

IMAGES

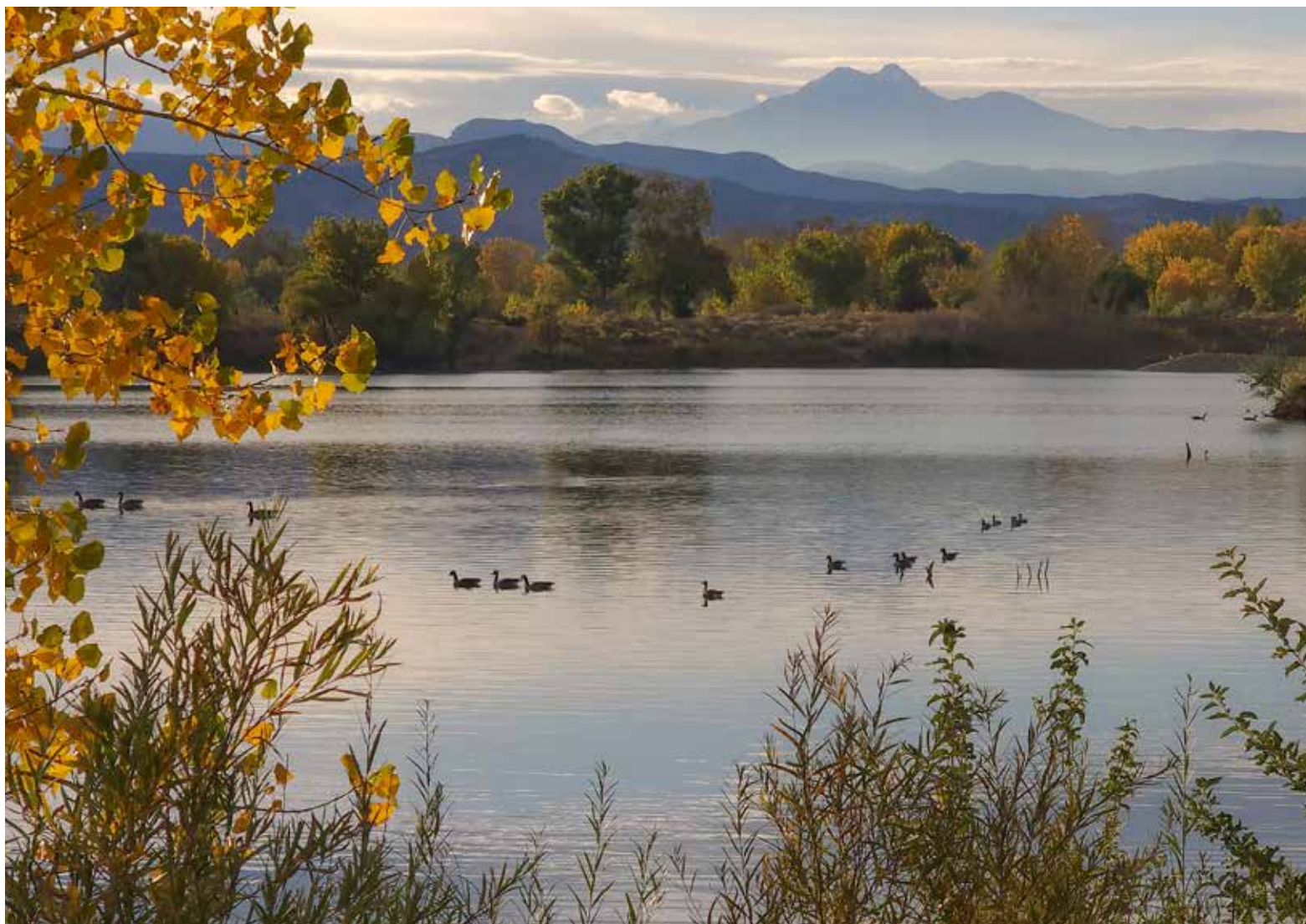
NEWS

PROPERTIES

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HISTORY

EVENTS



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: Pella Crossing by Brad Winckelmann
Cache and Carry, Ann Cooper

*Uncredited photos from BCPOS Collection

NATURE DETECTIVES

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Volume 47, number 3



Rooted in Service: Parks & Open Space Volunteers

by Sheryl Kippen and Angela Borland

From the very beginning, Boulder County Parks & Open Space (BCPOS) has been rooted in service. Volunteers have shaped trails, cared for animals, gathered scientific data, shared stories of the past, and connected thousands of residents to the land we call home. As the department grew, so did the dedication of volunteers, expanding into many more roles that continue to shape our work today.

FROM THE BEGINNING

Volunteerism existed even before BCPOS was created. In 1963, a volunteer parks advisory committee was formed to guide the development of an open space program. The committee gathered public input and laid the groundwork for what would become Boulder County's open space program.

In 1967, the Boulder County Commissioners formally appointed the first members of the Parks & Open Space Advisory Committee (POSAC), a volunteer group created to advise the commissioners on open space matters. POSAC continues to meet monthly, providing opportunities for community input into open space management.

Soon after the Parks & Open Space department became official in 1975, staff began recruiting and training Volunteer Naturalists. By 1979, BCPOS had 10 to 20 dedicated volunteers. These naturalists served as the county's boots on the ground, helping connect with the community at a time when the department's budget and staff were limited. Last year, 130 volunteer naturalists contributed 6,395 hours preparing, and presenting 182 programs to the community. These naturalists spark curiosity, foster stewardship, and help thousands of residents connect more deeply with Boulder County's open spaces.



Volunteer Naturalists gather for a lighthearted group photo, celebrating their role in connecting the community to Boulder County's open spaces.

EXPANDING OUR REACH AND VOLUNTEER INVOLVEMENT

As the department grew, volunteers began assisting with everything from trail building to weed management, and wildlife monitoring to plant research. In 1986, volunteers helped trap and tag deer in response to farmers' concerns about crop damage. Efforts like these provided valuable scientific data to guide staff and support to landowners living near county properties.

While some volunteers focused on gathering data and protecting wildlife, others turned their attention to keeping history alive. The first class of volunteers dedicated to cultural history was recruited in 1990 after Walker Ranch and its historic homestead were added to the National Register of Historic Places (1984 and 1988). At the homestead, volunteers in period clothing offer living history demonstrations (Vintage Baseball Game and Autumn Heritage Day is coming up on Oct. 5. See page 11 for details). Beyond living history demonstrations, cultural history volunteers educate school groups, staff museums such as the Assay Office and the Nederland Mining Museums, and serve as tour guides. At the Agricultural Heritage Center, volunteers also provide daily care for the animals as part of the cultural history program. Last year, 129 volunteers contributed 2,821 hours, leading 190 programs that reached 3,937 participants.



A cultural history volunteer leads a school group during a field trip to the Agricultural Heritage Center.

As trails grew busier, there was a need for peer-to-peer education, leading to the creation of the park host program in 1996. Today, these volunteers are part of the Volunteer Ranger Corps and can often be seen on the trails. Park patrol helps BCPOS connect with community members in the moment by enhancing visitor experience, reducing conflict, and providing service and information. The Bark Ranger program allows volunteers to hike with their certified dogs that serve as trail ambassadors. Last year, 79 Volunteer Rangers gave 2,614 hours of their time and contacted 19,567 visitors on our open spaces.

Starting in 2008, the department placed an even greater emphasis on volunteerism, expanding efforts in trail building, invasive weed removal, native seed collection, prairie dog fencing, and more. Today, this work continues through the Wild Work Program, which engages community groups, corporations, families, and individuals in one-day projects that enhance visitor experiences, strengthen land conservation practices, and build community. Last year, 1,268 volunteers participated in 178 one-day projects, contributing 4,250 service hours.

ENGAGING YOUTH

The Lefthand Outdoor Challenge began engaging youth in 2012. Participants ages 14 to 18 take part in nine monthly challenges focused on outdoor exploration, environmental stewardship, and careers in the outdoors. Volunteer adult mentors, some of whom participated in the program as teens, help guide the youth through their experiences.



Left Hand Outdoor Challenge participants practice winter survival skills during a snowshoe outing.

CONNECTING WITH NEW COMMUNITIES AND VOLUNTEERS INTO THE FUTURE

Today, BCPOS has more than 500 ongoing volunteers assisting seven dedicated teams, along with more than 1,200 additional volunteers who have contributed through one-day programs. Boulder County CSU Extension has their own extensive and storied volunteer programs. Look for a future article highlighting these programs, including the Colorado Master Gardener program, also celebrating its 50th anniversary this year!

Our volunteers share the wonders of our properties with the public, collaborate with staff, monitor wildlife and plant species, and help build a more sustainable natural environment. Our mission would not be possible without them!

Have you attended an educational program, joined an outreach event, or met a volunteer on the trail? You are part of the inspiration that keeps our volunteers coming back!

Are you interested in learning more about volunteering and how to get involved? Sign up for our monthly volunteer newsletter at boco.org/VolunteerEmails to discover opportunities or visit boco.org/discover to see upcoming events and programs.

Ripple Effect: Boulder County Parks & Open Space Foundation Extends the Reach of Conservation and Community

by Tina Nielsen

The story of Boulder County's beloved parks, open spaces, and agricultural lands is a story of foresight, commitment, and community. For 50 years, Boulder County Parks & Open Space (BCPOS) has worked to protect the region's natural landscapes and heritage. And behind the scenes for the last 20 years, quietly and powerfully amplifying that mission, is the Boulder County Parks & Open Space Foundation, a small but mighty organization making a big impact.

Just like a stone cast into a still pond, the foundation creates ripples, small acts of support that extend outward, touching people, programs, and partnerships that otherwise might not flourish. From cultural celebrations to nature-based education, the foundation extends the reach of the county's open space program by funding collaborations for tangible programs that deepen our connection to the land.

COLLABORATING FOR INCLUSION AND CONNECTION

One of the most powerful ways the foundation creates impact is by partnering with community-based nonprofits. Together, we open doors, often literally, for underrepresented groups to feel welcome in public spaces and connected to nature. These partnerships help remove barriers that may be physical, financial, or, for Indigenous communities, rooted in historical displacement and systemic exclusion from ancestral lands. Whether it's a first encounter with open space or a meaningful reconnection, we believe that fostering a bond between people and the land is essential for health and well-being.

Take Explorando Senderos, for example. This grassroots initiative creates safe, welcoming hiking experiences for Latinx families in Boulder County. With support from the foundation, Explorando Senderos has expanded its guided hikes, led by bilingual leaders who help families explore local trails while building confidence and community. These hikes aren't just outdoor recreation, they're moments of belonging, empowerment, and joy.

Similarly, through its work with Harvest of All First Nations, the foundation has helped elevate Indigenous voices and traditions in Boulder County. With financial support from the foundation, Harvest of All First Nations hosts the annual Corn Festival at the Agricultural Heritage Center. The event celebrates corn as a unifying ancestral food that connects many Native and Indigenous

communities. It weaves storytelling, music, and traditional dance into a family-friendly, educational experience. It's more than a festival; it's a reclamation of space and an invitation to learn with original peoples of the land.

HELPING STUDENTS EXPERIENCE THE LAND

The foundation also plays a crucial role in educational access. For many elementary school children, the chance to see a working farm, pet a sheep, or watch a blacksmith at work can be life changing. But those experiences often depend on one simple, overlooked detail: how to get there. Schools have limited funding for activities.

That's why the foundation helps fund school bus transportation for elementary classes visiting the Agricultural Heritage Center. These field trips connect young students to Boulder County's agricultural history through immersive, hands-on learning. Thanks to foundation support, financial barriers are removed for schools with limited resources, ensuring all children, regardless of background, can experience the magic of learning outdoors.

EXPANDING NATURALIST PROGRAMMING FOR ALL ABILITIES

Another ripple of impact comes through a partnership with Environment for the Americas (EFTA), a nonprofit dedicated to increasing diversity in the conservation field. With the foundation's support, the EFTA interns have launched "train-the-trainer" naturalist programs designed for disabled individuals and the professionals who serve them.

This work is about more than compliance, it's about creating authentic, enriching outdoor experiences for people of all abilities. By training educators and caregivers to adapt programming, interpretive signs, and outdoor experiences, the foundation is helping ensure that Boulder County's open spaces are truly for everyone.

A GOLDEN YEAR: CELEBRATING 50 YEARS OF PARKS & OPEN SPACE

This year marks a major milestone: the 50th anniversary of the Boulder County Parks & Open Space Department (learn more at boco.org/OpenSpace50). In honor of this golden year, the foundation is sponsoring a special celebration on Oct. 9, bringing together founders, volunteers, and current supporters to honor a half-century of stewardship.

This festive event will celebrate and pay tribute to those whose vision created the department in 1975 and to the residents who fought, through three separate elections, to secure the county's first open space sales tax, finally passing in 1993. Their unwavering persistence, along with the community's continued support for sales taxes, has shaped the open space legacy that now defines Boulder County. Learn more and purchase tickets at preservebouldercounty.org/50-event.

JOIN THE RIPPLE EFFECT

The Boulder County Parks & Open Space Foundation may not be a household name, but its impact is felt throughout the county, in the joy of a child on a field trip, in the quiet appreciation of a community hike, and in the gatherings that honor our deep cultural connections to the land.

As the department looks to the next 50 years, the foundation's role will only grow more important. Your support can help make sure those ripples continue to spread.

To donate or learn more about the foundation's work, visit preservebouldercounty.org.

Whether your passion lies in equity, education, conservation, or celebration, your gift helps ensure that Boulder County's parks and open spaces remain not just protected, but truly shared.



A school bus unloads students arriving for a field trip to explore the Agricultural Heritage Center.



Left Hand Outdoor Challenge participants practice wildfire response by learning to operate a fire hose in a training funded by the foundation.

IMAGES READER SURVEY

Thank you for taking a few minutes to help us improve Images, the quarterly magazine from Boulder County Parks & Open Space. Your feedback will help us better understand who our readers are, what content you value most, and how we can best serve the community. This short survey should take about five minutes to complete.

Your responses are anonymous and will be used solely to guide future improvements to the magazine. Thank you for sharing your input! Survey closes Oct. 10.

Take Survey



boco.org/ImagesSurvey

Cache and Carry!

by Ann Cooper

Do you carry food home from a grocery store or farm stall to eat days later? If canned beans or soups are on special at your local supermarket, do you overbuy and cache some items in a pantry, larder, or kitchen shelf at home, to be eaten later? Most readers probably do. We're no different from many mammals and birds in this respect. We need food to sustain us every day, but we don't always have easy access to it when hunger pangs hit. We plan.

So do pikas, squirrels, cougars, chipmunks, jays, chickadees, magpies, and even, in a way, bears. The details vary, and the stories are intriguing.

Some animals solve the winter food issue by migrating south. Makes sense, although the journey is hazardous. Others, hibernators such as bears, stock up on calories in fall and accumulate thick layers of belly fat to see them through the chilly and provision-less months. Their "cache" is internal. Other hibernators might wake periodically to nibble on their close by store of saved vegetation or seeds.

Local animals that remain active year-round must eat no matter the season, but food availability varies widely. So, they cache supplies, their larders for later.

Pikas spend the summer and early fall amassing hay piles full of fragrant and drying tundra vegetation. They stash it away in the shelter of rocks, accessible for future munchy moments.

Chickaree squirrels in pine forests build large heaps (larders or middens) of pinecones and shredded remnants from which they extract nutritious seeds. Other edible oddments, such as bits of fungus, may also be buried in the well-guarded pile. And if you approach that larder, the chickaree will no doubt scold you severely!



Chickaree squirrel midden piled with pinecone scales.

Chipmunks and ground squirrels often retreat to the relative safety of their home or hole to eat. Danger lies in feasting, exposed, in the great outdoors! They may stuff their cheek pouches with seeds and scurry back to shelter before they empty their seed cheeks and eat, or stash.



A chipmunk stuffs seeds into its cheek pouches.

Cougars cache meal remnants short term. After a large kill, they feast until they're full. They save and hide the leftovers but may lurk close by keeping watch on their pantry-for-now. Beware! Other predatory mammals such as foxes may bury bits and bones to retrieve them when they next get hungry, but before the remnants rot to inedibility. Does this remind you of your pet pooch?

Most remarkable of all are the fox squirrels, jays, crows, and magpies, and others that cache geographically. It's known as scatter hoarding. Rather than maintaining a single heap of edibles, they spread individual food items separately, maximizing the chance that some, at least, will escape being pilfered. Think about what this complex behavior entails!

First, find a chunk of food. Next, find a suitable location to hide it. Make sure, when you bury it in the earth, tuck it under a section of loose bark, or poke it into a rock crevice, that no other animal is watching and waiting for their chance to steal a free meal.

If you are seen burying goodies, dig them up and rebury them somewhere safer without being seen to do it! Finally, remember for days, weeks, or months, where you hid that precious life sustaining morsel. Go to the correct spot and successfully retrieve it. Talk about a good memory!

Inevitably, some items are never reclaimed. Maybe the bird or mammal forgets some hiding places, or moves on to a different territory, or simply doesn't survive. Then the lost seed may become food for the multitudes of small soil dwellers, or sprout and become tomorrow's shrub or sapling. Nothing, in nature, is ever wasted.

NATURE DETECTIVES

Fall 2025

Text by Pam Sherman
Illustrations by Emily Lark

Treasure in the Mountains: The Story of Mining in Boulder County

Did you know that Boulder County was famous across the country for its rich veins of gold, silver, and other precious metals? We'll get to that story, but first....

What are gold and silver? What do people use them for?

Gold and silver are two of the most precious metals in the world. That means they are hard to find in nature and can be very expensive. They are beautiful, resist rusting, and are easy to work with to make into coins, jewelry, and all kinds of other shiny things. In fact, pure gold is too soft to be worked with for a long time, so it is often mixed with other metals to make it easier to handle! Both gold and silver have been used for thousands of years by ancient and modern civilizations as money.

We still use gold to this day! Both gold and silver carry (or conduct) electricity and heat very well. That makes them important for making electronics such as computer parts.

Gold has also been used in satellites, on space suit visors, and even on the windows of tall office buildings to help control temperature. Dentists have used gold in tooth fillings for a long time.

Silver is found in nature both by itself and mixed with many other minerals. Gold, on the other hand, does not combine easily with other minerals. Instead, it is often found inside rocks as tiny grains or shiny flakes.

Gold, silver, and other metals concentrated and encased in bedrock are called veins. Bedrock is the hard, solid layer of rock beneath all the soil, dirt, and sand on Earth.



Gold is found all over the world. In the Boulder County mountains, miners would pan for gold by swirling rocks and gravel in a stream and sifting out the shiny pieces. Later, bigger machines did this work on a larger scale. Eventually, miners traced the gold upstream until they discovered it locked in the bedrock.



Did you know Boulder County is where one end of the Colorado Mineral Belt begins? This stretch of land runs about 250 miles south to the San Juan Mountains near Silverton. It is 10 to 35 miles wide at different points.

How Was This Belt Created?

About 65 million years ago, the Rocky Mountains were pushed up for the second time. As the mountains rose, rock layers tilted and cracked. Hot, mineral-rich fluids flowed into the cracks and crevices and hardened into what we now call veins of precious metals in the Colorado Mineral Belt.

Over millions of years, mountain building, along with wind, water, and ice erosion, brought these

veins closer to the surface. The area we now call Boulder County holds gold, silver, tungsten, lead, zinc, tellurium, and more, all mined during its short but busy history.

How did miners get these precious minerals out of the rocks?

They used a method called hard rock mining, which took place only in the mountains. This kind of mining was Boulder County's main industry in the late 1800s. The gold and other minerals were encased in the bedrock and veins, so miners had to break apart the rock and process it into a useful form.

Another type of mining, called soft rock mining, was used to dig out coal on the plains in eastern Boulder County.

In 1859, gold was discovered in what is now the town of Gold Hill, along today's Gold Run Road. This was the first precious metal find in Boulder County. After that, more discoveries of gold, silver, and other metals kept drawing people to the area.

Towns such as Nederland, Eldora, Gold Hill, Ward, and Allenspark as well as smaller mountain communities like Salina, Ferncliff, Raymond, and Riverside, all got their start during the mining boom of the mid to late 1800s in the western United States.

Life in a mining camp or community was not for the faint of heart. There were few to no services, and it could take a full day to travel down to the tiny new settlement that would become the City of Boulder. Mine collapses, fires, explosions, and accidents were common.

At first, groups of men came to work the mines. Boardinghouses provided them a place to stay. Often the beds in these boardinghouses were never empty. As one miner woke to begin work, another was finishing his shift and heading to the bed the first miner had just left.

Later, women and families joined the miners. They helped build the towns and communities that still exist in the mountains today.

What about kids in those days? In 1885, labor laws banned children younger than 12 from working in the mines. Later, the age was raised to 14. Still, children were expected to help support their families. If a father worked the late shift, it was often a child's job to carry his lunch down into the mine in the dark.

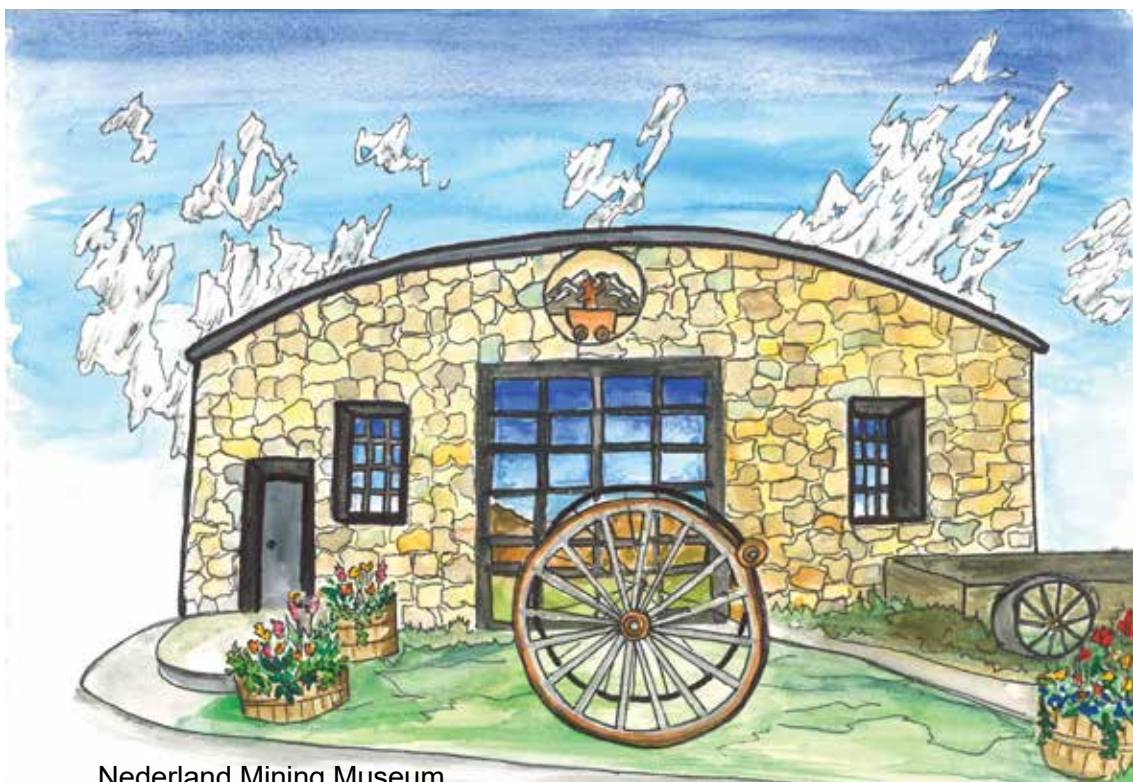
Hard rock mining left us with problems that still affect Boulder County today. When the precious metals were exposed to air and water, it caused acid mine drainage. This polluted streams and creeks, turning the water yellow or orange. The water was unsafe for fish, other animals, plants, and people to drink.

Over the years, Boulder County has worked to clean up these problems. Newer mining techniques and stronger rules have also helped make more recent mining safer for the environment.

But another danger remains: Some people think exploring old mines is fun. In fact, it can be very dangerous. Falling rocks and other hazards have hurt many people. That's why the state warns everyone: stay away from old mine openings!

The Nederland Mining Museum is one of the best places in Boulder County to learn about mining and its history, both the rocks and the people. Visitors can explore what life was like for miners and even pull the handle on a dynamite machine. You can also ring a bell that once told the hoist operator to raise or lower a bucket in a mine. The bucket worked like an elevator, carrying people, tools, and rocks to and from the surface.

There's even a special area for kids to play and try on pioneer or mining clothes.



Nederland Mining Museum

Nederland Mining Museum Coordinator, Donal Maloney, who trains staff and volunteers and oversees museum operations, has worked in a gold mine during his career. He is a living gold mine of information and stories for visitors, both tourists and locals.

We asked him, "What is the hardest thing for museum visitors to wrap their minds around at the Mining Museum?" He responded, "Probably the difficulty of living and working in a rough, pioneer type environment and the difficulties and hard work of mining underground."

We followed up with, "What are some things you wish that people understood about mining and ore and rocks?" He told us, "Probably the difficulty, both physically and economically, of finding worthwhile deposits of minerals to mine. And the hit or miss nature of 'making it rich' and the luck involved!"

Mining brought thousands of people to Boulder County and "put it on the map." Today visitors come to see the golden aspens fluttering in the fall wind, the golden sun rays slanting from the sky in late afternoon, to hike, and to ski the silvery, new-powder snow ... And to explore the Mining Museum in Nederland!

Activity

Go to the Nederland Mining Museum June 1 through Oct. 31. Friday, Saturday, and Sundays from 11 a.m.-5 p.m. Admission is free. They also host special events such as Hard Rock Mining Tours, Small Engine Demonstration Days, and Gold Panning. The Assay Office Museum in Four Mile Canyon hosts an open house once a month. More information can be found at boco.org/Discover. Have fun!!

NEDERLAND MINING MUSEUM SCAVENGER HUNT



Find all the different parts of the mining museum!



- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tungsten rock | <input type="checkbox"/> Mine shaft model | <input type="checkbox"/> Miner's hard hat |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Signal bell | <input type="checkbox"/> Mining claim map | <input type="checkbox"/> Dress up area |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Assay's scale | <input type="checkbox"/> Dynamite detonator | <input type="checkbox"/> Gold panning display |

A Day in the Life of a Conservation Easement Monitor

by Andrea Van Sambeek

What is it you actually do? Seems like a simple enough question. It's one of the basics you might get at a social gathering when meeting someone new. However, when I get asked this question, I like to check to see if the person really has the time, and interest, for the full answer. Because what I do is far from simple and doesn't fit into any typical description. I'm a stewardship monitor for Boulder County Parks & Open Space's Conservation Easement Program.

That title alone is a mouthful and requires some breaking down. The Conservation Easement Program is a partnership between Boulder County and approximately 850 landowners throughout the county. These landowners agree to restrict uses on their land to protect conservation values, providing invaluable agricultural lands, wildlife habitat, and rural character on more than 40,000 acres of the county.

The restrictions and terms for each easement are unique, but the overall goal is to form a partnership between the county and landowners to conserve and steward the land together.

Stewardship is no easy task! Here at Parks & Open Space, we have two full-time and two seasonal staff members to get the job done. That's where the Conservation Easement Program, and especially the stewardship monitors, come into play. Our role is to support landowners, answer questions, and connect them with the resources they need to steward their land.

Each conservation easement property must be monitored to ensure the terms of the easements are being fulfilled. How often we visit depends on the terms of the easement as well as staff capacity. Before visiting, we review the easement's terms, research past activity on the property, and examine aerial imagery to be able to spot any recent changes.

Once the preparation is complete, it's time to head into the field. Sometimes landowners request to meet us for these visits; other times, we conduct the visits on our own. Either way, we explore each property to observe how the land is doing and ensure the terms of the easements are upheld.

We look out for common culprits like invasive weeds and investigate any issues the landowners bring to our attention. On agricultural lands, we look at what's growing and check to make sure any water rights associated with the easement are being utilized. We also generally look for signs of wildlife, native plants, and overall health of the land. Finally, we take photos and document our observations. It all requires a thorough exploration.

Then it's time for follow up! As advocates for our landowners, we seek out information from other staff within Parks & Open Space. Stewardship is a team effort! We consult with our agriculture, invasive plants, plant ecology, wildlife, and forestry teams on a regular basis. We also consult with the Boulder County Community Planning & Permitting department about plans our landowners may have. Sometimes questions lead us on a deep dive into land use code regulations, other times we may need to research methods of weed management or perhaps learn more about fire mitigation. Each follow up is as unique as the conservation easement itself. In the Conservation Easement Program, staff members are true jacks of all trades.

In addition to following up with the landowners, we write a report about what we observed on site. We include the photographs we've taken as well as a map of where these photographs were taken. Monitoring reports over the years give a great view of what's happening with the land over time.

So, what do I answer when asked, "What do you actually do?" Often, I just smile and say that I work as an advocate for conservation easement landowners in Boulder County, I help steward some of the most beautiful places in the county, and that it's my great privilege to do so.



Conservation easement monitoring site visit meeting with landowner

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!



FALL IN THE FOOTHILLS

Thursday, Sept. 4, 6:30-8 p.m.

Lyons Community Library, 451 4th Ave., Lyons

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 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 the diverse birds and flora of our area, we've got you covered!

FUN ON THE FARM: PIÑATA, PIÑATA

Friday, Sept. 5, 9:45-10:30 a.m.

Agricultural Heritage Center, Longmont

Children ages 3 to 6 will love to visit the farm to learn about animals, plants, and agricultural life. "The Piñata the Farm Maiden Hung" is a bilingual story for National Hispanic Heritage Month about the farm animals helping the farmer throw a fiesta. The program includes hands-on activities and a take-home craft. Afterwards, explore the farm and meet the farm animals from the story. Children must be accompanied by an adult. This is the final Fun on the Farm program for the 2025 season.

GOLD PANNING

Saturday, Sept. 6, noon-2 p.m.

**Nederland Mining Museum, Nederland
Ages 5 & Older**

Strike it rich, just like the miners! Try your hand at gold panning and learn how the search for shiny treasure sparked the European settlement of Boulder County. Do you have what it takes to uncover gold like a 19th-century prospector? Fun for kids ages 5 and older (and grown-ups, too)!

BATTY ABOUT BATS IN BOULDER COUNTY

Friday, Sept. 12, 7-8:30 p.m.

Heil Valley Ranch - Wapiti Trailhead, Boulder

Bring the whole family for a nighttime adventure at Heil Valley Ranch! We'll learn about Boulder County's amazing bats, why they're important to nature, and what challenges they face. We'll use a bat detector to listen in on their high-frequency calls and explore the ranch's nighttime soundscape. A fun and educational adventure for nature lovers of all ages!

WANDER, WONDER, AND WATERCOLOR: A NATURE JOURNALING JOURNEY

Saturday, Sept. 13, 10 a.m.-noon

Walden Ponds Wildlife Habitat, Boulder

Embark on a creative adventure at Walden Ponds Wildlife Habitat. This all-ages program will guide you on a nature walk while observing the beauty of the landscape. Then, unleash your inner artist and capture the wonders you see through sketching, writing, and colorful exploration in your nature journal. All supplies are included. No artistic experience is necessary, just a love for nature and a curious mind!

SMALL ENGINE DAY

Saturday, Sept. 13, noon-3 p.m.

Nederland Mining Museum, Nederland

Step back in time and explore the fascinating world of early small engines, also known as hit-or-miss or skip motors, that once powered farms, mines, and more. Watch these historic machines in action, including a museum model that's more than 100 years old. Learn how they worked, what made them so reliable, and why they were essential to everyday life. Drop in anytime during the event.

HISTORIC ALTONA SCHOOL OPEN HOUSE

Sunday, Sept. 14, 11 a.m.-2 p.m.

Altona Schoolhouse at Heil Valley Ranch, Boulder

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.

PUTTING THE 'FUN' IN FUNGI

Saturday, Sept. 20, 9:30-11:30 a.m.

Anne U. White Trail, Boulder

Curious about the hidden world of fungi? Join us for a guided mushroom walk and hands-on exploration to discover the vital role they play in sustaining healthy ecosystems. Learn simple ways to protect biodiversity in your own backyard while connecting with fellow nature enthusiasts. No prior fungi knowledge required.

ASSAY OFFICE MUSEUM OPEN HOUSES

Saturday, Sept. 20 and Saturday, Oct. 18

11 a.m.-3 p.m., Assay Office Museum, Boulder

Stop by the unique Assay Office Museum on this open house day. Learn about assaying, hard rock mining, and the families in the area from long ago.

THE MYSTERY OF BIRD MIGRATION

Thursday, Sept. 25, 6:30-8 p.m.

Ron Stewart Parks & Open Space Building, Longmont

Some birds are seen year-round in Boulder County, some only in summer or winter, and others visit only briefly in spring or fall. Learn why birds make seasonal journeys, how they know when and where to go, how they find their way, and what brings them back year after year. Join volunteer naturalists to explore these and other fascinating mysteries surrounding the amazing world of bird migration.

NATURE DETECTIVES IN THE FIELD: MINERAL ADVENTURES IN NEDERLAND

Sunday, Sept. 28, 10 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

**Mud Lake, Nederland
Families (Ages 6 & Older)**

Join us for an outdoor family program designed for children 6 and older, though all ages are welcome. We will explore the fascinating world of mining history and geology in Nederland, beginning with a hike at Mud Lake. Families will take part in activities such as erosion control, building the Flatirons, and matching minerals with their commercial uses.

After our outdoor exploration, we will head to the Nederland Mining Museum to learn more about the mining process and experience the thrill of gold panning. This program blends hands-on activities with history and science to foster a love for nature, geology, and local heritage in a fun, interactive setting.

ART IN THE PARKS: CREATING A COMPOSITION

Sunday, Sept. 28, 11 a.m.-1 p.m.

Hall Ranch, Longmont

Ages 13 & Older

Join volunteer naturalists for an art program in nature! Volunteers will provide limited guidance in creating one or more drawings that capture elements of the natural world found at Hall Ranch. They will demonstrate how thumbnail sketches on a single page can create a coherent composition and share examples from well-known nature artists, such as Linda Miller Feltner and John Muir Laws, for inspiration. The program provides ample time to create a composition of your choice. No experience is necessary. All supplies are provided.

MOOSE ON THE LOOSE!

Wednesday, Oct. 1, 8-10 a.m. and Saturday, Oct. 4, 5-7 p.m.

Caribou Ranch, Nederland

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 moose to Colorado. We'll discuss the past, present, and future of moose in Boulder County.

HARD ROCK MINING VAN TOUR

Saturday, Oct. 4, 9:30 a.m.-1 p.m.

Nederland Mining Museum, Nederland

Tap into the towns, tools, and characters of our hard rock mining heritage by visiting mining sites of years gone by. Tours are open to ages 10 and older with accompanying adult. Some walking required.

GOATS GALORE: MEET AND GREET

Saturday, Oct. 4, 10 a.m.-noon

Agricultural Heritage Center, 8348 Ute Hwy, Longmont

Meet goats up close with the Goats Galore 4-H Club. Discover why people raise goats, and explore breeds, housing, and care! We will also bust some goat myths (no tin cans or tennis shoes) and share how you can get involved in 4-H. Perfect for curious families and animal lovers alike, drop in anytime.

REGENERATING OUR SOIL, ECOSYSTEMS, AND LOCAL FOOD ECONOMY

Saturday, Oct. 4, 10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

Carolyn Holmberg Preserve, Broomfield

Ages 13 & Older

Join us at Rock Creek Farm this harvest season to explore the past, present, and future of Boulder County agriculture. Learn about county plans for working lands conservation, our own relationships with our food system, and the role of regenerative agriculture in building a resilient ecological landscape. Together, we will envision a future where all voices help shape a thriving, equitable agricultural and food system.

THE PANCAKE HIKE

Sunday, Oct. 5, 9 a.m.-noon

Mud Lake, Nederland

What's better than an early morning fall hike? An early morning fall hike followed by pancakes! Join us for a morning hike around the lake to welcome the season. Look for signs of fall in the trees and on the ground, breathe in the crisp air, and take in the views. After your hike, join us at the shelter for some pancakes with fruit. Hike a half-mile, a mile, or more, or skip the hike and relax with us at the shelter. Hiking and pancake eating are not required but are encouraged.

A MINDFUL WALK AMONG THE ASPENS

Tuesday, Oct. 7, 10 a.m.-1 p.m.

Caribou Ranch, Nederland

Ages 13 & Older

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

CORVIDS ALL AROUND US

Thursday, Oct. 9, 6-7:30 p.m.

Ron Stewart Parks & Open Space Building

Corvids, the Genus Corvus, thrive in human-dominated environments and are familiar to almost everyone in Boulder County. You've undoubtedly seen these loud social birds soaring above the trees, cawing at your window, or even picking through the trash. In this class, you'll learn about how they inspire mythology, how they interact with humans, and how they socialize within flocks and family groups.

THE GEOLOGY OF SANDSTONE RANCH

Saturday, Oct. 11, 10-11:30 a.m.

Sandstone Ranch Visitor Center, Longmont

Ages 13 & Older

Discover the fascinating geology of the Colorado Front Range and Sandstone Ranch. Join us for a 1-mile loop as we explore the tales told by the rocks formed from ancient dunes and beaches, shallow oceans and estuaries full of sea life, and a time of glaciers.

EVENING AT THE MUSEUM: HARD ROCK MINING IN BOULDER COUNTY - HOW AND WHY DID DEPOSITS FORM HERE?

Thursday, Oct. 16, 6 p.m.

Nederland Mining Museum, Nederland

Beneath Boulder County's scenic landscapes lies a story of shifting continents, ancient seas, and valuable minerals that shaped the region's history. Join Rick and Becky Lewis, Boulder County volunteers, for a look at how plate tectonics formed the Colorado Mineral Belt. They will share the stories behind three of the county's most notable mineral deposits: gold at Gold Hill, silver at Caribou, and tungsten below Barker Reservoir.

OWLS OF BOULDER COUNTY SLIDESHOW PROGRAM

Saturday, Oct. 18, 2-3:30 p.m.

Louisville Public Library, 951 Spruce St., Louisville

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

BBB: BEARS, GOOD, BAD, AND IN BOULDER

Tuesday, Oct. 21, 6:30-7:30 p.m.

Lafayette Public Library, 775 Baseline Rd., Lafayette

Where do bears live? What unusual foods make up their diet? Together, we'll learn about bear physiology, their seasonal habits, and how they have been portrayed in legends as well as good and bad interactions with humans today. Find out what they are busy doing right now.

TAKE FLIGHT THIS HALLOWEEN

Saturday, Oct. 25, 10 a.m.-noon

Heil Valley Ranch - Wapiti Trailhead, Boulder

Celebrate Halloween with a fun, hands-on program about the flying creatures of All Hallows' Eve. Discover how owls glide silently through the night, learn the truth about misunderstood bats, and explore the mysteries of ravens and crows. With games, activities, and a dash of spooky storytelling, this program will delight, educate, and maybe give you a little fright.

BIRDING BIG SIT

Saturday, Nov. 1, 8-11 a.m.
Walden Ponds Wildlife Habitat, Boulder

We're excited to host our next Birding Big Sit at Walden Ponds Wildlife Habitat! This inclusive trailhead event allows park users to both stand and sit to watch birds. Spotting scope and optics will be available to borrow and use. This is a drop-in event for anyone who wants to see birds. All ages and skill levels are welcome. We will be near the boardwalk by Cottonwood Marsh.

DISCOVER RON STEWART PRESERVE AT RABBIT MOUNTAIN

Thursday, Nov. 6, 6:30-8 p.m.
Lyons Community Library, 451 4th Ave., Lyons

Have you ever wanted to learn more about the Ron Stewart Preserve at Rabbit Mountain (RSP@RM)? This slideshow program will reveal the RSP@RM that you have never known! We'll explain the unique natural history, reveal the cultural history, tell stories, and share fun facts about this open space property located near Lyons.

STORY IN THE ROCKS: THE GEOLOGICAL HISTORY OF BOULDER COUNTY

Friday, Nov. 14, 2-3:30 p.m.
Age Well Center for Older Adults – West, Boulder Seniors

The geologic history of Boulder County's remarkable landscape goes back nearly two billion years! Rocks contain a record of earth's history that can be read like the pages in a book. Join volunteer naturalists for this slide program and learn how to read this fascinating story in the rocks.

BIRDS OF PREY DRIVING TOUR

Saturday, Nov. 15, 9 a.m.-noon
Near Longmont
Ages 13 & Older

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 their habitats, and work on developing identification skills. If available, bring binoculars and a bird field guide.

GOBBLE! GOBBLE! WILD TURKEY PROGRAM

Saturday, Nov. 22, 10 a.m.-12:30 p.m.
Heil Valley Ranch- Wapiti Trailhead, 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.

Take a Kid Mountain Biking Day

Saturday, Oct. 4, 9 a.m.-noon
Heil Valley Ranch, Boulder

Join the Boulder Mountainbike Alliance and Boulder County Parks & Open Space for a morning of riding the beginner and kid friendly trails at Heil Valley Ranch. This event will have mini-skills clinics, route suggestions, bike decorating materials, and educational information. This event is recommended for families with kids ages 3 to 10 who are new to mountain biking and want to learn more. Parking is limited. Registration required.

Junior & Senior Fishing Derby

Saturday, Oct 18, 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

FRIDAY NIGHT IS ASTRONOMY NIGHT

Join volunteer naturalists and astronomers from the Longmont Astronomical Society for a series of summer night astronomy programs. Together, we'll learn about the night skies and view the celestial bodies residing in our galaxy and beyond.

NEBULAS TO STAR CLUSTERS

Friday, Sept. 26, 6:15-8:45 p.m.

Does it seem like astronomers speak a different language? Let's demystify some astronomical names and terms. Join us for fun demonstrations and an interactive 'language' lesson. Then, view the night sky and understand, as astronomers describe what we see through the telescopes.

THE PLEIADES

Friday, Nov. 14, 4:15-7:45 p.m.

The Pleiades, also known as the Seven Sisters, is one of the most recognizable star clusters in the constellation Taurus. Discover how this brilliant asterism has inspired ancient myths, guided explorers, and captivated astronomers across cultures and centuries.

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

AGRICULTURAL HERITAGE CENTER

8348 Ute Highway 66, Longmont

HAMMERING ON THE FARM

Fridays, Sept. 5, Oct. 3, Oct. 17, Oct. 31, and Saturday, Nov. 1
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.

SUNSET AT THE FARM

Fridays, Oct. 3, Oct. 24, and Saturday, Oct. 25, 5-7 p.m.

Celebrate autumn evenings at the Agricultural Heritage Center! This October, enjoy this rare opportunity for extended hours until 7 p.m. Perfect for fall photos, relaxed exploration, and family time in a scenic heritage setting..

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.

Play Ball! Annual Vintage Baseball Game and Heritage Day

Sunday, Oct. 5, 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.



Celebrating 50 Years of Night Skies Over Open Space

Friday, Oct. 17, 6-8:30 p.m.

Heil Valley Ranch, Boulder

Celebrate 50 years of Boulder County Parks & Open Space under the cover of darkness as we reveal stories of mythical creatures, far away galaxies, and the park's wild residents. This family event includes astronomy with the Longmont Astronomical Society, Bigfoot hikes, s'mores with park rangers, and learning about the lives of nocturnal animals.

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.

FALL FLOWERS

Thursday, Sept. 18, 9-11 a.m.

Bald Mountain Scenic Area, Boulder

Join us for a 1-mile, easy to moderate hike in the foothills near Boulder. We'll look at what's still blooming in this wildflower hotspot and talk about how pollinators and flowers interact on the landscape.

LOOKING FOR THE LEAVES

Thursday, Oct. 16, 10 a.m.-noon

Mud Lake, Nederland

Explore the stunning colors that the change of seasons brings to Mud Lake. We'll go on a 1-mile leisurely walk around the lake in search of the aspen trees that change colors from green to vibrant shades of yellow and orange. We'll discuss the fall season and all the changes it brings.

FALL HARVEST WALK

Thursday, Nov. 20, 10 a.m.-noon

Carolyn Holmberg Preserve, Lafayette

Join us on this easy 1.5-mile walk around Stearns Lake and learn about the history of this property. From its agricultural roots to the many services it provides now, explore what Carolyn Holmberg Preserve has to offer.

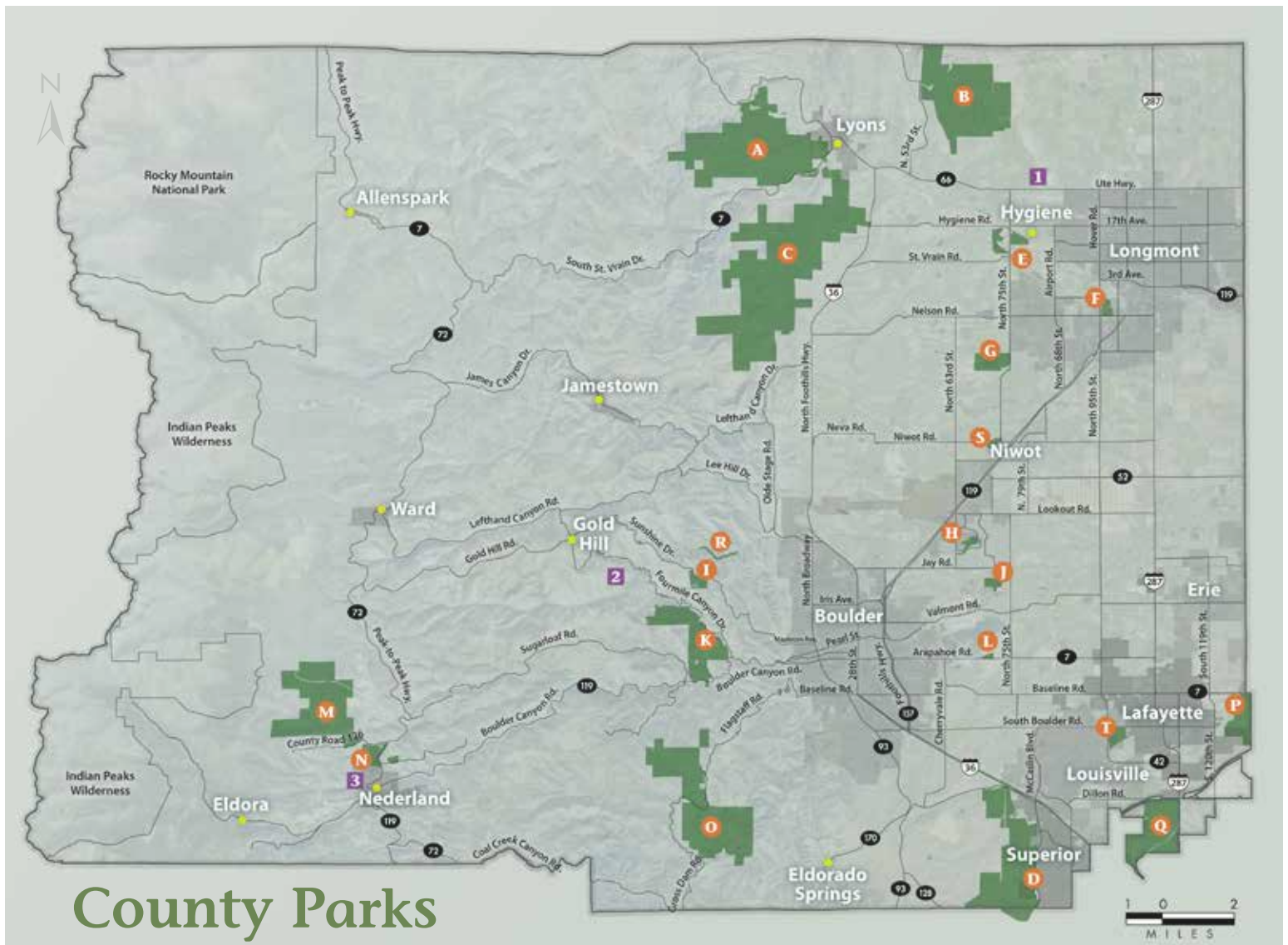




Parks & Open Space

5201 St. Vrain Road, Longmont, CO 80503

BoulderCountyOpenSpace.org



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|--|--|---|--|
| 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 |