

# NATURAL AREAS EXPLORER

JUNE-OCTOBER 2024



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

YOUR GUIDE TO CONNECTING WITH THE CITY OF FORT COLLINS  
NATURAL AREAS THROUGH FREE ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS



Bill Walton

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# IMPORTANT INFORMATION

## 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. Check the maps on pages 74-76 or visit [fcgov.com/naturalareas](http://fcgov.com/naturalareas).

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

## THANK YOU, ARTISTS!

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

## 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).

## BILINGUAL ACTIVITIES INTERPRETATION AND TRANSLATION

New in 2024! Some activities in this guide offer consecutive or simultaneous Spanish interpretation. Some are in Spanish only. See pages 58-63. Simultaneous interpretation uses specialized audio equipment. This enables interpreters to convey speakers' messages in real-time without disrupting the flow of the conversation. Consecutive interpretation occurs when a speaker pauses to allow the interpreter to speak their words in another language. Translation is the act of converting written text from one language to another. If you require interpretation for other activities, or in a language other than Spanish, contact [naturalareas@fcgov.com](mailto:naturalareas@fcgov.com) or 970-416-2815 to request an interpreter.

**ES** Any activities delivered partially or entirely in Spanish will be marked with this symbol (ES)

## ACTIVIDADES BILINGÜES INTERPRETACIÓN Y TRADUCCIÓN

*¡Nuevo en 2024! Algunas actividades en esta guía se ofrecerán con interpretación consecutiva o simultánea al español. También habrá actividades ofrecidas solo en español. Consulta las páginas 58-63 para obtener más información. La interpretación simultánea se facilita mediante equipo de audio especializado, lo que permite a los intérpretes transmitir los mensajes del presentador en tiempo real sin interrumpir el*

*flujo de la conversación. La interpretación consecutiva ocurre cuando un hablante hace una pausa para permitir que el intérprete reproduzca sus palabras en otro idioma. La traducción es el acto de convertir texto escrito de un idioma a otro. Si necesitas interpretación para otras actividades o en un idioma diferente al español, contáctanos en [naturalareas@fcgov.com](mailto:naturalareas@fcgov.com) o al 970-416-2815 para solicitar un intérprete.*

**ES** Cualquier actividad ofrecida parcial o completamente en español se marcará con el símbolo (ES)

## ACCESSIBILITY REQUESTS

People of all abilities are welcome to participate in all programs. We are happy to make any appropriate accommodations. If you'd like to request an accommodation (language interpretation, wheelchair access, etc.) please visit the website at this QR code or email us at [naturalareas@fcgov.com](mailto:naturalareas@fcgov.com).

If accommodations are needed for an activity, please allow two (2) weeks prior to the event to process your request and arrange the accommodation, if available.

Auxiliary aids and services are available for persons with disabilities. V/TDD: Dial 711 for Relay Colorado. This publication is available as an accessible PDF through [fcgov.com/naturalareas](http://fcgov.com/naturalareas) and can be requested in large print. 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.

## SOLICITUD DE ACCESIBILIDAD

*Todas las personas, independientemente de sus habilidades, son bienvenidas para participar en todos los programas. Con mucho gusto haremos cualquier modificación apropiada. Si necesitas solicitar interpretación de idiomas, acceso para sillas de ruedas, etc., por favor visita el sitio web a través de este código QR o envíanos un correo electrónico a [naturalareas@fcgov.com](mailto:naturalareas@fcgov.com).*

*Si necesitas acomodación para una actividad, por favor solicítala con dos semanas de anticipación al evento para que podamos procesar tu solicitud, y si dichas modificaciones están disponibles, hacer los arreglos necesarios.*

*Aparatos auxiliares y servicios están disponibles para personas con discapacidades. V/TDD: Marca 711 para Relay Colorado. Esta publicación está disponible en formato PDF accesible a través de [fcgov.com/naturalareas](http://fcgov.com/naturalareas) y puede ser solicitada en letra grande. Si tienes alguna pregunta o preocupación sobre la accesibilidad de un programa, por favor contacta a [naturalareas@fcgov.com](mailto:naturalareas@fcgov.com) o llama al 970-416-2815 para más información.*



Áreas  
naturales  
en español



Accommodation  
Form

Formulario de  
accesibilidad

## WHAT THE SYMBOLS MEAN



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



This program will be delivered partially or entirely in Spanish. *(ES) Este programa se ofrecerá parcial o completamente en español.*



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 on all activities.



These programs are led by Natural Areas partners and require a separate website to register.

## REGISTERING AND CANCELLATIONS

Registration is required for most activities and opens 30 days before the activity. Go to [fcgov.com/register](https://fcgov.com/register) to register or call 970-416-2815 for more information about a particular event.

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



Check out:

- [fcgov.com/register](https://fcgov.com/register) for descriptions, registrations, cancellations, and program updates.
- [fcgov.com/naturalareas](https://fcgov.com/naturalareas) for trail closures and general information.
- Follow City of Fort Collins Natural Areas on **Facebook** for news and information.
- See photos from your favorite natural areas at [@fcnaturalareas](https://www.instagram.com/fcnaturalareas).
- Visit [trails.colorado.gov](https://trails.colorado.gov) or check the COTREX app for trail closures.

## ACTIVITY LEADERS

Volunteer Naturalists are 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.

## DOGS

For the comfort of all visitors, dogs are not allowed at any scheduled activities. To protect natural habitats, dogs must be on leash at all times at natural areas. Due to extremely sensitive wildlife concerns, 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 those with disabilities 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. If you're not sure how to properly prepare, refer to this guide or contact us at [naturalareas@fcgov.com](mailto:naturalareas@fcgov.com).



*Four Seasons of a Cottonwood*, by Carol Evans




## LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We acknowledge and honor the lands situated within the City of Fort Collins as the original homelands of the Hinono'eiteen (Arapaho), Tsétséhéstáhesé (Cheyenne), Nám̄m̄n̄n̄n̄ (Comanche), Cáuigú (Kiowa), Čariks i Čariks (Pawnee), Sosonih (Shoshone), Oc'eti S'akowin (Lakota) and Núuchiu (Ute) Peoples. This area is an important site of trade, gathering, and healing for these Native Nations. These lands are home to a diverse urban Native community representing multiple Native Nations and Indigenous Peoples. Despite forced removal and land dispossession, they continue to thrive as resilient members of our community. We are grateful for Native community members and honor the rich cultural heritage they bring to our collective community. We further recognize and value their social, intellectual, economic, and cultural contributions. The City of Fort Collins is committed to supporting, partnering, and working with the Native and Indigenous community.

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY
		<p><b>Plains Killifish,</b> by Kate Moseley</p>	
2	3	4	5
		From the Basement to the Desert, p. 54	Just Be Yoga and Meditation Series, p. 47 Sesión de yoga: Simplemente ser, p. 61
9	10	11	12
			Toddler Tracks Storytime, p. 27
16	17	18	19
		Introduction to Nature Journaling, p. 43	<b>JUNETEENTH</b>
<b>POLLINATOR WEEK: JUNE 17-23</b>			
23	24	25	26
			Summer Bike to Work (or Wherever) Day, p. 25 River Project Collaboration, p. 35
30			

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


THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		1
		Welcome Bobolinks!, p. 51
6	7	8
	Nature Along the Poudre River, p. 51 Art in the Great Outdoors, p. 27	<b>NATIONAL TRAILS DAY</b> National Trails Day, p. 65
13	14	15
Raptors and Nature Explore and Share, p. 53	Real Colorado Roots, p. 54 Art in the Great Outdoors, p. 27	Pride Picnic Special Event, p. 57
20	21	22
	Art in the Great Outdoors, p. 27	Bison-Archaeology Connection, p. 39 WildFest, p. 65
27	28	29
Light Up the Night, p. 31	Art in the Great Outdoors, p. 27 Day and Night at Gateway, p. 51	Astronomy at Bobcat Ridge, p. 32

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



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY
 City of Fort Collins	1	2 Light Up the Night, p. 31 Noche de Luces, p. 61	3
7 Hike with an Environmental Planner, p. 36	8	9 Just Be Yoga and Meditation Series, p. 47	10 Toddler Tracks Storytime, p. 27 Lightning Talks, p. 65
14	15	16 Just Be Yoga and Meditation Series, p. 47	17 Wade the River, p. 52
21 LGBTQIA+ Community Hikes, p. 57	22	23	24 Conservation Agriculture, p. 35
28	29	30 Primrose Studio Tour, p. 65	31 Restoration and Bird Monitoring, p. 36

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

THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
INDEPENDENCE DAY 4	5	6
11 Hike with an Environmental Planner, p. 36	12 Day and Night at Gateway, p. 51 Día & Noche en Gateway, p. 61	13 ZUMBA, p. 47 ZUMBA, p. 61 <sup>ES</sup> Skygazing at Fossil Creek Reservoir, p. 32
18	19 Nature is Where You Find It, p. 51	20 Campfires: Owls and Bats, p. 31
25	26 History Underfoot, p. 39	27
 City of Fort Collins		

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

# JULY 2024

NATURAL AREAS ACTIVITIES



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY
			
4 Raptors and Nature Explore and Share, p. 53 Just Be Yoga and Meditation Series, p. 47	5	6	7 Toddler Tracks Storytime, p. 27
11	12	13 Hike with an Environmental Planner, p. 36	14
18 Just Be Yoga Retreat, p. 47 Retiro de yoga: Simplemente ser, p. 62	19	20	21 The Power of Pollinators with Nature in the City, p. 35
25	26	27 Grazing for Conservation Targets, p. 36	28

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

THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1	2	3 Bugs and Blooms Captured in a Naturalist's Notebook, p. 43
<b>TRANS HISTORY MONTH</b>		
8 Journaling the Nature Experience, p. 43	9 LGBTQIA+ Community Hikes, p. 57 LGBTQIA+ caminata comunitaria, p. 62 Campfires: Canines of Colorado, p. 31	10 Poudre River Fest, p. 65
15	16 Skygazing at Fossil Creek Reservoir, p. 32 Observación del cielo en Fossil Creek Reservoir, p. 62	17
22	23	24 Nature Smartphone Photography, p. 44
29	30 A Colorful History of the Poudre River, p. 40	31

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

# AUGUST 2024

NATURAL AREAS ACTIVITIES





SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY
1	LABOR DAY 2	3	4 Just Be Yoga and Meditation Series, p. 47
8	9 Wildlife Photography Workshop, p. 44	10	11 Toddler Tracks Storytime, p. 27
15 OPEN Streets, p. 25	16	17 Let's Explore Arapaho Bend, p. 51	18 ¡Charlas Relámpago! p. 62 and p. 66
<b>LATINO CONSERVATION WEEK: SEPT. 14-22</b>			
<b>LATINÉ &amp; HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH: SEPT. 15 – OCT. 15</b>			
22 Art in Natural Areas, p. 66 Arte en Áreas naturales. Para toda la familia, p. 63	23	24	25 The Art of River Restoration, p. 35
29	30		

City of Fort Collins

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

THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
5	6	7 Bison–Archaeology Connection, p. 39 Skygazing at Soapstone Prairie, p. 32
12	13 Real Colorado Roots, p. 54	14 Wade the River, p. 52 Camina el río, p. 62
19 Nature's Magic Hour, p. 44	20	21 Raptors and Nature Explore and Share, p. 53 Smithsonian at Lindenmeier, p. 40
26 LGBTQIA+ Community Hikes, p. 57	27	28 <b>NAT'L PUBLIC LANDS DAY</b> National Public Lands Day, p. 66
		

John Bartholow

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

# SEPTEMBER 2024

NATURAL AREAS ACTIVITIES



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY
 Kevin Borchert		1	2
			Forest Therapy, p. 47
LATINÉ & HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH: SEPT. 15 – OCT. 15			
6	7	8	9
		Black-Footed Ferret Exploration, p. 53	Walk the Gangplank, p. 54
13	INDIGENOUS PEOPLES' DAY 14	15	16
20	21	22	23
27	28	29	30

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

THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
3	4	5
	Astronomy at Bobcat Ridge, p. 32	Marvelous Fall Migration, p. 52
10	11	12
	Let's Explore Arapaho Bend, p. 51	Bird Watching for Beginners, p. 52
17	18	19
Early Morning Bird Photography Stroll, p. 44	Meet the Boo Crew, p. 53	Homesteading at Soapstone Prairie, p. 40
24	25	26
	Campfires: Day of the Dead, p. 31 Fogata del Día de los Muertos, p. 63	Black-Footed Ferret Exploration, p. 53
BAT WEEK: OCT. 24-31		
31	NOVEMBER 1	2
DÍA DE LOS MUERTOS: NOVEMBER 1-2		

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

# OCTOBER 2024

NATURAL AREAS ACTIVITIES





Fallen leaves  
become shelter,  
food, and fertilizer

Help the environment

Leave the leaves

*Leaves*, by Julie Kitzes

## 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 runoff 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 September through October 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.**

## COMMUNITY SCIENCE



1

Locate / Record



2

Share Sightings



3

Discuss / Track

### eBird

Your sightings contribute to hundreds of conservation decisions, peer-reviewed papers, thousands of student projects, and help inform bird research worldwide. [ebird.org](http://ebird.org)



The purpose of this project is to continue to find fireflies in the western U.S. in unexpected places. View a map of recorded firefly sightings throughout the west, which continues to grow thanks to participation from everyday community scientists. Little is known about the life cycle of fireflies and every sighting helps researchers learn more. [nhmu.utah.edu/citizen-science/fireflies](http://nhmu.utah.edu/citizen-science/fireflies)

### iNaturalist

Every observation can contribute to biodiversity science, from the rarest butterfly to the most common backyard weed. This app shares 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)



*Above The Ridge*, by Rick Rizzotto

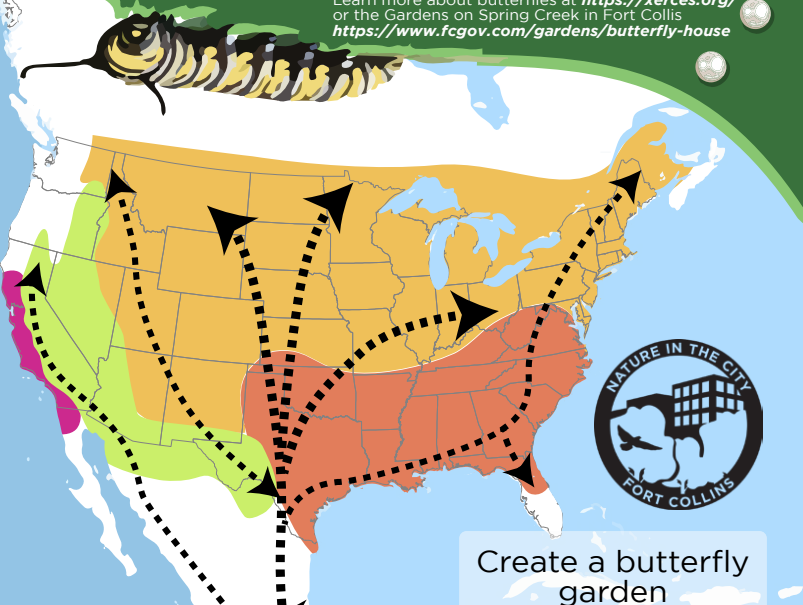


*Smiling Sky at Riverbend Ponds*, by Jen Barnes

# Support the Monarchs!

Some Monarch Butterflies undertake an incredible migration, traveling between 50-100 miles a day to breeding areas, and some of them land in Northern Colorado for the summer. You can support them by adding milkweed to your garden. Milkweed, a Colorado native plant, is the only food monarch caterpillars will eat and where monarch butterflies lay their eggs.

Learn more about butterflies at <https://xerces.org/> or the Gardens on Spring Creek in Fort Collins <https://www.fcgov.com/gardens/butterfly-house>



**Map Key**

- Overwintering areas
- Spring breeding areas
- Summer breeding areas
- Spring and Summer breeding areas
- Fall Migration
- Spring Migration



## Create a butterfly garden

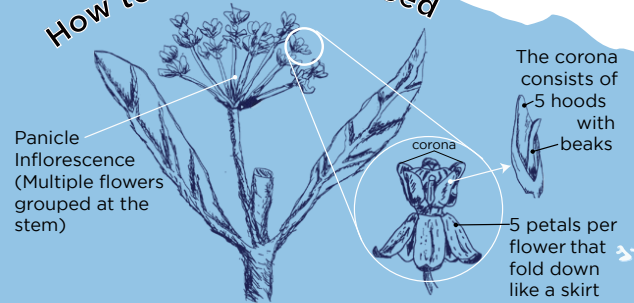
In addition to planting milkweed for the caterpillar stage, consider planting a garden for all stages of the monarch's life including blazing star (*Liatris ligulistylis*) golden rod (*Solidago*), and others that can be found in the native plant database below.

You can also add a shallow dish of water to help the butterflies find a drink.



[fcgov.com/naturalareas/native-plants](https://fcgov.com/naturalareas/native-plants)

## How to Identify Milkweed



The corona consists of 5 hoods with beaks

## Meet the Local Milkweeds



**Showy Milkweed**  
*Asclepias speciosa*



**Swamp Milkweed**  
*Asclepias incarnata*



**Butterfly Milkweed**  
*Asclepias tuberosa*

# ON THE TRAIL

## YOUR STEWARDSHIP CHECKLIST



There are plenty of ways to give back!



### PLAN AHEAD AND PREPARE

- ✓ Use the checklist on page 70. Natural areas can be busy, so check parking lot webcams at [fcgov.com/naturalareas/status](https://fcgov.com/naturalareas/status) before you go.
- ✓ Check trail status before you go—sometimes we must close trails. Visit lesser-known natural areas and visit at less crowded times. See [trails.colorado.gov](https://trails.colorado.gov) or COTREX app for closures.
- ✓ Visit in the mornings, evenings, or on weekdays.



### TRAVEL ON DURABLE SURFACES

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



### DISPOSE OF WASTE PROPERLY

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



### LEAVE WHAT YOU FIND

- ✓ Allow others a sense of discovery. Don't collect any items. Leave everything as you found it.



### NO FIRES ARE ALLOWED IN NATURAL AREAS

- ✓ Attend a campfire activity in this guide instead! See page 31.



### 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.



Protect wetlands, waterways,  
and riverbanks... they protect you.

City of Fort Collins

## 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.
- Remember—if your group of enthusiastic eco-stewards is larger than 15 people, you'll need a permit. More information on the Pick It Up FoCo website.
- Visit [fcgov.com/volunteer/trashpickup](https://fcgov.com/volunteer/trashpickup) for more information.



NATURAL AREAS  
**STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK**  
THE GUIDE TO CONSERVATION AND STEWARDSHIP

**What do you want for the future of your natural areas?** For over 30 years, the Fort Collins and Larimer County community has prioritized natural areas conservation. Now, your voice will guide the future forward with a planning document called the Natural Areas Strategic Framework. Your perspectives will help the City embody community-driven conservation and stewardship.

Learn more and share your feedback at [ourcity.fcgov.com/natural-areas-strategic-framework](https://ourcity.fcgov.com/natural-areas-strategic-framework)



¿Cuáles son tus deseos para el futuro de tus áreas naturales? Por más de 30 años, la comunidad de Fort Collins y el Condado de Larimer ha priorizado la conservación de las Áreas naturales. Ahora, tu voz guiará el futuro en el documento de planificación llamado Marco estratégico de las Áreas naturales. Incorporando tus puntos de vista, la Ciudad podrá hacer realidad un plan de conservación y protección impulsado por la comunidad.

Para más información y para compartir tus puntos de vista, visita el sitio: [ourcity.fcgov.com/marco-estrategico-de-areas-naturales](https://ourcity.fcgov.com/marco-estrategico-de-areas-naturales)

## EVENTS WHERE YOU CAN SHARE FEEDBACK

### SUMMER BIKE TO WORK (OR WHEREVER) DAY

Every June, Colorado celebrates Bike Month and here in Fort Collins the community loves anything that highlights and promotes people who ride bicycles. Stop by the Natural Areas station for a yummy breakfast and swag. Learn more at [fcgov.com/bicycling/bike-to-work-day](https://fcgov.com/bicycling/bike-to-work-day).

- **Wed. June 26**

### POUDRE RIVER FEST

The Poudre RiverFest is a free, family-friendly festival that celebrates the Poudre River, promotes restoration, and educates the community about the river corridor. The festival features activities for children and adults to explore the role of the river as an important habitat for wildlife, a lively recreation area, and a source for clean drinking water. Learn more at [poudreiverfest.org](https://poudreiverfest.org).

- **Sat. Aug. 10 • New Belgium Brewing**

### OPEN STREETS

At Open Streets, participants can enjoy 1-2 miles of car-free, family-friendly streets. Listen to live music, engage in arts and culture activities, and connect with local organizations and businesses. Learn more at [fcgov.com/openstreets](https://fcgov.com/openstreets).

- **Sun. Sept. 15, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.**  
*Shields St. from Mountain Ave. to Prospect Rd.*

# YOUNG NATURALISTS

Activities specifically for youth.

## TODDLER TRACKS STORYTIME **R**

Discover flowers, bugs, tracks, and more in this slow-paced exploratory walk and story-time in natural areas with Poudre Libraries. For ages 1-3. Parents/guardians must be present at all times. Register at [read.poudrelibraries.org/events](http://read.poudrelibraries.org/events).



- **Wed. June 12, 9:30 – 10 a.m. • Ross Natural Area**  
*Meet at Rolland Moore Park Playground.*
- **Wed. July 10, 9:30 – 10 a.m. • Red Fox Meadows Natural Area**  
*Meet at the trailhead kiosk off Longworth Dr.*
- **Wed. Aug. 7, 9:30 – 10 a.m. • Magpie Meander Natural Area**  
*Meet at Soft Gold Park.*
- **Wed. Sept. 11, 9:30 – 10 a.m. • McMurry Natural Area**  
*Meet at small parking lot at the west end of Hemlock St.*

## ART IN THE GREAT OUTDOORS **R**

Let your creativity flow with a mini art workshop and go for a guided hike with a naturalist. For teens and tweens ages 10-18. Register at [read.poudrelibraries.org/events](http://read.poudrelibraries.org/events).



- **Fri. June 7, 10 a.m. – noon • Riverbend Ponds Natural Area**  
**Focus: Photography**
- **Fri. June 14, 10 a.m. – noon • Red Fox Meadows Natural Area**  
**Focus: Sketching**
- **Fri. June 21, 10 a.m. – noon • Riverbend Ponds Natural Area**  
**Focus: Ukulele**
- **Fri. June 28, 10 a.m. – noon • Red Fox Meadows Natural Area**  
**Focus: Art on the Wind**

## WANT TO KEEP EXPLORING?

Try the unique outdoor scavenger hunt, "The Future of the Poudre River is up to You"!



[labs.geocaching.com](http://labs.geocaching.com)



Bill Walton



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

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

**Facebook and Instagram:**

@GenerationWildColorado

**Tag Us:** #100ThingsToDo

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



### Rachel the Prairie Dog's Adventures – Part 1

by Bill Walton

Hi everyone! My name is Rachel and I'm a black-tailed prairie dog. I live in Coyote Ridge Natural Area, and I see lots of human families looking at me every day! Did you know that prairie dogs have families, just like you? In fact, we are the only animals in the world that live in permanent family homes in large colonies.

My prairie dog family is called a coterie. Typically, that consists of one mature male and three mature females and lots of youngsters. All the mothers will help take care of all the babies. But just like in human families, not all prairie dog families look the same. Some have only one prairie dog, or no males! Some have two mature males.

Our coterie covers an acre of prairie and we have about 70 burrows (tunnel entrances). Learn more about our homes on page 71. Thanks for learning about my family with me!



# NATURAL AREAS AFTER DARK


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

## NIGHT WALKS

Bring a headlamp or flashlight for a fun and mellow family-friendly walk through a natural area.

### LIGHT UP THE NIGHT

Find out why Fort Collins is such a great place for fireflies to live and learn fun facts about these amazing beetles. *If you have attended in previous years, please consider giving first-timers the opportunity to attend. Meet at the Prospect Road parking lot.*



- **Thur. June 27, 8:30 – 10 p.m. • Riverbend Ponds Natural Area**
- **Tue. July 2, 8:30 – 10 p.m. • Riverbend Ponds Natural Area**  Simultaneous Spanish interpretation

## 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 1.1 mile 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 at the cabin. Bring a flashlight for the walk back. 2 miles round trip with a few moderate hills each way.

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).

- **Sat. July 20, 7 – 8:30 p.m. • Coyote Ridge Natural Area**  
**Owls and Bats:** Explore how these fascinating nocturnal creatures survive and live in the darkness of night.
- **Fri. Aug 9, 6:30 – 8:30 p.m. • Coyote Ridge Natural Area**  
**Canines of Colorado:** Learn about the canines that call Colorado home, including the largest—the gray wolf!
- **Fri. Oct. 25, 5:30 – 7 p.m. • Nix Farm**    
**Día de los Muertos:** Join a naturalist for an evening of stories centered around Día de los Muertos. Offered in Spanish with some bilingual elements. All ages welcome!



Bill Walton




## SKYGAZING AT SOAPSTONE PRAIRIE

Enjoy a very special night celebrating the dark skies at Soapstone Prairie. Learn about the benefits of a dark sky for humans and wildlife. Then, enjoy viewing the skies through telescopes with members of the Northern Colorado Astronomical Society. Dress warmly and bring a blanket or chair to sit on. **Gates will close shortly after the start time and parking on the road is not allowed. Please be on time.** *Event will take place in the South Parking Lot.*

- Sat. Sept. 7, 8 – 10:30 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. *Meet in the parking lot.*

- Sat. July 13, 9 – 11 p.m.
- Fri. Aug. 16, 8:30 – 10:30 p.m.  Spanish speaking staff and volunteers will be available, along with simultaneous Spanish interpretation.

## ASTRONOMY AT BOBCAT RIDGE

Enjoy a brief, family-friendly astronomy activity followed by stargazing with the Northern Colorado Astronomical Society. A telescope will be provided. Dress warmly and bring water and a blanket or chair to sit on in the parking lot. **Please arrive on time! The gate closes shortly after start times and parking is not allowed on the road outside the gate.** *The activity will start at the pavilion, about a 10-minute walk from the parking lot. Stargazing will be in the parking lot.*

- Sat. June 29, 8:30 – 10 p.m.
- Fri. Oct. 4, 6:45 – 8:45 p.m.



***Storms & Fireweed - Rising from the Ashes,***  
by Brita LaTona



Greg Fend

## 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.

### NATURE LOVERS ADVENTURE SERIES R



#### RIVER PROJECT COLLABORATION

Learn more about the partnership project between CSU, the City of Fort Collins Natural Areas, and the City of Fort Collins Utilities. Discover how the partnership project is providing critical habitat and preserving water rights. Walking over uneven terrain is required. Register at [read.poudrelibraries.org/events](https://read.poudrelibraries.org/events).

- **Wed. June 26, 6 – 7:30 p.m. • Environmental Learning Center and Prospect Ponds Natural Area**  
*Meet in the ELC Parking lot, approximate address is 2400 S. Country Rd. 9.*

#### CONSERVATION AGRICULTURE

Take a closer look at what's happening in the City-owned farm fields and how the City is restoring the surrounding land to support the community, wildlife, and local agriculture. Register at [read.poudrelibraries.org/events](https://read.poudrelibraries.org/events).

- **Wed. July 24, 6 – 7 p.m. • Kestrel Fields Natural Area**  
*Register for details.*

#### THE POWER OF POLLINATORS WITH NATURE IN THE CITY

Learn how to increase wildlife habitat and make nature more accessible through small urban projects. Register at [read.poudrelibraries.org/events](https://read.poudrelibraries.org/events).

- **Wed. Aug. 21, 6 – 7 p.m. • Sugar Beet Park Pollinator Garden**  
*Register for details.*

#### THE ART OF RIVER RESTORATION

Discover how biologists, botanists, and restoration staff work together to create healthier plant and animal communities along the river. Register at [read.poudrelibraries.org/events](https://read.poudrelibraries.org/events).

- **Wed. Sept. 25, 6 – 7 p.m. • McMurry Natural Area**  
*Park at the Shields St River Access. Group will walk to McMurry together.*

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



**HIKE WITH AN ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNER**

Have you ever wondered what planners look for when they are developing ways to protect sensitive natural resources and enhance visitor experiences? Join a planner on a walk to learn more about the elements that are taken into consideration and discuss the future impacts and opportunities that will be addressed in the Natural Area Strategic Framework. Participants will have the opportunity to provide feedback that can shape the natural areas for the next 10-20 years!

- **Sun. July 7, 4:30 – 5:30 p.m. • Riverbend Ponds Natural Area**  
*Meet at the Prospect Road parking lot.*
- **Thur. July 11, 8 – 9 a.m. • Pineridge Natural Area**  
*Meet at the Dixon Reservoir Parking lot.*
- **Tue. Aug. 13, 5:30 – 6:30 p.m. • Arapaho Bend Natural Area**  
*Meet at parking lot at Strauss Cabin and E. Horsetooth roads.*

**RESTORATION AND BIRD MONITORING**

Learn how ecologists create habitat to support wildlife, and how data informs the management of natural areas.

- **Wed. July 31, 6 – 7 p.m. • Coyote Ridge Natural Area**

**GRAZING FOR CONSERVATION TARGETS**

Can a natural area can be left alone to thrive? You'll learn about some of the practices required for ecosystem health. Grazing is one of the more surprising tools for restoration; learn about its benefits and challenges.

- **Tue. Aug. 27, 9 – 10 a.m. • Cathy Fromme Prairie Natural Area**

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



*Meet the Pollinators*, by Cathy Morrison



*Growing Along the Poudre*, by Rosy Southwell



Greg Fend

## VOICES OF THE PAST

For over 10,000 years, northern Colorado has been a great place to live. Discover people of the past who have lived in and shaped our community.

We recognize that the stories we are sharing in these activities are from a dominant settler cultural perspective, which is not the full story. We continually strive to include the histories and voices of diverse communities. While our knowledge is currently limited, efforts are underway to hear from diverse perspectives that are not yet represented in our activities. These efforts take time, trust, and relationship-building.

We acknowledge and honor this area as the original homelands of the Arapaho, Cheyenne, Comanche, Kiowa, Pawnee, Shoshone, Lakota, and Ute Peoples. The places where these activities are held are important sites of trade, gathering, and healing for these and other Native Nations. We hope you will experience a deep connection to this land and contribute to its stewardship with a sense of respect and responsibility.

### BISON-ARCHAEOLOGY CONNECTION

Learn about the acquisition of Soapstone Prairie, the history of the American bison, and the treasures uncovered at the Lindenmeier archaeological site.

- **Sat. June 22, 9 – 11:30 a.m.** • Soapstone Prairie Natural Area
- **Sat. Sept. 7, 9 – 11:30 a.m.** • Soapstone Prairie Natural Area  
*Meet at the South Parking Lot. Approximately a one-hour drive from Fort Collins.*

### HISTORY UNDERFOOT

Learn about those who called this area home before us and how history influences what we see on the landscape today and Colorado water law.

- **Fri. July 26, 10 a.m. – 1 p.m.** • Arapaho Bend Natural Area  
*Meet at the Harmony Transit Center parking lot. Meet at the NW end of the lot near the trailhead.*



City of Fort Collins

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



**A COLORFUL HISTORY OF THE POUDBRE RIVER** 

Join us for a lively stroll through the natural wonders and more than a thousand years of human activity on the Poudre River.

- **Fri. Aug. 30, 9:30 – 11 a.m. • Old FC Heritage Park**  
*Meet in the parking lot behind the Northside Aztlan Center.*

**SMITHSONIAN AT LINDENMEIER**

Travel back in time to learn how Paleoindians survived the high plains and how Smithsonian Institution archaeologists uncovered their story in the 1930s.

- **Sat. Sept. 21, 10 a.m. – noon • Soapstone Prairie Natural Area**  
*Meet in the North Parking Lot, approximately a one-hour drive from Fort Collins.*

**HOMESTEADING AT SOAPSTONE PRAIRIE**

Discover how early Euro-Americans lived in the Soapstone Prairie area in the late 1800s.

- **Sat. Oct. 19, 10 a.m. – noon • Soapstone Prairie Natural Area**  
*Meet in the South Parking Lot, approximately a one-hour drive from Fort Collins.*



***Beauty from Struggle***, by Kaley Alie

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

## CREATIVE BY NATURE

Beginners and veterans welcome! Deepen your connection to nature with guided observations, drawing, painting, and writing. 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.

### INTRODUCTION TO NATURE JOURNALING

Learn all about observing nature and recording your nature experience. Discover the techniques easiest to use when out in nature. Beginners and novices welcome!

- **Tue. June 18, 9 – 11 a.m. • Primrose Studio**  
*Meet at the studio at 4300 Michaud Lane near Reservoir Ridge.*

### JOURNALING THE NATURE EXPERIENCE

Whether capturing the distant mountain landscape or the close flora and fauna, nature journaling is the way to enjoy and develop appreciation of nature.

- **Thur. Aug. 8, 9 – 11 a.m. • Riverbend Ponds Natural Area**  
*Meet at the Cairns Dr. parking lot.*

### BUGS AND BLOOMS CAPTURED IN A NATURALIST'S NOTEBOOK

Learn how to use art as a tool for discovering and capturing the details of plants, insects, and other creatures.

- **Sat. Aug. 3, 9 a.m. – noon • Primrose Studio**  
*Meet at the studio at 4300 Michaud Lane near Reservoir Ridge.*



Kevin Borchert

Kevin Borchert

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





## PHOTOGRAPHY

### NATURE SMARTPHONE PHOTOGRAPHY

Learn to take great nature photos with your smartphone! Discover the basics of framing, light, and people photography during a roll and stroll along the river, ponds, and forest.

- **Sat. Aug. 24, 9 – 11 a.m. • Prospect Ponds Natural Area**  
*Meet in the parking lot on Sharpe Point Dr.*

### WILDLIFE PHOTOGRAPHY WORKSHOP

A workshop for anyone interested in nature photography! Learn tips for finding wildlife in the natural areas. You may be an experienced photographer or just interested in capturing special moments in the field with the camera on your mobile device.

- **Mon. Sept. 9, 6 – 7:30 p.m. • Nix Farm**

### NATURE'S MAGIC HOUR

An accessible stroll along the Poudre Trail to capture beautiful photos at the magic hour, just before sunset. No experience or professional equipment necessary.

- **Thur. Sept. 19, 6 – 7:30 p.m. • Prospect Ponds Natural Area**  
*Meet in the parking lot on Sharpe Point Dr.*

### EARLY MORNING BIRD PHOTOGRAPHY STROLL

Early morning is an ideal time to see birds of all kinds! Join the group to learn about birds and other fauna and flora and great tips for photographing them. No birding or photography experience necessary.

- **Thur. Oct. 17, 7:30 – 9:30 a.m. • Riverbend Ponds Natural Area**  
*Meet at the Prospect Road parking lot.*



**Connection to Nature**, by Brian Carroll



## WELLNESS

Time spent in nature has been linked to reduced stress, improved well-being, and increased social connectedness. These activities are designed to benefit physical and mental wellness through mindful and intentional time spent in nature.

### JUST BE YOGA AND MEDITATION SERIES

The asana practice of yoga is designed to prepare the body for meditation. Join Reneca and Duan of InnatelyU for meditation and a light yoga practice for all levels of practitioners. Limited yoga mats available; please bring your own.



- **Wed. June 5, 8 – 9 p.m. • Red Fox Meadows Natural Area** **ES**  
*Consecutive Spanish translation. Meet at the kiosk on Longworth Dr.*
- **Tue. July 9, 8 – 9 p.m. • Fossil Creek Reservoir Natural Area**  
*Meet at the outdoor classroom near the parking lot.*
- **Tue. July 16, 5:30 – 6:40 a.m. • Fossil Creek Reservoir Natural Area**  
*Meet at the outdoor classroom near the parking lot.*
- **Sun. Aug. 4, 7:30 – 8:30 p.m. • McMurry Natural Area**  
*Meet at the Shields Street River Access.*
- **Wed. Sept. 4, 7 – 8 p.m. • Red Fox Meadows Natural Area**  
*Meet at the kiosk on Longworth Dr.*

### ZUMBA **ES**

Dance to the beats of nature in this bilingual Zumba class. Jose Gonzalez's vibrant energy will get you moving!

- **Sat., July 13, 6 p.m. – 7 p.m. • Primrose Studio**

### JUST BE YOGA RETREAT **ES**

Dive deeper into your yoga and meditation practice with Duan and Reneca of InnatelyU at this half-day retreat.

- **Sun. Aug. 18, 9 a.m. – 1 p.m. • Primrose Studio**  
*Consecutive Spanish translation. Meet at Primrose Studio at 4300 Michaud Lane near Reservoir Ridge.*

### FOREST THERAPY **18+**

Experience the Japanese tradition of *Shinrin-Yoku* on this guided nature walk. Learn to open your senses to nature's healing power.

- **Wed. Oct. 2, 1 – 3 p.m. • Primrose Studio**  
*Meet at Primrose Studio at 4300 Michaud Lane near Reservoir Ridge.*





**Local Neighbors**, by Novelteeth

# NATURAL DISCOVERIES

## WELCOME BOBOLINKS!

Each year this rare-to-Colorado songbird journeys thousands of miles to nest at Reservoir Ridge. They are hard to miss once here and they rarely disappoint; you just have to know where to look!

- **Sat. June 1, 8:30 – 10:30 a.m. • Reservoir Ridge Natural Area**  
*Meet at the parking lot off of Overland Trail Rd.*


## NATURE ALONG THE POUDBRE RIVER

Take a leisurely hike along the Poudre River to learn more about the natural environment surrounding us everyday.

- **Fri. June 7, 9 a.m. – noon • Lee Martinez Park**  
*Meet in the parking lot by the tennis courts.*

## DAY AND NIGHT AT GATEWAY

Learn about the lifestyles of a few of Gateway Natural Area's iconic daylight and nighttime animals and how they have adapted to their environment. Includes a walk along the North Fork of the Poudre to explore their habitat.

- **Fri. June 28, 10 a.m. – noon • Gateway Natural Area**  
*Meet at Shelter A.*
- **Fri. July 12, 10 a.m. – noon • Gateway Natural Area **  
*Simultaneous Spanish interpretation. Meet at Shelter A.*

## NATURE IS WHERE YOU FIND IT

Take an active stroll and meet new friends as we look for wildlife and plants along the Cache la Poudre River.

- **Fri. July 19, 9:30 – 11 a.m. • Lee Martinez Park**  
*Meet in the parking lot by the tennis courts.*

## LET'S EXPLORE ARAPAHO BEND

Discover a special natural area along the Poudre River in southeast Fort Collins and learn about the people, animals, and plants that call this area home.

- **Tue. Sept. 17, 9 – 11 a.m. • Arapaho Bend Natural Area**  
*Meet at parking lot off of Strauss Cabin and E. Horsetooth roads.*
- **Fri. Oct. 11, 9 – 11 a.m. • Arapaho Bend Natural Area**  
*Meet at parking lot off of Strauss Cabin and E. Horsetooth roads.*


Kevin Borchert





### WADE THE RIVER

Use dip nets and collecting trays to discover what lives beneath the surface of the Cache la Poudre River. Biologists will be on hand to help identify your finds.

- **Wed. July 17, 9:30 a.m. – noon • Poudre River Trail**
- **Sat. Sept. 14, 9:30 a.m. – noon • Poudre River Trail **  
*Offered bilingually. Park at the tennis courts at Lee Martinez Park and follow the paved trail west until you come to a small beach on the north side.*

### MARVELOUS FALL MIGRATION

Many migratory birds use Fort Collins as a final stop or a rest stop during migration. Come explore the diversity of avian life and learn identification tips.

- **Sat. Oct. 5, 8 – 10 a.m. • Fossil Creek Reservoir Natural Area**  
*Meet at the outdoor classroom near the parking lot.*

### BIRD WATCHING FOR BEGINNERS

A leisurely one mile walk along natural surfaces and paved trails around Rigden Reservoir. Learn all about identifying birds through physical appearance, behavior, microhabitat, flight pattern, vocalization, and so much more.

- **Sat. Oct. 12, 8:30 – 10:30 a.m. • Arapaho Bend Natural Area**  
*Meet at the Harmony Transfer Center at the trailhead in the northwest corner.*

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

### MEET THE BOO CREW

Just in time for Halloween, learn all about the Boo Crew—the bears, bats, and owls that live in the greater Fort Collins area. Includes a walk along the North Fork of the Poudre to explore their habitat.

- **Fri. Oct. 18, 2 – 4 p.m. • Gateway Natural Area**  
*Meet at Shelter A.*



Greg Fencil

### BLACK-FOOTED FERRET EXPLORATION

Start with a short presentation at the Museum of Discovery Black-Footed Ferret exhibit, then journey together to Soapstone Prairie to learn more about this charismatic endangered species. Includes a hike and search for this elusive resident.

- **Tue. Oct. 8, 5 – 10 p.m. • Soapstone Prairie Natural Area**  
*Meet at the Museum of Discovery. Activity time includes travel to and from Soapstone Prairie.*
- **Sat. Oct. 26, 5 – 10 p.m. • Soapstone Prairie Natural Area**  
*Meet at the Museum of Discovery. Activity time includes travel to and from Soapstone Prairie.*

### RAPTORS AND NATURE EXPLORE AND SHARE

Learn about the amazing raptors that populate Colorado's Front Range and how we can help conserve them. Observe live raptors up close with a visit from special guests from the Rocky Mountain Raptor Program.

- **Thur. June 13, 6:30 – 8:30 p.m. • Coyote Ridge Natural Area**  
*Meet at the parking lot for a 1.1 mile hike to the cabin.*
- **Sun. Aug. 4, 8 – 10 a.m. • Primrose Studio **  
*Meet at the studio at 4300 Michaud Lane near Reservoir Ridge.*
- **Sat. Sept. 21, 8 – 10 a.m. • Soapstone Prairie Natural Area**  
*Meet in the North Parking Lot, approximately a one-hour drive from Fort Collins.*



Steve Waller



## GEOLOGY

### FROM THE BASEMENT TO THE DESERT **12+**

Learn about the local geology and ecology and examine the oldest rocks in the Fort Collins area, spanning from 1.7 billion years to about 270 million years ago. Ecozones, flora, and fauna from prairie to foothills will also be covered.

- **Tue. June 4, 9 a.m. – 1 p.m. • Bobcat Ridge Natural Area**  
Meet at the parking lot restrooms.

### REAL COLORADO ROOTS **18+**

Discover Colorado's origins as pieced together by geologists using the theory of plate tectonics and other evidence along the Black Powder Trail.

- **Fri. June 14, 8:30 – 11:30 a.m. • Gateway Natural Area**  
Meet at Shelter A
- **Fri. Sept. 13, 8:30 – 11:30 a.m. • Gateway Natural Area**  
Meet at Shelter A

### WALK THE GANGPLANK **12+**

Discover the geologic secrets of rocks shed from the Rocky Mountains and how these influence humans and wildlife.

- **Tue. Oct. 9, 9 a.m. – 2 p.m. • Soapstone Prairie Natural Area**  
Meet at the North Parking Lot; approximately one-hour drive time from Fort Collins.

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



*Gratitude for Nature*, by Dave Rorabeck

## Ghazal for Open Space

by Erica Reid

*A ghazal is a poetic form that repeats a refrain (in this case, “open space”) and a rhyme (in this case, “before,” “adore,” etc). Each couplet acts independently, and the poet often hides their name in the final line.*

A city-heart trembles before open space  
and, over time, comes to adore open space.

Goshawks turn cartwheels that shadow the trail,  
making it difficult to ignore open space.

The pronghorn, gazelle-like, meanders the grass  
of the prairie, seeking out more open space.

Cormorants pose in dramatic black gowns—  
haughty, as though they abhor open space.

A fawn tucks in tight, hides her spots from the light.  
Before long, she'll grow and long for open space.

An osprey snags fish in a dive like a prayer.  
The river slips her banks to restore open space.

Winter heath (*Erica carnea*) and May Night wood sage  
slide their bright, showy notes through my door's open space.

## ACTIVITIES FOR THE LGBTQIA+ COMMUNITY

### LGBTQIA+ COMMUNITY HIKES

Explore natural areas and their importance to our local ecosystems and our own mental health and wellness. Topics will vary. Hikes are intended to be a safe and inclusive space for members of the LGBTQIA+ community to gather. Allies are welcome; please be mindful of the safe space.

- **Sun. July 21, 9 – 11 a.m. • Coyote Ridge Natural Area**  
**Topic: Wear Your Rainbow (wear your most PRIDEful outfit)**  
*Meet in the parking lot for a hike to the cabin.*
- **Fri. Aug. 9, 2 – 4 p.m. • Magpie Meander Natural Area** **ES**  
**Topic: Mindfulness, Intersectionality, and Equality.**  
*With simultaneous Spanish interpretation. Meet at Soft Gold Park in the parking lot on Hickory St.*
- **Thur. Sept. 26, 5 – 7 p.m. • Arapaho Bend Natural Area**  
**Topic: Birding Nature Hike**  
*Meet at parking lot off of Strauss Cabin and E. Horsetooth roads.*

### PRIDE PICNIC SPECIAL EVENT **R**

A celebration for Pride Month, join Poudre Libraries and other partners for a variety of activities including nature hikes led by Volunteer Naturalists.

- **Sat. June 15, 4 – 6 p.m. • Ross Natural Area**  
*Meet at west side of Rolland Moore Park, near the footbridge to Ross Natural Area.*



*Retro Birds*, by Ell Cee

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



Bill Walton



## JUSTICIA LINGÜÍSTICA

La Ciudad de Fort Collins valora la inclusión y se asegura de que todos tengan acceso equitativo a la información y a los servicios, independientemente del idioma que hablen. Estas son algunas de las iniciativas en Áreas naturales que están en marcha:

- Publicaciones semanales en redes sociales en español
- Un nuevo volante que ofrece una visión general de las Áreas naturales en español y árabe
- Un nuevo Formulario de solicitud de accesibilidad en inglés y español para cada actividad
- Más actividades bilingües en 2024; consulta la página 60
- Personal y voluntarios bilingües dedicados a facilitar la comunicación y participación para todos los visitantes. Si estás interesado en ser voluntario, por favor comunícate con [naturalareas@fcgov.com](mailto:naturalareas@fcgov.com)

Junto con miembros de la comunidad y colaboradores, el departamento de Áreas naturales se esfuerza por crear espacios inclusivos donde cada voz sea escuchada y entendida. ¡Acompáñanos en este viaje!

## LANGUAGE JUSTICE

The City of Fort Collins values inclusivity working so that everyone has equitable access to information and services, regardless of the language they speak. Several Natural Areas initiatives are underway:

- Weekly social media posts in Spanish
- New flyer offering an overview of Natural Areas in Spanish and Arabic
- A new Accessibility and Accommodation Request Form in English and Spanish for each activity
- More bilingual activities in 2024; see page 60
- Bilingual staff and volunteers dedicated to facilitating communication and engagement for all visitors. If you are interested in volunteering, please reach out to [naturalareas@fcgov.com](mailto:naturalareas@fcgov.com)

Together with community members and partners, Natural Areas is striving to create inclusive spaces where every voice is heard and understood. Please join us on this journey!



*Kestrel Fields*, by Lynn Rizzotto

## ACTIVIDADES EN ESPAÑOL Y BILINGÜES

Las siguientes actividades se ofrecerán con interpretación simultánea o consecutiva al español, o serán dirigidas por personal bilingüe. La interpretación simultánea se facilita mediante equipo de audio especializado, lo que permite a los intérpretes transmitir los mensajes del presentador en tiempo real sin interrumpir el flujo de la conversación. La interpretación consecutiva ocurre cuando el presentador hace una pausa para permitir que el intérprete reproduzca sus palabras en otro idioma. La traducción es el acto de convertir texto escrito de un idioma a otro.

Si estás interesado en asistir, por favor envía un correo electrónico a [naturalareas@fcgov.com](mailto:naturalareas@fcgov.com).

### SESIÓN DE YOGA: SIMPLEMENTE SER

La práctica de asanas del yoga está diseñada para preparar el cuerpo para la meditación. Acompaña a Reneca y Duan de InnatelyU para meditar y hacer una práctica de yoga para todos los niveles de practicantes. Hay tapetes de yoga limitados disponibles, de ser posible, por favor trae tu propio tapete. *Nos encontraremos en el kiosko de la calle Longworth Dr.*

- **Miércoles 5 de junio, 8 – 9 p.m. • Red Fox Meadows Natural Area**  
*Se ofrecerá interpretación consecutiva al español.*

### NOCHE DE LUCES

Descubre por qué las luciérnagas encontraron el hogar ideal en Fort Collins mientras aprendes datos curiosos sobre estos increíbles insectos de la familia de los escarabajos. Encuéntranos en el estacionamiento de Prospect Road.

- **Martes 2 de julio, 8:30 – 10 p.m. • Riverbend Ponds Natural Area**  
*Se ofrecerá interpretación simultánea al español.*

### DÍA & NOCHE EN GATEWAY

Aprende sobre los estilos de vida de algunos de los animales icónicos del Área natural Gateway, tanto diurnos como nocturnos, y cómo estos animales se han adaptado a su entorno. Incluye un paseo por el North Fork del río Poudre para explorar el hábitat de estos animales. *Nos Encuentranos en el área de picnic A.*

- **Viernes 12 de julio, 10 a.m. – noon • Gateway Natural Area**  
*Se ofrecerá interpretación simultánea al español.*

### ZUMBA

Baila al ritmo de la naturaleza en esta clase bilingüe de Zumba dirigida por la vibrante energía del instructor José González. Cupo limitado, se requiere inscripción en [engage.fcgov.com](http://engage.fcgov.com).

- **Sábado 13 de julio, 6 – 7 p.m. • Primrose Studio**

**Necesitas inscribirte** para la mayoría de los programas; la inscripción abre 30 días antes de la fecha de la actividad en [fcgov.com/register](http://fcgov.com/register) o 970-416-2815.



Áreas naturales en español

Bill Walton



## LGBTQIA+ CAMINATA COMUNITARIA

Explora las áreas naturales y su importancia para nuestros ecosistemas locales y nuestro propio bienestar y salud mental. Este pasep incluye algunas actividades de atención plena y una discusión sobre cómo nuestras identidades diversas y complejas contribuyen a una mejor comunidad. Esta actividad es parte de una serie de caminatas destinadas a ser un espacio para los miembros de la coudidad LGBTQIA+. Todos los aliados son bienvenidos, por favor ten en cuenta que este es un espacio seguro. *Nos encontraremos en el parque Soft Gold.*

- **Viernes 9 de agosto, 2 – 4 p.m. • Magpie Meander Natural Area**  
*Se ofrecerá interpretación simultanea al español.*

## OBSERVACIÓN DEL CIELO EN FOSSIL CREEK RESERVOIR

Voluntarios de la Sociedad Astronómica del Norte de Colorado proporcionan telescopios y comparten su conocimiento sobre estrellas, planetas, galaxias y más. Abrígate bien y trae una manta o silla para sentarte. *Nos encontramos en el estacionamiento.*

- **Viernes 16 de agosto, 8:30 – 10:30 p.m. • Fossil Creek Reservoir Natural Area**  
*Personal y voluntarios bilingües. Se ofrecerá interpretación simultanea al español.*

## RETIRO DE YOGA: SIMPLEMENTE SER

Sumérgete profundamente en tu práctica de yoga y meditación con Duan y Reneca de InnatelyU en este retiro de medio día.

- **Domingo 18 de agosto, 9 a.m. – 1 p.m. • Primrose Studio**  
*Se ofrecerá interpretación consecutiva al español.*

## CAMINA EL RÍO

Utiliza redes y bandejas de recolección para descubrir qué vive bajo la superficie del río Cache la Poudre. Biólogos estarán disponibles para ayudar a identificar tus hallazgos. Apto para toda la familia.

- **Sábado 14 de septiembre, 9:30 a.m. – noon • Poudre River Trail**  
*Actividad bilingüe. Estacione en las canchas de tenis en Lee Martinez Park y siga el sendero pavimentado hacia el oeste hasta llegar a una pequeña playa en el lado norte.*

## ¡CHARLAS RELÁMPAGO!

Celebra la Semana de la Conservación Latina, donde los Departamentos de Áreas Naturales, Servicios Vecinales y Servicios Públicos de la Ciudad de Fort Collins se unen con estudiantes de CSU y miembros de la comunidad para compartir conocimientos y reflexiones sobre la conservación del medio ambiente.

- **Miércoles 18 de septiembre, 6:30 – 8:30 p.m. • The Lyric**  
*En español con elementos bilingües.*

**Necesitas inscribirte** para la mayoría de los programas; la inscripción abre 30 días antes de la fecha de la actividad en [fcgov.com/register](https://fcgov.com/register) o 970-416-2815.

## ARTE EN ÁREAS NATURALES. PARA TODA LA FAMILIA

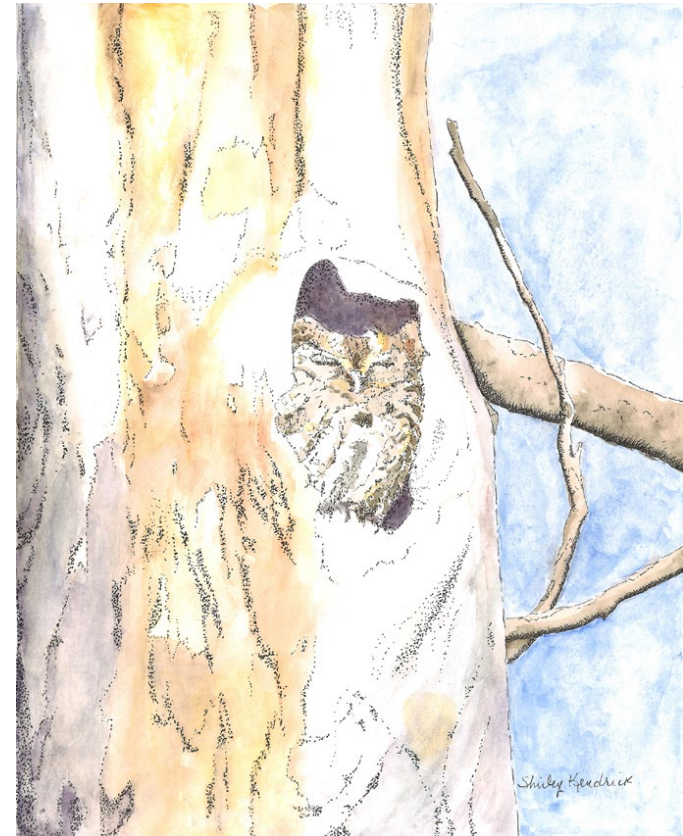
Continúa la celebración de la Semana de Coservación Latina con artistas locales quienes compartirán sus talentos por el sendero de Poudre Trail y el Área Natural de Kingfisher Point. Estacionamiento permitido en Nix Farm.

- **Domingo 22 de septiembre. Visítanos entre las 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. • Kingfisher Point Natural Area**  
*En español con elementos bilingües.*

## FOGATA DEL DÍA DE LOS MUERTOS

Únete a un naturalista para una noche de historias centradas en el Día de los Muertos. ¡Todas las edades son bienvenidas! Trae sillas de jardín o mantas para sentarte si lo deseas (asientos limitados disponibles). *Nos encontraremos en Nix Farmhouse.*

- **Viernes 25 de octubre, 5:30 – 7 p.m. • Nix Farm**  
*En español, personal bilingüe disponible.*



**Owl In Tree**, by Shirley Kendrick

**Necesitas inscribirte** para la mayoría de los programas; la inscripción abre 30 días antes de la fecha de la actividad en [fcgov.com/register](https://fcgov.com/register) o 970-416-2815.



Bill Walton

## SPECIAL EVENTS

### NATIONAL TRAILS DAY

Help celebrate National Trails Day by repairing a soft surface trail and bringing it up to accessibility status. This project is designed to be accessible for people with disabilities, particularly ones that limit mobility. Registration required at [engage.fcgov.com](https://engage.fcgov.com).

- **Sat. June 8, 8:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. • Fossil Creek Reservoir Natural Area**  
*Meet at the outdoor classroom near the parking lot.*

### PRIDE PICNIC

A celebration for Pride Month, join Poudre Libraries and other partners for a variety of activities, including nature hikes led by Volunteer Naturalists.

- **Sat. June 15, 4 – 6 p.m. • Ross Natural Area**  
*Meet at Rolland Moore Park.*

### WILDFEST

Bring the family and learn about native wildlife species, how we can safely interact with them, and how you can contribute to local wildlife conservation efforts.

- **Sat. June 22, 10 a.m. – 1 p.m. • Lory State Park**  
*Meet in the Visitors Center. No park pass required*

### LIGHTNING TALKS

Join Natural Areas for several short presentations on a variety of topics with time for questions. Topics include the black-footed ferret, the northern leopard frog, and projects happening in the natural areas.

- **Wed. July 10, 6:30 – 8:30 p.m. • The Lyric**

### PRIMROSE STUDIO TOUR

Experience the magic of Primrose Studio, a secluded event venue at Reservoir Ridge Natural Area. Learn what makes this space special and the steps Natural Areas takes to protect and maintain it. Registration required.

- **Tue. July 30, 6 – 8 p.m. • Primrose Studio**

### POUDRE RIVER FEST

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 learn about river restoration projects and sign up to volunteer at [poudreriverfest.org](https://poudreriverfest.org).

- **Sat. Aug. 10, noon – 6 p.m. • New Belgium Brewery**

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



### ¡CHARLAS RELÁMPAGO! ES

Celebrate Latino Conservation Week, where the City of Fort Collins Natural Areas, Utilities, and Neighborhood Services departments join efforts with CSU students and community members to share knowledge and reflections on environmental conservation.

- **Wed, Sept. 18, 6:30 – 8:30 p.m. • The Lyric**  
*Program offered only in Spanish.*

### ART IN NATURAL AREAS ES

Celebrate Latino Conservation Week with local artists along the Poudre Trail and Kingfisher Point Natural Area.

- **Sun. Sept. 22, drop-in between 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. • Kingfisher Point Natural Area**  
*Offered in Spanish with some bilingual elements.*

### NATIONAL PUBLIC LANDS DAY

Location and project TBD. Check online in September for more details!

- **Sat., Sept. 28, 8:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. • Location: TBD**

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



**Rivers Edge** by Bonnie Lindstrom

### Sol Invictus

by Roxanne Griffin 12/2023

Come winter solstice  
that we may linger a while longer in moonlit stillness.  
Let us connect to the time-link of our Neolithic ancestors  
and dance before the fire in age-old tradition.  
Let us kindle our kinship  
with a banquet of family, friends and food.

Let us come together on common ground  
to find our Stonehenge, our sun dagger within  
that whispers darkness is not something to despair  
but to celebrate. To shed our fears and sorrows  
knowing that in the absence of light,  
therein lies the sleeping seeds of tomorrow.

Seeds of every rainbow color, shape and size.  
Seeds that seek and reach and teach.  
Seeds that purify, amaze and nurture.  
Seeds with wings that give flight to bird songs.  
Seeds that spring forth from our treasured earth,  
reminding us to protect all its worth.

# 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.



## SAFE TO GO?

- ✓ Know the weather and water conditions. High flows are unsafe. [fcgov.com/floodwarning](https://www.fcgov.com/floodwarning)
- ✓ 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.



## KNOW WHERE YOU ARE

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



## FLOAT SOBER, FLOAT SAFE

- ✓ Alcohol and drugs including marijuana, impair judgment.



## BE COURTEOUS

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



## IF YOU'RE IN THE WATER

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



## SHARE THE RIVER

- ✓ Give other boaters and anglers plenty of space.

**HAVE A SAFE TRIP!**

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



Bill Walton



## 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 Compass, a GPS System, or Your Phone:** Not all natural areas have good reception, see the box below for more information. A natural areas map is at [fcgov.com/naturalareas](http://fcgov.com/naturalareas) and at trailhead kiosks.
- Layered Clothes 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:** Include a space blanket if you have one.
- Flashlight**
- Sun and Bug Protection**



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. The call box is in the parking lot.
- **Soapstone Prairie Natural Area** has more cell phone coverage towards the North Parking Lot. The call box is at the entrance gatehouse near the South Parking Lot.
- **Gateway Natural Area** never has coverage. The call box is located before the gatehouse at the entrance



Brent Eelman

## Rachel the Prairie Dog's Adventures - Part 2

by Bill Walton

Hi again, it's me, Rachel the black-tailed prairie dog. I'm here to teach you all about prairie dogs! We learned about coteries, or prairie dog families on page 29, and now I'd like to share more about our homes.

Our family home is about an acre of prairie, and we have around 70 burrows, or tunnel entrances. Some are so long and connected to other tunnels that our young ones get lost while playing underground! We live deep in the ground where it's cool in summer or winter. We never visit the other colonies because our dominant male patrols our property and gets in minor fights sometimes with the other males next door.

Thanks for learning about prairie dogs with me.

## PRIMROSE STUDIO

Primrose Studio is a secluded lakefront event venue perfect for meetings, retreats, and small classes. With no shortage of beautiful scenery and wildlife viewing opportunities, this special place has a remote feel without sacrificing amenities like reliable WiFi, state of the art audio/visual capabilities, and a full kitchen.

- Standard Rental: \$50 per hour
- Non-profit/Government Rental: \$30 per hour
- Four-hour minimum required

Learn more during the special event on Tue. July 30 (pg 65) or at [fcgov.com/naturalareas/primrose](http://fcgov.com/naturalareas/primrose) or call 970-416-4265.



City of Fort Collins



## REDUCED FEE PROGRAM

Reduced fees available for income-qualified participants. Discounted passes and activities! Visit [fcgov.com/reducedfee](http://fcgov.com/reducedfee) for more information.

## PROGRAMA DE TARIFAS REDUCIDAS

Tarifas reducidas basadas en nivel de ingreso para participantes que reúnan los requisitos. Pase de recreación y actividades con descuento. Visite [fcgov.com/reducedfee](http://fcgov.com/reducedfee) para obtener más información.

Auxiliary aids and services are available for persons with disabilities.

Hay ayudas y servicios auxiliares disponibles para personas con discapacidad. | 23-25200

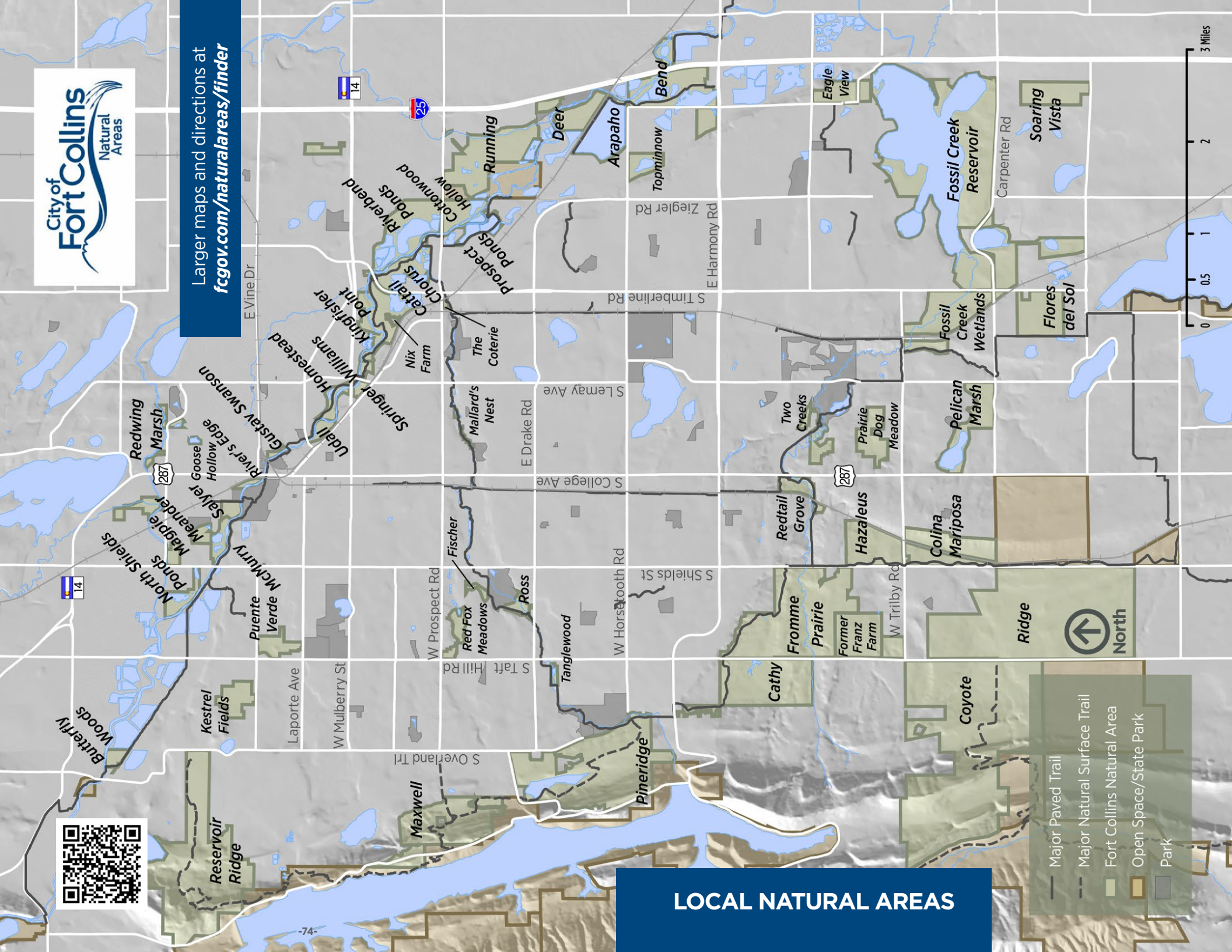


Larger maps and directions at [fcgov.com/naturalareas/finder](http://fcgov.com/naturalareas/finder)

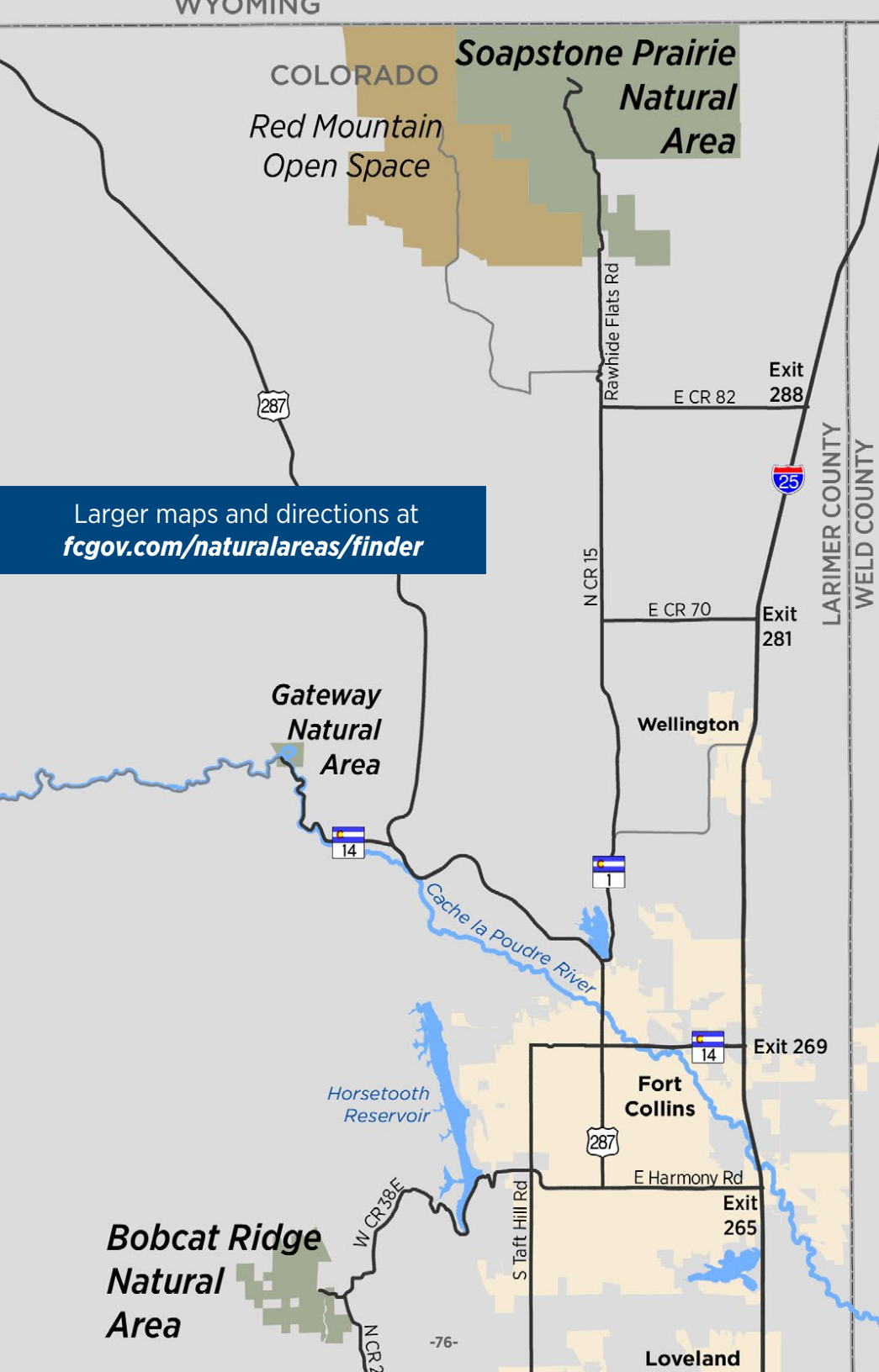


# LOCAL NATURAL AREAS

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



# REGIONAL NATURAL AREAS



**Soapstone Prairie Natural Area**  
 COLORADO  
 Red Mountain Open Space

## 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.

Gary Raham

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

**Gateway Natural Area**

## 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, 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 Latona

**Bobcat Ridge Natural Area**



# THANK YOU!

The activities in this booklet and the conservation and stewardship of City of Fort Collins natural areas are made possible by Fort Collins and Larimer County voters. Community-initiated sales tax ballot measures dedicate funds for land conservation, 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)



Cover photo by Mike Barry

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

