

## \$4 million grant to protect land from Horsetooth to Devil's Backbone

Larimer County, Fort Collins partner on conservation project

By Pamela Johnson

Reporter-Herald Staff Writer

POSTED: 06/16/2016 04:26:25 PM MDT



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Larimer County and Fort Collins received a \$4 million Great Outdoors Colorado grant to preserve about 2,300 acres between Horsetooth Mountain Open Space and Devil's Backbone Open Space. The four parcels will connect these and other natural areas to Lory State Park. (Submitted)

A project to protect 2,300 acres of land will connect open spaces and natural areas from Lory State Park to the Devil's Backbone along the western edge of Larimer County with the help of a \$4 million grant for "once-in-a-lifetime" conservation opportunities.

The county and Fort Collins are partnering on the Horsetooth Foothills Conservation Project that, once finished, will create a stretch of more than 7,000 connected acres, protecting pine forests, rolling meadows and sharp rock formations.

With one of the first grants from Great Outdoors Colorado's protect initiative, Larimer County and Fort Collins will partner to protect four parcels of land between Lory State Park, Horsetooth Mountain Open Space, Devil's Backbone Open Space and Coyote Ridge Natural Area.

About 1,000 acres of the property will be purchased outright, allowing future public access and trails, and 1,300 will be preserved via conservation easement, according to information from Kerri Rollins, the county's open lands director.

Together, it will create a large swath of protected lands, of views and of habitat in a growing area very close to the cities of Fort Collins and Loveland.

"It's over four square miles," noted John Stokes, director of the Fort Collins Natural Areas Department. "In this day and age, especially that close to Fort Collins, it's amazing."

The "rare opportunity" of connecting existing open spaces and natural areas so close to Fort Collins is one of the reasons Great Outdoors Colorado approved \$4 million from a \$47 million pot for "once-in-a-lifetime" opportunities, according to a news release. These properties, together, will protect scenic views and wildlife habitat, including two miles of Redstone Creek.

In the future, when some of the property, is opened for trails and public access, it also will alleviate pressure on the trails at Horsetooth and other popular and often crowded open spaces, parks and natural areas. Horsetooth Mountain, alone, draws more than 100,000 visitors per year.

The total project price will be based on appraisals and is still under negotiation, though Rollins anticipates it will be about \$10 million plus costs associated with the purchases. Larimer County and Fort Collins plan to split the total above the grant and will work together on the conservation easements and property management as well.

Working with four different land owners, the project is complex, however, Stokes said he believes all pieces may be wrapped up by the end of the year.

Great Outdoors Colorado also announced a second grant this week to protect land in Larimer County.

The Colorado Cattlemen's Agricultural Land Trust received \$44,350 to help conserve 1,300 acres in northwest Larimer County.

This grant is part of a new land conservation program to pay for transaction costs to help land owners place conservation easements on their property. They retain ownership of their land and, at the same time, permanently conserve the land from development.

This project will involve an easement on 1,360 acres of agricultural land along Forest Creek, Granny Creek and the Larimer River, providing a buffer around a public campground, according to Great Outdoors Colorado. It will protect agriculture land, which Colorado loses at a rate of 30,000 acres per year, and help maintain water supply, scenic views and wildlife habitat.

Great Outdoors Colorado provides a portion of state lottery profits for conservation, parks, trails and natural areas. Since 1992, it has invested in more than 4,700 projects in all 64 counties.

In Larimer County, projects have received \$48.6 million.

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## Larimer County looks for park ranger helpers

By Reporter-Herald Staff  
POSTED: 06/15/2016 09:37:12 PM MDT

The Larimer County Natural Resources Department is seeking volunteers to assist park rangers on boat ramps, swim beaches and other areas at Carter Lake and Horsetooth Reservoir, two of Larimer County's most popular places to go boating.

Park ranger assistant volunteers are asked to work shifts on Saturdays, Sundays and holidays between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. from now until Labor Day weekend.

Volunteers must be 16 years of age or older and must be friendly and courteous, be able to get on and off boats, possess no fear of water and learn how to operate a handheld radio.

Training is offered.

For details about being a park ranger assistant, or to sign up to volunteer, contact Outreach Specialist Cameron Rhea at 619-4559 or [crhea@larimer.org](mailto:crhea@larimer.org) (<mailto:crhea@larimer.org>).

# \$4 million GOCO grant will expand Horsetooth Open Space



Stephen Meyers, [stephenmeyers@coloradoan.com](mailto:stephenmeyers@coloradoan.com) 1:05 a.m. MDT June 16, 2016



(Photo: Austin Humphreys/The Coloradoan)

This story has a correction. Four separate properties will be conserved, but not all four of them are in Redstone Canyon as the original article stated.

Larimer County on Monday received a \$4 million grant from Great Outdoors Colorado to conserve nearly 2,300 acres in the foothills on the west side of Horsetooth Mountain Open Space.

Four separate properties will be conserved, GOCO said, and new hiking trails have been proposed. This would be a boon for hikers and mountain bikers who frequent ever-busy Horsetooth Mountain Open Space, which sees more than 100,000 visitors a year.

Once finished, the project will create more than 7,000 acres of connected open space between Lory State Park, Horsetooth Mountain Open Space, Devil's Backbone Open Space and Coyote Ridge Natural Area.

The grant is one of the first funded by GOCO's Protect Initiative, which will invest \$47 million over the next three years in large-scale land conservation efforts, GOCO said in a press release.

GOCO also announced it awarded a \$44,350 grant to Colorado Cattlemen's Agricultural Land Trust to conserve more than 1,300 acres along the Laramie River in northwest Larimer County.

The project will protect 2.6 miles of Forest Creek, Granny Creek and the Laramie River and will provide a buffer of views around a public campground located on the property.

Larimer County has been a frequent recipient of GOCO grants. To date, GOCO has invested \$48.6 million in Larimer County, preserving more than 60,000 acres of land and helping improvements at Pinewood Reservoir and Hermit Park Open Space.

# 3 rescued from boat blaze on Horsetooth Reservoir



Cassa Niedringhaus, cniedringhaus@coloradoan.com 2:05 p.m. MDT June 13, 2016



Buy Photo  
(Photo: Cassa Niedringhaus/The Coloradoan)

Three people and a dog escaped a boat fire that belched noxious fumes and smoke on the southeast end of Horsetooth Reservoir on Sunday afternoon.

None of the boat's occupants were injured in the blaze, and they were rescued by nearby boats that came alongside the burning craft. They were aboard a 16-foot, 1997 Watercraft boat when they heard a pop in the engine compartment before the fire broke out, according to Poudre Fire Authority.

Multiple boaters called 911 to report the blaze at the popular reservoir west of Fort Collins, with the first call coming in at 11:30 a.m., according to PFA. A park ranger also spotted the fire from the South Bay pavilion, ranger supervisor Devin Neumann said.

The occupants of the boat declined medical attention following their rescue, though one person reported light smoke inhalation.

"Nobody was hurt," Neumann said. "That's the good thing."

Larimer County Department of Natural Resources rangers and PFA firefighters put out the fire, and EMTs responded to tend to possible injuries.

Rangers towed the burning boat into the cove near the intersection of Larimer County roads 38E and Reservoir. Firefighters pulled the craft in toward the shore. They carried a hose from the road down to the water's edge and doused the boat until the fire went out. They had control of the fire by about 12:25 p.m., according to PFA.

Sections of the two roads were closed during the operation but have been reopened. While 38E was closed, rangers directed traffic bound for the swim beach and marina to go through Loveland and Masonville instead.

The boat was burned to the water, and only charred remains survived.

The remains of the boat were towed by barge to a dock where it would be loaded onto a trailer and taken to the ranger compound for an investigation into the fire's cause.

## New trail opens at Loveland's Devil's Backbone

Posted: Fri Jun 10 20:58:23 MDT 2016

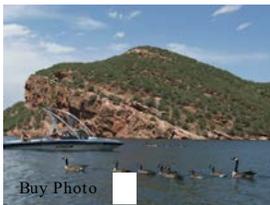
LOVELAND — A brand-new trail at Devil's Backbone Open Space debuts Saturday.

The 1.8-mile Hidden Valley Trail runs from the trailhead north and then ties back into the main trail near Wild Loop. It is designed for mountain biking, horseback riding and trail running, all of which will no longer be allowed on the Wild Loop Trail.

The new trail was built to separate uses and ease congestion at the open space, located just off U.S. 34 west of Loveland.

## Volunteers sought at Horsetooth Reservoir, Carter Lake

Coloradoan staff 9:27 p.m. MDT June 10, 2016



Buy Photo

(Photo: Austin Humphreys/The Coloradoan)

Volunteers are needed to assist park rangers on boat ramps, swim beaches and other areas at Horsetooth Reservoir and Carter Lake.

Park ranger assistant volunteers work shifts from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Saturdays, Sundays and holidays from now until Labor Day weekend at the two busy boating areas.

Volunteers must be at least 16 years old. They must also be friendly and courteous, be able to get on and off boats, possess no fear of water and learn how to operate a handheld radio. Training is available.

For more information about the park ranger assistant position, or to sign up to volunteer, contact outreach specialist Cameron Rhea at 970-619-4559 or [crhea@larimer.org](mailto:crhea@larimer.org).

**SPORTS > OUTDOORS**

# Larimer County “three in a row” reservoirs offer unique fishing, hiking, camping opportunities

Carter Lake, Pinewood Reservoir, Flatiron Reservoir boast great fishing, provide tremendous variety of outdoor resources



Steve Stoner, Loveland Reporter-Herald

Water laps up on the shore of Carter Lake near the marina, April 10, 2015.

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By **TERRY WICKSTROM** | [terrywickstromoutdoors@gmail.com](mailto:terrywickstromoutdoors@gmail.com)

June 8, 2016 | UPDATED: 1 week ago

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Heading north on Interstate 25 from Denver, just prior to exit 250 (Berthoud), one sees a sign that says “Carter Lake.” But that sign is misleading. The road west goes to Carter Lake, which is a great destination, but that is only the beginning.

Continuing a short drive west up the foothills, there are two more recreation areas: Flatiron Reservoir and Pinewood Reservoir. These “three in a row” reservoirs — Carter, Flatiron and Pinewood — are part of the Big Thompson water system that diverts water from the mountains for storage.

While recreation may not be the primary function, the [Larimer County Parks](#)-managed lakes provide a tremendous variety of outdoor resources that include various fishing, hiking, picnicking and camping opportunities.

Starting from the furthest west, Pinewood has a newly renovated campground and a boat ramp, allows boating at wake-less speeds and is also a great place to kayak or float tube. But what truly makes Pinewood memorable is the fishing. The lake is heavily stocked with trout, has a healthy tiger musky population and provides constant action with some large “holdover fish.”

**“If you fish Pinewood from shore or from a boat, you will have a tiger musky experience.”**

*Dan Rieves, Larimer County Parks park manager*

You may or may not catch a musky, but seeing these giant fish slowly swimming by can be both exciting and frustrating. I have personally experienced both, and I have made multiple casts without even a look that landed tiger muskies larger than 40 inches from Pinewood.

Unlike Pinewood and Carter, no water craft of any kind is allowed on Flatiron, which has a handicapped access area. There are also some areas that require a bit of a walk to get to, but those places attract less people. The put-and-take fishery is heavily stocked with catchable trout and is a great place to take kids for some basic fishing with lots of action. You are encouraged to take a few fish for the pan.

By far the largest of the three reservoirs, Carter Lake is one of the jewels of the Larimer County Parks system. Carter offers a variety of boating activity, extensive campgrounds and trophy fishing. It was once a cornucopia of fish species but was difficult to manage; the lake now boasts three major fish populations — walleye, trout and largemouth bass — that are doing well.

Famous for its trophy walleyes, the Carter regulations allow people to keep three fish that are shorter than 21 inches. Stocked with trout, the action can vary, but there is an excellent population of very large fish. My wife, Karen, recently caught and released a 20-plus inch rainbow from shore. What may be the surprise fish in Carter is the largemouth bass.

While boasting big fish, Carter is probably the toughest of the three reservoirs to fish. The unique fish species to forage relationship means traditional tactics don't always produce, and with extremely high water right now, fish are not in their usual locations. The high water has many fish near shore and back in the trees, something to keep in mind if you are going.

*Larimer County Parks park manager Dan Rieves joined Terry Wickstrom on 104.3 The Fan on Saturday to share information on the "three in a row" reservoirs: Carter Lake, Pinewood Reservoir and Flatiron Reservoir.*

You can [listen to the full podcast](#) of Rieves' interview below.



**Terry Wickstrom** Guest fishing writer and host of Terry Wickstrom Outdoors on FM 104.3 The Fan. Join Terry every Saturday morning at 9 a.m. for all your outdoor information on Terry Wickstrom Outdoors FM 104.3 The Fan.

# Medical personnel join Horsetooth Reservoir ranger boats



Stephen Meyers, [stephenmeyers@coloradoan.com](mailto:stephenmeyers@coloradoan.com) 3:58 p.m. MDT June 7, 2016



(Photo: Austin Humphreys/The Coloradoan)

Larimer County Department of Natural Resources for the first time will add medical personnel to its ranger boats patrolling Horsetooth Reservoir this summer.

County boat rangers will be joined by a paramedic from UCHealth's Poudre Valley Hospital Emergency Medical Services on Saturdays and holidays and a volunteer emergency medical technician from Poudre Fire Authority on Sundays.

The medical personnel first joined the rangers over Memorial Day Weekend. The partnership will last through Labor Day.

Jim Hawkins, senior ranger and boat safety coordinator, said the paramedics and EMTs will be crucial for quickly providing aid when medical situations such as motor vehicle crashes, hiking injuries or falls, snake bites, heat exhaustion and heart attacks arise at Horsetooth Reservoir and surrounding open spaces.

During Memorial Day Weekend, a paramedic was able to provide care to a visitor who was injured near the swim beach in the South Bay area of Horsetooth Reservoir, Hawkins said in a press release.

UCHealth estimates that having medical personnel on a boat will save 20 to 27 minutes in getting support to visitors who are injured on Horsetooth Reservoir.

# North Forty News | Larimer County launches open spaces passport program

Larimer County Department of Natural Resources invites people to explore Larimer County's amazing, scenic open spaces using a new passport as their guide.

The department launched The Larimer County Passport to Your Open Spaces on Tuesday, May 31. People can pick up a passport brochure at trailhead kiosks on Larimer County's open spaces to start their adventure.

For the passport program, the department placed posts on eight Larimer County open spaces. Two posts were placed on each open space in easy (short hike) and hard (long hike) locations. Each post has a plaque affixed to it with a unique image. People can place their passport over the plaque and make a rubbing of the image to "stamp" their passport.

"From prairies to mountains and forests to wetlands, Larimer County's open spaces deliver the best of Colorado's great outdoors," said Kerri Rollins, Larimer County's Open Lands Program manager. "We're excited to launch this new passport program so people can learn about each open space. Hopefully, they discover new open spaces that they've never visited and have fun collecting rubbings in their passport along the way."

The passport brochure contains directions on where to find each of the 16 posts, as well as educational information about the history, wildlife, plants, trails and other aspects of each open space. The plaque affixed to each post has an image that relates to the open space where it's located.

"The plaques themselves are really cool," Rollins said. "Hopefully, people get a 'collect them all' mentality once they see the plaques and want to get rubbings of them all."

People can collect eight rubbings for a prize, 12 rubbings for a passport T-shirt, or all 16 rubbings for a prize, T-shirt and entry into a grand prize drawing. Grand prizes include annual entrance permits to Larimer County parks and open spaces and two nights in a camper cabin at Hermit Park Open Space.

The passport program is open to people of all ages. Individuals, families and groups are encouraged to participate. People must remember to bring a crayon or pencil with them to the open spaces to make their rubbings.

Passport brochures are available at the following locations:

- Larimer County Department of Natural Resources Administrative Offices, 1800 S. County Rd. 31, Loveland
- Hermit Park Office, Hermit Park Open Space, 17 Hermit Park Rd., Estes Park
- Citizen Information Center, Larimer County Courthouse Offices, 200 W. Oak St., Fort Collins
- Kiosks at the trailheads for Horsetooth Mountain, Devil's Backbone, Red Mountain, Eagle's Nest, Hermit Park, Ramsay-Shockey and River Bluffs open spaces and Fossil Creek Reservoir Natural Area

The passport is being launched as part of the 20th anniversary celebration of the Help Preserve Open Spaces

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sales tax in Larimer County. Funds from this tax have been used to acquire and maintain many of the open spaces in the passport. To learn about the anniversary, visit [www.larimer.org/openspaces20th](http://www.larimer.org/openspaces20th).

To learn more about the passport program, visit [www.larimer.org/passport](http://www.larimer.org/passport).

## Veterans memorial unveiled in Masonville

Larimer County commissioners help unveil Buckhorn Valley Veterans Memorial at Masonville Post Office in special celebration Saturday

By Shelley Widhalm

Reporter-Herald Staff Writer  
Loveland Reporter-Herald

Posted: Sat May 21 19:02:06 MDT 2016

The stone of the veterans memorial Larimer County Commissioners Steve Johnson and Lew Gaiter uncovered Saturday at the Masonville Post Office fit the building for two reasons.

"It almost looks like the post office building was designed to fit around this beautiful stone," said Johnson as he pointed out the sandstone from Arkins Park Stone quarry.

The second reason the Buckhorn Valley Veterans Memorial fit was more figurative, reflected on by Gladys Forshee, memorial originator and a historian from Superior.

"This stone has multiple layers created by God over untold number of years, just as the untold numbers of Buckhorn Valley veterans was created by God, who have served to give us our freedom today," she said, reading from her prepared comments. "This stone and our Buckhorn Valley veterans were destined for each other at this spot in the universe."

Forshee and the commissioners that included Tom Donnelly, leader of the half-hour unveiling ceremony, reflected on the memorial dedicated on Armed Forces Day the third Saturday of May. The dedication ceremony included the posting of the colors, the singing and playing of the National Anthem and other patriotic songs and the leading of the Pledge of Allegiance by Loveland Girl Scout Troop No. 4476.

Donnelly explained how Forshee came across a large number of World War I and World War II veterans while she conducted research on Buckhorn Valley for a history book she is writing on the area.

"The list was so lengthy, it really astounded her, so she brought it to the commissioners' attention," Donnelly said.

Forshee worked with the commissioners and the Larimer County Department of Natural Resources to get the memorial placed at a public location, and Adkins Park Stone donated a rectangular-shaped stone from its quarries in Buckhorn Valley and sandblasted the design and dedication.

"The layers of stone and the layers of all the veterans over the years, they just match; they just connect," Forshee said in an interview after the event.

Each of the commissioners made comments.

Johnson, when he was about to make his, discovered he and Donnelly planned to read the same poem, "It is the Soldier," by poet Charles M. Province. Johnson let Donnelly be the one to read it.

"I wanted to thank the veterans who have served our country so well and so amiably and so remarkably," Gaiter said in his comments. "You guys set an example that is very difficult and yet a very good standard for us to follow and for our children and grandchildren to follow."

The commissioners gave the front row seats to the veterans, including two men who served during World War II, Lt. Col. Ralph Papania, 97, and Col. Harold Dale Wolaver, 94.

"I think it's a real honor," said Papania, who served with the U.S. Air Force for 28 years. "All these people here recognizing us, that's something."

Wolaver of Masonville served 26 years in the U.S. Army and is a 1940 graduate of Loveland High School.

"I thought it was very moving. It's a beautiful, beautiful piece of stone," said Wolaver's daughter-in-law, Peggy Wolaver of Fort Collins. "There is such a tremendous number of veterans in this area who feel appreciated and remembered."

Shelley Widhalm: 970-669-5050, [swidhalm@reporter-herald.com](mailto:swidhalm@reporter-herald.com), [twitter.com/ShelleyWidhalm](https://twitter.com/ShelleyWidhalm)

# Larimer County launches open-space passport hunt

Residents invited to find stations, earn prizes

By Pamela Johnson

Reporter-Herald Staff Writer  
Loveland Reporter-Herald

Posted: Fri May 20 22:43:14 MDT 2016

## If you go

**What:** Kerri Rollins, Larimer County's open lands manager, and Tom Donnelly, county commissioner, will celebrate the passport program with a hike at Devil's Backbone Open Space.

**When:** 9 a.m. Friday, June 3.

**Where:** Devil's Backbone Open Space, at the trailhead off U.S. 34 west of Loveland.

**Cost:** Free.

**More info:**  
[www.larimer.org/NRRegistration/](http://www.larimer.org/NRRegistration/)

Larimer County would like residents to fill their passports this summer — with custom etchings depicting what is special about the county's open spaces.

The Department of Natural Resources is launching its Passport to Your Open Spaces program by the beginning of June to encourage residents to check out the trails, history and natural beauty that Larimer County has to offer.

"People typically go to the open spaces closest to them or the ones they're familiar with," said Teddy Parker-Renga, project manager for the passport program. "This is a way to get people to open spaces they've never been to.

"We wanted to not only get people out there, but to learn a little too."

Two passport posts have been installed at each of eight open spaces — Ramsay-Shockey and Devil's Backbone, both near Loveland, Hermit Park outside Estes Park, and Horsetooth Mountain, Red Mountain, Eagle's Nest, River Bluffs and Fossil Creek Reservoir, which spread out in different directions around Fort Collins.

At each site, one post is a fairly easy trek near the trailhead, the closest 300 feet from parking, and another is more difficult, the farthest a 4.3-mile hike.

Each features a custom-designed image to celebrate something special about its particular location.

"We wanted to make sure it was doable by these uber-athletes that want to have a challenge and by families who can't make it too far out off the trailhead but still want to participate," said Parker-Renga.

The idea is for visitors to pick up a passport booklet — at the county offices in Fort Collins, Bison Visitor Center near Carter Lake or at the individual trailheads — and set off on adventures to find the passport posts.

"It's all about the experience and getting people out in the open spaces," said Forest Nichols, a member of the county trail crew that finished installing the posts Thursday.

Each passport page offers directions to follow to reach the post — directions that were thoroughly tested — and information about the wildlife, nature or history of that particular area. The images chosen for each space are a surprise and a reward for participants.

Once they find the post, visitors use a crayon or grease pen that they have brought with them to make a rubbing in their passports of the image on the post.

Anyone who records eight of the 16, or half, will receive a collapsible water bottle as a prize. Those who find 12 will win a T-shirt.

And those who record all 16 images will be entered into a drawing for prizes that include a tent, two nights' stay at Hermit Park and annual passes to Larimer County's parks and open spaces. Entries for this year are due Dec. 1.

The passports are being launched this year as part of the celebration of the open space program's 20th anniversary, but Parker-Renga expects them to last much longer. He anticipates that the program could grow or change slightly but will be around as long as people are having fun finding the different images.

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