

Colorado State Symbols—for use with Living Map *(accompanying photos are in the Living Map trunks)*

School children often learn about Colorado state symbols in the classroom and become attached to these symbols. This offers a chance to illustrate where you find these organisms, but also that most can be found in Boulder County. This exercise is also a good lesson in talking about native and non-native species.

In addition, many of our symbols were made official through the work of students and teachers who researched and lobbied to get these animals and plants recognized. This is something that ties in well with our student presentations—young students can make a difference!

Using the Colorado Symbols photos with the Living Map

You can break up students into smaller groups and give each one a Colorado symbol. Ask them to read about it on the back of the photo, and then decide as a group what life zone it goes in on the map (it may belong in several life zones). *Note: there is also a Stegosaurus—the Colorado State Fossil. You can include this with one of the groups to make them think, or add it at the end to talk about the changes to our environment from past time periods.*

After they have placed their photo on the map, have each group share why they put their “symbol” where they did, explain if they think it belongs in several life zones and why, and share one or two fun facts they learned about that animal or plant (from the information on the back of the picture).

Life Zones of Colorado Symbols

Here are some notes about where these animals and plants are found:

Rocky Mountain Bighorn Sheep are sometimes seen in the Foothills to the Montane, but in the summer they often go up to the Alpine tundra. In Boulder County, you can often see them along Highway 7 on the way to the Peak to Peak Highway.

Greenback Cutthroat Trout are endangered and have lost most of their habitat due to introduced trout, like Brook and Rainbow. There are a few protected locations in Boulder County west of the Peak to Peak Highway where known populations of Cutthroat exist currently.

Western Tiger Salamanders can be found in ponds and lakes in all 64 counties of Colorado. They live in Riparian life zones up to 12,000 feet in elevation.

Rocky Mountain Columbine grows from the Foothills to the Alpine.

Blue Grama Grass loves lots of sun and is found on the Prairie.

Colorado Bluestreak Butterflies are often found on Gambel Oak in the Foothills and Montane life zone.

Lark Buntings are seen in the Prairie life zone, and have declined considerably in Boulder County since the turn of the century.

Colorado Blue Spruce generally grow in the Foothills and Montane life zones, but has also been planted in many yards and parks in Boulder County.

Western Painted Turtles are seen around ponds and lakes everywhere in Boulder County, in both the Prairie and Foothills life zones.