

Berthoud nets GOCO grant for recreation plan

By Reporter-Herald Staff

POSTED: 06/18/2015 08:18:27 PM MDT

BERTHOUD — The town will receive \$40,000 from Great Outdoors Colorado to help update the its plan for parks, trails, open space and recreation.

Berthoud plans to hire a consultant to help staff reach out into the community for resident input and to update the plan for what is needed for open spaces, trails and recreation.

"The Berthoud community is very active and appreciates outdoor amenities," Mike Hart, town administrator, said, according to a press release.

"As the town matures and grows, updating our Parks, Open Space, Trails and Recreation (PORT) Plan will help determine where public spaces are developed and what facilities a community like ours needs in the future.

"We are very grateful for the GOCO funding to help us get going on the right path."

More information will be available on the town's website, www.berthoud.org.

Editorial: Don't add to damage on trails

POSTED: 06/01/2015 10:40:21 PM MDT

In March, officials whose job it is to oversee public lands had serious concerns about the coming summer. A very dry winter had created conditions in which the stage was set for possible wildfires and loss of wildlife resources.

April and May turned those fears around in a hurry. After an unusually dry March, the storms of late spring have a snowpack that delayed opening of Trail Ridge Road and have kept many more roads closed in the national forests. In lower elevations, the moisture fell as rain, causing streams and rivers to challenge the banks that held them in check; in some cases, the streams won.

Unfortunately, too many urban residents aren't heeding the warnings about resource damage on public lands and are creating problems that will last far longer than just one season.

Officials from the Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forests in Northern Colorado have documented the damage done by visitors to public lands who have ignored closures and turned muddy roads and trails into ugly ravines and bogs. In other locations, forest road vehicle users and hikers — apparently fearful of what mud might do to their wilderness experience — have carved new paths around the soaked sections, adding to the human footprint.

On unpaved trails, even in open spaces in the urban corridor, rains have softened the ground to where a bicyclist's tire will leave an imprint that could last weeks. At Lory State Park, the intermittent gulch on the Arthur's Rock trail recently covered the first quarter-mile of walking path. If you hike on such a trail, you're going to get wet and muddy.

In most cases, park managers are hoping hikers will find an alternative, even if it's for just a week or two, until the June sun can dry things appropriately.

Pay attention to the warnings from Forest Service, state and county parks officials. The resources they are trying to protect are meant to last much longer than you might be inconvenienced.

Remodeled Pinewood open to campers

Pinewood Reservoir campground project nearly finished

By **Pamela Johnson**

Reporter-Herald Staff Writer

POSTED: 05/27/2015 02:55:24 PM MDT

Prolonged rain dampened the opening of the newly remodeled Pinewood Reservoir campground, but the \$981,000 project is nearly finished and opening as weather allows.

Despite rain and mud that slowed work on the natural play area and the finishing touches on the campground, 15 of the total 28 sites opened over Memorial Day weekend.

To make reservations

To make a camping reservation at Pinewood or any Larimer County campgrounds call 800-397-7795 or visit www.larimercamping.com.

For the next 10 days, those sites will be open on weekends and closed during the week to allow crews to finish up the last-minute touches on the remodel and repair rain damage.

Dan Rieves, manager of the Carter Lake District, is anxious for the rain to stop to allow the work to end and the campground to fully open. But, looking on the bright side, he said the storms allowed the county to work through kinks before the busiest season.

Soon, all 28 sites will be open, including brand new walk-in tent sites as well as sites with electrical hookups, which are new to this particular campground.

"The walk-in campsites are like theater-style seating for the reservoir," said Rieves. "They're staggered."

Also new are two restrooms and the playscape, newly designed picnic areas and a longer boat ramp to make it easier to launch the non-motorized crafts that are allowed on the 100-acre reservoir located west of Loveland.

And crews added another mile to Besant Point Trail, making it a 3.6-mile total loop all the way around Pinewood.

"Before it was like camping in a parking lot," said Chris Fleming, another area manager with the Department of Natural Resources. "Despite camping combat style, it was popular ... We put a lot of effort and planning into this."

And both she and Rieves believe, once the last bits of work are finished and the sun comes out, that the new campground will be even more popular.

Pamela Johnson: 970-669-5050, ext. 526, johnsonp@reporter-herald.com, www.twitter.com/RHPamelaJ.

Rocky Mountain National Park might buy Cascade Cottages

By Pamela Johnson

Reporter-Herald Staff Writer

POSTED: 05/26/2015 09:40:27 PM MDT

Just inside the Fall River entrance of Rocky Mountain National Park, on private land, people have enjoyed summers at the Cascade Cottages since the 1920s.

Opened originally as a summer venture by teachers from Kansas, the oasis remains in family ownership, offering small cabins to rent for the summer.

The future of the cottages, however, is looking to be folded into the surrounding national park. The Rocky Mountain Conservancy, the park's nonprofit partner, is launching a campaign to raise \$3 million to buy the cottages, Vaughn Baker, park superintendent, said Tuesday.

The original owners of the cottages promised to give Rocky Mountain National Park the first option to buy the cottages if they ever decided to sell in what Baker described as "a handshake deal." Nine decades later, the heirs made good on that promise.

"That's what they are honoring," said Baker.

For the sale, the Rocky Mountain Conservancy is looking to raise money, and the park might look at other land preservation partners. Already, Larimer County has offered a letter of support for the sale to the national park, and the plan will go before the Larimer County Open Lands Advisory Board this Thursday.

The Cottages are open for business this summer with 12 cabins available to rent but no other type of camping allowed on the site, according to Baker.

"Once we get the land, then the Rocky Mountain Conservancy will evaluate if they want to use those cabins for summer camp," Baker told the county commissioners at a meeting Tuesday. "They're primitive, but they'd be great for the summer."

Pamela Johnson: 970-669-5050, ext. 526, johnsonp@reporter-herald.com, www.twitter.com/RHPamelaJ.

Natural Resources adds staff

Ecologist to help restore damaged land

By Pamela Johnson

Reporter-Herald Staff Writer

POSTED: 05/19/2015 12:30:56 PM MDT

FORT COLLINS — A new position within the Larimer County's Department of Natural Resources will help the county heal public lands affected by fires and floods.

The county commissioners on Tuesday agreed to let the department spend an additional \$90,000 to hire a full-time restoration ecologist and a part-time graphic artist.

The restoration ecologist will lead efforts to restore damage on public lands managed by the open lands department as well as private lands that are protected by conservation easements, according to information from the department.

"This person will be doing restoration on our properties, like at Lions Park," said Meegan Flenniken, program manager. "We're seeing a need for more of that, especially after the fires and flood."

The restoration ecologist, too, will work on projects in the Big Thompson Canyon, which is facing a need for major habitat restoration after the 2013 flood.

"The Big Thompson Canyon is complicated with long-term projects," Flenniken said. "We don't have the capacity to do that with our existing staff."

Other open lands properties also have varying restoration needs even if they were not damaged by natural disaster, she explained.

One resource specialist, Jeffrey Boring, has been working on restoration as has a seasonal employee, according to Natural Resources staff. That season position is being morphed into this new full-time position, noted director Gary Buffington

The second position, a part-time graphic artist to work on Natural Resources publications is expected to actually save the department money because it will cost less than the current practice of hiring a consultant, according to information from the department.

The additional \$90,000 will come from the open space sales tax as well as a fund made up of parks user fees.

Pamela Johnson: 970-669-5050, ext. 526, johnsonp@reporter-herald.com, www.twitter.com/RHPamelaJ.

Volunteers remove fence to prepare for Soapstone bison reintroduction

BY [NFN](#) ON JUNE 16, 2015 IN [.QUEUE](#), [LARIMER COUNTY](#) · [ADD COMMENT](#)

Last week, more than 80 volunteers removed fence on Soapstone Prairie Natural Area and Red Mountain Open Space to prepare the properties for a pasture where bison will be reintroduced this fall.

With support from City of Fort Collins and Larimer County staff, the volunteers removed roughly 6 miles of fence over two days on the city- and county-owned properties about 20 miles north of Fort Collins.

The existing fence needed to be taken down to prepare the site for the reintroduction of American bison to the properties. New fencing will be erected to create a roughly 1,000-acre pasture where about a dozen bison will be released on these historic grazing grounds on Nov. 1.

“This is the bison’s ancestral land,” said volunteer Don Gillespie, looking across the expanse of shortgrass prairie as thunderheads loomed in the distance. “There can’t be anything more authentic in this area than bison.”

The volunteers used an array of tools to clip the barbed wire fencing from posts, pull the posts from the ground and collect the debris to be reused or recycled. More than 1,500 posts were removed during the project.

Volunteers for the project consisted of groups from Larimer County, City of Fort Collins, Defenders of Wildlife, Hewlett-Packard, Larimer County Horseman’s Association and Northern Colorado Back Country Horsemen.

This project is part of a larger effort by Colorado State University, USDA, City of Fort Collins and Larimer County to restore genetically pure bison to northern Colorado, called the Laramie Foothills Bison Conservation Herd.

The bison that will roam the properties will be purebred Yellowstone bison – without lingering cattle genes that are typical in most bison herds as a result of interbreeding between the two species.

The herd will also be free of the infectious disease brucellosis, which spreads easily among cattle, bison and elk and causes devastating “abortion storms” in herds, thanks to an innovative technique of sperm washing developed at CSU’s Animal Reproduction and Biotechnology Lab.

On June 5, the first calf destined for the Laramie Foothills Bison Conservation Herd, genetically pure and free of brucellosis, was born at CSU’s Foothills Campus. Two more bison are pregnant and will deliver this summer.

About a dozen bison will be released on Soapstone Prairie Natural Area and Red Mountain Open Space on Nov. 1, with plans for expansion of the Laramie Foothills Bison Conservation Herd in the future.

To learn more about or support the bison restoration effort, visit <http://larimer.org/openlands/bison.htm> or <http://advancing.colostate.edu/BISON>.

To volunteer on future projects like this, contact Pam Mayhew at 970-619-4552 or pmayhew@larimer.org.

Boat-in sites at Horsetooth offer twist to camping

Carrie Visintainer 1:49 p.m. MDT June 16, 2015



(Photo: Courtesy of Carrie Visintainer)

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There's an heirloom of sorts sitting in my garage. It's a Coleman Marine 15-foot canoe.

It was my family's boat when I was a child growing up in the Midwest, and I have many great memories of paddling with my parents and sister, fishing and watching for loons in the lush state parks of northern Wisconsin, or in the deep, clear lakes of the Sylvania Wilderness near Watersmeet, Michigan.

It's those types of childhood experiences that shaped me into the adult that I am — a free-spirited outdoorsy type who loves to play in the mountains.

But as I suppose it goes with many heirlooms, the canoe has been doing only one thing in my garage in Colorado —collecting dust.

Recently, I decided to take the canoe down off its shelf, thinking "it's time." My husband and I are now parents ourselves — kids are 8 and 4 — and I wanted to share the experience. Pass along the tradition. Maybe it'd stick, or not.

Probably a morning paddle would've been a good first step, so instead we decided to really go for it.

We booked a boat-in campsite (\$20) on Horsetooth Reservoir, one that's only accessible from the water. Horsetooth is such a gem in Northern Colorado and less than 10 minutes from our house. What could be more novel than floating in to our site?

We had to give it a try.

Although we didn't exactly know how we were going to get four people and camping gear into one canoe, we'd figure it out.

Right?

Problem unsolved

The day before our trip, my husband and I realized we definitely had not figured it out. We took a look at our mountain-sized pile of gear — a feeling that's become familiar since having children — and realized it wouldn't be feasible. One boat would not be enough. If we tried it, we would risk capsizing.

Then it hit me.

Why not add a new tradition to the mix — a stand-up paddleboard (SUP)? Although SUP's have been around for decades, it's a relatively new activity in my life. I've been out a few times, on lakes, one river and the ocean, and I've become comfortable. So I went to Rocky Mountain Adventures in Fort Collins and rented an inflatable board from the ultra-friendly staff.

The new plan would be that I'd paddle in on the SUP, opening up significant space in the canoe. But this would mean our 8-year-old son would have to handle the front of the canoe — my usual spot.

Was he strong enough? Enthusiastic enough? We hoped for the best.

Against the wind

The trip began with a striking azure sky, glimmering leaves and a short how-to-paddle-a-canoe orientation with our son in the Satanka Bay parking lot. Although it was clear he was only half-listening, he seemed to mostly get it.

The true test would happen on the water.

Then we packed up everything. Things fit inside the canoe, it floated and we pushed off.

An encouraging start.

It was then that we noticed the head wind. Or felt it, actually. Blowing our hair back in knots.

Although the distance to our campsite looked short on our map — it was only a couple of coves away — the wind, coupled with lots of gear, children paddling and speedboats whizzing by — creating some decent waves — made for a solid, somewhat hair-raising paddle.

But we kept with it, me paddling on my knees when the water got really choppy, all of us encouraging our son and my husband muscling it out.

We were the only ones in a canoe out there. It felt sort of epic.

Eclectic fun

The reward was worth the effort. We had a beautiful campsite right on the water with views of Lory State Park behind us and red rock against verdant hillsides. My husband and I set up the tent while the kids explored the area, taking photos of geese and their goslings and splashing around in the water.

Quickly, we were all in our swimsuits, soaking in some much-needed Vitamin D, lazing around in camp chairs, munching on yogurt-covered pretzels and raisins and reading books.

It wasn't long before my son became curious about the SUP. In typical kid-fashion, he was up and standing on the board in a flash, no training necessary, paddling around, navigating the half-submerged aspen nearby. His sister, not one to be left behind, convinced him to pull her behind him in a floatie while she fished with her pink princess fishing pole.

She actually caught several trout (with help). An hour later, she tried out the board, standing up for a few minutes at a time and testing her balance.

Soon, various boats began to file into the cove in front of our campsite, a combination of fishing boats, svelte cruisers, kayaks and mini-yachts. A few groups were having spring break-like dance parties on their decks.

It was an eclectic scene, an interesting mix of people enjoying the outdoors in their own way. It made me think there were so many things we could try, maybe bringing kayaks out next time or renting a pontoon with friends.

Bringing it home

That evening, when everything quieted down and it was late dusk, after we'd eaten our dinner and s'mores around our campfire, we all piled into the canoe and floated under the almost-full moon.

The water was glass.

Fish jumped in the distance.

A few stars glittered above us.

It reminded me a lot of Wisconsin, those peaceful nights camping near lakes with my parents and sister. And now it was our little family.

My son pierced the silence with a question. "When are we going home?" he asked.

"Tomorrow," I answered.

He paused and then sighed. It was enough affirmation to know that this adventure in our heirloom canoe, while trying out new concepts, would be something we'd continue into the future.

Horsetooth Reservoir boat-in camping

www.co.larimer.co.us/parks/permits.htm

C.A.S.T. event takes special needs children fishing

Dave Coulson 12:12 p.m. MDT June 10, 2015



(Photo: By Dave Coulson)

10CONNECT 7TWEETLINKEDINCOMMENTEMAILMORE

On Saturday June 6, I rose at 4 a.m. Time enough to dress, fix breakfast and get to the Horsetooth inspection station with the boat. Fortunately, I'd hitched up the boat the prior evening, or it would have been necessary to get up at 3 a.m. or even earlier.

While some may see that as bordering on insanity, it's normal for a serious angler. The kicker is, I didn't get there that early to fish, rather in preparation to take a youngster and their parent, whom I'd never met, fishing. Saturday was C.A.S.T., "Catch A Special Thrill," a kids' event designed to take special needs children fishing.

I've volunteered for the Horsetooth C.A.S.T event for several years now, taking pictures, helping around the banquet and helping where I could. This year it was different, as I volunteered, along with some 40 others, to take a kid out in my boat.



The program is such that kids and adults benefit from sharing a day on the water, providing a fishing experience they might not otherwise get. This is from the C.A.S.T website:

“Participants are hosted at a local lake, or body of water, supplied with a fishing rod & reel, t-shirt, hat and tackle box, partnered with an experienced volunteer angler and escorted onto a boat where, with the supervision of a parent or guardian, they are shown proper fishing techniques and receive natural resources education. Participants and volunteers all then return from their morning fishing excursion to a BBQ lunch and an awards ceremony.”

Per [their website](#), C.A.S.T. began operations in 1991. As I understand it, the Horsetooth event has been held for the last 19 years and is one of the oldest continuously held C.A.S.T. events. Thanks to the efforts of many dedicated individuals and the sponsorship by agencies such as the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, Larimer County Department of Natural Resources, Centennial BASS Club and numerous others, this annual event continues to be a great success.

Once the boat was inspected, I parked in the upper lot with the rest of the volunteer boaters, checked in and was treated to donuts and coffee. Around 8, I was called and picked up Charlotte Hellyer and her father Brian. It was Charlotte’s second year, but she’d yet to catch her first fish. That’s something I was determined to rectify. After everyone was loaded into the boat, our driver pulled us around to the ramp where I launched. Knowing we needed to be back by 11 a.m., I opted for a short run to Dixon Cove and joined several other boats with a similar idea.

Normally I fish the long rod, but this round I knew it would be easier for my guests if we fished conventional gear. I rigged Charlotte’s and my rods with 1/8 ounce jigs and three inch plastic twister style grubs. That did the trick, and it wasn’t long before Charlotte landed her first of three smallmouth bass. Success! While catching was always part of the plan, it was obvious from their smiles that just getting out fishing was enough for Charlotte and Brian to have a great day.

None of us were ready to call it a day as 11 rolled around, but rules are rules, and we headed back to the dock where we trailered the boat and headed back to the pavilion where lunch and the rewards ceremony awaited.

While I’ve had better days catching, spending time with Charlotte and Brian and sharing in their time on the water made Saturday one of my best days fishing.

Email Dave Coulson at dave@fishexplorer.com.

Bison baby born to CSU's genetically pure herd



Nick Coltrain, The Coloradoan 1:07 p.m. MDT June 10, 2015



(Photo: John Eisele/CSU Photography)

12CONNECT 8TWEETLINKEDINCOMMENTEMAILMORE

The genetically pure bison that will be released in Northern Larimer County earlier this year reached a 45-pound milestone recently with its first birth.

A male calf was born Friday morning in an event veterinarians described as rarely witnessed, according to a Colorado State University news release.

"I was surprised it happened so well in front of a crowd. That rarely happens, so that was pretty special," Jack Rhyan, a veterinarian with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, said, according to CSU. He has worked with bison since 1982 seen just three other births in his career. "Usually you come out in the morning, and there's a calf."

The team of USDA and CSU researchers and veterinarians artificially inseminated the bull calf's mother to ensure the herd remains genetically pure and free from brucellosis, a disease that can cause problems carrying a pregnancy to term.

The calf will soon roam on [800 acres of land at Soapstone Prairie and Red Mountain Open Space](#) through a joint Larimer County and city of Fort Collins venture to return genetically pure bison to Northern Colorado. The bison that will be released there stems from the Yellowstone National Park herd, which is heralded for never intermingling with cattle.

This story has a correction: The bison herd will not be released until later this year.

Try yoga, boot camp in Fort Collins' great outdoors

Coloradoan staff 12:41 a.m. MDT May 30, 2015



(Photo: Coloradoan library)

20CONNECT 1TWEETLINKEDINCOMMENTEMAILMORE

You've got at least a couple chances to get out into nature for group exercise in Fort Collins this summer.

Yoga in the Gardens begins June 13 at The Gardens on Spring Creek, 2145 Centre Ave.

Miramont Lifestyle Fitness instructors Jes Dory and Tonya Dunn teach the class one Saturday each month from June through September.

Classes, from 8:30-9:30 a.m. June 13, July 11, Aug. 8, and Sept. 5, are suitable for all skill levels. Check-in begins at 8 a.m.

A summer pass for all four sessions is \$30. Single sessions are \$10 per person. All proceeds benefit The Gardens and Colorado Moves to End Cancer. Register at www.fcgov.com/gardens.

If you're looking for something more intense, try the Summer Body Boot Camp on the beach at Horsetooth Reservoir.

Raintree Athletic Club's Niki Veldman will teach a high-energy, interval style class for calorie burning and muscle building.

Classes are from 9 to 9:45 a.m. Saturdays, June 6 through Aug. 29 at the South Bay Swim Beach Pavilion at the South Bay Area. All experience levels are welcome.

The cost is free, but a Larimer County Natural Resources day or annual pass is required.

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

Hike at Carter Lake's Sundance Trail

Coloradoan staff 10:09 p.m. MDT May 22, 2015



(Photo: Coloradoan library)

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- **Why go:** This trail is little-known outside of the campers who frequent the campgrounds at either end of it. It is a scenic, easy trail with plenty of quiet places to fish. Look for mule deer. And rattlesnakes.

- **Distance:** 3.1 miles one way

- **Elevation range:** 6,000 to 6,300 feet

- **Difficulty:** Easy

- **Trailhead:** North Pines Campground on the north end of Carter Lake and South Shore Campground from south end of Carter Lake. From Loveland, take U.S. Highway 34 west to Larimer County Road 29. Turn south on County Road 29 and go 2 miles to County Road 18E. Turn west on County Road 18E and go 2.2 miles to the north entrance.

- **Hours:** 24 hours daily

- **Fee:** \$7 for daily entrance

- **Open to:** Hiking, mountain biking and horseback riding

- **Maps:** None needed

- **Pets:** Yes, on leash

- **Information:** www.co.larimer.co.us/parks/carter.cfm or 970-679-4570

Horsetooth Mountain, Devil's Backbone both closed



[Stephen Meyers](#), The Coloradoan 9:22 p.m.

MDT May 22, 2015

(Photo: Elliott Foust/For the Coloradoan)



126CONNECT 14TWEETLINKEDINCOMMENTEMAILMORE

Bad news hikers, Horsetooth Mountain Open Space and Devil's Backbone Open Space both closed Friday due to muddy conditions, just before the three-day Memorial Day weekend.

Both the upper and lower (Soderberg) parking lots at Horsetooth Mountain Open Space are closed, as is the Blue Sky Trailhead.

North of Fort Collins, Eagles Nest and Red Mountain open spaces also are closed.

Larimer County Department of Natural Resources will continue to monitor trails.

CAMPING: [Wet and cold holiday weekend in Northern Colorado](#)

Wet and muddy conditions often close foothills-area trails during the spring. Trail closures usually last one to three days, but Fort Collins doesn't usually see 10 straight days of rain in the forecast like this week.

Pineridge, Maxwell, Reservoir Ridge and Bobcat Ridge natural areas [all closed](#) Tuesday due to muddy conditions. River Bluffs Open Space in south Fort Collins is closed due to flooding concerns from the Poudre River.

Want to hike this weekend? Head to the Poudre Canyon. Good chance you'll be able to find a [first-come, first-served campground](#) with more rain forecast through the weekend.

Larimer County Natural Resources closes its open spaces and trails 10 to 12 days a year. Fort Collins Natural Areas close 10 to 20 days a year due to the mud.

OTHER CLOSURES: [Trail Ridge Road may not open for holiday weekend](#)

For updated Larimer County open spaces trail conditions, visit www.larimer.org/naturalresources/conditions.cfm.

For updated Fort Collins Natural Areas closures, visit www.fcgov.com/naturalareas/status.php.

Follow Xplore reporter Stephen Meyers on Twitter @stemeyer or Facebook.com/meyersreports.