more at boco.org/walden.



Parks & Open Space

5201 St. Vrain Road, Longmont, CO 80503

www.BoulderCountyOpenSpace.org



County Parks

- | | | | |
|--|--|---|--|
| A Hall Ranch | F Boulder County Fairgrounds | L Legion Park | R Anne U. White |
| B Ron Stewart Preserve at Rabbit Mountain | G Lagerman Reservoir | M Caribou Ranch | S Dodd Lake |
| C Heil Valley Ranch | H Twin Lakes | N Mud Lake | T Harney Lastoka |
| D Coalton Trailhead | I Bald Mountain Scenic Area | O Walker Ranch | 1 Agricultural Heritage Center |
| E Pella Crossing | J Walden Ponds Wildlife Habitat | P Flagg Park | 2 James F. Bailey Assay Office Museum |
| | K Betasso Preserve | Q Carolyn Holmberg Preserve at Rock Creek Farm | 3 Nederland Mining Museum |