



2020 RESULTS
Natural Areas Annual Report



NATURAL AREAS A PANDEMIC ESSENTIAL



Visitation increased up to 214% during the pandemic.

Community members visited natural areas in record numbers during the pandemic seeking the physical and mental health benefits of the outdoors. Depending on the natural area site, visitation increased between 13% and 214%, demonstrating that natural areas are crucial for the health and wellbeing of people as well as nature.



Kevin Borchert

Fire at Bobcat Ridge Natural Area

In October, the Cameron Peak Fire burned about 75% of Bobcat Ridge including the valley grasses, significant patches of trees and shrubs, and some visitor infrastructure. While aspects of this special natural area may be changed for a long time, another perspective is that fire is a restoration opportunity and a natural ecological process. Habitat restoration efforts kicked off immediately and will continue for some time. Visitor infrastructure will be reconstructed and reopening of Bobcat Ridge is planned in late summer 2021. A generous grant from the Pulliam Charitable Trust supported recovery efforts- thank you!



Laramie Foothills Conservation Grows

In a conservation victory, Great Outdoors Colorado awarded a grant to Larimer County Department of Natural Resources and City of Fort Collins Natural Areas to conserve nearly pristine wildlife habitat in the “mountains to plains” wildlife corridor near Red Mountain Open Space and Soapstone Prairie Natural Area. The three-way partnership conserved two expansive ranches in 2020 encompassing nearly 2,000 acres of wildlife habitat.



Two Creeks Natural Area Doubled in Size

A generous donation by a family that highly values open space supported the conservation of 23 acres of land adjacent to Two Creeks Natural Area in south Fort Collins. The landowners chose open space and habitat conservation over maximizing the sale price through development- thank you!



38 Acres Added at Kestrel Fields Natural Area

Kestrel Fields Natural Area in northwest Fort Collins nearly doubled in size with the acquisition of 38 acres. Thank you to the community members who enthusiastically supported this effort through generous contributions to support restoration work. In the coming years, Kestrel Fields will be restored to enhance wildlife habitat; trails will be built, and there will be an area for conservation agriculture (local food production).



Crossline Canyons Natural Area Expansion

Crossline Canyons is a conserved natural area west of Lory State Park with outstanding wildlife habitat. It is named after the Crossline Skipper butterfly. The site was expanded by 216-acres through two acquisitions. Crossline Canyons is important habitat for wildlife such as deer, elk, mountain lion, and bears, and it protects the view of the foothills.



A Green Connection

The vision to protect wildlife habitat along the Dry Creek drainage in northwest Fort Collins gained momentum. A 7-acre parcel was conserved (adjacent to a previously conserved 12-acre parcel) bringing a conserved corridor from College Avenue to the Poudre River closer to reality.





LAND CONSERVATION

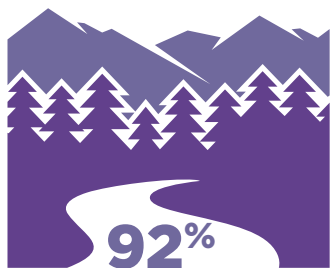
10 acquisitions totaled 3,026 acres

THE NATURAL AREAS DEPARTMENT MISSION

To conserve and enhance lands with natural resource, agricultural and scenic values, while providing meaningful education and appropriate recreation opportunities.

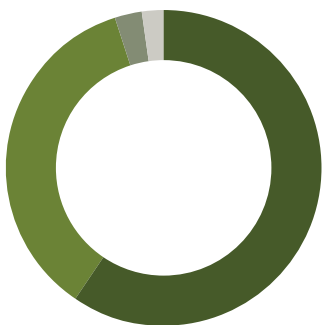
NATURAL AREAS RANGERS

made **3,923** cordial contacts and responded to **1,134** phone calls. **86%** of visitor contacts were informational and non-regulatory.



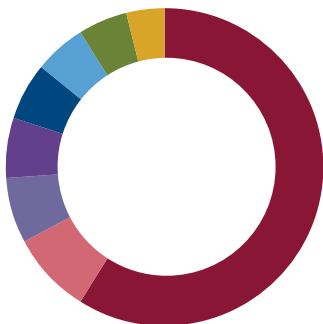
92% of trails were in good condition

REVENUES \$13,512,677



Open Space Yes! Fort Collins Sales Tax	60%
Help Preserve Open Space Larimer County 1/4 Cent Sales Tax	36%
Earnings on Investments	4%
Miscellaneous Revenue	3%

EXPENDITURES \$13,979,954



Land Conservation	58%
Resource Management	8%
Trails and Visitor Amenities	7%
Rangers	6%
Department Management	6%
Facility Operations	5%
Planning and Special Projects	5%
Public Engagement	4%

CITY COUNCIL/CITY MANAGER

Wade Troxell, Mayor
 Susan Gutowsky, District 1
 Julie Pignataro, District 2
 Ken Summers, District 3
 Kristin Stephens, Mayor Pro Tem, District 4
 Ross Cunniff, District 5
 Emily Gorgol, District 6
 Darin Atteberry, City Manager

Community Services
 Natural Areas Department
 P.O. Box 580
 Fort Collins, CO 80522
fcgov.com/naturalareas
 970.416.2815
 Printed on recycled paper with soy-based ink

2020 HIGHLIGHTS

- ▶ Appreciation goes to all that stayed home to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and to the **372 volunteers** who contributed **6,482 hours**, the equivalent time of more than three employees with an economic impact of **\$191,219** (independentsector.org value of volunteer time in Colorado 2020- \$29.50)
- ▶ **6,069 people** participated in **245 activities** and volunteer opportunities including new online options
- ▶ **21,518 acres** were actively managed to improve habitat for plants and wildlife
- ▶ **Parking availability** at Gateway Natural Area became viewable via **webcams**
- ▶ **Nature in the City** funded **16 community projects** that converted 48,550 square feet into native landscaping, **increasing habitat area by 150%**



A field trip to Soapstone Prairie during the Cameron Peak wildfire.