

NATURAL AREAS EXPLORER

JUNE–OCTOBER 2019

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



naturally yours

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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 36,000 acres and 100 miles of trails—there's probably a natural area near you! Check the maps on pages 46-48 or visit fcgov.com/naturalareas.

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



City of Fort Collins/John Hudson

STAY INFORMED

Subscribe to *Natural Areas Enews*, a monthly email newsletter that includes trail recommendations, updates, and volunteer opportunities at fcgov.com/naturalareas (click upper right corner).

WHAT THE SYMBOLS MEAN



Accessible; wheelchairs welcome. Paved or hard-packed trails; distance is 1 mile or less with moderate inclines. *Auxiliary aids and services are available for persons with disabilities.* V/TDD: Dial 711 for Relay Colorado.



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.

REGISTERING & CANCELLATIONS

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

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

- › fcgov.com/register for descriptions and registrations
- › fcgov.com/naturalareas for cancellations and updates
- ›  Like City of Fort Collins Natural Areas on Facebook for news and information.
- ›  Follow @FCNaturalAreas for cancellations, updates, and trail conditions.

ACTIVITY LEADERS

Master Naturalists are highly trained volunteer educators who lead most 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 Master Naturalist-led activity.

GROUPS

Groups of six or more are required to schedule their activities at a separate time. To request an activity for your group, visit www.fcgov.com/naturalareas/naturalists. At least three weeks advance notice is required. All activities are free.

Continued on next page

Required registration opens 30 days prior to activity date at fcgov.com/register or 970-416-2815.
Check for cancellations at fcgov.com/naturalareas before you go!

Groups, continued

Groups of 15 or more visiting a natural area without a Master Naturalist must apply for a permit in advance, at fcgov.com/naturalareas/permits.php. Permits are free and help ensure there are no conflicts on the day you plan to visit.

DOGS

Dogs are not allowed at any activities (except Bark Tours). Please enjoy the natural areas with your dog outside of activity times. As a reminder, dogs must be on leash at all times at natural areas. Dogs are not allowed at Bobcat Ridge, Coyote Ridge, Cottonwood Hollow, Fossil Creek Reservoir, Running Deer, and Soapstone Prairie natural areas.

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.



City of Fort Collins/John Robson



Gary Raham

JUNE

NATURAL AREA ACTIVITIES

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
						1 Astronomy at Bobcat Ridge, p.28
2	3	4 From Basement to Desert, p.39	5 Poudre River Nature Walk, p.36 You are a Nature Guide, p.21	6 Toddler Tracks, p.21	7 Sights and Sounds of Gateway, p.36	8 Skygazing at Fossil Creek Reservoir, p.29 Bobolinks are Back!, p.40 Bugs, Blooms, and Nature Captured in a Naturalist's Notebook, p.34
9	10	11	12 Wildflower Walk, p.36	13 Junior Naturalists: Exploring through Journaling, p.22	14 Campfire at the Cabin, p.25	15 Hike through the Ages, p.33 Jewel in the City: Nix Native Plant Garden, p.38
16	17 POLLINATOR WEEK	18	19 Poudre River Nature Walk, p.36 Nature Playdate, p.21	20 Wildflower Walk, p.36	21 Natural History of the Foothills, p.38 Campfire at Nix Farm, p.25	22 Forest Therapy, p.38 Trash Clean Up, p.18
23	24 NATIVE PLANT WEEK	25	26	27 Junior Naturalists: A Day in the Life of Your Ice-Age Neighbor, p.22	28 Bark Tour!, p.36	29
30						

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Required registration opens 30 days prior to activity date at fogov.com/register or 970-416-2815. **Check for cancellations** at fogov.com/naturalareas before you go!



JULY

NATURAL AREA ACTIVITIES

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1	2	3	4	5 Astronomy at Bobcat Ridge, p.28	6 Bison-Archaeology Connection!, p.33
7	8	9 From Shore to Ocean Depths, p.39	10 Wildflower Walk, p.36	11 Junior Naturalists: From Source to Tap, p.22	12 Campfire at the Cabin, p.25	13 Skygazing at Fossil Creek Reservoir, p.29 Ten Years at Soapstone Prairie, p.41
14	15	16 Full Moon Walk, p.25	17 Trash Clean Up, p.18	18	19	20 A Colorful History of the Poudre River, p.33 A Day in the Life of Your Ice-Age Neighbor, p.33
21	22	23 Science Behind the Scenery: Night Skies and You, p.31	24	25 Junior Naturalists: Writers in the Wild, p.22	26 Campfire at Nix Farm, p.25	27 Natural History of the River by Bike, p.38
28	29	30	31			

Required registration opens 30 days prior to activity date at focgov.com/register or 970-416-2815. Check for cancellations at focgov.com/naturalareas before you go!



Chris Metz

AUGUST

NATURAL AREA ACTIVITIES

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<p>Coming Soon! – Grand Opening of Poudre River Whitewater Park fcgov.com/parkplanning/poudre-river-park</p>				<p>1 Bats of Gateway, p.40</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>3 Wade the River, p.38 Bison-Archaeology Connection!, p.33 Weird Wild Weather, p.38</p>
<p>4</p>	<p>5</p>	<p>6</p>	<p>7</p>	<p>8 Toddler Tracks, p.21 Pioneer Days, p.22</p>	<p>9 Skygazing at Fossil Creek Reservoir, p.29</p>	<p>10 A Colorful History of the Poudre River, p.33 Smithsonian at Lindenmeier, p.33</p>
<p>11</p>	<p>12</p>	<p>13</p>	<p>14 Forest Glen Adventures, p.34</p>	<p>15 Full Moon Walk, p.25</p>	<p>16</p>	<p>17 Campfire at the Cabin, p.25</p>
<p>18</p>	<p>19</p>	<p>20</p>	<p>21 Trash Clean Up, p.18</p>	<p>22</p>	<p>23 Natural History of the Foothills, p.38</p>	<p>24 Campfire at Nix Farm, p.25 Walk the Gangplank, p.39</p>
<p>25</p>	<p>26</p>	<p>27</p>	<p>28</p>	<p>29</p>	<p>30</p>	<p>31 Astronomy at Bobcat Ridge, p.28</p>

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Bobcat Ridge Natural Area Wildlife Camera

SEPTEMBER

NATURAL AREA ACTIVITIES

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1	2	3	4 Wonders of Evening, p.34	5	6	7 Skygazing at Fossil Creek Reservoir, p.29 Loren Eiseley: Scientist, Poet, and Time Traveler, p.33
8	9 Black-Footed Ferret Exploration, p.40	10	11 Forest Therapy, p.38 Trash Clean Up, p.18	12	13 Bark Tour!, p.36 Full Moon Walk, p.25	14 Bison-Archaeology Connection!, p.33 Campfire at the Cabin, p.25
15	16	17	18	19	20 Astronomy at Bobcat Ridge, p.28	21 Campfire at Nix Farm, p.25
22	23	24 Science Behind the Scenery: Black-Footed Ferrets, p.31	25	26	27	28 Hike through the Ages, p.33 National Public Lands Day, p17
29	30					

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Required registration opens 30 days prior to activity date at fsgov.com/register or 970-416-2815. Check for cancellations at fsgov.com/naturalareas before you go!



City of Fort Collins/Grant Smith

OCTOBER

NATURAL AREA ACTIVITIES

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		1	2	3 Science Behind the Scenery: How Are the Birds?, p.31	4 Skygazing at Fossil Creek Reservoir, p.29	5
6	7	8 Forest Therapy, p.38	9 Science Behind the Scenery: Bats of Colorado and Fort Collins Natural Areas, p.31	10	11 Black-Footed Ferret Exploration, p.40	12
13 Trash Clean Up, p.18	14	15	16	17	18	19 Astronomy at Bobcat Ridge, p.28
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28 BAT WEEK →	29	30	31		

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Required registration opens 30 days prior to activity date at focgov.com/register or 970-416-2815. Check for cancellations at focgov.com/naturalareas before you go!



City of Fort Collins/Diane Wendt



City of Fort Collins/Diane Wendt

STEWARDSHIP

The natural areas are yours to enjoy and explore, and as stewards it is our responsibility to care for these special places. With more than 36,000 acres and more than 50 natural areas there is a lot to care for! You can share your time and talents as a natural areas volunteer—find out more at: www.fcgov.com/naturalareas/volunteers.php. Here is how to be a steward for your natural areas.

Events

NATIONAL PUBLIC LANDS DAY

Saturday, September 28, time TBD

Save the date for a family-friendly project that celebrates giving back to the natural areas you love! Project registration, details and description will be available in late summer. All volunteers under the age of 16 must be with an adult 18+. Free, registration is required at fcgov.com/register.

Continued on next page

Required registration opens 30 days prior to activity date at fcgov.com/register or 970-416-2815. **Check for cancellations** at fcgov.com/naturalareas before you go!



Events, continued

TRASH CLEAN UPS

Show your stewardship at a monthly trash pickup! A more detailed project description and logistics will be available when you register. All volunteers under the age of 16 must be with an adult. Free, **registration is required** at fcgov.com/register.

DATE	TIME	NATURAL AREA	DESCRIPTION
Sat., June 22	9:00 – 11:00 a.m.	Red Fox Meadows Meeting place and description available when you register.	
Wed. July 17	9:00 – 11:00 a.m.	Goose Hollow Meeting place and description available when you register.	16+
Wed. Aug. 21	5:30 – 7:00 p.m.	North Shields Ponds/Shields St River Access Meeting place and description available when you register.	16+
Wed. Sept.11	1:00 – 3:00 p.m.	Picnic Rock Meeting place and description available when you register.	16+
Mon. Oct. 14	10:00 a.m. – noon	Prospect Ponds Meeting place and description available when you register.	

Contact Diane Wendt, Natural Areas Stewardship Coordinator for more information, 970-224-6153 or dwendt@fcgov.com.

Required registration opens 30 days prior to activity date at fcgov.com/register or 970-416-2815. **Check for cancellations** at fcgov.com/naturalareas before you go!

YOUR STEWARDSHIP CHECKLIST

Can't make it to one of these events? There are plenty of ways to give back!



PLAN AHEAD AND PREPARE

- ✓ Use the checklist on page 43. Natural areas can be busy so check parking lot webcams at fcgov.com/naturalareas/status.php before you go.



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.
- ✓ 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, fcgov.com/naturalareas.



LEAVE WHAT YOU FIND.

- ✓ By not collecting or gathering you are allowing the narrative of each place to be sustained. Please leave all items as you found them.



NO FIRES ARE ALLOWED ON NATURAL AREAS.

- ✓ Attend a campfire activity in this guide! (see page 25)



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.





City of Fort Collins/John Robson

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.** Organized groups should schedule activities at a separate time; contact naturalareas@fcgov.com.

DATE	TIME	NATURAL AREA	DESCRIPTION
Wed. June 5	5:30 – 7:00 p.m.	Nix Farm 1745 Hoffman Mill Rd.	You Are a Nature Guide! Kids (and parents) who spend time outdoors are healthier, more creative, and better at problem solving. Join us to learn more and enjoy some time outdoors while learning activities you can take back to your family. Content will be geared towards adults with activities available for kids.
Thurs. June 6	9:00 – 10:00 a.m.	Ross Meet at Rolland Moore Park playground.	Toddler Tracks Discover flowers, bugs, tracks, and more in this slow-paced exploratory walk. 1-3
Thurs. Aug. 8		Red Fox Meadows Meet at the trailhead kiosk off Longworth Dr.	
Wed. June 19	10:00 – 11:00 a.m.	Gateway Meet at the picnic shelter.	Nature Playdate Come and play with sand, water, sticks, rocks, and more! 3-7

NATURE IS HEALTHY FOR EVERYONE!

Nature has the power to make us healthier, happier, and smarter. But over the last few generations, we've gone indoors and we've lost our connection to the natural world. Take a few minutes every day to reconnect to nature—a view of the sky, your backyard, a park, a trail, or a natural area. Breathe the fresh air, listen for natural sounds, feast your eyes on beauty, and feel renewed.



For more information: www.childrenandnature.org.

Required registration opens 30 days prior to activity date at fcgov.com/register or 970-416-2815. **Check for cancellations** at fcgov.com/naturalareas before you go!

JUNIOR NATURALISTS – AGES 8-12 

Become a Junior Naturalist! Explore, learn, and grow your stewardship skills. Attend all activities and receive a Junior Naturalist Certificate. 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 will be geared towards the stated age group. Organized groups should schedule activities at a separate time; contact naturalareas@fcgov.com.

DATE	TIME	NATURAL AREA	DESCRIPTION
Thurs. June 13	9:00 – 11:00 a.m.	Fossil Creek Reservoir Meet at the picnic shelter near the parking lot.	Exploring through Journaling Start your very own nature journal to document your adventures throughout the summer. Journals will be provided.
Thurs. June 27	10:00 a.m. – noon	Soapstone Prairie Meet at the north parking lot; approximately one-hour drive time from Fort Collins.	A Day in the Life of Your Ice-Age Neighbor Jump back in time and learn what it was like to live on the prairie 10,000 years ago.
Thurs. July 11	9:30 – 11:00 a.m.	Gateway Meet at the picnic shelters.	From Source to Tap Follow the journey of a drop of water from its source to your home.
Thurs. July 25	9:00 – 11:00 a.m.	North Shields Ponds Meet at the parking lot.	Writers in the Wild Explore the outdoors in a new way and discover how nature can inspire writing and creativity.
Thurs. Aug. 8	9:00 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.	Bobcat Ridge Meet at the parking lot.	Pioneer Days Experience a day in the life of pioneer children. Bring your lunch to enjoy at the pioneer cabin. 3 miles; easy.



City of Fort Collins/John Robison

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City of Fort Collins/John Robson

NATURAL AREAS AFTER DARK

Explore and enjoy the natural areas after the sun goes down. Organized groups should schedule activities at a separate time; contact naturalareas@fcgov.com.

FULL MOON WALKS AT COYOTE RIDGE ¹⁶⁺

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

DATE	TIME
Tues. July 16	7:30 – 9:30 p.m.
Thurs. Aug. 15	7:00 – 9:00 p.m.
Fri. Sept. 13	6:00 – 8:00 p.m.

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. June 14	8:00 – 9:30 p.m.	Coyote Ridge Cabin	Scat Happens Practice your observation skills and learn how to be a scat detective.
Fri. June 21		Nix Farm	
Fri. July 12	8:00 – 9:30 p.m.	Coyote Ridge Cabin	Owls: Predators After Dark Discover how these silent night flyers keep prey populations in check.
Fri. July 26		Nix Farm	
Sat. Aug. 17	7:30 – 9:00 p.m.	Coyote Ridge Cabin	Tall Tales and Starlight Storytelling Listen to campfire stories and join in with some singing, too!
Sat. Aug. 24		Nix Farm	
Sat. Sept. 14	7:00 – 8:30 p.m.	Coyote Ridge Cabin	Mosquitos and Bats! You Gotta Love 'Em! Discover interesting facts about these two very different night-flying animals.
Sat. Sept. 21	6:30 – 8:00 p.m.	Nix Farm	

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Play It Safe On the River

This 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 tube. It could drown you.



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.



Know Where You Are

- Take a map!
- Plan your take-out location before you get in.



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.
- Share the river. Give other boaters and anglers plenty of space.



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.

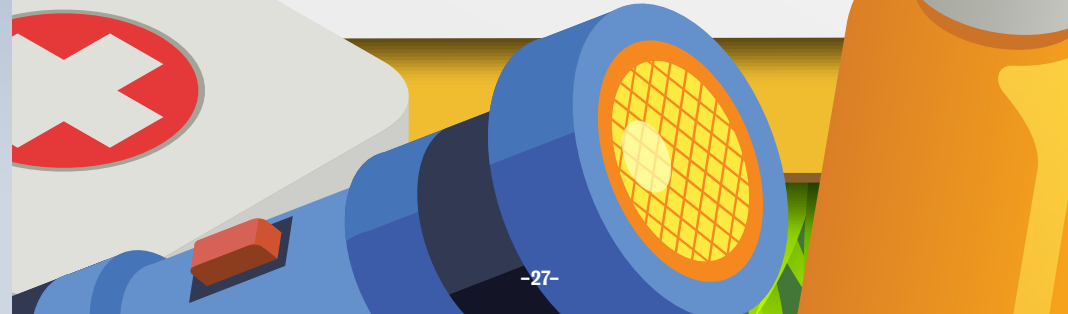
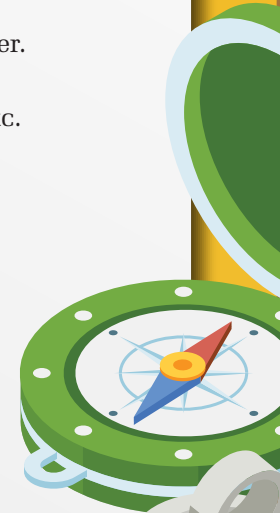
In case of emergency, call 911.

Have a safe trip!

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 plus a compass and GPS system (not all natural areas have good reception).**
A natural areas map is at fcgov.com/naturalareas, trailhead kiosks, and pages 46-47 in this booklet.
- 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**
Such as a lightweight space blanket.





City of Fort Collins/John Robson

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. Activities at Bobcat Ridge 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 1	8:30 – 10:30 p.m.	Globular Clusters All around the Milky Way are hundreds of clusters of stars. Learn more about these marvelous objects and enjoy viewing them through telescopes.
Fri. July 5	8:30 – 10:30 p.m.	Jupiter and the Moon Learn about Jupiter’s orbit and retrograde motion as well as the orbit and motion of our closest celestial companion, the Moon.
Sat. Aug. 31	7:30 – 9:30 p.m.	The Saturn Show Saturn is visible this time of year. Learn about its rings and moons, and view Saturn through the telescopes.
Fri. Sept. 20	7:00 – 9:00 p.m.	Meteor Mayhem Discover where meteors come from and learn about upcoming meteor showers.
Sat. Oct. 19	6:30 – 8:30 p.m.	Celestial References Glimpse the farthest object visible to the human eye—the Andromeda Galaxy—and become familiar with some common constellations.

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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
Sat. June 8	9:00 – 11:00 p.m.
Sat. July 13	9:00 – 11:00 p.m.
Fri. Aug. 9	8:30 – 10:30 p.m.
Sat. Sept. 7	8:00 – 10:00 p.m.
Fri. Oct. 4	7:00 – 9:00 p.m.
Sat. Nov. 2	7:00 – 9:00 p.m.
Fri. Dec. 6	7:00 – 9:00 p.m.

LOVE THE NIGHT SKY?

All residents and businesses can help improve night sky quality through these 6 principles:

1. Light only where you need it
2. Light only when you need it
3. Shield lights and direct them downward
4. Use the minimum amount of light needed
5. Select the most energy efficient lighting
6. Select lamps with warmer colors

Learn more at www.fcgov.com/nightsky.

Jeremy White, National Park Service

SCIENCE BEHIND THE SCENERY  

These informative talks are designed for adults to learn more about research and science related to natural areas. Bring a snack if you like.

DATE	TIME	LOCATION	DESCRIPTION
Tues. July 23	7:00 – 8:30 p.m.	Senior Center 1200 Raintree Drive	Night Skies and You Discover the importance of darkness for humans and wildlife and learn what the City is doing to protect our night skies.
Tues. Sept. 24	7:00 – 8:30 p.m.	Senior Center 1200 Raintree Drive	Black-Footed Ferrets Learn about the conservation of these charismatic creatures and get updates about the population at Soapstone Prairie.
Thurs. Oct 3	7:00 – 8:30 p.m.	Senior Center 1200 Raintree Drive	How Are the Birds? Ten years of bird research and conservation at Soapstone Prairie reveal exciting trends. Join Natural Areas Wildlife Biologist Aran Meyer and Rocky Mountain Bird Conservancy's Community and Outreach Specialist Erin Youngberg to learn more.
Thurs. Oct 10	7:00 – 8:00 p.m.	Nix Farm 1745 Hoffman Mill Rd.	Bats of Colorado and Fort Collins Natural Areas Enjoy a presentation on bats of Colorado and learn about the research and data gathered at Gateway and other natural areas over the last few years.



Mark Voder

VOICES OF THE PAST

From ancient to modern times, northern Colorado has been a great place to live. Discover people of the past that have lived in and shaped our community. Organized groups should schedule activities at a separate time; contact naturalareas@fcgov.com.

Required registration opens 30 days prior to activity date at fcgov.com/register or 970-416-2815.

DATE	TIME	NATURAL AREA	DESCRIPTION
Sat. June 15 Sat. Sept. 28	9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.	Soapstone Prairie Meet at the south parking lot; approximately one-hour drive time from Fort Collins.	Hike through the Ages 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. 12+
Sat. July 6 Sat. Aug. 3 Sat. Sept. 14	9:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.	Soapstone Prairie ♿ Meet at the south parking lot; approximately one-hour drive time from Fort Collins.	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. 0.25 miles; easy. 16+
Sat. July 20 Sat. Aug. 10	9:30 – 11:00 a.m.	Old Fort Collins Heritage Park ♿ 112 Willow St. (next to the Northside Aztlan Community Center)	A Colorful History of the Poudre River Consider the origins of the Cache la Poudre River and explore both the history and future of people along the river. 1-2 miles; easy.
Sat. July 20	10:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.	Soapstone Prairie ♿ Meet at the north parking lot; approximately one-hour drive time from Fort Collins.	A Day in the Life of Your Ice–Age Neighbor Discover what it was like to live 10,000 years ago and how people hunted, cooperated, and thrived. 0.5 miles; easy. 9+
Sat. Aug. 10	10:00 a.m. – noon	Soapstone Prairie ♿ Meet at the north parking lot; approximately one-hour drive time from Fort Collins.	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. 0.25 miles; easy. 12+
Sat. Sept. 7	10:00 a.m. – noon	Soapstone Prairie ♿ Meet at the north parking lot; approximately one-hour drive time from Fort Collins.	Loren Eiseley: Scientist, Poet, and Time Traveler Experience the amazing prose and poetry of naturalist Loren Eiseley and learn about his critical archaeological discovery at the Lindenmeier site. 0.5 miles; easy. 12+

Check for cancellations at fcgov.com/naturalareas before you go!

CREATIVE BY NATURE

Beginners and veterans welcome! Focused and guided observations along with drawing, painting, and writing deepen your connection 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. Organized groups should schedule activities at a separate time; contact naturalareas@fcgov.com.


DATE	TIME	NATURAL AREA	DESCRIPTION
Sat. May 25	9:00 – 11:00 a.m.	Fossil Creek Reservoir  Meet at the shelter near the parking lot.	Introduction to Nature Journaling Discover the art materials easiest to use in nature, types of journals, and journaling techniques. Participate in studio and outdoor nature journaling. 0.5 mile; easy. 9+
Sat. June 8	9:00 a.m. – noon	Reservoir Ridge  Meet at Primrose Studio	Bugs, Blooms, and Nature 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. 1 mile; easy. 9+
Wed. Aug. 14	9:00 a.m. – noon	Redwing Marsh Meet at Greenbriar Park, 730 E Willox Ln.	Forest Glen Adventures Observe the play of light and shadow in the leafy oasis. 1 mile; easy. 9+
Wed. Sept. 4	6:00 – 8:00 p.m.	Nix Farm  1745 Hoffman Mill Rd.	Wonders of Evening Relax in this peaceful setting and capture the waning light as it softens into night. 0.5 mile; easy. 9+



Required registration opens 30 days prior to activity date at fcgov.com/register or 970-416-2815. **Check for cancellations** at fcgov.com/naturalareas before you go!

NATURAL DISCOVERIES

Enjoy a variety of activities and hikes with trained naturalists. Be prepared! Bring water, food, sun protection, appropriate footwear, and any other comforts you might need. Unprepared individuals may be denied participation for their safety. Organized groups should schedule activities at a separate time; contact naturalareas@fcgov.com.

DATE	TIME	NATURAL AREA	DESCRIPTION
Wed. May 15	9:00 – 11:00 a.m.	Red Fox Meadows Meet at the kiosk off Longworth Drive.	Bark Tours! Learn how your best friend can enjoy the natural areas with you and how together you can help water and wildlife. One well-behaved dog on a hand-held leash per family welcome to come along! 1-2 miles; easy. 18+
Fri. June 28	9:00 – 11:00 a.m.	Gateway Meet at the picnic shelters.	
Fri. Sept 13	3:00 – 5:00 p.m.	Lee Martinez Park 600 North Sherwood St. Meet in the parking lot near the tennis courts.	
Fri. May 24 Wed. June 12 Wed. July 10	8:30 – 10:00 a.m.	Pineridge Meet at Cottonwood Glen Park in the parking lot (3074 S Overland Trail Rd.).	Wildflower Walks Explore the blooms through the months while learning about native and non-native plants. 1-4 miles; easy-moderate. 18+
Thurs. June 20	9:00 a.m. – noon	Bobcat Ridge Meet in the parking lot.	
Wed. June 5 Wed. June 19	9:30 – 11:00 a.m.	Lee Martinez Park  600 North Sherwood St. Meet in the parking lot near the tennis courts.	Poudre River Nature Walk Explore the dance between the river and land while observing plant and animal life. 1-2 miles; easy.
Fri. June 7	9:30 – 11:00 a.m.	Gateway Meet at the picnic shelters.	Sights and Sounds of Gateway 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.

Continued on next page



City of Fort Collins/John Robson

Required registration opens 30 days prior to activity date at fcgov.com/register or 970-416-2815. **Check for cancellations** at fcgov.com/naturalareas before you go!

Natural Discoveries, continued

DATE	TIME	NATURAL AREA	DESCRIPTION
Sat. June 15	9:00 – 10:30 a.m.	Nix Farm 1745 Hoffman Mill Rd.	Jewel in the City: Nix Native Plant Garden Learn how to use beautiful native plants in your yard to attract butterflies, birds, and bees—all while saving you time and money! Free wildflower seeds. 18+
Fri. June 21 Fri. Aug 23	9:00 – 11:00 a.m.	Pineridge Meet in the Dixon entrance parking lot.	Natural History of the Foothills Discover fascinating ecological links in this dynamic life zone. 1 mile; easy
Sat. June 22	1:00 – 3:00 p.m.	Nix Farm 1745 Hoffman Mill Rd.	Forest Therapy Experience the Japanese tradition of Shinrin-Yoku on this guided nature walk. Learn to open your senses to nature’s healing power. 0.5 miles; easy. 18+
Wed. Sept 11		Primrose Studio	
Wed. Oct. 9		Primrose Studio	
Sat. July 27	10:00 – 11:30 a.m.	Lee Martinez Park 600 North Sherwood St. Meet in the parking lot near the tennis courts.	Natural History of the River by Bike For beginner and advanced riders alike! Bike through two natural areas while learning fascinating information about the river corridor and how it supports humans, wildlife, and plants. Bring a bike you can ride on dirt trails and a helmet. 2 miles; easy, paved and soft-surface trails. 9+
Sat. Aug. 3	9:00 – 11:00 a.m.	Fossil Creek Reservoir Meet at the parking lot.	Weird Wild Weather Learn about our unique weather patterns and how weather and climate affect humans and animals alike. 0.25 miles; easy. 12+
Sat. Aug. 3	10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.	Lee Martinez Park 600 North Sherwood St.	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. All equipment is provided. Bring your own towels, wear closed-toe shoes that can get wet, and sun and mosquito protection.



City of Fort Collins/North Keally

GEOLOGY AND ECOLOGY EXPLORATIONS 12+

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 4	9:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.	Bobcat Ridge Meet in the parking lot.	From Basement to Desert Discover the oldest rocks in Larimer County, the Great Unconformity, and the red rocks shed from the ancestral Rockies. 4 miles; moderate.
Tues. July 9	9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.	Coyote Ridge Meet in the parking lot.	From Shore to Ocean Depths 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.
Sat. Aug. 24	9:00 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.	Soapstone Prairie Meet at the north parking lot; approximately one-hour drive time from Fort Collins.	Walk the Gangplank Discover the geologic secrets of rocks shed from the Rocky Mountains and how these influence humans and wildlife. 5-6 miles; moderate-strenuous.

Required registration opens 30 days prior to activity date at fcgov.com/register or 970-416-2815.

Check for cancellations at fcgov.com/naturalareas before you go!



City of Fort Collins/Mark Yoder

WILDLIFE WONDERS

Our natural areas are full of diverse wildlife! Learn about some of the unique species that live in or migrate through Northern Colorado and the efforts to protect them. Bring binoculars, snacks, water, closed-toe shoes, and sun/wind protection.

DATE	TIME	NATURAL AREA	DESCRIPTION
Sat. June 8	9:00 – 10:30 a.m.	Reservoir Ridge Meet at the parking lot off Overland Trail Rd.	Bobolinks are Back! Learn about a special bird as they make a rare visit to our area. Discover their songs, habits, and look for this special visitor and some of its friends. 1 mile, easy.
Thurs. Aug. 1	8:00 – 9:00 p.m.	Gateway Meet near the picnic shelters.	Bats of Gateway Discover the important role bats play in our ecosystem and learn about the bat research going on at Gateway! Enjoy a short presentation by a bat specialist before watching these nocturnal creatures emerge from their roost.
Tues. Sept. 10	6:00 – 11:00 p.m.	Soapstone Prairie Transportation is provided from the Fort Collins Senior Center. 1200 Raintree Dr.	Black-Footed Ferret Exploration 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. 16+
Fri. Oct. 11	5:00 – 10:00 p.m.		

Required registration opens 30 days prior to activity date at fcgov.com/register or 970-416-2815. **Check for cancellations** at fcgov.com/naturalareas before you go!

TEN YEARS AT SOAPSTONE PRAIRIE

Sat. July 13, 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.
Soapstone Prairie Natural Area

The City's largest natural area opened in June 2009. Celebrate this very special place and anniversary by learning about ongoing conservation efforts including updates on bison and black-footed ferrets. Explore the world-renowned ancient Lindenmeier site, geology, wildlife, plants, and more. No registration required but sign up at fcgov.com/register for updates and reminders.



City of Fort Collins/John Robson

NATURAL AREAS VISITORS CENTER

Fort Collins Museum of Discovery, 408 Mason Court, Fort Collins
Tuesday – Sunday 10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m., Thursday until 8:00 p.m.

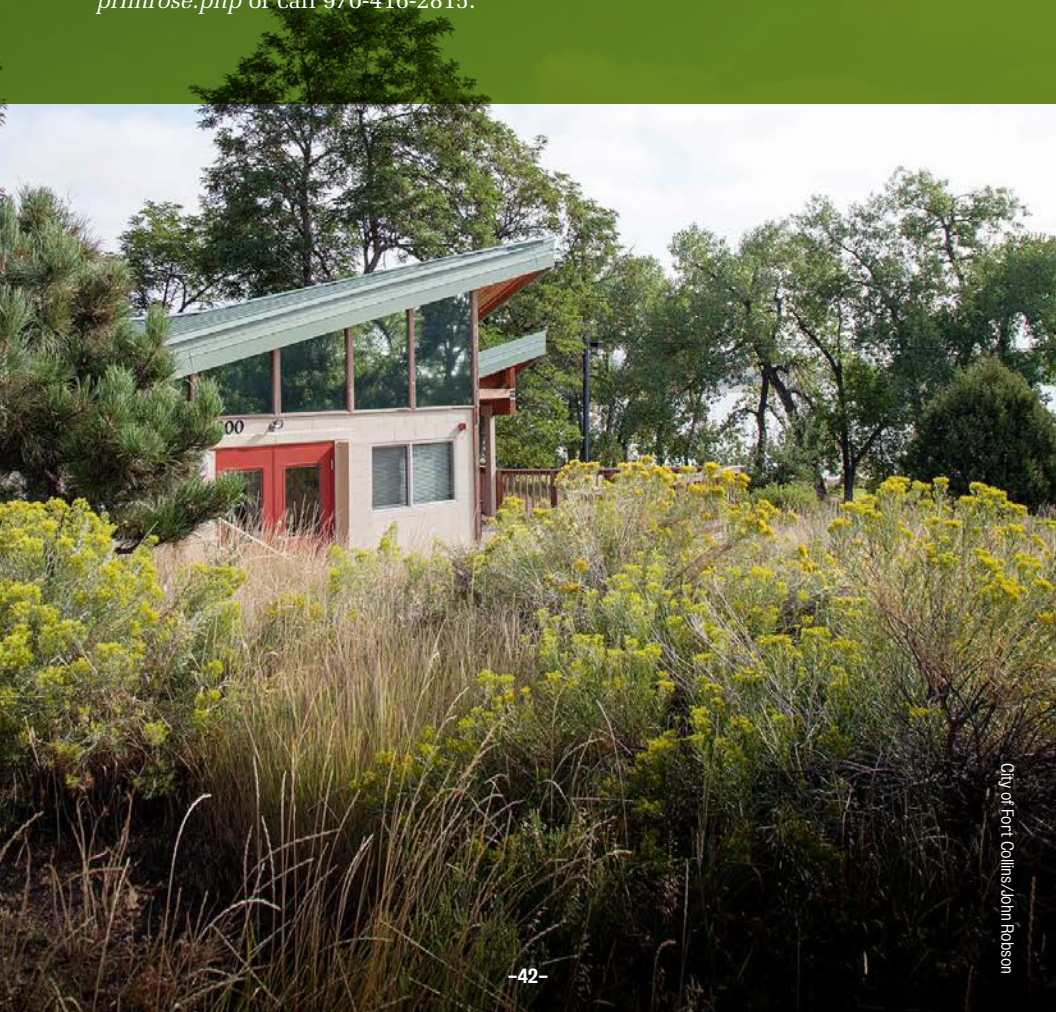
Check out the Natural Areas Visitor Center in the lobby of the museum. Play with the interactive map and watch live endangered black-footed ferrets. Pick up a map or other natural areas information while you're there. *No admission fee!*

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 a.m. – 10 p.m. Closed holidays.

Cost: Private groups: \$200 for up to 5 hours and \$40 per additional hour. Non-profit and government rates: \$100 for up to 5 hours and \$20 per additional hour. Three-hour minimum required. Learn more at fcgov.com/naturalareas/primrose.php or call 970-416-2815.



City of Fort Collins/John Fobson

FIND YOUR NATURAL AREAS

WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING FOR?	NATURAL AREA RECOMMENDATION
 BETTER CHANCE FOR SOLITUDE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Running Deer > Soapstone Prairie
 NEW!	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Long View Trail connects Fort Collins and Loveland and provides access to Hazaleus and Colina Mariposa natural areas parallel to Shields St.
 DESIGNED FOR KIDS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Cattail Chorus > Hidden Clues Trail at Coyote Ridge > Gateway's natural playground
 EASY FISHING ACCESS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Arapaho Bend > Riverbend Ponds > Prospect Ponds
 SHADY PICNIC SPOTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > North Shields Ponds > Reservoir Ridge (at Overland Trail Rd. parking lot) > Fossil Creek Reservoir

Find more information on each natural area at fcgov.com/naturalareas/finder.
Maps on pages 46-47.

MORE ACTIVITIES

Check out these other City of Fort Collins activities:

- > **Gardens on Spring Creek** are undergoing a transformation. Look for an exciting new line-up of activities for all ages starting this winter. fcgov.com/gardens
- > **Fort Collins Utilities** – Learn about electricity, water, stormwater, and wastewater through a variety of offerings. Visit 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

naturally yours

OUTDOOR

RECREATION AND EDUCATION

What's on your bucket list?

Let us help you check off the boxes.

- Make a new friend.
- Take timeless nature pictures.
- Summit Mt. Bierstadt.

Sign up for your next adventure at

fcgov.com/outdoorrecreation



LEAD . EXPLORE . COLLABORATE . GIVE BACK



City of Fort Collins/John Robson

ROOTS Club! Just for Youth 14–18 years.

Join the fun this summer and:

- › Establish ROOTS in your community,
- › Participate in grass-ROOTS stewardship efforts,
- › Stay true to your ROOTS while branching out with new friends.

ROOTS meets every Friday, June 7–August 16, 9:00 a.m.–1:00 p.m. at the Natural Areas Department headquarters. ROOTS is for all youth 14-18 years old. Free, transportation provided.

More information and to apply:
fcgov.com/naturalareas/roots.php

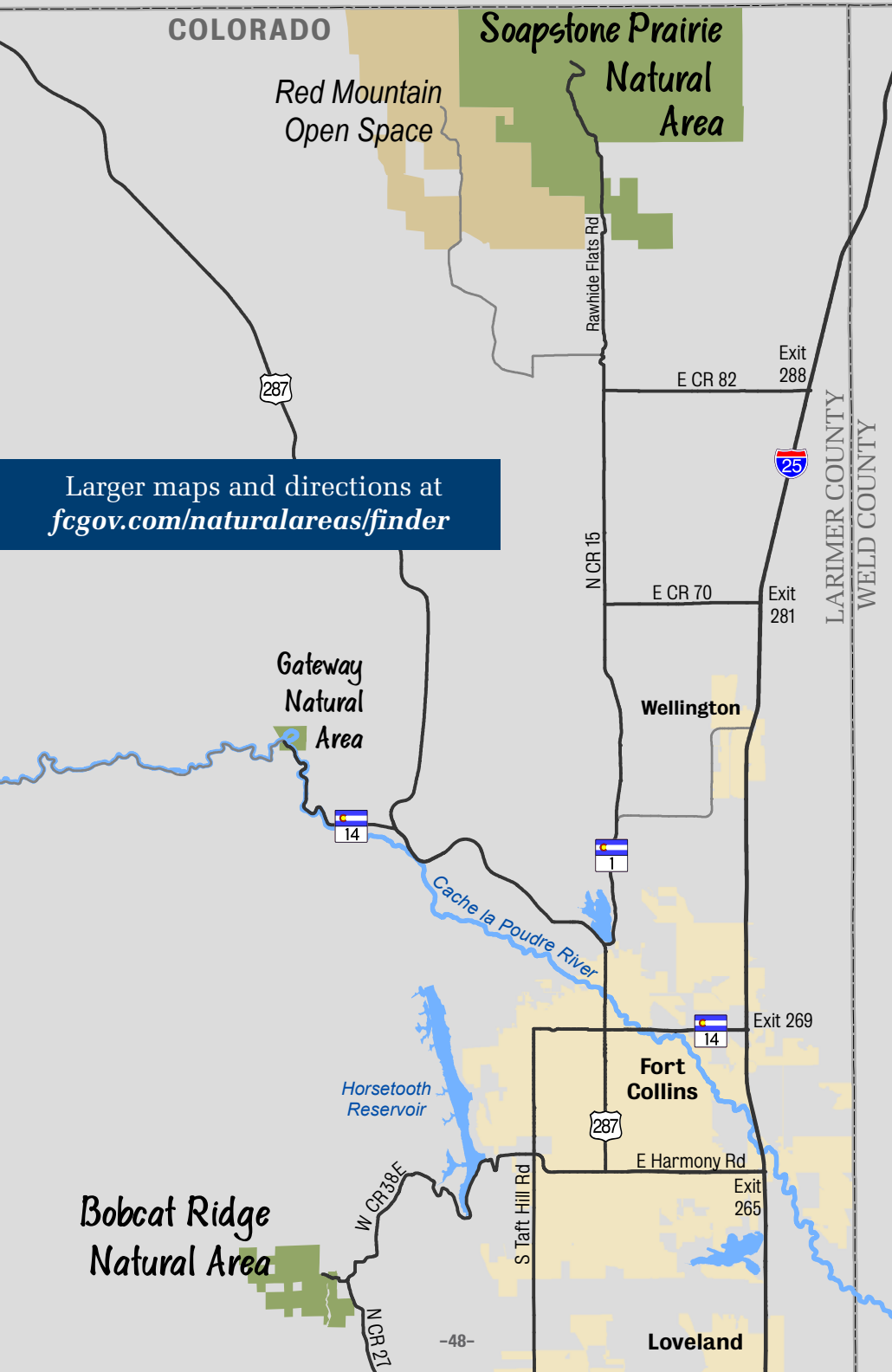


Larger maps and directions at
fcgov.com/naturalareas/finder

LOCAL NATURAL AREAS

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





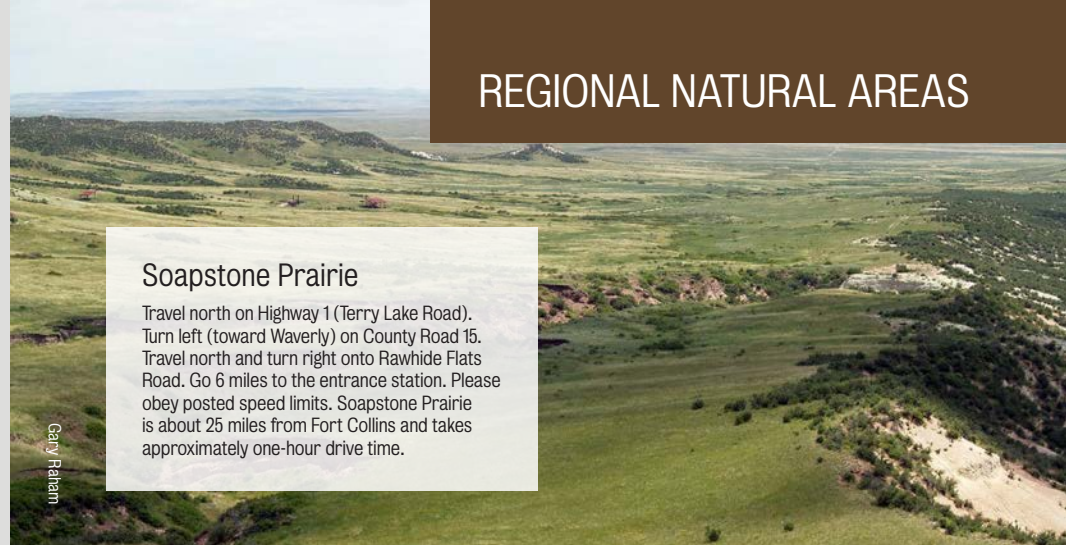
Larger maps and directions at fcgov.com/naturalareas/finder

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.

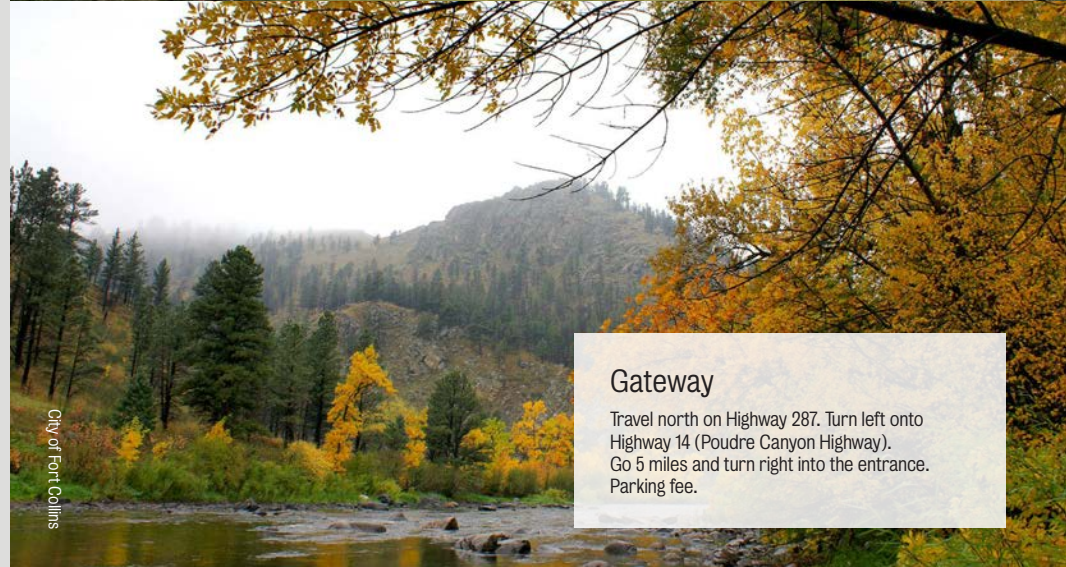
Gary Raham



Gateway

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

City of Fort Collins

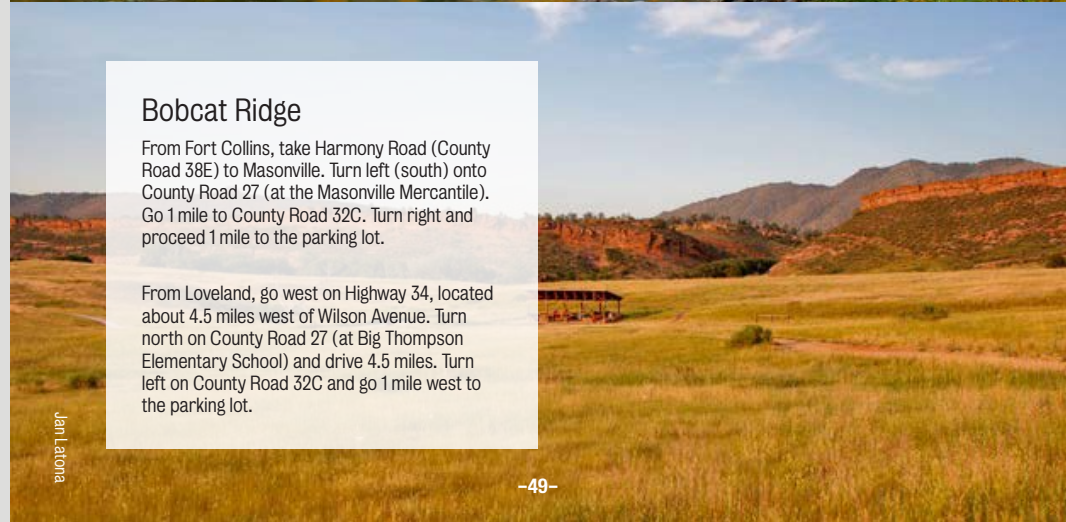


Bobcat Ridge

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 parking lot.

Jean Latona



Bobcat Ridge
Natural Area

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City of Fort Collins/Grant Smith

THANK YOU!

The Natural Areas Department is 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.



Natural Areas Department - **970-416-2815**
Rangers - **970-416-2147**
fcgov.com/naturalareas
naturalareas@fcgov.com

Register for activities at fcgov.com/register.

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