



2021 RESULTS

Natural Areas Annual Report





NATURAL AREAS

2021 HIGHLIGHTS



Natural Areas Department Director Hired

The City of Fort Collins is excited to announce the hiring of its new Natural Areas Department Director, Katie Donahue. Since 2016, Katie Donahue has served as the District Ranger for the Canyon Lakes Ranger District on the Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forests and Pawnee National Grassland. Her previous roles at the U.S. Forest Service include Program Manager for Recreation Fees and Business Planning and a District Ranger role on the George Washington and Jefferson National Forests in Virginia. Donahue has a Bachelor of Arts in International Studies and Economics from American University and a Masters of Public Management from the University of Maryland. She spends her free time gardening and exploring Colorado with her husband and two kiddos on foot, bikes, and skis.

Bobcat Ridge Reopening and Restoration

Thanks to support from the community and the Pulliam Charitable Trust, the popular Bobcat Ridge Natural Area reopened in September. Since the Cameron Peak Fire burned 80% of the site in 2020, the Natural Areas Department and community volunteers worked hard on restoration and repair.

Burned trees adjacent to trails were removed, bridges and boardwalks were reconstructed, Valley Loop trails were reconstructed after being washed out by several flash floods, and all trails underwent routine maintenance. Other improvements to visitor amenities included additional parking spots, a new vehicle exit road, and a new equestrian ramp. Visitors will see ecological restoration efforts underway for the next few years including monitoring and managing the burned area, removing invasive plants, and reseeding with native species to improve habitat for native wildlife and pollinators.

Cooper Slough

Twenty-four acres were purchased along the Cooper Slough, a con high priority area because of the unique warm water slough that does not freeze in the winter and is particularly helpful for wildlife!

Dry Creek Additions

Nine acres were purchased along the Dry Creek corridor in northwest Fort Collins. This area is a wildlife and potential connector to the Poudre Trail.

New Poudre River Conservation Easement

A 17-acre residential and agricultural property directly along the Poudre River has been of conservation interest for some time. After the property was in the same family for 80 years, they decided to grant the City a conservation easement to preserve the site's relatively natural habitat and open space. This was a unique opportunity to preserve an intact portion of the river amidst intense sand and gravel mining activity.

Kestrel Fields Volunteer Involvement

At the newly acquired (and not yet open to the public) Kestrel Fields Natural Area, volunteers planted 600 native trees and shrubs. One participant shared, "The event at Kestrel Fields was a real pleasure. It was well-organized, well-managed onsite, and well-supported, with holes pre-dug and a plethora of details anticipated before the event began."

Crossline Canyons Addition

A 155-acre purchase extends Crossline Canyons Natural Area, securing additional wildlife habitat for the crossline skipper butterfly, black bears, mountain lions, and elk. Crossline Canyons encompasses rock outcrops, steep foothills and small glades, which give rise to distinct ecological communities like montane-foothill shrubland and ponderosa pine woodland.

Maxwell Trail Restoration and Volunteers

The multiuse Foothills Trail connects visitors to two other natural areas and Horsetooth Reservoir. Informed by public engagement in 2019, about 3100' of trail at Maxwell Natural Area was repaired to improve access for a wide range of users, protect ecological integrity, and restore natural drainage patterns. Thanks to volunteers, a helicopter, and pack llamas, 290 tons of a more durable soil mix was incorporated into the trail surface. Passionate users and staff grappled with some challenging tradeoffs, but the trail is now less susceptible to closures for muddy conditions and more welcoming to visitors who might not have been able to use it in the past.

Soaring Vista Now Open

Soaring Vista is a new natural area in south Fort Collins. A one-mile loop trail is available for bird watchers, dog walkers, equestrians, bikers, and runners. The site was named Soaring Vista because of the expansive views of the Colorado Front Range to the West and the common sight of raptors soaring overhead.





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.

LAND CONSERVATION

5 acquisitions
totaled 207 acres



COMMUNITY SURVEY

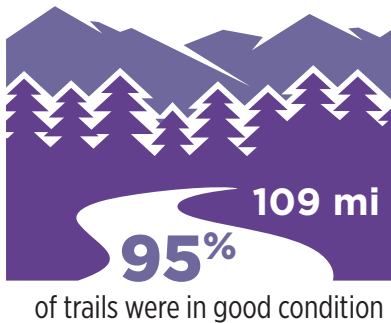
✓ **94%** of the **249** respondents were very satisfied or satisfied with their overall experience.

18,710 ACRES

are actively managed to improve habitats

12 community Planning Grants
+ 5 internal City projects

17 TOTAL funded by Nature in the City



NATURAL AREAS RANGERS

made **4,107** cordial contacts and responded to **825** phone calls.



310 activities for **8,488** people provided by Natural Areas staff and volunteers



THANK YOU

785
Volunteers

8,458
Hours

ONGOING VOLUNTEERS

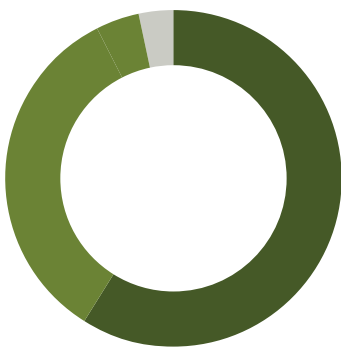
322 Volunteers
7,275 hours

ONE-TIME VOLUNTEERS

463 Volunteers
1,183 hours

Volunteer hours can be valued at \$30.31 each (independentsector.org), a value of \$256,362 in 2021.

REVENUES \$13,931,599



Open Space Yes! Fort Collins Sales Tax **56%**
Help Preserve Open Space Larimer County 1/4 Cent Sales Tax **41%**
Miscellaneous Revenue **3%**

EXPENDITURES \$10,838,075



Land Conservation **34%**
Resource Management **15%**
Trails and Visitor Amenities **12%**
Planning and Special Projects **10%**
Rangers **9%**
Department Management **9%**
Facility Operations **6%**
Public Engagement **5%**

CITY COUNCIL/CITY MANAGER

Jeni Arndt, Mayor
Susan Gutowsky, District 1
Julie Pignataro, District 2
Tricia Canonico, District 3
Shirley Peel, District 4
Kelly Ohlson, District 5
Emily Francis, Mayor Pro Tem, District 6
Kelly DiMartino, Interim City Manager

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