

Opening a door to outside

New program at Namaqua helps get students up and outdoors

By Carl McCutchen

Loveland Connection

For years, Namaqua Elementary School volunteer and mother Michele

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Mandeville wanted to get an outdoors club rolling. She figured the location of the school — it's nestled against the foothills — and the insect and wildlife environments

surrounding the grounds were an untapped educational resource.

"There hasn't been any outdoor club or anything since we've been there," Mandeville said.

After cutting through some red tape this year, Mandeville, along with Namaqua teacher **Julie Augusto**, launched Namaqua's monthly outdoor club in April.

It was more of a success than



Namaqua Elementary School students build birds nests during the school's first Outdoor Club meeting. The club aims to get students interested in the outdoors. COURTESY OF MICHELE MANDEVILLE

anyone could have hoped for.

The Namaqua students were treated with an educational session about birds, complete with a talk from a naturalist from Larimer County Parks and Open Lands, as well as a bird walk where the students were able to test their newfound knowledge.

"We walked around outside and named the birds that we

saw," Mandeville said. "Then, we came back into the classroom and built our own nests for the birds."

Mandeville said students enjoyed the hands-on task of building different kinds of birds' nests, and the only bad part of event was that not all the students who wanted to participate could.

More than 50 students regis-

GET OUTDOORS

The Namaqua Outdoor Club will meet again Friday at the school, 209 N. County Road 19E. For more information, call (970) 613-6600.

tered for the program but there was only enough space for about 20 students.

See **OUTDOORS**, Page 8

Outdoors

Continued from Page 1

That's an unfortunate aspect that Mandeville hopes to change in the future.

"We had to cut some kids out," she said. "We hope to change it around so more kids can participate in the club."

As an added bonus, the new outdoors club also scheduled an option family walk just a few days after the initial club offering, with hopes

of getting more parents involved in the club.

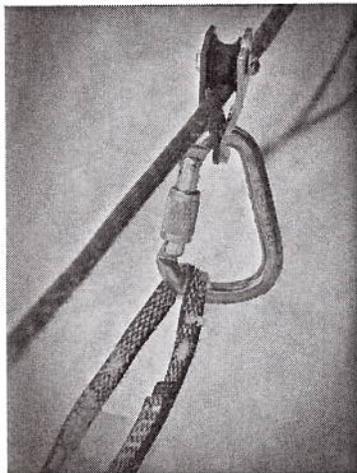
Ultimately, Mandeville said, she would like to pair up with Big Thompson Elementary School to enhance the programs. Big Thompson already offers outdoor activities for families during certain weekends. That's something Mandeville would like to see Namaqua parents take advantage of.

"Basically, the point is to connect kids with nature, but encourage kids to get involved on a weekend and get outside," she said.

Although school is nearly complete for the year, the outdoor club hopes to get one more event in before students disperse for summer, with the next meeting scheduled for May 13.

Mandeville said the students will get a chance at learning about the leave no trace philosophy, as well as proper trail stewardship.

"We're going to make our own homemade nature journals," she said. "So, we'll do that, and then Saturday we'll do a local hike with a naturalist."



One of the two pulleys in a "Z" haul system.

lated fallen climber out of a "crevasse"; others roped up and practiced traveling as a roped team.

Although everyone managed to function under less than ideal conditions, staying warm was a challenge while laying in the snow and communications were hampered by high winds and blowing snow.

As a result, there were a number of techniques the group was not able to practice before slogging back to the trailhead. Planning for a supplementary session is underway.

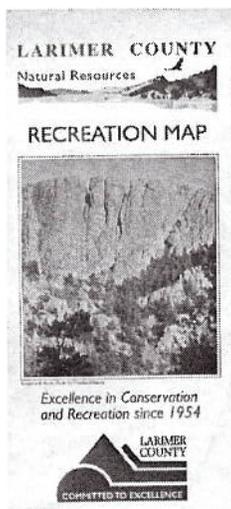


A "fallen climber" is pulled out of the "crevasse"

Larimer County Releases New Recreation Map

Larimer County Natural Resources Department has published a new Recreation Map. This map shows all the trails in Horsetooth Mountain Open Space, Red Mountain Open Space, Devil's Backbone & Rimrock Open Spaces, Eagle's Nest Open Space, Lion's Open Space & Pleasant Valley Trail, River Bluffs Open Space & Poudre River Trail, Glade County Park, Narrows County Park, Forks County Park, Sleepy Hollow Park, Hermit Park Open Space, Horsetooth Reservoir County Park, Carter Lake & Flatiron Reservoir County Park, and Pine-wood Reservoir County Park & Ramsay-Shockey Open Space.

Since a couple of the individual site maps are not oriented North



at the top, you have to check the compass indicator at the bottom of each site map to orient appropriately. The map also contains all the general regulations for

County Parks and Open Spaces. A handy table indicates the location of each park and open space and identifies the activities and accommodations available. The full-color map is printed on water resistant paper and is the same size as a standard folded road map. Best of all these maps are free and may be picked up at any park or open space location.

Check out the webpage at www.larimer.org/naturalresources to learn more about County offerings as well. Several Fort Collins Group Members provided input to the Natural Resources Department as this map was developed and turned into the final published product.

- York

Space Opens on Mongolian Trek

A September 2011 Mongolia CMC Adventure Travel trip has had a cancellation and is seeking another participant to keep the costs from going up.

<http://www.cmc.org/AdventureTravel/AdventureTravelDetails.aspx?EventID=2229>

Members are also encouraged to visit www.cmc.org/at to view other great trips, that are scheduled for this year including trips the Himalayas, Great Basin National Park and the Italian Alps.

County seeks volunteer ranger assistants

Written by

Chandler Shortlidge

10:16 PM, May. 18, 2011|

Residents looking to spend some time outside and try something new this summer are invited to serve as volunteer Larimer County park ranger assistants at Carter Lake and Horsetooth Reservoir.

CJ Cullins, volunteer program coordinator for the Larimer County Department of Natural Resources, said 20 to 25 volunteers are needed for weekend and holiday shifts working at the boat docks, riding with rangers in patrol boats or in the parking lots.

People 18 years and older can participate in the program dedicated to helping visitors to the county's popular recreation areas. Although ranger assistants will be involved with directing visitors, this is not a law enforcement situation, Cullins said.

"We have been very blessed in the past to have former military and law enforcement come and help, who are great because they are good at knowing where the boundaries are when dealing with the public," she said.

However, Cullins said, that doesn't mean

the only people having success in the program come from such backgrounds.

"We have also had everyone from housewives, rocket scientists and teachers, and everyone has done well," she said.

With expectations for heavy spring runoff adding to local waterways and reservoirs, assistant rangers should not be dissuaded from serving. Instead, they should be prepared for more people turning out for fun in the water. Volunteers who want to work on boats will have to show they are able to swim and stand up in a moving boat, Cullins said.

Horsetooth District Manager Mark Caughlan said every volunteer he has worked with has had a fantastic time in the program.

"You get to be outside and work with the public at the second busiest reservoir in the state," he said.

Additionally, having assistant rangers involved in the busy season is an asset to

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permanent staff when facing budget challenges, Caughlan said.

People who volunteer will receive an S-Pass that grants free access to paid areas in the recreation areas, Cullins said.

"It's a very positive experience for most people, and usually the only people who don't stay on are those who realize after a few shifts that they really don't like to be outside all that much," she said. "But we usually try to place them where they will be comfortable. Volunteering should be fun."

An assistant ranger orientation will be from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. May 25 at The Bison Visitor Center, 1800 S. County Road 31, Loveland. During the session, participants will see an overview of park rules and regulations. There also will be a field session with scenario training, as well as having the chance to meet with some of the rangers they will be working with.

INTERESTED?

A Larimer County park ranger assistant orientation will be from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. May 25 at The Bison Visitor Center at Carter Lake, 1800 S. County Road 31, Loveland.
For more information, call (970) 679-4552, or visit www.larimer.org.

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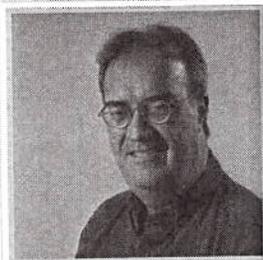
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Larimer County Natural Resources volunteer coordinator CJ Cullins honored

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CJ Cullins, volunteer coordinator for the Larimer County Department of Natural Resources, has a way with people.

Her knack for lining up and deploying the talents of volunteers in the county's parks and open lands translates to more than 53,000 hours of donated time and an estimated value of \$1.2 million to the department.

"She's one person but she operates like she's two full-time employees," said Gary Buffington, director of natural resources, told the county commissioners.

Her work managing the volunteer program earned Cullins the Volunteer Coordinator of the Year award from the United Way and Directors of Volunteers in Agencies.

Cullins' management style is "catch and release," said Kerri Rollins, manager of the county's open lands program. She brings in the volunteers, matches them with the appropriate field managers, and lets them go. The department has about 420 volunteers.

The commissioners on Tuesday recognized Cullins for her work and the honor she received.

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New Larimer County rec map shows the way through miles of trails



Written by

Miles Blumhardt

4:02 PM, Apr. 29, 2011|

Larimer County Natural Resources doesn't have an app for that, so they did it the old fashioned way.

The county department that oversees parks and open lands recently released its all-encompassing recreational map of its more than 20 properties totaling 37,000 acres and 85 miles of trails.

"We were looking at doing an all-encompassing map that pretty much provided information for all recreationists so they know where they can go and what to expect when they got there," said Jeffrey Boring, Larimer County resource specialist and map project manager. "It was a big undertaking what with the diversity of recreation we have. We wanted to make sure all interests were accounted for and nothing was overlooked. We believe we accomplished that."

The county had printed 30,000 copies of

the free maps that are available at all county parks and open spaces and will be available at local festivals, visitor centers and outdoor retailers. The map is illustrated with photos of wildlife, natural scenery and recreationists at parks and open spaces. It includes detailed maps and locator maps of all of its properties. The map includes all the Larimer County-managed recreation trails, camping areas, swimming areas, climbing spots and other recreational opportunities. Trail profiles help hikers and mountain bikers see the difficulty of hikes and rides. Many of the map insets use 3-D technology to give the user a better feel for the topography of each property.

The map, which cost \$15,000 to design and \$8,500 to print, is 4-inches-by-9-inches folded and 27-inches-by-36-inches unfolded.

"We envision people grabbing one at a trailhead when hiking or at a reservoir when fishing and taking it home to study it further," Boring said. "This doesn't replace t

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he individual site brochures we have, which will still be available. It just helps people better prepare for their trips.”

Boring said the map project started about two years ago. The original intent was to combine various other brochures into one product that combined all the parks and open lands. However, the project soon grew larger after staff quickly saw they needed to expand the scope of the project. Staff scheduled focus group meetings with members of various users groups, including the Overland Mountain Bike Club, Colorado Mountain Club, Loveland Fishing Club and Larimer County Horseman’s Association. More than 150 people from the public provided comment on the design of the map.

“Input from these user groups really shaped the final product,” said Zac Wiebe, Larimer County Natural Resource technician. “They played an active role in the design of the map, recommended new features and overall made the map a lot more user friendly.”

The map was designed by the same Boulder company that did similar maps for the city of Fort Collins Natural Areas Program and cities of Loveland and Cheyenne.

One of the interesting features is the use of 3-D on some maps.

“We could have done it in the traditional manner with lots of 2-D maps but knew we had some properties like Hermit Park, Red Mountain and Eagle’s Nest that were more

suitable for 3-D due to their topography,” Boring said.

Boring said as good as the map is, it is a “living map,” and updates and corrections will be made to it on an annual basis.

“We are asking users to bring information they wish to have added to the map or corrections to rangers out in the field,” Boring said. “We expect to run out of the maps by the end of year so we will need to print more in 2012 at which time we can make changes.”

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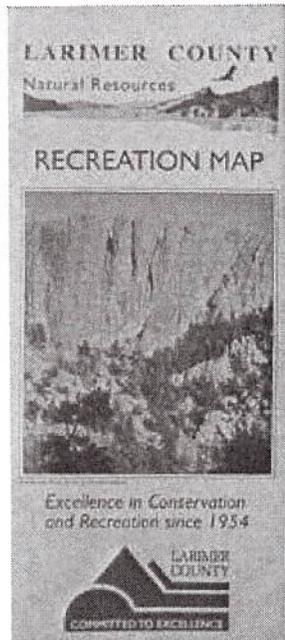
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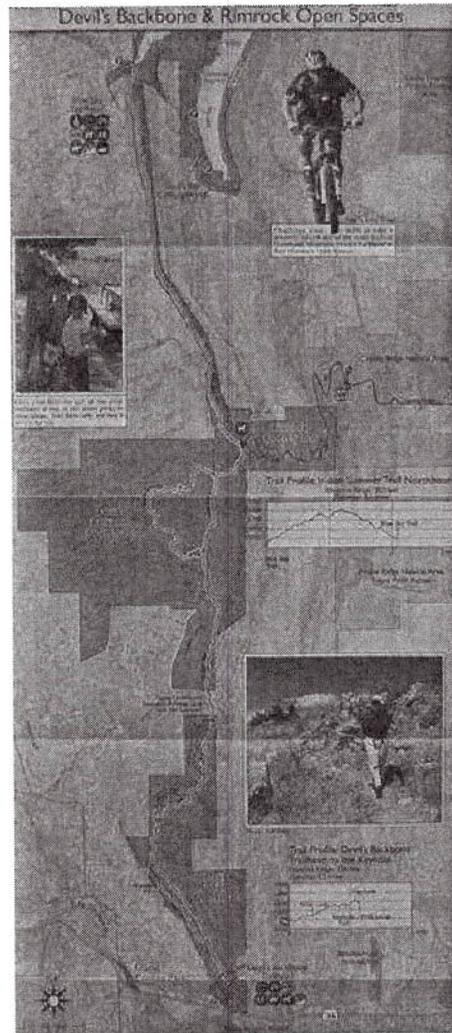
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