

IMAGES

NEWS

PROPERTIES

NATURE

HISTORY

EVENTS



IMAGES

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

PHOTOGRAPHS & ILLUSTRATIONS

Cover: *Stary Night at Hall Ranch*, Mike Lohr
Nature Detectives young girl and family, Pouria Montazeri

Cactus Close-up: *Ouch!*, Ann Cooper
*Uncredited photos from POS Collection

NATURE DETECTIVES

Ann Armstrong, Ann Cooper, Carol Kampert

EDITORS

Summer Alameel and Eva Lark.
Suggestions and comments are welcome.
Please contact us at elark@bouldercounty.gov
Non-credited articles are by the editors.

RECEIVE IMAGES ONLINE OR IN PRINT

In print: Contact us at rrobles@bouldercounty.gov or 303-678-6222 to start a free subscription.

Online: Scan the QR code below using your smartphone or go to boco.org/isubscribe. Enter your email address in the space provided and you will receive four emails per year with the issue of IMAGES.



NOTE: To stop receiving the printed version, send an email to rrobles@bouldercounty.gov.

Volume 46, number 3



Clues to Solve the History of Nature Detectives

by **Tori Guesman**

Started in 1984 by volunteer naturalists Ann Cooper, Carol Kampert, and Ann Armstrong, the Nature Detectives Club is a kids' program through Boulder County Parks & Open Space (BCPOS) that uses activities and engaging content to foster children's appreciation and connection to nature. At present, Nature Detectives consists of three main components, including an educational insert found in the county's quarterly magazine, Images, free public programs, and the Mystery Guides, which are activity-based brochures found at various parks and trails around the county. While the Nature Detectives Club is currently one of the most popular programs run by the department's education & outreach workgroup, the program itself started quite small. Its founding was guided by the big idea that: "Children have an innate sense of joy and wonder about nature," as Armstrong put it. And that experiential environmental education can help kids deepen their connection to the natural world (Bache-Snyder, 1990).



Young girl stops to smell a wildflower during a nature adventure at Pella Crossing

As robust and developed as BCPOS is now, it may be hard to believe that when the department was established in 1975, it had just four employees — a parks planner, two rangers, and a planning technician. At that time, the importance of open space itself was in question and community debate around the open space sales tax to fund the department was high. Perhaps this is why the creation of the Volunteer Naturalist Program in 1975, the same year that BCPOS was founded, was crucial in providing the support the department needed to successfully

serve the community using such limited resources. Ann Cooper became a volunteer naturalist in 1978, leading public programs on environmental education, and would later write natural history articles for Images magazine. Images was first published in the spring of 1980 in collaboration with the City of Boulder Mountain Parks (now known as City of Boulder Open Space & Mountain Parks).

Cooper soon got together with fellow volunteer naturalists, Ann Armstrong and Carol Kampert, who each had extensive experience in outdoor education. The three connected in their passion for teaching kids about nature and shared a concern that children were spending too much time indoors watching TV, losing their connection to the outdoors. This concern reflected a growing societal fear. In fact, in 1984, the American Academy of Pediatrics Task Force on Children and Television issued a statement that highlighted the health risks associated with too much television viewing and recommended that parents limit their kids' time in front of the TV.

Ignited by the notion that children in their community would benefit from intentional, hands-on time in nature, Armstrong, Cooper and Kampert proposed the idea of creating articles and activities about nature specifically for kids to Rich Koopman, who was BCPOS' Planning Manager and Images editor at the time. Koopman enthusiastically approved the idea, and the trio of volunteer naturalists came up with a theme, brainstormed content, and used a collaborative approach to write "Ponds and Puddles," an article with accompanying puzzles featured in the first issue of Nature Detectives, which made its debut in the spring edition of Images in 1984.

The original Nature Detective centerfolds may appear somewhat rudimentary to us now with hand-written text, simple illustrations that were largely done by Armstrong, and even the authors own fingerprints that were used to draw the bodies of mice.



Original Nature Detectives logo with fingerprint mice.

Yet what these initial inserts may lack in flashy design, they make up for in accessible, warm content that educates

while also encouraging readers to mindfully explore the natural world for themselves. As Cooper wrote in The Courant in 1986, "The key to being a nature detective is 'hands-on' (or even, sometimes, 'feet-in') participation . . . using sight, sound, scent, and touch as they search for clues of animal activity and animal homes, finding stories in the landscape."

Cooper, Armstrong, and Kampert continued writing the Nature Detectives centerfolds, which featured short articles, activities, and puzzles, as well as a notice for a public program set in nature that corresponded to the issue's nature theme. Although Boulder County's environmental education events for kids already existed prior to the creation of Nature Detectives, the programming became more robust and established under the tutelage of Nature Detectives.

Today, the county continues to run free public programs, the second prong of the Nature Detectives Club, for kids at various county parks. These programs cover a wide range of topics, from woodpeckers and the moon, to water, and park rangers. The three founders of Nature Detectives worked on the program together until the mid 1990s when they published "The Wild Watch Book," a nature-based kids activity book series that amassed especial popularity along the Front Range. Cooper states that she, Armstrong, and Kamper drew heavy inspiration from the Nature Detective centerfolds to write their books. Cooper even credits the inserts with helping her start her writing career — a passion that resulted in the writing of 12 books, an endeavor that she continues today, 40 years later, by writing for Images magazine. In fact, you can read Cooper's latest article on the county's cacti in this issue! Armstrong, Cooper, and Kampert have long since passed the reins of Nature Detectives to other Boulder County volunteer naturalists. However, their legacy and passion for connecting kids to nature has endured. Their work helped spawn the creation of the Mystery Guides decades later, which have since become a revered element of the Nature Detectives Club.



A photo of Nature Detectives founders Ann Cooper, Carol Kampert, and Ann Armstrong (from left to right) was featured in a 1990 issue of the Sunday Times-Call Magazine following the publication of their book, "The Wild Watch Book".

Clues to Solve the History of Nature Detectives Continued . . .

In 2007, Pascale Fried, who worked in education & outreach for BCPOS for 31 years, created the Nature Detectives Mystery Guides. These interactive brochures for kids contain activities and information specific to each of the 10 county parks and trails where the guides are found. Fried conceived the idea for the Mystery Guides after pondering how to encourage kids to enjoy open spaces more. Her inspiration stemmed from her own experiences in parks, where she frequently observed children who were frustrated and in tears during hikes, much to the dismay of their equally frustrated parents. Fried was also inspired by the book, “The Last Child in the Woods,” and a widespread concern within the industry that children were spending too much time indoors — the same sentiment that sparked Armstrong, Cooper, and Kampert to create Nature Detectives in 1984. These factors combined to inspire Fried to launch Mystery Guides.

The guides were created using the principles that the content was to be experiential, self-guided, suitable for families to do together, and importantly, that there were no right answers. Moreover, Fried thought that the Mystery Guides shouldn't be so much about the science of nature, but rather the being in nature. This helps kids to slow down, observe their surroundings, and get curious about the natural world around them.



A family works together on a mystery guide.

Helen Olsson, local author of “The Down & Dirty Guide to Camping with Kids: How to Plan Memorable Family Adventures and Connect Kids to Nature,” wrote of her experience with her kids in completing Nature Detective

Mystery Guides at Walden Ponds. She noted, “The kids connected to nature in a way they wouldn't have if we'd simply been on a hike.” She added, “it got us really looking and listening to nature.” This sentiment echoes Fried's intentions for the Mystery Guides, which are not about completing all 10 guides or doing every single activity, but rather about engaging in at least one activity and retaining a skill or experience that can be applied to future outdoor explorations.

Fried and Education & Outreach Seasonals started the Mystery Guides series in 2007, creating three guides for different properties each year over a three-year period. They tweaked activities and content along the way and introduced the Nature Detectives mascot, Sherlock Fox. Today, Mystery Guides are available at trailheads in 10 different Boulder County parks and trails. Kids can complete the guides on their own or with an adult, and they don't need any special knowledge or equipment — just a writing utensil, a curious mind, and a sense of adventure!



A park sign where Sherlock Fox invites kids to join the Nature Detectives Club.

Guided by Sherlock Fox, kids become Nature Detectives, tasked with exploring the mysteries of the natural world around them. Using the Mystery Guide, they collect clues and complete various activities and quests. Through this nature treasure hunt, children engage their senses in deep, mindful observation, build confidence in self-guided learning and play, and foster a greater appreciation for nature.

After completing the Mystery Guide, participants and their accompanying adults can fill out their contact information on the back and deposit the guide in the white mailbox located at the Nature Detective station. If more time is needed, the guide can be mailed to the address on the back of the guide. Once the guide is received, a letter and prize

are mailed to the participants to encourage them to keep completing more Mystery Guides and getting out in nature.

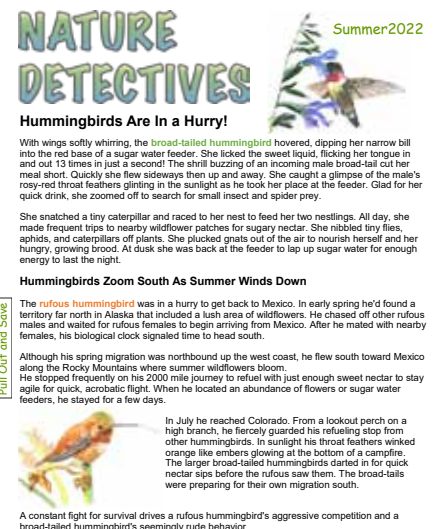
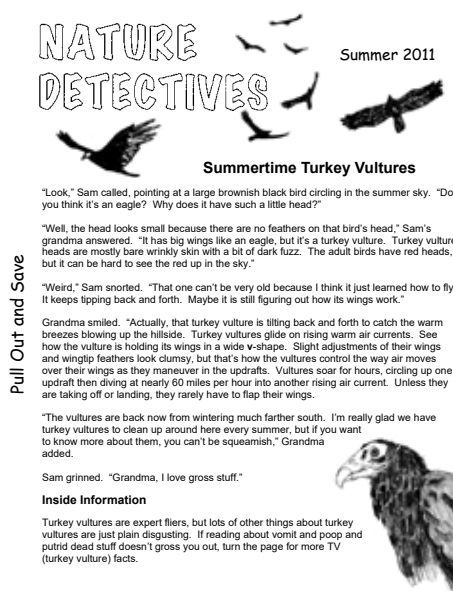
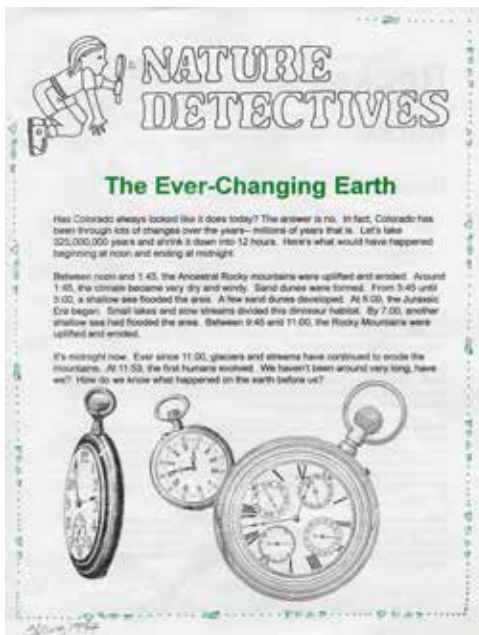
In celebrating the 40th anniversary of the creation of Nature Detectives, it's important to recognize that Volunteer Naturalists, Ann Cooper, Ann Armstrong, and Carol Kampert, started this program with the simple yet authentic goal of deepening kids' connection to nature. Little did they know that this unassuming kids' program would morph and grow over the years into a multi-faceted approach for nature exploration. Whether it be the written word of the centerfolds in Images, the facilitated programs by educators, or the self-guided exploration born from the Mystery Guides, the legacy that Nature Detectives leaves on this community is immense and deeply meaningful, and is guided by the grounding principle that as Cooper puts it, "any hike, anywhere, anytime, becomes an adventure."

WHERE IN THE COUNTY ARE THESE MYSTERY GUIDES?

- Agricultural Heritage Center
- Anne U. White Trail
- Bald Mountain
- Betasso Preserve
- Caribou Ranch
- Carolyn Holmberg Preserve at Rock Creek Farm
- Heil Valley Ranch
- Mud Lake
- Pella Crossing
- Walden Ponds

A HEARTFELT THANKS TO ALL WHO'VE CONTRIBUTED TO NATURE DETECTIVES OVER THE YEARS

- | | | |
|--------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Jessica Abel | Cindy Hutchins | Pam Sherman |
| Ann Armstrong | Charlotte Jorgensen | Stephanie Stansbury |
| Cathy Baker | Carol Kampert | Carol Tuttle |
| Carole Beck | Alyssa Lyon | Mary Waddell |
| Ann Cooper | Chaya Nanavati | Sally Weisenhelder |
| Barbara Farnsworth | Sabine Nebenfuehr | Colleen Welch |
| Tiffany Fourment | Deborah Price | Katherine Young |
| Rachel Gehr | Lee Ann Rosol | |



Pull Out and Save

Pull Out and Save

Summer 2022

"Look," Sam called, pointing at a large brownish black bird circling in the summer sky. "Do you think it's an eagle? Why does it have such a little head?"

"Well, the head looks small because there are no feathers on that bird's head," Sam's grandma answered. "It has big wings like an eagle, but it's a turkey vulture. Turkey vulture heads are mostly bare wrinkly skin with a bit of dark fuzz. The adult birds have red heads, but it can be hard to see the red up in the sky."

"Weird," Sam snorted. "That one can't be very old because I think it just learned how to fly. It keeps tipping back and forth. Maybe it is still figuring out how its wings work."

Grandma smiled. "Actually, that turkey vulture is tilting back and forth to catch the warm breezes blowing up the hillside. Turkey vultures glide on rising warm air currents. See how the vulture is holding its wings in a wide v-shape. Slight adjustments of their wings and wingtip feathers look clumsy, but that's how the vultures control the way air moves over their wings as they maneuver in the updrafts. Vultures soar for hours, circling one updraft then diving at nearly 60 miles per hour into another rising air current. Unless they are taking off or landing, they rarely have to flap their wings."

"The vultures are back now from wintering much farther south. I'm really glad we have turkey vultures to clean up around here every summer, but if you want to know more about them, you can't be squeamish," Grandma added.

Sam grinned. "Grandma, I love gross stuff."

Inside Information

Turkey vultures are expert fliers, but lots of other things about turkey vultures are just plain disgusting. If reading about vomit and poop and putrid dead stuff doesn't gross you out, turn the page for more TV (turkey vulture) facts.



A constant fight for survival drives a rufous hummingbird's aggressive competition and a broad-tailed hummingbird's seemingly rude behavior.

Cactus Close-up: Ouch!

by Ann Cooper

Among the roughly 1,500 kinds of plants that grow in Boulder County, very few fight back. Cacti — or is it cactuses? — are the exception. (Either word is grammatically correct.) Cacti are desert-adapted and evolved to protect themselves from munching creatures seeking moisture and sustenance from the succulent stems.

These stems swell with available water and shrink in drought, or to maximize winter water conservation. The stems have a waxy surface to help with moisture retention. And the roots of cacti are numerous and widespread, many of them shallow, enabling the plant to soak up moisture quickly from a brief downpour.

Cactus leaves are reduced to spines, and spines do not absorb water but direct small droplets to trickle stem-wards if there is dewfall or rain. This is an efficient way to reduce water loss through transpiration that the plant would face if it had “normal-sized” leaves spread in intense sun. The fleshy stems are green, that’s where photosynthesis — the food production using chlorophyll and sunlight — takes place.

The ouch effect of spines is substantial. If you accidentally place a hand or sandaled foot carelessly in a wildflower meadow or if you inadvertently park yourself on a prickly tuffet at a picnic, you’ll not soon forget it. The pain is frequently delivered as a double whammy. First comes a sharp poke from a sturdy spine. Second follows the itch from a cluster of brownish fuzzy glochids (minute, barbed bristles) growing around spines, that detach easily and embed in your skin. Spines are easy, if painful, to remove. Glochids are a challenge. Advice on their removal is copious. Maybe you’ve heard “pick them out one by one with needle-nosed tweezers,” or “Use duct tape sticky side down to pull out clusters,” or “Use a drop or two of Elmer’s glue, let it dry then peel off the glue-skin (not your skin!) and glochids together.” (Who knows how many folks carry Elmer’s just in case!) We have several cactus species growing in Boulder County, as they do well in our semidesert habitats and can tolerate moderate wintery conditions, even snow cover. It’s good moisture, after all.

Prickly pear species are the most widespread and frequently seen of our local cacti. These plants belong in the genus *Opuntia*, and the four kinds are not always easy to tell apart. The species that “sticks with you” most readily is the brittle prickly pear, whose roundish, prickly stems break off from the plant cluster readily at the touch of a sneaker, sock, or pant leg. It’s a great dispersal method. I have yet to see this species in bloom.

The other three species, with flattened, paddle-like stems, are the western, plains, and brown-spine (aka tulip prickly pear or desert prickly pear — which goes to show how iffy and uninformative common names can be). Prickly pears have vivid and variably colored flowers with many stamens. They always seem to have resident insects inside the petals to add to the interest.

The rest of our cacti are ball or barrel shaped. Missouri foxtail (*Coryphantha missouriensis*) is a prickly barrel that shrinks inconspicuously into the ground when not flowering. It blooms in May and the fruits ripen the following spring. (Its relative, the pincushion cactus — *Coryphantha vivipara* — with luminous pink flowers, grows in Colorado, but not locally.)

“Hedgehog” is an ongoing theme in many common names, not surprisingly. In the case of our Mountain cactus, the whole genus (*Pediocactus*) bears the name Hedgehog. This rounded barrel cactus has spirally arranged tubercles (small projecting elongated knobs) with pink flowers at the tubercle tips.

The nylon hedgehog cactus (*Echinocereus viridiflorus*) — now there’s a common name conundrum — is an early bloomer which boasts a mass of yellowish-green flowers below the highpoint of its clustered barrel stems. It is a joy to find an extended patch of these subtle, easily overlooked cacti in a meadow dotted with spring beauties and sand lilies.

As the season changes from summer to fall, you’ll notice cacti shriveling in preparation for the cold winter months. Though they may look dead and even turn shades of orange and red, they are, in fact, alive and well. By dehydrating, they are preparing for the freezing temperatures to come. Cacti are hardy plants that thrive in our desert landscape.



Opuntia polyacantha



Coryphantha missouriensis



Pediocactus simpsonii



Echinocereus viridiflorus

What's Missing?

by David Hirt

It's often said we don't notice something until it's gone. But perhaps other times, we don't notice something even after it's gone. Especially if what's missing was out of place to begin with. During the coldest week of the winter in 2023, crews from Poudre Valley Rural Electric Association finished removing the power poles and electric line that spanned 1.45 miles across the heart of the Ron Stewart Preserve at Rabbit Mountain (RSP@RM).

It all started over two years ago when the utility crews were performing standard maintenance and replacing old power poles across the park. In conversations with Boulder County Parks & Open Space staff, we realized the entire line served just one home near the park's trailhead. By rerouting the power to that single home with new poles along North 53rd Street, we were able to remove the interior lines that spanned the park. In doing so, we eliminated the need for utility crews to maintain the lines and potentially affect the natural resources. RSP@RM is one of two areas within the county that has received the highest ranking of outstanding biodiversity from the Colorado Natural Heritage Program. By removing the power lines, the county reduces wildfire risk, eliminates infrastructure that hinders prescribed fire operations, and enhances the park's aesthetics, allowing visitors to enjoy the beautiful, uninterrupted views.



Re-creation of what RSP@RM looked like before pole removal.



RSP@RM after pole removal.

RESEARCH ON OPEN SPACE

The Boulder County Parks & Open Space Department offers grants for research on county open space lands each year. All proposals are reviewed by a team of resource specialists, and awarded research projects are monitored during their activities on open space. The following is a summary of a 2023 study conducted by Jonathan Henn and Katharine Suding at University of Colorado Boulder. The project focused on understanding grassland fuels and their relationship to wildfire risk mitigation.

Abstract: Grassland fuels are severely understudied, and their variation is often underestimated in fuel models used for fire modeling. However, understanding their variation can be extremely useful for making management decisions about when, where, and whether to attempt fuel reduction treatments. To better understand how grassland fuel characteristics vary across the Front Range landscape, we set up a network of 120 fuel monitoring plots across the primary grassland types in the region.

We measured fuel characteristics during midsummer (July) and fall (October) to determine spatial and temporal variation in grassland fuel structures. We found that vegetation type has large consequences on fuel characteristics and that a combination of vegetation type, topography, soils, prairie dog presence, and vegetation cover can predict fuel characteristics moderately well (R² from 0.44-0.98). We also conducted a fire modeling exercise to investigate how fuel loads, fuel moisture, and wind interact to affect fire behavior. This exercise shows that fire spread is sensitive to fuel moisture and fuel loads in a non-linear way where spread rate can be slower than the wind speed when moisture is higher and fuel loads are lower. Overall, these results have implications for determining areas of higher priority fuel management due to high productivity.

If you want to read the full report, or other funded research, visit the department's website at boco.org/research

FALL
1984

Nature Detectives



"Who's been here?" "What were they doing and why were they doing it?" "When did it happen?" Nature Detectives try to answer questions like these by looking for clues and evidence of the activities of creatures in the outdoors.

Have you ever wondered about teeth marks on the trunk of a tree, or strange footprints in the snow or mud? If you have, then you are already a nature detective.

THEME:



Animal Homes

Animal homes are everywhere around us. Look for holes and burrows in open meadows, under tree roots or in river and pond banks. Watch for heaps of earth that say "someone has been digging here", or see if you can spot cracks and crannies in rocks or holes underneath boulders that could be somebody's shelter.

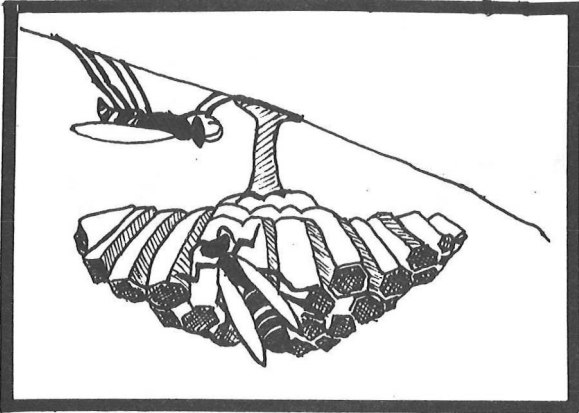
And those big trees? Do they have nests in the angles of their branches or even suspended from frail looking twigs high up? Or are the trees hollow? Perhaps woodpeckers or chickadees live in small holes or even a family of raccoons if the hollow center of the tree is more spacious! Flattened areas of long grass under shrubbery could be a deer's "yarding ground" (the place where the deer rests). Mounds of vegetation, cattails or large branches, out in the middle of the pond, are likely home to muskrats and beavers.

Whenever you see animal homes, keep an eye open for signs of recent animal activity - fresh tracks, droppings, remains of food, clipped grass or bushes, or runways. And if you are very lucky, quiet, and observant in those kinds of places, you have a good chance of seeing the private lives of many animals.



Animal Architects

Many insects, birds, and mammals construct elaborate shelters for themselves, using an amazing variety of materials and techniques. Are you familiar with some of the building materials shown below?

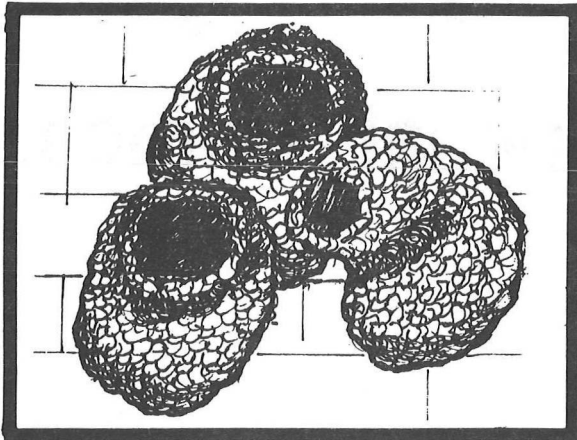
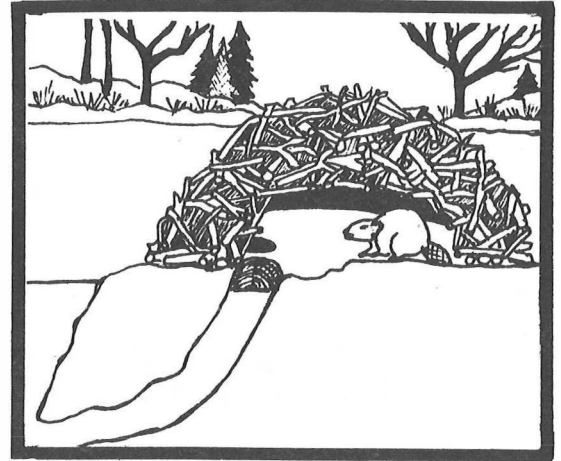


WASPS: PAPER CONDOMINIUMS

Paper wasps make nests for their larvae out of weathered wood chewed to a pulp and mixed with saliva to form a durable papier-mache (PAY-per ma-SHAY).

BEAVERS: LOG CABINS

Sharp teeth for cutting branches and agile "hands" for construction are the only tools used by this mammal when building its lodge.

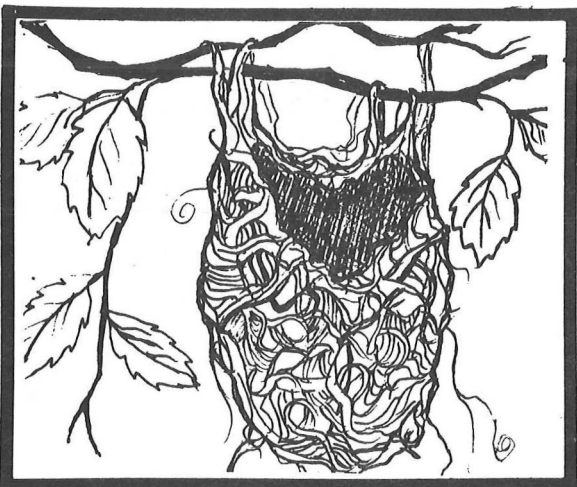


SWALLOWS: MUD APARTMENTS

You've probably seen clusters of these gourd-shaped nests plastered to the sides of buildings, bridges, and cliffs. They're made from mud pellets which are built up in layers similar to the way a potter makes a clay pot.

CATERPILLARS: SILK TENTS

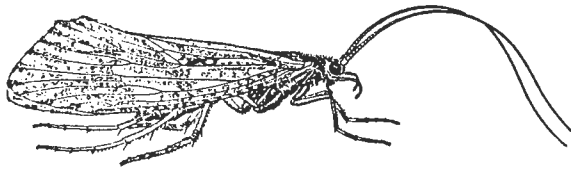
These webs are created by tent caterpillars in the branches of wild plum and chokecherry trees; the tents are good protection from predators.



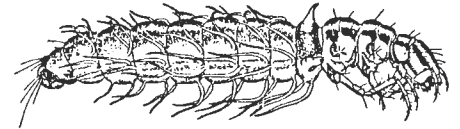
ORIOLES: GRASS BASKETS

These colorful birds also weave yarn, fishline, feathers, and horsehair into their sturdy nests, which hang from the limbs of cottonwoods and other tall trees.

Mobile Homes



Caddis Adult

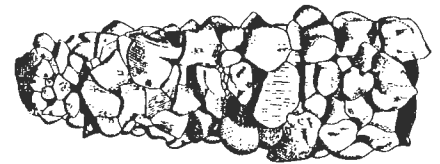
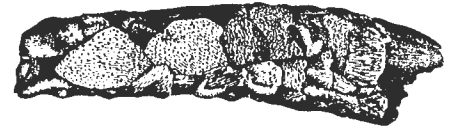


Caddis larva

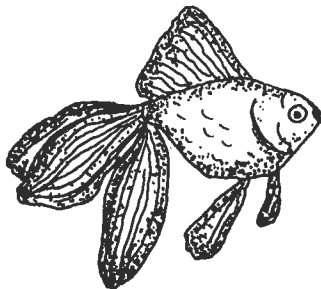
Turtles and snails are never without a hiding place when danger strikes - for they can tuck themselves into their own "mobile homes". But these shells are not really homes. They are not built, but grow as part of the animal's body. A turtle can't come out of his shell all the way; the shell is part of the turtle.

Other creatures really do have mobile homes..... In ponds and streams you can find larvae of caddis flies. These 'larvae' (a caterpillar is the larva a butterfly) live and grow in the water protected by "mobile homes" that they build out of whatever is handy - glued together with silk threads and spit. If the river has tiny pebbles or mica, the caddis larva will make his home of pebbles and mica. If the pond has little bits of twigs or stems of plants, that's what will be made into the caddis-house. The caddis mobile home is protection for the growing larva until it hatches out into a moth-like fly, the tiny brown kind you can often find fluttering about in the long grass of a pond or river bank.

Can YOU think of other animals that live in mobile homes?



Caddis larval Houses



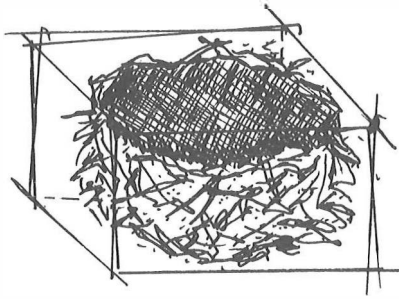
Who Lives with You?

Perhaps you live with a parent or two? Sisters? Brothers? Maybe even some pets - dog? cat? lizard or goldfish?

Do you know that you also share your home with quite a few other animals? Inside you may spot a spider or two scurrying away into a dark corner or lurking in the tub, or see moths fluttering at a window or a light. Outside you can look for spiders' webs across the corners of window frames, ready to catch unwary flies or ants. You may find ant lions - or at least their traps - in warm sandy places and roly-polly bugs under loose boards or logs.

Got a minute with nothing to do? Then go and explore your home inside and out and keep a notebook of all the animals who live with you.

Collecting Nests

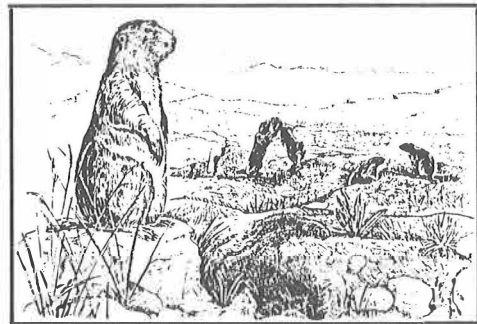


Fall and winter are good times to find birdnests of the past summer. Nests found now may be removed and displayed in your home or school. Before collecting the nest, you may wish to record observations in your field notebook--location, size, shape, height from the ground, and materials used for construction. Can you tell what kind of bird built the nest?

Home Sweet Home

Match the animals with their homes.
Answers are below.

- | | | | |
|----|-------------|-----|----------------|
| 1 | Beaver | --- | a nest |
| 2 | Prairie dog | --- | b drey |
| 3 | Fox | --- | c town |
| 4 | Badger | --- | d hill |
| 5 | Eagle | --- | e hive |
| 6 | Robin | --- | f lodge |
| 7 | Jack rabbit | --- | g tent |
| 8 | Caterpillar | --- | h eyrie |
| 9 | Squirrel | --- | i sett |
| 10 | Bee | --- | j rookery |
| 11 | Heron | --- | k form |
| 12 | Ant | --- | l earth or den |



We have a new address! 5201 St. Vrain Rd., Longmont, CO 80503.
You can still find events in the Images calendar!



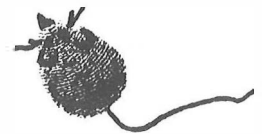
Mailbox

What animal homes do you find? Please send drawings, copies of field notes, or any other nature news to: NATURE DETECTIVES, Boulder County Parks and Open Space, P.O. Box 471, Boulder, CO 80306.

**** NATURE DETECTIVES' SPECIAL PROGRAM ****

"Animal Homes Hike"--Winter is a good time to look for nests and other animal homes that were so hard to find when the trees were leafy and the grass was tall! Come to Walden Ponds to look for hundreds of homes. Details in the Images calendar.

ANSWERS: 1f. 2c. 3l. 4i. 5h. 6a. 7k. 8g. 9b. 10e. 11j. 12d.



Calendar of Events

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



HISTORIC ALTONA SCHOOL OPEN HOUSE

Sunday, Sept. 8, 11 a.m.-2 p.m. Altona Schoolhouse at Heil Valley Ranch (park at the Corral Trailhead at Heil Valley Ranch and hike 10 minutes on Schoolhouse Loop to the Altona School).

Drop by anytime between 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. to go inside the historic schoolhouse where students studied and played from 1880 to the World War II era. Volunteers will be on hand to share the school's history and restoration with visitors. If time allows, you can take part in a game or spelling bee. Registration not required.

SOME LIKE IT HOT: WARM SEASON GRASSES

Saturday, Sept. 14, 10 a.m.-12:30 p.m.
Ron Stewart Preserve at Rabbit Mountain, Longmont
Adults (Ages 13 & Older)

Have you ever wondered about the grasses growing along the trail? Join us for a moderate 2-mile hike at Ron Stewart Preserve at Rabbit Mountain to learn about the warm-season grasses of the foothills. We'll search for grasses while we discuss their vital role in the ecosystem and how they combat climate change. Look closely, and you might develop a new appreciation for our beautiful yet often overlooked grasses!

FULL MOON HIKE: MOONLIGHT AT THE PONDS

Sunday, Sept. 15, 7-9 p.m.
Walden Ponds Wildlife Habitat, Boulder

Join volunteer naturalists for a walk under the moon's light. Learn more about our earth's natural satellite and discover some of the ways that wildlife adapts to life at night.

ART IN THE PARKS: CREATING FUN, NATURE-INSPIRED ART

Tuesday, Sept. 17, 3:30-6 p.m.
Wapiti Trailhead at Heil Valley Ranch, Boulder
Adults (Ages 13 & Older)

Get creative in nature! Join us for a fun-filled outdoor art experience. We'll use the park as our inspiration to create amazing works of art. Let your imagination guide you as you explore different sketching techniques using classic drawing supplies. Supplies will be provided. All skill levels are welcome!

MOOSE ON THE LOOSE!

Saturday, Sept. 21, 9-11:30 a.m.
Caribou Ranch, Nederland
Adults (Ages 13 & Older)

Have you noticed that there are more moose in the high country than ever before? Join us for a moderate hike at Caribou Ranch to learn about the successful reintroduction of the moose to Colorado. We'll talk about the past, present, and future of moose in Boulder County.

PRAIRIE DOGS: THE PILLAR OF THE PRAIRIE SLIDESHOW PROGRAM

Tuesday, Sept. 24, 6:30-8 p.m.
Lyons Community Library, 451 4th Ave., Lyons

The prairie dog is more than a cute little rodent who chews up the grass. This entertaining presentation by volunteer naturalists dives into this fascinating creature's social structure, life cycle, behavior, and language.

FALL IN THE FOOTHILLS SLIDESHOW PROGRAM

Saturday, Sept. 28, 2-3:30 p.m.
Louisville Public Library, 951 Spruce St., Louisville

Join us in celebrating autumn through an exciting indoor slide and activity program! Explore the beauty of our county's open spaces virtually and discover the best spots to enjoy the vibrant colors of this season's beautiful plants. Whether you're looking for a scenic picnic spot near a trailhead, a hike along picturesque paths that showcase fall's splendor, or a leisurely ramble to study our area's diverse birds and flora, we've got you covered!

ARTS IN THE PARKS: LIGHT AND SHADOW

Tuesday, Oct. 1, 3:30-6 p.m.
Pella Crossing, Longmont
Adults (Ages 13 & Older)

Unleash your creativity with the magic of light and shadow! Join us for a fun-filled outdoor experience where we'll explore the interplay of light and darkness through art. Discover new ways to see the world around you and create unique pieces inspired by nature's masterpieces. All skill levels are welcome!

THE COLOR OF NATURE: KIDS PROGRAM**Saturday, Oct. 5, 10 a.m.-noon.****Betasso Preserve, Boulder****Ages 5 to 8**

Using activities, we will learn about what is happening in the fall when the colors of nature show off. We'll look for animals that stand out or camouflage and examine the changes plants are going through as they all prepare for winter. This program is geared toward children ages 5 to 8, but all are welcome.

OWLS OF BOULDER COUNTY SLIDESHOW PROGRAM**Tuesday, Oct. 15, 6:30-7:30 p.m.****Lafayette Public Library, 775 Baseline Rd., Lafayette.**

More than half of the owl species in the United States have been seen in Boulder County. These owls live here during parts of the year, and most will build their nests here. Join volunteer naturalists for an indoor slide program to explore these fascinating and diverse creatures and learn about the adaptations that make them expert hunters.

BLACK BEARS IN OUR BACKYARD**Wednesday, Oct. 23, 1-3:30 p.m.****Betasso Preserve, Boulder**

Black bears are busy gorging on berries and other food in preparation for their long winter sleep. Join volunteer naturalists on a moderate 3-mile hike to learn about the life cycle of the black bear and how people and bears can share our wild places.

A MINDFUL WALK AMONG THE ASPENS**Friday, Oct. 25, 10 a.m.-1 p.m.****Caribou Ranch, Nederland****Adults (Ages 13 & Older)**

Join volunteer naturalists on a mostly flat, 3-mile hike to the aspen groves at Caribou Ranch. While resting among the aspen, we will practice mindful observation. Learn what we've discovered about aspen, mindfulness, the natural world, and what remains unknown. We'll take time to reflect together on what we've observed and what we can still learn from nature.

DEEP TIME WALK**Saturday, Oct. 26, 10 a.m.-12:30 p.m.****Pella Crossing, Longmont**

Join volunteer naturalists for a "journey" where one walks the age of the Earth, approximately 4.6 billion years, in 3 miles. In this "Deep Time Walk," each step corresponds to 1 million years. Therefore, all human history happens in the last few inches! During this walk, a journey through the Earth's geological time, we describe some of the most critical moments of our planet's history and how life evolved from simple organisms to all the species we know today.

BIRDS OF PREY SLIDESHOW PROGRAM**Tuesday, Oct. 19, 6:30-8 p.m.****Lyons Community Library, 451 4th Ave., Lyons.****Adults (Ages 13 & Older)**

Join us for a fun slideshow program and learn to recognize birds of prey, including hawks, eagles, and falcons, that fly in the skies above Boulder County. Volunteers will share tips to help you distinguish among raptors by identifying field marks, behavior, location, and time of year.

GOBBLE! GOBBLE! WILD TURKEY PROGRAM**Sunday, Nov. 10, 10 a.m.-12:30 p.m.****Wapiti Trailhead at Heil Valley Ranch, Boulder**

How fast can a turkey run? Do they fly? Did you know wild turkeys can be found all over the Front Range, including at Heil Valley Ranch? Come learn all about wild turkeys during this program, which includes a short hike, hands-on crafts, and games.

THROUGH TIME AND STONE: EXPLORING GEOLOGY AT HALL RANCH**Saturday, Nov. 16, 10 a.m.-12:30 p.m.****Hall Ranch, Lyons****Adults (Ages 13 & Older)**

Join volunteer naturalists on a moderate 2.5-mile hike to explore Hall Ranch's remarkable geology. During the hike, you'll observe different rock formations that took millions of years to form. Learn more about how the mountains and canyons in this area were created while taking in incredible views!

THE TREACHEROUS JOURNEY SOUTH SLIDESHOW PROGRAM**Thursday, Nov. 7, 6-7:30 p.m.****Ron Stewart Parks & Open Space Building, Longmont****Adults (Ages 13 & Older)**

Most birdwatchers focus on birds migrating north, but the trip south is even more critical and dangerous. Birds face many risks, like predators and man-made obstacles. And young birds that are not good at flying yet, have a hard time migrating south to their winter homes. Join us to learn how these young birds make their journey, find their winter homes, and see the mass migration of raptors.

BIRDS OF PREY DRIVING TOUR**Saturday, Nov. 23, 9 a.m.-noon.****Near Longmont**

Join volunteer naturalists for a driving tour of some of the best areas to view birds of prey. We will drive in search of raptors, learn about habitat, and work on identification skills. If available, bring binoculars and a bird field guide.

Know before you go! Remember to plan ahead, know your limits, and do not take unnecessary risks. Check boco.org/closures or boco.org/trails for the latest information on your favorite parks.

2024-25 Hunting Season Closure

Ron Stewart Preserve at Rabbit Mountain will be closed Monday and Tuesday from Oct. 7 through Jan. 31 for elk management through limited hunting. If hunters are successful early in the week, the park will be reopened the following day. The park is open Wednesday through Sunday and on the following days:

Oct. 21-22 OPEN

Nov. 25-26 OPEN (Thanksgiving week)

Dec. 23-24 OPEN (Christmas week)

Jan. 20-21 OPEN (Martin Luther King Jr. week)

For more information, please visit boco.org/elk.

HIKES FOR SENIORS

Join our volunteer naturalists for easy-paced hikes on open space to explore and learn about the unique geology, history, plants, and wildlife of these beautiful properties. Open to seniors 60 and older.

CAL-WOOD FIRE RECOVERY

Thursday, Sept. 19, 9-11 a.m.

Wapiti Trailhead at Heil Valley Ranch, Boulder

Join us for a leisurely walk through the areas where the Cal-Wood Fire came through Heil Valley Ranch. Discover the recovering landscapes while we look for the birds, fall wildflowers, and grasses that are helping to bring the area back to life.

AUTUMN BIRDS OF THE FRONT RANGE

Thursday, Oct. 17, 9-11 a.m.

Ron Stewart Preserve at Rabbit Mountain, Longmont

Explore the vibrant birdlife in Rabbit Mountain Open Space during the fall. Experience the beauty of nature and the joy of birdwatching as we observe the diverse Colorado Front Range bird species. This easy-to-moderate hike of 1 to 2 miles is on uneven trails.

WILDLIFE IN YOUR BACKYARD

Thursday, Nov. 21, 9-11 a.m.

Twin Lakes, Boulder

Join us on this easy walk to learn about the fascinating creatures that share the outdoor spaces near your home! Explore the diverse wildlife of Boulder County plains, from birds and mammals to reptiles and insects.

Play Ball! Annual Vintage Baseball Game and Heritage Day

fun
for all
ages!

Sunday, Oct. 6, noon-3 p.m.

Walker Ranch Homestead, 7701 Flagstaff Road, approximately seven miles west of Boulder. Registration not required.

Drop by anytime between noon and 3 p.m. to enjoy an old-fashioned



vintage baseball game in the picturesque and historic setting of Walker Ranch Homestead. The Walker Ranchers, local recruits, will play a team from the Colorado Vintage Base Ball Association.

The game will be played using 19th-century rules. "Base ball" was two words back then. Those watching the game are cranks, rooters, or bugs; players are ballists. A hurler pitches the ball to the behind, or catcher. No gloves or helmets are worn, and a cloth ball and cloth bases are used. Listen for the players' nicknames and a bell ringing as players reach home plate.

Bring your own lawn chairs and blankets for seating. No food will be available on-site, so please bring a picnic and drinking water for your household. Costumed volunteers will also share games and chores of the past for visitors to take part in.

MINING PROGRAMS

GOLD PANNING

Saturday, Oct. 12, noon-2 p.m.

Nederland Mining Museum 200 N. Bridge St., Nederland

Ages 5 and older

This activity led to the European settlement of Boulder County as people sought their fortunes. Do you have what it takes to travel back in time and search for gold?

HARD ROCK MINING VAN TOUR

Thursdays, Sept. 19 and Oct. 10, 9:30 a.m.-1 p.m.

Nederland Mining Museum, 200 N. Bridge St., Nederland.

Tour open to ages 10 and older.

Tap into the towns, tools, and characters of our hard rock mining heritage by visiting mining sites of years gone by. Some walking required.

**Sign up for our monthly hikes
and events e-newsletter at
boco.org/HikesEvents**

AGRICULTURAL HERITAGE CENTER

8348 Ute Highway 66, Longmont

FUN ON THE FARM: FARM ANIMALS CAN COOK?

Friday, Sept. 13, 9:45-10:30 a.m.

Children ages 3 to 6 will love to visit the farm to learn about animals, plants, and agricultural life. The Farm Animals Can Cook? program shares a bilingual story for National Hispanic Heritage Month about the farm animals helping the farmer cook a yummy dessert. Program includes hands-on activities and a take-home craft. Afterwards, explore the farm and meet the farm animals from the story. This is the final Fun on the Farm for the 2024 season. Registration not required.

HAMMERING ON THE FARM

Fridays, Sept. 20 and Oct. 18, 10 a.m.-noon.

Drop by anytime from 10 a.m. to noon to watch the blacksmith work his craft. Listen to the clang-clang-clang of the hammer and the hum of the coal forge blower. Learn about blacksmithing tools, such as hammers, tongs, anvils, swage blocks, and more. Registration not required.

YOGA ON THE FARM

Fridays, Sept. 20 and Oct. 11, 9-10 a.m.

Ages 12 and up.

Join Andrea Van Sambeek (certified yoga instructor) for a gentle yoga class and take in the views from your mat. Pause, breathe, and revitalize in this idyllic setting. After connecting with breath and movement, stay to explore all the Agricultural Heritage Center has to offer. Please bring your own yoga mat. All levels are welcome!

AGRICULTURAL HERITAGE CENTER DETAILS

Hours: April-Oct. 27, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. 10 a.m.-5 p.m.

Admission: Free.

Tours are offered on open days at 11 a.m. No registration required

The farm includes two barns with interactive exhibits, a milk house, heirloom garden, and a furnished 1909 farmhouse. During the busy season there are also animals on site, including chickens, pigs, sheep, and other critters. For additional information visit boco.org/ahc.

Wanted! Volunteers for National Public Lands Day

On Saturday, Sept. 28, we will celebrate annual National Public Lands Day.

National Public Lands Day fosters community building by bringing together volunteers of all ages and abilities to work toward a common goal.

It's a chance for volunteers to roll up their sleeves and work side by side, while also enjoying the benefits of spending time outdoors and engaging in physical activity.

This is a national effort that fosters a collective sense of care and responsibility toward our recreational, historic, and cultural public land sites. Please go to our website to sign up for a project.

boco.org/volunteer

Be a Volunteer Naturalist!

If you enjoy nature and sharing your knowledge with others, apply to be a volunteer naturalist!

Volunteer naturalists lead nature hikes, present interpretive programs, and provide hands-on experiences to people of all ages. We highly encourage people interested in sharing nature with school groups, both on trails and in the classroom, to apply.

Volunteers are provided with a 10-week immersive training that covers local wildlife, plants, ecology, and geology. You will also learn interpretive techniques to connect audiences of all ages to nature.

TRAINING INFORMATION: Training classes take place on Fridays, Jan. 10 through March 14, 2025, from 8:30 a.m.-4 p.m. in Longmont.

Application deadline is Oct. 31, 2024, or until all positions are filled.

Please visit boco.org/naturalist for more information and to complete an application.

Junior & Senior Fishing Derby

Saturday, Oct. 19, 9 a.m.-noon. Wally Toevs Pond at Walden Ponds Wildlife Habitat off of 75th St. between Jay Road and Valmont Road in Boulder. Registration not required.

Create your fishing dream team of one senior and one junior angler and come enjoy a beautiful fall morning fishing together for prizes and fun. Participants need one senior, 65 or older, and one junior, 15 or younger, to fish together as a team. Prizes will be awarded to the team that catches the heaviest trout, has the largest age difference, and are first to catch the limit.

- Drop by anytime between 9 a.m.-noon.
- The pond is stocked with rainbow trout — artificial and live bait are permitted.
- Bring your own fishing gear and lawn chairs for seating.
- Seniors must have a valid Colorado fishing license.
- A wheelchair-accessible pier is available.

For more information visit boco.org/FishingDerby

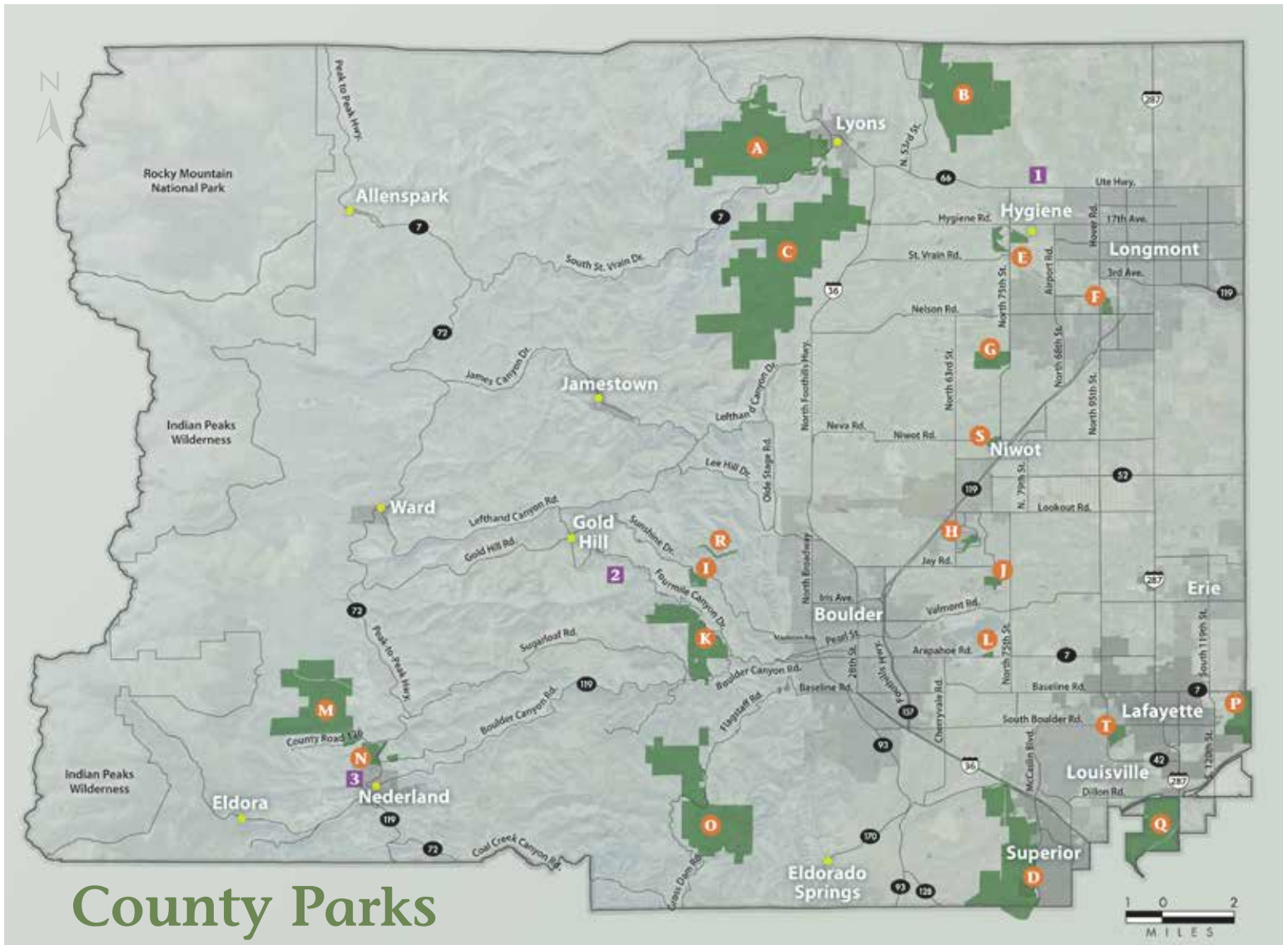




Parks & Open Space

5201 St. Vrain Road, Longmont, CO 80503

www.BoulderCountyOpenSpace.org



County Parks

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