

# *images*

OF BOULDER COUNTY PARKS AND OPEN SPACE



*summer 2013*

## Images

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*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:** Sunset at Walden Ponds Wildlife Habitat, photo by Michael Lohr

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# Walden Ponds Revisited

by Larry Colbenson



*A new fishing deck at Wally Toevs Pond is one of many improvements made at the property.*

Surrounded by the hustle and bustle of everyday life, Walden Ponds Wildlife Habitat is a peaceful and welcoming sanctuary for nature and people alike. This county open space property is a place for you to slow down, explore, and observe the natural world at work. From mud flats and shallow water wetlands, to open water ponds and surrounding upland areas, Walden also provides diverse habitat for many species of plants and wildlife.

This has not always been the case. At some point in the early history of Boulder County, the land that now supports Walden Ponds was transformed from a native prairie and riparian ecosystem to pastures for hay and livestock grazing. This use continued into the 1950s when Boulder County began to purchase the property for its gravel resources. In 1958, gravel mining at Walden Ponds began and continued sporadically until the mid-1990s. In the early 1970s, County Commissioner Walden Toevs proposed reclaiming the barren and desolate gravel pits to productive wildlife habitat to be used as a public open space for recreation, education and relaxation.

Reclamation of the three eastern ponds and wetlands for wildlife habitat began in 1974, and the site opened as a public open space in 1975 with a number of recreational amenities including trails, fishing access and bird-watching blinds. Gravel mining and subsequent reclamation efforts for the western ponds and wetlands concluded in the mid-1990s. Trails were designated around these ponds and wetlands and incorporated into the existing trail system.

Today, the open space consists of Wally Toevs Pond, Cottonwood Marsh, Duck Pond, Bass Pond, and Ricky Weiser Wetland. As a testament to its success, the 113-acre open space property currently contains unique and important wildlife habitat and provides excellent public recreation and education opportunities. The mosaic of wetlands, riparian vegetation, grasslands, mud flats, and open water provides for numerous wildlife species, especially waterfowl. The water levels within the groundwater-fed ponds and wetlands fluctuate, providing an ever-changing environment that supports a variety of species and reflects the natural hydrologic cycle of the Front Range of Colorado.



The Walden Ponds Wildlife Habitat Management Plan was adopted by the Boulder County Board of County Commissioners in 2010. The plan revises, updates, and supersedes the original management plan which was prepared in 1982. Boulder County Parks and Open Space (BCPOS) chose to revise the 1982 plan for a number of reasons. These include the extensive amount of time that has elapsed since the first plan, the completion of on-site mining and reclamation, the evolution of the site since reclamation, and an overall better understanding of the various opportunities and constraints posed by the site. The new plan was to update the vision, goals, objectives, and strategies for future management of the site.

Since the last management plan, the property has succeeded in meeting its original goal of reclaiming wildlife habitat from former gravel mines and now enters into a new era of management. This plan moves the site from its reclamation past to its fulfillment as a sanctuary for wildlife and an open space for recreation and education.

**The current vision for Walden Ponds Wildlife Habitat Area is:**

*...a wildlife haven of ponds, wetlands, and uplands on former gravel mines blanketed by native cottonwoods, willows, grasses, marsh species, mud flats, and open water for a diversity of species...*

*...an easily accessible place on the plains of Boulder County where people can observe and learn about the evolving landscape and natural cycles ...*

*...an open space with peaceful trails, exceptional wildlife viewing, captivating interpretation, and accessible fishing.*

The department continues to provide a number of visitor facilities and amenities with some necessary changes and upgrades. The three trailheads (Wally Toevs Pond, Cottonwood Marsh, and Heatherwood Trail) have been upgraded to provide better and more efficient parking and access. BCPOS will continue to maintain 4.2 miles of multiple use trails, as well as

## Walden Ponds At a Glance

**Hiking:** 4.2 miles of trails wind around most ponds

**Accessibility:** accessible 500-foot boardwalk lets you observe wetland wildlife. Wally Toevs Pond offers fishing for seniors and people with disabilities and their companions 15 years and younger

**Picnicking:** picnic tables and grills are available in two areas

**Fishing:** Except for Wally Toevs Pond, fishing is by artificial flies or lures only.

- All smallmouth and largemouth bass caught must be returned to the water immediately.
- A Colorado fishing license is required for people 16 and older.
- All State of Colorado fishing regulations apply at this open space.
- Only Boulder County residents who are 64 and older and/or disabled and their companions 15 years or younger are permitted to fish in Wally Toevs Pond.

**Mountain bikes and equestrians:** all trails, except for the boardwalk, are open to mountain bikes and horses

**Dogs:** welcome on leash

**Restrooms:** available at Wally Toevs and Cottonwood Marsh parking areas

the Cottonwood Marsh boardwalk and the Wally Toevs Pond fishing pier. The popular boardwalk on the south edge of Cottonwood Marsh has been completely rebuilt. New interpretive panels will be installed soon. Also, repairs to the Wally Toevs Pond fishing pier were recently completed. The trail around Bass Pond and Ricky Weiser Wetland, and the Heatherwood Trail have been converted from unimproved two-track trail and asphalt trails to more accessible and durable crusher fine trails.

Finally, safer and less environmentally damaging access points to Wally Toevs Pond and Duck Pond are being created for fishing, bird watching, and interpretive programs. These improvements include two fishing platforms with staircase access at Wally Toevs Pond. Another fishing platform at Duck Pond will be completed soon. Also, an interpretive program platform will be installed sometime this summer at Duck Pond to facilitate our many wetland ecology programs for local schools.

The department received an \$8,000 grant from Colorado Parks and Wildlife (formerly Colorado Division of Wildlife) to make these improvements at Walden Ponds Wildlife Habitat, and related improvements at Pella Crossing Open Space.

With improvements in place and continued habitat protection, Walden Ponds should continue to provide diverse recreational and educational opportunities for many years to come, as well as a refuge for those seeking a connection with nature.



*Kids at play on the boardwalk at Walden Ponds Wildlife Habitat.*

# 2013 Parks and Open Space Land Conservation Awards

by Vivienne Jannatpour

On April 23, the Boulder County Parks and Open Space Department held the annual Land Conservation Awards ceremony. Here are highlights from the special gathering.

**Land Conservation Award** recognizes notable achievements in preserving Boulder County's agricultural lands. Keith Bateman is proud to call himself a fifth generation Boulder County farmer. Keith's great-great grandfather, Adolph Waneka, homesteaded in Boulder County in 1859, and Keith's father farmed around Waneka Lake when Keith was a child. At 17, Keith borrowed \$800 to buy a tractor and leased his first 40 acres of land to begin his own farming career. Keith now farms on thousands of acres of land in the county – over 2,000 of which he leases from Boulder County Parks and Open Space. His commitment to conserving agricultural lands also includes participation on numerous committees including the Cropland Policy Advisory Group in 2011, and as a supervisor for the Boulder Valley Conservation District since 1999. He was given the 2012 Commissioner's Award for Conservation Excellence by the Commissioner of Agriculture, John Salazar. Keith's son, Cory Bateman, now farms alongside him and Keith hopes that his two grandsons, ages three and four, will become 7th generation farmers in Boulder County.

**Environmental Stewardship Award** recognizes individuals or organizations that have promoted land conservation and stewardship practices that respect the interdependent relationship between our community and its valued ecosystems. George and Marti Oetzel were recognized for their coordination of the Boulder County Audubon and Boulder County Parks and Open Space nest box monitoring program since 2005. Each year, 20 volunteers care for and record nesting results from more than

100 nest boxes at Walker Ranch, Betasso Preserve and other open space lands. Results of the project have been published in a national magazine devoted to bluebird recovery. George and Marti have also contributed to other inventory projects, including the Boulder County Nature Association wintering raptor survey. Their combined volunteer efforts have made a huge difference in understanding and recovering birds of special concern in Boulder County.

**Heritage Award** recognizes achievements in preserving Boulder County's heritage through substantially privately funded historic preservation projects. The Little Church in the Pines Board, including Peter Brady, Thelma Robinson, and Marti Anderson, were recognized for their voluntary efforts to restore and preserve The Little Church in the Pines in Four Mile Canyon. Built in 1902, the wood frame building served the Salina community for the next 46 years as its church and polling place. In 1948, twelve Four Mile Canyon residents purchased and organized the church, naming it The Little Church in the Pines. This group repaired the building, held Sunday school classes and receptions, and in turn made the building a vital part of the community. By the 1970s, the building was in disrepair and in 1998 a group formed to preserve the building and promote its use by anyone in Four Mile Canyon as a "place for spiritual edification, enlightenment, and encouragement." The long list of repairs and renovations will soon be completed, and the building will serve the community for many years to come.

**Partnership Award** recognizes alliances with businesses and organizations around the county that foster a community-based stewardship ethic for the preservation and care of open space. Geocaching Colorado has been an Open Space Partner for four years. Chris Laxson has served as the fearless leader of the organization. As part of the annual "Cache-In-Trash-Out" national effort each April, Geocaching Colorado works to clean up the public open spaces. These strong, hard, fast workers prefer the worst of the worst, including telephone poles, tires, hot tubs, car parts, and refrigerators. Over the past four years, 152 volunteers have contributed 520 hours to trash removal and seed collection. They have removed over six tons of trash and 300-plus tires, and collected approximately 54 bulk pounds of seed. We appreciate their devotion and willingness to work hard and get dirty!

**Outstanding Volunteer Awards** recognizes individuals whose leadership and support of the department's volunteer programs have enhanced our community partnerships and improved public service. This year there were two recipients.

Joyce Costello has been a volunteer naturalist since 2008. The department's Volunteer Naturalist Program asks that volunteers lead at least four



Peter Brady, Chris Laxson, Joyce Costello, Cindy Domenico, Marti Anderson, Thelma Robinson, Elise Jones, George Oetzel, Marti Oetzel, Megan Bowes, Keith Batemen



programs every year. Over the past five years, Joyce has led 115 programs and hikes—averaging about 23 programs per year! While Joyce enjoys sharing nature with all ages, she is recognized among staff and volunteers alike for her expertise in children's programming. Joyce developed training for all volunteer naturalists which focused on bringing nature to the classroom. Joyce's passion for nature, love of children, and willingness to share her time and knowledge with others has proven to be a valuable resource for the department, and of great benefit to the Boulder County community.

Megan Bowes has been a volunteer instructor in the Boulder County Native Plant Master Program since the program's inception in 2008. Not only has Megan taught more classes than any other volunteer, but she has been a mentor for many new instructors. She has been a key liaison to the Colorado Native Plant Society, and has been instrumental in helping the program reach new audiences. Megan has taught an additional "basic botany" class each year which has proved to be very helpful to community members to brush up on their botany skills—allowing a broader audience to take advantage of the native plant master courses' more advanced materials.

# Field Notes

## A Day in the Life of a Cultural History Coordinator

Four times each year, the department helps visitors to the Walker Ranch Homestead travel back in time to the Victorian era. To visitors, we strive for fun and hope it looks as easy as putting on a sunbonnet or cowboy hat but, really, it's a months-long exercise in planning!

About two months before each Heritage Day, I review our volunteers' annual agreements. Who said he or she would help with this event at the ranch? Then I get in touch with those people to be sure their calendar still holds that promise. I then email the remainder of our great Walker Ranch volunteers to see who else is available that day.

I make a list of available volunteers for each day and decide which chores and demonstrations fit best with that season. Except for the smaller scale winter event and this year's new format for Summer Heritage Evening, each Heritage Day features at least 12 basic or "staple" demonstrations or activities with probably up to four others added that fit the season or mesh with volunteers' skills. That means at least 35 energetic, friendly, trained volunteers are required for the day!

Almost all events feature visitor favorites such as butter making, log house cooking, laundry, and blacksmithing and homestead tours. Each of those, ideally, needs one volunteer to lead the activity and a helper. For planning, those are on a chart by time frame. Everything is done with erasable markers since elements can change often!

Are there other offerings that would add to the day? Maybe there should be a one room school presentation from noon-1pm in the Wheat Barn and Sausage Making in the Spring House from 10am-12. Do I have volunteers who enjoy doing those? Those are added to the chart. Volunteers usually switch their chore area each hour for variety. I then plug volunteers into each area needing help. Women can only do women's chores; men can only do men's! Youth ages nine and older can volunteer at Walker Ranch also.

Once the schedule is set, reminders and the schedule are sent out to all volunteers who will help that day—did I create

the need for cloning and have one person in two places at the same time? I ask volunteers' help proofing it; almost always a change or two arises. Everyone makes sure he or she has the proper historic period costuming. If not, we set up time for visits to the Agricultural Heritage Center to raid the costume closet.

When the big event day arrives, volunteers have been asked to arrive at least 1 1/2 hours before start time. All do and very faithfully and capably begin setting up their first volunteer shift areas: fires in the stove and forge are started, water is toted, cream begins churning—all with many smiles, helping hands and laughter.

All of us Walker Ranchers then gather for a meeting a bit before the event's start. We introduce ourselves and usually answer a "question of the day" to help get to know one another and, again, provide some fun. Then. . . the gates open and visitors arrive for us to assist them in time traveling back to the 1880s!

*Note: The next training class for Walker Ranch volunteers is July 11. For information call Sheryl Kippen at 303-776-8848.*



*Sheryl Kippen, Cultural History Coordinator and author of this article, dresses in clothing suitable to ranch life in the 1880s at a special event.*

# Open Space, Hard Labor, and Student Writing

by Rebecca Dickson and Catherine Lasswell

CU-Boulder's Program for Writing and Rhetoric coordinates each semester with Boulder County Parks and Open Space to organize outdoor service projects. Students engage in a volunteer project and then write an essay about the experience. Below are two outings that convey how valuable these events are to students and, we hope, to Boulder County.

## International Students Discover the Front Range

Twenty-seven University of Colorado students carpooled to Heil Valley Ranch one Saturday for a reforestation project on a chilly April morning. We drove a group of foreign students up, most of them from mega-crowded cities in mainland China. They gazed wide-eyed out the car windows at the greening foothills.

In their writing courses, these students research and write about sustainable practices while engaging in hands-on service-learning with community organizations such as Boulder County Parks and Open Space.

Volunteer Coordinator and Forester, Shane Milne, organized the project: an activity to minimize the possibility of destructive fires occurring in Colorado's increasingly dry summers. Shane explained that students would be prepping the forests for a controlled burn. The forests had been thinned a few days before and heavy trucks had hauled out the thick pine logs. What remained was a mess: pine branches lopped off from the trunks and strewn over acres of forest. Some branches lay heaped up beneath tall pines that, if lit in a burn, could ignite living trees.

Groups were formed and given McLeods to work with. We watched as students dragged unwieldy tree limbs while talking in Chinese and groaning with one another. We cringed. We had told them the project would probably involve planting seeds in the forest. Over four hours, though, they worked their way up the mountain. When they were done, the students were proud to hear Shane announce that they were able to "rehab approximately 40 acres of forest."

Students had a wide variety of responses to the project. Many Chinese students mentioned the "freshness" of the air and beauty of the mountains. Others were struck by the hard physical labor involved. One graduate student from Beijing got weary midway through the project but "could only sit for a couple minutes because I could not forgive myself if the fire damages the forest due to my breach of duty."

A student from Taiwan expressed the satisfaction felt by many: "When we were going to leave, all of us looked very tired. But I looked back at the mountain and saw how much work we did," she said. "I felt very proud of our class... suddenly I was not tired anymore but was happy that I was one of the people preserving the environment."

## Undaunted: An Afternoon at Heil Valley Ranch

A CU Suburban arrived at Heil Ranch with eight students and one instructor—me, Rebecca Dickson—to do some restoration work with Shane Milne. But as we piled out of the Suburban, we heard a loud hissing. Not a snake, no; it was our quickly flattening back tire. What to do? A call to CU Transportation Services yielded this: "Can't you fix it yourself?" Fine then—we would—or rather, Shane would fix it, along with help from a student named Travis.

Forty-five minutes later, we had a viable tire back on the Suburban and, undaunted, we set out to do our service event. The heavy equipment that removed the trees had left behind some significant scars on the landscape. Our job was to go in and fix it, by hand, with McLeods (students called them "big rake-like things").

And that's when the bonding occurs. Students work side by side: first-year students with graduating seniors, astrophysics students with economics majors. Women and men, younger and older, smaller and bigger—all of them sharing a task and a laugh and their water bottles (we don't recommend the latter, but it happens). They meet new folks and at the same time learn a new appreciation for the ways that communities can nurture the land. And they serve as volunteers, many times for the first time in their lives. They also get outside into a pleasant locale for a bit. They forget the pressure of classes and grades. And they frequently decide that there's nothing like sweating together to form a bond with others.

It's uncanny how many subsequent papers start like this: "I expected not to like this event but ended up liking it." Of course, they write this after the hard labor is behind them. Nonetheless, I believe it is sincere. Students connect with each other and their instructors and community in ways they don't typically experience at a big university like CU. That, along with the good work we do, makes the service very worthwhile.





# Weathering the Weather

by Jennifer Kemp

The West was settled under a boom and bust mentality, and despite best efforts to stabilize water supplies, farmers and ranchers throughout the state must still contend with boom years where water is plentiful and bust years when it is not. Add to this the very complicated system of water rights and water delivery and it is amazing that any sane person would choose to make growing food in a semi-arid desert a lifetime career. However, those who do decide to stick with the task of growing food and raising animals in this extreme climate also learn how to make savvy decisions that allow them and their families to remain on the land for many decades and even for a number of generations.

## A Juggling Act

When Boulder County farmers and ranchers describe their vocations, they often use phrases such as “juggling act” or “figuring out a puzzle” or “it’s complicated.” For Keith Bateman, it is a matter of trying to make decisions that put him in a better position. Bateman, a fifth-generation farmer, grows wheat, barley, alfalfa, corn, grass hay and oats on over 2,000 acres of Boulder County Open Space properties. When asked how last year’s drought and this year’s storms impacted his operations, Bateman explained that rather than plant corn, a crop receiving exceptionally high prices these days, he chose to plant more wheat and small grains last fall. Along with being less water consumptive, these crops are harvested by mid-July and therefore are not reliant on the availability of late water. The storms this spring prompted Bateman to consider planting corn for silage that can be harvested in September, but knowing he would likely not have critical late season water, he is making decisions that keep him in a better position.

Drought conditions last year led to very poor pasture and low hay yields for most livestock producers throughout Colorado. Steve Penner, another Open Space tenant, raises a herd of Black Angus cows which he feeds in Boulder County during the winter and pastures in the Yampa Valley on the West Slope during the summer. In a normal year, Penner sells his calves in February. Last year, however, he had to sell his calves early due to high feed prices and very low alfalfa yields, while the rest of his herd was fed more poor quality feed such as corn stalks. In an average water year, Penner sells his hay to buyers in the county, but this past year he had to save most of his hay for his own herd. Over half of the land that Penner leases has very junior water rights, and as such, he planted Sudan grass and oats for forage last year. Spring storms this year have him considering whether to plant corn for silage instead of the more drought tolerant grasses.

Vegetable growers also find themselves in a planning quandary this spring. Unlike row crop producers who may

irrigate two to eight times over the course of a growing season depending on the crop, vegetable growers need a steady, sometimes daily, supply of water throughout the season. In a year like this, where the water supply is still questionable, knowing what to plant can be a guessing game. As Jason Condon of Isabelle Farm explains, “You have to plant as if you will have enough water, and then make decisions as the season progresses.” During the drought last year, Condon found they had just enough water for their crops and not a drop more. He often slept in his truck so he could make sure his fields got the amount of water needed before switching to another area to irrigate. Isabelle Farm diversifies its sales among three market segments; Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) members, wholesale markets and restaurants. If there is not enough water to get a full harvest of a certain crop, Condon and his staff must decide which segment of their market will take precedence over the others. Condon said that they are also using more drip tape and row plastics to conserve water, and plan to plant more of the mainstay crops and less “exotic varieties.” In a nutshell, Condon explains with a laugh that they “do all of that and I worry a lot.”

## Preparing for Drought

Mark Guttridge of Ollin Farms began implementing drought preparedness techniques into his farming system when he started the farm seven years ago. Focusing primarily on the quality of the soil, Guttridge has greatly increased the amount of humus (organic matter that acts like a sponge) into the soils on his farm. Recent soils tests indicate that humus levels are in the excellent range. To increase water use efficiency, Guttridge has placed drip tape on all of his crops, and is growing more fast-growing vegetables such as greens, tomatoes, early season peppers and root crops, and less of the water consumptive crops like winter squash, corn and pumpkins. While Guttridge expects to see an increase in production on his farm this year despite the predicted dry conditions, he did hold off on expanding the amount of acreage under cultivation due to concerns over water availability.

It is hard for a non-farmer to comprehend the many complicated and stressful decisions a producer must make over the course of a growing season, and it can be equally difficult to understand why someone would sign up to do this job year after year when the next drought may be around the next corner. But those producers who do learn how to weather the weather develop a sense of pragmatic optimism that allows them to keep doing this important work. As Steve Penner explained, “You plan for the worst and hope for the best. History tells us that we are going to get moisture at some point.” This spring, that proved to be true.

# Agricultural Roots: Boulder County Fair

by Lisel Record

Come the first week of August, Boulder County residents will flock to the former Affolter Corner Farm in Longmont, the site of the Boulder County Fair. Perhaps they are hoping to catch a glimpse of rodeo queen Mandy Larson, perhaps they arrive with rabbits, chickens, or goats to show, or perhaps they are fans of the demolition derby, carnival rides, and funnel cakes. More than 100,000 people are expected to visit this year's fair and there is something for everyone.

The Boulder area has celebrated its agricultural and mining roots through various fairs, events, and festivities since before Colorado gained statehood in 1876. Filling a lull between planting and harvesting, the Boulder County Fair began as a way to showcase the county's agricultural products.

The June 12, 1869 edition of the Boulder County News is the first to mention a county fair, which was to include a granger's convention. That year the Boulder County Agricultural Society was founded, elected a president, and purchased 40 acres for a fairground between 28th and Valmont streets in Boulder. Their first fair was held in October, and included horse races and five classes of exhibits, including minerology. The fair lost \$2,500 its first year and the fairgrounds were later sold to pay the debt.

John Brierly, an Englishman who came to Boulder to mine and stayed to farm, was known for his fruits, vineyards, vegetables, and the hothouse carnations that won him many prizes at this first Boulder County Fair. He was just one of many farmers in the early days of Boulder County. By 1900 the county was home to 967 farms. Some came to mine and found more profit in supplying miners with fresh food. Others came with the intention of farming.

## Main Attractions

In 1871, a group called the Chicago-Colorado Colony arrived, platting the town of Longmont. The settlers who came with the Chicago-Colorado Colony came with agricultural dreams, rather than hopes of finding gold in the hills. They formed the Northern Colorado Agricultural Society and purchased 80 acres (today's Roosevelt Park in Longmont) to serve as fairgrounds. Roosevelt Park was originally named Lake Park after Lake Michigan, because it held a shallow lake in the center, which only saw water in wet years. Eventually the lake

was filled in, but the half-mile race track that encircled the park is echoed in today's circular walking path. This track hosted numerous horse races and bicycle races, both very popular in the 1890s.

Over time, the County Fair in Boulder drifted away from its focus on agriculture and the fair held in Longmont continued to draw great crowds. In October of 1899, the Boulder County Fair was officially moved to Roosevelt Park, where it stayed until 1978. Photographs from the 1920s and 1930s show a bustling scene with a grandstand, Ferris wheel, children feeding a tame bear, elaborate canning and grain exhibits, and livestock barns.

Agricultural machinery has remained a staple at the fair for more than a century. In 1877 farm machinery displays proved the most popular event at the fair, with people streaming in to see the new threshers powered by steam. In fact, the steam powered machinery at the tractor show is still a large draw today.

The fair has continued to grow uninterrupted except for 1946 when a polio epidemic led to its cancellation. Much of the state was hit hard by the epidemic. Both the Boulder County Fair and the Loveland Fair were canceled in hopes of keeping children involved in 4H activities from being exposed to the virus. Two Louisville schools postponed their opening days that fall, scout meetings were canceled, and movie theaters would not admit children under 16, in hopes of reducing their exposure to the virus.

## Early Beginnings of the Local Foods Movement

With the fair growing in popularity, more space and new facilities were needed. In 1976 the county purchased the land at the corner of Nelson and Hover roads. The 130-acre property afforded plenty of room for the fair to spread out, and the first of many buildings was raised. The county continues to support agriculture in Boulder County through improvements for the county farmer's market located on site.

The burgeoning local food movement and Boulder County's reputation as a hotbed for natural foods has seen a renaissance in the number and diversity of its farming operations. Today, as much as in 1869, the Boulder County Fair remains a way to celebrate Boulder County's agricultural products and heritage.



*The "Round House," built in 1870 to display agricultural and mineral products.*

*Neck-and-neck in the Jockey race, 1919-1922.*



# NATURE DETECTIVES

Summer 2013



## Looking for Little Lizards

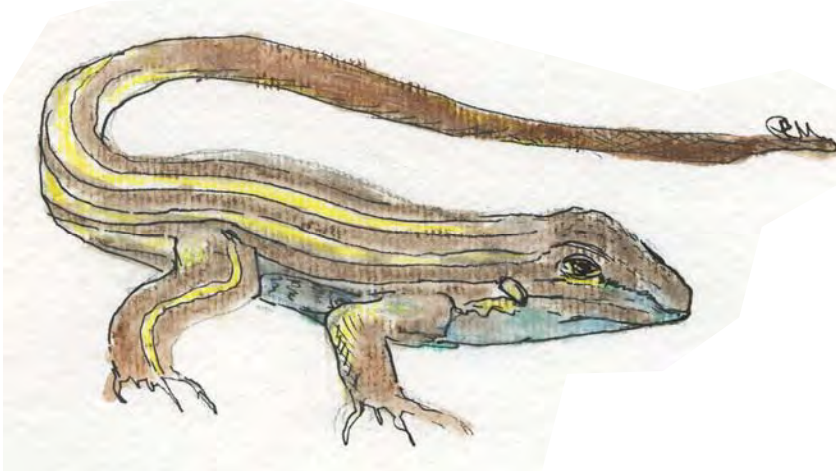
More lizards live on our earth than snakes or turtles or any other type of reptile. So it is not surprising some lizards dwell in Boulder County. Our lizards are little, even the adults are just a few inches long. They have small teeth, no venom and are harmless to people. Our lizards are shy and often dart quickly out of sight. Motionless, their great camouflage colors allow them to hide in plain view. Catching a glimpse of one is exciting.

Lizards try to look tough by doing push-ups. They look like tiny reptile physical fitness buffs. In fact the word for small lizard in Spanish, *lagartija*, is also a word for push-up, the kind you might do in PE class. It would be funny if we started calling the push-up exercise a "lizard." How many "lizards" can you do?

Lizard skin is dry and scaly. The scales are made of keratin, the same as your fingernails. Scales help protect lizards from cuts and scratches, and scales help lizards keep moisture inside their bodies when it is hot and dry outside.

## Basking in the Sun

Lizards are ectotherms, which means they can't make their own body heat. They lie in the sun to warm up each morning. They prefer sunny weather that isn't windy or too cold or too hot. Lizards are active during the day when temperatures are just right. If they get hot or cold, they have to seek shelter or they die. They hide under rocks or leaves or underground. They like rodent burrows for safe refuge beneath the ground during their winter hibernation.



## Picture These

Common names of lizards are often descriptive.

**Short-horned lizard**, **six-lined racerunner** and **red-lipped prairie lizard** are three different kinds of lizards living in Boulder County.

You could probably picture the lizards in your mind just by reading their names.



## **Lizards on the Lookout**

Lizards are hunters with excellent eyesight. Unlike snakes, lizards have eyelids and can blink. Like snakes, they “smell” with their tongues. They flick their tongues to pick up chemical scent molecules in the air. They put their tongues in a special place on the roof of their mouths to decode the smells.

Lizards hear through ear slits on the sides of their heads.

Smelling and hearing and especially seeing well

help them catch their food and escape their predators. Hawks, falcons, owls, kestrels, shrikes, snakes and cats will hunt lizards.

## **Weird Defenses**

Racerunners and prairie lizards have the ability to drop their tails if they are grabbed. The dropped tail end twitches and may distract a predator, giving the lizard a chance to escape. Their tail tissues and bones are built to divide, and special muscles shut off bleeding. A stumpy, boneless tail will slowly grow back.

Why do you think newly hatched baby racerunners have bright blue tails?!

Short-horned lizards don't drop their tails, but they have an odd ability to squirt blood from around their eyes when they feel threatened. The blood, which can spurt 3 or more feet, seems especially good at causing canines like foxes and coyotes to feel burning in their noses and mouths.

## **Growing and Surviving**

Lizard skin can stretch a bit, but it can't actually grow so lizards have to shed their skin periodically as they get bigger. The bright new skin hardens as it dries, but it is loose to give the lizard a little growing room.

Baby lizards are the most likely to be snatched by predators, but all lizards face human-caused dangers. Pesticides, pollution and getting run over by vehicles take their toll. Loss of lizard habitat to buildings and farm fields is another challenge. Lizards in our area live for around four or five years if they stay out of danger.

## **Habitats and Seasons of Lizard Activity**

Boulder County lizards hang out where there is some space between plants and plenty of sunshine. They can be found in the grasslands and in the foothills shrublands and in open montane forests of ponderosa pine and Douglas fir.

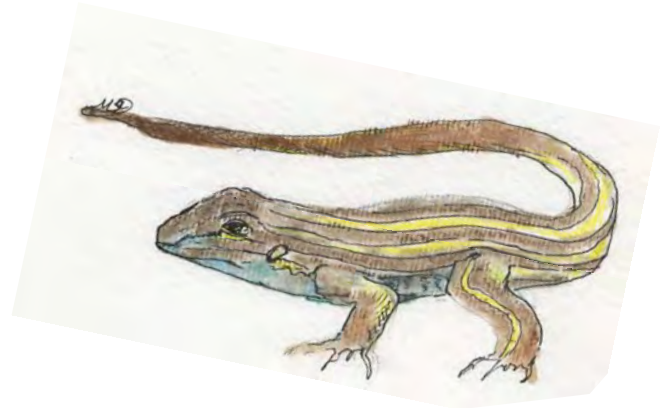
Lizards are active as soon as temperatures warm to their liking in spring. Young lizards are the first to emerge from their underground winter hiding places.

In the fall, the youngest lizards are last to hibernate and will wait as late as October or even November before going below ground.



## Six Lined Racerunner

The ability to run at almost 20 miles per hour gives this skinny lizard its name. It swings its long whip-like tail for balance as it zips around on the ground. It dives under shrubs and leaf litter to stalk its prey. It hunts for crickets, grasshoppers, beetles, ants, spiders, butterflies, moths and caterpillars.



The lizards' camouflage colors and lines on their bumpy, scaled backs make it hard for snakes, hawks or other predators to keep a focus on them as they dart into hiding. Many racerunners have pale, bright greenish upper bodies that mimic the colors of yucca or other plants where they might rest out of the sun. A mature male shows off his pale blue belly and throat as he performs push-ups. Push-ups can be slow or quick with different length pauses. It is a complex communication to warn off competitors and to attract mates.

## Red-lipped Prairie Lizard



Actually, these lizards are orange or yellow on their faces and chins. The males have the brightest colors, especially around mid-May. Females display lighter orange or yellow colors then.

More rare are prairie lizards with lots of black color and no orange/yellow. All three variations pass the colors on to their offspring. When the orange guys do their push-ups, the other male prairie lizards back off. Push-ups also show off blue coloring normally hidden. Female lizards are attracted to the males with the brightest colors.

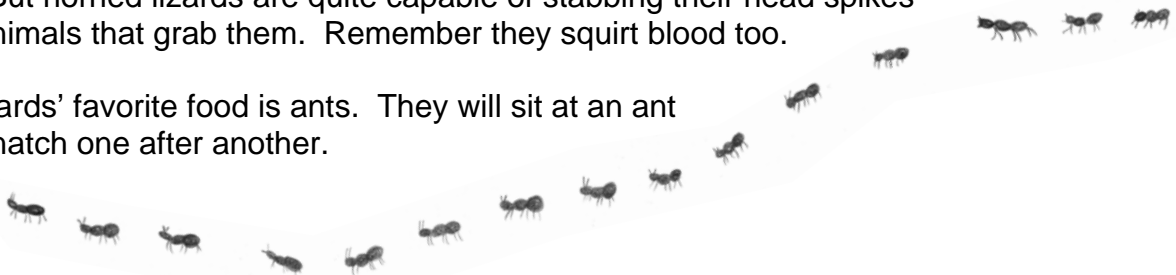


Prairie lizards have spiny scales, prickly like some pinecones. Their dull colored bodies are lightly striped with darker cross bands. Their prey can include grasshoppers, spiders, flies, beetles, larvae and ticks.

## Short-horned Lizard

A startled horned lizard will puff out its round, flat body to make its many sharp spiny scales and pointy spikes stand out. Short-horned lizards are small. The babies are about the size of a nickel. But horned lizards are quite capable of stabbing their head spikes into any animals that grab them. Remember they squirt blood too.

Horned lizards' favorite food is ants. They will sit at an ant trail and snatch one after another.



## Learning to Look for Lizards

Since lizard colors often match their surroundings, the key to seeing lizards is learning to spot lizard shapes on rocks and trails and roadways. Approach slowly and hold still if they look at you.



**Warning:** Our wild lizards might seem like they would be fun pets but it is illegal to keep them. It is also unkind because giving them the habitat they need is next to impossible. They won't eat. They get **sick**. They suffer and die. If you are patient or lucky enough to find any lizards, enjoy seeing them in their natural habitat where they belong.

## Lizard Science

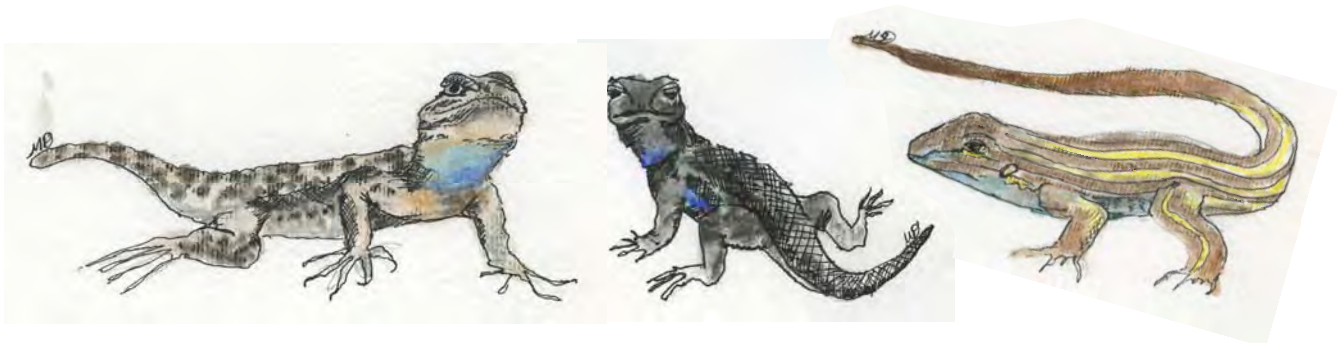
Many more kinds of lizards and bigger lizards live closer to the equator where the climate is warmer. We have fewer lizards because our climate is cool by comparison. Our lizards are small because small bodies warm up more quickly in the sun.

See if you can design an experiment with water balloons to test how size makes a difference in temperature. Fill one balloon with a little water and another balloon with more water and put both balloons in the sun. Keep feeling the balloons to see if one water balloon warms faster than the other.

Some lizards are darker colors than others and seem to be out earlier and later in the day and on cloudier days than lighter colored lizards. To test how color works, plan a different experiment with two sheets of construction paper, one black piece and one white piece. Lay the papers in the sun and put a hand under each piece of paper. Does one hand feel warmer than your other hand?

## Tongue Twister

How fast can you say it? **Loopy lizards lying lazily aloft a little line of logs**





# Hiking Through History

by Shirley Hollingsworth

Do you enjoy history and hiking? If so, Boulder County Parks and Open Space trails are perfect for you. By hiking the trails, you can step back in time and discover the history of the county.

## Mining

If you are interested in mining, you might want to hike Caribou Ranch or Mud Lake just north of the town of Nederland. The Caribou Ranch trail system is 4.5 miles long and wanders by the Blue Bird Mine Complex. The complex includes a bunkhouse, the mining company house, mine shafts and tracks. With the discovery of silver in the Caribou area in 1869, heavy prospecting occurred in the area. Hiking the trails at Mud Lake, you will discover glory holes which are pits left when the miners explored the area. Gold and silver were not discovered at Mud Lake, but in the early 20th century, the tungsten mining boom began. The area produced most of the tungsten ore in the world during World War I.

## Cattle Ranching

If cattle ranching is your love, you are in luck, because Boulder County Parks and Open Space has a lot of old cattle ranches. At Hall Ranch, when you hike the Nelson Loop trail you will be in the historic Antelope Park which was homesteaded by Richard Clark in 1890, and then bought by the Nelson family in 1922. Today you can hike by the ranch house, garden and silo. At Bald Mountain Scenic Area, cattle grazing occurred on the open meadows. The trail is a one-mile loop that begins where a livestock loading corral and chute still stand. Walker Ranch on Flagstaff Mountain was one of the largest cattle ranches in this area. Hiking the 7.8-mile Walker Ranch Loop trail, in the distance you can see the historic homestead including the log house, root cellar, granary, smokehouse, springhouse, chicken and turkey houses, barn and corrals. Also along the trail, you will see remnants of barns and sheds. Hiking the 2.6-mile Meyers Homestead Trail, you pass the restored barn of the Meyers family and discover that timber was very valuable to the homesteaders. Heil Valley Ranch has a long history

of cattle ranching and many trails that pass by remnants of cabins. Betasso Preserve also has a ranching history. In 1912, the Blanchard family homesteaded 160 acres. In 1915, Steve Betasso purchased this ranch for their cattle operation. When you hike the Blanchard Trail (it has a long staircase) you will pass the restored cabin and barn. Along the 3.3 mile Canyon Loop trail you will see the Ronald McDonald cabin. McDonald homesteaded this land and built the cabin in 1919. He was a plum grower and you can still see plum trees in the valley below the cabin.

## Farming

Interested in looking at old farm equipment? At Betasso Preserve below the kiosk, you will discover a mower and binder. On the Picture Rock Trail, as you reach the 3-mile marker, you will discover a horse drawn seed planter. And if you are not a hiker, but like antique farm machinery, be sure to visit our Agricultural Heritage Center off Highway 66 in north Longmont!

## Sandstone Quarries

Heil Valley Ranch is a terrific place to hike if you are fascinated with quarries. Hike the 2.5-mile Wapiti Trail that connects to the 2.6-mile Ponderosa Loop trail, and you will have a fantastic view of the sandstone quarries. Do you want to step back in time? Hike the Picture Rock Trail off Old St. Vrain Road near Lyons. You will reach the Whitestone and Vickery quarry and ranching complex at the 3-mile marker on the trail. Go ahead and wander the quarry itself. You'll see holes from the drills owned by Jess and Ben Vickery, two brothers who leased the quarry from the Heil family in the 1950s and 60s. Look at the old truck just south of the quarry, built with a wooden firewall between the engine and the driver, and think how comfortable that wooden seat felt on the dirt roads. Discover the old

car near the main quarry bed and the old grain silo.

Boulder County Parks and Open Space trails weave through a lot of local history, so go out and explore on your own this summer!



*Top: The restored Meyers cabin can be seen while hiking the Meyers Homestead Trail at Walker Ranch.*

*Above: Hikers at Caribou Ranch Open Space peek in in the bunkhouse, part of the Bluebird Mine Complex at the property.*

## On the Line—Fishing for Bass in Boulder County

by Eric Yokomizo

Did you know that Colorado and the Rocky Mountains are home to some 35 different species of fish? With over 6,000 miles of streams and more than 2,000 lakes and reservoirs, we are lucky to have so many opportunities for both warmwater and coldwater fishing.

Here in Boulder County, I think some of the best fishing is for bass. Pella Crossing, Walden Ponds Wildlife Habitat, Lagerman Reservoir and Stearns Lake are only some of the fishing areas open to the public. Each has its own fishing regulations and catch limit, so make sure to check requirements before you head out.

Largemouth bass are the dominant species of warmwater fish here on the Front Range of Colorado and some surrounding areas. Also known as bucket mouths, largemouth bass gets its name from the long jaw which extends past the eye, allowing the fish to engulf large portions of food, like frogs or crawfish. Largemouth can exceed 10 pounds if the habitat is good. This is the one fish that you'll find in most warmwater lakes in Colorado. These fish were among the first introduced species into Colorado back in 1878. Largemouth bass are distinguished by the horizontal stripe through the center of their body sides. Whereas, smallmouth bass have vertical lines on their sides and can have a red tint to their eyes.

### Bait Choices

When shopping for bait, buy both brilliant and natural colors. Bright colors will be a big help when fishing since they stand out in murky water and on cloudy days. In clear water and on sunny days, natural colors look best.

While there is a wide variety of live bait available for bass fishing, let's look at the two basic artificial baits. Largemouth bass are very aggressive naturally which means that you don't always have to play the patience game like you might with trout. A great beginner and reliable lure for bass fishing is the spinnerbait. This is a "V" shaped spinning lure that has a plastic "skirt" around the hook end. The spinning of the blade and the color of the skirt are the big attractors to bass and their short temper. This is always a great one to turn to because bass love them.

Plastic worms are another great artificial lure for fishing. Plastic worms come in handy for properties that do not allow live bait. They hold one big advantage over real worms—a variety of color. Artificial worms come in all sorts of shapes, sizes and colors. With any lure, including worms, just because they are not working doesn't mean a fish won't eat anything at all. A color change can be very valuable. Plastic worms are a great starter worm which work best with the large worm hooks. These worms are nice because you can work them in differ-

ent ways, with weight or just by themselves. I suggest learning a basic Texas worm rig for rigging a worm on the oversized large worm hooks. These work great for getting around grasses, shrubs and trees in the water.

### Fishing Tips

Fishing practices can vary widely from angler to angler, and some may not work for you. You are the best judge of what works.

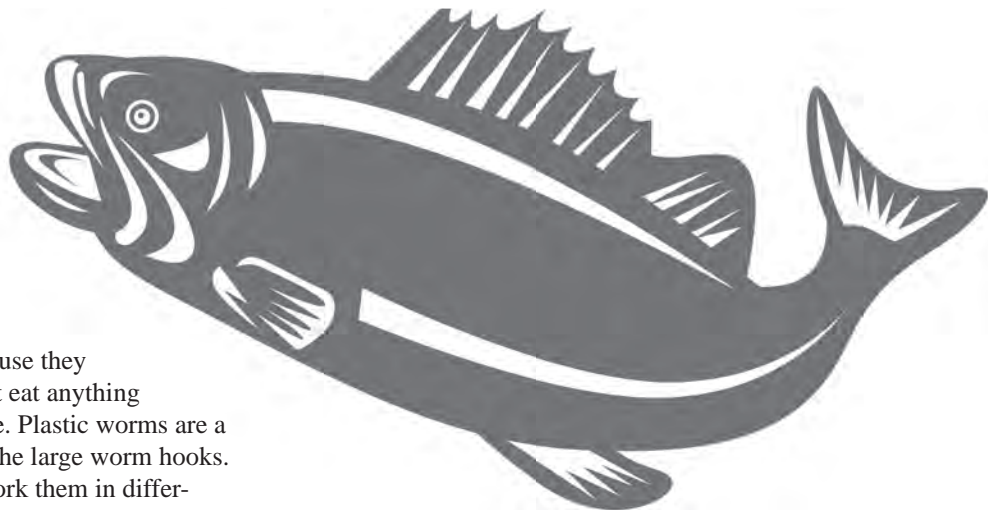
The strategy when casting into the waters for bass is coverage. If you are fishing in areas with objects in the water, natural or not, cast as close as you can to those objects. Bass enjoy the coverage like other fish and animals.

Also, just because a fish doesn't hit on the first cast doesn't mean they are not there, so give it multiple shots. Fishing in and near objects can be tough, you may lose lures to trees and rocks, but the benefit can be great.

The time of year and weather conditions are important to consider when fishing both open and shallow waters. If too cold, the bass won't be active. Ideally, you'll want the water to be 65 to 75 degrees. Higher temperatures slow down activity due to lower oxygen levels and a few other factors. What does this add up to? Bass can travel into the more shallow waters when heat is needed and travel to the deeps when desired.

Largemouth bass do not travel in large schools together but at times there are favored locations in a lake or reservoir in which they will gather. This is where it can be worth staying in a location for a while because you never know how many other fish are around.

Trust your instinct and have fun. Ultimately that gives us the best luck when fishing. Remember why we all enjoy it: watching the sun rise or the sun set next to the water, feeling the breeze across your face. A bad day fishing is still better than a good day at work!





# Discover Boulder County

## A CALENDAR OF NATURAL AND CULTURAL HISTORY EVENTS

### Sunset Hikes

Every summer, Boulder County Parks and Open Space offers weekly nature hikes at a variety of parks. These slow-paced hikes cover an array of topics. Volunteer naturalists interpret each park's history, geology, ecosystems, plants and wildlife.

Hikes begin at 6:30pm, conclude by sunset, and involve about 2 miles of easy-moderate hiking. No reservations are needed. Sunset hikes are suitable for all ages. An adult must accompany children, and no pets are permitted. Most importantly, bring your family and friends to enjoy an evening exploring your local parks.

Thursday, June 6	Rabbit Mountain Open Space
Friday, June 14	Carolyn Holmberg Preserve at Rock Creek Farm (meet at Stearns Lake Trailhead)
Monday, June 17	Walker Ranch Open Space (meet at the Meyers Homestead Trailhead)
Tuesday, June 25	Pella Crossing Open Space
Wednesday, July 3	Heil Valley Ranch Open Space (Lichen Loop Trail; meet at group picnic shelter)
Thursday, July 11	Mud Lake Open Space
Friday, July 19	Bald Mountain Scenic Area
Monday, July 22	Betasso Preserve
Tuesday, July 30	Caribou Ranch Open Space
Wednesday, August 7	Heil Valley Ranch Open Space (Lichen Loop Trail; meet at group picnic shelter)
Thursday, August 15	Walker Ranch Open Space (meet at Meyers Homestead Trailhead)
Friday, August 23	Bald Mountain Scenic Area



### Geology Walk at Sandstone Ranch

**Saturday, June 8, 2013; 10:00am to noon**

**Sandstone Ranch Open Space; the visitor center is located south of Highway 119, one mile east of Weld County Road 1**

Join volunteer naturalists Dick Pratt and Roger Myers to learn about the geology of Sandstone Ranch and Boulder County. From a scenic overlook, we will learn about this dramatic and diverse landscape. After a short, easy walk exploring geologic history, you can visit the beautiful and historic Sandstone Ranch house to learn about some of the human history associated with this site.

### Trickster Tales

**Sunday, June 9; 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 cultures. Sometimes coyote has the power of creation, and sometimes he's a trickster, outsmarting people and animals alike. Join volunteer naturalists Dot Fears and Susan Holley for a moderate 2-mile hike to learn more about this clever, adaptable character. Bring drinking water and your sense of humor.

### Fish Hawks of Boulder County

**Saturday, June 15; 9:00am to 10:30am**

**Lagerman Reservoir; off Pike Road, between North 63rd and North 75th Streets; meet at the picnic shelter**

What hawk-like bird has a white head, eats fish, and spends the summer and nests in Boulder County – and is not a bald eagle? The answer can only be – osprey! Join volunteer naturalists to learn about this remarkable bird of prey. An osprey pair has nested at Lagerman Reservoir for over 10 years, and with a little luck, we may see adults and young looking for food and trying out new wings. We will also keep our eyes out for other birds. Bring a bird field guide and binoculars if you have them.

### Fire and Flowers Hike

**Sunday, June 16; 9:30am to 11:30am**

**Bald Mountain Scenic Area; 5 miles west of Boulder on Sunshine Canyon Drive (Mapleton Ave. in Boulder city limits)**

Join volunteer naturalists for a moderate one-mile hike to learn about the natural role of fire in ponderosa pine ecosystems and forest management practices that can lessen the effects of wildfires. You will see evidence of the September 2010 Fourmile Canyon fire, and learn about some of the rehabilitation efforts that have been employed recently. Along the trail, we will also help you identify wildflowers.

# Discover Boulder County

## A CALENDAR OF NATURAL AND CULTURAL HISTORY EVENTS

### I Spy Bones

**Thursday, June 20; 10:00am to 11:00am**

**Heil Valley Ranch Group Picnic Shelter; North of Boulder off Lefthand Canyon Drive; meet at group picnic shelter**

The bone detectives are on the prowl! Help volunteer naturalists search for evidence, including skulls, bones, and antlers of some of the animals that live here. This program is for preschool children and their families and will include plenty of hands-on fun for all.

### Celebrate Summer Hike at Mud Lake

**Saturday, June 22; 10:00am to noon**

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

Join volunteer naturalists to celebrate the coming of summer! On this easy 2-mile hike we will explore the natural history of the area including wildflowers, wildlife, and forest ecology. We will also talk about summer weather patterns and safety in the mountains. Be prepared to hike at an elevation of 8,500 feet and bring a rain poncho.

### Circle of Stones Hike: A Woman's Journey to Herself

**Saturday, June 29; 9:30am to noon**

**Meeting location will be provided to registered participants**

Volunteer naturalist Louise Alderson will lead a nature walk to experience inner wisdom and honor the feminine within us. This program, based on the book *Circle of Stones* by Judith Duerk, will include writing and sharing time. For women of all ages. Participants should be prepared for a moderate 1.5-mile hike. Register by email at [lcolbenson@bouldercounty.org](mailto:lcolbenson@bouldercounty.org) or call 303-678-6214 by Thursday, June 27.

### Wildflowers of Caribou Ranch

**Saturday, July 6; 9:00am to noon**

**Caribou Ranch Open Space; 2 miles north of Nederland on County Road 126**

Escape the summer heat and enjoy beautiful wildflowers! Volunteer naturalists will be available along the 4.2 miles (roundtrip) of easy-moderate trails to help you identify and learn about the wildflowers as you explore the beautiful montane forest, meadows, and wetland landscape. Participants should be prepared to hike at an elevation of about 8,500 feet, and bring a rain poncho and drinking water.

### Night Hikes



Join volunteer naturalists for an evening of exploring nature under cover of darkness. We'll hike about 2 miles roundtrip on moderate trails enjoying the starlight, listening for night sounds, and learning about the nocturnal habits of the critters that live here. Bring a flashlight, and your night vision.

**Wednesday, June 12; 8:30pm to 10:30pm** at Heil Valley Ranch - Lichen Loop Trail; meet at group picnic shelter

**Tuesday, July 9; 8:00pm to 10:00pm** at Walker Ranch; meet at the Meyers Homestead Trailhead

**Tuesday, August 13; 8:30pm to 10:00pm** at Bald Mountain Scenic Area

### Butterflies and Other Flying Creatures

**Sunday, August 4; 9:00am to 11:30am**

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

Volunteer naturalist Jan Chu and others will lead 1.5-mile walk in search of mid-summer butterflies, birds, and other flying insects. See how creatures in the foothills find the food, water, shelter, and space needed to survive. We'll talk about butterfly behavior and learn tips on identification. We'll also look for interesting butterfly behavior. Bring field guides, binoculars, and a snack, if you choose.



### The Wonder of Walden: A Write & Sketch Hike

**Saturday, August 10; 9:30am to 11:30am**

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

Engage the outdoors through nature journaling. Volunteer naturalist Ellen Orleans will introduce sketching and writing techniques and then we will take off for a walk through the wetland ecosystem. Along the way we will sketch cattails, clouds, birds or anything else that catches our eye, experiencing nature more deeply. Bring your own pencils, journal or pad of paper.



# Discover Boulder County

## A CALENDAR OF NATURAL AND CULTURAL HISTORY EVENTS

### Activities for Kids

#### Junior Ranger Adventures - Summer Challenge Memorial Day – Labor Day 2013

Hey kids! Summer is the perfect time to get outdoors and learn new junior ranger skills. Sign up for the Junior Ranger Adventures Summer Challenge and put your skills to the test! Become a Nomad, an Explorer, an Adventurer and a Champion as you earn points and badges.

Challenges range from planning a “no technology day” at home to patrolling with a ranger at Mud Lake. Once you reach 1,000 points, you’ll receive an invitation to have lunch with the Boulder County Rangers and the chance to win awesome prizes during a celebration ceremony. Everyone is welcome to participate, but you must be between 6-13 years of age to attend the celebration and to win prizes.

Registering is easy to do. Visit [www.boulder-countyopenspace.org/jr](http://www.boulder-countyopenspace.org/jr) and get started on your Summer Challenge today!



#### Kids Gone Fishing

Kids Gone Fishing clinics are for children between the ages of 5 to 15 who have never fished or who want to learn more about how to fish. Kids will go through stations to learn about casting, baiting a hook, fish handling, and more and then get to practice their new skills.

These clinics take place once a month from June to September on Saturdays from 9:00am to 12:00pm.

#### Dates for 2013:

June 15: Carolyn Holmberg Preserve

August 24: Cattail Pond

September 14: Lagerman Reservoir

To sign up, go to [www.BoulderCountyOpenSpace.org/register](http://www.BoulderCountyOpenSpace.org/register)

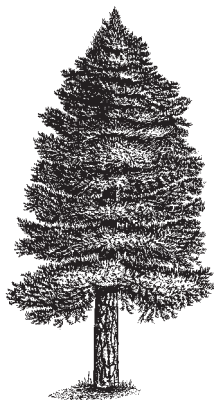
Got questions? Contact Michelle Bowie at [mbowie@bouldercounty.org](mailto:mbowie@bouldercounty.org)

#### Conifers of Caribou Saturday, August 17;

10:00am to 12:30pm

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

Join volunteer naturalists for a moderate two-mile hike exploring this scenic montane forest. You will learn to identify a variety of coniferous trees, and talk about forest ecology and management issues. We will also look for wildflowers and signs of wildlife.



#### Living in Lion and Bear Country

Saturday, August 24; 9:00am to 11:00am

Heil Valley Ranch Lichen Loop Trail; North of Boulder off Lefthand Canyon Drive; meet at the group picnic shelter

Join volunteer naturalists for a moderate 1.5-mile hike and learn about the ecology and behavior of our local mountain lions and black bears. As we hike along the loop trail, we’ll talk about why the foothills are such good habitat for lions and bears. We’ll also discuss hunting and feeding habits, and what to do if you meet a lion or bear.

### All Programs

All ages are welcome unless otherwise noted. NO PETS PLEASE! Be prepared for summer temperatures. For information about these programs, or to arrange a volunteer-led program for your group, please call 303-678-6214.

### Nature Hikes for Seniors

Enjoy a guided nature hike for seniors every month. Programs include information about the area’s history, wildlife and plants. 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. **Programs begin at 10:00am and end at noon.**

June 27	Mud Lake Open Space
July 25	Bald Mountain Scenic Area
August 29	Caribou Ranch Open Space

# Discover Boulder County

## A CALENDAR OF NATURAL AND CULTURAL HISTORY EVENTS

### Cultural History Events

#### Barnyard Critter Day

**Sunday, June 23; 10:00am to 3:00pm**

**Agricultural Heritage Center**

**8348 Highway 66, between Lyons and Longmont**

Animals have always been part of our lives. Come learn about the roles of chickens, pigs, horses and other animals on a farm. See demonstrations of sheep herding and horseshoeing, visit with chickens and pigs, and ride on a horse-drawn wagon.

Please leave pets at home so our working animals will not be disturbed.

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



#### Summer Heritage Evening at Walker Ranch Homestead

**Saturday, July 20; 5pm to 7:30pm**

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

Bring your family and a picnic supper (please bring a blanket if you plan to picnic – there are no tables at the homestead). Visit with costumed volunteers as they demonstrate various chores associated with rural living in the late 1800s such as doing laundry the old-fashioned way, woodworking, meal preparation, blacksmithing and children's games. Visitors can participate in chores and games.

This event is open to all ages. For more information, please call 303-776-8688 or email [skippen@bouldercounty.org](mailto:skippen@bouldercounty.org).

#### Let's Talk Chickens

**Sundays: June 9, July 14, & August 11**

**1:00pm to 3:00pm**

**Agricultural Heritage Center, 8348 Hwy 66, Longmont**

Join volunteer Barb Kirchner, as she shares experiences and lessons learned from raising her own chickens. Learn why chickens have been popular as pets and livestock for centuries and how they are suited to your backyard today. Kids (and adults) can learn how to walk, talk, and act like a chicken. Bring your kids and questions to this informal drop-in hen party!

#### All That Glistens Is Not GOLD

**Saturday, June 15 & Saturday, August 17**

**11:00am to 1:00pm**

**Meeting location provided to registered participants**

Try your hand at an activity that led to the settlement of Boulder County—gold panning! Do you have what it takes to travel back in time to do that? Programs are open to all ages, but space is limited to 25 people. Register at [www.BoulderCountyOpenSpace.org/register](http://www.BoulderCountyOpenSpace.org/register) or call 303-776-8848.

#### Ground-breaking Ladies

**Sunday, July 14; 11:00am to noon**

**Walker Ranch Homestead; 7701 Flagstaff Road**

Join us as we explore the lives of two adventurous women who were a bit before their time. Martha Maxwell had a wildlife museum, some of which she showed off at the 1876 Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia. Hazel Schmoll, from a mining family in Ward, was the first woman to earn a doctorate in botany from the University of Chicago. She even had a plant named for her, the *Astragalus schmollii*, or Schmoll's Milk-vetch, found in various Colorado national parks and Indian reservations.

#### Hard Rock Mining Tours

**The first Saturday of each month July through October; 10:30am-12:30 or 1:30pm (depending upon the route)**

**Meeting location provided to registered participants**

Tap into the towns, tools and characters of local hard rock mining heritage by visiting Boulder County mining sites of years gone by. More precise tour agenda will be available 1-2 weeks before each tour at the online location. The tour is free and open to ages 10 and up. Some walking required. Register online at [www.BoulderCountyOpenSpace.org/register](http://www.BoulderCountyOpenSpace.org/register), or call 303-776-8848.



## Regional Mountain Trails Master Plan Initiative

Boulder County has invited partners that manage public lands in the foothills and mountains of Boulder County to collaborate on the Regional Mountain Trails Master Plan.

The purpose is to create a shared, long-term master plan for a network of access points and travel corridors for non-motorized users in the mountain area. It is envisioned that this trail network would connect mountain communities and recreation areas to the regional trails in the plains. The partners are the U.S. Forest Service, the National Park Service, Colorado Parks and Wildlife, Boulder County, the City of Boulder, and the City of Longmont. Staff from the Commissioners' Office, Parks and Open Space, and Transportation are on the planning team.

### Public Input

To kick off the project, 11 public listening sessions were held across the county this spring. The meetings gave the community an opportunity to highlight their issues, concerns, desires, and expectations about the initiative; and to identify principles or values important to them in this year-long effort. Over the summer, the partners will utilize this input to develop principals to guide the effort and to map opportunities and constraints that influence planning. In the fall, the partners will utilize these tools to work with stakeholders and the community to identify potential trail corridors for consideration in the draft plan. It is anticipated that a final plan will be approved by next summer that will guide cooperative, incremental, and opportunistic implementation of the trail network over the coming years.

More information is available on the project website ([www.RegionalMountainTrails.com](http://www.RegionalMountainTrails.com)) where you can also sign up for email updates about the project.

## Nederland Mining Museum Opens June 1



Learn about the lives of the miners of yesteryear. Visit the Nederland Mining Museum and get a glimpse into the world of hard rock mining days in Boulder County during the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Various "tools of the trade" offer a close-up look at the lives of the miners. Miners wore helmets equipped with lights; how did those change over the years? See how drills used to do the mining changed as technology did. Ring a signal bell like the miners did to tell the hoist operator to bring them up and out of the mine. How was dynamite stored and in what amounts could miners buy it? See indoor and outdoor displays of trams, ore carts, engines, historic photographs and rare mining claim maps.

- **Admission is free**
- The museum is located at 200 N. Bridge Street (on the roundabout in Nederland at the corner of North Bridge Street and Highway 119).
- Open June 1 - October 31  
Friday, Saturday, Sunday 10:00am to 4:00pm

### Volunteer Opportunities at the Museum

The Nederland Mining Museum is looking for docents. Attending a training course or shadowing/observing experienced guides, and the ability to volunteer mostly on weekends is required.

## New Portion of Coal Creek Trail Open



*Enjoy a walk on the newly expanded Coal Creek Trail.*

In May, Boulder County, the City of Lafayette and the Town of Erie opened an additional 2.4 miles of the Coal Creek Trail. This is a partial opening of the trail; the remainder is expected to open later this summer.

The new, open portion of trail starts at the current terminus of the Rock Creek Regional Trail near 120th Street in Lafayette and ends approximately one half-mile north of the trail underpass at Hwy 7. The section north of this point will remain closed due to ongoing construction and visitors must turn around on the trail.

This section of the trail will be open to pedestrians, bicyclists and equestrians. Equestrian use is limited to the section south of Hwy 7.

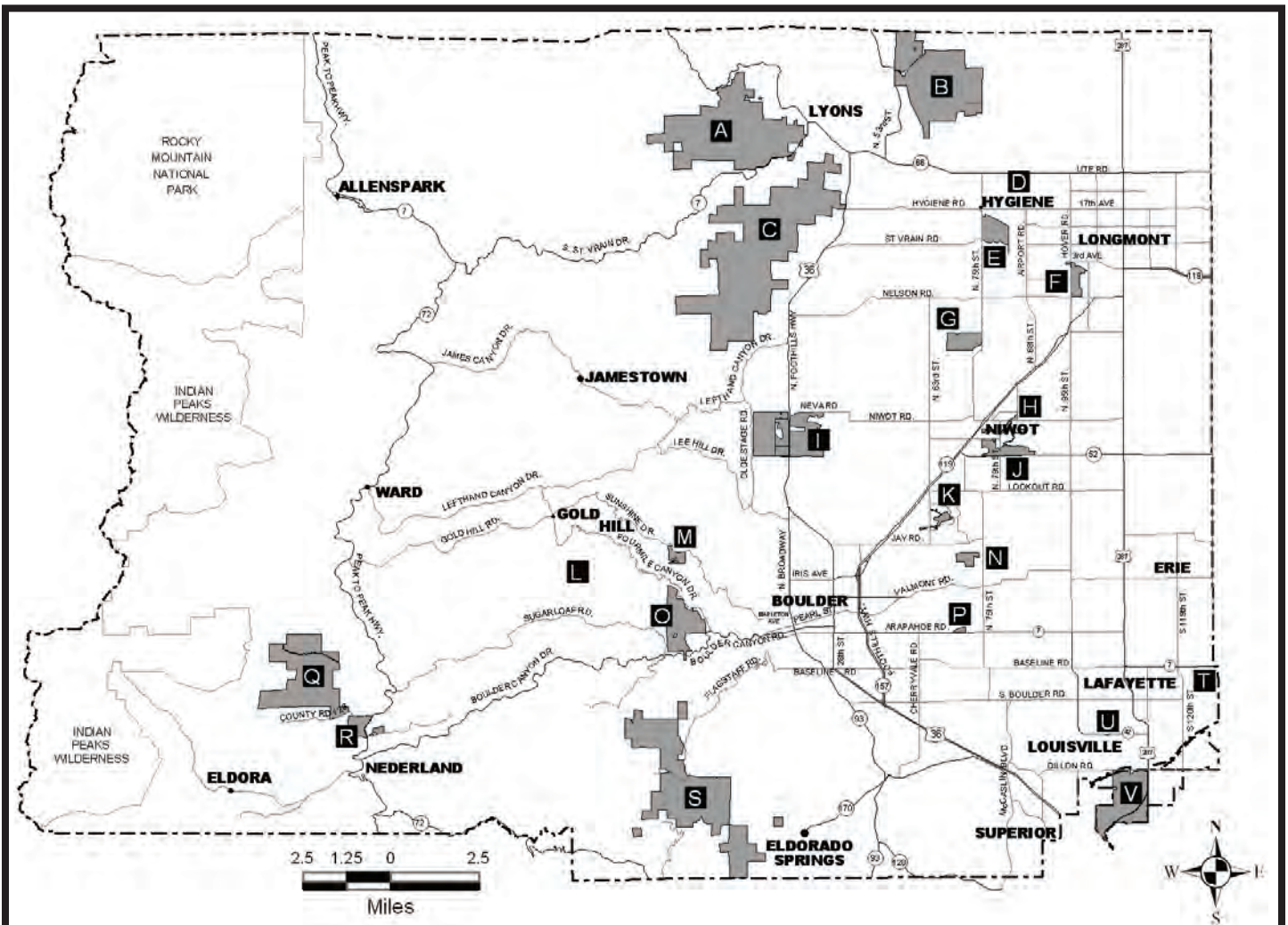
For more information, please call 303-441-3900 or visit the County Transportation Department's web site at [www.bouldercounty.org/roads](http://www.bouldercounty.org/roads).



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