

# *images*

OF BOULDER COUNTY PARKS AND OPEN SPACE



*winter 2012-13*

# Artist-in-Residence Testimonial

by Gregory Hill

(barn-dweller from August 21-27, 2012)

## Images

volume 34, number 4

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

**COVER PHOTO:** Douglas fir in winter at Betasso Preserve.

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I have never much appreciated mountains.

My feelings almost certainly began at age three when my family, on a trip near Estes Park, took an off-road joy ride with a crazed bearded man in a jeep. The memories of this event are hazy, but what I do recall involves cackling laughter and boulders. I spent the entire journey curled into a fetal position while I bounced up and down in a metal compartment that may have been a tool box.

Also, I grew up on the Great Plains of eastern Colorado, which inspired two more reasons to not care for the mountains:

1) I am accustomed to open spaces. I want to see the sun rise and set against an actual horizon. I want to watch the clouds come in on a summer afternoon. I want to see the billows of an approaching dust storm. I want to see the posse in time for me to escape with the loot.

2) Everybody in the world thinks Colorado is one gigantic mountain. It is not. As a plainsman, I am angry about being left out.

So, then, why did I apply for the 2012 Artist in Residence at Boulder County? I liked the picture of the barn on the website.

When I arrived, I had no intention of leaving the barn. It was red, secure, and the accommodations were commodious. Sarah, the park ranger, showed me how to survive here. She warned me not to use the microwave and the stove top at the same time as that would trip the breaker on the solar-powered batteries. She showed me the workings of the propane-heated shower and the propane-cooled refrigerator. I would live in this barn for a week.

"Here," I said to myself, "is the place where I will finish my next novel. I will not leave this barn until it is complete."

As Sarah was departing, she pointed to the vast meadow to the west of the barn and said, "If you get up early, you may see elk grazing in that meadow." I would not wake up early. This week was my chance to sleep in. Then Sarah mentioned something about a recent bull moose sighting. Apparently bull moose are aggressive. I promised to stay out of trouble. We said goodbye.

I settled in to the barn. I looked out the window, gazed at the glorious hills around me, and suddenly recalled a book I'd read about homicidal mountain lions in Boulder County.

Elk? Bull moose? Mountain lions? There were bears out there, too, I was sure. Let them keep their mountains and meadows. I wouldn't be leaving the barn. I had a book to write.

The first day, I hid inside the barn and read what I'd written of my new book so far. I'd been working on it for eight months. It was at four hundred pages with no sign of an ending. The book had two potential titles: The Bloated Follow-Up or The Sophomore Slump. Or I could condense them into one: The Bloated Sophomore Slump.

As I read, people hiked around the barn. Apparently, there was a hiking loop out there. A trail. I felt less isolated than I anticipated. I should have read the instructions. There were signs warning people that an Artist was working in the barn. Please do not disturb the Artist. I was safe.

After two hundred pages of vigorous reading, I attempted an afternoon nap. I was awoken by a pounding sound. I raised my head to see a woman peering in the window. I pretended to be asleep and she went away. I woke up and read the remaining two hundred pages. I liked it. It would be worth finishing.

By the time the sun set, I had literally not left the barn except to walk the twelve steps to and from the outhouse. A nicely equipped outhouse. Hot water and a septic system.



Before I went to bed, I walked to the outhouse to brush my teeth. The bears, the mountain lions, the bull moose all lurked in that giant, dark meadow. The stars were clear. I did not look upward. I've seen clear stars. I just wanted to survive the walk to the bathroom. With much shouting ("Bears beware!" "Lions begone!"), I managed to safely tread the twenty four steps of the round trip.

That night, I had a dream within a dream that involved a bear with the head of a bull moose and the legs of a mountain lion. It was not comforting.

At six am, I awoke with that desperate need to pee that only occurs when you're sleeping in an unfamiliar barn. I opened the door, ready to sprint to the outhouse. Elk. At least ten of them were grazing in the meadow. Elk are big. I walked slowly. The Elk did not attack.

When I returned to the barn, I commenced to writing. I wrote well. I grew comfortable with the hikers who wandered around the loop. Most of them didn't even realize I was there. I had the windows open and could hear some of them chatting. It's a universal fact: When siblings hike, they talk about what to do about their parents.

I'm accustomed to writing in short stretches, two days a week. I measure my progress in the number of words I write. At home, in Denver, I typically manage about two thousand words per week. In the barn, I'd written two thousand words by the middle of the afternoon. I deserved a break. But what to do? I took a deep breath, exited the barn, and went for a walk around the path. It was nicer than I expected. I enjoyed the exercise.

I saw a guy without a shirt. I thought he was nuts. You're asking for skin cancer, pal. I saw a guy without shoes. I thought he was insane. You're asking for sore feet, buddy.

I returned to the barn and wrote another 2,000 words. That's two weeks of work in one day. Not bad.

I slept well that night.

Day number two began with a six a.m. welcome to the elk in the meadow. I took a hike. I wrote five thousand words. I took another hike.

By the third day, today, I was hiking morning and night. Any time I got stuck on a passage, I went right out the door. I chatted with the rocks, and understood the web of life. I actually thought, "Oh, web of life. We are one. The fluidity of nature is clear to me now." I saw more elk, three critters that looked like wild chickens, and lots and lots of scat. The mountains were my home and I loved them.

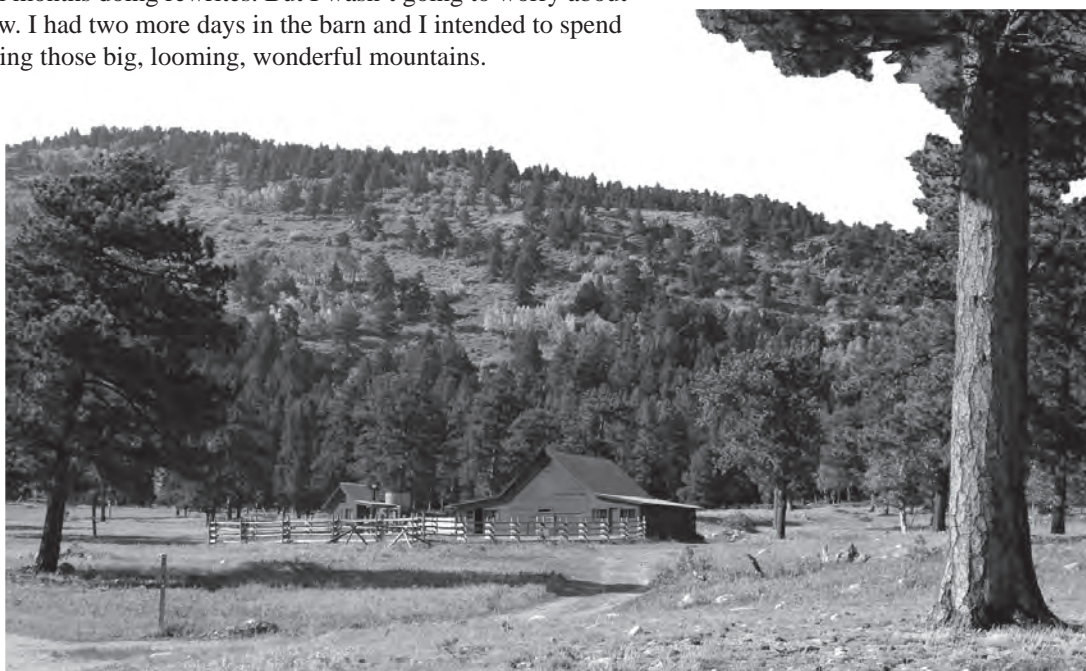
By the fourth day, I had taken to walking shoeless and shirtless. This was my loop, my meadow and I would hike as I pleased.

I wrote like mad, marching around the barn, waving my hands, doing all the stuff that you imagine novelists do, right down to the wild cackling whenever I managed to resolve a ridiculous plot device. The characters argued and I shoved them and made them do what I wanted and everything made perfect sense. I had never concentrated this well for this long in my life.

And then, on the afternoon of the fifth day of my seven-day stay, I finished my novel. In total, I wrote twenty thousand words—that's ten weeks of work in five days. More importantly, they were good words. The Bloated Sophomore Slump earned a new title: The Luckiest Man in the World. Completing a novel is a grand experience. It's pure ego joy. I feel, at least for a while, like I've done something Important and Wonderful. Eventually, that feeling dissipates as I accept that I'm going to have to spend several months doing rewrites. But I wasn't going to worry about that yet. At least not now. I had two more days in the barn and I intended to spend every last minute enjoying those big, looming, wonderful mountains.

*NOTE: The online application for the 2013 Artist-in-Residence Program can be found on the department's webpage at [www.BoulderCountyOpenSpace.org](http://www.BoulderCountyOpenSpace.org)*

*The residence at Caribou Ranch Open Space.*



# The Question of Relocation

by David Hoerath

There's the story of the homeowner that calls in to the Division of Parks and Wildlife and reports, "There is a bear in my backyard." The Division personnel respond with, "I just got off the phone with a bear that said 'There is a house in my front yard.'" So who is right? It is increasingly more difficult for wildlife to fit into our developing sub/urban society. We put homes and roads into new areas that are already wildlife habitat, and we create new habitat inside our living spaces. Wildlife have legs and wings, don't read signs, and can jump fences—so they don't always stay where you think they should, or where you want them. Habitat is habitat, whether it is a mountain meadow or your tasty, smooth green backyard with a big shady tree to nest in or lie under. Most landowners have some tolerance for the presence of wildlife, but draw a line somewhere. When critters cross that line, wildlife professionals, often the Division of Parks and Wildlife, are sometimes tasked with moving an animal that is in "the wrong place at the wrong time."

## Prevention Is Key

Sometimes wildlife truly becomes a nuisance to homeowners, rural and urban alike. Animals nest, den, roost, or burrow in unwanted places and create unsavory smells by their presence or waste. They also raid gardens, compost boxes, fruit trees, and beehives, munch down landscaping and tear up lawns. And some animals are just too big and scary (and perhaps dangerous) to have around homes, trails, and neighborhoods.

The key in these circumstances is prevention. Can landowners do things to make their property less attractive or unattainable? Wildlife professionals and Extension agents give advice to those who encounter problems to help solve their current problem and so they might avert future ones. Boulder County's Wildlife Master's Program is a cadre of volunteers that know the in's and out's of wildlife problems. Their internet site is [www.extension.colostate.edu/boulder/acreage](http://www.extension.colostate.edu/boulder/acreage).



But there are still situations where animals must be moved. Perhaps the most common species to be moved or removed is a raccoon. They find their way into attics, chimneys, outbuildings, old cars, etc. Some landowners trap and move them (it is legal to move raccoons in Colorado without a permit or a license to a site up to two miles distant if you have permission from the receiving site landowner and notify the CPW). Some landowners call a pest control agent to address the problem. Landowners are also allowed to kill some nuisance wildlife (beavers, raccoons, pocket gophers, prairie dogs, coyotes and bobcats) to protect private property. Other species that are commonly moved

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The decision to move an animal depends on many factors. Human safety is always first, but the safety of the animal is usually next.

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include rabbits and squirrels, both of which can be trapped and moved to a site up to 10 miles distant – with the same requirements: permission and notification. Open Space however is not a receiving site for unwanted or problem animals. The wildlife already there don't need the competition, disease, parasites, or predator that gets dumped off!

Those kinds of relocations usually don't make the news. Two relocations that were very much in the news this past summer were the "Falling Bear" on the CU campus and the moose in the skate park pool outside Nederland! The bear was in the center of the university and officials decided to move it. Many times, bear situations in urban areas result in waiting out the bear (usually in a tree) and letting it move on its own. The bear on campus was darted, fell asleep from the tranquilizer, fell out of the tree, and was immortalized in a photo. This bear was taken miles out of town, yet returned to the area within 10 days, and was killed when struck by a car on US-36 near Louisville.

The juvenile moose was startled and got into the pool, but couldn't get out of the smooth-sided thing. Since the animal had no apparent drastic injuries, it was decided to just get him out. Wildlife officers used a tranquilizer dart to anesthetize the animal, wrapped it in a tarp, and then winched it out of the pool.

## Tranquilizing: The Perfect Mix

The science of tranquilizing animals is fraught with dangers and uncertainty. The key is to administer the correct dosage. That requires a good estimate of the weight of the animal – which is not easy to calculate for very large animals like moose, elk or bears. That dosage has to be enough to knock out the animal, but not so deeply that it might die. The dosage needs to keep the animal down long enough to work the animal without compromising the safety of the people handling it. They generally take measurements, blood or tissue samples, check and administer first aid, and fit the animal with a radio collar or tag it.





*Opposite page:*

*Rangers and wildlife biologists tend the first cougar to go in the study from Parks and Open Space at Heil Valley Ranch. The animal was not moved, just added to the study. Heil Valley Ranch was part of his home range.*

*This page, clockwise:*

- A moose that was moved out of Boulder in 2003.
- This rattlesnake was moved away from a gate at Heil Valley Ranch for visitor safety.
- A trap set up by Colorado Parks and Wildlife to capture a cougar seen in Louisville in 2006.

Conditions around the site need to be controlled and safe – not just for the time to work and move the animal, but also for it to come out from under the influence of the tranquilizer. Some animals are placed in the shade or sun if they need to be kept cool or warmed up, but some animals (heavy ones or dangerous ones) are often left right where they get tranquilized. Often, animals will get up from the experience and wobble off like drunken sailors until they find a place to “sleep it off.” The skate park moose did not survive the experience due to one or a combination of factors: stress from being unable to exit the pool, being tranquilized, hot conditions, drug, and/or dosage.

One animal that did survive its experience was the hibernating bear found in the boiler room of a cottage near the Mapleton Center at the western edge of Boulder. This bear was not tranquilized, likely due to poor chances for success using drugs in the frigid temperatures. It was awakened and shooed away, hopefully to find another den on the outskirts of town.

## Relocation Considerations

So you see, the decision to move an animal depends on many factors. Human safety is always first, but the safety of the animal is usually next. Most critters can tolerate being moved into strange surroundings, but with some territorial animals like cougars it can be dangerous with fatal consequences. Living space and access to scarce resources are sometimes at a premium, and are defended. Luckily enough, most large animals are capable of moving large distances to find their way, just like juveniles of the species when forced to leave their mothers. Everyone has to eventually make their own way. It's no different in the animal kingdom—and it's not easy.



## Get Involved: Time for the Christmas Bird Count

The 113th Christmas Bird Count season has begun. As the longest running citizen science survey in the world, the Christmas Bird Count provides critical data on population trends.

What birds are in town for the holidays? Help us find them—contact the Boulder County Audubon Society ([www.boulderaudubon.org](http://www.boulderaudubon.org)) so they can help you find a compatible group on Sunday, December 16th! All are welcome, even those who think they know little about bird species.

Also, if your home is within the boundaries of a Count Circle, you can stay home and report the birds that visit your feeder once you have arranged to do so with the Audubon Society.

Data from over 2,000 circles are entered after the count and are available to query in the National Audubon's website in January.

Contact Bill Schmoker at [bill.schmoker@gmail.com](mailto:bill.schmoker@gmail.com).

# National Public Lands Day

by Craig Sommers and Fletcher Jacobs



*Volunteers improve trails at Hall Ranch on National Public Lands Day*

National Public Lands Day (NPLD) is the nation's largest, single-day volunteer event for public lands. It began in 1994 with 700 volunteers at three sites. The first year proved to be such a big success that it became a yearly tradition. NPLD continues to grow every year and is typically held on the last Saturday in September.

Since the first NPLD, the event has grown by leaps and bounds. In 2012, about 175,000 volunteers worked at 2,206 sites. Projects were held in every state, the District of Columbia and in many U.S. territories. 2012 was the biggest NPLD in the history of the event and a great deal was accomplished.

Volunteers across the country collected an estimated 23,000 pounds of invasive plants; built, restored and maintained an estimated 1,500 miles of trails; planted more than 100,000 trees, shrubs and other native plants; removed approximately 500 tons of trash from parks, trails and other open spaces and contributed \$18 million through volunteer services to improve public lands. There were eight federal agencies as well as nonprofit organizations and state, regional and local governments that participated in the annual day of caring for public lands.

NPLD is important because it educates Americans about the environment and natural resources. It also raises awareness about the need for shared stewardship of these valued and irreplaceable lands. NPLD builds partnerships between the public sector and the local community based upon mutual interests in the enhancement and restoration of America's public lands as well as Boulder County's open spaces. Lastly, NPLD improves public lands for outdoor recreation, with volunteers assisting land managers in hands-on work.

## Local Participation

Boulder County Parks and Open Space has participated in National Public Lands Day in some capacity since its inception in 1994. In the last five years, projects have varied and have been quite successful. Not only do volunteers get the satisfac-

tion of contributing to the environment and community they love and live in, but a lot of work gets done too!

In 2008, volunteers built slash piles at Reynolds Ranch and collected native seed at Mud Lake. In 2009, volunteers restored social trails and built slash piles at Reynolds Ranch. In 2010, volunteers helped construct the Benjamin Loop trail at Betasso Preserve. Last year, volunteers removed an old barbed wire fence and restored a trail at Betasso Preserve. This year was the largest National Public Lands Day yet, and we are proud to have been a part of it.

In 2012, the Boulder County Parks and Open Space Department had a trail re-route project at Hall Ranch Open Space where 44 volunteers constructed 1,500 feet of a new trail and reseeded 300 feet of an old social trail off of the Nighthawk Trail.

This project gave volunteers a peek of a newly acquired property, Hall II, where the morning activities were held. Volunteers started arriving before 8 a.m. on a beautiful sunny, crisp fall morning. They were greeted with breakfast burritos and then were shuttled to the work site on the back side of Hall Ranch. Boulder County partnered with the Boulder Mountain Bike Alliance (BMA); those volunteers helped as volunteer crew leaders and technical advisors. The department often partners with BMA to meet common goals to have mountain bike friendly trails. Not only did the volunteers accomplish quite a bit of work, it was a beautiful day and a good time was had by all.

## National Public Lands Day 20th Anniversary

In 2013, National Public Lands Day will be held on Saturday, September 28. Help to celebrate two decades of public land volunteerism by participating in the 20th anniversary! It is a great way to get involved, see your open spaces, get some exercise and give back in a way that will preserve our precious land and the open spaces we love and value so much.



# Growing Up On a Farm

by Shirley Hollingsworth

Have you ever wondered about the origin of farmers or what it was like to grow up on a farm? I grew up on a farm in Wiggins, Colorado (65 miles east of Denver on I-76) with three brothers and two sisters. My father was a German-Russian immigrant who came over as a young child with his parents in 1912 to work as farm laborers. My grandparents had signed a contract to work on a farm in Illinois, and after five years, they had saved enough money to move to Colorado and buy a farm, receiving a loan from the bank. They settled in Wiggins because a large concentration of German-Russian immigrants who spoke German lived there. This was important to my grandparents because they had not learned to speak English. My grandparents farmed for 30 years and then sold the farm and retired to Longmont. My parents leased a farm until they had saved enough money to buy their own farm.

## Early Memories of the Farm

Growing up on the farm, I remember my parents discussing the Great Western Sugar Company and the need to hire migrant farm workers. Then one spring, a group of migrant farm workers arrived on our farm to work the sugar beets from early May through late August. My parents used the term “bracero” for these men but I never understood what that meant. All I knew was that these men couldn’t speak English and dressed differently than my family. They worked six days a week from dusk to dawn. On Saturday night they dressed up and my dad took them to town. I asked my dad why he took them to town and he told me the migrant workers wanted to play cards, dance, and socialize with people who could speak their language. Then on Sunday, my father took them to church. After 1964, my parents no longer used the term “bracero,” but discussed whether to use Mexican Nationals or “wetbacks.” When the wetbacks arrived, I kept looking at them to see if their backs were wet, but they weren’t, so I didn’t know why they were called that (I was only a child). My parents hired the wetbacks for two years and then hired Mexican National families. Once again when the families arrived, I wondered why my parents called the workers “nationals” because they didn’t look different from the other workers except they brought their children with them. I remember my parents hired the same family year after year until the 1980s, when migrant farm workers were no longer needed because machinery could do the thinning and weeding.

## Significance of the Migrant Farm Workers

Today I understand what my parents had discussed regarding our farm workers because I was given the task of researching and writing an interpretation panel on migrant farm housing. In 1909, Colorado dominated the sugar beet industry in the United States and needed farm workers to tend and harvest the beets, but there was a labor shortage. The Great Western Sugar Beet Company recruited German-Russians because they were experienced farm workers. However, usually after four to six years, these German-Russians had saved their money and received a loan from a bank to purchase a farm of their own. Then Great Western needed another source of labor and recruited Japanese workers, but they formed associations and bought their own farms as well. Now it was 1917, and Mexico’s Revolution was over with nine million people living in poverty without jobs, so Great Western recruited Mexican workers. Ten percent of the Mexican population migrated to the United States for jobs until 1930 when the U.S. Government stopped Mexican immigration due to the Depression. Responding to another labor shortage during World War II, U.S. and Mexico created the Bracero Program in 1942. The Mexican government recruited men from remote, rural villages and negotiated their contracts. These men were called braceros, which means “strong arm,” the

term used in Mexico for manual farm laborers. Once hired, the men began the long journey to Colorado and 33 other states, relying on the farmers for housing, food, and medical care. When the program ended in 1964, over 4.6 million contracts had been fulfilled. Following the termination of the Bracero Program, farmers formed labor associations that hired wetbacks, who were illegal migrant farm workers hired by the farmers because they accepted lower wages. The U.S. government stopped the hiring of wetbacks by fining farmers who hired them. Farmers then contracted legally with families. Many of the braceros and families returned home after their contracts expired but later emigrated to the U.S.

## Current Life in Wiggins

When I visit my brothers who still farm in Wiggins, I see some of the families that worked for my father. One day recently, I took my mother to the doctor and the nurse was one of the migrant children that had worked for my father. Growing up on the farm, I never dreamed that these workers

would become an important part of our community.



*After the Bracero Program ended, families were brought to Colorado to work in the fields, living in the same quarters that the braceros had occupied.*

# Turtles

by Francesca Giongo

The common snapping turtle and the western painted turtle are the two most common turtles in Boulder County. Turtles and tortoises are reptiles belonging to the order *Chelonia*. They have hard, protective shells made of bones covered by plates called scutes. The shell's top is called the carapace, and the bottom is the plastron. These two turtles have many things in common. They both live at elevations below 6,000 feet in shallow ponds, lakes or streams, preferring slow-moving water. The sex of their hatchlings is determined by the temperature during incubation: lower temperatures produce mostly males, higher temperatures, mostly females. In our climate, both species spend the winter hibernating.

## Snapping Turtles

The common snapping turtle (*Chelydra serpentina*) is a large freshwater turtle. It has a ridged carapace, a muscular build, and a highly mobile head and neck—the word “serpentina” means “snake-like.” Adult snappers can be up to 20 inches long (not including head and tail) and weigh 10 to 35 pounds. These turtles have evolved the ability to snap because unlike other turtles, they are too large to hide in their own shells when confronted. Out of the water they can be quite aggressive, snapping and hissing while standing on all fours and rocking back and forth. They also produce a very unpleasant odor.

Largely nocturnal, snapping turtles spend most of their time underwater, lying on the bottom. They often bury themselves in mud in shallow water with only their eyes showing. Their nostrils are positioned on the very tip of the snout, effectively working as snorkels.

One third of the snapping turtle's diet is plants, the rest is animal matter. They are important aquatic scavengers, but also active hunters that prey on anything they can swallow, including many invertebrates, fish, frogs, reptiles, birds and bird eggs, and small mammals. Small prey is swallowed whole and large prey is torn to pieces with their large, powerful jaws and sharp claws.



## The Painted Turtle

The painted turtle is the most widespread native turtle of North America. The subspecies found in Colorado, the western painted turtle (*Chrysemys picta bellii*), is the largest and it has a distinct red pattern on its plastron and around the border of the carapace.

The adult painted turtle female is four to 10 inches long; the male is smaller. The turtle's carapace is smooth and oval without a ridge on the top. The carapace's color varies from olive to black, allowing the turtle to blend in with its surroundings. The turtle's skin is also olive to black with red, orange, or yellow stripes on its extremities. All these colors are what give this turtle its name.

Painted turtles eat aquatic vegetation, algae, and small water creatures including insects, crustaceans, and fish. When actively hunting, this turtle quickly juts its head in and out of vegetation to stir potential victims out into the open water, where it gives chase. In early summer, 60 percent of its diet comprises insects. In late summer, 55 percent includes plants.

Painted turtles are active only during the day, when they bask for hours on logs or rocks with their necks and legs stretched out and their toes spread wide apart. Basking allows their body to produce vitamins and helps to kill fungi. They alternate cycles of basking and foraging throughout the day, dropping to the bottom of the water at night to sleep.

Both turtles will travel extensively overland to reach new habitat or to lay eggs. The instinct to lay is so strong, that females would cross highways to get to their favored nesting grounds. They mate from April through November, but the peak laying season is in June and July. The female can hold sperm for several seasons. This allows individuals to mate at any time of the year, and it also allows females to lay eggs every season without needing to mate. A single clutch may have multiple fathers. After digging a hole, a female snapper typically deposits 25 to 80 eggs, a western painted turtle two to 11, covering them with sand for incubation and protection.

When temperatures start to drop in the fall, the turtles become less and less active, until they go into hibernation, generally by the end of October. They bury themselves at the bottom of ponds, and undergo fascinating physiological changes during hibernation. Their body temperature can drop to only a few degrees above freezing, much lower than that of most animals that hibernate. Their blood changes to function like antifreeze in cars. They stop breathing, although may get some oxygen through their skin. The painted turtle in particular is one of the best-studied vertebrates able to survive long periods without oxygen through adaptations of its blood chemistry, brain, heart, and shell.





# NATURE DETECTIVES

Winter 2012



## Bison Are Not Boring

When you view a bunch of bison grazing beyond a ranch fence, they look pretty much like big, shaggy, lumpy cattle. But looks are deceiving.

Bison are rugged, untamed survivors. 10,000 years ago, bison and their enemies the gray wolves survived when bigger animals, the mastodons, woolly mammoths, saber-toothed cats and dire wolves, died out. Just 200 years ago, 30,000,000 bison roamed the vast Great Plains, including Colorado's grasslands. Now, wolves are gone from here and bison live on ranches. Although these days Colorado bison are livestock, they retain a lot of wild spunk.

Pull Out and Save

Regular cattle fencing is easily pushed over by bison bulls. Each bull can weigh a ton (2000 pounds!). Even the females weigh half a ton. A bull can jump six feet from the bottom of a gully onto higher ground and land on all four hooves. Ranchers must build their bison fences 8 feet tall. Bulls can broad jump 14 feet over objects on the ground so an 8 foot wide cattle guard in a roadway is a mere hop. And, bison can run faster than 30 miles per hour.

With ancient survival instincts, today's bison cows and bulls still fight grizzly bears and gray wolves in Yellowstone National Park. Bison bulls engage in tough battles with other strong bulls to see who gets to father new calves in the herd. In a cloud of dust, they paw the dirt, whirl and charge each other. Their bellowing and roaring sounds can be heard miles away.

## Bison or Buffalo



As with many animals and plants in North America, early explorers from Europe gave bison a name and it stuck. Although American bison aren't true buffalo (those are in

Asia and Africa), buffalo is a cool-sounding name and lots of people use it.

CU's mascot just wouldn't sound the same called Ralphie the Bison. CU sports teams are unlikely to be nicknamed the "Bises" instead of the Buffs.



## Winter Survivors

Bison are well equipped to deal with the worst that winter can bring. The grasses and other plants that bison eat become increasingly scarce over the winter. Luckily, bison need less food in winter. Bison use their heavy heads to push away snow so they can graze on the brown grasses beneath.

Bison have 10x more hair than cattle and shorter eyelashes that don't collect ice. Unlike cattle, bison face into blizzards so winds don't drive them into drifts where they could suffocate as cattle sometimes do. Little body heat is lost through their double-layer winter coat of hair, and snow lies on top of the long outer guard hairs without melting.

It is a struggle for bison to travel through deep snow so wolves can become a bigger threat. But soon it will be spring and the herd will enjoy tender new plants and comfortable days.

## Spring Brings New Life

Nutritious spring grasses grow fast. Bison eat, rest, and eat lots more to replace fat lost over the winter. As they graze, they swallow without chewing. While they rest, they bring up wads of grass from the front part of their stomachs and chew and chew. After re-swallowing, the vegetation moves on to the main part of the stomach to finish digestion.

Calves are born in this season of good grass. Newborns struggle to stand up in a few short minutes. Within an hour, after their first milk meal, the frisky calves are ready to move with the herd.

Calves depend on the safety of being part of the herd for protection from wolves and bad weather. Instinctively they will follow anything big so moms have to keep close track. If they do get separated, their grunting calls will bring mom and calf back together. Moms and babies recognize each other by smell.

## Summer Changes

At three months, calves taste their first grass and by six months, they no longer need any milk from their moms. At six months, young bulls are spending most of their time with other bull calves, but daughters stick closer to their moms for a year or two or until they have their first calf. All the calves practice chasing and butting each other. Soft buds on their heads will become future horns.

The mature bulls have wandered and grazed alone or in all-male groups since last fall. Now they rejoin the herd of cows and calves in hopes of fathering some of the calves to be born next spring.



## Wallows

Bison use their horns and hooves to dig up the prairie sod. The sun-baked soil churned by horns and hooves turns to powdery dust. That is just the way bison like it. The big shaggy animals roll and roll in these wallows to cover themselves with dust. Dust fends off biting insects and may help bison keep cool in summer. Bison also roll in the dirt mounds at the top of prairie dog tunnels.



## The Fight is On

When the bulls start competing to be dads, they wallow a lot. They even urinate in the wallow and roll in the urine-soaked dirt. It makes them smell tough and look strong to other bulls.

The bulls stomp toward each other making grunting sounds with every step. Dust spills from long hair on their legs and chins and beard. The swaying hair on their legs accents their grand size. Weaker bulls will retreat without a fight. Challengers will butt heads and horns. Long hair cushions their foreheads and often gets sheared off between ramming horns. Hair and dust fly through the air as the bulls clash.

Bulls try to dig their horns into the side of an opponent, but bison are built big and heavy over their front legs and slender over their rear legs. This shape allows them to spin around on their front feet to quickly maneuver against the attack of wolves and grizzlies. Bulls use this same ability to turn quickly to protect their flanks and keep their strong heads and horns toward their opponents.



## Fall Food Frenzy

As soon as mating season is over in early fall, the bulls' long hairs on their beards and front legs fall out. It is a signal to stop fighting and focus on eating. Cows, bulls and calves try to put on as much body fat as possible to help them get through the winter of scarce food, cold temperatures and strong winds.

**In Colorado bison once wandered seasonally from the plains to the mountains. They prospered in great herds despite drought, fire, wolves and blizzards.**



### “Buffalo-birds” **Never** Nest – It Makes Sense

Brown-headed **cowbirds** evolved as “buffalo birds,” hopping around at the feet of bison herds to eat the bugs that leaped away from bison hooves. They lay their eggs in the nests of other kinds of birds. A grazing bison herd travels miles every day. Cowbirds could not tend nests miles away from their food. They bet their babies' futures on the willingness of other birds to raise baby cowbirds as their own.

## Bison Doom

For generations, Native American tribes hunted bison on foot and later on horseback. Spears were replaced with bows and arrows and finally guns. Bison supplied the tribes with most of their food and almost everything else they needed. Nearly every part of the bison was used. Tribes who depended most on the bison lived in tents. Tent (tipi) camps were easy to move as the people followed the migrating herds.

Eventually roads and train tracks were built on trails that the millions of bison had worn in the grasses over years of grazing and migrating across the Great Plains. Visitors came by train to marvel at the vast herds. Others came with guns and considered it sport to kill as many bison as possible. Men shot bison by the thousands to make money from selling just the hides. The bison meat was left to rot.

Some people wanted all bison gone to force the Arapaho, the Cheyenne and other tribes to go away and live on reservations. The great herds went from millions of animals to scarce groups scattered in remote areas. **Bison were almost extinct.** A few people captured bison calves to start small herds. They guessed that again some day, all people would value seeing bison herds run wild.

### Match Some Bison Parts to a Few Tribal Uses

- 1 Hide with hair on it
- 2 Hoof
- 3 Tiny thin bones
- 4 Hide without hair
- 5 Dried bison manure (chips)
- 6 Stomach
- 7 Rib bones
- 8 Sinew (muscle fibers)
- 9 Bison hair
- 10 Horns

- A Sewing needles
- B Burned for fuel
- C Cooking pot
- D Clothes or tipi cover
- E Sewing thread or bow strings
- F Paint brushes or rope
- G Tipi floor or blanket or robe
- H Spoons or cups
- I Runners on kids' sleds
- J Glue



Good read aloud: THE RETURN OF  
THE BUFFALOES by Paul Goble

1 G, 2 J, 3 A, 4 D, 5 B, 6 C, 7 I, 8 E, 9 F, 10 H

Answers to Matching Game:



# The Great Depression: Era of Teamwork for Boulder County Parks

by Christina Papastathis

The Great Depression hit the nation hard, and Boulder County was no exception. The drought devastated agriculture, real estate plummeted, and local banks failed. In the summer of 1930, Boulder's Chautauqua Park was at its lowest visitor numbers in its history. The facilities were in shambles and the trails in disrepair. Performers couldn't use the park for a profitable venue and cancelled shows. Morale was low nationwide and every community pulled together in their own way to find hope, relief and shelter in dark times. Many communities closed their doors to out of work migrant workers posting signs such as, "Jobless Men. Keep Going. We can't take care of our own." Boulder found their community spirit in the parks, recreation, and natural beauty of the county.

Boulder's unemployment rate was 25 percent, the agriculture was devastated after the droughts, and thousands of young men were reaching adulthood with no work prospects in sight. In 1929 and 1930, a few areas began their own emergency relief programs to preserve some of our greatest resources—our young men and our land. In Boulder, relief efforts began at the city level.

In 1931, Rudolph Johnson, the City of Boulder Welfare Director, headed a work relief committee and raised \$10,465. With this funding, the city employed 498 young men to work on improvements of city and park grounds. The group constructed the recreation park on the north side of Boulder Creek between 9th and 11th streets. The park contained a lighted softball field, two tennis courts, three horseshoe lanes and a playground. In addition to the park, they built the Loop Road and parking area on top of Flagstaff Mountain.

In July of 1933, the first Federal Work Relief program arrived in Boulder County, otherwise known as the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC). The Civilian Conservation Corps crew called themselves Woodpeckers. They were young men between the ages of 18 and 25, skilled and unskilled. In return for their service they received hearty meals, warm shelters and uniforms. Their pay rate was a dollar a day, of which they kept eight dollars with the remaining 22 dollars sent home to their families. For the cost of materials and 125 dollars per month, Boulder had two CCC camps of approximately 400 men in the Boulder area who built park structures, created trails, and repaired roads. They burned trees infected with the Black Hills beetle, planted new trees, built rock dams, and built miles of fire lines. Their accomplishments include the construction of the Sunrise Circle Amphitheater, the Panorama Park Halfway House, and the Green Mountain Lodge. They built and repaired roads and bridges such as Chapman Drive, the Enchanted Mesa Bridge over Bluebell Creek, and extensive improvements to the Flagstaff Road. The Corps also created many miles of our most popular hiking trails, such as the Flagstaff Trail, the trail from Realization (sometimes called Inspiration) Point to the Morse Well, the Royal Arch Trail, and the Bluebell-Baird Trail. For

considerable portions of the mountain parks we enjoy today, we have the CCC to thank.

Local climbing clubs contributed to the creation and maintenance of trails. The clubs formed a committee, called the UCHC, which improved the Bear Peak and Mesa Trails. As the eyes and ears of local climbing areas, hikers, bikers and climbers have proven to be stewards of the land and trails and have worked closely with governments to ensure the preservation of the public spaces.

Civic organizations have always been deeply involved in our parks and recreational areas. The Lion's Club in particular, has played a large role in the development and improvements for the area. They constructed the Boulder Day nursery in 1930. In 1933, the same club built the Flagstaff Summit Shelter House using private funds donated by two honorary members, William H. and John A. McKenna. The Grand Army of the Republic erected the flagpole on top of Flagstaff Mountain and the Daughters of the American Revolution installed a bronze plaque in Buckingham Park. Community organizations have left lasting imprints on our parks and their history can be read on trail benches, plaques and buildings throughout Boulder County.

The CCC program was terminated in 1942, the Works Progress Administration (WPA) withdrew their funding of the recreation center and programs at the start of WWII, but Boulder County and its citizens have remained committed to the preservation of our parks and recreation areas. The creeks, mountains, and plains offer an unrivalled quality of life.

City, county, state and federal governments continue to combine their efforts to support and maintain our parks. Civic clubs and organizations spearhead efforts to build, repair and maintain our parks and trails. Boulder County residents have always made conservation, preservation and public land use a priority—before the depression, during the depression, and continue to do so today.



Participants in the Civilian Conservation Corps worked on Chapman Drive, west of Boulder.

## Boulder County Partners Celebrate Four Years of Service

by Karen Imbierowicz

How do we love our partners? Let us count the ways. On a snowy Thursday evening in October at the Boulder Museum of Contemporary Art, Boulder County partners celebrated the completion of their fourth year of caring for our public parks and trails. Since 2009, businesses and organizations have been dedicated to volunteering once, twice or more each year and participating in a variety of construction, maintenance, and restoration projects on our properties.

During this year's partnership event, representatives from the Boulder Mountainbike Alliance and the Boulder Climbing Community recognized staff member Andy Tyler for his dedication working with volunteer groups, creativity in identifying projects, and overcoming obstacles resulting in projects that greatly improve trails and recreation areas.

The University of Colorado's Program for Writing and Rhetoric is a new partner. A professor from that program spoke about the strong influence staff member Craig Sommers had on her students. She spoke of one student who was exceptionally moved by her experience on a clean-up project. When this student went to New York City for the summer, she marched into Mayor Bloomberg's office and insisted she work on the sustainability task force. She secured a summer job with the Mayor's office, and when she returned to CU this fall, she changed her major to Environmental Studies.

A volunteer coordinator with our partner, Singletrack Mountain Bike Adventures, spoke about how her young members who participated in trail maintenance projects often correct their parents should they use a trail inappropriately. Because these young mountain bike enthusiasts have volunteered their sweat and muscle to caring for our trail system, they are becoming a new generation of stewards of our land.



*Partners from Merck helped prepare an agricultural area for grazing. They cleared enough rock to fill an entire roll-off.*

Also celebrated at the annual partnership event was the 2012 County's Land Conservation Awards winner of the Partner of the Year, Amgen Pharmaceutical. Each year the department holds Land Conservation Awards and recognizes groups and individuals who have made outstanding contributions to the conservation, preservation and protection of land-based environmental resources. SmartWool, Partner of the Year in 2011, was the recipient of the Governor's Service Awards, outstanding small business, receiving recognition for their outstanding contribution to volunteerism, community service and civic engagement.

### Partners: The Details

We have three types of partners who help us care for trails and properties. Trail Stewardship teams that help us with trail maintenance and construction two or more times a year, include: Backpacker Magazine, Boulder Area Trails Coalition, Boulder County Horse Association, Boulder Mountainbike Alliance, Boulder Trail Runners, Redstone Cyclery, Singletrack Mountain Bike Adventures and Vecchios Biccliteria. Property Stewardship teams perform various tasks on properties or trails two or more times a year and include: Amgen, Boulder Climbing Community, CU – Program for Writing and Rhetoric, Eldorado K-8, Geocachers, Level 3, Naropa Institute ROOTS, SmartWool, Volunteers for Outdoors Colorado and Wildland Restoration Volunteers. Foothills teams are committed to at least one group volunteer, trail or property project each year. They are: Alpha Phi Omega Gamma, Best Buy, Boy Scouts of Boulder County, Corden Pharma, Colorado Youth Program, CU Boulder MBA Leeds, Defenders of Wildlife, Environmental Chemical Corporation, Foothills United Way, Heritage Middle School, Key Equipment Finance, Mapleton School District, Merck Pharmaceutical, New Vista High School, Niwot Community Association, Platts, Qualcomm, Stratus Consulting and Upward Bound at CU.

Project Type	Tangible Results
Agriculture	2,100' Irrigation Ditches Cleaned
Facilities	1,350' New Fence Constructed 300 Tires Removed 8 Tons Trash Collected 30 Tons of Fill for Belay Areas Moved
Forestry	80 Slash Piles Built 2 Acres of Forest Floor Raked
Plant Ecology	6,500' Perennials Planted 1,150 Trees Planted 450 Pounds of Seed Collected 1 Acre of Shrubs Lopped 30 Tree Cages Removed
Trails	14,250' of Trails Maintained, Restored & Improved Several Miles of New Trail Constructed
Weeds	211 Russian Olive Trees Removed 2 Acres of Weeds Pulled
Wildlife	2,000' of Prairie Dog Barrier Installed 4,380' of Fence Removed 3,400' of Fence Maintained



# 2013

## Nature Hikes for Seniors

The last Thursday of every month (except where noted by an asterisk) the Boulder County Parks and Open Space Department hosts a nature hike for seniors at a county park.

Join us for an enjoyable, informal, and slow-paced hike through your open space!

- Programs begin at 10:00am and end by noon.
- Hikes include information about an area's history, wildlife and resource management projects.
- Meet at the park entrance kiosk, unless another location is indicated below.
- For more information and directions, call 303-678-6214. Please call in advance if you plan to bring a group so we can provide enough staffing.

January 31	Pella Crossing Open Space
February 28	Carolyn Holmberg Preserve at Rock Creek Farm (meet at Stearns Lake parking lot on South 104th Street)
March 28	Agricultural Heritage Center at Lohr/McIntosh Farm
April 25	Heil Valley Ranch Open Space (Meet at group picnic shelter near Lichen Loop Trailhead)
May 30	Betasso Preserve
June 27	Mud Lake Open Space
July 25	Bald Mountain Scenic Area
August 29	Caribou Ranch Open Space
September 26	Walker Ranch Open Space (Meet at Meyers Homestead Trailhead)
October 31	Heil Valley Ranch Open Space (Meet at group picnic shelter near Lichen Loop Trailhead)
November 21*	Rabbit Mountain Open Space (on the 3rd Thursday due to Thanksgiving)
December 26	Walden Ponds Wildlife Habitat Area

# Discover Boulder County

## A CALENDAR OF NATURAL AND CULTURAL HISTORY EVENTS

### Wildlife and Winter Hike

**Saturday, December 8; 1:00pm to 3:00pm**

**Heil Valley Ranch Open Space; North of Boulder off Lefthand Canyon Drive; meet at group picnic shelter**

Join volunteer naturalists for a late fall hike to observe seasonal changes and to discover how the wildlife of Heil Valley Ranch prepares for winter. You'll learn about behavioral and physiological adaptations to the shortening days and cooling temperatures, and also look for signs of wildlife that are active year-round. Participants should be prepared for a slow-paced hike of just over a mile, and dress for the weather, wear hiking shoes or boots, and bring drinking water. All ages are welcome.

### Nature Hike for Seniors

**Thursday, December 27; 10am to noon**

**Walden Ponds Wildlife Habitat Area; 75th Street between Valmont Road and Jay Road; meet at group picnic shelter near Cottonwood Marsh**

Boulder County Parks and Open Space hosts a nature hike for seniors every month. Programs include information about an area's history, wildlife and current facelift of park amenities. For more information, call 303-678-6214. Please call in advance if you plan to bring a large group so we have enough naturalists at the program. *(See page 11 for a full list of Hikes for Seniors in 2013.)*

### The Nature of Snow

**Saturday, January 19; 10:00am to noon**

**Mud Lake Open Space; 2 miles north of Nederland on County Road 126; meet at parking lot kiosk**

Snow is an amazing substance! It is sculpted by the wind into beautiful shapes, it insulates, it fractures into avalanches, and makes winter survival possible for plants and animals. Join volunteer naturalists on a hike to explore the properties of snow, examine the snowpack and learn how some plants and animals have adapted to life in the cold. Bring drinking water, and clothing and boots suitable for cold and windy weather. Ski or hiking poles are recommended due to icy trail conditions. Be prepared to hike about two miles in snow, above 8,000 feet in elevation.



### Winter Heritage Day at Walker Ranch Homestead

**Sunday, January 27; 1:00pm to 3:00pm**

**Walker Ranch Homestead; 7701 Flagstaff Mountain Road, approximately 7 miles west of Boulder on Flagstaff Road**

Pioneer settlers had a lot to do preparing for and surviving Colorado's long winters. Learn about typical winter chores when you explore the Walker Ranch Homestead. Tour the ranch, see a working demonstration in the blacksmith shop and smell food being prepared on the woodstove.

Be prepared for cold, windy weather, and to walk in snow. For more information, contact Sheryl Kippen at 303-776-8848 or [skippen@bouldercounty.org](mailto:skippen@bouldercounty.org).

This program is free and open to all ages.

**Please note:** Dogs and bicycles are not permitted on the site.



### A Kid's View of Raptors

**Wednesday, January 23; 4:30pm to 5:30pm**

**Louisville Public Library, 951 Spruce Street, Louisville**

Learn how to recognize birds of prey, or raptors—hawks, eagles, falcons, and owls—in the winter skies above Boulder County. During the slide presentation you'll see some of these awesome birds up close and learn about where they live and what they eat. You will also get to see how your "wingspan" measures up against a hawk or eagle. This program is for families with elementary-age children.



# Discover Boulder County

## A CALENDAR OF NATURAL AND CULTURAL HISTORY EVENTS

### Junior Ranger Adventures

**Saturday, February 23, 11am-1:00pm**

**Mud Lake Open Space; 2 miles north of Nederland on County Road 126**

Calling all snow-loving kids! Blizzards, snow drifts, frozen lakes and icy trails are all part of the wintertime outdoor experience. The Boulder County Parks and Open Space Rangers want to help you be safe and prepared for all the adventures the cold weather can bring. Join us for a day of fun as you complete winter challenges and become a Junior Ranger!

Your winter adventure day will include ice safety, building a snow shelter, learning how to safely start a fire and even making ice cream. And for a special treat, watch the Boulder Emergency Squad perform an ice rescue demonstration! After you complete all your outdoor challenges, you will receive the title of Junior Ranger!

Junior Ranger Adventures is perfect for kids aged 6-12, but all family members are welcome. A parent or guardian must be present. Pre-registration is required. To register, please visit [www.bouldercountyopenspace.org/register](http://www.bouldercountyopenspace.org/register).

Be prepared for the winter weather by wearing warm clothing, boots, hat and gloves. Sunscreen, water and snacks are also recommended.

If you have questions, contact Ranger Erin O'Leary at 720-352-7041 or [eoleary@bouldercounty.org](mailto:eoleary@bouldercounty.org).



### Prairie Winter Hike

**Saturday, February 2; 1:00pm to 3:00pm**

**Carolyn Holmberg Preserve at Rock Creek Farm; Stearns Lake Trailhead, South 104th Street, ½ mile south of Dillon Road, Louisville**

Learn how grassland and wetland wildlife respond and adapt to winter on the prairie along the Colorado Front Range. Volunteer naturalists will lead this easy walk to explore and learn about the different winter strategies employed by wildlife that migrate through or are resident to the prairie ecosystems of Boulder County. Dress for the weather, wear hiking boots or shoes, and bring drinking water. All ages are welcome.

### Signs of Life – Wildlife in Winter Hike

**Sunday, February 10; 10:00am to 1:00pm**

**Caribou Ranch Open Space; 2 miles north of Nederland on County Road 126; meet at parking lot kiosk**

Join volunteer naturalists to learn how wildlife survives winter. We'll talk about hibernation, dormancy, migration, and strategies for animals that are active all winter long. We will look for signs of wildlife, including tracks, scat, and browse marks on trees. Bring water and clothing suitable for a moderate 2-mile hike in winter weather. Ski or hiking poles are recommended due to icy trail conditions.

### Where the Wild Things Live!

**Saturday, February 16; 10:00am to 11:00am**

**Longmont Public Library, 4th Avenue and Emery Street, Longmont, Meeting Rooms A & B**

Where do wild animals live? Join volunteer naturalists and hike across a HUGE map of Boulder County, from the grassy plains to the highest peaks, looking for signs of wildlife. Be a nature detective and help discover where animals find the food, water, shelter, and space they need to survive. This program is geared to early elementary-age children accompanied by an adult.

### All Programs

All ages are welcome unless otherwise noted. NO PETS PLEASE! Be prepared for cold temperatures. Bring drinking water and dress in layers. See the back cover for park locations. For information about these programs, or to arrange a volunteer-led program for your group, please call 303-678-6214.

# Discover Boulder County

## A CALENDAR OF NATURAL AND CULTURAL HISTORY EVENTS

### Birds of Prey Slide Shows

**Thursday, December 13; 7:00pm to 8:30pm**  
**Louisville Public Library, 951 Spruce Street, Louisville**  
**--and--**  
**Monday, January 7; 7:00pm to 8:30pm**  
**Longmont Public Library, 4th Avenue and Emery Street,**  
**Longmont, Meeting Room A & B**  
**--and--**  
**Wednesday, February 6; 7:00pm to 8:30pm**  
**George Reynolds Branch, Boulder Public Library, 3595**  
**Table Mesa Drive, Boulder (overflow parking available in**  
**King Soopers parking lot across the street)**

Learn how to recognize birds of prey, or raptors—hawks, eagles, falcons, and owls—in the winter skies above Boulder County. During this slide presentation, you'll observe and learn how to distinguish between different raptors by identifying common field marks. You will also learn about the habitat requirements, behavior, and ecology of these magnificent birds. All ages are welcome.

### Birds of Prey Driving Tours

**Saturday, December 15; 10:00am to 1:00pm**  
**Saturday, January 12; 10:00am to 1:00pm**  
**Saturday, January 26; 9:30am to 2:30pm (extended tour)**  
**Saturday, February 9; 10:00am to 1:00pm**  
**Saturday, February 23; 9:30am to 2:30pm (extended tour)**  
**Registration is limited; meeting location will be provided to registered participants.**

Join Boulder County volunteer naturalists for a driving tour of some of Boulder County's best areas to view birds of prey, or raptors. We will carpool from our meeting place, searching for raptors, learning about habitat and behavior, and working on our observation and identification skills. Bring water, lunch or a snack, binoculars, spotting scopes, and a bird field guide if you have them. Older children are welcome. Register by calling 303-678-6214, or emailing [lcoblenson@boulder-county.org](mailto:lcoblenson@boulder-county.org) no later than the Thursday before each scheduled Saturday tour.

### The Crusty Rocks of Rabbit Mountain

**Sunday, February 17; 9:30am to noon**  
**Rabbit Mountain Open Space; NE of Lyons on north 55th Street; meet at group picnic shelter**

Join volunteer naturalists Megan Bowes and Roger Myers for a 2-mile moderate hike to discover the geology and lichens of Rabbit Mountain. We'll learn about the unique location and orientation of the rock layers as well as what lichens are made of and why the sandstone and other resistant rocks support their growth. Participants should wear hiking shoes or boots, bring drinking water, and dress for the weather. All ages are welcome.

### Trickster Tales

**Sunday, February 24; 10:00am to noon**  
**Hall Ranch Open Space; one mile west of Lyons on Highway 7; meet at group picnic shelter near the upper parking lot**  
Coyotes live throughout most of North America and coyote tales are found in many native cultures. Sometimes coyote has the power of creation, other times he battles supernatural enemies, and sometimes he's a trickster, outsmarting people and animals alike. Join volunteer naturalists for a moderate 2-mile hike at Hall Ranch Open Space to learn more about this clever, adaptable character. Dress for the weather, wear hiking boots or shoes, and bring drinking water and your sense of humor.

### Visit the Agricultural Heritage Center

Take time to visit Agricultural Heritage Center this winter. It is located at 8348 Ute Highway 66 west of Longmont.

**Hours:** Open the first Saturday of each month, November through March from 10:00 am to 5:00 pm. Tours start at 11:00am. Groups may make special arrangements for tours.

Learn about the rich agricultural history of Boulder County. This site gives special focus to the years 1900 to 1925 when local families prospered as farmers and witnessed the coming of the Modern Age.

The farm includes two barns, an outhouse, a milk house, a blacksmith shop, and a 1909 farmhouse furnished with items from the 1910s.

For more information, call 303-776-8688 or send e-mail [jdrew@bouldercounty.org](mailto:jdrew@bouldercounty.org)





## Strategic Vision

Several years ago, the Boulder County Parks and Open Space director challenged staff to imagine sitting down together five years in the future reviewing accomplishments that support Boulder County's mission statement:

**As trusted stewards of Boulder County's future, we provide the best in public service.**

In response to this challenge, the department developed a strategic vision for the five-year period ending in 2012—nearly 500 performance measures that focus our efforts to ensure that we are achieving our mission. Some highlights from our accomplishments: preserved 10,800 acres of land, added 20 miles of new trails, developed a partnership program, doubled volunteer hours, removed 10,500 Russian olive trees, converted 10 percent of agriculture leases to organic production, restored 1,700 acres of grasslands, and adopted several policy documents and management plans.

Even as we celebrated these accomplishments in 2012, the department devoted time to develop a vision for the next three years. Staff held strategic visioning sessions and solicited input from stakeholders, our advisory committee, and policy makers. Themes that emerged from these sessions include effective management, stewardship ethic, and sustainability. These themes will help prioritize our work as we pursue new goals, including preserving another 1,500 acres of land, adding 10 miles of trails, converting 15 percent of agriculture to organic production, eliminating two State "List A" weed species, and expanding volunteer hours.

Stay tuned—we'll keep you posted on our progress!

## Call for 2013 Small Grant Proposals

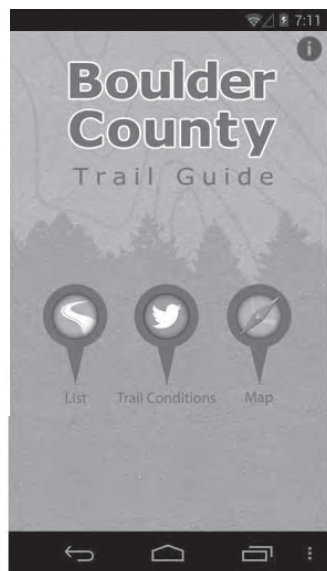
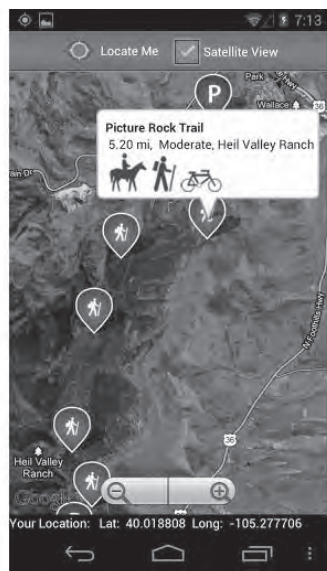
The Boulder County Parks and Open Space Department is offering small grants for research and biological inventories on open space lands. These research projects and inventories provide valuable data to monitor management practices and improve resources and park visitor experiences. Two categories will be awarded: grants up to \$5,000 and grants up to \$10,000. The deadline for proposals is Monday, January 21, 2013 at 11:59pm.

The department has identified the following research topics as priority needs for natural resource and visitor management, including:

- Compare soil erosion on prairie dog towns to other areas without prairie dogs, including native grassland.
- Investigate the best economic opportunities for biochar on Colorado's Front Range.
- Boulder County's regional trails (Coal Creek, Rock Creek, Niwot and LOBO) seasonal visitation and use.
- Evaluation of forest patch size/patch shape treatment areas on wildlife diversity, utilization, predation.
- Herpetile inventories on Boulder County Parks and Open Space properties, with emphasis on Rabbit Mountain.



For more details, visit the department's webpage at [www.bouldercounty.org/os/culture/pages/posresearch.aspx](http://www.bouldercounty.org/os/culture/pages/posresearch.aspx)



## Trail App Available for Android™

Let your iOS or Android™ device find you on the trail and show you your options.

### Features:

- Trail Length
- Trail Difficulty
- Parking Locations
- Allowed Uses (dogs, bikes and horses)
- Locate Me (see where you are on the trail)
- Trail Conditions (as reported on Twitter; requires internet connection)
- Satellite Map (see the landscape in incredible photographic detail)

### Notes:

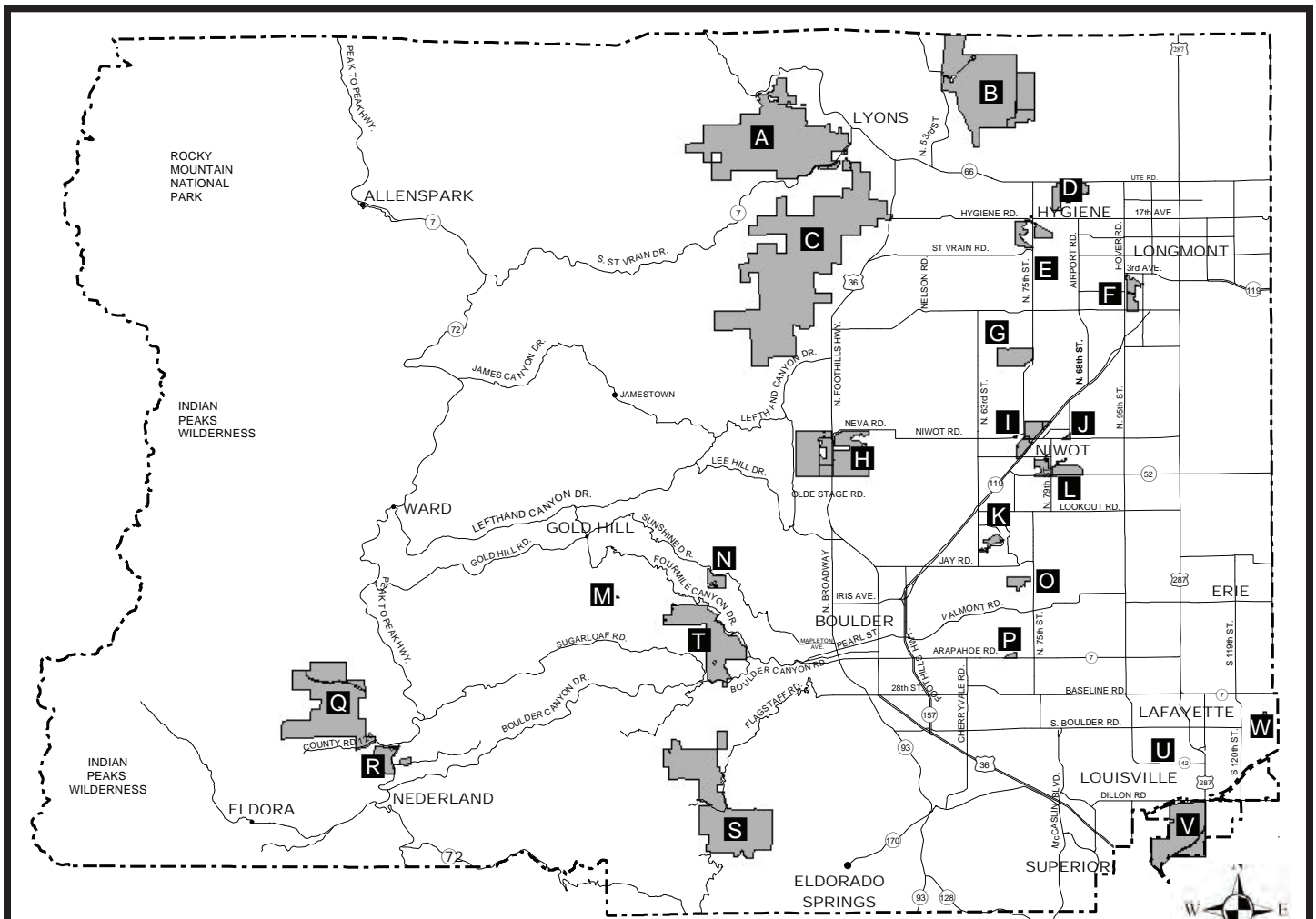
- Locate Me works best on devices with GPS.
- This application does not include other local agency trails such as City of Boulder or United States Forest Service trails.
- Zoom around the map before heading to your destination. This will cache and save the map so you can use it even when you are not connected to the internet.



PARKS & OPEN SPACE DEPARTMENT  
5201 St. Vrain Road  
Longmont, CO 80503  
303-678-6200

[www.BoulderCountyOpenSpace.org](http://www.BoulderCountyOpenSpace.org)

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|--|----------------------------------|--|
| A. Hall Ranch  | I. Dodd Lake                     | Q. Caribou Ranch                                   |
| B. Rabbit Mountain                                       | J. Lefthand Valley Grange        | R. Mud Lake  |
| C. Heil Valley Ranch                                     | K. Twin Lakes                    | S. Walker Ranch                                    |
| D. Agricultural Heritage Center<br>at Lohr/Mcintosh Farm | L. Niwot Trail System            | T. Betasso Preserve                                |
| E. Pella Crossing  | M. Wall Street Assay Museum      | U. Coal Creek Trail                                |
| F. Boulder County Fairgrounds                            | N. Bald Mountain                 | V. Carolyn Holmberg Preserve<br>at Rock Creek Farm |
| G. Lagerman Reservoir                                    | O. Walden Ponds Wildlife Habitat | W. Flagg Park                                      |
| H. Beech Open Space                                      | P. Legion Park                   |  |