



Contact: Zoe Whyman, Community Relations Manager, (970) 221-6311, [zwhyman@fcgov.com](mailto:zwhyman@fcgov.com)

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**Soapstone Prairie Natural Area BioBlitz Results Announced**

The Soapstone Prairie BioBlitz (a 24-hour, all species count) was held on June 26-27. Thirty-six scientists donated their time, surveying over a 24-hour period. These ten scientist teams inventoried insects (spiders, beetles, bees, wasps, leafhoppers, grasshoppers, butterflies, moths and aquatic invertebrates) large and small mammals, plants, fungi, birds, reptiles and amphibians. The public was invited to take part in their own BioBlitz scavenger hunt, eat the trail mix made possible by pollinators, try out calling in different birds and attend programs about biodiversity and geology. The public also had a chance to meet the scientists and hear their results.

A total of 681 species were counted. At least fifty species were added to the list of known flora and fauna at Soapstone Prairie. Without the BioBlitz and the scientists' efforts, these species might not have been known! For complete species lists, see [www.fcgov.com/naturalareas/bioblitz.php](http://www.fcgov.com/naturalareas/bioblitz.php).

The scientists were very excited about the opportunity to sample and survey this area and most were surprised and encouraged by the diversity within their specialty.

Dina Clark of Denver Botanic Gardens said,

"My parting image of the Soapstone Bioblitz was coming upon the beetle people along the road as I was leaving for the night. They were standing on a hill adjacent to a white sheet that had been strung between trucks, the bottom edge held down by rocks with a black light shining on the fabric. Not the average scene encountered at roadside. I slowed down and asked if they were the beetle people, and in return they replied in a nonplussed fashion that they were. I then told them to ask for Georgia Doyle back at base camp as she had some potentially interesting beetles in her shirt pocket. I thought afterward[of] the exchange that we had seemed so normal, but perhaps it would be unusual for the average person. That is too bad. What a true gift the Earth is with all of its creatures, and what an opportunity it is to encounter and work with the people who are interested in its diversity."

[Why Did We Do a Bioblitz?](#)



Raise Awareness of Biodiversity - Sometimes we think biodiversity only applies to exotic rainforests in tropical climates. At Soapstone Prairie there is amazing biodiversity close to home! We take for granted clean water, fertile soil and air to breathe. Yet these are all the result of working ecosystems filled with species that perform a myriad of tasks. From our morning shower to our late night snack, we are supported by biodiversity.

Connect to Nature - The excitement and energy of the scientists from many disciplines working together was infectious! Everyone rallied around the common goal of discovering the wonders of the natural world. Many citizens enjoyed watching the species tally grow and listening to the scientists report their results.

Generate Data - The BioBlitz generated a list of species found at Soapstone Prairie Natural Area. At least fifty species were added to the list of known flora and fauna. The new species lists will be used by the City of Fort Collins Natural Areas Program to help manage the site. Thirty-six scientists donated their time contributing more than 550 hours!

Celebrate - Soapstone Prairie Natural Area is a very special place where unique biodiversity has been conserved. Soapstone Prairie is part of a larger conservation vision to preserve a corridor from the mountains to the plains - the *Laramie Foothills Mountains to Plains Project*. Everyone celebrated the biodiversity that has been conserved at the BioBlitz.

Thank you Fort Collins and Larimer County voters! Your citizen-initiated sales taxes make it possible to conserve natural areas such as Soapstone Prairie and provide visitor services such as the BioBlitz.

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