

# GOCO to fund new trails

## \$550,000 will go toward Soapstone, Red Mountain

BY KEVIN DUGGAN

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**Great Outdoors**  
Colorado has awarded a \$550,000 grant to build trail systems at Red Mountain Open Space and Soapstone Prairie Natural Area.

The grant was given to Larimer County, which owns Red Mountain Open Space, and the city of Fort Collins Natural Areas Program, which administers Soapstone Prairie Natural Area. The money will help build 42 miles of trail and three trailheads on the scenic properties near the Wyoming border.

The funding also will help the county pay for fencing that will protect sensitive riparian areas from grazing cattle and a display wall that illustrates the area's cultural heritage, said Meegan Flenniken, resource specialist with Larimer County Department of Natural Resources.

Red Mountain and Soapstone are scheduled to open for public use in June. The connecting trail systems will provide access to more than 27,000 acres.

Construction on roads leading to the area and parking facilities has been going on for about a year,

Sears said. When complete, Soapstone will have about 40 miles of trail, and Red Mountain, about 14 miles.

The trails are expected to draw hikers from along the Front Range, Sears said.

**Great Outdoors**  
Colorado, or GOCO, is funded by state lottery proceeds. Since 1994, Larimer County has received more than \$30.7 million in GOCO grants.

In 2004, GOCO contributed an \$11.6 million grant toward the Laramie Foothills: Mountains to Plains project, which would recreate a 140,000-acre conservation area north of Fort Collins.

"They have been very instrumental in helping us open these properties to the public," Sears said.



Michael G. Seamans/Coloradoan library

**Cattle graze in one of many pastures at the Soapstone Prairie Natural Area.**

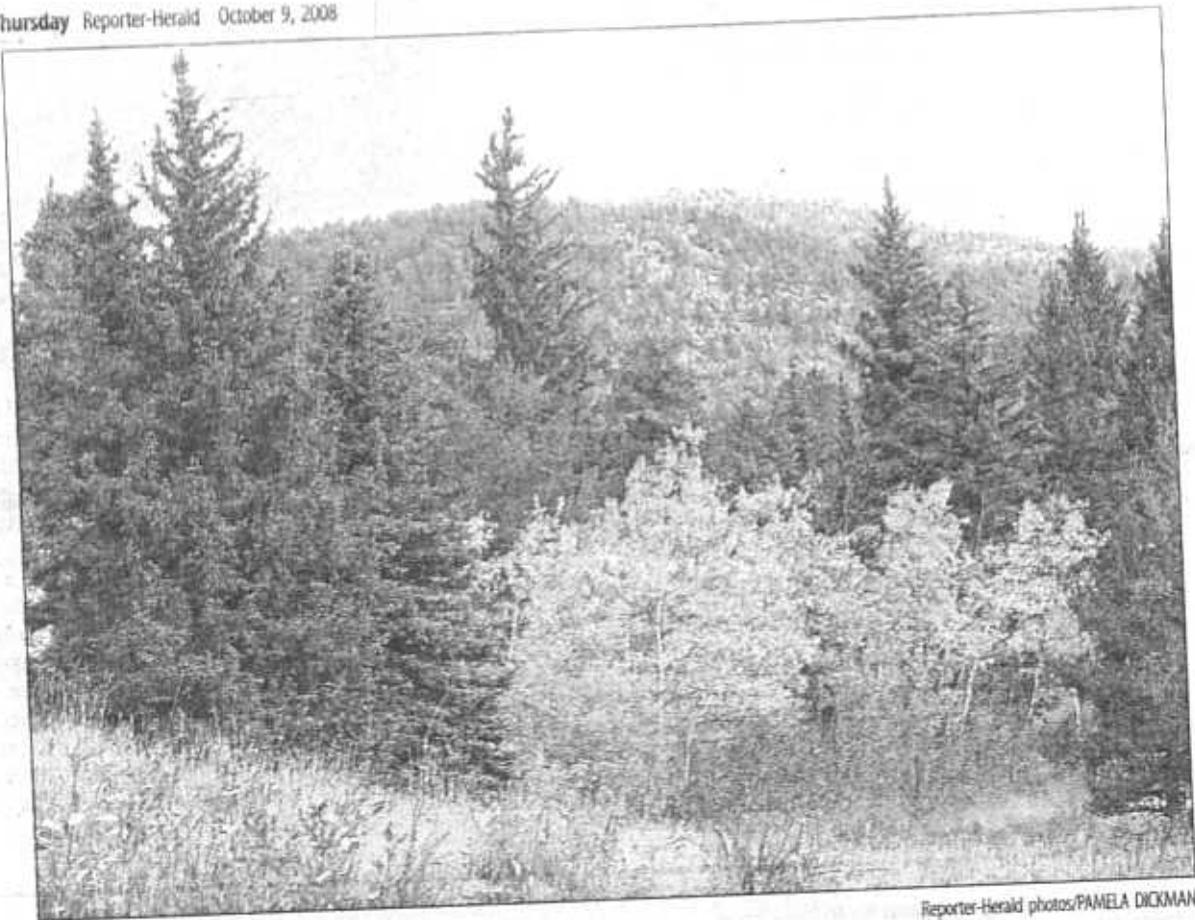
said Mark Sears, program manager for the city of Fort Collins Natural Areas Program.

The county will receive \$338,000 through the grant; Fort Collins will

receive \$210,000. The remaining \$2,000 will go to the Larimer County Youth Corps.

Portions of the trail systems on both properties are already under construc-

Thursday Reporter-Herald October 9, 2008



Reporter-Herald photos/PAMELA DICKMAN

Vibrant yellows and greens mix with reds and browns at Hermit Park.

# Hermit Hideaway

# Homestead Meadows hike in Roosevelt National Forest once a squatter's paradise

By PAMELA DICKMAN  
REPORTER-HERALD STAFF WRITER

The vibrant gold and red leaves make the aspen trees look more alive than their true signal of impending dormancy.

Throughout the ups and downs of the hike to Homestead Meadows — not difficult but more challenging than its "easy" rating — the fall hues are striking against green pines.

About 2.5 miles from the parking lot at Hermit Park, a new public recreation area just outside Estes Park, the first historic homestead awaits — one of seven built in the late 1800s or early 1900s.

The Homestead Meadows trail, which winds through about 12 miles of the Roosevelt National Forest, is accessible from Hermit Park, an oasis of beauty, wildlife and history.

Hiking a few miles beyond the first homestead will delight the eyes with more colors and more old cabins.

From the car on the road through Hermit Park, an old cabin in hints at another history.

Named after an old hermit who squatted on the land when it was a cattle ranch and who was eventually hanged because of his hankering for beef, the cabin is the oldest in the new Larimer County park.

The county bought the 1,362



Leaves tumble to the ground along the path that winds to the Homestead Meadows trailhead from Hermit Park Open Space near Estes Park. The cabins in Hermit Park and Roosevelt National Forest were built in the late 1800s and early 1900s. The first of the cabins is about 2.5 miles from the parking lot in Hermit Park.

acres from Hewlett-Packard, who owned it for decades as a personal playground for its employees.

Earlier this year, Hermit Park opened to residents who want to camp, rent cabins or hold large celebrations.

And for those who simply want to spend the day, two trails start in the park.

The Homestead Meadows trail is about 1.5 miles within Hermit Park then continues on national

forest land. To a beginner, the inclines seem tougher than they look, but spectacular views and colors are the rewards.

Also starting in the park is the Kruger Rock trail, which is 2.75 miles round trip accessible only to those on foot. No bikes, horses or vehicles allowed.

The view from either trail inside Hermit Park, breathtaking at any time of the year, is particularly striking now, amid the fall colors.

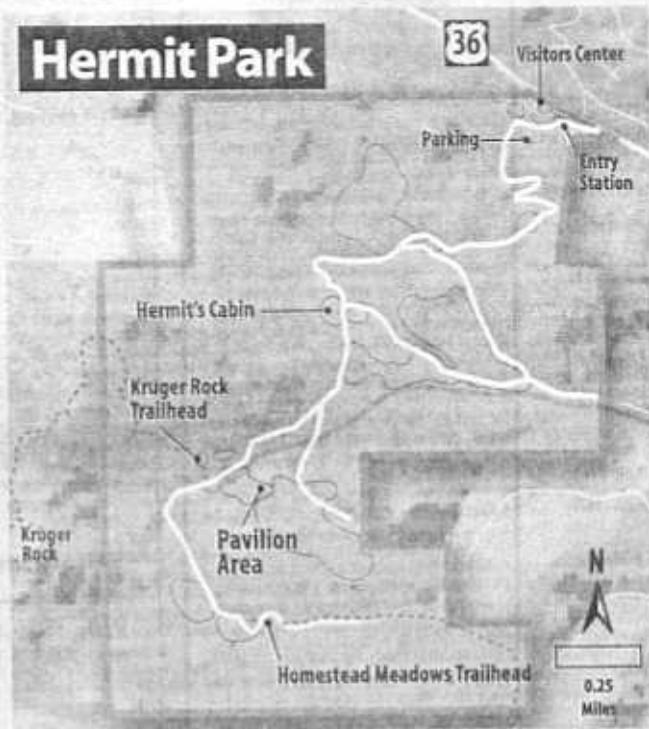
## Upcoming hikes

- "Views from Kruger Rock," a 2.75-mile hike with naturalists 9 a.m. Saturday, starting from the pavilion area at Hermit Park Open Space. Participants must pay \$6 park entrance fee per vehicle. Hike is three hours, rated moderate.

- "Hike to the Homesteads" with a naturalist 9 a.m. Saturday, Oct. 18, at the Homestead Meadows parking lot inside Hermit Park Open Space. The hike is free, but participants must pay the \$6 entrance fee per vehicle. Hike is five miles and lasts five hours, rated easy to moderate.



Homestead Meadows is named after the seven cabins you can see along the hike.



Reporter-Herald graphic/KATE WYMAN

# Chimney Hollow Reservoir disputed

## Western Slope residents speak out at hearing

BY PAMELA DICKMAN  
REPORTER-HERALD STAFF WRITER

Representatives of some of the cities that will benefit from Chimney Hollow Reservoir spoke Tuesday of the need to store water for future growth on this side of the Continental Divide.

However, people who live on the

other side of the Divide worry that the proposal to send water from the Windy Gap Project through the Colorado-Big Thompson pipeline will hurt tourism and water quality — the backbone of the Grand County economy.

"One area of the state should not grow at the expense of others," attorney Gina Harden said at a public hearing on the proposed reservoir Tuesday.

Several Western Slope residents trekked over the Continental Divide to talk at a hearing in Loveland about their worries if Northern Water is al-



Reporter-Herald/STEVE STOMER

Flatiron Reservoir can be seen at left Wednesday near the site of the proposed Chimney Hollow Reservoir northwest of Carter Lake.

SEE RESERVOIR, PAGE A2

# RESERVOIR: 2nd hearing tonight

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lowed to build Chimney Hollow southwest of Loveland.

A second public hearing is set tonight in Granby.

Harden spoke on behalf of governments in Grand County because, according to the draft environmental impact statement, the plan would affect flow, water quality and fish in the upper Colorado River.

Harden and Fraser resident Kirk Klancke, separately, asked Will Tully of the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation to require conservation and other specific ways to mitigate damage to the river.

"The (environmental impact statement) should have conservation as their No. 1 choice and the death of the Colorado River as the last choice," Klancke said.

Representatives of five cities that will use the water — Loveland, Longmont, Broomfield, Greeley and Erie

— all assured Tully at the hearing that they do conserve water and, even with conservation, Chimney Hollow is key to an affordable, quality water supply for the future.

They already have the rights to the water and sometimes draw from it but have no place to store it from wet to dry years.

Robin Hoek doesn't buy that argument from her hometown, Broomfield.

She accused the city of using thirsty Kentucky bluegrass instead of native grasses, watering during the heat of the day and not offering incentive plans to reduce water.

Berthoud resident Karen Stockley agreed that all the cities involved need to further reduce their water use and look at options other than reservoirs, including fallowing agreements and storage in aquifers.

"We need to look outside the box," she said.

## What to know

**What:** Northern Colorado Water Conservancy District (Northern Water) wants to build Chimney Hollow Reservoir near Carter Lake to store 90,000 acre-feet of water from the Windy Gap project.

**Who:** The water belongs to: Loveland, Greeley, Lafayette, Fort Lupton, Evans, Erie, Broomfield, Longmont, Louisville, Superior, Central Weld Water District, Little Thompson Water District and Platte River Power Authority.

**Cost:** \$270 million, shared by the participants. Loveland's share is estimated at \$21 million, or \$3,000 per acre-foot. The money is currently available in the city's raw water fund, which comes from de-

velopment fees, rates and other sources.

**When:** The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation should decide by spring 2009 whether to issue a permit, and construction could begin in 2011.

**How to comment:** Comments are due Oct. 28 to Will Tully, Bureau of Reclamation: 11056 W. County Road 18E, Loveland, CO 80537; 663-3212 (fax); or wtully@gp.usbr.gov (put "Windy Gap draft EIS comment" in the e-mail subject line). A public meeting is scheduled for 7 tonight at the Inn at Silvercreek, 62027 U.S. 40, Granby.

**ON THE NET:** For more information, go to [www.chimneyhollow.org](http://www.chimneyhollow.org) or [www.usbr.gov/gp/eca](http://www.usbr.gov/gp/eca).

## Environmental impacts

The draft environmental impact statement for Chimney Hollow Reservoir outlines the following potential effects:

- Water flows in the Colorado River would decrease with or without the reservoir, although the decrease would double with the reservoir.
  - Flows in the Big Thompson River would increase about 5 percent.
  - Water levels would decrease about 1 foot in Carter Lake and 2-6 feet in Horsetooth Reservoir. This is not likely to impact fish populations.
  - Water temperatures and levels of phosphorous would increase slightly in the Colorado River and Granby Reservoir.
  - The habitat for adult rainbow trout could decrease 24 percent in the Colorado River upstream of Williams Fork four out of 10 years. However, if the reservoir is approved, Northern Water would work with the Division of Wildlife to implement ways to mitigate that.
  - The project will not impact spring spawning of rainbow trout or fall spawning of brown trout.
  - Chimney Hollow would provide a new recreation outlet in Larimer County, providing hiking on adjacent open space, nonmotorized boating and fishing. An estimated 50,000 annual visitors would increase traffic.
  - Construction of the reservoir also would increase traffic on County Road 18E and County Road 31. However, it also would add jobs and construction-related spending.
  - During worst-case-scenario years, the project could deal a combined \$556,000 blow to commercial rafting and kayaking in Big Gore Canyon and Pumphouse.
- Source: U.S. Bureau of Reclamation draft environmental impact statement

## TOPIC: GLADE RESERVOIR



**Lew  
Grant**  
Soapbox

### Glade Reservoir our best option for future water

It will take some mitigation, but a Glade Reservoir is the doable, least costly and environmentally sound alternative to meet current and future needs of important communities in Northern Colorado.

The Glade Reservoir should be built as the best alternative of the Northern Integrated Supply Project. It involves the storage and beneficial use of water that otherwise flows down the Platte River out of Colorado and ultimately into the Gulf of Mexico. This is waste of one of the earth's most important environmental resources. This is water that this semi-arid area cannot afford to fritter away.

Glade is designed to provide annually about 40,000 acre feet of water for direct use by the participants that otherwise is lost downstream. The capturing of this water in the upper basin also has a multiplying effect because after the use of water by the participants, a substantial portion of it will be returned to the water system for reuse further downstream. This helps both the downstream underground and river water users in Colorado.

The need for the water is clearly established in the draft Environmental Impact Statement. The Glade Reservoir option is more cost-effective and environmentally sound than the "no action" option.

It is argued by some of the project opponents that providing this extra water will just encourage development. But it is clear that development has, is, and will take place. This is a free country, and people want to live in one of the most desirable places. This is one of them, and water will be available.

The Corps estimates that up to 69,000 acres would be lost to irrigated agriculture to meet this need in the "no action" option. This would be in addition to nearly half of the agriculture acreage already lost from the loss of water to municipalities. This would be land converted from irrigated crop land to dry land. Such conversion to dry land not only hurts the economy but can and does lead to more scattered development, unsightly views and even dirt blowing undesirable lands. Don't doubt that his farm land loss will occur with the "no-action" alternative.

Many of the opponents of Glade are those that blocked the use of remaining unappropriated water on the South Platte River system for the proposed Grey Mountain Reservoir on the main stem of the Poudre River. The basic objection then was that because it was in the canyon on the main stem of the river, it would degrade the beautiful canyon. The Glade alternative removes the water storage from the Poudre Canyon and puts it where there is minimal aesthetic and environmental impact.

Many of those opposing were members of a highly organized group to "save our Poudre" with the emphasis on "our." But the Poudre basin and river belong to us all.

In addition to the current multiple use of the Poudre River there is, with good planning, room for the additional multiple uses that include a Glade Reservoir for stored water and a wonderful recreation reservoir. An online commenter, Danachoice in the Sept. 6 Coloradoan, put it very well pointing out that we tend to be a selfish society: what's "mine is mine and yours is mine, too." Danachoice ended with "thank you forefathers for your building the current reservoirs."

Lew Grant lives in Wellington.

# Devil's Backbone a top spot

BY MILES BLUMHARDT  
For Loveland Connection

Fins of defiant sandstone resembling protective scales on a stegosaurus' back march along the hogback, ready to bathe in the first rays of the day.

Juncos flitter from spent yucca tops to boulders. Spotted towhees call from mountain mahogany.

Wands of purple liatris and cushions of golden-yellow rabbitbrush wait for the sun to awaken their sleeping beauty.

And then the sun peeks over the eastern hills, coloring first on the fins, coloring them a buttery yellow-gold, then the wildflowers, shrubs and grasses, until the Devil's Backbone Open Space is fully clothed

in the day's best light attire.

Already, there are people running and hiking the ruddy-colored trails that offer stunning vistas, a testament to the popularity of this 2,198-acre Larimer County Natural Resources-managed property west of Loveland.

Of all the county's open spaces, Devil's Backbone is hard to beat when taking everything into consideration.

Basically, Loveland residents feel about the Devil's Backbone like Fort Collins residents feel about Horsetooth Rock. Consider:

- It's free, where at Horsetooth Mountain Open Space, you have to pay.
- The rock formations are every bit as beautiful, if

## DEVIL'S BACKBONE OPEN SPACE

kiosks and 7 miles of trails with varying difficulty in the original portion of the property with an additional 10 miles of trails that stretch to Horsetooth Mountain Open Space. Look for the adult prairie falcons that have made the backbone their home, as well as other raptors and ravens.

- **Where:** Take U.S. Highway 34 west in Loveland to Hidden Valley Drive (old water tank west of Loveland). Go right. The trailhead is in the northeast part of the parking lot.
- **Hours:** Sunrise to sunset
- **Cost:** Free
- **What's there:** The Luke Altmix Simmons' outdoor classroom recently opened, parking lot with horse trailer parking, restrooms, drinking fountains,

• **Information:** Larimer County Parks and Open Lands, 679-4570 or visit [www.co.larimer.co.us/parks](http://www.co.larimer.co.us/parks)

are much easier to get close-up looks.

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## Devil's

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- The view from the Keyhole to the layered mountains to the west and Front Range to the east are as stunning a view as you'll find.

- Wildlife is plentiful with deer, raptors, rabbits, coyotes, bobcats and black bears (one was seen at the trailhead Aug. 21) are present in widely varying numbers.

Though as I found out on my recent trip to video the open space, taking a camera can sometimes jinks the wildlife viewing.

- And the trails, well, there is everything from easy hiking loops that take you to near the base of the rock formations to spacious horseback trails that wind through remote dry washes to technically challenging mountain bik-

ing. These combined total 17.5 miles and connect to the city of Fort Collins-managed Coyote Ridge Natural Area and Horsetooth Mountain Open Space.

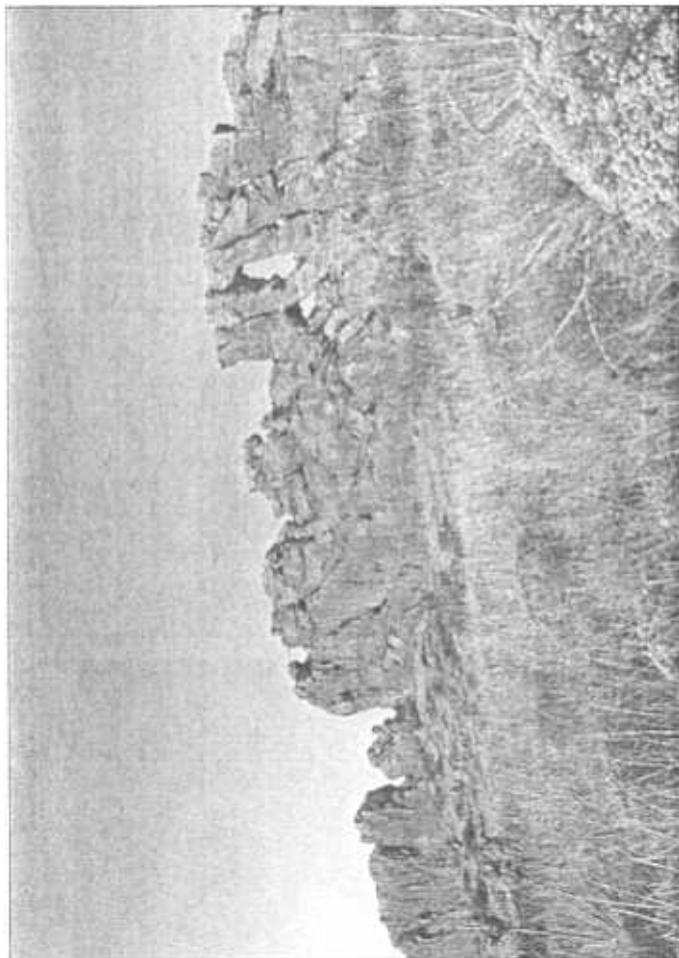
Plus, in sections, the trails separate hikers, bikers and horseback riders to alleviate conflict.

I like to take my bike and hiking boots.

That way I can enjoy the foot-only trail section that takes you closest to the rock formations where raptors and ravens nest and perch. Once I do that loop, I hop on my mountain bike and ride the more secluded Hunter and Laughing Horse loops.

From here, you can access the beautiful Blue Sky Trail and ride all the way to Horsetooth.

There are two excellent times of the year to enjoy Devil's Backbone — May through mid-June and



Miles Blumhardt for Loveland Connection

Devil's Backbone Open Space earned its name from the defiant fins of stone that protrude from the rest of the rolling property west of Loveland.

September and October. These times reward the user with pleasant temperatures, wildflowers and migrating raptors. After wiping out on a

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steep, rocky descent on the Hunter Loop trail, I picked myself up, wiped myself off and staggered to a high spot to check out the possible damages to bike and body.

- Two deer, backlit by the early morning sun, browsed on mountain mahogany along a distant ridge.

The sandstone fins marched across the hogback spine in the forefront with layers of hazy mountains in between and Longs Peak and Mount Meeker serving as the backdrop.

Two insects were mating on a layer of bright yellow sunflower blooms.

I was alright. No, I was more than alright.

# Pol shows strong support for Glade

BY KEVIN DUGGAN  
KevinDuggan@coloradoan.com

BERTHOUD — Glade Reservoir and the Northern Integrated Supply Project has wide spread support among Larimer County and Fort Collins residents, according to survey results released Friday.

The survey found 57 per-

cent of responding Fort Collins residents support the project, as do 63 percent of Larimer County residents.

Thirty percent of Fort Collins residents oppose NISP, primarily because they believe it would harm the Poudre River, according to the survey.

In Weld County, 81 percent of respondents sup-

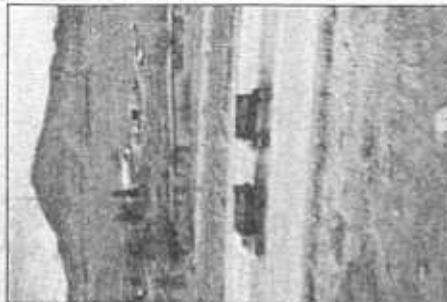
port NISP, which would draw water from the Poudre River and store it in the proposed Glade Reservoir north of Ted's Place.

The project also would draw water from the South Platte River for storage in Galeton Reservoir, which would be built near Greeley, to be exchanged with irrigation companies.

Most of the 15 municipalities and water districts that would fund NISP through the Northern Colorado Water Conservancy District are in Weld County.

NISP participants funded the \$35,000 survey, which was conducted by Denver-based polling firm

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V. Richard Haro/Coloradoan library

**A truck drives on Highway 287 on April 8 past the area where the dam for Glade Reservoir is proposed. The proposed dam would run from the hill in the foreground to the hill in the background.**

## By the numbers

NISP and Glade Reservoir:

	Larimer	Weld	Fort Collins	Greeley
Favor	63 percent	81 percent	57 percent	83 percent
Oppose	24 percent	8 percent	30 percent	8 percent
Don't know/ neutral	13 percent	11 percent	13 percent	9 percent

### Why in favor (multiple answers):

Need the water	43 percent	49 percent
Need storage	36 percent	32 percent
Area growing	14 percent	9 percent
Good project	5 percent	7 percent
Protect agriculture	2 percent	3 percent

### Why oppose (multiple answers):

Dry up or hurt the river	44 percent	28 percent
Hurts the environment	13 percent	12 percent
Unnecessary	11 percent	0
Inadequate plan	10 percent	0
Will encourage growth	6 percent	0
Stop building reservoirs	5 percent	16 percent

For complete results of the survey by Ciruli Associates, see [www.gladereservoir.org](http://www.gladereservoir.org)

## Glade

Continued from Page A1

Ciruli Associates, Northern Water spokesman Brian Werner said.

The random survey of 500 registered voters in Larimer County and 300 in Weld County was conducted in early August.

The Larimer County results have a margin of error of plus or minus 4.4 percentage points, pollster Floyd Ciruli said. The margin of error for the smaller Weld County sample is 5.7 percentage

points.

The survey shows "overwhelming" support for the project, Ciruli told the Northern Water board of directors Friday.

If the survey were connected to an election issue, Ciruli said, he would expect a landslide victory at the polls.

Gary Wockner, spokesman for the anti-Glade group Save the Poudre Coalition, declined to comment on the survey until he and others review the full survey and the results.

Northern Water officials said they were pleased and

somewhat surprised by the results.

"If you listen to a lot of the more (vocal) opinions out there, you would think the results would have been the opposite of what they came out to be," said Eric Wilkinson, general manager.

The survey also showed strong support in both counties for protecting agriculture and regional cooperation on water projects.

Ciruli told reporters survey respondents were aware and informed about Glade and NISP. More than 50 percent of respon-

dents in Larimer County said they had heard a great deal to some information about the project as opposed to 28 percent in Weld County.

The vocal opposition has affected public opinion in Fort Collins, he said, as is evidenced in the difference between results for the city and Larimer County.

"There's one solid quarter of the public ... that are absolutely opposed in Larimer County," he said. "They show up in each question. And they correspond to the environmental activist community."

# Glade foes rip survey

## Save the Poudre Coalition calls new NISP data 'a biased push poll'

BY KEVIN DUGGAN  
kevinDuggan@coloradan.com

Opponents of Glade Reservoir on Monday ripped a recent survey that indicated broad public support for the reservoir and the proposed Northern Integrated Supply Project.

The survey, which was financed by the 15 regional municipalities and water

districts that would build NISP through the Northern Colorado Water Conservancy District, was "a biased push poll" intended to manipulate respondents, said Gary Wockner, spokesman for the Save the Poudre Coalition.

Wockner said the poll is "filled with false and

grossly misleading information" and fails to mention environmental and economic problems that could be brought on by the project, which would draw water from the Poudre River and store it in Glade Reservoir north of Ted's Place.

See SURVEY/Page A2



Michael G. Seumans/Coloradan library  
Jamie Jasinski, left, and Scott Lyon stand in the Poudre River in their river recreation outfits in April.

Tuesday, September 16, 2008

## Glade opponents blast NISP survey

> "Funny how there was no mention of the costs of the project to Fort Collins residents when finding out whether they were still 'in favor' of it. I also noticed a convenient conflation of benefits, making it seem to Fort Collins residents that they would somehow directly benefit from building the Glade Reservoir.

There was also no statement of drawbacks or problems with the conceptualization of the project, making it seem as if there couldn't even be any negatives. ..."

— MaxEntropy

# Survey

Continued from Page A1

"It's like telling people about the benefits of nuclear power but not telling them uranium causes cancer," he said. "The push poll is a complete sham."

The survey was done by Denver-based Ciruli Associates headed by Floyd Ciruli, who has more than 30 years experience in public-opinion research. The results were released Friday during a presentation to the Northern Water board of directors.

Ciruli said Monday he followed standard methodologies and techniques in crafting the survey's questions and in interviewing respondents. The survey showed 52 percent of respondents from Larimer County were aware of NISP, he said.

A key survey question on NISP was preceded by background information gleaned from media reports on the project and the draft Environmental Impact Statement on NISP, he said. The information was intended to be as neutral as possible.

Responses to follow-up statements, to which respondents could agree or disagree, showed strong support for increased water storage and keeping water avail-

## On the Internet

- > To see full results of Northern Water's survey, visit [www.glade-reservoir.org/Docs/Cirulisurveyresultsfinal.pdf](http://www.glade-reservoir.org/Docs/Cirulisurveyresultsfinal.pdf)
- > For more information on Save the Poudre, visit [www.savethepoudre.org](http://www.savethepoudre.org)

able for agriculture, he said. The answers were consistent, Ciruli said.

"I think if you look at the data, you'll find the people of Weld and Larimer counties are exceptionally well informed on water issues," he said.

The survey found 63 percent of responding Larimer County residents and 57 percent of Fort Collins residents favor the project. In Weld County, 81 percent of those surveyed support NISP.

Wockner dismissed the results as skewed because of the questions and how they were presented.

The random survey of 500 registered voters in Larimer County and 300 in Weld County was conducted in early August.

The Larimer County results have a margin of error of plus or minus 4.4 percentage points, while the margin of error for the smaller Weld County sample is 5.7 percentage points.

## County officials want to protect open spaces

By KATHRYN DAILEY  
REPORTER-HERALD STAFF WRITER

FORT COLLINS — Officials plan to keep a close eye on mineral rights purchase and leasing opportunities for the county's open spaces, hoping to protect them from mining or drilling.

After a request earlier this year by County Commissioner Randy Eubanks, staff members from the Natural Resources Department presented the commissioners with a list Tuesday of all the open space properties and conservation easements that the county holds but for which it isn't sole owner of the mineral rights.

Staffers did not identify any properties they believe are at risk.

"I'm going to feel a lot more comfortable knowing where we sit on this," Eubanks said.

If the county owns a piece of land but someone else owns the rights to the underground resources, such as gas or oil, then that person or entity has the right to extract them.

Although there were no

properties identified as being at risk, the county should update the assessments on the likelihood of the minerals being developed, which can change as the economic climate changes, said K-Lynn Cameron, the county's open lands manager.

Land agent Charlie Johnson said those assessments cost between \$3,000 and \$5,000.

Another option is to look at purchasing the severed mineral rights to the properties that county officials feel may be at risk in the future, Johnson said.

For pieces of land where the rights are owned by the federal government or railroads, Johnson said the county should consider leasing them if they become available.

"They're not going to give up their rights," he said.

Commissioner Kathay Renels suggested that annual updates of the status of the properties be made.

"I think this is a really good framework we've established," Cameron said, adding that now it will be easy to update and monitor the properties.

# County officials say open lands not threatened by mining

BY KEVIN DUGGAN  
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Increased oil and gas activity in the region is not likely to pose a threat to Larimer County open lands on which the county

does not own the mineral rights, officials said Tuesday.

Exploration has picked up in Weld County with the surge in oil prices and could move into the southeast part of the Larimer County

and spread north, Charlie Johnson, an engineer with county's Department of Natural Resources, told the county commissioners.

But Johnson said he sees no "imminent threat" to land owned outright by

the county or property covered by county-purchased conservation easements because of their locations.

Oil, gas and other minerals may be beneath the surface of county-owned lands, but the cost of retrieving

them may be too high to make extraction economically feasible, he said.

If oil drilling were to come, the disruption would be short-lived, Johnson said in an interview following the commissioners' meeting.

"Oil and gas extraction is not as bad an open-pit mine," he said. "It's temporary: It's kind of ugly when it's going on and you do have some infrastructure after it's done but it's not that bad."

Commissioner Randy Eubanks raised the issue of whether county lands may be vulnerable to mining given the spike in prices for

uranium as well oil and gas.

After reviewing property records, Johnson found mineral rights on several open-lands property were wholly or partially owned by entities such as the Union Pacific Land Resources Corp. and the U.S. government.

Other rights appear to be owned by private parties, such as family members of former property owners.

Officials will continue reviewing property maps to see if development is occurring near county-owned properties, said K. Lynn Cameron, manager of the open lands program.

## TOPIC: GLADE

# Options highlight environmental justice

One issue surrounding Glade Reservoir has received too little attention — environmental and social justice.

The President's Council on Environmental Quality directs agencies such as the Army Corps of Engineers to "recognize the interrelated cultural, social, occupational, historical or economic factors that may amplify the natural and physical environmental effects of the proposed agency action."

If Glade were built as currently envisioned, some communities such as Fort Collins and Greeley would be asked to sacrifice resources and quality of life so that other communities outside the project area might eventually benefit from expected growth.

Many of us in the affected area have worked for decades on boards and commissions and through our elected officials to develop sound county and municipal land-use plans, water supply and conservation strategies and a cohesive vision for our communities. This vision calls for minimization of agricultural loss to maintain working landscapes, utilizing cluster development in rural areas, open space acquisitions, private land conservation, advanced water and storm water planning, and a variety of partnerships with agriculture.

Impacts from NISP spoil this vision. Specialists from the city of Fort Collins, Colorado State University and elsewhere have



**George N. Wallace**  
Soapbox

revealed that the Glade project would induce a host of impacts: reduced flows, diminished water quality, increased water treatment costs, weakened riparian ecosystem functioning, diminished value of open space along the Poudre, years of construction associated impacts such as loss of dwindling aggregate resources, highway relocation, loss of the unique tumble-down rimrock landscape in Hook and Moore Glade, impacts to North Poudre irrigators etc.

Locals are asked to bear such impacts to supply water to small towns, bedroom communities, special districts and Denver suburbs. Many of the NISP partners are havens to developers (many out-of-state corporations) precisely because planning has been scarce, regulations more permissive and unbridled annexations have been approved by those promising future jobs and tax revenues.

Though we here have worked in an open democratic process to build consensus and adopt master plans and land protection programs, we now find ourselves faced with an enormous project where offering comments to the

Corps is our sole access to the decision process short of litigation. Our elected officials can comment but not determine the outcome. Because planning for NISP was never an inclusive or participatory regional process, this is a socio-economic or social justice issue overlooked by the draft EIS and is likely sufficient grounds for litigation.

Is this a new form of "takings"? Must it be that each time smaller rural communities wish to grow, other established communities must sacrifice their resources and hard-won quality of life? One of the goals of NEPA is "to balance population growth and resource use." As currently conceived, Glade Reservoir seems out of balance. It is at once highly consumptive of resources in the project area and an engine for population growth largely outside the project area.

Alternatives to Glade have recently been proposed that would use fewer resources and produce fewer impacts in the communities not participating in NISP. Such alternatives would foster environmental justice, provide tangible benefits to agriculture (water sharing agreements) while allowing some continued growth. A revised EIS should give these alternatives the attention they are due.

George N. Wallace lives in Waverly, two miles east of the proposed Glade reservoir site.

## Horsetooth



Miles Blumhardt/The Coloradoan

Rene Clements of Fort Collins takes in the panoramic views from the top of 7,256-foot Horsetooth Rock on Tuesday. Longs Peak is in the background.

## Now's a great time to visit local landmark

BY MILES BLUMHARDT

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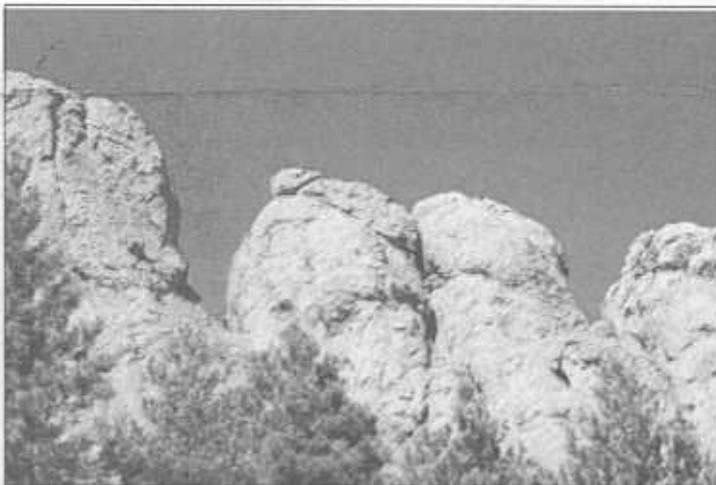
Crossing paths with the black fox that has been the highlight of visits to Horsetooth Mountain Open Space this year was a sign of good luck.

The fox with white-tipped tail kept a distance just outside of a good shot with my longest camera lens and video camera, but close enough so that I could enjoy its hunting rodents along the service road leading out of the parking lot on Tuesday.

Trotting on the road, a faint rustling sound in the grasses dotted with resilient wildflowers and blooming rabbitbrush, prompted the fox's attention. Sitting intently with eyes focused on any movement or sound, it leaped into the air time and again to pounce on a meal only to turn up nothing.

After each unsuccessful pouncing, it turned around to make sure I was a safe distance, trotted before finally disappearing onto private property.

The black fox is just one reason to head to this popular



Miles Blumhardt/The Coloradoan

Horsetooth Rock rises up from green pines to the blue sky as seen from the trail on the way to the 7,256-foot rock formation that is a Fort Collins icon.

Larimer County open space, which draws more than 100,000 people annually. The waning wildflower show and blooming shrubs, hints of fall on the foliage and temperature and the lack of summer crowds are all more reliant reasons to visit the 2,866-acre open space this time

of year.

The only thing that could make my early morning hike to the top of 7,256-foot Horsetooth Rock any more pleasing would be seeing a bear, which has been seen by visitors in recent weeks.

With only two cars in the parking lot at just past sunrise,

**VIDEO**  
WATCH IT ON  
COLORADOAN.COM

See video of Horsetooth Mountain Open Space at [www.coloradoan.com](http://www.coloradoan.com)

solitude was not an issue. I hiked the 2.5-mile Horsetooth Rock Trail, stopping frequently to watch butterflies and other insects drinking in the last nectar of the season from bright golden rabbitbrush, which steals the color show in fall.

Subtler shows of color from lavender asters, purple penstemon, magenta cranesbill, blue harebells and yellow sunflowers still dot the hillsides and blend with a confusion of orange, red and yellow hues from American

See ROCK/Page E3

### Horsetooth Mountain Open Space

> **Acres:** 2,866

> **Where:** Main parking lot located approximately 5 miles west of the intersection of Harmony and Taft Hill Roads, along Larimer County Road 38E. The Soderberg Open Space trailhead parking area is accessed by following signs to Inlet Bay off of Shoreline Drive.

> **Fee:** \$6 for a daily pass

Horsetooth Falls; hiking or mountain biking the more than 30 miles of trails, which connect to Lory State Park and the Blue Sky Trail; wildlife watching and wildflowers and fall foliage peeping

> **Facilities:** Water, restrooms, information kiosks, picnic shelters

> **Pets:** Yes, on leash

> **Camping:** Backcountry camping is allowed for free but you must register with park staff to get a permit.

# Rock

Continued from Page E1

plum, golden leaves of narrowleaf cottonwood and Rocky Mountain maples. Pockets of aspen higher on the trail have yet to join in the show.

Throw in time to soak in the views of Horsetooth Reservoir and an awakening Fort Collins and at this rate it would take an entire morning to hike the hour or so up to Horsetooth Rock's summit. But then going this slow allows the visitor to soak in all the open space has to offer. Plus, it gave me a better chance of the off-chance to seeing that bear.

Once on the trail, about the only view you don't

have is of the rock itself. It doesn't expose itself until about three-quarters of the way up. Then, after a bend where the Horsetooth Rock and South Ridge trails intersect, the tooth-like formation juts up into the blue sky, framed by pine boughs.

From here, it's a short hike, shorter scramble up the northern flank of the formation and you're on top of the landmark.

The views from the top are easily worth the effort. To the east are a gleaming Horsetooth Reservoir and Fort Collins. To the south, Loveland, and if you're lucky, Pikes Peak. To the west, distant views of Longs Peak and below your feet beautiful Redstone Canyon. To the north, Greyrock and the

Wyoming border.

You can't reach the middle tooth from either direction, as cuts in the rock prevent it.

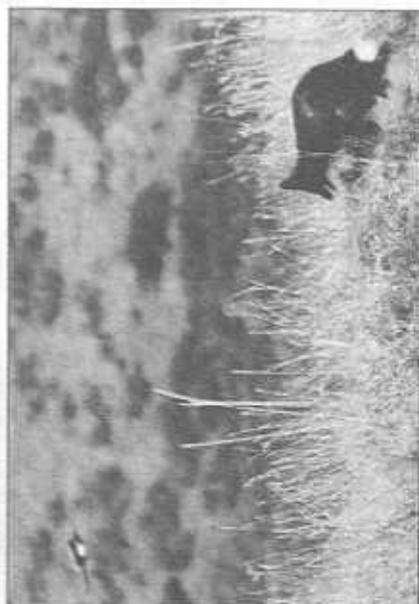
Instead of returning to the parking lot via the Horsetooth Rock Trail, descend on the Audra Culver Trail, which after a mile hooks up to the South

Ridge Trail. The Audra Culver Trail is much less traveled and offers spectacular views south to Milner Mountain.

Hiking down the Audra Culver Trail, I had visions of seeing that bear putting on hibernation weight by feasting on the last of the chokecherries and wild plums in the gulley that parallels the trail. No such luck.

The black fox, wildflowers, emerging fall foliage, aroma of pines, splendid panoramic views, blue sky and solitude would have to do on this outing.

Not a bad consolation with reason to return.



Miles Blumhardt/The Coloradan

**A black form of a red fox** hunts for rodents along the service road at Horsetooth Mountain Open Space on Tuesday. The fox has been a highlight of visitors of the property this year.

The Coloradoan, Sunday, September 26, 2008

# Preserving the 'giant' icon that is Horsetooth Rock

**A**ll you need to do is look west towards the foothills from almost any location in eastern Larimer County and you will most likely see one of Northern Colorado's most popular icons.

That familiar landmark is Horsetooth Rock and the 95,000 people annually who hike to its peak are rewarded with impressive views across the Eastern Plains. From the summit, you can see landmarks such as Pikes Peak, Indian Peaks, Mount Meeker and Longs Peak.

Horsetooth Rock is an icon and commonly used in logos for governmental organizations and private groups in this area.

As far back as 10,000 B.C., the Horsetooth Rock area was used by American Indians as a hunting and gathering ground. According to American Indian legend, Horsetooth Rock represents the body of a giant who was slain with a slash of his heart by a brave warrior. The death of the giant is said to have brought peace and tranquility to the valley known today as Spring Canyon.

Fur trappers and traders began to move into the area as early as 1825. Settlers soon followed with the discovery of nearby gold in 1858. By the 1870s, Horsetooth Rock became a popular place to recreate. In the 1880s, sandstone quarrying in Spring Canyon created a demand for lumber, which was harvested from the mountain slopes. Over time, regular land use practices on the mountain and surrounding land included cattle

## Mark Caughlan

### Open spaces

grazing, timber harvesting, quarrying and farming. By 1952, the Soderberg family owned the majority of what is now Horsetooth Mountain Open Space.

In the early 1980s, Horsetooth Rock came under the threat of impending residential development. In response, two Colorado State University students began a petition to purchase the Soderberg Ranch for a county park. Funding would be provided by extending an existing one-cent sales tax for six months. The issue, placed on the April 28, 1981 ballot, passed and by 1982, Larimer County became the owner.

Horsetooth Mountain Park was established in 1982 as a regional park.

Since then, Help Preserve Open Space sales tax dollars have been used to purchase an additional 680 acres to provide ecological buffers, more trails and protect the original Soderberg Ranch buildings.

Now, Horsetooth Mountain Park has become known as Horsetooth Mountain Open Space, reflecting the use of open space dollars to cover annual management costs above those raised in user fees. Your Help Preserve Open Space tax dollars have protected more than 40,000 acres in Larimer County.

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Mark Caughlan is the Horsetooth District Manager for Larimer County Natural Resources. Call him at 498-5606 or send e-mail to [mcaughlan@larimer.org](mailto:mcaughlan@larimer.org)



## Outdoors Near Your Back Door

By Deborah Huth Price  
THE BERTHOUD RECORDER

# More than Meets the Eye At Eagle's Nest Open Space

At first glance, the rolling hills and sea of grass and shrubs at Eagle's Nest Open Space may not reveal much variety. Larimer County Parks and Open Lands Ranger Fraser MacDonald wants to help people see there is more than meets the eye in the diverse ecosystem of the short grass prairie.

MacDonald led a plant walk on Saturday at the open space to acquaint visitors with the many native and non-native plants, shrubs and grasses that inhabit this 750-acre site. "I thought this would be a nice way to get people engaged," said MacDonald, who often sees only 15-20 people at Eagle's Nest on weekends.

He drew attention to the scenery, noting that mountain mahogany shrubs dominate the undisturbed slopes, while a multitude of grasses and forbs fill in the lower areas.

Eagle's Nest reflects some of its western ranching roots with trails named after old cattle brands, and keeps cattle grazing on the property through a lease with the neighboring ranch.

As the group of visitors walked the 3-Bar trail, one of the beautiful fall bloomers that first caught everyone's eye was gayfeather, decorating the landscape with its thin purple feathery petals. Snakeweed, senecio, prairie baby's breath and prickly poppy were a few of the other native bloomers spotted.

MacDonald pointed out the spiral seed of the mountain mahogany, designed to wind itself into the soil. Mule deer like to browse the mahogany, along with skunkbush and rabbitbrush. According to MacDonald, rabbitbrush was pressed and used to make latex during World War II, and skunkbush was used by Native Americans in food, beverages, and medicines.

The grasses are a more difficult and intimidating category for those trying to learn the various species. The variety of grasses at Eagle's Nest gave MacDonald an opportunity to point out the distinctive characteristics of needle and thread grass, green needle grass, blue grama, western wheatgrass, junegrass, and the invasive and non-native cheatgrass.

While some non-native plants, like dalmatian toadflax, were probably introduced for their attractive flowers, MacDonald explained they tend to spread easily, dominating areas where native plants formerly grew. He added that Larimer County is currently working on developing a beetle that will feed on this "scary invader." Other problem non-natives include mullein, gumweed, blue mustard, Jim Hill mustard, smooth brome, Russian thistle (tumbleweed), and leafy spurge.

Where you find plants, shrubs and grasses, you also find wildlife of all sizes. As the group examined a few of the grass species, a pair of large grasshoppers mated near the path, and several different beetle species traveled the trail



Photo by Deborah Huth Price

Larimer County Ranger Fraser MacDonald educates visitors about native and non-native plants at Eagle's Nest Open Space.

and dug into the soil. Nearby, Eagle's Nest Rock has been a golden eagle nesting site for over 100 years. In late spring and early summer, visitors can view the nest through scopes provided along the trail. Mountain lions, bears, coyotes, deer, elk, rabbits, rattlesnakes and hawks are a few of the larger residents of this beautiful prairie.

When taking in the larger view of the beauty and solitude that Eagle's Nest offers, don't forget to examine the soil at your feet—there's diversity among the rocks and on the hillsides that shouldn't be missed.

Eagle's Nest Open Space is managed by Larimer County Parks and Open Lands, and opened to the public in 2005. To reach the site, go north of Fort Collins on Highway 287, 10 miles past the cutoff for the Poudre Canyon (Highway 14). Turn west on 74E (at Livermore) and go about 1/3 mile. The entrance to the site is on the south side of the road. Open sunrise to sunset, dogs allowed on leash, horse trailer parking available. For more information, visit the Web site at [www.larimer.org/naturalresources](http://www.larimer.org/naturalresources)

## INTO THE WILD



Photos by Michael G. Seamans/The Coloradoan

**Nathan Hughes, left, watches** as his mother, Kathy Hartman, center, helps Carin Avila, director of education with the Rocky Mountain Raptor Program, release an American kestrel back into the wild. The trio took part in Saturday's Northern Colorado Birding Fair at Fossil Creek Reservoir Regional Open Space.

# Bird watchers flock together

## Fair offers viewing, presentations, release of animals

**BY NATE TAYLOR**

NateTaylor@coloradoan.com

It was Cole Wild and Andrew Spencer's first time at the Northern Colorado Birding Fair on Saturday at Fossil Creek Reservoir, but they fit right in with other birders who celebrated the hobby and wildlife at the fair.

Birders, including veterans and novices, spent Saturday morning bird watching, taking in bird presentations and watching a raptor and duck released into the wild.

The fair was the fourth annual and attracted hundreds to Fossil Creek Reservoir Regional Open Space, about a mile west of the Interstate 25 and Colorado Highway 392 interchange.

Wild, 24, of Loveland and Spencer, 23, of Fort Collins say they are younger than your typical avid bird watcher, but they

have traveled the world to go birding. Despite traveling to places such as the Amazon rainforest and the Andes Mountains, the two birders still have an appreciation for the birds found at Fossil Creek.

"This is the most birders I've seen in one place in Fort Collins," said Spencer, a CSU junior studying wildlife biology. "This is a good location because it's the best birding spot around for water fowls."

Wild said he got hooked on birding after learning what a few birds looked like in a high school class and then going fishing and putting his new knowledge to good use. He and Spencer said they would like to see more young birders and more classes about it in schools.

Saturday's birding fair, which was aimed at families, included a



**Pat Gifford holds a bald eagle** at the Northern Colorado Birding Fair at Fossil Creek Reservoir Regional Open Space.

bird Olympics and scavenger hunt.

Liz Pruessner of Fort Collins, a birder for the past two years, said she was excited to see so many children enjoying the fair.

"This is just a great chance to take the kids out and have them start a bird list," Pruessner said.