



Victor T. Anderson / Courtesy photo

Hermit Park Open Space is only ten minutes from Estes Park.

Rating the trails around Hermit Park Open Space

It's only ten minutes from the center of Estes Park on highway 36 to Heritage Park. From there you can access trails to ride all day long or for an hour or two at Homestead Meadows. Some trails are so nice you can ride side by side, and, other than one steep portion, I rate it as a 2. Great scenery and history alongside of you as you ride. What more could you ask for?

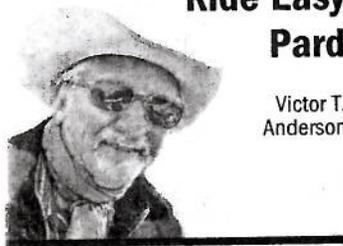
More parking spaces and the ability to rent the cabins the same as any other citizen, as was promised to the local horsepersons, would be a good place to start.

When Larimer County brought the property they had several meetings with the local citizenry to determine what was to take place, and what facilities were needed. There was a horse owner at every table at the meetings I attended. When all was said and done, we were promised that some of the cabins would be "horse friendly," and certain rules were to be followed. It sounds wonderful, doesn't it? The trouble is, it never happened. I've been told the master list includes what was promised to the horse owners. Let's hope it's true and it happens soon.

Approximately a dozen horse trailers come into the area each week. That could include as many as 6-8 horses per trailer load, or as few as one or two. But if you are the third horse trailer that day, there is not enough room to park your rig, as the picture shows. You might as well go somewhere else.

It is a beautiful area to ride. After stopping at the office to

Ride Easy Pard



Victor T. Anderson

pay for a day pass, or an annual pass, follow the road to the end, where you will find the only parking area designated for horse trailers. There is a gate to the road that leads you toward Homestead Meadows, whose border is just over a mile away. After following the road for approx. half a mile, you'll start uphill, then you'll ride down the only tough portion of the trail. At this point I rate it a 4. It's steep and has a lot of slick rock. Have your horse well shod, and just before you start down, it's a good idea to check your cinch.

When you get to the bottom, you'll find a pretty nice two track road which will take you to trails leading to the abandoned homesteads, areas where you can gallop, hidden meadows, and great places to stop and have a picnic.

It might be a good idea to avoid riding there this weekend, Sept. 23-26. There will be hundreds of boy scouts and their leaders there. The open space is not closed to the general public but it's going to be full.

I just hope none of the scouts are working on their horsemanship merit badge. They can't have a horse if it has to be there overnight because of a lack of facilities.

It pays to
part of the c

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Estes Inside + Out 9.24.10

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Publish Date: 8/26/2010

By sharing gift of natural area, Colorado Youth Outdoors aims to pay it forward

*By Pamela Dickman
Loveland Reporter-Herald*

Colorado Youth Outdoors has always been about families enjoying the great outdoors.

This year, the program is moving out of the schools to Swift Ponds with its trees, fishing ponds and wildlife.

Most of the classes and outdoor activities will take place at the outdoor oasis, located east of Interstate 25 and north of Windsor.

“This is where we want to be,” said Bob Hewson, who created the nonprofit with his brother, Tom, 10 years ago to share their love of the outdoors with area youth.

“The classroom is great, but here is where we want to be — outdoors.

“Isn’t that what it’s all about?”

For its first decade, Colorado Youth Outdoors was based in schools where volunteers would teach parent-child teams outdoor skills. Then, they would schedule outings to try them out.

When Louis Swift died and left his acreage to the nonprofit, the program had a beautiful home for all its activities.

Since then, the team has raised money and secured grants to add another 26 acres and to build some facilities.

Handicapped-accessible fishing docks are already in place.

Bathrooms and an outdoor classroom — made from the logs of beetle-killed wood harvested from Gould — will be finished in time for a celebration next month.

The program, always open to all community youths and their parents, will grow more now that it is based at the facility and not just in certain schools, said Rob Bloss, marketing manager.

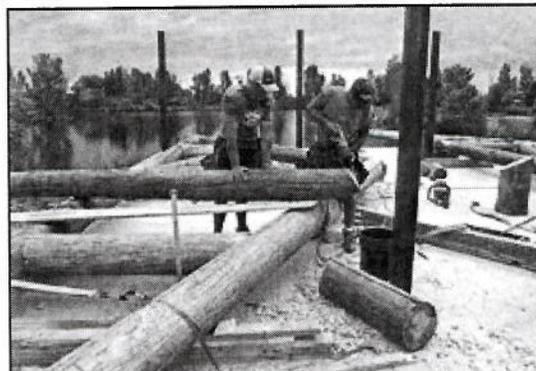
“We’re able to reach the entire community, including home-schooled (children) and private schools,” said Bloss.

Parent-child duos can sign up for fall and/or spring sessions at a cost of \$50.

But if they can’t afford it, Colorado Youth Outdoors will find a way, added Bloss.

The nonprofit uses its land once a week, but many other community groups camp, picnic and fish there the rest of the time. Scouts, schools and other groups are welcome to use the land because, after all, it is there for the children.

“This was gifted to us, so we feel our duty is to keep giving the gift,” said Hewson.



Reporter-Herald/Jenny Sparks
Josh Johnston, left, and Chris Walker work on huge beetle-killed logs for the outdoor classroom at Swift Ponds recently.

10/18/2010

reporterherald.com - By sharing gift of ...

The fall session of Colorado Youth Outdoors started Wednesday, but there is still room for others to join and a spring session.

“It’s one of the coolest places for education,” Hewson said.

“If you’re not part of CYO, you’re missing out.”

For more information, go to www.coloradoyo.org, e-mail info@coloradoyo.org or call 663-0800.

Comments

With a mission of strengthening relationships between parents & students, CYO has definitely accomplished its mission in our family. My husband and I participated in this program the first year it was available at TVHS with our two sons and now ALL of our nieces and nephew have completed the program as well. CYO has made such a great impression that even as college students they still volunteer their time to this organization. It's awesome to see a former CYO student now in college working on the new pavilion. THANK YOU CYO!!

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reporterherald.com

Publish Date: 10/14/2010

Tiny creature packs a big impact

By Lisa Coalwell
Loveland Reporter-Herald

On the “majestic” scale of local wildlife — with moose, elk and bears standing proudly at 10 — rabbits might rate a one, if they’re lucky. They’re too common, too abundant and too small to have much of a “wow” factor.

But don’t discount them, says Rob Novak, education program coordinator for the Larimer County Department of Natural Resources.

Novak quoted well-known naturalist John Muir, who once said, “When we try to pick out anything by itself, we find it hitched to everything else in the universe.”

“Rabbits might seem like a small part of the system,” Novak said, “but they serve as great a purpose as any other part of the whole.” He explained that rabbits play an important role in our local ecosystem, both as a grazer and as a food source for larger wildlife, including hawks, eagles, owls, foxes, bobcats and coyotes.

As consumers, these tiny cottontails help keep vegetation in balance (in the wild, at least; maybe not in the backyard garden). As prey, they provide energy in the food chain.

Although rabbits are abundant, their life span in the wild is only about a year. They more than make up for a shortened life span by reproducing rapidly — a female carries her young for only

four weeks, giving birth to as many as seven babies at one time. With such a short gestation period, females might give birth up to six times in one summer.

‘Abandoned’ Baby Bunnies?

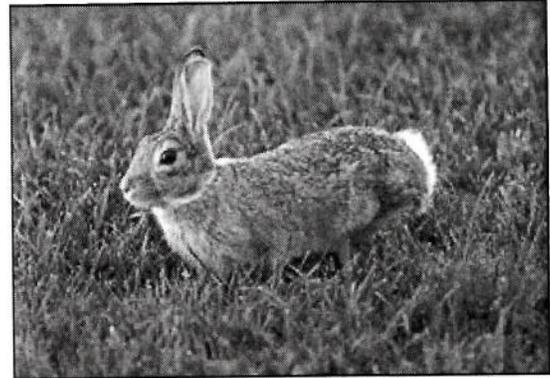
If you come across a nest of baby rabbits, leave them alone, advises Novak. “Baby rabbits, much like mule deer fawns, are often left alone so that the mother’s scent does not attract

predators. You may be coming upon this kind of situation, so unless the young are injured, they should be left alone, and hopefully the mother will return when you — the perceived threat — have left.”

As manager of wildlife services for Larimer Humane Society, Bob Nightwalker sees a lot of rabbits coming into the WildKind department during the spring and summer months.

He explained that mother rabbits usually feed their babies “two to three times a day — once very early in the morning, and once or twice late at night, after dusk. It’s common not to see a mother rabbit present at the nest.”

Nightwalker recommends covering the nest in grass clippings or twigs. “This will serve two purposes — one, it will protect



Reporter-Herald/Jenny Sparks
 A rabbit stills itself to avoid notice recently near Embassy Suites in east Loveland.

Wascally Wabbits

The rabbits may be wild, but what happens when they prefer a more domesticated menu, such as your garden or landscaping? Bob Nightwalker, manager of wildlife services for Larimer Humane Society, can help.

If you are “having difficulty with rabbits — or any other form of wildlife in the neighborhood — causing damage to flowers, shrubbery or garden vegetables,” he said, you can turn to the society’s website at www.larimerhumane.org/content/blogcategory/35/45/. There, you’ll find fact sheets on safe and effective solutions to dealing with wildlife and co-existing peacefully with them.

the offspring, and two, it will allow an individual to determine if the nest is truly abandoned," he explained. "If the grass clippings or twigs have been moved to one side or the other, you will know if the mom is still coming and going. Of course, if there is severe weather, it is wise to rescue the animals."

'Be Vewy Quiet — We're Huntin' Wabbits'

Although the warmer months are their breeding season, rabbits are active all year long. If, like Elmer Fudd, you'd like to hunt for rabbits (for pictures, of course), "you have a good chance of seeing rabbits at any of the country's open spaces or parks," Novak said. "I've seen them most often at Horsetooth Mountain Open Space, Red Mountain Open Space and the Devil's Backbone Open Space."

As for finding and following the animals' distinctive tracks in winter — an easy activity for even the beginning tracker — Novak suggested Eagle's Nest Open Space near Livermore.

If you find rabbits in the foothills, they're most likely mountain cottontails, Novak said. "There are three species common in Colorado — eastern, mountain and desert cottontails. I see the mountain species most often in the foothills; down in town, I'm not entirely sure which of the three you are likely to see, although my guess would be either mountain or eastern."

According to Nightwalker, "jackrabbits also live in Larimer County, but they aren't as prevalent." These larger, longer-eared cousins of the cottontails are actually hares, not rabbits, and they prefer more open country than do their fluffy-tailed kin.

In town, the Loveland bike trail is a good place for Elmer-Fudd wannabes with cameras.

Rabbits are most active early in the morning and late in the afternoon, when they are feeding. Look for them in brushy areas with sheltering thickets nearby.

Weighing in at just

2 pounds and a foot-and-a-half in length, these cottontails seem less like wildlife and more like pets.

But, "it's not advisable to take in any kind of local wildlife as a domestic pet," Novak warned. "Wild animals are just that, wild. ... It is important they retain their wild nature and not become habituated to domestic life. Even if you believe you are doing the animal good, the entire system is made weaker by its removal."

So, maybe the rabbit isn't anywhere near the top of the food chain or the "majestic" scale. But pound for pound, its importance as a building block is hard to top.

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Publish Date: 10/18/2010

Rectifying the river: Reservoir proponents see project as a way to right past damage

By Pamela Dickman
Loveland Reporter-Herald

Northern Water has proposed building Chimney Hollow Reservoir west of Loveland to ensure a firm water supply in future years.

The site is miles and across the Continental Divide from the Colorado River where it runs through Grand County.

However, the director of the Colorado Division of Wildlife believes the reservoir is a starting point to fix problems on the river.

"This is not a

healthy river," Tom Remington said at a meeting in Loveland last week. "The question is how do we fix the river?"

In the past decades, wildlife officials and fishermen have seen a decline in fish populations and in insects on which the fish feed.

They believe the culprit is a mix of changing water temperatures and flows, fluctuating chemical levels and differing habitat.

But exactly what mix of remedies to use still is being studied.

But now, with Chimney Hollow proposed, wildlife officials are taking a closer look at the big picture of the river.

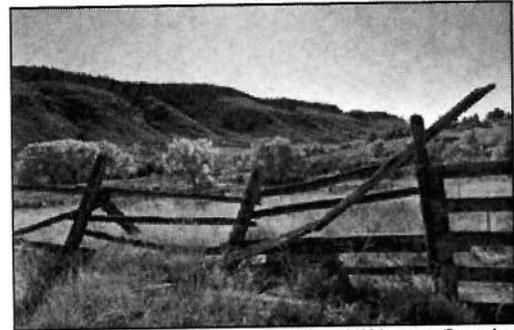
If built, Chimney Hollow would hold 90,000 acre-feet of Windy Gap water for several cities, including Loveland.

The water is pumped from a diversion dam on the Colorado River and the Fraser River to Windy Gap Reservoir, then to Lake Granby, which also stores Colorado-Big Thompson Project water.

When Lake Granby is already full, the water simply spills over because there is no other place to store it.

Chimney Hollow would allow the cities to bank that water, which they already own, to use in drier years by flowing it through the Colorado Big-Thompson project to Chimney Hollow.

The reservoir is in the midst of the federal permitting process, which is expected to be complete in 2011. If approved, construction could begin in 2013.



Reporter-Herald/Jenny Sparks
Fall colors fill the Chimney Hollow Open Space in Larimer County on Friday west of Loveland.

That construction, however, would flood 810 acres of wildlife habitat southwest of Loveland near Carter Lake.

And an environmental evaluation shows it could further harm fish habitat and populations, the population of insects that fish eat and stream flow in the Colorado River — a popular recreational river.

Northern Water, the water conservancy district that wants to build the reservoir, is required to work with the Colorado Division of Wildlife to mitigate any additional impacts to wildlife and the river.

To accomplish this, the Division of Wildlife plans to bring planners together with biologists, government officials, conservation groups and others with a stake in the river.

Maybe together, they can go one step beyond maintaining the river as it is to fixing problems from past water projects, Remington said.

“This project allows us a look back,” Denver resident and fisherman Tony Kay said at a Loveland meeting for input on how to mitigate impacts on wildlife.

“We can benefit from 20/20 hindsight to see where things went wrong. ...

“We might be able to perhaps head off another disaster in 25 years.”

Besides working to fix wildlife habitat, communities should conserve more water to help save resources, which are changing with the climate, according to others who spoke at the Loveland meeting.

The water district already owns the water and has conservation plans in place.

The Division of Wildlife cannot prevent the district from taking the water, but it can try to mitigate the impact on wildlife, said wildlife commissioner Bob Streeter of Fort Collins.

“We’re looking at this as an opportunity to fix a problem,” added Remington.

“It leads to a better river down the road instead of just maintaining the current condition, which is all Northern Water is required to do.”

Comments

I don't get it. People acknowledge that the Colorado is already unhealthy - and that's because of so many current diversions. So how is it that Northern District thinks it can "repair the damage" by diverting even more water from the river?

Or did the editor who titled this piece misunderstand?

What I'd also like to know is this: What will the Northern District and other water-miners do once they've succeeded in extracting every drop of the rivers?

Leo, Loveland, 10/18/2010 11:39:00 AM

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Coloradoan 12/10/10

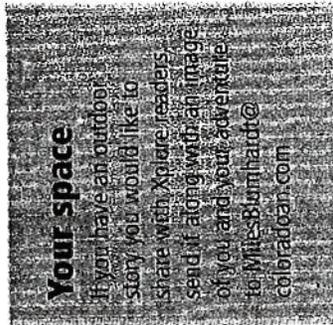
Dave Leatherman's bird tricks a sight to behold

BY MARY MITCHELL
For the Coloradoan

I went on a guided bird-watching walk sponsored by the Northern Colorado Birding Fair on Sept. 18. Our guide, Sue Kenney, shuttled us to the Running Deer Natural Area on the east side of Fort Collins where we met up with local birding expert Dave Leatherman.

Within a few minutes, a large buck deer ran across our path showing that this open space was very aptly named. Cottonwood Hollows Natural Area is adjacent to Running Deer and both areas have a good variety of habitats from wetland to ponds and ditches to grassy areas and large, old trees.

I would describe myself as a complete beginner when it comes to bird watching. But during our tour, the group was treated to a wonderful outdoor mini-adventure. Dave



Your space

If you have an outdoor story you would like to share with Xplore readers, send it along with an image of you and your adventure to MaryMitchell@coloradoan.com

walk, we saw a pair of chickadees caching seeds, one at a time, in the bark of a cottonwood tree.

We saw a group of about 20 blackbirds breakfasting on sunflower seeds that I initially dismissed as starlings. It turned out they were female red-winged blackbirds identifiable by the brownish stripes on their wings. I would have completely missed these birds if our guide hadn't pointed them out.

A little later, we saw a group of goldfinches feasting on seeds. It was hard to see them even with binoculars because they blended so perfectly with the color of the sunflower stems. When we were almost back to the trailhead, we saw a pair of song sparrows perched on a branch, fluttering a little as they sang an exquisite song. I felt honored to be in the presence of such beauty.

All in all, it was a wonderful experience. We were very lucky to have two wonderful guides. I learned a lot about birds and about why people love bird watching so much. I was amazed that tucked in this small area close to town was so much richness and

variety. This was a perfect example of why open space is so important to the quality of life in Colorado. It provides habitat for so many wild creatures, large and small, and an opportunity for people to immerse themselves in nature.

Birding fair date planned at open space

The annual Northern Colorado Birding Fair will spread its wings on Sept. 25 at Fossil Creek Reservoir Regional Open Space south of Fort Collins.

Guided bird walks will be available at 7 and 7:15 a.m., activities will run from 8 a.m.

to 3 p.m., and there will be hourly presentations and interactive clinics during the event. This year's fair will also include tours to local birding hot spots.

Children who complete the Birding Fair Passport may earn special prizes, and a silent auction is also on the agenda. The

day, sponsored by Larimer County Department of Natural Resources, is geared to the entire family. Admission is free, but donations will be accepted. For information, contact 679-4561, rnovak@larimer.org or www.larimer.org/naturalresources/birding_fair.

Berthoud Weekly Surveyor September 2, 2010 Page A7

September guided hikes

Saturday Sept. 18, at 9 a.m.
 "Look Out! Here Comes the Fall."
 Join Naturalists Jay and Caroline for a hike at the Devil's Backbone Open Space, located just west of Loveland on Highway 34, where you will be treated to all the amazing ways that animals and plants wind down from a busy summer and transition into fall. You'll hear about the rutting of mule deer and elk, where the flowers all go, and how trees change the colors of their leaves. Hike rating: easy. Program is free, and no registration is required. Approximately two-hour program. Please direct questions to Rob at 970-679-4561.

Saturday, Sept. 18, at 10 a.m.
 "Bear Necessities." Join former veterinarian and County Naturalist Bob

for a captivating presentation about local bruins, that ranges from their habits to habitats at the Hermit's Cabin at Hermit Park Open Space, located just south-east of the town of Estes, off of Highway 36. Learn the best ways to avoid trouble with bears and all about their lifestyles. This is a stationary program. No registration required. Program is free; a \$6/vehicle entrance permit applies. Approximately one-hour program.

Wednesday, Sept. 22, at 7 p.m.
 "Masters of the Air - Falcons." Have you ever seen a raptor fly by so fast you couldn't even make out what it was? Find out if it was a falcon at this naturalist-led talk at the Devil's Backbone Open Space's outdoor classroom, located just west of Loveland off of Highway 34. Find out what makes falcons so well suited for flying and hunting and why they are considered to be "Masters of the Sky." Stationary program. Program is free and no registration is required. Approximately one-hour long program. Please direct questions to Rob, at 970-679-4561.

To learn more about Larimer County's parks and open spaces, go to www.larimer.org/naturalresources.

IN BRIEF

Connection 9/4/2010

County accepting grant applications

Larimer County Department of Natural Resources' Open Lands Program is accepting applications for the 2011 Small Grants for Community Partnering project.

The program disperses a portion of the Help Preserve Open Spaces sales tax dollars throughout the county for community projects up to \$2,000 per project.

Since 1998, 101 local projects have received about \$131,000 in funding.

Grant categories include:

- Protection or enhancement of open space, trails, natural areas, wildlife habitat, river areas, and wetlands on private or public land

- Agriculture
- Increased access to open spaces

• Research on open spaces
Applications are due by 3 p.m. Sept. 24. The awards will be announced in February 2011. Grant selection criteria, application, and other information are available at www.larimer.org/parks/openlands/smallgrants.htm.

For more information, call 679-4566.

Free firewood offered through county program

Connection Sept 4, 2010

Loveland Connection staff

The Larimer County Department of Natural Resources' 2010 Free Firewood Program is open for reservations.

Those registering must be able to cut downed logs to the lengths they want, load the

wood on their trucks and assist in loading all trucks in the group.

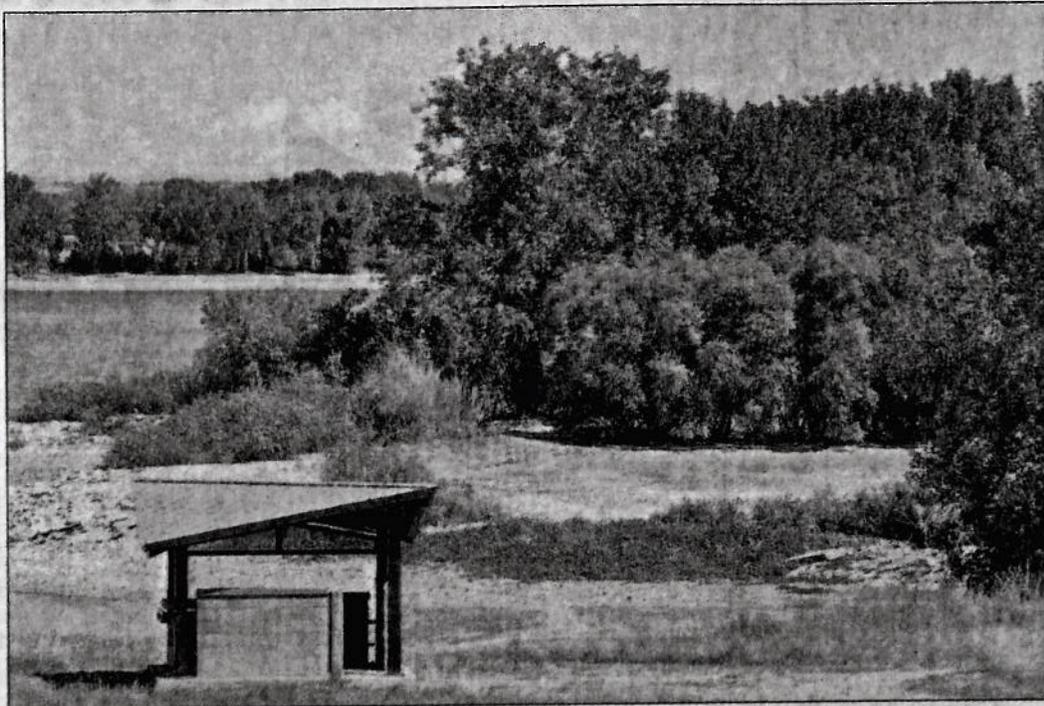
Firewood collection begins at 9 a.m. weekends through Oct. 10, except Labor Day weekend.

Participants must register for one of the available time slots. Attendance is limited to

12 vehicles each day. Reservations can be made only at www.larimer.org/naturalresources/firewood.

Participants must have a printed receipt of signup to enter at the starting location at the Soderberg Trailhead, 3901 Shoreline Drive, at Horsetooth Mountain Open Space.

Land near Fossil Creek Reservoir is purchased



V. Richard Haro For Loveland Connection

A bird watchers hut at the Fossil Creek Reservoir Open Space overlooks a strand of trees where many birds nest. The stand of trees in the background is on a parcel of 23-acres purchased with Fort Collins open space funds to keep the nesting area protected. The land is jointly owned by Larimer County and Fort Collins, with Fort Collins maintaining the land and county rangers working the areas.

Jointly owned land now protected area

BY KEVIN DUGGAN
KevinDuggan@coloradoan.com

The Fort Collins Natural Areas program has paid \$800,000 for the 23-acre site near the east side of Fossil Creek Reservoir, an area jointly owned by Larimer County and the city of Fort Collins..

The site offers "incredible views" as well as important bird habitat and right of way for a trail that eventually will link to trail systems to the north and west of Fossil Creek Reservoir Regional Open Space, said **John Stokes**, director of the Fort Collins' Natural Resources Department.

"It's a great purchase for the program," Stokes said. "It's something we have aspired to for a long time."

The property is part of a point of land that juts into the reservoir along its eastern shoreline. It is prime habitat for raptors, including nesting bald eagles, he said.

Fossil Creek Reservoir Regional Open Space sits northwest of the interchange of Interstate 25 and Colorado Highway 392. Fort Collins and Larimer County share ownership of the open space area, which is managed by Fort Collins.

With its numerous species of migratory birds, the reservoir area is considered one of the best birding locations in Northern Colorado, Stokes said.

"We're very pleased to protect additional parts of the shoreline and the lake," he said.

The property was part of a larger parcel owned by **Gary Young**, Stokes said. The portion bought by the Natural Areas program could have been used to build two or three large-lot houses.

Robert Hau, a senior adviser with the real estate firm Sperry Van Ness who brokered the deal, said Fort Collins and county officials worked with the owner to keep the property open.

The I-25/Colorado 392 interchange is considered a southern "gateway" and is likely to see more development in the years to come, Hau said. The interchange is expected to be rebuilt in the next few years to relieve safety and congestion concerns.

See OPEN SPACE / Page 19

Open space

Continued from Page 18

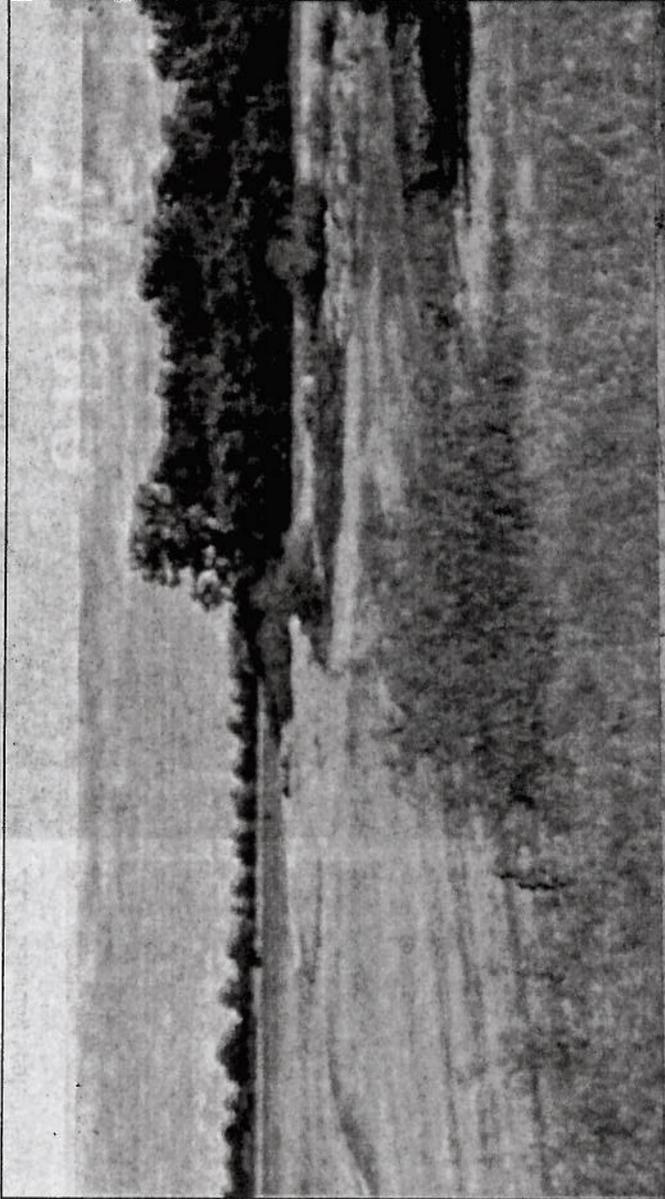
Hau said the deal is a "win-win" in that it provides a balance between conserving open spaces and leaving room for attractive development.

Public access to the site is likely to be years away because of a lack of funding for trail construction, Stokes said.

The Natural Areas program is funded through a dedicated 0.25 percent sales tax. The program also receives funding through a 0.25 percent sales tax for protecting open space collected by Larimer County.

In recent years the program has shifted its spending from acquiring land to maintaining what it already owns, Stokes said.

"We're not going to do as much land conservation as we have," he said. "But when an opportunity comes along to buy a strategic and important piece like this one, we'll take it."



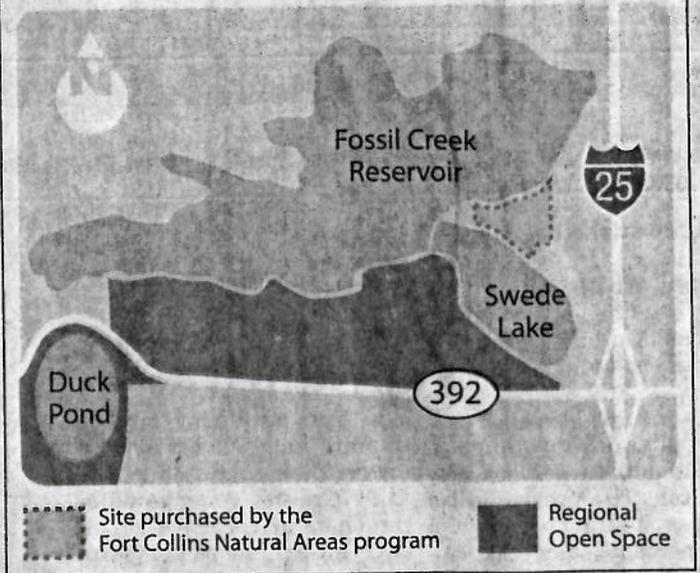
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V. Richard Haro
For Loveland
Connection

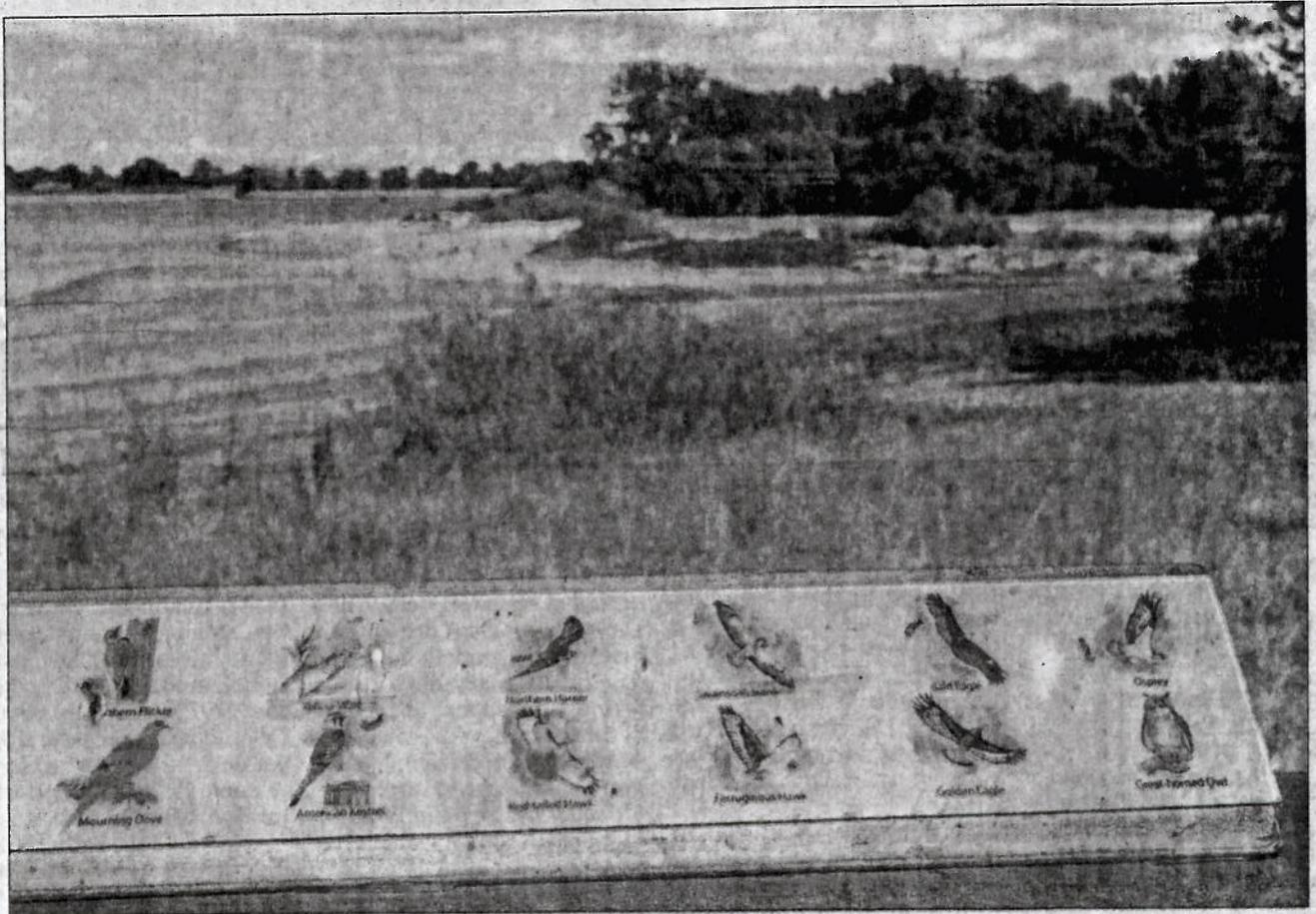
Colorado
Sept 4, 2010

City adds land

Natural Areas purchase



Jen Smith/The Coloradoan



V. Richard Haro/The Coloradoan

A panel of bird drawings is displayed at a bird watchers hut at Fossil Creek Reservoir Open Space, overlooking a stand of trees where many birds nest. The trees are on a parcel of 23 acres the city of Fort Collins purchased with open space funds.

23-acre site near Fossil Creek costs \$800,000

BY KEVIN DUGGAN

KevinDuggan@coloradoan.com

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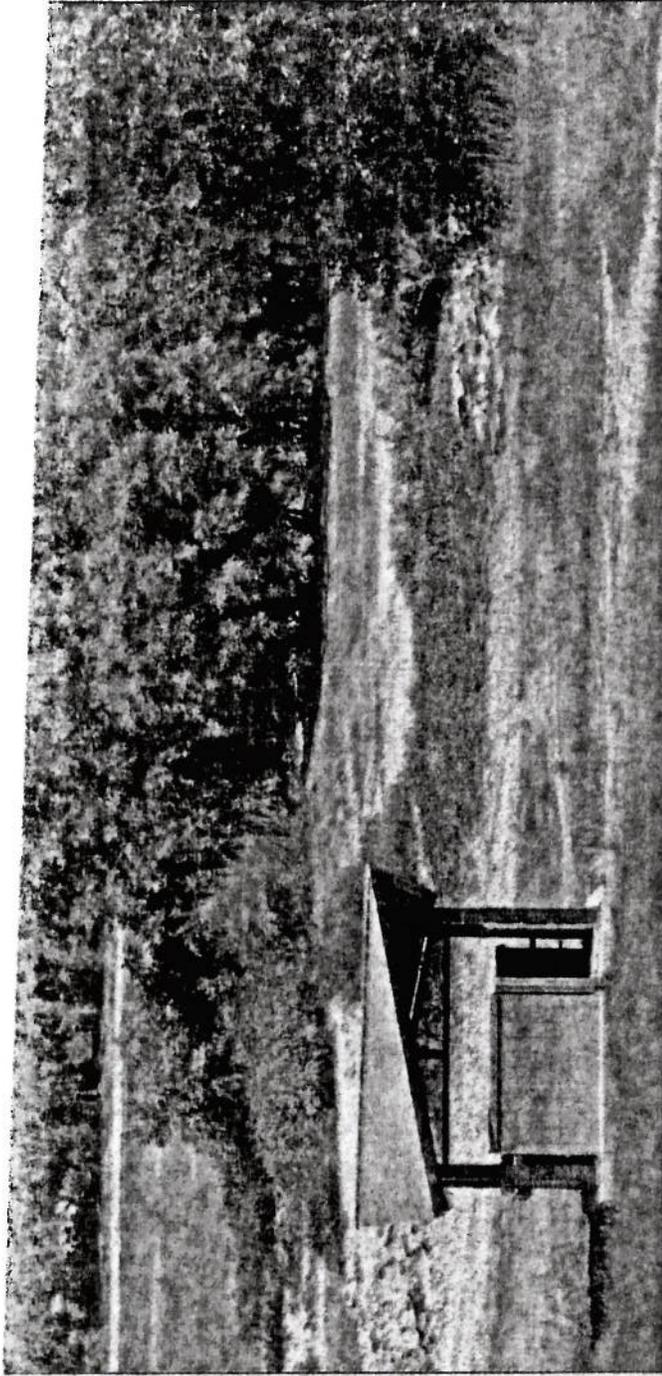
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V. Richard Haro/The Coloradoan
A bird watchers' hut at Fossil Creek Reservoir Open Space helps birdwatchers identify the different species. The area is prime bird-watching territory in Northern Colorado.

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In Your Voice

Join the conversation at www.coloradoan.com/forums.

ing from acquiring land to maintaining what it already owns, Stokes said.

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'We're not going to do as much land conservation as we have. But when an opportunity comes along to buy a strategic and important piece like this one, we'll take it.'

John Stokes, director of the city's Natural Resources Department

IN BRIEF

Coloradoan 9/7/2010

County offering free firewood to area residents

The Larimer County Department of Natural Resources' 2010 Free Firewood Program is open for reservations.

Those registering must be able to cut downed logs to the lengths they want, load the wood on their trucks and assist in loading all trucks in the group.

Firewood collection begins 9 a.m. weekends through Oct. 10.

Participants must register for one of the available time slots. Attendance is limited to 12 vehicles each day. Reservations can be made at www.larimer.org/naturalresources/firewood.

Participants must have a printed receipt of signup to enter at the starting location at the Soderberg Trailhead, 3901 Shoreline Drive, at Horsetooth

Mountain Open Space, west of Fort Collins.

Reporter Herald 9/7/2010

Explore outdoors in depth

Nature Notes Club to offer guided hikes, share skills for creating journals

BY PAMELA DICKMAN
REPORTER-HERALD STAFF WRITER

Ever finish a scenic hike just to realize you forgot what flowers and animals you saw?

Ever wish you could put pen to paper to record your outdoor experience?

Larimer County has a new group just for you — the Nature Notes Club.

The Department of Natural Resources is offering six weekly hikes for residents who want to create their own nature journal.

Come to all.

Come to a few.

But come prepared to learn about ecology, geology, wildlife, sketching and other ways to enhance the outdoor experience.

A volunteer naturalist will lead a short hike to a scenic locale at different county open spaces, offering information and ideas.

Once there, participants are encouraged to let their creative juices flow and record their feelings, thoughts and experiences.

Hikes will be 8-11 a.m. on different Sundays:

- This week and Sept. 19: Devil's Backbone, west of Loveland.

- Oct. 3: Ramsay-Shockey Open Space, southwest of Loveland.

- Oct. 10: Hermit Park Open Space, just outside Estes Park. If the weather does not cooperate, the outing will move to Horsetooth Mountain Open Space west of Fort Collins.

- Oct. 24: Soderberg Open Space near Horsetooth Reservoir.

The final session, Oct. 31, will be inside the Bison Visitor Center at Carter Lake, where participants will put the final pieces of their nature journals together.

All it takes is a love of the outdoors, a desire to create and a notebook, camera and drawing equipment.

Organizers urge participants to bring a small stool, snacks and water and to dress for the weather.

To join the Nature Notes Club, contact Rob Novak at 679-4561 or rnovak@larimer.org.

Loveland Connection

Wednesday, September 22, 2010

County to offer grants for projects

Larimer County Department of Natural Resources' Open Lands Program is accepting applications for the 2011 Small Grants for Community Partnering project.

The program disperses a portion of the Help Preserve Open Spaces sales tax dollars throughout the county for community projects up to \$2,000 per project.

Since 1998, 101 local projects have received about \$131,000 in funding.

Grant categories include:

- Protection or enhancement of open space, trails, natural areas, wildlife habitat, river areas and wetlands on private or public land
- Agriculture

- Increased access to open spaces

- Research on open spaces

Applications are due by 3 p.m. Friday. The awards will be announced in February 2011. Grant selection criteria, application, and other information are available at www.larimer.org/parks/openlands/smallgrants.htm.

For more information, call 679-4566.

Birding fair adds events to increase appeal

BY MILES BLUMHARDT
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@coloradoan.com

The Northern Colorado Birding Fair takes place Saturday at Fossil Creek Regional Open Space with added attractions in its sixth year to attract more people.

RED-TAILED HAWK

V. Richard Haro
Coloradoan
library

free event includes more presentations than in the past with noted birding experts from around the state, a bird photo contest and two raptor releases of rehabilitated birds from the Rocky Mountain Raptor Program at 8:30 a.m. and 1 p.m.

Rob Novak, Larimer County Parks and Open Lands education coordinator, said he's hoping the added attractions will increase attendance from 450 last year to 600 to 800 this year.

"We go after two groups: families with kids and adult birders," Novak said. "This year, we have added activity booths for the

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Schedule of events at the Northern Colorado Birding Fair

kids; the raptor release is back; and we have big name presenters for our adult presentations."

Noted bird experts who will give presentations include Dave Leatherman of Fort Collins, who will speak about what birds eat, as well as Dave Sutherland of Boulder talking

See BIRDING/Page A5



Local Birding

Continued from Page A3

out bird stories and fables, and Mary Ann Bonnell of Aurora helps people identify birds or prey. There also will be bird walks, bird-calling contests, a scavenger hunt and awarding the winners of a bird photo contest. "It looks like we'll have fantastic weather, so we're hoping to see lots of people out there," Novak said. Novak said proceeds from a silent auction and other activities will go toward keeping the event

Northern Colorado Birding Fair

- > When: 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday
- > Where: Fossil Creek Regional Open Space, Carpenter Road, 1 mile west of Interstate 25 and Colorado Highway 392 (Windsor exit)
- > Cost: Free

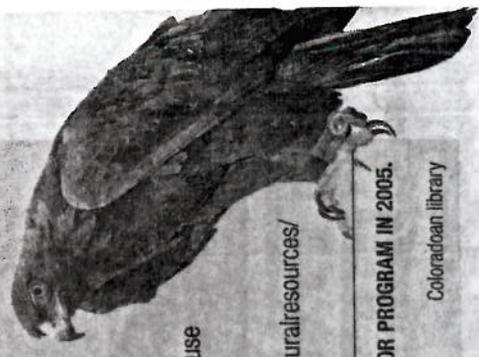
List of events

- > 7 a.m.: Bird walks with local birding experts and free breakfast
- > 8 a.m.: Passport Activity booths where children can earn prizes by completing activities, habitat scavenger hunt and mist netting demonstration
- > 8:30 a.m.: First of two bird releases
- > 9 a.m.: Birding basics presentation with Connie Kogler
- > 9:45 a.m.: Bird calls contest, also at 10:50 a.m., 11:45 a.m. and 1:45 p.m.

- > 10 a.m.: What birds love to eat clinic with Dave Leatherman
- > 11 a.m.: Bird stories for kids with Dave Sutherland
- > Noon: Raptor identification clinic with Mary Ann Bonnell
- > 1 p.m.: Bird release, wild bird adaptations presentation with Dave Marvin and tour of River Bluffs Open Space
- > 2 p.m.: Optics for birding with Sportsmen's Warehouse staff

For a complete list of events, visit www.larimer.org/naturalesources/birding_fair.htm or call (970) 679-4561

A GOLDEN EAGLE RESCUED BY ROCKY MOUNTAIN RAPTOR PROGRAM IN 2005.



Coloradoan library

Scouts to gather for weekend near Estes

By KELLY MOLL

The Longs Peak Council, Boy Scouts of America 100th anniversary event is scheduled today through Sunday.

The event will bring together more than 2,500 Scouts and Scout leaders from throughout the Northern Colorado Front Range, southeast Wyoming and southwest Nebraska at Hermit Park Open Space near Estes Park.

The opening ceremony Saturday will consist of the U.S. flag flown in by the Colorado Army National Guard flying a UH60 Blackhawk helicopter by the 2/135 Aviation Battalion.

The flag has flown over the U.S. Capitol in Washington and the National Headquarters of the Boy Scouts of America in Irving, Texas. Troop 921 and 922 of the Longs Peak Council flew it most recently at the National Boy Scout Jamboree in Fort A.P. Hill, Va.

During the lunch program, Colorado House Speaker Terrance Carroll, an Eagle Scout, will be the keynote speaker.

Also, the Council's National Hall of Leadership inductee — one in only 300 in the country — Gene Yoss will be presented a national award for his dedication and service. Gene has been Cubmaster of Pack 179 in Boulder for 41 consecutive years.

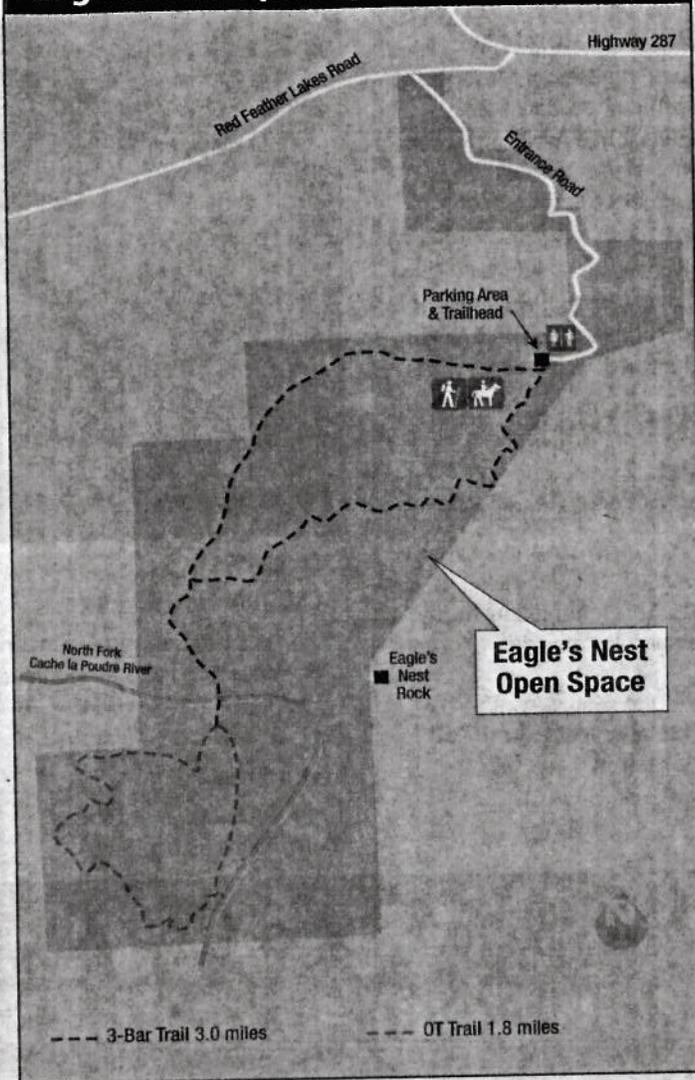
Events during the day consist of mountain biking, geocaching, low COPE, mountain boarding and other outdoor Scouting activities.

To learn more about the Longs Peak Council or to join Scouting: www.longspeakbsa.org

Take a hike *Sept 26, 2010*

COLORADO

Eagle's Nest Open Space



- > **Distance:** 2.4 miles one way
- > **Difficulty:** Moderate
- > **Elevation:** 5,700 to 6,000 feet
- > **Trailhead:** Take U.S. Highway 287 north from Fort Collins 20 miles to Livermore (Larimer County Road 74E) Take Country Road 74E west for 0.25 of a mile to the sign that directs visitors 1.25 miles south on a gravel road to the parking lot.
- > **Cost:** Free
- > **Facilities:** Restrooms and information kiosks located at trailhead
- > **Pets allowed:** Yes, on leash
- > **Open to:** Hiking and horseback riding. No bikes.
- > **Information:** Roosevelt National Forest, (970) 297-6700 or visit www.fs.fed.us/arnf. Rocky Mountain National Park, (970) 586-1206 or visit www.nps.gov/romo

- > **Why go:** This 755-acre natural area managed by Larimer County Parks and Open Lands includes beautiful views of the Laramie Foothills dotted with golden rabbitbrush and cottonwoods this time of year. The soothing North Fork of the Poudre offers a pleasant diversion and offers fishing in designated areas. Take the 3.8-mile 3-Bar Trail loop across the North Fork of the Poudre to the 1.8-mile Oh-Tee Trail loop where you will have views of Eagles' Nest Rock. The archery and muzzle-loading seasons close after today and there is no rifle hunting seasons allowed on the property though hunters can access national forest property from the open space.
- > **More trails:** To see details of 30 area trails, check out the Coloradoan Trail Guide at www.coloradoan.com/trailguide.

The Coloradoan, Sunday, September 26, 2010

nature

Nature Notes Club

8-11 a.m., Ramsay-Shockey Open Space, Adjacent to Pinewood Reservoir. Participants will be led through the process of creating their own nature journals. Each session will include basic instruction on sketching, ecology, geology, wildlife and other natural sciences, and a short hike to a scenic location. To sign up, call or email: rnovak@larimer.org. Information: (970) 679-4561 or www.larimer.org/naturalresources

Coloradoan

11-2-2010

Volunteers needed for education push

The Larimer County Department of Natural Resources is looking for volunteer to help combat weeds and pine beetle.

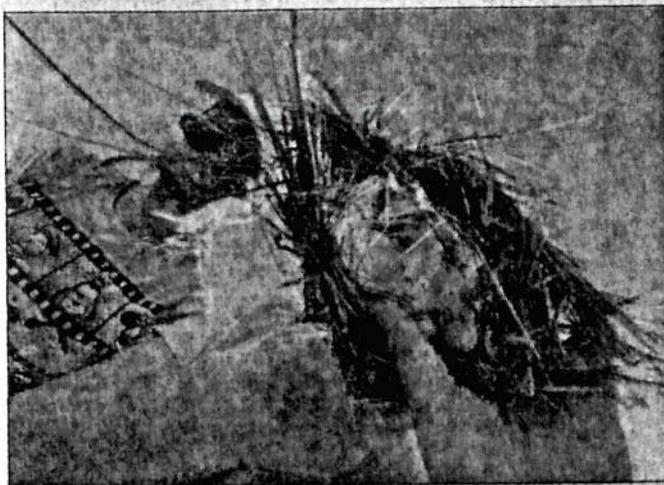
Conservation Warriors educate homeowners' associations on weed and forestry issues, are involved in identifying and marking areas of infestation and help to protect natural resources. Training begins in early 2011.

For more information, contact CJ Cullins at ccullins@larimer.org or (970) 679-4552, or visit Larimer.org/naturalresources.

Sunday, September 26, 2010

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COLORADOAN.COM



Rich Abrahamson/The Coloradoan

Cecelia Herff, 13, right, and McKenna Shuler, 12, both from Fort Collins, use grass and other material to make nests Saturday during the Northern Colorado Birding Fair at Fossil Creek Reservoir.

Love of birding takes flight at sixth annual fair

BY MARCY MIRANDA

MarcyMiranda
@coloradoan.com

Speaking to an audience of children, adults and seniors, Dave Sutherland shared a Native American tale Saturday morning about how a clever raven stole the sun from a powerful chief and placed it in the sky.

"The bird flew out and placed it high in the sky, and now we know that ball of light is the sun," Sutherland, a naturalist with Boulder County, told an audience of about 20 people.

Sutherland's performance was one of about 10 events held at the sixth annual Northern Colorado Birding Fair at Fossil Creek Reservoir.

The fair gave families the chance to get their children outdoors and hosted clinics for bird watchers to improve their skills, said Rob Novak, education program coordinator for Larimer County Parks and Open Lands.

"We try to get bird watchers and families with kids because we're dedicated to getting kids outdoors," Novak said. For children in particular, birds are some of the most visible wild animals they can encounter in their natural habitat, he said.

The event had 15 activity and merchandise tents, most of which provided games and activities for children to learn about bird migration, habitats and behavior, Novak said.

"We try to do something where they are learning but don't realize they're doing it," he said.

For the bird watchers who want to improve their skills,

three clinics were offered by well-known members of the bird-watching community. The clinics focused on teaching bird watchers about what birds eat, identifying raptors, large birds of prey, and the latest birding optics tools, such as binoculars.

"The clinics provide in-depth information with experts so they can move up in their skills," Novak said.

At the Environmental Learning Center table, 4-year-old Ryan Pratt and his sister Lauren, 6, were making nests using twigs, dry leaves and some white yarn.

While Ryan tried to tie twigs together in a triangle shape, Eli Fox, an employee at the environmental center, showed him an actual robin's nest that the center uses as an educational tool.

"We work to educate younger people about the environment," Fox said.

At another tent several feet away, 7-year-old Arielle Damiana and her little brother Thomas were using bean bags to learn what liquids can be drained into the city's sewer system.

Their mother, Karra Damiana, said she attended the birding fair with her kids because Arielle is interested in birds.

"She loves raptors and learning about nature," she said.

They have attended the fair for a handful of years, and the programs put on by the Raptor Center are something Arielle looks forward to.

Novak said the day was successful, with the largest number of visitors ever to attend the fair.