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IMAGES

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

PHOTOGRAPHS & ILLUSTRATIONS

Cover: Sweeping Mountain View, Zach Moran
Mining History, Carnegie Library for Local History / Museum of Boulder Collection
Trail Magic, Ann Cooper
*Uncredited photos from BCPOS Collection

NATURE DETECTIVES

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Volume 46, number 4



Rooted and Reaching: Celebrating 50 Years of Conservation and Community in Boulder County



Therese Glowacki - Parks & Open Space Director

Boulder County Parks & Open Space (BCPOS) is celebrating 50 years of protecting and managing unique and priceless lands in Boulder County. This experiment in land use — dreamed up by visionary naturalists, planners, policymakers, and activists — has taken hold throughout Colorado and the United States. Protecting national parks and forests is not new, but coming together as a community to protect the small, important natural treasures in our backyards is what sets Boulder County apart.

BCPOS is so special because of its major goals: preserving the unique biodiversity in our county, defining urban boundaries around towns, protecting

agriculture, and providing quality recreation and places for the community to connect with nature and each other.

Using sales tax dedicated to open space and property taxes, which support local government, we have protected more than 110,000 acres, built 120 miles of regional and mountain trails, preserved 26,000 acres of agricultural land, and kept our towns from merging together. When friends or family visit from outside our county, I often hear them say, “I saw cows on my way here” as though they are surprised that an urban area like Boulder or Longmont would still have cows in the fields. I tell them it was not by accident. Boulder County could have looked like the larger Denver metro area where one town runs into another with only a road to divide them. But open space preservation buffers our towns and keeps active agriculture, including cows, in the fields.

We also have fantastic hiking trails and access to streams, lakes, rivers, and of course, the mountains. Our trails are constructed to be sustainable, reducing their impact on the land and built to last for generations.

In all of this work, we prioritize protecting the most valuable wildlife habitat and reducing the human impact on it. Our extremely knowledgeable and dedicated biologists have inventoried the county and identified rare and important forests, grasslands, streams, and wetlands to preserve. We do a lot of this by controlling noxious weeds, planting and reseeding after floods or fires, and, more recently, reclaiming and restoring land that has been turned inside out from mining. Our mine restoration projects include the Highway 7 andesite quarry and the Cemex limestone quarry near Lyons, the Cardinal Mill hard rock mine near Nederland, and the newest Prairie Run Open Space on the east county line. East Boulder Creek, as it passes through Prairie Run, has been straightened for mining and agriculture and doesn't function as quality

riparian habitat. Our team is working with restoration contractors to design a dynamic and resilient stream with adjacent wetlands. We'll be monitoring as wildlife return to this area in abundance.

We are doing this work for you, our community, so we all have clean air and water, and a chance to get out into nature. We are expanding who we work with to include members of our Latinx, Indigenous, and LGBTQ communities. We want our visitors, volunteers, and staff to reflect the diversity of our county. Every day, we are taking steps in that direction with intention and commitment.

Although we have accomplished protecting 110,000 acres in our 50 years as an agency, there is still so much more to do. Please join us in celebrating our 50th year by volunteering with us on a restoration project, seed collection, or trail maintenance project; visiting a local farm and supporting our Boulder County farmers; or by joining us on a hike led by enthusiastic volunteers. Together, we can improve and enjoy our open spaces and make them welcoming to all.



Mining History and the Minority Experience

by Ashley Matthews

Colorado's history is rich and complex, with significant contributions from various minority groups. Mining was one of the primary foundations for growth in Colorado and began here in 1859. Just as "Bleeding Kansas" helped spark the Civil War, an economic depression bore down on struggling Americans and mining in California began to cool, creating the very conditions for Colorado's own gold rush.

Many minority groups were key contributors to Colorado's mining history. African Americans faced considerable challenges, including racial discrimination and segregation; however, they found ways to participate in the industry, often working in lower-paying, labor-intensive roles.



African American miner poses in front of a large shaft house.

The daily life for an African American in a mining camp likely ebbed and flowed with the comfort and community that came from close friendships to the very opposite experience, perhaps moments later, of hostile individuals and intense discrimination. They navigated the transition to freedom with newfound hope and possibility, and their hard work in the mines often reflected that. Much like their European American counterparts, they sought to improve their lives through land ownership, homesteading, and creating strong community bonds. Building a life and caring for their families were of utmost importance for many African American men laboring in mining towns.

This drive in the make of the West was not unusual. The Chinese, though they were encouraged and invited by the governor of Colorado to fill the labor shortage created once hard rock mining began in earnest, were often treated with hostility by Americans.

American miners would often comment that when the

Chinese came into a mining town, this was indication that the mine was losing money. Many Chinese, however, came to Colorado having gained considerable skills in mining and agricultural work in California. More than 20,000 Chinese workers were hired to navigate the treacherous Sierra Mountains to build the western section of the Transcontinental Railroad between 1865 and 1869.

Their work ethic and unique perspective gave them a laser focus. The average stay in the United States for a Chinese man (called a bachelor population) was six years, and if they survived the dangerous and difficult work and saved enough money (most saved nearly \$30 per month), they would return to China with more than \$2,000 — enough to retire. This drive, alongside prowess, made many Chinese men extremely successful at finding gold left behind in mines already abandoned by American miners. During the winter months, Chinese miners would light small fires to melt the ice on frigid Colorado creeks and continue to placer mine. They also worked doing laundry, which was desperately needed because many American men refused to do "a woman's job" and women were too scarce to fill the need. Chinese men took no offense in working hard this way and filling the gap, which brought them closer to home.



Chinese and American miners work side by side at a placer mine in Boulder County.

As the Chinese braved the hard and dangerous work of building railroads and working mines in a hostile foreign land away from their families, African American men and women began, for the first time, to try to build their lives and their homes as Americans, free from slavery. Meanwhile, Hispanic individuals and families found their homes changing nations right under their feet in just the span of a generation.

For instance, a child born in 1800, in what is now southern Colorado's San Luis Valley, would have been under the citizenship of Spain, France, Mexico, and finally, America, all before 1850.

Many Hispanic families had settled in what is the present-day San Luis Valley hundreds of years before. Many men worked in mines in Mexico and were highly skilled miners by the time they began working in the coal mines of eastern Boulder County. They often worked in the beet fields in the summer when the coal mines stopped running until demand picked up again.



Mexican laborers and their children pose in a field of sugar beets in Niwot in 1908.

Many Hispanic men who made their way to Boulder County came from the area around Trinidad where they mined until an economic depression forced expansion north to the coal fields of Lafayette.

Coal mining was no less treacherous than hard rock mining. Despite this, many workers were children who were forced to give up schooling at around the eighth grade to help provide for their families. One man tells the story of being 9 years old and having to try to pass for 13 and work with a pickax for hours in the coal mines. His hands became one massive blister after the first day because the ax handle was so splintered it cut into his palms. He ate in the dark, dealt with frigid temperatures, and later went on to fight for fair working conditions as an adult alongside other men during volatile labor strikes. Though Hispanic populations had been in the area for hundreds of years, they often faced discrimination but maintained strong cultural ties, which helped them form tight-knit communities.

Finally, it is the Utes, Cheyenne, and Arapaho, that once lived throughout present day Colorado for thousands of years, who ended up suffering the most. For example, the Utes were not one tribe but rather three bands governed by their own chiefs. Despite this, Chief Ouray was appointed as the chief of all of the bands by a white U.S. government official because this Uncompagndre chief spoke great English and was considered a great leader by white men. It is speculated that Ouray was too friendly with the Americans, and, as a result,

he often failed the bands in negotiating well on their behalf. The Brunot Agreement was one such arrangement, which sealed the fate of the Utes and relocated them to reservations with false promises for continued access to the western half of Colorado for hunting and foraging. Their once unfettered territory that met a need for each season was winnowed down to nothing as miners following veins of gold and silver deep into Ute territory and high into the mountains took precedence over any previously negotiated agreements. Ute reservations in southern Colorado and Utah are now just a tiny fraction of the lands they had once worked and lived.



Ute men, women, and children in front of tepee at the 1909 Boulder Semi-Centennial Celebration.

Other immigrant groups, including Italians, Irish, and Eastern Europeans, also played essential roles in Colorado's mining history. These groups often formed their own communities within mining towns and brought valuable skills and labor to the industry. They faced their own sets of challenges and discrimination but were integral to the development of the mining sector.

The impact of minorities and Natives on Colorado is undeniable. Mining towns supported, embraced, discouraged, and discriminated against a variety of cultures. Each of these cultures had their own sets of valuable skills, perspectives, and ultimately shared a drive with all who made their home in the West: to create a better life and care for their families and communities.

Despite the additional hardships minority groups faced in an already difficult climate and industry, their history and legacy is a testament to their resilience and contributions in spite of significant barriers. Minority communities in Colorado continue to be pivotal in the state's strong cultural and economic fabric.



Trail Magic by Ann Cooper



Ever had one of those days when your to-do list overwhelmed your time available, and exercise became one more chore to fit in? Join the club! On a day like that, I arrived at Walden Ponds Wildlife Habitat in a grumpy mood, planning to do a dutiful and speedy trail circuit, but grudging every minute. Until . . .

Halfway along the boardwalk, I stopped in my tracks. Coming toward me was this handsome creature in no apparent hurry to leave. We stared at each other. Minutes passed. Finally, he or she effortlessly scaled the low wooden barrier and vanished into the marshy undergrowth.

It was as if the bobcat appeared at that precise moment to prompt me to slow down, to savor the moment, to smell life's roses! For the rest of a very slow circuit, I was hyper alert, intent only on noticing. My chores dwindled into insignificance. These were the things in life that mattered:



- a tiny vole scurrying and stopping to nibble
- an impossibly vivid grasshopper
- a camouflaged woodhouse's toad hiding among pebbles
- a gorgeous wasp
- a stunning wood duck
- a bright bullfrog, its eye and reflected eye gleaming orange

By the time I left Walden Ponds Wildlife Habitat, my grumps had gone and my mood was joyous! That's trail magic. Try it!



NATURE DETECTIVES

Winter 2024-25

Text by Pam Sherman
Illustrations by Emily Lark

Discover Secrets of Seeds!

What are seeds? What do they look like?

What's that big thing at the center of your peach and plum? What are those little hard brown things inside your apple core? Yes, those are seeds. The baby plants inside them ready to unfold and grow into a new apple, peach or plum tree.



Seeds come in all shapes and sizes and colors. Can you find the seeds in the tomatoes you eat? The melons? Some watermelons have very few seeds these days, but older varieties and other melons still have them. Can you find the seeds in cucumbers? Can you find the pea and the bean seeds in the pea and bean pods? Hint: the peas and beans are the seeds! Another trick question for you: what does corn seed look like? It's the kernels!

Here's another tricky one: what are bread and cookies made of? Flour, right? But what is flour? Ground-up seeds of the plant we call wheat! We also make cookies from oat seeds and bread from rye and barley seeds. They are called grain and are in the grass family.

Pull Out and Save



What does the flour look like when it's still seeds? There are many different types of wheat and the seeds of each look different from each other, too. When you take a drive in the eastern part of our county you can see lots of these growing in farmers' fields.

When you make rice, what are you cooking? Yup, the seeds. Do all rice seeds look alike? There are fat, short, sticky rice seeds and long, thin non-sticky rice seeds. Some are white, some are red, some black.

With every food you prepare and eat, can you find the seeds? Some are easy, some are harder. Can you find the seeds in strawberries? Hint: they are not inside it. In raspberries? Blueberries?

Here's a tricky one: can you find the seeds of lettuce? Have you ever seen a lettuce seed? When lettuce is going to seed, it hardly looks like the same plant you put in your salad. The lettuce grows into a kind of tower, with tiny yellow flowers and tiny, fluffy seeds. If you know a gardener, ask them to leave at least one lettuce plant to go to seed next summer so you can see it and save its seeds! Another tiny seed is carrot seed. If you sneeze or blow even lightly over lettuce or carrot seeds, you might scatter them all over the room.

Have you eaten pine tree seeds? What a strange question! But yes, trees have seeds just like veggies. If you have eaten a pine nut from a Colorado pinyon pine tree, you have eaten its seed. It's called a nut because to some people it looks like one, but don't be fooled: it is really the tree's seed. (Do your grownups know this?)

What's so important about seeds?

For starters, they contain the new baby plants inside a protective shell — some are hard, some are soft. If we cut the flower or pull up the plant before it makes seeds or before the seeds are fully formed, there will be no new baby plants.

Do you like chocolate cake? Lots of people do. Does chocolate cake come from a seed? That seems like a silly question, but what are the ingredients? If you make the cake yourself or if you buy a mix, the same ingredients are in there: chocolate, milk, wheat flour, vanilla, eggs, sugar, to name some of the main ones.

Does chocolate come from a seed? You bet, from a tropical cacao plant. What about vanilla? Isn't it a liquid? Vanilla is from a beautiful tropical orchid, so it's from a seed. We already talked about wheat flour. What about sugar? Right again! It can come from beets which grow right here in Colorado.

But milk doesn't come from a seed, does it?

It's from a cow and a cow is not a plant, it's an animal. But how does the cow grow big and strong enough to give milk? It eats grass and other plants in the pasture and the seeds of those plants. That's how. You've probably seen cows munching away as you drive by farms in our county.



Same with eggs: they don't grow from a seed, they come from a chicken, of course. What do chickens love to eat to make them grow and stay healthy? Seeds!

Do you wear cotton t-shirts or jeans? Where does the cotton come from? Yup, cotton seeds. Do you wear wool in the winter to keep warm? Where does the wool come from? Yup, sheep. And sheep eat grasses and all kinds of other plants and their seeds.

Does your family use canola oil or sesame seed oil in cooking? Or walnut or almond oil? These oils come from the seeds themselves. Olive oil is from the fruit just around the seed. Does your family use coriander or fennel seed or dill seed in cooking? All these are seeds from plants.

Have you ever seen a necklace made of hard seeds? People all over the world have made beautiful jewelry and art with seeds for thousands of years and we still do it!

How do seeds travel?

Now that it's winter, you can find seeds all over on plants growing near houses, shops, other buildings, on farms, in gardens, in

natural areas. When you go outside, what seeds can you find to collect? Everyone at some point has blown dandelion seeds

and watched them float with the wind. Have you watched maple seeds twirl in the wind? They are called samaras but most people call them "little helicopters."

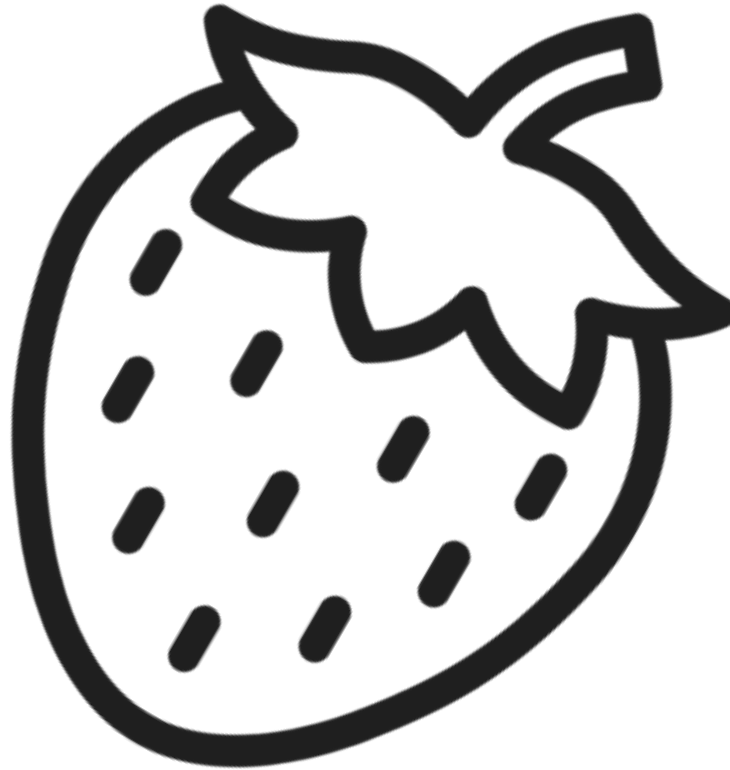
Some plants, like the invasive leafy spurge, burst open and shoot their seeds out far away from the parent plant so they have a chance to grow. Some, like milkweed, just split open when the seeds are ready. Have you seen that? Some plants like our native mountain mahogany actually shoot their seeds into the ground. They are feathery and shaped like little corkscrew drills and drill themselves into the soil to plant themselves!

Some plants drop their waterproof seeds into the stream, which carries them to a new place to grow. Some like the famous burdocks have seeds with teeny hairs with teeny hooks that stick tighter than sticky tape to an animal's fur or your socks.



ACTIVITIES

How many different places can you find seeds from garden veggies, lawn weeds, or wild, native plants? Do you find them on flowers, bushes, trees? They'll be on the plant or on the ground. Where you find birds eating, you will often find seeds. How many different colors can you find? How many different shapes? Lay them out and see. You can even make a seed picture by gluing the different shapes and colors into a pattern. Collect seeds from your pantry (dried beans, nuts, sunflower seeds, etc.) and fill in the strawberry shape to make seed art. Be creative!



Take one seed that grows easily and put it in a little soil inside a small cup. Water it a bit at first, but don't drown it. If you know what the seed is, you can read up on how to care for it. If you don't know what it is, have fun and learn what it wants by how it responds to your care. Put it in the window so it gets some light. How much light does it want? How much water does it want? Watch it grow. How long does it take your seed to sprout? Next spring when it's warm, transfer it to a bigger container or plant it outside. Just as seeds give us gifts of food, clothing, warmth, and beauty, you can give that seed a gift, too, by learning about what it likes best and taking care of it.

Conservation Awards

On Sept. 18, Boulder County Parks & Open Space (BCPOS) held the annual Conservation Awards ceremony to celebrate the 2024 winners for their outstanding contributions made to the conservation, preservation, and protection of land-based environmental resources as well as their contributions toward connecting our communities to open space. Here are highlights from the special gathering for this year's recipients:

LAND CONSERVATION AWARD

The Land Conservation Award recognizes contributions that demonstrate notable achievements in preserving Boulder County's open space lands through the sale or donation of land or conservation easements, donation of funds, or through significant activities that resulted in the preservation of open space.

Conrad Lattes was the Assistant County Attorney for Boulder County, representing BCPOS for 22 years. Over that time, he facilitated the acquisition of more than 55,000 acres of open space lands and conservation easements, which are now permanently protected. Staff appreciated Conrad's sage advice over the years. His real estate work enables BCPOS to implement all department goals, which include preserving natural resources, cultural resources, and agricultural resources, as well as providing quality recreation and environmental education on county open space.

ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP AWARD

The Environmental Stewardship Award recognizes contributions and activities that have made a significant impact on the conservation, preservation, and/or protection of Boulder County's land-based environmental resources through on-the-ground actions or program management.

The Innovation Center of St. Vrain Valley Schools (IC) — specifically Jayme Sneider, Nathan Wilcox, Mai Vu, Axel Reitzig, Joe McBreen, and Darrell Self — makes significant impacts on the conservation and preservation of Boulder County's environmental resources through on-the-ground actions and program management. These activities include the preservation of threatened wildlife, monitoring of natural ecosystems, and providing hands-on scientific education.

Over the past five years, IC has developed new technologies and methods to successfully restore threatened native wildlife species to private and public land in Boulder County, provided hands-on wildlife management and research experience to a diversity of local students, and continues to develop and deploy innovative technologies for monitoring natural resources — all driven by local students, teachers, and mentors.

IC works with private landowners and multiple government agencies to monitor habitats and release more rare native species. Their student teams effectively reach out to landowners and set up field visits to conduct their work, and frequently present their results to the community.

OUTSTANDING VOLUNTEER AWARD

The Outstanding Volunteer Award honors individuals whose leadership and support of the BCPOS volunteer programs have enhanced our community partnerships and improved public service. This year, BCPOS bestowed this honor twice.

Trace Baker has volunteered for the Conservation Easement Program since 2018, often monitoring some of the most difficult to reach conservation easement properties. He has been a member of the Volunteer Ranger Corps (VRC) since 2017 and has given nearly 500 hours of volunteer time to that program. Trace kindly offers to help train and mentor new VRC volunteers. Trace has served as a Parks & Open Space Advisory Committee member since 2019 and was chair for two of those years. Trace leaves a positive impression on everyone he meets, not only visitors but also Boulder County staff.

Dianne Marshall has been a Colorado Master Gardener volunteer since 1988. She frequently provides free science-backed education to the public at special events or by answering questions from the public at our many help desks or information booths. As a longstanding member of the Tree Team, Dianne provides on-site consultations with homeowners struggling with diseased trees. Dianne recognizes the importance of trees in our landscape and their value — monetary and emotional — and her compassion in these situations reflects that. She volunteers regularly to serve as a mentor to new Master Gardener apprentices. Staff is lucky to have Dianne as an active member of our program, and Boulder County residents are lucky to have her expertise guiding their home horticulture environment.

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS AWARD

The Community Connections Award recognizes individuals, families, community groups, and organizations for programs and activities that have made a significant community impact and/or reach underserved residents of Boulder County. These programs include activities that connect the community to open space values, goals, and access to public parks and trails.

Luna Cultura: Adriana Luna creates meaningful learning experiences for Mexican and Latinx culture, connecting art to social and environmental justice. Adriana created a community-led exhibit "Relatos de la Madre Tierra" or "Tales from Mother Earth" with about 40 local artists from different backgrounds and ages. This year, she collaborated with BCPOS on a Mother's Day walk, "Caminata con Mama," at Bald Mountain Scenic Area.

Las Aventuras de San Lazaro: Susana Rodriguez has connected more than 70 residents from her community, San Lazaro, to parks and open space lands within and near Boulder County. Susana has provided our community with a variety of outdoor connections, including interpretative hikes at BCPOS properties, first-time camping opportunities at Golden Gate State Park and Rocky Mountain National Park, CPR/First Aid classes and certifications, mountain bike clinics for San Lazaro teens, and astronomy and night programs. She assists Boulder County and City of Boulder in providing trainings to San Lazaro residents to empower them to lead their own outdoor excursions.

DISCOVER BOULDER COUNTY

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!



BIRDING BOULDER COUNTY THROUGH THE SEASONS

Saturday, Dec. 14, 2-3:30 p.m.

Louisville Public Library, 951 Spruce St., Louisville

Join volunteer naturalists to learn about birding year-round in Boulder County. This program will explore where to find and how to identify some of our local and migratory birds and introduce you to an amazing range of ecosystems and habitats. Register on the Louisville Public Library website. boco.org/SeasonalBirding

THE WONDERS OF WINTER

Tuesday, Dec. 17, 6:30-7:30 p.m.

Lafayette Public Library, 775 Baseline Road, Lafayette

Winter is a great time to explore the natural wonders of Boulder County! Join volunteer naturalists to learn about the many wonders of winter and how plants and animals adapt to snow and cold — from the Great Plains to the Continental Divide.

WINTER SOLSTICE NIGHT WALK

Saturday, Dec. 21, 4:30-6:30 p.m.

Pella Crossing, Longmont

On the longest night of the year, experience what the night has to offer. Join volunteer naturalists for a flat, easy, 1-mile walk around the ponds at Pella Crossing. Explore open space after hours and discover the secrets of the dark, including local nocturnal wildlife and the winter constellations in the night sky.

WINTER ON THE RANGE

Monday, Jan. 6, 10 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

Beech Shelter, Boulder

Join us for a winter adventure on the prairie! Experience the magic of winter on the plains, and learn how local wildlife adapts to the cold, snowy season. Knowledgeable naturalists will guide you on a 2-mile walk along a prairie dog colony, sharing insights into the fascinating behaviors of these creatures. Before the walk, cozy up under the shelter for an informative presentation about the unique ecology of the prairie. This program is perfect for families and nature enthusiasts of all ages.

THE WINTERING BIRDS OF BOULDER COUNTY

Saturday, Jan. 25, 2-3:30 p.m.

Louisville Public Library, 951 Spruce Street, Louisville

Adults (13 & Older)

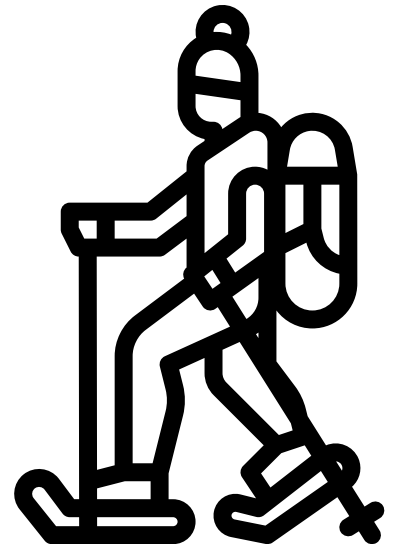
When the temperature drops and the snow settles in, what birds stick around and call Boulder County home? The bird species that reside in the area during the winter face risky challenges and have adapted unique behaviors and physiology that help them meet these challenges and survive. Register on the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

A SNOWSHOE WALK AMONG THE ASPEN

Thursday, Jan. 23, 10 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

Caribou Ranch, Nederland

Join volunteer naturalists on a mostly flat, 3-mile, out-and-back snowshoe walk to an aspen grove at Caribou Ranch. With the leaves gone, we can enjoy the subtle colors of winter and the stories in the aspen bark. While resting among the aspen, we will practice mindful observation. We'll take time to reflect together on what we've observed, what we know about aspen and what remains unknown, and what we can still learn from nature.



Know before you go! Remember to plan ahead, know your limits, and do not take unnecessary risks.

Check boco.org/trailclosures or boco.org/trails for the latest information on your favorite parks.

WILDLIFE SIGNS HIKE

Wednesday, Jan. 29, 1-3:30 p.m.

Heil Valley Ranch, Boulder

Join volunteer naturalists for a hike in the foothills to look for signs of wildlife activity, including tracks, scat, feathers, fur, and browse marks on trees. Explore the foothills life zone and the animals and plants that call it home. We will learn about the many ways that wildlife survives winter in the foothills.

IS IT SPRING YET?

Sunday, Feb. 2, 10 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

Mud Lake, Nederland

Join us for a fun-filled family adventure in the high country! Embrace the beauty of winter and celebrate the signs of spring. Explore the winter wonderland with a scavenger hunt, create stunning snow art, and engage in exciting outdoor games. Knowledgeable naturalists will share fascinating insights into winter ecology. Make lasting memories while connecting with nature and each other.

THE WONDERS OF WINTER

Saturday, Feb. 8, 10 a.m.-12 p.m.

Sandstone Ranch Visitor Center, 3001 Sandstone Drive, Longmont

Winter is a great time to explore the natural wonders of Boulder County! Join volunteer naturalists to learn about the many wonders of winter and how plants and animals adapt to snow and cold, from the Great Plains to the Continental Divide.

Winter Heritage Day at Walker Ranch Homestead

Sunday, Jan. 26, 1-3 p.m.

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

Embark on an unforgettable journey to the past with this immersive historical event that will transport you back to the late 1800s. As you wander through the picturesque and wintry landscape of the Walker Ranch Homestead, you'll encounter friendly costumed volunteers who bring the European settler history of the ranch to life. Engage in conversations with these knowledgeable guides as they demonstrate the daily tasks and traditions of the era. But the adventure doesn't stop there! You will have the opportunity to roll up your sleeves and actively participate! Forge a deeper connection to the past through hands-on learning as you engage in activities that were once an integral part of ranch life. And for the young and young-at-heart, immerse yourselves in the joy of playing historical games, an entertaining way to experience the past together. Registration not required; you may register to receive updates in case of inclement weather or cancellation. Be prepared for cold, windy weather and to walk in snow. For the enjoyment and safety of all attendees, bikes and pets are not allowed at the homestead. For more information, please call 303-776-8848 or email skippen@bouldercounty.gov.

ALTONA SCHOOL OPEN HOUSE: LOVE YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD SCHOOLHOUSE

Thursday, Feb. 13, 2-5 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 2 and 5 p.m. to go inside the historic schoolhouse, where students studied and played from 1880 to the World War II era. Make a Valentine, too. Volunteers will be on hand to share the school's history and restoration with visitors.

ASTRONOMY: EXPLORING OTHER WORLDS

Thursday, Feb. 13, 6-7:30 p.m.

Longmont Public Library, 409 4th Ave., Longmont

There is much to learn about the cosmos. The night sky has brought wonder to all for millennia, and we have only just started to see what's really out there. Join us for an interactive slide presentation about our universe and the stars, moons, and planets in our galaxy. Learn about the latest discoveries and how you can observe the big night sky for celestial bodies!

Never miss an
adventure — sign up
for a monthly hikes
and events email at
boco.org/HikesEvents



HIKES FOR SENIORS

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

WELCOMING WINTER

Thursday, Dec. 19, 1-3:30 p.m.

Mud Lake, Nederland

Meet us in the Montane to welcome winter and the changes the season brings. Walk around the lake and learn about how animals and plants take refuge during this time. **Transportation from Boulder available for non-mountain drivers. Details provided upon registration.**

WETLANDS WINTER WONDERLAND

Thursday, Jan. 16, 10 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

Walden Ponds Wildlife Habitat, Boulder

Join us for a leisurely walk around the ponds and learn how animals and plants that call the wetlands home survive the winter months. Explore how pond life endures in the face of harsh conditions.

THE FOOTHILLS FREEZE

Thursday, Feb. 20, 10 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

Heil Valley Ranch, Boulder

The foothills are a dynamic ecosystem that transforms in the winter. As the snow falls and the temperatures drop, plants and animals must adapt to survive in the harsh conditions. Join us for a moderate 1.5-mile hike as we explore this ecosystem.

Become a Cultural History Volunteer with Boulder County Parks & Open Space

Altona Schoolhouse: Volunteers inspire curiosity by leading fun and educational programs for schools and the public at the Altona Schoolhouse at Heil Valley Ranch.

Nederland Mining Museum and Assay Office Museum: Volunteers inspire a passion for Boulder County's mining history by sharing the area's history with visitors from around the world. You may apply to volunteer at either or both locations.

Walker Ranch Homestead: Volunteers bring Boulder County's ranching history to life by sharing interactive demonstrations at the Walker Ranch Homestead. Activities include cooking on a wood stove, churning butter, chopping wood, and more — all while dressed in period costume. This is a great family volunteer opportunity.

To learn more about these volunteer opportunities and to apply, visit boco.org/BCPOSvolunteer

BIRDS OF PREY DRIVING TOURS

Near Longmont. Location provided when registering.

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

Space is limited.

Driving tour dates:

- Saturday, Jan. 4, 9 a.m.-2 p.m. (Extended Tour)
- Saturday, Jan. 11, 9 a.m.-noon
- Saturday, Feb. 1, 9 a.m.-2 p.m. (Extended Tour)
- Saturday, Feb. 22, 9 a.m.-noon



Be Prepared for Winter Weather

Make sure you have:

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

Bring supplies for your pet:

- Food, water, layers, and booties

Have in your car:

- Emergency kit, including snow shovel and jumper cables

Plan ahead:

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

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

- Store this number in your contacts for quick access.

WINTER HOURS & EVENTS

Agricultural Heritage Center



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

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

HAMMERING ON THE FARM

Saturday, Jan. 4

Saturday, Feb. 1

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, anvil, swage blocks, and more. All ages welcome. Registration not required; you may register to receive updates in case of inclement weather or cancelation.

Get Muddy!

Why Should I Get Muddy?

Wet ground is fragile. Winter snow saturates and softens the ground, making it very susceptible to recreation impacts.

When trails are muddy:

- Use before 10 a.m.
- Visit another park that has hard-surface trails

Stay on the trail and go through mud.

Shortcutting switchbacks and bypassing mud puddles greatly increases erosion, widens trails, and destroys vegetation.

Boots, bikes, and horses clean up fast, but trails take years to heal.

Before you go:

- Check trail conditions
- Visit www.BoulderCountyOpenSpace.org for current trail conditions

Pick the Right Trail

In wet conditions, use hard-surface trails at lower elevations, such as:

- Coal Creek Trail
- Boulder Creek Path
- St. Vrain Greenway Trail

Sharing Snowy Trails

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

ETIQUETTE ON SNOWY TRAILS:

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



Call for 2025 Research Projects

Each year we award small grants for research and biological inventories on Boulder County open space lands. These research projects and inventories provide valuable data to monitor management practices and improve resources and park visitor experiences. We are accepting proposals for grants up to \$12,500 per project. Department staff have identified 23 priority needs, including these four topics, but all proposals are considered:

- Produce a baseline status report of white nose syndrome in bats using existing data from Boulder County Parks & Open Space properties and provide a review of recommended methodology to determine disease prevalence.
- Investigate impacts of reed canarygrass (*Phalaris arundinacea*) on riparian plant establishment and stream geomorphology, and efficacy of various measures to control its spread and establishment.
- Demonstration study for utilizing U.A.S. to remotely identify limber pine. We would be targeting one or two properties to determine the feasibility using the multi/hyper-spectral camera owned by BCPOS.
- Estimate seasonal & annual visitation to Boulder County's regional trails (Coal Creek, Rock Creek, and LoBo Trails).

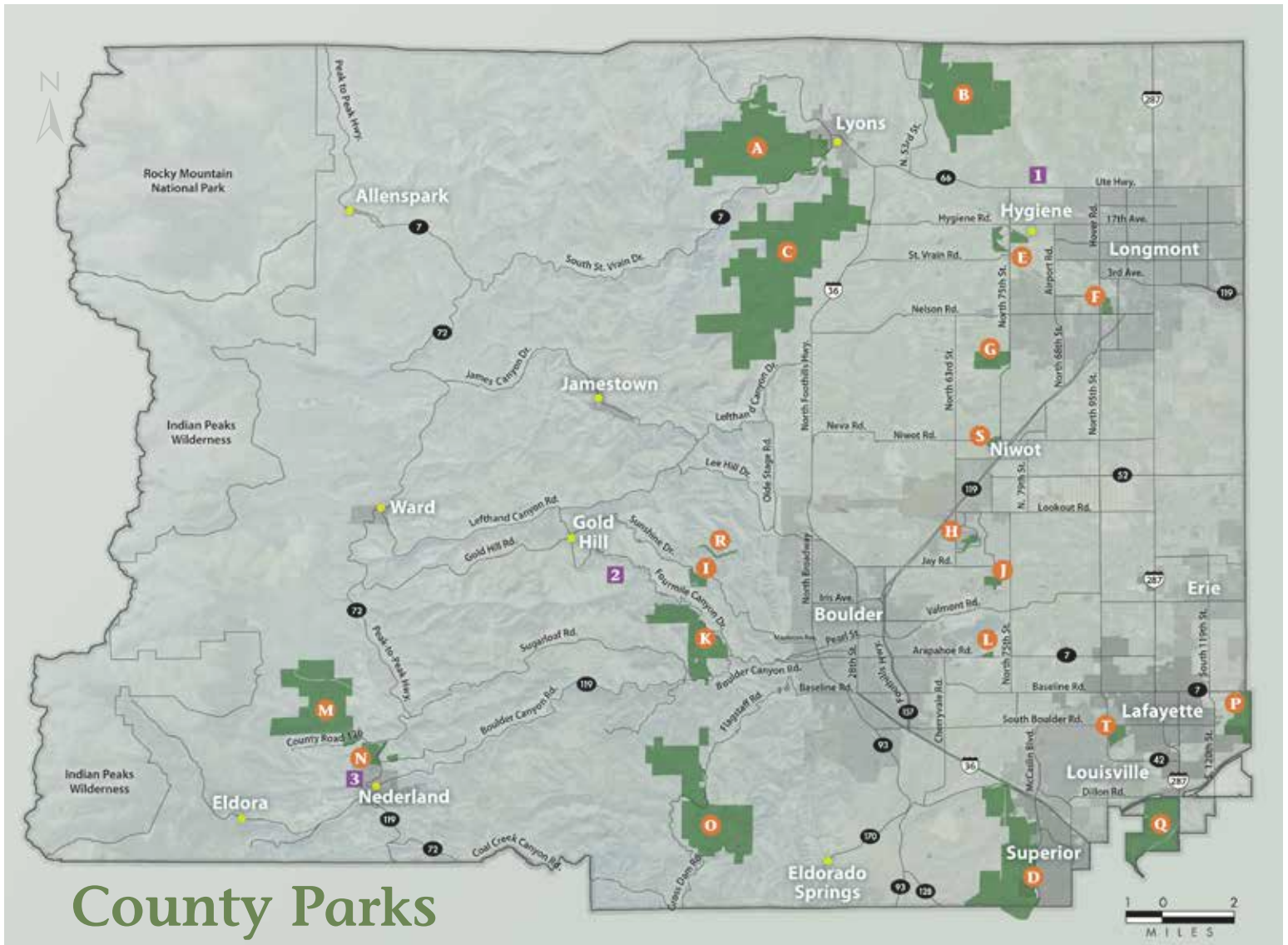
The deadline for proposals is Thursday, Jan. 9
Learn more and apply at boco.org/research



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 |