

# NATURAL AREAS EXPLORER

JUNE-OCTOBER 2021

Your resource guide to connecting with the City of Fort Collins  
Natural Areas Department through free activities and events



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## DISCOVER YOUR NATURAL AREAS!

Natural areas are special places to explore and treasure. The City of Fort Collins Natural Areas Department manages more than 50 natural areas encompassing over 40,000 acres and 100 miles of trails—there's probably a natural area near you! Check the maps on pages 68-70 or visit [fcgov.com/naturalareas](http://fcgov.com/naturalareas).

Fort Collins natural areas are open from 5 a.m. until 11 p.m. except Bobcat Ridge, Gateway, Fossil Creek, and Soapstone Prairie natural areas which are open dawn to dusk. Soapstone Prairie is closed December–February.

## STAY INFORMED!

Subscribe to *Natural Areas Enews*, a monthly email newsletter that includes trail recommendations, updates, and volunteer opportunities at [fcgov.com/naturalareas](http://fcgov.com/naturalareas).

## LANGUAGES AND ACCESSIBILITY

Natural Areas Department activities are delivered in English. If you require interpretation in another language, contact [naturalareas@fcgov.com](mailto:naturalareas@fcgov.com) or 970-416-2815 to request an interpreter and we will provide one for you.

*Auxiliary aids and services are available for persons with disabilities.* V/TDD: Dial 711 for Relay Colorado.

If you have any questions or concerns about the accessibility of a program, please contact [naturalareas@fcgov.com](mailto:naturalareas@fcgov.com) or call 970-416-2815 for more information. We are happy to make any appropriate accommodations.

## WHAT THE SYMBOLS MEAN



Accessible; wheelchairs welcome. Paved or hard-packed trails; distance is 1 mile or less with moderate inclines.



Some activities are not suitable for all audiences and have age restrictions. Children must be accompanied by adults on all activities.



Some activities are specifically designed to be family-friendly and welcome all ages. Children must be accompanied by adults for all activities.



This activity is open to all, but specifically noted as a great activity for newcomers to the Fort Collins area.






These programs are led by Natural Areas partners and require a separate site for registration.

## REGISTERING AND CANCELLATIONS

Registration is required but cannot take place more than 30 days in advance. Go to [fcgov.com/register](http://fcgov.com/register) to register or call 970-416-2815.

Activities may be canceled due to inclement weather. Check before you go! Activity leaders may cancel an activity in progress for safety reasons.

The Natural Areas Department follows all local, state, and federal guidelines related to COVID-19. Check [fcgov.com/eps/coronavirus](http://fcgov.com/eps/coronavirus) for the latest updates. Registered participants will be notified of cancellations or restrictions through e-mail and in the activity description.

- [fcgov.com/register](http://fcgov.com/register) for descriptions, registrations, cancellations, and program updates.
- [fcgov.com/naturalareas](http://fcgov.com/naturalareas) for trail closures and general information.
-  Like City of Fort Collins Natural Areas on **Facebook** for news and information.
-  Follow [@FCNaturalAreas](https://twitter.com/FCNaturalAreas) for cancellations and updates.
-  Visit [nocotrailreport.com](http://nocotrailreport.com) or check the CoTrex app for trail closures.

## ACTIVITY LEADERS

Volunteer Naturalists are highly trained volunteer educators who lead many of the activities in this guide. They love to share their enthusiasm, knowledge, and passion for natural areas. You'll have lots of fun and gain a deeper understanding of your natural areas by attending a Volunteer Naturalist-led activity.

## GROUPS

Groups of 15 or more visiting a natural area on their own must apply for a permit in advance at [fcgov.com/naturalareas/permits](http://fcgov.com/naturalareas/permits). Permits are free and help ensure there are no conflicts on the day you plan to visit.

## DOGS

Dogs are not allowed at any scheduled activities. Please enjoy the natural areas with your dog outside of activity times. As a reminder for those areas that do allow dogs, they must be on a leash at all times. Dogs are not allowed at Bobcat Ridge, Coyote Ridge, Cottonwood Hollow, Fossil Creek Reservoir, Running Deer, and Soapstone Prairie natural areas.

Service animals trained to assist with a disability are always welcome at natural areas and at natural areas programs.

## SAFETY

The activities and events offered in this guide often take place in natural areas where you are responsible for your own safety. Outdoor activities include the potential for serious injury, death, or property loss. Choose activities that match your abilities. Be prepared for changing weather conditions. Beware of rattlesnakes, lightning, and high water. See page 65 for more information on ways to be safe in natural areas.

## ART

Throughout this publication, you will notice artistic contributions by community members, such as poetry, stories, and visual art. These contributions reflect the viewpoints and opinions of those individuals and their personal connections with nature. We are proud to feature the work of our community in this year's Natural Areas Explorer!

# EQUITY IN NATURE

by Yaz Haldeman

The path is open,  
Twisting into light and darkness.  
The city fades into sky and earth.

Colors are vibrantly blind.  
Tones are sharply silent.  
The land is parched for truth.

We share the air,  
We do not share the wealth.  
Open hearts bloom in spring.

New seeds sprout,  
Their light source blocked  
By our fearful shadows.

We too can shed our skins of  
Seasons past.

The path is open...

"This poem was inspired by the equity seen appreciated and accepted in nature and how we as intellectual beings can use that to guide us in our relationships with people who are different from us. The more we find in common, like sharing the path on an open trail in one of Fort Collins' natural areas, the easier it will be to live in harmony like the creatures that share with us the natural world."

- Yaz Haldeman



City of Fort Collins Art in Public Places

# JUNE

## NATURAL AREA ACTIVITIES

*Sphere* by Stephen Shachtman. Located in Redtail Grove Natural Area, on the Fossil Creek Trail west of College and southwest of the railroad tunnel. Learn more on the Art in Public Places website at [fcgov.com/artspublic/sphere](http://fcgov.com/artspublic/sphere).

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
						<b>Breathing with Trees,</b> page 54 <b>Astronomy at Bobcat Ridge,</b> page 39
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
						<b>JUNTEENTH</b>
<b>NATIVE PLANT WEEK: JUNE 13-19</b>						
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
						<b>Real Colorado Roots,</b> page 59
<b>POLLINATOR WEEK: JUNE 20-26</b>						
27	28	29	30	<p><i>Sphere</i> is an 8 ft. diameter flagstone sculpture by Stephen Shachtman. The sculpture plays off the scale of the site and the nearby tunnel, appearing to be the same size as the tunnel opening and draws from the color palette of the natural area as well as the historical site. This area of the Fossil Creek Trail, in Redtail Grove Natural Area, was home to a brick factory from 1902 to 1952. Historical evidence found at the site includes remnants of bricks and buildings, bases of the tram that carried the brick clay, and a kiln. Visitors should search the sculpture to find a historic brick hidden in the 903 brick-like pieces of flagstone.</p>		
<b>Yoga in Nature,</b> page 54						

Registration is required and opens 30 days prior to activity date at [fcgov.com/register](http://fcgov.com/register) or 970-416-2815. Check for cancellations at [fcgov.com/naturalareas](http://fcgov.com/naturalareas) before you go!



# JULY

## NATURAL AREA ACTIVITIES

Todd Juhasz

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				1 Fireflies, page 34	2 Astronomy at Bobcat Ridge, page 39	3
INDEPENDENCE DAY 4	5	6	7	8 Junior Naturalists: Yoga and Wellness, page 28	9 Campfire at Nix: A Bird's Life, page 37	10 Ecology Walk, page 57
11	12	13	14 The Unfriendly Dalmatian Project, page 45	15 Junior Naturalists: Leave No Trace and Community Science, page 28 Poudre Riverfest: Everyday Water, page 63	16 Toddler Tracks Storytime, page 27 History Underfoot, page 49 The Arts and the Great Outdoors, page 27	17 Ecology Walk, page 57 Skygazing at Fossil Creek, page 40
18	19	20	21 Ecology Walk, page 57	22	23 Sights and Sounds of McMurry, page 57	24 Campfire at Coyote Ridge: Dogs and Cats, page 37
25 Yoga in Nature, page 54	26	27 The Arts and the Great Outdoors, page 27	28 The Water We Use, page 45	29 Junior Naturalist: WaterWise, page 28	30	31

LATINO CONSERVATION WEEK: JULY 17-25



# AUGUST

## NATURAL AREA ACTIVITIES

*Painting of Poudre Canyon by Rick Bachand*

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	Burning and Renewal at Bobcat Ridge, page 58	For the Love of Ravens, page 58	Campfire at Coyote Ridge: Wild Cats, page 37	
15	16	17	Bats!, page 45	Junior Naturalist: Wildfire and Recovery, page 28	Toddler Tracks Storytime, page 27	Smithsonian at Lindenmeier, page 49 Skygazing at Fossil Creek, page 40
22	23	24	Watershed Health and Wildfires, page 46	Bugs and Blooms Captured in a Naturalist's Notebook, page 50	Sights and Sounds of Bobcat Ridge, page 58 Campfire at Nix: Wild Cats, page 37	Poudre Riverfest: Celebration, page 63
29	30	31	Know Your City: Conservation Agriculture, page 46	Trail Magic, page 46	Astronomy at Bobcat Ridge, page 39	Bison-Archaeology Connection, page 49
Yoga in Nature, page 54						



# SEPTEMBER

## NATURAL AREA ACTIVITIES

Kevin Borchert

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			<b>1</b> Wildfire Impacts, page 46	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b> Astronomy at Bobcat Ridge, page 39	<b>4</b> Wildfire Impacts, page 46 Skygazing at Soapstone Prairie, page 40
<b>5</b>	<b>6</b> LABOR DAY		<b>7</b>	<b>8</b> From Basement to Desert, page 59	<b>9</b> Campfire at Nix: Dogs and Cats, page 37	<b>10</b> Forest Therapy, page 54 Skygazing at Fossil Creek, page 40
<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b> Bird Banding and Important Bird Areas, page 47	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b> What About Ravens?, page 58	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH: SEPT. 15 – OCT. 15</b>			
			<b>22</b> Black-Footed Ferret Exploration, page 58	<b>23</b> Archaeology at the Lindemeyer Site, page 47	<b>24</b> Campfire at Coyote Ridge: A Bird's Life, page 37	<b>25</b> NATIONAL PUBLIC LANDS DAY
<b>26</b> Yoga in Nature, page 54	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>		





# OCTOBER

## NATURAL AREA ACTIVITIES

*Prairie Forms* by Robert Tully. Located in the Soapstone Prairie Natural Area. Learn more on the Art in Public Places website at [fcgov.com/artspublic/prairie-forms](http://fcgov.com/artspublic/prairie-forms).

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Taking visual inspiration from the site's topography and history, Robert Tully created multiple site-specific artworks for Soapstone Prairie Natural Area. Tully developed the graceful curves of the roofs on the picnic shelters, entrance structure, and the Lindenmeier Overlook. The roof designs were given an Award of Merit by the Associated Builders and Contractors in late 2009. The artist carved oversized replicas of artifacts found at the Lindenmeier archaeological site in stone and set them in the walls of the Lindenmeier Overlook structure as educational aides. To welcome and orient visitors as they arrive at Soapstone Prairie, Tully stacked four stone cairns along the road in a gesture symbolic of historic human presence on the land. The artist also used stone and metal to create the natural area's entrance sign.						
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
	INDIGENOUS PEOPLES' DAY		Wellness Walk, page 54		History Underfoot, page 49	Hike Through the Ages, page 49 Astronomy at Bobcat Ridge, page 39
17	18	19	20	HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH: SEPT. 15 - OCT. 15		
			Wellness Walk, page 54	21	22	23
					Black-Footed Ferret Exploration, page 58	Wellness Walk, page 54
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
BAT WEEK: OCT. 24-31						
31						Wellness Walk, page 54

# SHIFT YOUR RIDE

## Natural Areas with Bike Racks:

- **Bobcat Ridge**
- **Cattail Chorus**
- **Coyote Ridge**
- **Gustav Swanson**
- **Maxwell**
- **Nix Farm**
- **North Shields Ponds**
- **Pelican Marsh**  
(at Water's Way Park)
- **Red Fox Meadows**
- **Reservoir Ridge**  
(at Overland and Michaud lots)
- **Ross**  
(at Rolland Moore Park)
- **Running Deer**  
(at the Colorado Welcome Center)



Some areas with bike racks do not allow biking on the trails. Please check before you arrive.

For more ways to live sustainably, check out [shiftfoco.com](https://www.shiftfoco.com)

## AT HOME

Besides enjoying your natural areas and spending time outdoors, there are lots of ways you can take action to help our environment. Check out these ideas!



### Shop Locally

This generates sales taxes that support natural areas conservation and visitor amenities.



### Plant Native Plants

Make your yard an extension of the natural areas network by planting native plants. Visit [fcgov.com/naturalareas/native-plants](https://fcgov.com/naturalareas/native-plants).



### Minimize Pollutants

Minimize pesticides and herbicides to prevent run-off that pollutes waterways and protect beneficial pollinators.



### Keep Cats Indoors

The great outdoors is no place for cats. Keep cats indoors. Learn more at [fcgov.com/naturalareas/wildlife](https://fcgov.com/naturalareas/wildlife).



### Adjust Your Lighting

Dark skies benefit people and wildlife. Light only where you need it. Resources available at [fcgov.com/nightsky](https://fcgov.com/nightsky).



### Support Air Quality & Climate

Carpool or use alternative transportation such as biking or walking.



### Create a Nature Space

Create a nature space with a *Nature in the City* grant which funds projects for residents, neighborhoods, and communities. Grant submissions are open November through mid-January at [fcgov.com/natureinthecity](https://fcgov.com/natureinthecity).



### Reduce & Reuse

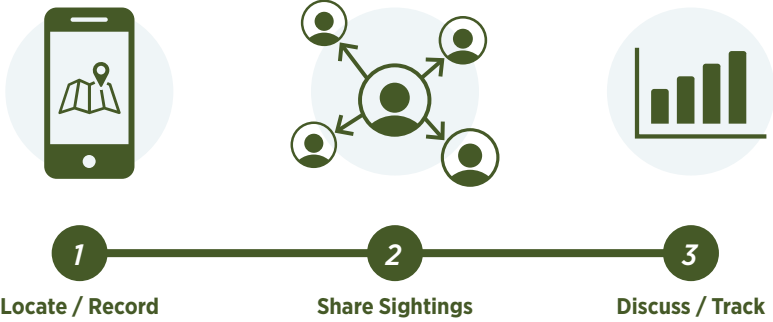
Reduce single-use plastics. These can be ingested by wildlife and they pollute waterways. Opt for reusable, recyclable, or compostable packaging whenever possible.

**THANKS FOR SUPPORTING  
YOUR LOCAL NATURE SPACES.**

Registration is required and opens 30 days prior to activity date at [fcgov.com/register](https://fcgov.com/register) or 970-416-2815. Check for cancellations at [fcgov.com/naturalareas](https://fcgov.com/naturalareas) before you go!

# COMMUNITY SCIENCE

Check out these opportunities to participate in self-guided community science projects in Fort Collins!



Your sightings contribute to hundreds of conservation decisions and peer-reviewed papers, thousands of student projects, and help inform bird research worldwide.

[ebird.org](http://ebird.org)



Every observation can contribute to biodiversity science, from the rarest butterfly to the most common backyard weed. We share your findings with scientific data repositories like the Global Biodiversity Information Facility to help scientists find and use your data. All you have to do is observe.

[inaturalist.org](http://inaturalist.org)



WESTERN MONARCH  
MILKWEED MAPPER

Monarch populations across North America are in serious decline. To preserve and protect populations in western states, we need to better understand where monarchs and their milkweed host plants occur in the landscape. Your help is critical in collecting data to better inform conservation efforts in the western U.S.

[monarchmilkweedmapper.org](http://monarchmilkweedmapper.org)

Still want to do more? [fcgov.com/naturalareas/community-science](http://fcgov.com/naturalareas/community-science)

Registration is required and opens 30 days prior to activity date at [fcgov.com/register](http://fcgov.com/register) or 970-416-2815.

# ON THE TRAIL

## YOUR STEWARDSHIP CHECKLIST

Can't make it to an event? There are plenty of ways to give back!



### PLAN AHEAD AND PREPARE

- ✓ Use the checklist on page 65. Natural areas can be busy, so check parking lot webcams at [fcgov.com/naturalareas/status](http://fcgov.com/naturalareas/status) before you go.
- ✓ Keep trails in good condition by checking trail status before you head out, visiting lesser known natural areas, and visiting at less crowded times. See [nocotrailreport.com](http://nocotrailreport.com) for closures.
- ✓ Visit in the mornings, evenings, or on weekdays. Check out hidden gems on page 66.



### TRAVEL ON DURABLE SURFACES

- ✓ Don't create new trails! If it's muddy, respect trail closures and visit a paved trail instead. Using the same path minimizes ecological impacts.



### DISPOSE OF WASTE PROPERLY

- ✓ Use the trash and recycling containers at trailheads.
- ✓ If trash can is full, pack out your own trash.
- ✓ Restrooms are at trailheads and some interior locations.
- ✓ Scoop your pet's poop to prevent water pollution.
- ✓ Pick up litter by becoming a Natural Areas Adopter at [fcgov.com/naturalareas](http://fcgov.com/naturalareas).



### LEAVE WHAT YOU FIND

- ✓ Allow the narrative of each place to be sustained. Don't collect any items. Leave everything as you found it.



### NO FIRES ARE ALLOWED ON NATURAL AREAS

- ✓ Attend a campfire activity in this guide! (See page 37.)



### RESPECT WILDLIFE

- ✓ Allow wildlife to thrive in their home and habitat by giving them space and not feeding them.



### BE CONSIDERATE OF OTHER VISITORS

- ✓ Be aware of other visitors and follow trail etiquette: Bikers yield to horses and pedestrians. Pedestrians yield to horses.

Check for cancellations at [fcgov.com/naturalareas](http://fcgov.com/naturalareas) before you go!



## PLANT NATIVES TO HELP WILDLIFE IN YOUR AREA!

A Smithsonian study found that more than **70%** native plants in the area helps bird populations thrive.

Try adding these **five native plants** to your space this year to support the birds and the bees!

**Goldenrod** (*Solidago gigantea*)

**Large beardtongue** (*Penstemon grandiflorus*)

**Wild bergamot** (*Monarda fistulosa* var. *mentifolia*)

**Butterfly milkweed** (*Asclepias tuberosa*)

**Three-leaf sumac** (*Rhus trilobata*)

[fcgov.com/natureinthecity](http://fcgov.com/natureinthecity)





Registration is required and opens 30 days prior to activity date at [fcgov.com/register](https://fcgov.com/register) or 970-416-2815.

## AT NATURAL AREAS

Natural areas are yours to enjoy and explore, and as stewards it is our responsibility to care for these special places. With more than 40,000 acres and more than 50 natural areas, there is a lot to care for!

### PICK IT UP FOCO

Want to take your impact to the next level? Lead your own trash clean-up.

- Clean up our city before trash makes its way to the Cache la Poudre River.
- Help us better understand issues around trash and single-use plastics in our City.
- Collect data that will help drive policy changes.



The City of Fort Collins is partnering with Litterati to engage the community in picking up litter in Fort Collins—download the app to help!



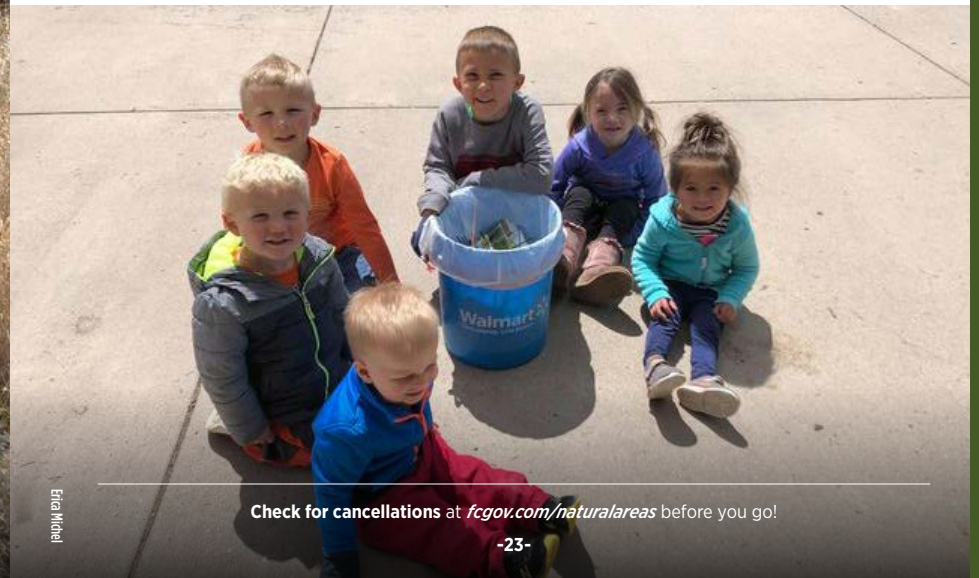
**VOLUNTEER SERVICES**

Visit [fcgov.com/volunteer/trashpickup](https://fcgov.com/volunteer/trashpickup) for more information.



Visit [litterati.org](https://litterati.org) for more information.

Visit [fcgov.com/volunteer/trashpickup](https://fcgov.com/volunteer/trashpickup) for more information and step-by-step instructions for a safe and fun volunteer experience.



Check for cancellations at [fcgov.com/naturalareas](https://fcgov.com/naturalareas) before you go!



A watershed is a geographic area in which water, sediment, and dissolved minerals all drain into a common body of water like a stream, creek, reservoir, or bay.

A watershed includes all the plants, animals, and people, who live in it, as well as the non-living components like rocks and soil.

We are all part of a watershed, and everything we do can affect the surface and ground water that runs through this system. [agintheclassroom.org](http://agintheclassroom.org)



**VISIT**  
FORTCOLLINS.CD.ORG  
TO LEARN MORE!

Visit [fcgov.com/recreation](http://fcgov.com/recreation)

# Recreator



Play your way with Recreation





**WANT TO TAKE YOUNG EXPLORERS OUT ON YOUR OWN OR EXPLORE FROM HOME?**

Check out our Learning Library at [fcgov.com/naturalareas/learn!](http://fcgov.com/naturalareas/learn!)

## BUDDING YOUNG NATURALISTS

Bring your little ones to learn about nature through stories, activities, nature walks, and hands-on projects. **Parents/guardians must be present at all times.**

DATE	TIME	NATURAL AREA	DESCRIPTION
Fri. June 18	10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.	<b>Ross</b> Meet at Rolland Moore Park Playground.	<b>Toddler Tracks Storytime</b> <span style="background-color: red; color: white; padding: 2px;">R</span> Discover flowers, bugs, tracks, and more in this slow-paced exploratory walk with the Poudre River Library District. Bring your library card along to check out books from the Book Bike! 1-3 yrs., register at <a href="http://read.poudrelibraries.org/events">read.poudrelibraries.org/events</a>
Fri. July 16	10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.	<b>Magpie Meander</b> Meet at Soft Gold Park.	
Fri. Aug. 13	10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.	<b>Red Fox Meadows</b> Meet at the trailhead kiosk on Longworth Dr.	
Fri. June 18 Fri. July 16	10:00 a.m. – noon	<b>Riverbend Ponds</b> Meet at Cairnes entrance off of Timberline; 705 Cairnes Drive.	<b>The Arts and the Great Outdoors for Tweens</b> <span style="background-color: red; color: white; padding: 2px;">R</span> This program is especially designed for tweens ages 10-13 by the Poudre River Public Library District. Explore Fort Collins Natural Areas with a guided hike, and then let your creativity flow with a mini workshop on music, poetry, or visual arts in the great outdoors. 10-13 yrs., register at <a href="http://read.poudrelibraries.org/events">read.poudrelibraries.org/events</a>
Tues. June 29 Tues. July 27	10:00 a.m. – noon	<b>Riverbend Ponds</b> Meet at Cairnes entrance off of Timberline; 705 Cairnes Drive.	<b>The Arts and the Great Outdoors for Teens</b> <span style="background-color: red; color: white; padding: 2px;">R</span> This program is especially designed for teens ages 12-18 by the Poudre River Public Library District. Explore Fort Collins Natural Areas with a guided hike, and then let your creativity flow with a mini workshop on music, poetry, or visual arts in the great outdoors. 12-18 yrs., register at <a href="http://read.poudrelibraries.org/events">read.poudrelibraries.org/events</a>

# JUNIOR NATURALISTS

## - AGES 8-12

Become a Junior Naturalist! Explore, learn, and grow your stewardship skills. Attend all activities and receive a special prize. One activity may be substituted by attending another activity in this booklet. **Parents/guardians must be present at all times.** Siblings are welcome, but the activities are geared towards the stated age group.

DATE	TIME	NATURAL AREA	DESCRIPTION
Thur. June 17	10:00 a.m. - noon	<b>North Shields Ponds</b> Meet at the parking lot for Shields Street River access.	<b>Nature Writing</b> Learn from a local nature author how to identify themes in nature, connect them with everyday life, and communicate lessons from the natural world. Enjoy engaging activities that will guide you through methods and habits of nature writing.
Thur. July 8	10:00 a.m. - noon	<b>Riverbend Ponds</b> Meet at the Cairnes Dr. Entrance, 705 Cairnes Dr.	<b>Yoga and Wellness</b> Being playful and silly is a great way to introduce yoga to kids. Not only will kids have space for self-expression in this class, but they will also strengthen their bodies, as well as their connection to mindfulness and breathing techniques. This class will incorporate yoga poses, art, and music. Bring a mat or blanket, a water bottle, and any props you'd like.
Thur. July 15	10:00 a.m. - noon	<b>Riverbend Ponds</b> Meet at the Cairnes Dr. Entrance, 705 Cairnes Dr.	<b>Leave No Trace and Community Science</b> Put on your thinking cap and help answer scientists' research questions that benefit local natural areas. Using your powers of observation, you'll learn to monitor native plants, birds, and butterflies.
Thur. July 29	10:00 a.m. - noon	<b>Gateway</b> Meet at the picnic shelters.	<b>WaterWise</b> Explore the journey of a drop of water from its source to your tap at home. This program will include a short hike and exploration of how the City assesses the health of our watershed to provide drinking water for thousands.
Thur. Aug. 12	10:00 a.m. - noon	<b>Bobcat Ridge</b> Meet in the parking lot.	<b>Wildfire and Recovery</b> What happens when a natural area burns? Come for a walk through the fire's path and learn how fire works and why it's important.

**Registration is required** and opens 30 days prior to activity date at [fcgov.com/register](http://fcgov.com/register) or 970-416-2815. Check for cancellations at [fcgov.com/naturalareas](http://fcgov.com/naturalareas) before you go!

## STAMP PAGE

Attend every Junior Naturalist program and collect a stamp from the program leader! Show the Volunteer Naturalist leaders your completed stamps on Aug. 12 for a special prize. As a bonus, complete one activity from Generation Wild's *100 Things to Do Before You're 12* and draw a picture of it.







## NATURAL AREAS' FAVORITE 100 THINGS TO DO BEFORE YOU'RE 12

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> NO. 1 Skip rocks.                     | <input type="checkbox"/> NO. 39 Try to catch your shadow.                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> NO. 2 Spot a shooting star.           | <input type="checkbox"/> NO. 42 Make a crayon leaf rubbing.                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> NO. 5 Roll down a hill.               | <input type="checkbox"/> NO. 45 Tell ghost stories around the campfire.    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> NO. 6 Go on a picnic.                 | <input type="checkbox"/> NO. 48 Hear your own echo.                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> NO. 8 See what's hiding under a rock. | <input type="checkbox"/> NO. 49 Find shapes in the clouds.                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> NO. 9 Walk on a log.                  | <input type="checkbox"/> NO. 51 Chase a butterfly.                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> NO. 11 Imitate a bird's call.         | <input type="checkbox"/> NO. 57 Make a fairy garden.                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> NO. 12 Dance in the rain.             | <input type="checkbox"/> NO. 59 Make mud pies.                             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> NO. 13 Dig up worms.                  | <input type="checkbox"/> NO. 61 Hear an elk bugle in the wild.             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> NO. 15 Climb a tree.                  | <input type="checkbox"/> NO. 64 Find a secret hiding place.                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> NO. 19 Roast marshmallows.            | <input type="checkbox"/> NO. 65 Go bird watching.                          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> NO. 20 Find the Big Dipper.           | <input type="checkbox"/> NO. 70 See who can jump the farthest.             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> NO. 21 Jump into a pile of leaves.    | <input type="checkbox"/> NO. 88 Identify animals by their tracks.          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> NO. 23 Splash in puddles.             | <input type="checkbox"/> NO. 96 Watch a caterpillar turn into a butterfly. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> NO. 29 Wade in a stream.              |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> NO. 34 Read a book under a tree.      |  |

### Facebook and Instagram:

@GenerationWildColorado

Tag Us: #100ThingsToDo

To learn more and see the complete list, visit [generationwild.com](http://generationwild.com).



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Registration is required and opens 30 days prior to activity date at [fcgov.com/register](http://fcgov.com/register) or 970-416-2815. Check for cancellations at [fcgov.com/naturalareas](http://fcgov.com/naturalareas) before you go!

## NEWCOMERS' SERIES

Are you new to Fort Collins or Larimer County? Welcome!

This special series of programs helps new residents learn about the ecosystems that make the area so special. **All programs are free. Registration required.**

Selected activities are marked with the New symbol: 

- **Parade of Prairie Bloom,**  
 June 3..... page 57
- **Sights and Sounds of Gateway Natural Area,** June 4 ..... page 57
- **Know Your City: Nature in the City,**  
 June 23 ..... page 45
- **Forest Therapy,** June 23, Sept 11 or Oct. 6..... page 54
- **Fireflies in Colorado,** June 24 or July 1..... page 34
- **Sights and Sounds of McMurry,**  
 July 23..... page 57
- **The Water We Use,**  
 July 28..... page 45
- **Sights and Sounds of Bobcat Ridge,** Aug. 20 ..... page 58
- **Bison-Archaeology Connection,**  
 Aug. 28 ..... page 49
- **From Basement to Desert,**  
 Sept. 9..... page 59
- **From Shores to Ocean Depths,**  
 Oct. 7 ..... page 59



"This painting was inspired by the Great Blue Heron I observed while walking Running Deer Natural Area. The sketch was made 3/31/20. Pandemic isolation was underway. The natural area provided wonderful solace and relaxation. I wrote in my journal; 'I am made aware of the magnificence of nature. The life and death struggles are a constant as this heron stands perfectly still in order to catch his food.'"

-Jan Latona



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Norm Keally

# NATURAL AREAS AFTER DARK

Explore and enjoy the natural areas after the sun goes down.

## NIGHT WALKS

Walks are offered near the full moon with lots of natural light—no need for flashlights! Dress warmly, wear closed-toed walking shoes, and bring water to drink. The activity will include a 1-2 mile walk on unpaved trails; easy.

DATE	TIME	LOCATION	DESCRIPTION
Thur. June 24 Thur. July 1	8:30 p.m. - 10:00 p.m.	<b>Riverbend Ponds</b> Meet at the Prospect Road parking lot.	<b>Fireflies in Colorado</b>  Did you know we have fireflies in Fort Collins? Find out why it's such a great place for fireflies to live and fun facts about these amazing beetles. Up to 1 mile; easy.

# GO FOR YOUR OWN NIGHT HIKE!

Have you ever explored nature at night? Take a night walk in a natural space and listen for owls, frogs, and other wildlife. Learn what blooms open at night. Here are some tips to keep you safe and learning:

- **Head out just before sunset:** Heading out before sunset can make it easier to get motivated, plus there's still a little light on the way out, which will make the way back easier.
- **Hike on a full moon:** On full moon nights, there is more natural light. You can use your headlamp or flashlight less!
- **Go with a group:** Hiking is more fun with friends. Plus, it's safer and not as intimidating.
- **Take a familiar trail:** A familiar trail will be easier for nighttime travel.
- **Pick the right location:** Some natural areas are closed after dark. Coyote Ridge, Reservoir Ridge, and Riverbend Ponds are all great places to try a night hike and they're open until 11:00 p.m.! Check out [fcgov.com/naturalareas](http://fcgov.com/naturalareas) for more natural areas that are open late.
- **Slow down and be observant:** Darkness can make terrain more challenging and it's easy to get turned around and miss a trail junction. Slow down and pay attention to your surroundings, including signs of wildlife.
- **Bring layers, like an extra coat or jacket:** If you start before the sun sets, you may want an extra layer of warm clothing once the night sets in and it cools off.
- **Bring a cellphone or radio for emergencies:** Be aware of the area you are hiking and know if you can get service there.
- **Tell someone where you are going:** Always let someone know where you are going and when you expect to be back.



Night hiking tips modified from: [rei.com/blog/hike/night-hiking-basics](http://rei.com/blog/hike/night-hiking-basics)



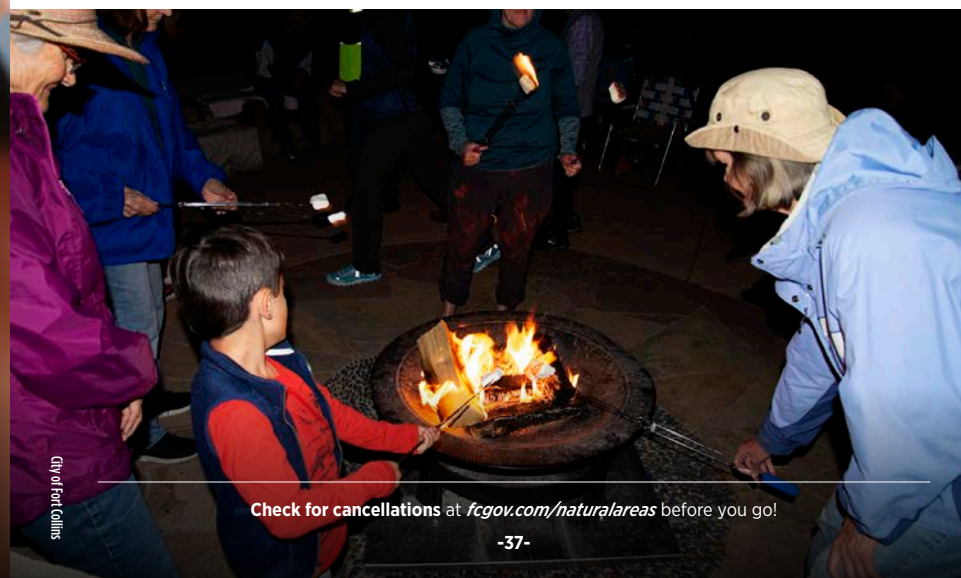
## CAMPFIRES

Spend a cozy evening by the campfire, complete with stories and s'mores! Suitable for all ages. Dress warmly and bring water to drink.

Campfires at Coyote Ridge include a hike on an unpaved trail to the cabin. Please allow 30-40 minutes to reach the cabin. The campfire begins at the time listed below. Bring a flashlight for the walk back. 2 miles; easy.

Campfires at Nix Farm do not include a hike and are wheelchair accessible. Bring lawn chairs or blankets to sit on if you like (limited seating available).

DATE	TIME	LOCATION	DESCRIPTION
Fri. July 9	7:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.	Nix Farm 	<b>A Bird's Life</b> Learn about our local year-round resident birds as well as summer visitors. Discover how birds use seasonal signals and earth's magnetic fields to migrate long distances.
Fri. Sept. 24	6:00 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.	Coyote Ridge Cabin	
Fri. Aug. 6	7:30 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.	Coyote Ridge Cabin	<b>Wild Cats</b> Native wild cats like the mountain lion and lynx are secretive and seldom seen. Learn to read the signs and discover which big cat you're sharing the landscape with!
Fri. Aug. 20	6:30 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.	Nix Farm 	
Sat. July 24	8:00 p.m. – 9:30 p.m.	Coyote Ridge Cabin	<b>Dogs and Cats ARE Wildlife</b> Your furry best friend is wilder than you think! Learn about the dogs and cats that call Fort Collins home, both wild and domestic.
Fri. Sept. 10	7:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.	Nix Farm 	



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# ASTRONOMY AT BOBCAT RIDGE

Enjoy a brief, family-friendly astronomy activity followed by skygazing. Volunteers from the Northern Colorado Astronomical Society provide telescopes. Dress warmly, bring water, and a blanket or chair to sit on in the parking lot. If bringing a flashlight, use a red light or cover it with red cellophane. Activities at Bobcat Ridge Natural Area will begin at the picnic shelter, a 0.25 mile-walk. **Please arrive on time! Allow for a 10-minute walk to the shelter. The gate closes shortly after start times and parking is not allowed on the road outside the gate.**

DATE	TIME	DESCRIPTION
Sat. June 12	9:00 p.m. – 11:00 p.m.	<b>Topic TBD</b>
Fri. July 2	8:30 p.m. – 10:30 p.m.	<b>Our Galactic Neighborhood</b> The Summer night sky provides some of the best views of the Milky Way Galaxy. We'll explore the Solar System's place in our galactic neighborhood and familiarize you with finding the galactic center and the constellations of the southern sky, as well as identify stars of the July evening sky. The program is scheduled for 8:30 p.m., but the summer days of early July are some of the longest daylight we have, so night telescope viewing may start closer to 9:30 p.m.
Fri Aug. 27	7:45 p.m. – 9:45 p.m.	<b>The Summer Triangle</b> The Constellations form patterns in the sky that are described in various ways by different cultures, but brilliant in the late summer sky is the large triangle shape formed by the 1st magnitude stars Vega, Altair, and Deneb. Known as an asterism, the Summer Triangle dominates the evening sky well into Fall before fading in the west and ushering in Winter. We'll also explore other stars and even see Saturn and Jupiter rise on the eastern horizon and maybe Venus set in the west. Program at 7:45 p.m., telescope viewing starts at 8:15 p.m.
Fri. Sept. 3	7:30 p.m. – 9:30 p.m.	<b>Topic TBD</b>
Sat. Oct. 9	6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.	<b>The Mighty Giant Planets Jupiter and Saturn</b> Although Saturn and Jupiter were closest to Earth on August 2 and 19, respectively, they are easiest to view now after sunset in the southeast sky. We'll model where Jupiter and Saturn are in the night sky relative to the Earth and Sun, and you'll get a great look at Jupiter's 4 major moons and the Saturn's rings through the telescopes of the Northern Colorado Astronomical Society. Program at 6:30 p.m., telescope viewing starts at 7:00 p.m.

# SKYGAZING AT SOAPSTONE PRAIRIE

Enjoy a very special night to celebrate dark skies during the new moon at Soapstone Prairie Natural Area. Learn about the benefits of a dark sky for humans and wildlife. Then enjoy viewing through telescopes with members of the Northern Colorado Astronomical Society. Dress warmly and bring a blanket or chair to sit on. Event will take place in the south parking lot, approximately one-hour drive time from Fort Collins. **Gates will close shortly after the start and road parking is not allowed, so please be on time!**

DATE	TIME
Sat. Sept. 4	7:30 p.m. - 10:00 p.m.

# SKYGAZING AT FOSSIL CREEK RESERVOIR

Volunteers from the Northern Colorado Astronomical Society provide telescopes and share their knowledge about stars, planets, galaxies, and more. Dress warmly and bring a blanket or chair to sit on. Meet in the parking lot.

DATE	TIME
Fri. June 18	9:30 p.m - 11:30 p.m.
Sat. July 17	9:00 p.m. - 11:00 p.m.
Sat. Aug. 14	8:30 p.m. - 10:30 p.m.
Sat. Sept. 11	7:30 p.m. - 9:30 p.m.
Fri. Oct. 15	7:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.
Fri. Nov. 12	7:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.
Sat. Dec. 11	7:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.





"Often we get caught up in the hustle of our daily lives. Time spent in a natural area can clear the clutter of those thoughts, providing opportunity to take notice of Nature's unique complexity. Creativity often blooms in such conditions."

- Heather Dieter Bartmann



## STEWARDSHIP BEHIND THE SCENERY 16+

These informative talks are designed for adults to learn more about research in natural areas and how their unique and valuable natural resources are stewarded. Parking is limited—please carpool, bike, or walk.

DATE	TIME	LOCATION	DESCRIPTION
Tues. June 8	7:30 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.	<b>Nix Farm</b> 1745 Hoffman Mill Rd.	<b>Frogs!</b> Learn about the importance of amphibian monitoring and what it tells us about the health of the ecosystem. Then, test your skills at a nearby restoration site.
Wed. June 23	6:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.	<b>Sugar Beet Park Pollinator Garden</b> Pre-register for more details.	<b>Know Your City: Nature in the City</b>   Let's meet outside and learn about the City's efforts to increase wildlife habitat and make nature more accessible to the entire community through small urban projects. Register at <a href="http://read.poudrelibraries.org/events/">read.poudrelibraries.org/events/</a>
Wed. July 14	8:00 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.	<b>Soapstone Prairie</b> Meet at South parking lot.	<b>The Unfriendly Dalmatian Project</b> Time to get your hands dirty at Soapstone Prairie! Spend the day removing dalmatian toadflax and help preserve the ecosystem. Take a break midday for lunch and a lesson on some of the area's unique history.
Wed. July 28	6:00 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.	<b>Gateway Natural Area</b> Meet at Shelter A.	<b>The Water We Use</b>  Where does our high-quality water come from, how much do we have, and how do we get it? Join Fort Collins Utilities experts to dive into these questions and more!
Wed. Aug. 11	7:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.	<b>Gateway Natural Area</b> Meet at Shelter A.	<b>Bats!</b> Did you know that Gateway is home to one of the largest maternal roosts in Northern Colorado? Learn where they live and why local scientists have been watching their habits closely.

Check for cancellations at [fcgov.com/naturalareas](http://fcgov.com/naturalareas) before you go!

Registration is required and opens 30 days prior to activity date at [fcgov.com/register](http://fcgov.com/register) or 970-416-2815.



DATE	TIME	LOCATION	DESCRIPTION
Wed. Aug. 18	6:00 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.	<b>Lee Martinez Park</b> Meet in the parking lot by the tennis courts.	<b>Watershed Health and Wildfires</b> What is a watershed? How might wildfires impact it? How does the health of a watershed impact our drinking water? These are massive questions! Join experts from Fort Collins Utilities and the Coalition for the Poudre River Watershed as they share their expertise.
Wed. Aug. 25	6:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.	<b>Kestrel Fields</b> Register for more information.	<b>Know Your City: Conservation Agriculture</b> <b>R</b> What do kale, carrots, currant, and chokecherry have in common? These plants may be found growing together on one of the newest natural areas in the city. Kestrel Fields Natural Area is home to a conservation agriculture pilot project. We will take a closer look at what's happening in the farm fields and how the City is restoring the surrounding land to support the community, wildlife, and local agriculture. Register at <a href="http://read.poudrelibraries.org/events">read.poudrelibraries.org/events</a>
Thur. Aug. 26	9:00 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.	<b>Maxwell</b> Meet in the parking lot off CR 42.	<b>Trail Magic</b> How do trails get rebuilt and who maintains them? It's more complex than it seems! Learn how the Maxwell trail project is balancing trail design, recreation needs, and a healthy environment. Up to 2 miles; moderate.
Wed. Sept. 1 Sat. Sept. 4	9:00 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.	<b>Bobcat Ridge</b> Meet in the parking lot.	<b>Wildfire Impacts</b> What does it take to restore a popular natural area after intense fire? Natural areas staff give an inside look at the restoration efforts completed at Bobcat Ridge after the Cameron Peak Fire of 2020.

Registration is required and opens 30 days prior to activity date at [fcgov.com/register](http://fcgov.com/register) or 970-416-2815.

DATE	TIME	LOCATION	DESCRIPTION
Tues. Sept. 14	5:30 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.	<b>Fossil Creek Reservoir</b> Meet at the amphitheater near the parking lot.	<b>Bird Banding and Important Bird Areas</b> Join the Bird Conservancy of the Rockies to learn about and get some hands-on experience with bird banding! We will discuss how we gather important data, and how bird banding supports conservation work. Afterwards, Fort Collins Audubon will lead a short guided birdwatching tour. Up to 1 mile; easy.
Thur. Sept. 23	6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.	<b>Fort Collins Museum of Discovery</b>	<b>Archaeology at the Lindemeier Site</b> Enjoy a presentation by archaeologist Jason LaBelle regarding his recent dig at Soapstone Prairie, as well as a look at artifacts from the Museum's archives.



City of Fort Collins

Check for cancellations at [fcgov.com/naturalareas](http://fcgov.com/naturalareas) before you go!







*Ghost Kitchen* by Joe McGrane. Located in Reservoir Ridge at the northern Foothills Trail trailhead. Learn more on the Art in Public Places website at [fcgov.com/artspublic/ghost-kitchen](http://fcgov.com/artspublic/ghost-kitchen).

*Ghost Kitchen* consists of two low concrete walls that define a picnic space and reference the farmstead that was once located in the area. The artwork includes welded steel “windows,” referencing the earlier homestead with silhouette cutouts depicting common birds, animals, and insects that visit the site. The wall that marks the entry to the space is designed for seating and incorporates a low-relief bronze map of the Reservoir Ridge Trail experience in the form of a game board. To play the game, small stones are moved along a path that includes the detours and side adventures one might find along the actual trail.

City of Fort Collins Art in Public Places

## VOICES OF THE PAST

From ancient to modern times, northern Colorado has been a great place to live. Discover people of the past and present that have lived in and shaped our community.

DATE	TIME	NATURAL AREA	DESCRIPTION
Fri. July 16 Fri. Oct. 8	2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.	<b>Arapaho Bend</b> Meet at the Harmony Transit Center parking lot. Meet near the southwest end of the lot near the kiosk sign.	<b>History Underfoot</b>  Hike along the Overland Trail through Arapaho Bend Natural Area. Discuss early homesteaders from paleo to Arapaho / Cheyenne bands that called the area home. Hear stories about the Buss Family, George Strauss and the Sherwood Ranch, and the Stage Coach Stop. Capped off by discussion of irrigation canals in the area that contributed to Colorado Water Rights Laws. 2 miles; easy.
Sat. Aug. 14	10:00 a.m. – noon	<b>Soapstone Prairie</b> Meet in the north parking lot; approximately a one hour drive from Fort Collins.	<b>Smithsonian at Lindenmeier</b>  Travel back in time to learn how Paleoindians survived the high plains and how Smithsonian Institution archaeologists uncovered their story in the 1930s. 0.25 miles; easy.
Sat. Aug. 28	9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.	<b>Soapstone Prairie</b> Meet at the south parking lot; approximately a one-hour drive from Fort Collins.	<b>Bison-Archaeology Connection</b>  Learn about the acquisition of Soapstone Prairie, the history of the American bison, and the treasures uncovered at the Lindenmeier archaeological site. 0.25 miles; easy.
Sat. Oct. 9	9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.	<b>Soapstone Prairie</b> Meet at the south parking lot; approximately a one-hour drive from Fort Collins.	<b>Hike through the Ages</b>  Experts in geology, ecology, and history show how Soapstone Prairie was formed, the creatures that keep it functioning, and the homesteading and ranching history that’s part of our heritage. 6-7 miles; strenuous, off-trail hike.

# CREATIVE BY NATURE

Beginners and veterans welcome! Instruction, focused and guided observations, along with drawing, painting, and writing deepen your connections to nature. No art experience required! Children under 16 must be accompanied by an adult. Bring something to sit on (a stool, jacket, pad, etc.). Feel free to bring your own art supplies or borrow ours.

DATE	TIME	NATURAL AREA	DESCRIPTION
Wed. June 9	9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.	<b>Fossil Creek Reservoir</b> Meet at the outdoor classroom near the parking lot.	<b>Journaling the Nature Experience</b> 9+ Whether capturing the distant mountain landscape or the nearby flora and fauna, nature journaling is the way to enjoy and develop appreciation of nature. 0.5 mile; easy.
Wed. June 30	9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.	<b>Riverbend Ponds</b> Meet at Cairnes entrance off of Timberline; 705 Cairnes Drive.	<b>Ecosystem Wonders</b> 9+ Learn to use a nature journal to capture ecosystem intricacies while you develop your art and observational skills. 0.5 mile; easy.
Thur. Aug. 19	9:00 a.m. – noon	<b>Primrose Studio</b> Meet at the studio at 4300 Michaud Lane near Reservoir Ridge.	<b>Bugs and Blooms Captured in a Naturalist's Notebook</b> 9+ Learn how to use art as a tool for discovering and capturing the details of plants, insects, and other creatures. 1 mile; easy.



Nick Stone



Megan Mills



Jerry Staley



Heidi Reisig

## ARTISTIC ABILITIES

Artistic Abilities is an inclusive art class through Adaptive Recreation Opportunities (ARO). Class members took a brief fieldtrip outside the Senior Center to collect natural materials, which they then manipulated, arranged, and glued into self-portraits. Nature can always provide artistic inspiration, complementing the multiple benefits of moving outdoors and expressing creativity. The ARO program provides quality and equal opportunities for recreation and leisure programs to community members with disabilities. [fcgov.com/aro](http://fcgov.com/aro)

Check for cancellations at [fcgov.com/naturalareas](http://fcgov.com/naturalareas) before you go!



Registration is required and opens 30 days prior to activity date at [fcgov.com/register](http://fcgov.com/register) or 970-416-2815.

# 83.44 MILES OF HEALING: A RUNNER'S STORY OF RECLAMATION

by Eryn Lynum

The flowers are different today. I almost can't discern the change, not in dawn's veiled light. Ten minutes from now, as the sun wanders higher, the details will no longer be obscured. I cherish these moments. Not many see the meadow in this light.

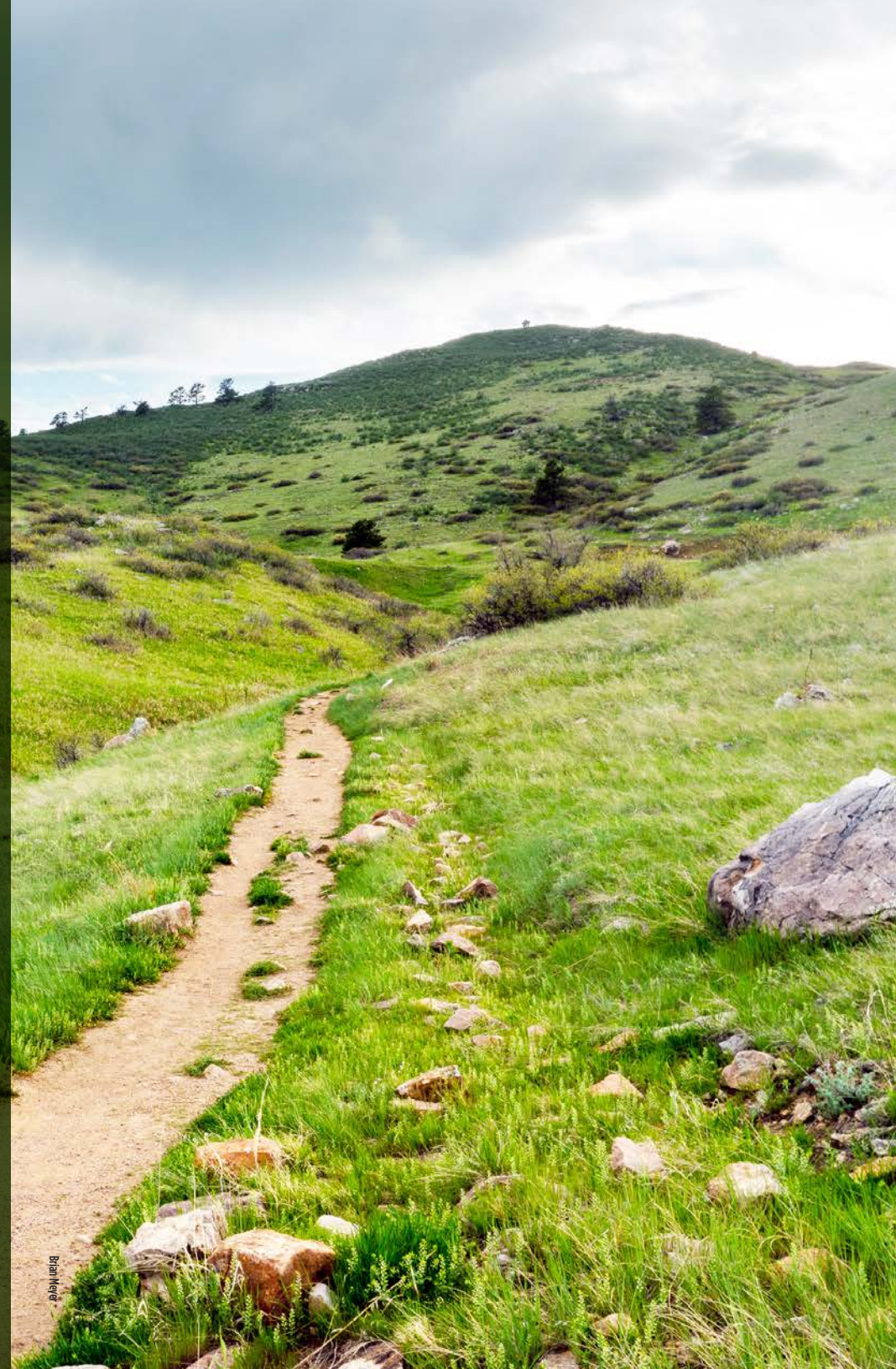
It is the summer of 2019. My feet again acquaint themselves with the dirt trails of Pineridge and Maxwell natural areas. This space has become a sort of sanctuary in which I am determined to reclaim my health physically, mentally, and spiritually after suffering a miscarriage. For the three years following my loss, I find myself unable to trust my body or continue my love of trail running.

In May, aching to return to the trails, I registered for a half-marathon trail race in Lory State Park at the end of summer as my motivation. Three times a week I find myself here, lost in every thought and no thoughts at all. Spanning these months, I come to recognize other runners who cross me on the path. I grow familiar also with the critters who call this area home, the ones protected by our natural areas. I watch as early summer flowers give way to late summer blooms. It is as if each week, our natural areas greet me with new splendor. I witness the resilient cadence of our landscape. Observing each facet and character of our ecosystem supporting one another, my respect for the space blossoms right along with its wildflowers. I begin to recognize the milkweed, thistle, rabbitbrush, and bluebells, appreciating each for the beauty it lends to my miles. On the warmest mornings, honeysuckle wafts from the bushes, warmed from the sun like honey melting on a biscuit. Swallows, swifts, and chickadees sing me through mile after mile. One afternoon even brings a bobcat across my path. Peering at me from the tall native grasses, I wait patiently for him to make his way up the ridge, thankful for the break he affords me to catch my breath.

As race day approaches, longer training runs demand earlier start times at the trailhead. There is a lesser-known entry to Pineridge, a narrow grass-hemmed trail off the south end of Overland Trail. Its initial ascent serves as a perfect warm-up, stealing my breath well before the first mile marker. Closing in on mile two, I resurface from the trees, coming out below the official trailhead parking lot. Fishermen are already well situated on the bank. They arrived at Pineridge far earlier than I. I hope one day my appetite for the trail will match their appetites for a bite on the line. Maybe one day I'll beat them to the water's edge.







As the weeks progress and my body and mind strengthen, I add to my route. Maxwell takes me up and over on to Reservoir Ridge. Mule deer raise their heads from the grass, offer a good-morning nod. Knowing the meadow will soon be busy with hikers, they wander back into the ponderosa pine until tomorrow's dawn. The magpies, however, don't seem to mind my presence. They fly right along with me.

In September, I cross the finish line of my race. I reflect on the past three years of grief, and more recently, my four months and 83.44 miles devoted to Pineridge and Maxwell and all their inhabitants. More fondly, I consider all they committed to me in cheering me on each mile to win back my health and return to these majestic places we all get to call home.



# WELLNESS

Time spent in nature has been linked to reduced stress, improved well-being, and increased social connectedness. Join trained Volunteer Naturalists to explore how time spent in green spaces can positively affect both your mental and physical health.

DATE	TIME	NATURAL AREA	DESCRIPTION
Sat. June 12	10:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.	<b>Riverbend Ponds</b> Meet at Cairnes entrance off of Timberline; 705 Cairnes Drive.	<b>Breathing with Trees</b>  Walking the nature trail is an immersion experience. Nature has an intuitive sense for what we need. Enjoy a breath of fresh air as you breathe the scents of trees. This unique walk will leave you feeling rejuvenated and alive. Up to 1 mile; easy.
Sun. June 27 Sun. July 25 Sun. Aug. 29 Sun. Sept. 26	9:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.	<b>Gateway Natural Area</b> Meet at Shelter A.	<b>Yoga in Nature</b>  Practicing yoga outside allows us to connect in the present moment and truly immerse ourselves into the natural world. This vinyasa style class will link poses and breath together while connecting to our natural surroundings. Come as you are and enjoy a mindful flow that is appropriate for all levels. Props available upon request.
Wed. June 23	1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.	<b>Gateway Natural Area</b>  Meet at Shelter A.	<b>Forest Therapy</b>  Experience the Japanese tradition of <i>Shinrin-Yoku</i> on this guided nature walk. Learn to open your senses to nature's healing power.
Sat. Sept. 11 Wed. Oct. 6	1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.	<b>Primrose Studio</b> Meet at the studio at 4300 Michaud Lane near Reservoir Ridge.	
Wed. Oct. 13 Wed. Oct. 20	Noon – 1:00 p.m.	<b>Fort Collins Museum of Discovery</b>  Meet at the Museum entrance.	<b>Wellness Walks</b>  Join Volunteer Naturalists for a short and slow walk along the Poudre. Discover ways to incorporate mindfulness and daily time in nature. Up to 1 mile; easy.
Sat. Oct. 23 Sat. Oct. 30	1:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.		



# NATURAL DISCOVERIES

Enjoy a variety of activities and hikes.

DATE	TIME	NATURAL AREA	DESCRIPTION
Thur. June 3	8:30 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.	<b>Pineridge Natural Area</b> Meet at Cottonwood Glen Park in the parking lot.	<b>Parade of Prairie Bloom</b>   Explore the blooms through the months, while learning about native and non-native plants. 1.4 miles; easy-moderate.
Fri. June 4	10:00 a.m. – noon	<b>Gateway</b> Meet at Shelter A.	<b>Sights and Sounds of Gateway</b>   Explore where the river and foothills meet. See the birds, butterflies, and plants that live here. Bring your lunch to enjoy during a short presentation after the hike. 1.5 miles; easy.
Wed. June 16	9:30 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.	<b>Lee Martinez Park</b> Meet in the parking lot by the tennis courts.	<b>A Walk Through Nature</b>   Enjoy a leisurely walk along the Poudre Trail. Explore the dance between the river and the land forms while observing birds, trees, and butterflies along the trail. Up to 1 mile, with fun for families; easy.
Sat. July 10 Sat. July 17 Wed. July 21	10:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.	<b>Fort Collins Museum of Discovery</b> Meet at Museum entrance.	<b>Ecology Walk</b>  Time spent in nature is never wasted. Learn a bit about local ecology and enjoy a peaceful walk along the Poudre River. Up to 1 mile; easy.
Fri. July 23	10:00 a.m. – noon	<b>McMurry</b> Meet at Shields St. River Access.	<b>Sights and Sounds of McMurry</b>   Discover another successful story of a Poudre River natural area right in town. Look for important plant and insect resources and watch for active animals. 1.5 miles; easy.



DATE	TIME	NATURAL AREA	DESCRIPTION
Wed. Aug. 4	9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.	<b>Bobcat Ridge</b> Meet in the parking lot.	<b>Burning and Renewal at Bobcat Ridge</b> Awaken your curiosity about wildfire and its impacts through up-close, personal observations of the recently burned landscape, stories from those who were on the scene during the fire, and an understanding of how the ecosystem reveals its resilience to this natural phenomenon.
Thur. Aug. 5	9:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.	<b>Pineridge</b> Meet at the Dixon Reservoir parking lot.	<b>For the Love of Ravens</b> 16+ Learn more about the magic of ravens as depicted in stories and literature. 3 miles; moderate.
Fri. Aug. 20	10:00 am – noon	<b>Bobcat Ridge</b> Meet in the parking lot.	<b>Sights and Sounds of Bobcat Ridge</b> + ♿ Explore the convergence of shortgrass prairie and foothills plant communities, how they support a web of animal life, and their resilience after wildfire. Hike on the Eden Valley Spur trail, examining plant resources, watching for active animals, and noticing the local geology and wildfire impacts. Up to 1.5 miles; easy.
Thur. Sept. 16	9:00 a.m. – noon	<b>Bobcat Ridge</b> Meet in the parking lot.	<b>What About Ravens?</b> 16+ Ravens are unique and intelligent birds. Learn more about what makes them so special and the role they play in the montane ecosystem. 3 miles; moderate.
Wed. Sept. 22	5:30 p.m. – 10:30 p.m.	<b>Soapstone Prairie</b> Meet at the north parking lot.	<b>Black-Footed Ferret Exploration</b> 16+ Explore North America's rarest mammal. Journey together to Soapstone Prairie for a presentation about black-footed ferrets. Then hike and search for this elusive resident. 1-2 miles; moderate with uneven terrain.
Fri. Oct. 22	5:00 p.m. – 10:00 p.m.		

Registration is required and opens 30 days prior to activity date at [fcgov.com/register](http://fcgov.com/register) or 970-416-2815.

# GEOLOGY AND ECOLOGY 12+ EXPLORATIONS

Explore with experts in geology and ecology to uncover the secrets of the oldest to youngest rocks in Fort Collins. Discover how the landscape was shaped by natural forces to form the ecological landscape. Bring sun protection, lunch, water, sturdy shoes, and rain gear.

DATE	TIME	NATURAL AREA	DESCRIPTION
Tues. June 15	9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.	<b>Coyote Ridge</b> Meet at the parking lot.	<b>Cover to Cover: Reading the Rocks of the Front Range Foothills</b> 18+ Take a walk through time and get full look at northern foothills geology through the juxtaposition of Coyote Ridge Natural Area and Devil's Backbone Open Space. 10 miles; very strenuous.
Sat. June 26	9:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.	<b>Gateway</b> Meet at Shelter A.	<b>Real Colorado Roots</b> 18+ Discover Colorado's origins as pieced together by geologists using the theory of plate tectonics and evidence along the Black Powder Trail. 1.5 miles; moderate.
Thur. Sept. 9	9:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.	<b>Bobcat Ridge</b> Meet in the parking lot.	<b>From Basement to Desert</b> + 12+ Discover the oldest rocks in Larimer County, the Great Unconformity, and the red rocks shed from the ancestral Rockies. 4 miles; moderate.
Thur. Oct. 7	9:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.	<b>Coyote Ridge</b> Meet in the parking lot.	<b>From Shore to Ocean Depths</b> + 12+ Examine the watery sediments that form Coyote Ridge. Learn how these rocks were deposited, uplifted, eroded, and vegetated to form the present landscape. 4 miles; moderate.

Check for cancellations at [fcgov.com/naturalareas](http://fcgov.com/naturalareas) before you go!

## RISE

by Bronson R.

Ash.  
Not just on a Wednesday,  
on nearly every gentle summer morning.

The sky mimicking the ground  
mirrors to the radiant brush  
clouds of burnt sienna.

Out on the reservoir  
refracting infused aerosols  
inhaling smoke through echoes.

The loud crackling  
effortless ridge lining  
suppressing generational risk

Land lost  
and at the same time, experiences.  
Having to find a way of breathing calmly.

The swabbing.  
Salivary glands giddy.  
Not being able to share the same air.

Again, smoky  
unknowing of falling heaven  
or of signs of raising hell.

An imminent rot,  
rethinking of normal routines  
with pestilence and hellfire rummaging succinctly.

Scars from the losses  
fatigue of boredom  
cooped up next to the windows.

Watching as the city burns  
as the world burns  
as does our disinfected hands.

But once the ash falls it can only move one way.  
When the drought settles,  
when the distinguishable white flurries-

-we will be Phoenixes.  
Molting into fortress  
to regain a livable premise,

where the sun does not burn to a crisp.  
To seek out kind souls of Horsetooth,  
and restore the calcium in our complexion.

Numbered are the days of demise  
for after the Cameron scorch,  
comes seral growing, comes rebirth.



# PLAY IT SAFE ON THE RIVER

THIS INFORMATION COULD SAVE YOUR LIFE!



## WEAR A LIFE VEST

- ✓ No pool toys—they won't hold you up.
- ✓ Wear shoes and a helmet.
- ✓ Don't tie anything to yourself or your vessel. It could drown you.



## KNOW WHERE YOU ARE

- ✓ Take a map!
- ✓ Plan your take-out location before you get in.
- ✓ Pay attention and follow all warning signs.



## BE COURTEOUS

- ✓ Don't leave trash in or near the river. Look for trash and recycling cans in parking lots.



## SHARE THE RIVER

- ✓ Give other boaters and anglers plenty of space.



## SAFE TO GO?

- ✓ Know the weather and water conditions. High flows are unsafe.
- ✓ This water is melted snow—it's always cold.
- ✓ Avoid logs, branches, rocks, and debris. They can drag you under.
- ✓ Your risk-taking endangers the lives of rescuers.



## FLOAT SOBER, FLOAT SAFE

- ✓ Alcohol and drugs, including marijuana, impair judgment.



## IF YOU'RE IN THE WATER

- ✓ Don't stand up in the river; avoid foot entrapment.
- ✓ Get on your back with feet pointing downstream. Get your toes out of the water.
- ✓ Use your arms to paddle to shore.

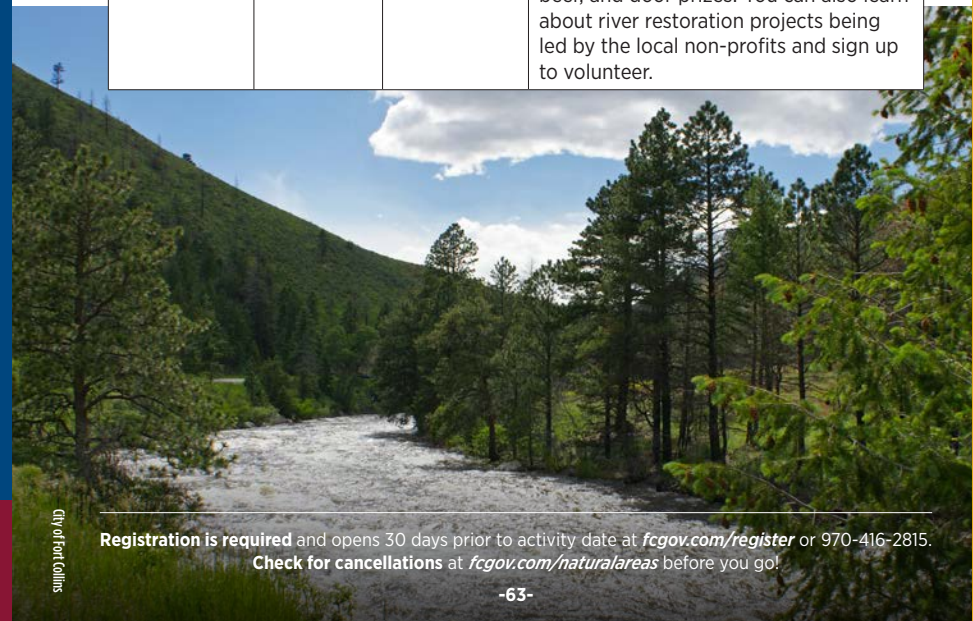
## HAVE A SAFE TRIP!

**IN CASE OF EMERGENCY, CALL 911.**

# POUDRE RIVER FEST

Learn more and sign up for activities at [poudreriverfest.org](http://poudreriverfest.org).

DATE	TIME	LOCATION	DESCRIPTION
Fri. June 25	10:00 a.m. – 7:00 pm.	<b>Virtual and In-Person</b>	<b>Recreation</b> The Poudre River has something for everyone when it comes to recreation: fishing, kayaking, tubing, or just relaxing on the river banks. Join us for a day of virtual interactive learning or join some of our safe in-person activities for a chance to get out and explore the Poudre River with your friends and family. Featuring: The Colorful History of the Poudre River at 10 a.m. with a Volunteer Naturalist.
Thur. July 15	10:00 a.m. – 7:00 pm.	<b>Virtual</b>	<b>Everyday Water</b> Water is critical resource in the arid West, and we rely on it for everything from drinking out of our taps to tapping those beer kegs! Join us for a deeper dive into the role that water plays in shaping our community and contributing to our prosperity, the challenges presented by drought and a changing climate, and how everyone can help make a difference to keep it flowing for all.
Sat. Aug. 21	1:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.	<b>New Belgium Brewery</b>	<b>Celebration</b> Join us at New Belgium Brewery for a day of education, restoration, and celebration of the Poudre River! There will be live music, exhibitor booths, interactive games, food trucks, tasty beer, and door prizes! You can also learn about river restoration projects being led by the local non-profits and sign up to volunteer.



City of Fort Collins

Registration is required and opens 30 days prior to activity date at [fcgov.com/register](http://fcgov.com/register) or 970-416-2815. Check for cancellations at [fcgov.com/naturalareas](http://fcgov.com/naturalareas) before you go!

## POP-UP EVENTS AND TRAILHEAD TABLES

Natural Areas Volunteers are popping up around town and on the trails with activities, giveaways, and brochures. Keep an eye on [fcgov.com/register](https://www.fcgov.com/register) and Natural Areas' Facebook and Twitter channels for information about pop-up events and Trailhead Tabling. They'll be announced the week before the weekend event.

Learn about:

- Nature Play
- River Safety and River Critters
- Poudre River History
- Archaeology
- Wildfires
- And More!



Registration is required and opens 30 days prior to activity date at [fcgov.com/register](https://www.fcgov.com/register) or 970-416-2815.



## WHAT TO BRING

Having the right things with you will help make your natural area visit a success. Use this checklist as a guideline to help you pack for a day outdoors.

- Map and a Compass, OR a GPS System:** (not all natural areas have good reception, see the box below for more info). A natural areas map is at [fcgov.com/naturalareas](https://www.fcgov.com/naturalareas) and at trailhead kiosks.
- Layers and Rain Gear:** Be prepared for sudden changes in weather.
- Repair Kit:** This may include duct tape, multi-tool, etc.
- Water:** Pack more than you think you'll need and drink before you feel thirsty.
- Trail Food**
- First Aid Kit**
- Flashlight**
- Sun and Mosquito Protection**
- Emergency Shelter:** A lightweight space blanket is appropriate.








Visitor safety is important to the Natural Areas Department. Bobcat Ridge, Soapstone Prairie, and Gateway natural areas have little to no cell phone coverage. Call boxes are available in case of an emergency. See locations and details below:

- **Bobcat Ridge Natural Area** usually has cell phone coverage in the higher elevations. (Call box in parking lot.)
- **Soapstone Prairie Natural Area** has more cell phone coverage towards the north parking lot. (Call box at gatehouse near entrance.)
- **Gateway Natural Area** never has coverage. (Call box before gatehouse upon entry.)

Check for cancellations at [fcgov.com/naturalareas](https://www.fcgov.com/naturalareas) before you go!

## FIND YOUR NATURAL AREAS

WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING FOR?	NATURAL AREA RECOMMENDATION
 <b>GOOD CHANCE FOR SOLITUDE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <b>Running Deer</b></li> <li>➤ <b>Soapstone Prairie</b></li> </ul>
 <b>NEW!</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <b>Puente Verde</b></li> <li>➤ <b>Soaring Vista</b></li> </ul>
 <b>DESIGNED FOR KIDS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <b>Cattail Chorus</b></li> <li>➤ <b>Coyote Ridge's</b> Hidden Clues Trail</li> <li>➤ <b>Gateway's</b> natural playground</li> </ul>
 <b>EASY FISHING ACCESS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <b>Arapaho Bend</b> (park at the Harmony Road Transit Center)</li> <li>➤ <b>Riverbend Ponds</b></li> <li>➤ <b>Prospect Ponds</b></li> </ul>
 <b>SHADY PICNIC SPOTS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <b>North Shields Ponds</b></li> <li>➤ <b>Reservoir Ridge</b> (at Overland Trail Rd. parking lot)</li> <li>➤ <b>Fossil Creek Reservoir</b></li> </ul>

Find more information on each natural area at [fcgov.com/naturalareas/finder](https://fcgov.com/naturalareas/finder).

## MORE ACTIVITIES

Check out these other City of Fort Collins activities:

- **Gardens on Spring Creek** — Visit the world-class botanic garden and enjoy the new butterfly house. Go to [fcgov.com/gardens](https://fcgov.com/gardens) or 970-416-2486.
- **Fort Collins Utilities** — Learn about electricity, water, stormwater, and wastewater through a variety of offerings. Visit [fcgov.com/utilities](https://fcgov.com/utilities) or 970-224-6141.
- **Fort Collins Museum of Discovery** — Expand your mind. Engage your world. Hands-on explorations in science and culture await! [fcmmod.org/programs](https://fcmmod.org/programs).

Registration is required and opens 30 days prior to activity date at [fcgov.com/register](https://fcgov.com/register) or 970-416-2815.

## NATURAL AREAS VISITORS CENTER

Fort Collins Museum of Discovery, 408 Mason Court, Fort Collins

Wed. – Sun., 10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Check out the Natural Areas Visitor Center in the lobby of the museum. Play with the interactive map and watch live endangered black-footed ferrets. Pick up a map or other natural areas information while you're there. *No admission fee!*

## PRIMROSE STUDIO

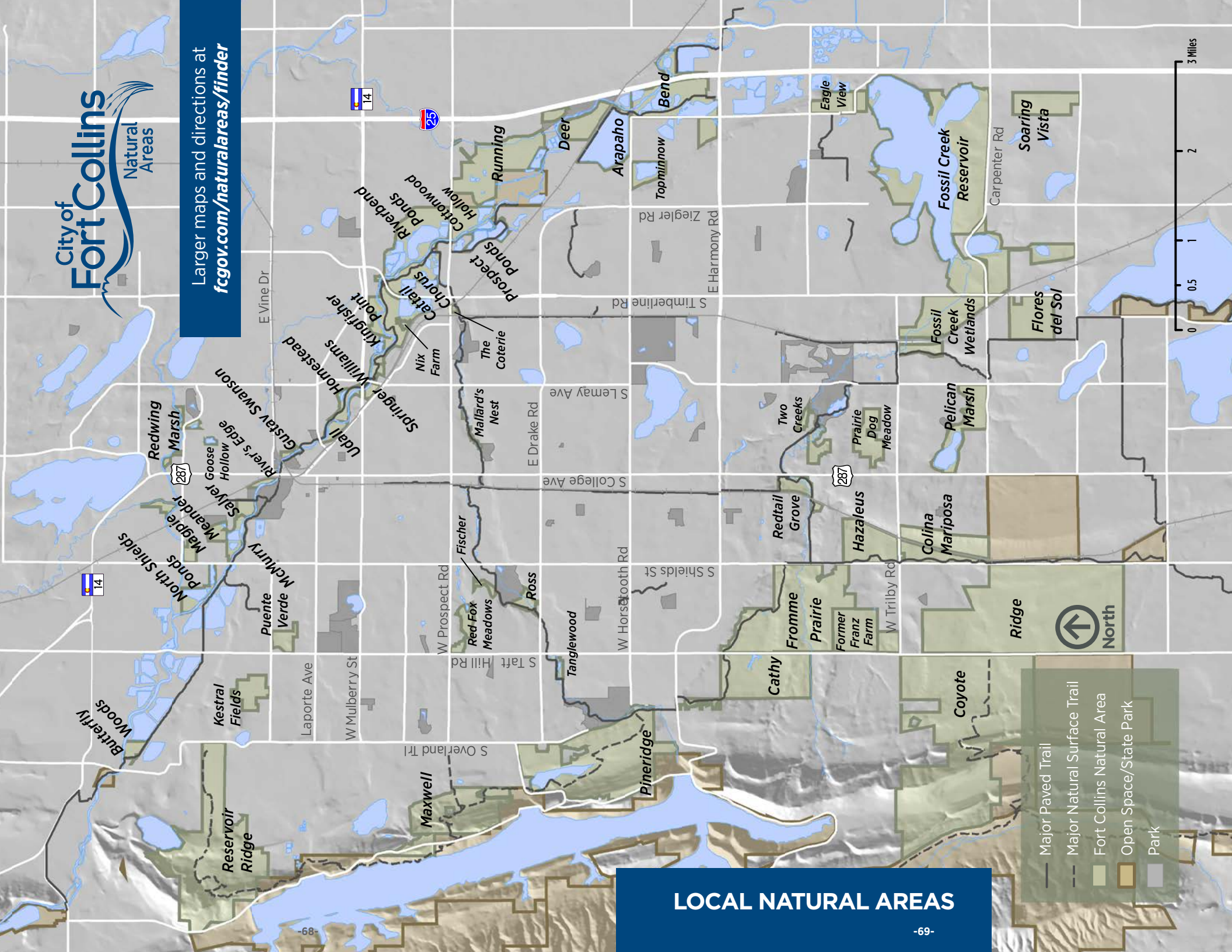
Primrose Studio is a quiet facility in a beautiful setting in northwest Fort Collins. It is perfect for small classes and retreats.

**Hours: Tues. – Sat. 8:00 a.m. – 10:00 p.m. Closed holidays.**

Cost: Private groups: \$250 for up to 5 hours and \$50 per additional hour. Non-profit and government rates: \$150 for up to 5 hours and \$30 per additional hour. Three-hour minimum required. Learn more at [fcgov.com/naturalareas/primrose](https://fcgov.com/naturalareas/primrose) or call 970-416-2815.



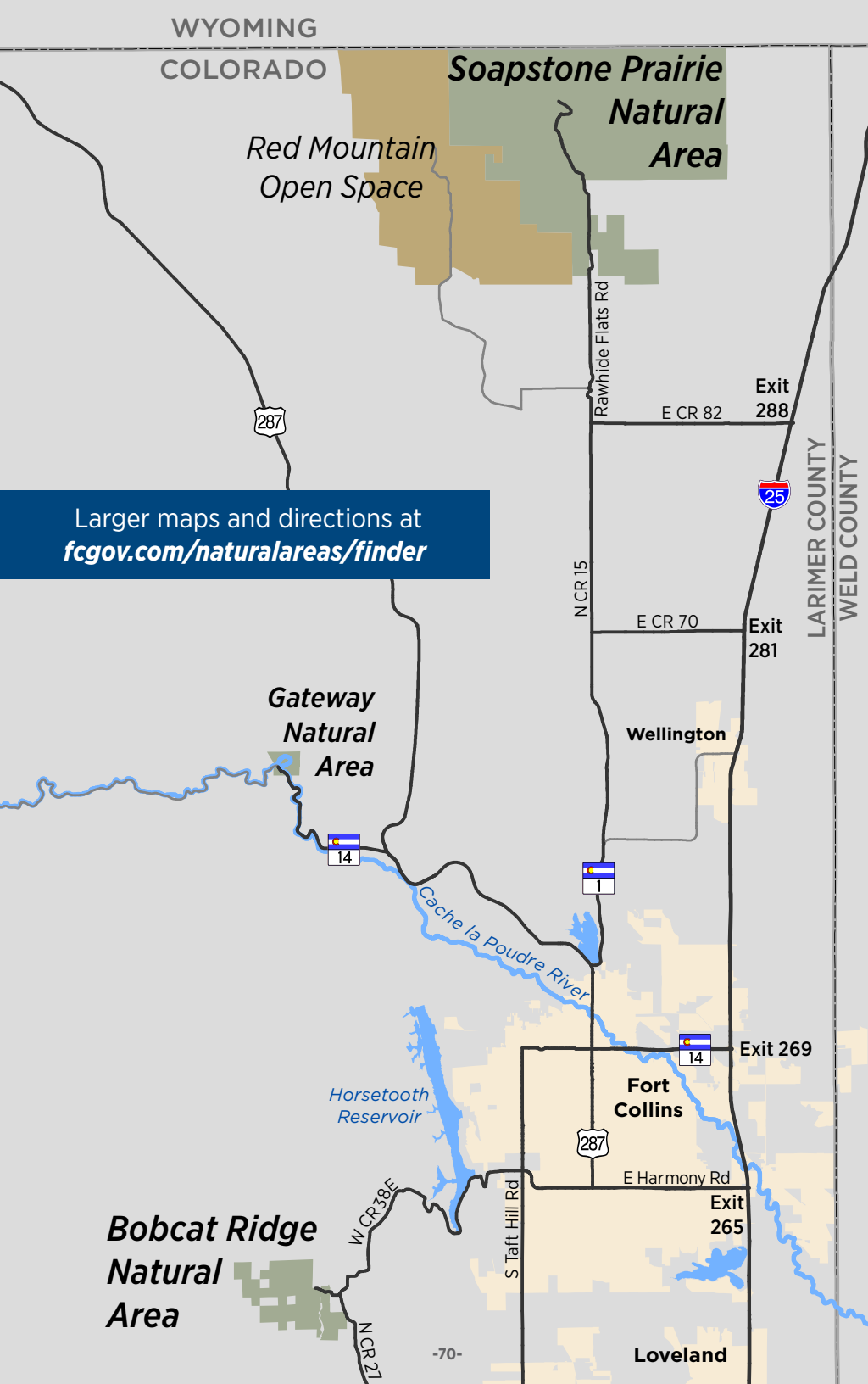
Check for cancellations at [fcgov.com/naturalareas](https://fcgov.com/naturalareas) before you go!



**LOCAL NATURAL AREAS**

- Major Paved Trail
- - - Major Natural Surface Trail
- Fort Collins Natural Area
- Open Space/State Park
- Park





Larger maps and directions at [fcgov.com/naturalareas/finder](http://fcgov.com/naturalareas/finder)

# REGIONAL NATURAL AREAS



## Soapstone Prairie

Travel north on Highway 1 (Terry Lake Road). Turn left (toward Waverly) on County Road 15. Travel north and turn right onto Rawhide Flats Road. Go 6 miles to the entrance station. Please obey posted speed limits. Soapstone Prairie is about 25 miles from Fort Collins and takes approximately one-hour drive time.

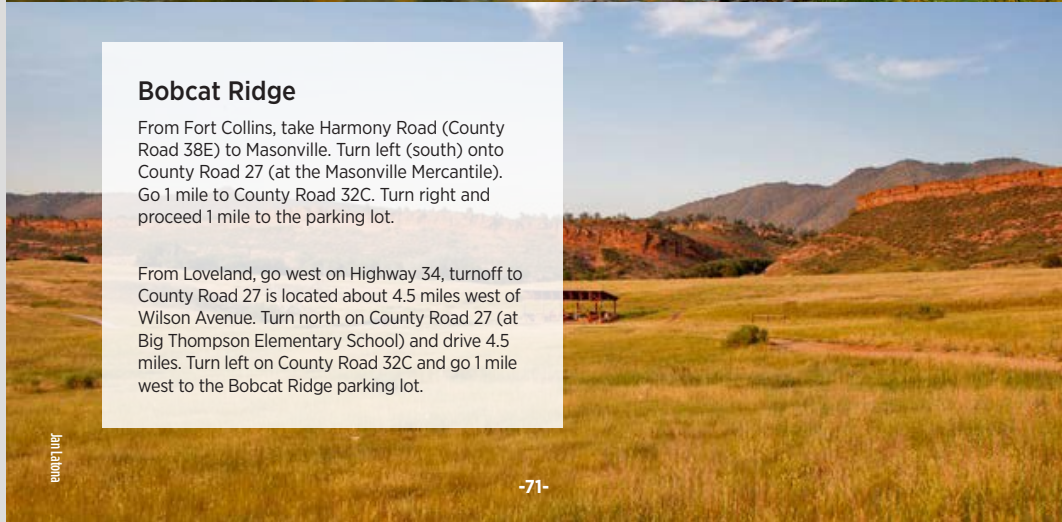
Gay Baham



## Gateway

Travel north on Highway 287. Turn left onto Highway 14 (Poudre Canyon Highway). Go 5 miles and turn right into the entrance.

City of Fort Collins



## Bobcat Ridge

From Fort Collins, take Harmony Road (County Road 38E) to Masonville. Turn left (south) onto County Road 27 (at the Masonville Mercantile). Go 1 mile to County Road 32C. Turn right and proceed 1 mile to the parking lot.

From Loveland, go west on Highway 34, turn off to County Road 27 is located about 4.5 miles west of Wilson Avenue. Turn north on County Road 27 (at Big Thompson Elementary School) and drive 4.5 miles. Turn left on County Road 32C and go 1 mile west to the Bobcat Ridge parking lot.

Jan Labona



Dave Leishman

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## THANK YOU!

The activities in this booklet and the conservation and stewardship of City of Fort Collins Natural Areas Department are funded by Fort Collins and Larimer County voters. Your sales tax dollars conserve land and provide funds for trails, shelters, restrooms, parking lots, and educational activities. Thank you!



Natural Areas Department - **970-416-2815**  
Rangers - **970-416-2147**  
[fcgov.com/naturalareas](http://fcgov.com/naturalareas)  
[naturalareas@fcgov.com](mailto:naturalareas@fcgov.com)

Register for activities at [fcgov.com/register](http://fcgov.com/register).

