

CITY OF FORT COLLINS
SOAPSTONE PRAIRIE
 NATURAL AREA

“Come to Soapstone Prairie – it’ll blow you away...”

- Erica Saunders



Meet the past,
 enjoy the present,
 preserve the future.

Open dawn to dusk,
 March 1 – November 30

TRAVEL TIPS

As you approach Soapstone Prairie, there are nine miles of gravel road that can be dusty, rough, and bumpy. Please respect our neighbors and be safe by observing the speed limit.

Soapstone Prairie is open during daylight hours, March–November; closed in December, January, and February.

THANK YOU!

Voters of Fort Collins and Larimer County approved sales tax ballot measures that conserve these lands and provide visitor amenities. There is no fee at Soapstone Prairie Natural Area.

fcgov.com/naturalareas
naturalareas@fcgov.com
 Natural Areas Department Office 970-416-2815
 Rangers 970-416-2147
 Life-threatening emergency 911



March 2018

18-19320

naturally yours

THE BISON ARE BACK!

In the fall of 2015, a small herd of bison were returned to Soapstone Prairie and adjacent Red Mountain Open Space. The herd is growing—each spring calves have been born.

Bison may appear tame, but they are wild and can be unpredictable. Bison are always on the move, so they may not be visible. Bring your binoculars and spotting scope for the best view. Never approach bison. View from trails, shelters, and viewing areas only.



Support the Herd

The Laramie Foothills Bison Conservation Herd addresses three challenges to bison conservation: disease, genetics, and habitat. To learn more and help with funding visit advancing.colostate.edu/BISON



RETURN OF THE FERRET

In the 1970s, black-footed ferrets were thought to be extinct. Then, a small group was discovered in Wyoming. Captive breeding programs succeeded in saving these prairie natives. Black-footed ferrets were reintroduced to Soapstone Prairie in 2014.

With plenty of prairie dogs to eat (ferrets’ main food source) it is hoped that the population can eventually sustain itself through natural reproduction. Ferrets are nocturnal and live mostly underground—so they’re pretty hard to see!



BE PREPARED

- Watch for rattlesnakes. Look where you put your hands and feet and stay on the designated trails.
- Soapstone Prairie is a big place. Watch for distant storms bringing lightning. Avoid ridge tops during storms, which occur mostly in the afternoons.
- This is wide-open country. Bring plenty of water and be prepared for wind and cool temperatures, or heat and sun.

KNOW THE RULES

Please honor and respect all the special aspects of Soapstone Prairie. We all hold it in trust for future generations.

Look But Don’t Touch! Enjoy what you see but leave everything in place. All collecting is illegal.

Stay on Marked Trails. Off-trail activity degrades the prairie, disturbs wildlife, and diminishes the experience for others.

Leave Fido At Home. To help protect wildlife, no dogs are allowed – not even in cars.

Attention Drivers! Wildlife is often close to the road. Obey posted speed limits, stay on designated roads, and use only designated pull outs. Enjoy the views but stay with your vehicle. Violators will be ticketed.



ATTENTION EQUESTRIANS!

Remember: Only equestrians must use the South Parking Lot.

Be considerate of others and clean up after your horse in the parking lot.

Help us prevent weeds! Your use of certified weed-free hay helps limit the spread of invasive weeds. Feed your horses weed-free forage well before you ride here to help ensure this prairie remains in its natural condition. Ask your local feed store for more information. Thank you!





Wyoming
Colorado

Soapstone Prairie Natural Area

(City of Fort Collins)

Closed April 1- July 15
Ranch Manager Residence
No Public Access

Big Hole
Open Space
(City of Cheyenne)

Red Mountain
Open Space
(Larimer County)

Stone Circle
Trail
0.2 mi

Red Mountain
Open Space
Parking Lot
P

North Parking Lot
P

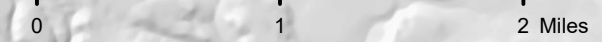
South Parking Lot
P

Entrance Station

Entrance Sign Rock

Viewing Zone

Windmill Gate



THE TREKKING ORDER:
Please mind your trail manners.
Bikers yield to horses and hikers.
Hikers yield to horses.

Try These Trails

BEST TRAILS FOR HIKERS:

Towhee Loop
3 miles, 1.5 hours, easy to moderate. Hikers only, closed to cyclists and equestrians. Great views. Look for mule deer and a variety of birds.

Mahogany Loop
7.6 miles, 3-4 hours; cyclists: 1-2 hours; moderate. Closed to equestrians. Travel through mountain mahogany shrublands. Great for geology buffs!

BEST TRAILS FOR CYCLISTS:

Pronghorn Loop
9.4 miles, 2 hours, easy to moderate. Also good for hikers and equestrians. Mix of rolling hills, arroyos, and grasslands. Watch for pronghorn—as well as sheep and cows. This area is grazed—please close the gates!

Mahogany/Canyon/Cheyenne Rim/Pronghorn
22 miles, 4.5 hours, moderate to difficult. Ride on single- and two-track trails through rolling terrain; 900 feet elevation gain. Some of this area is grazed by cows and sheep. Please close the gates!

BEST TRAILS FOR EQUESTRIANS:

Cheyenne Rim Trail
7.8 miles one-way to Big Hole Overlook at the K marker. 6 hours round trip, moderate. Enjoy rolling terrain with spectacular views to the north and west. Equestrians must use the South Parking Lot only.

BRING THIS MAP WITH YOU!

Fifty miles of trails are marked only at main intersections. Use the letters (A to Z) on the top or back of each trail marker with this map to find your way. Watch for seasonal trail closures.

