

## Fun on the water: Boating season kicks off in Northern Colorado

Jun. 29, 2013 |

3 Comments



Purchase Image

Boaters enjoy the water at Horsetooth Reservoir on Tuesday. / Photos by Rich Abrahamson/The Coloradoan



Written by

**Stephen Meyers**



Recreational boating is a popular summertime activity in local waters and across the U.S. / Rich Abrahamson/The Coloradoan

## Boater's checklist

### Required Items:

- Numbers and registration
- Personal Flotation Devices (PFDs/life jackets) - one per person and throwable
- Fire extinguisher
- Horn/sound signal
- Navigation lights after sunset

### Recommended items:

- First-aid kit
- Anchor and line
- Flashlight
- Visual distress signal
- Tool kit and spare parts
- Oars or paddles
- Bailing bucket

Source: Colorado Parks and Wildlife

## 2012 Colorado boating accidents by the numbers

**64:** Total reportable accidents

**21:** Accidents involving injuries

**9:** Fatalities (all from drowning, none of the victims were wearing life jackets)

**85:** Percent of boat operators involved in an accident that had no, or no known, boat safety education.

**50:** Percent of fatal and 24 percent of nonfatal boat accidents involved alcohol and/or drugs.

**36:** Average age of an operator involved in an accident

**93:** Percent of operators involved in a boat accident that were male

**Top three primary causes of boat accidents in 2012:** Alcohol/drug use, careless/reckless operation and operator inexperience.

**Top three primary accident types in 2012:** Collision with a vessel, flooding/swamping and skier mishap.

Source: Colorado Parks and Wildlife

## Avoid a BUI

Colorado's law on boating under the influence, or BUI, states that not only operators of motor boats can be arrested for being under the influence of alcohol, drugs or controlled substances, but also operators of watercraft operated by motor, wind, paddle and oar; such as Jet Skis, sailboats, motorboats, kayaks, canoes and rafts.

The blood alcohol content, or BAC, at which a person operating a vessel is considered under the influence is .08, consistent with the limit for motor vehicle operators on Colorado roadways.

A first-offense BUI can be punishable by up to a year in jail, a loss of boating privileges three months, fines up to \$1,000 and up to 96 hours of community service. Subsequent offenses can be punishable by up to a year in jail, the loss of boating privileges for one year, fines up to \$1,500 and up to 120 hours of community service.

Source: Colorado Parks and Wildlife

- **Swimming:** Swimming is allowed at the South Bay and Sunrise swim beaches. South Bay can be accessed by driving north through the South Bay Inlet area. Sunrise is located on the east side of the reservoir, and can be accessed by driving north on Centennial Drive past Rotary

# coloradoan.com

Park. There are no lifeguards on duty. Don't expect the water temperature to rise much higher than the low 70s by August.

- **Camping:** Of the 155 campsites here, 15 are boat-in only sites. The boat-in sites are strung along the west side of the reservoir, stretching from Dixon to Soldier coves. These are secluded and right on the water with the only amenity restrooms. The rest are found at South Bay and Inlet Bay and can accommodate tents and RVs (\$15-\$30 per night). Cost is \$20 per night for boat-in sites. Reservations are accepted at [www.larimercamping.com](http://www.larimercamping.com)
- **Marina:** Full service from Inlet Bay Marina. Call (970) 223-0140 or visit [www.inletbaymarina.com](http://www.inletbaymarina.com).
- **Fees:** \$7 per vehicle daily; \$14 per vehicle and boat daily; \$75 per vehicle annually; \$150 vehicle and boat trailered annually.
- **Information:** Call (970) 679-4570 or visit [www.larimer.org/naturalresources](http://www.larimer.org/naturalresources)

## Boyd Lake

- **Overview:** This 1,700-surface-acre reservoir between Fort Collins and Loveland is one of the state park system's premier water-based parks. It's open to boating, using Jet Skis, water skiing, paddling, fishing, sailing and camping.
- **Where:** Larimer County Road 11C between Fort Collins and Loveland
- **Water talk:** Boyd is lower than average, but all boat ramps are open. The water temperature is 70 degrees.
- **Boating:** Any boats entering Boyd must be inspected for exotic mussels. Inspections take place 6 a.m. to 10 p.m. daily through September, main boat ramp only.
- **Water skiing/tubing:** Water skiing is only allowed in south portion of the lake. If you have a wet suit, pack it.
- **Swimming:** Unfortunately, the swim beach is closed due to low water levels and is doubtful to open this summer.
- **Camping:** Boyd Lake State Park also has a recently updated, modern campground with 148 paved pull-through sites that can accommodate vehicles up to 40 feet in length. Sites are \$20 per night. Reserve sites at <http://coloradostateparks.reserveamerica.com> or (800) 678-2267.

# coloradoan.com

- **Marina:** Full service. Call (970) 663-2662
- **Fees:** \$8 per vehicle and \$70 annual pass
- **Information:** (970) 669-1739 or visit <http://parks.state.co.us/Parks/BoydLake>. Visitor center is open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., seven days a week in the summer.

## Carter Lake

- **Overview:** This 3-mile long and 1-mile-wide reservoir southwest of Loveland includes 1,100 surface acres of water and is best known for its premier sailing and features an active sailing community. Carter tends to see fewer water skiers and recreationists using Jet Skis than Horsetooth or Boyd Lake.
- **Where:** Larimer County Road 31, about 7 miles southwest of Loveland
- **Water talk:** Carter is about 90 percent full with a water temperature around 65 degrees. All boat ramps are open.
- **Boating:** Any boats entering Carter must be inspected for exotic mussels. Inspections take place 6 a.m. to 10 p.m. daily at Carter Lake North and South Shore ramps and 6 a.m. to 10 p.m. Wednesday through Sunday and Monday holidays at the North Pines ramp.
- **Water skiing/tubing:** Best in early mornings and evenings during the week when the water is less crowded. Pack your wet suit.
- **Swimming:** The only place you can legally swim is the Carter Lake Swimbeach located at Carter Lake Dam No. 2 on the east side of the lake. Swim hours vary. No lifeguard on duty.
- **Sailboating:** This is one of the state's premier bodies of water to sail and is home to the active 56-year-old Carter Lake Sailing Club ([www.sailcarter.org](http://www.sailcarter.org)). Winds are best for sailing from 9:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. and after 4 p.m.
- **Camping:** Few of Carter Lake's 95 camping sites are right on the water. Your best bets are sites 17-21 at South Shore. They are close to the water and the boat ramp. Camping rates vary from \$15 to \$25 per night. Reservations are accepted at [www.larimercamping.com](http://www.larimercamping.com)
- **Marina:** Full service at the Carter Lake Marina Store. Call (970) 667-1062 or visit [www.carterlakemarina.com](http://www.carterlakemarina.com)

# coloradoan.com

- **Fees:** \$7 per vehicle daily; \$14 per vehicle and boat daily; \$75 per vehicle annually; \$150 vehicle and boat trailered annually

- **Information:** (970) 679-4570 or visit [www.larimer.org/naturalresources](http://www.larimer.org/naturalresources)

## Lake McConaughy (Neb.)

- **Overview:** The joke is that more Coloradans visit “Lake Mac” than Nebraskans. McConaughy is Nebraska’s biggest lake and at 20 miles long and 142 feet deep at the dam, it offers supreme boating, fishing and swimming opportunities.

- **Where:** About 225 miles northeast of Fort Collins near Ogallala, Neb.

- **Water talk:** The water level is about 25 feet below average for this time of year, at an elevation of 3,239 feet. Water temperature is 65 degrees.

- **Boating:** Out-of-state boaters need only comply with the regulations governing your boat in Colorado licensing. No special permits or fees are required.

- **Swimming:** Built on the edge of the Nebraska Sandhills, McConaughy features natural white sand beaches.

- **Camping:** McConaughy features 60 campsites as well as beach house rentals and lodges.

Martin Bay Campground is one of the most popular areas.

Visit <http://nebraskastateparks.reserveamerica.com> or [www.ilovelakemac.com/the-lake/lodging-camping](http://www.ilovelakemac.com/the-lake/lodging-camping).

- **Fishing:** The fishing at McConaughy is a large draw, as its deep water offers walleye, wiper, bass, tiger muskies, perch and more. Nebraska’s state record walleye of 16 pounds, 2 ounces was caught at McConaughy.

- **Marina:** Several marinas and boat repair and rental shops. For more information, visit [www.ilovelakemac.com/the-lake/rentals-repairs-storage](http://www.ilovelakemac.com/the-lake/rentals-repairs-storage)

- **Fees:** \$5 per vehicle daily and \$25 annual pass

- **Information:** Visit <http://www.ilovelakemac.com> or call (800) 658-4390

Xplore reporter Stephen Meyers covers the outdoors and recreation for the Coloradoan. Follow him on Twitter @stemeyer or Facebook.com/meyersreports.

## Get out and hike with county officials

By Deni LaRue Special to the rail-Gazette Estes Park Trail-Gazette

Posted:

eprail.com

---

Estes Valley residents have two upcoming opportunities to meet informally with county officials, in a natural setting, to discuss issues while enjoying scenery and outdoor exercise.

Friday, June 28, at 8:30 a.m. "Take It Outside with Your Commissioner" — Hike at Devil's Backbone Open Space with Larimer County commissioner Tom Donnelly and Open Lands program manager Kerri Rollins. This informal opportunity to visit with an elected official will give you the chance to ask anything you'd like about the county in a spectacular outdoor setting. Come on out and get to know Donnelly and Rollins. Hike rating: easy. Please bring water for the trail and dress appropriately for the weather. Approximately 2-hour program. Program is free, but registration is required. Please go to [larimer.org/NRregistration](http://larimer.org/NRregistration) to sign up. Please direct questions to Heather at 970-679-4489.

Friday, July 26, at 8:30 a.m. "Take It Outside with Your Commissioner" — Hike at Devil's Backbone Open Space with commissioner Tom Donnelly and Open Lands program manager Kerri Rollins. Please go to [larimer.org/NRregistration](http://larimer.org/NRregistration) to sign up. Please direct questions to Heather at 970-679-4489.

# Fort Collins to spend millions on trail improvements

Fort Collins will focus on sought-after trail connections in the coming years, meeting users' requests to make trail navigation easier.

Jun. 24, 2013 |  
28 Comments



A cyclist riding on the Spring Creek Trail is reflected in a safety mirror as he emerges from the tunnel beneath the BNSF Railway tracks just west of College Avenue on Monday. The section of the Spring Creek trail west of the railroad tracks will be rebuilt and realigned starting next week to remove curves, widen the path and replace the asphalt with concrete. That section of the trail is the most popular trail section in the city. / Dawn Madura/The Coloradoan



Written by

**Trevor Hughes**

## **Paved trails in Fort Collins**

- 32 miles of paved trails
- 1.9 million estimated annual trail users
- 5,000 estimated daily trail users
- 70 percent of users are cyclists, 30 percent are pedestrians or other users
- Men use the trails more often than women: 61 percent of users are men, 39 percent are women
- Bike helmet use is about 60 percent
- 6 percent of users bring their dogs
- The 6.9-mile Spring Creek Trail is most popular, drawing an estimated 650,000 annual users
- The 10.1-mile Poudre Trail is the longest trail in the system
- Building a mile of paved trail costs about \$535,000
- Building an underpass costs about \$840,000

Source: City of Fort Collins

Fort Collins plans to spend millions of dollars to build new bike and walking trails across the city during the next few years, including extensions of the popular Power, Fossil Creek and Poudre trails.

And workers next week will realign a portion of the most popular trail section in the city: the Spring Creek Trail near College Avenue, west of Dairy Queen.

“They’re pretty significant projects that are really starting to come together,” said Marty Heffernan, the city’s director of community services. “The more of this we can get accomplished, it makes us feel like we’re serving the community well.”

City residents and business owners consistently rank the trails as one of Fort Collins’ most popular amenities. Last year, more than 1.9 million people rode, ran, Rollerbladed and biked the paved trails spanning the city, according to a study conducted last fall. The city also has an extensive network of soft-surface trails, including a new 1.4-mile section west of Overland Trail connecting Reservoir Ridge Natural Area to the Foothills Trail.

After decades of building major trails, the city is now focusing on building shorter connections, including overpasses and underpasses, to help make trail travel more convenient. The top priority for residents is a connection between Fossil Creek and Cathy Fromme Prairie Natural Area, between Shields Street and College Avenue. Almost as popular, the survey found, was a connection from the CSU Environmental Learning Center near the junction of Prospect Road and Interstate 25 south to Arapaho Bend Natural Area and then across Interstate 25, allowing riders to connect through Windsor to Greeley.

Money for the trail connections is coming from a variety of sources, including city taxpayers, Great Outdoors Colorado and the Colorado Department of Transportation. The city has worked hard to allocate money for the trails because they have won Fort Collins a national reputation for quality of life and because residents consistently say they are some of the city’s best features.

Eric Gawron, store manager for Lee’s Cyclery, said he’d love to be able to ride from Fort Collins to Greeley. A big part of the delay for that trail connection is paying for, and then building, an overpass across Interstate 25, Heffernan said.

“That would be pretty cool, to have that long extension,” Gawron said.

On the city’s west side, the new Reservoir Ridge trail allows mountain bikers and hikers access to the Foothills Trail, and from there, connections to Horsetooth Reservoir, Hughes Stadium and points south. Monday morning, a hawk soared above the trail as birds chirped, crickets sang and tall prairie grasses waved in the warm wind.

Returning to the parking lot after a walk with their dogs, CSU veterinary student Alex Pyuen and her mom, Kyle, said it was their first visit to the new trail. They pronounced themselves pleased with the flat, graded gravel trail, especially walking their elderly dogs in the morning heat.

“I love the trails here,” Alex Pyuen said. “I do wish the Mason Trail kept going all the way down.”

Heffernan said that as part of the \$86.7 million Mason Corridor project, cyclists and pedestrians will be able to use the sidewalks along the MAX bus rapid transit route to move more easily north and south through the city. Pyuen said she often ends up riding on Overland Trail because the city lacks good north-south connections.

One major north-south trail, the Power Trail, is about to get longer. Workers in a few weeks will begin building an underpass at Trilby Road and beefing up the sidewalks connecting the east-west Fossil Creek Trail to the Power Trail, which runs generally parallel to Timberline Road. The south end of the Power Trail today is at Trilby Road; the underpass will take the trail under the road and then down to Carpenter Road, ultimately connecting with county and Loveland trails.

Work on the Fossil Creek Trail connection between Shields and College south of Harmony Road will likely start next year. Heffernan said that \$1.3 million project is being designed this year, and the city is working to get permission from the railroad to build an underpass beneath the tracks just west of College.

“That railroad underpass has always been a major undertaking,” he said.

## Man critically injured in alcohol-related boating accident on Horsetooth Reservoir

Jun. 30, 2013 |  
15 Comments



Written by  
[Sarah Jane Kyle](#)

## Man critically injured in alcohol-related boating accident on Horsetooth Reservoir

Jun. 30, 2013

A 22-year-old man was critically injured Sunday when he fell off a boat in Horsetooth Reservoir and was run over by its intoxicated driver.

The boat had approximately 9 people on it, many of whom were underage and “severely intoxicated,” according to Larimer County Sheriff’s Office. It’s unclear whether or not the victim had been drinking.

LCSO, Larimer County’s parks department, Poudre Fire Authority, Medical Center of the Rockies’ AirLink and a Poudre Valley Hospital ambulance responded to the call.

The man was taken to Medical Center of the Rockies with serious lacerations on his right side from the boat’s propeller. His condition is unknown.

No identities will be released at this time, according to LCSO.

An investigation is ongoing to determine whether or not the fall was accidental and alcohol-related or intentional.

**TODAY'S NEWS**

## **Community Partnering Program accepting grant applications**

ShareThis [Print](#) [E-Mail](#) [Comment](#)

By Taylor Reed July 10, 2013

The 2014 Small Grants for Community Partnering program, sponsored by the Larimer County Natural Resources Department, has begun accepting applications.

The grant program provides money for improvement projects that include work on open spaces, natural areas and agriculture. Grants may be awarded to groups, individuals, and homeowner/property associations.

Applications must be received by the Larimer County Natural Resources Department by 3 p.m. on Sept. 6, 2013.

Awards for the grant will be announced by February, 2014. Small Grants for Community Partnering has provided about \$190,000 in funding for these projects since 1998. Individual projects can receive as much as \$2,000 in funding.

Applicants for the grant can apply in person at the Larimer County Natural Resources Department or online at [sburke@larimer.org](mailto:sburke@larimer.org).

## County natural resources grants offered

Jul. 11, 2013 |

0 Comments

Written by

**Coloradoan staff**

The Larimer County Natural Resources Department will accept grants for its 2014 Small Grants for Community Partnering through 3 p.m. Sept. 6.

The grants are offered to individuals or groups for agriculture projects and open space and natural area protection, research and access improvement work. Awards will be announced in February 2014, according to a county news release.

The county has set aside \$20,000 to award grants of up to \$2,000 for individual projects.

Application forms and information is available at <http://noconow.co/smallgrant2014>.

## Poudre River Trail to advance through Timnath

Larimer County will coordinate a 0.6-mile project that will eventually connect other trail segments.

Jul. 12, 2013 |  
6 Comments



Purchase Image

Cody Speaker of Timnath rides his bike June 4 along the Poudre River Trail at the River Bluffs Open Space. Timnath officials have approved a 0.6-mile expansion of the trail through their town. / Sam Noblett/The Coloradoan



Written by  
[Kevin Duggan](#)

### By the numbers

Funding for a segment of the Poudre River Trail through Timnath:

- Great Outdoors Colorado – \$355,643
- Larimer County – \$143,130
- Timnath – \$99,875

Source: Town of Timnath

### Related Links

- [Map: Existing and Proposed Trails in Fort Collins](#)

The Poudre River Trail is a step closer to making its way through Timnath.

The town council has approved an agreement with Larimer County to build a 0.6-mile section of the popular trail that would cross Harmony Road.

# coloradoan.com

The agreement, which still needs to be approved by Larimer County commissioners, calls for the county to coordinate construction of the trail segment.

The project would connect a section of trail near the Walmart store at Interstate 25 and Harmony Road to the site of a proposed new Poudre Fire Authority station along Larimer County Road 3F.

The project is expected to cost about \$598,000, with the town, Larimer County and Great Outdoors Colorado, or GOCO, contributing.

The section of new trail in Timnath is expected to begin this fall with completion by next summer, said Jeffery Boring, regional trail coordinator with the Larimer County Department of Natural Resources.

The trail segment through Timnath eventually will tie into a section that would be built by Larimer County connecting to River Bluffs Natural Area near Windsor, Boring said.

“Step by step, it’s coming together,” he said. “It’s just a matter of time, perhaps another three or four years, and this whole thing will be done.”

Last year, GOCO awarded a \$5.1 million grant to efforts aimed at filling in gaps along the Poudre River Trail, which when complete would run from Bellvue to Greeley.

The trail currently runs about 21 miles from Greeley to Windsor. Another segment runs from Bellvue to the Environmental Learning Center south of Prospect Road in Fort Collins.

City officials are working on plans to extend the trail from the environmental center to Arapaho Bend Natural Area near I-25 and Harmony Road. Work on a new trailhead and an extension of the trail at Arapaho Bend is expected to begin this year, said Craig Foreman of the city’s Parks Planning Department.

Fort Collins’ segment would be carried from Arapaho Bend over I-25 on a bridge. The structure would be a repurposed portion of the pedestrian bridge that currently runs across the Poudre River at Mulberry Street, Foreman said.

When the Colorado Department of Transportation replaces the bridge that carries Mulberry Street across the river, a section of the existing pedestrian bridge will be used to carry the Poudre River Trail across the river, Foreman said. The other section will be used for the I-25 overpass.

“We’re planning to repurpose the bridge,” he said. “It’s a way to make the project sustainable.”

## Colorado Lottery turns 30 with \$2.4 billion for trails, parks wildlife

By Jason Blevins *The Denver Post* *The Denver Post*

Posted:

ReporterHerald.com

Cole Citarella bounds from the South Platte River with his inner tube and plops into a chair under his folks' picnic canopy in Denver's Confluence Park.

"The tubing is awesome," he said.

Count one more happy customer of the Colorado Lottery. Celebrating its 30th year this summer, the state's lottery has distributed more than \$2.4 billion to Colorado parks, recreation, open space, conservation and public-school construction. Almost \$150 million has gone to the city and county of Denver, with a large chunk of that going to river restoration, parks and recreation along the city's South Platte.

Thirty years ago, Colorado Lottery boosters hoped the program would generate \$35 million for the state's construction projects and parks. The first year saw \$41 million in proceeds, and the lottery has defied economic turmoil ever since, posting a record \$545.3 million in sales in fiscal 2012 and directing \$123.2 million toward the state's efforts to protect land, water and wildlife and promote outdoor recreation, especially for kids.

"This definitely achieves getting kids outdoors," Lisa Citarella said as her family relished a day on the river in downtown Denver. "Maybe we should go buy another ticket."

As the population of Colorado has grown from about 2.8 million in 1983 to more than 5 million today, Colorado Lottery proceeds have enabled the state to protect the state's natural assets while increasing access to the outdoors.

How that money is distributed has evolved since 1983. For the first decade, half of all lottery proceeds went to state construction projects, 40 percent to local and county parks and 10 percent to state parks. In 1988, a cash-strapped legislature began diverting proceeds from the state's Conservation Trust Fund and division of parks into prison construction and other capital projects.

By 1991, a trove of amendments to the original lottery statute saw more than 60 percent of proceeds directed toward capital projects. Voters in 1992 stepped in and approved a constitutional amendment that directed the lottery distribution back toward parks and open space by creating the Great Outdoors Colorado Program. GOCO now collects 50 percent of all lottery proceeds after payouts and administrative expenses (\$57 million in 2012), while 40 percent goes to the Conservation Trust Fund (\$49.2 million in 2012) and 10 percent funds the Colorado Division of Parks and Wildlife (\$12.3 million in 2012), which counts on lottery proceeds as its only support from the state.

Colorado Lottery funds have most recently spurred the renovation and development of the state's playgrounds, part of a concerted effort by GOCO to get more kids playing outside. [GOCO last month distributed 42 grants worth \\$7.4 million](#), including 16 Schoolyard Initiative grants for school playgrounds in a dozen Colorado counties.

"Throughout all the things we do, we are placing an emphasis on projects that get kids and families outside. We placed a high priority on that this year," said GOCO executive director [Lise Aangeenbrug](#) on her trust's recent work with the Colorado Health Foundation to revamp school playgrounds. "We've learned that can be the only place some kids get outside."

Martha Tableman said Colorado Lottery funds and GOCO have been instrumental in not only helping Clear Creek County acquire open space but in developing long-term plans for the county's ambitious greenway plan, which counts the path through Clear Creek Canyon as an essential component. Tableman, director of Clear Creek Open Space, said the Plains to Peaks trail creates a project of "regional and statewide significance" because it opens parts of the canyon that are not accessible except by car or boat.

"This is clearly an example of where working together across jurisdictional lines results in a sum that is greater than the

parts," she said.

Don't try to pin down Aangeenbrug on her favorite GOCO projects. She pretty much blankets the state with her response, noting GOCO river corridor, open space, trails, wildlife and parks grants in Mesa, Montezuma, Archuleta and Gunnison counties, North Park, Purgatory, the South Platte River corridor from Littleton to Adams County and along the Yampa River. The theme is that each of these projects moves well beyond district, municipal and county lines.

"The thing GOCO has afforded local efforts is that they are able to protect larger landscapes that provide both recreation, the preservation of agricultural lands and the protection of wildlife habitat," she said. "People are able to do larger projects that address all the things Coloradans are most concerned about. They want recreation close to home, but they also want to know the state's most iconic landscapes are protected."

One example of regional collaboration that combines backyard recreation and conservation is Clear Creek and Jefferson counties working on the Plains to Peaks Trail through Clear Creek Canyon, a 5-mile, \$10.2 million project that won a \$4.6 million GOCO grant last year. A 2009 GOCO grant enabled Clear Creek County to acquire a crucial parcel with 3,000 feet of Clear Creek frontage, sparking the effort to develop a trail that will connect the mountains with the Front Range.

"It may start as a local idea, but when GOCO holds out the carrot, it can bring counties together like it did for Clear Creek and Jefferson," Aangeenbrug said.

*Jason Blevins: 303-954-1374, [jblevins@denverpost.com](mailto:jblevins@denverpost.com) or [twitter.com/jasontblevins](https://twitter.com/jasontblevins)*

\$2.4 billion

The amount that the Colorado Lottery has distributed to Colorado parks and construction since it began in 1983

\$150 million

The amount the city and county of Denver has received from the program — which funded the South Platte River restoration

\$545.3 million

The sales that the Colorado Lottery program posted in fiscal 2012 — a record-setting total

•  
• Story

# Larimer County to offer an early look at Chimney Hollow Open Space

*Reporter-Herald Staff*

POSTED: 07/14/2013 09:41:31 PM MDT

LOVELAND -- Larimer County Natural Resources and Northern Water will offer more sessions of its popular field trip to Chimney Hollow Open Space in the Blue Mountain Conservation Area.

The Chimney Hollow Open Space Tour will take place at 9 a.m.-noon Saturday, Aug. 3, and again Thursday, Sept. 5.

The field trip will include an easy, round-trip walk of a half-mile for the whole group.

After learning about the Windy Gap Firing Project's proposed Chimney Hollow Reservoir and the Chimney Hollow property, the group will split up, and one group will have an opportunity to hike an additional 1.5 miles, while the other group will receive a historical interpretive tour of the property.

The longer hike will give a sense of what the recreational amenities may become following a public management planning process.

The field trip is free, but space is limited and registration is currently being taken at [larimer.org/Nrregistration](http://larimer.org/Nrregistration).

For details, contact Heather Young at 679-4489 or by email at [hyoung@larimer.org](mailto:hyoung@larimer.org).



[FIRE RESTRICTIONS TO BE LIFTED ON THE ARAPAHO AND ROOSEVELT NATIONAL FORESTS](#) [NATIONAL NIGHT OUT IS AUG. 6](#)

## ‘Small Grants for Community Partnering’ make a difference in Northern Colorado communities

BY [NFN](#) ON JULY 17, 2013 IN [DISPATCHES](#) · [ADD COMMENT](#)

Since 1998, local groups and neighborhoods throughout Northern Colorado have used Larimer County’s Small Grants for Community Partnering to help fund their projects and make a difference in their communities. These include Glacier View Meadows, Buckeye Community Club, Red Feather Lakes Library, Soaring Eagle Ecology Center, Abbey of St Walburga, Virginia Dale Community Club, Eyestone Elementary and the North Fork Weed Coop.

Funded by the County’s Help Preserve Open Spaces 0.25-cent sales tax, the program allows citizens to request funds for their community projects. Annually, \$20,000 is set aside for individual awards up to \$2,000 per project per year. Grants are dispersed throughout Larimer County and your group is encouraged to apply for this seed money to enhance your community.

Applicants can be individuals, organizations and groups, and homeowner/property owner associations. Projects can be for:

- 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 lands and natural areas
- Research on open spaces.

Applications for 2014 grants are due Friday, Sept. 6 at 3 p.m., and awards announced by February 2014. Information and application are available at [www.larimer.org](http://www.larimer.org). Applicants are encouraged to read through the selection criteria and to contact Sue Burke, Coordinator for Small Grants for Community Partnering, with questions.

Application forms, selection criteria and other information may be obtained:

- Online at [www.larimer.org](http://www.larimer.org)
- In person at Larimer County Natural Resources Department, 1800 S. County Road 31, Loveland, or
- By mail by contacting Sue Burke at 970-679-4566 or [sburke@larimer.org](mailto:sburke@larimer.org)

## Bridging the gaps: Poudre River Trail stepping toward completion

Jul. 29, 2013 |  
2 Comments



[Purchase Image](#)

A cyclist uses the Poudre River Trail on Friday near the Colorado State University Environmental Learning Center in Fort Collins. / Dawn Madura/The Coloradoan



Written by  
[Kevin Duggan](#)



## Detours ahead

Numerous construction projects are planned along the Poudre River in Fort Collins, resulting in closures and detours of the Poudre River Trail:

- **Vine Drive outfall project:** A stormwater channel will be built west of Shields Street to carry runoff from the area around West Vine Drive to the river. The trail will be closed from fall to spring 2014.
- **Woodward (formerly Link-N-Greens):** Bikes and pedestrians will be detoured to Lincoln and Lemay avenues. Work begins in fall; a new trail through the site will be installed in early 2014.
- **Mulberry Street bridge:** The Colorado Department of Transportation is scheduled to replace the bridge over the Poudre River. The 18-month project is expected to begin this fall. The trail is expected to be affected throughout 2014, with traffic detoured to a temporary trail.
- **Shields Street bridge:** Larimer County is expected to replace the bridge in 2015. During the 8-month project, trail traffic will be detoured to Vine Drive, Wood Street, Elm Street and The Farm at Lee Martinez Park.

Step by step, the decadeslong vision of building a recreational trail from Bellvue to Greeley is getting closer to reality.

Two major gaps remain in completing the Poudre River Trail, with the great divide centered near Interstate 25 and its intersection with Harmony Road.

Bridging those gaps within the next three to four years is a distinctive possibility, if funding sources and alignments can be secured, officials say. And it will require continued cooperation among entities such as Fort Collins, Larimer County, Windsor and Timnath.

“I am confident it will happen,” said Jeffery Boring, regional trail coordinator with the Larimer County Department of Natural Resources. “We have the right players at the table and we are working collaboratively to make it happen.”

But plenty of challenges remain. Property easements from willing landowners to run the trail across their property still have to be obtained on both sides of the interstate.

And building one mile of trail costs about \$500,000. Sources of funding such as state lottery money and Great Outdoors Colorado, or GOCO, are available, said Craig Foreman, parks planning manager for Fort Collins.

But the process of securing GOCO grants is highly competitive. Last year the Poudre Trail project received a \$5.1 million grant to help move it forward.

“The connection to Timnath came up strong as a top priority for GOCO,” he said. “That helped validate that we are on the right track.”

The Poudre River Trail currently stretches about 21 miles from Greeley to River Bluffs Natural Area near Windsor. Another segment runs about 17 miles from Bellvue through Fort Collins to the Environmental Learning Center south of Prospect Road.

The gaps cover roughly 5-6 miles, depending on the alignment. Here's a look at where efforts to bridge the gaps stand:

## West of I-25

- Fort Collins plans to begin construction this fall on a parking lot and trailhead for the Poudre River Trail at Arapaho Bend Natural Area.
- A bridge to carry the Poudre River Trail over I-25 will connect it to a segment near the Walmart store in Timnath. The structure will be a repurposed pedestrian bridge that currently crosses the river along Mulberry Street in Fort Collins.
- Construction of the bridge is expected to occur in 2015.
- Fort Collins has identified a potential route for the trail from the Environmental Learning Center to Arapaho Bend Natural Area, but property easements for the trail have not yet been secured.
- The trail would cross the Great Western Railway track south of the ELC and cut across a large piece of land that in time might contain a 100-acre community park.
- The roughly 2.25-mile segment would cost about \$1.5 million to build. Funding for the construction has not been identified, but the city plans to seek grants from Great Outdoor Colorado, or GOCO.

## East of I-25

- Larimer County has identified an alignment of the trail running about 1.2 miles north of River Bluffs Natural Area and County Road 32E. The trail will run along the eastern edge of a conservation easement on land known as the Three Bells property.
- No funding is identified for constructing the trail segment, which is expected to cost between \$800,000 and \$1 million to build.
- The county will seek grants for the project from Great Outdoors Colorado, or GOCO, in 2014 with construction in 2015 if a grant is received.
- Discussions are underway with several owners of land in the river corridor within the roughly 3-mile stretch between the Three Bells property and Timnath.
- Larimer County has agreed to design and build a 0.6-mile section of trail connecting the existing trail and Timnath's Gateway Park next to the Walmart store to a site southeast of the intersection of Harmony Road and County Road 5.
- The project is expected to cost about \$598,000, with the town, Larimer County and GOCO contributing. Construction on the section is expected to begin this fall with completion by next summer.

## Shooting area under development to balance needs, safety concerns of gun enthusiasts and recreationists

*Project at Pawnee National Grassland the result of partnership of local, state, and federal agencies.*

Jul. 31, 2013 |  
5 Comments



[Purchase Image](#)

United States Army Reservist Andrew Zollner looks over the site at the new Baker Draw Designated Shooting Area on the Pawnee National Grassland in Weld County east of Fort Collins on Wednesday. The grassland's first designated shooting area is expected to open this fall. / Rich Abrahamson/The Coloradoan



Written by  
[Stephen Mevers](#)

### Shooting on open lands

Until the Baker Draw Designated Shooting Area is open, Pawnee National Grassland and Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forests have no designated shooting areas. Several areas along roads in the grassland are marked “prohibited” with signs. Larimer County limits shooting on its open spaces to hunting seasons.

#### Shooting rules:

- Be farther than 150 yards from a residence, building, campsite, developed recreation area or occupied area.
- Do not shoot across or on a National Forest System road or nearby body of water.
- Do not shoot where a person could be hurt or property could be damaged.
- Do not use tracer bullets or incendiary ammunition.
- Use only approved targets: cardboard targets, paper targets, manufactured metallic targets, or manufactured thrown-type clay targets (clay pigeons). Exploding targets are not permitted.
- Information: [www.fs.usda.gov/arp](http://www.fs.usda.gov/arp)

### Shooting partnership

The Northern Front Range Recreational Sport Shooting Management Partnership is a coalition of local, state and federal governments, including Larimer, Boulder, Gilpin and Clear Creek counties, and the U.S. Forest Service and Colorado Parks and Wildlife.

# coloradoan.com

For more information, visit [SportShootingPartners.org](http://SportShootingPartners.org). Or, call project coordinator Garry Sanfacon at (720) 564-2642 or email him at [info@SportShootingPartners.org](mailto:info@SportShootingPartners.org).

## Related Links

- [Sections of Pawnee National Grassland closed during shooting area construction](#)
- [Target shooting in Pawnee grasslands](#)
- [Pawnee National Grasslands](#)

The wide-open prairie expanse of the Pawnee National Grassland is dotted with tall, native grasses, cactus, wildflowers and the two rising Pawnee Buttes. It's that beauty that attracts outdoor enthusiasts.

But amidst that beauty are pockets of charred grass, broken glass, old TV sets and millions of gun casings and shotgun shells littering the landscape. You might hear the sound of gunfire in the distance.

The litter of gun activity has spread onto the grassland about 45 minutes east of Fort Collins as recreational shooters flock to the popular area to practice their aim.

Responsible gun enthusiasts will tell you they don't shoot at Pawnee anymore. It's too unsafe, since people don't use proper backstops and stray bullets fly haphazardly. It's too dirty, as people leave behind their targets — often old home appliances.

"It's like a war zone out there," said Kevin Quast, manager of Great Guns Sporting in Nunn. "People don't know what they're doing."

Increased traffic on U.S. National Forest Service land, where rules allow recreational shooting without limitation, has caused nerve-racking situations for other grassland visitors, officials say. But the hope from local, state and federal agencies is the formation of a new partnership, research and the addition of the Baker Draw Designated Shooting Area on the Pawnee will create safe designated areas for gun enthusiasts to shoot while keeping other outdoor recreationists from having to keep their heads on a swivel.

"Anytime you put more people in the woods, those possible conflicts are going to occur," said Gary Buffington, director of the Larimer County Department of Natural Resources. "I think it's important to recognize the popularity of people shooting guns in public lands and finding the best way to meet the needs in Larimer County."

## Partnership forms

Regulations and restrictions on shooting on public lands could be coming, as Larimer County earlier this year joined a consortium to study shooting on public lands. The Northern Front Range Recreational Sport Shooting Management Partnership is a coalition that includes Larimer, Boulder, Gilpin and Clear Creek counties as well as the U.S. Forest Service and Colorado Parks and Wildlife.

Project coordinator Garry Sanfacon said the partnership supports "traditional gun ownership" and "responsible gun ownership."

Target and recreational shooting are permitted on Forest Service land with few restrictions. Guidelines for shooters in Arapaho and Roosevelt national forests and on Pawnee National Grassland are few and simple: Targets should be farther than 150 yards from a residence, building, campsite, developed recreation area or occupied area;

no shooting across or on a National Forest System road or nearby body of water; no shooting where a person could be hurt or property could be damaged and no use of tracer bullets or incendiary ammunition. Casings, targets and trash also should be removed.

Supervised ranges exist in Larimer and Weld counties, such as Quast's Great Guns Sporting, Pawnee Sportsmen's Center near Briggsdale and Estes Park Gun and Archery Club. There are several indoor facilities such as Rocky Mountain Shooters Supply and the Front Range Gun Club in Loveland.

"There are plenty of places to go shoot in the area," Buffington said. "Right now, no areas are being taken away. We don't have as many challenges as the other three (counties) have. They're smaller as far as a land base. The challenges there are real."

Target shooting in Boulder County's national forest lands has long been a divisive topic. According to the Longmont Times-Call, some Boulder County residents have expressed alarm about the safety of allowing sport shooting to continue in such areas as Left Hand Canyon and a former community dump site near Allenspark.

Twelve community members from Larimer County attended an open-house, informational meeting of the Northern Front Range Recreational Sport Shooting Management Partnership in June in Fort Collins.

Buffington said the 12 members included 11 people who identified themselves as gun enthusiasts and one man concerned about safety.

"He had been on the hiking trails in the forest and heard close shots being fired. He was concerned about that being on a trail," Buffington said. "That's a real concern for people. Everyone's perception of safety and danger is different. Hearing shots fired, you naturally wonder about where the shots are coming from and which direction they're going."

The partnership's preliminary criteria to identify areas that might be studied further for their potential use as target shooting sites include: being at least 1 mile from the boundary of a nearby city or town; being at least half a mile from a residential development, subdivision or unincorporated town, and at least one-quarter mile from a single-family home; being at least one-quarter mile away from a trail, campsite or other developed recreational facility; and being at least one-quarter mile away from a communications tower.

Reghan Cloudman, forest service spokeswoman, said she hasn't had many cases of conflict between gun users and non-gun users in the Arapaho and Roosevelt national forests, located in the Poudre Canyon.

"Up higher in the mountains and deeper in the forest, you can find those safe backstops," she said. "The conflict there isn't what we see on the Pawnee."

### **A safe place to shoot**

Since there are no designated shooting areas in the Arapaho and Roosevelt national forests and Pawnee National Grassland, recreational shooters basically can shoot anywhere but must follow all rules and regulations.

Unfortunately, Cloudman said, many people are unaware of the regulations and accidents occur. Seventeen fires at the grassland were ignited by shooters using illegal tracer bullets in the past year and a half, according to the

# coloradoan.com

U.S. Forest Service. Cloudman has several documented cases of near misses where stray bullets came close to homes and structures.

“There’s no regulating it, so you don’t know what it’s going to be like,” said Bill Cates, manager of Rocky Mountain Shooters Supply in Fort Collins. “There are too many people out there and it’s like any abuse of public land, whether it’s on ATVs or people leaving behind their ammo, then it hurts the people who use the land responsibly.”

Cloudman hopes construction of the Baker Draw Designated Shooting Area will help reduce the illegal target shooting on the 193,060-acre grassland.

Located near the intersection of Weld County roads 96 and 63, northwest of Briggsdale, the new shooting area will feature a parking lot, dirt berms, 30 shooting lanes (25, 50 and 100 yards) and 26 shooting benches, an information kiosk and possibly shade covers. The area is expected to open this fall and will be open from dawn to dusk daily.

The U.S. Army Reserves are constructing the site, which was approved in 2011 and funded by a \$25,000 grant provided from the National Rifle Association and \$97,000 from Colorado Parks and Wildlife.

“We have many responsible shooters who don’t cause any problems, but we’ve also had some irresponsible shooters. One of the biggest hopes from this location is that it is a place where we can send people,” said Cloudman, who estimates more than 100 people shoot at Pawnee on busy weekends in spring and fall. “Here’s a place you can go, safely. All the rules and regulations will be there, so people can be better informed.”

Better informed or not, Quast is skeptical much will change with the addition of the designated shooting area.

“It isn’t regulated. So, with shooting on public grounds, I don’t know what really can be done. Like with any other rules we have, if people want to break them, then they probably will,” he said.

## Body found in Larimer County open space

Reporter-Herald News Staff Loveland Reporter-Herald

Posted:

ReporterHerald.com

---

FORT COLLINS -- Parks units and Larimer County Sheriff's deputies responded Thursday afternoon to a report of a body found in Lions Park open space northwest of Fort Collins.

The incident does not appear suspicious, sheriff's office spokeswoman Jennifer Hillmann said. The body was reported to the sheriff's office just after 4 p.m. by a passerby who indicated the body may have been there for awhile.

Lions Park is located off North Overland Trail and according to emergency radio transmissions, a passerby found the body about 50 yards from a pavilion.

The Larimer County Coroner's Office was called to the scene.

Additional details were not available.



## Body found in Lions Park Open Space

BY [NFN](#) ON AUGUST 2, 2013 IN [DISPATCHES](#) · [ADD COMMENT](#)

Larimer County Sheriff's Office deputies and Larimer County Department of Natural Resources rangers responded to Lions Park Open Space, located at 2503 North Overland Trail, on Aug. 1 at approximately 4 p.m. on the report of a dead body.

Upon arrival, deputies discovered the body of what is believed to be a 39-year-old homeless male who appeared to be living in the area. Larimer County Sheriff's and Coroner's office personnel are investigating.

The Larimer County Coroner will release the identity of the victim as well as the manner and cause of death following the autopsy and notification of family.

## Body of man, 39, found in park northwest of Fort Collins

Aug. 2, 2013 |  
16 Comments



Written by  
[Robert Allen](#)

A 39-year-old man's body was found Thursday afternoon in Lions Open Space near the Poudre River northwest of Fort Collins, according to Larimer County Sheriff's Office.

It's uncertain whether foul play is suspected because the sheriff's office is awaiting autopsy results, sheriff spokesman John Schulz said in an email. The man is believed to have been homeless and dwelling in the area.

The Larimer County Coroner's Office had not yet identified the man after an autopsy Friday.

Deputies and Department of Natural Resources rangers found the body at 2503 N. Overland Trail, according to the sheriff's office.

— Coloradoan staff

## 2014 Grant Cycle Begins

*Special to the Trail-Gazette Estes Park Trail-Gazette*

Posted:

eptrail.com

---

Larimer County Natural Resources Department announces the 2014 "Small Grants for Community Partnering" grant cycle. Applications are due Friday, Sept. 6, at 3 p.m., with awards announced by February, 2014.

These grants are offered to individuals, organizations and groups, and homeowner/property owner associations for community, neighborhood, and group projects for:

- 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 lands and natural areas
- Research on open spaces

Grant selection criteria, application, and other information are available at [larimer.org/naturalresources/openlands/smallgrants.htm](http://larimer.org/naturalresources/openlands/smallgrants.htm) Applicants are encouraged to read through the selection criteria and to contact Sue Burke, Coordinator for Small Grants for Community Partnering, with questions.

Application forms, selection criteria, and other information may be obtained:

- Online at [larimer.org/naturalresources/openlands/smallgrants.htm](http://larimer.org/naturalresources/openlands/smallgrants.htm)
- In person at Larimer County Natural Resources Department, 1800 S. County Road 31, Loveland
- By mail by contacting Sue Burke at 970-679-4566 or [sburke@larimer.org](mailto:sburke@larimer.org)

Small Grants for Community Partnering are funded by the County's Help Preserve Open Spaces ¼-cent sales tax. Annually, \$20,000 is set aside for individual awards up to \$2,000 per project per year. Since 1998, 135 projects throughout Larimer County have received approximately \$191,000 in funding. (See Google Map of funding history at the above web link.)

## **The 1890s Swartz farmstead will stay largely intact, with a lease developed between the city and Loveland Historical Society**

*By Jessica Maher Reporter-Herald Staff Writer Loveland Reporter-Herald*

*Posted:*

ReporterHerald.com

With Loveland's newest natural area slated to open next month, city groups that had been at odds over what to do with a historic farmstead there have reached a tentative agreement.

Construction crews are currently putting the finishing touches on the River's Edge Natural Area, which sits on property formerly owned by Hewlett-Packard and then Agilent, and which the city acquired in 2011. Also part of that property are nine buildings plus shed ruins that make up the Swartz farm, a rare complete farmstead -- silo, barn, the works -- that dates back to the late 19th century.

Over the past several months, the city has been working with representatives from the Historic Preservation and Open Lands Advisory commissions to develop a shared vision and concept plan for the farmstead site, which in one early design plan would have been razed to construct a parking lot.

At a joint meeting of both commissions this week, both commissions agreed to a plan that leaves most of the farm intact.

"It looks like we have an agreed upon concept plan on how that can be incorporated into the River's Edge natural lands project," Opens Lands manager Rob Burdine said.

Under that plan, all but two structures would stay standing. To clear space for parking, the machine shed and agricultural building would be demolished.

For the rest of the buildings, the city plans to develop a long-term lease with the Loveland Historical Society, one that could possibly look like the one crafted for the Milner-Schwarz house adjacent to the farmstead on South Railroad Avenue.

And the historical society's goal would be the same: preserve and rehabilitate the buildings for future use.

Mike Perry, president of the Loveland Historical Society, said that they are committed to the project and have a vision of staffing a caretaker to live on site, though the idea of losing two pieces of the farm still stings.

"We really would like to keep the complete farm because it was a sheep farm, and basically the building that's being demolished is what the sheep were in. It's a blow to lose that," Perry said. "But we realized we had to make some compromises ... we knew we couldn't have everything."

There are still more questions than answers ahead for the farmstead. The next simultaneous steps are working out the lease and going forward with state and national historic designation for the buildings.

Historic designation is vital because the farmstead sits in a floodway, and unless it receives a designation on the National Register of Historic Places, those structures cannot be occupied.

"We're moving forward with a plan to open them up to public use in the future if that's what we can get to,"

Burdine said.

A grand opening for River's Edge has been scheduled for Sept. 28. The park's main entrance will be off First Street. The parking lot at the Swartz farm off South Railroad Avenue will operate as a secondary entrance as well as parking for environmental programs the city hopes to expand with the opening of the natural area, Burdine said.

Jessica Maher can be reached at 669-5050, ext. 516, or [maherj@reporter-herald.com](mailto:maherj@reporter-herald.com). Follow her on Twitter: @JessicaMaherRH.

# States Seek Federal Crackdown on Mussel Invaders

By [Jim Malewitz](#), Staff Writer

*(Updated 8/5/2013: CORRECTS story to note mussels' multi-billion dollar cost to U.S. taxpayers, not hundreds of billions.)*

State lawmakers and wildlife officials want Washington's help in battling huge colonies of zebra and quagga mussels that are wreaking havoc in U.S. waters and costing U.S. taxpayers billions of dollars.

The officials say an infusion of federal dollars would give them the biggest boost, but few expect tightfisted Congress to deliver. In the meantime, they want Washington to tweak a 113-year-old federal law to give them more ammunition against people who help the invaders spread.

## **"Serious threat"**

The tiny mollusks — the zebra mussel and its close cousin the quagga—have been spotted in more than 600 bodies of water in 27 states, according to the [U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service](#). The animals ravage underwater food chains by sucking up resources fish depend on. They also cling to everything in their path, clogging pipes and the machinery of power plants and water-delivery systems. That has necessitated millions in repairs and, in a few cases, shutdowns.

The mussels, natives of Eastern Europe and Western Asia, were transported to the U.S. in the ballast water of trans-Atlantic cargo ships. They first appeared in the Great Lakes in the mid-1980s, and between 2000 and 2010, they cost that region's water users some \$5 billion. The invaders have since crossed the Rocky Mountains, likely hitching a ride on a vacationer's boat (they can survive for weeks out of water).

Their rapid spread threatens water supplies and energy systems in the West, a region heavily dependent upon hydropower and often gripped by drought. In response, state officials have stepped up boat inspections and cleaning efforts in addition to calling for federal help.



Invasive quagga mussels in 2009 cover this formerly sunken boat at Lake Mead National Recreation Area in Nevada. State wildlife officials say Congress can help fight the mussels' invasion by tweaking a 113-year-old conservation law. (AP)

“These little critters are a serious threat to the United States,” said Larry Dalton, who retired this year as Utah’s invasive species coordinator. In that state, the mussels have hit two lakes and a reservoir and have cost taxpayers up to \$15 million for repairs to water-delivery systems.

In 2007, researchers there discovered a quagga infestation in Lake Mead, formed by the Hoover Dam, a key source of water, energy and recreation for states along the Colorado River. They now blanket the lake’s bottom and have traveled down canals into Southern California, adding costs to operating the Hoover and Davis dams.

In North Texas, the 2009 discovery of zebra mussels in Lake Texoma, one of the largest reservoirs in the U.S., has strained water supplies in an area that has suffered a years-long drought. The North Texas Municipal Water District is now building a \$300 million pipeline that can filter out zebra mussels or other invasive species. Customers are picking up the tab, which has increased some water bills by as much as 15 percent. In the meantime, the district has stopped pumping water from the lake, giving up 28 percent of its normal water supply.

## Federal action

A bill in the U.S. House would add quaggas to a list of “injurious” species under the 1900 Lacey Act, which prohibits trade in wildlife, fish, and plants that have been illegally taken, transported or sold. If quaggas are put on the list, the federal government could prosecute — criminally or civilly — people who import or transport the mussels across state lines.

Those convicted of felony trafficking under the act could face a fine of up to \$20,000, or five years in prison, or both. A misdemeanor violation, a more likely scenario, carries a maximum fine of \$10,000 and a year in prison.

“It’s a very powerful tool in terms of deterrence,” said Holly Propst, policy director at the Western Governors’ Association, which last week released a [letter](#) supporting the bill.

The zebra mussel is already on the injurious species list, which also includes certain mongooses and fruit bats, among a host of other creatures. The Fish and Wildlife Service could add the quagga without an act of Congress, but that route could take as long as 10 years.

“In many ways, this is somewhat of a milestone,” Leah Elwell, coordinator of the Western Regional Panel on Aquatic Nuisance Species, said of the proposal. Otherwise, “it basically takes an act of God to put something on the injurious wildlife list.”

## States’ Patchwork

Eleven western states already restrict the transport of quaggas, according to a recent [Arizona Journal of Environmental Law and Policy article](#). Five of those states — Idaho, Washington, Oregon, Wyoming and Montana — have not yet found them in their states, but fear their impact.

But state rules vary, and some legal experts say the existing patchwork of regulations doesn’t guarantee boaters will inspect their vessels, especially since the rules are enforced by agencies hit hard by [cuts under Congress’ sequestration](#).

Stephanie Showalter-Otts, director of the University of Mississippi’s National Sea Grant Law Center, points to a [case in Washington State](#) as an example of the limits of state power. In October 2012, officials in Spokane stopped a truck carrying a boat that had been hauled from Lake Michigan. Some 100 live zebra and quagga mussels were clinging to the hull, and the truck driver admitted he had also been cited in another state. Two years earlier, Washington officials had cited the trucking firm for the same offense.

Adding quaggas to the Lacey Act would send a stronger message to commercial haulers and boaters, Showalter-Otts said.

But even if Congress changes the Lacey Act, it is unclear how vigorously federal officials would go after offenders: The U.S. Department of Justice tends to care more about drug and gun violations than zebra or quagga mussel incursions.

“It’s pretty hard to get a quagga and zebra case in front of a federal magistrate,” said Dalton, the former Utah official. Even so, he said, the legal change would point the spotlight on [invasive species across the U.S.](#) — not just mussels, but hundreds of animals, including the Burmese python, Asian carp and several [types of beetle](#).

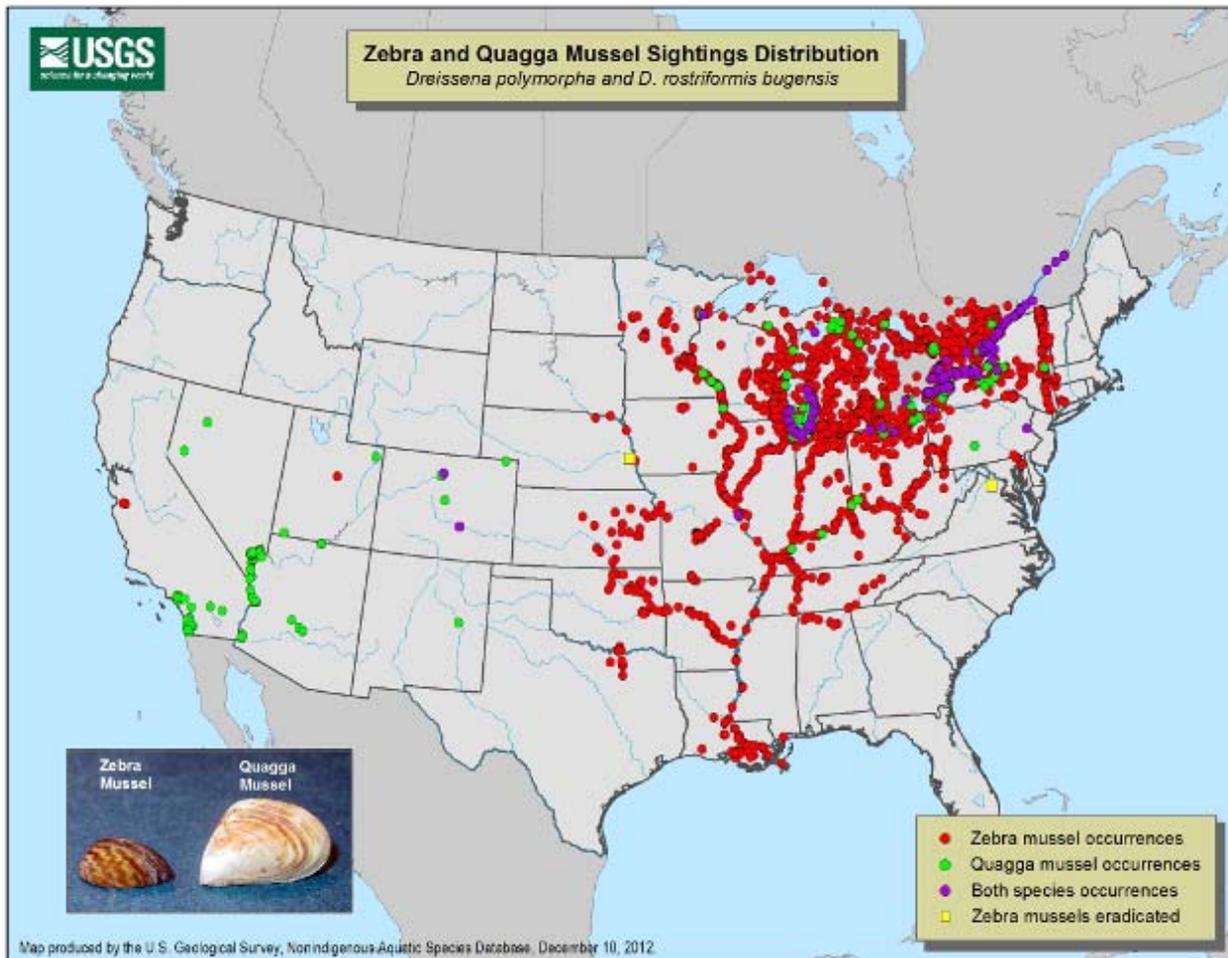
Changing the Lacey Act also could complicate some interstate water transfers in a region peppered with towns whose survival

depends on water found elsewhere. North Texas water officials found that out the hard way.

Once it finishes building its filtration system, the North Texas Municipal Water District plans to resume pumping water from Lake Texoma. But because the lake is on the Oklahoma side of the border and the zebra mussels still live there, Texas officials had to secure a Congressional exemption from the Lacey Act for the interstate transfer.

An “injurious” listing for quaggas could force those managing other infested waters — Lake Mead, for instance — to seek similar exemptions.

Western officials say they understand that issue, even as they push to include quaggas in the Lacey Act. “This is just a really thorny set of problems,” Propst said.



**Source:** *U.S. Geological Survey*

**Issues:** [Water Supply](#), [Wildlife](#), [Electricity Transmission](#)

**States:** [National](#)

[Want to Republish our Stories?](#)