



Parks & Open Space

Education and Outreach

Boulder County

2019 Annual Report

Cultural History

234 programs

5,338 participants

Natural History

248 programs

4,955 participants

Museums

Agricultural Heritage Center

Assay Office Museum

Nederland Mining Museum

Dougherty Museum

Paid Staff

8 full-time

6 seasonal

18 senior tax work-off

Volunteer Staff

133 cultural history

110 naturalists

152 park patrollers

9 writers & illustrators

2019 Highlights

- ◆ 482 cultural history and natural history programs presented to 10,293 participants
- ◆ 1,842 park visitors dropped by our trailhead displays
- ◆ 1,847 people talked with us at local town festivals and community events
- ◆ 1,081 people attended two special events at the Agricultural Heritage Center
- ◆ 208 people attended a fishing clinic, fishing derby, or Catfish Night event
- ◆ 17,879 people visited our museums
- ◆ The historic Altona School opened for school group visits



Cultural History Education

AHC: 9,367 people visited the site. June was the busiest month, with 1,997 visitors.

AHC: Two annual special events — Barnyard Critter Day (741 visitors), and Crafts and Trades of Olden Days (340 visitors) — were highly successful. Volunteers and paid vendors demonstrated special skills, and encouraged visitors to participate in various activities including toy making, wool washing and spinning, crafts, candle dipping, blacksmithing, and much more.

WRH: 536 elementary school students attended Walker Ranch School Days. The field trips are active, fun, and much anticipated by teachers, students, and parents. Hands-on stations focus on Colorado pioneer and ranching history.

NMM: 6,829 visitors dropped by the museum or attended a special program at the museum.

NMM: The town of Nederland celebrated the 150th anniversary of the silver strike and naming of the town of Caribou. NMM hosted candle dipping and gold panning that day.

AS: A new volunteer opportunity began in fall 2019 at the historic one-room schoolhouse. Thirteen volunteers were trained as Altona Educators and five programs to local school groups and clubs were conducted.

64% of program participants were pre-K and elementary-school-aged kids.

Hard rock mining driving tours took place July through October. Tour stops included the Blue Bird Mine Complex at Caribou Ranch, Conger Mine near Sherwood Gulch, Old Cardinal City, Blue Jay Mine, Rocky Mountain Mammoth Mine, and Cardinal Mill. The tours continue to be popular, often with waitlists.

The department completed the Standards and Excellence Program with the American Association for State and Local History (AASLH) to comply with new State of Colorado requirements for state-approved repositories of archaeological objects.

Cultural history volunteer Betty Musfeldt was recognized as the 2019 Parks & Open Space Volunteer of the Year!



List of Abbreviations:

Agricultural Heritage Center (AHC)

Altona School (AS)

Assay Office Museum (AOM)

Dougherty Museum (DM)

Nederland Mining Museum (NMM)

Walker Ranch Homestead (WRH)



Natural History Education

248 natural history interpretive and educational programs (25 fewer than previous year)
110 school and homeschool groups programs (17 more than previous year)



53% of requested programs took place outdoors. Walden Ponds Wildlife Habitat (43%) and Heil Valley Ranch (41%) were the most popular.
47% indoor programs were held in classrooms and local libraries.

77% of public programs took place outdoors. Ron Stewart Preserve at Rabbit Mountain (22%), Walden Ponds Wildlife Habitat (15%), and Heil Valley Ranch (11%) were the top three locations for those programs.



Wildlife (30%), general ecology (20%), and wetlands (13%) were the top three topics for requested programs. The top three topics for public programs were wildlife (20%), birds (20%), and general ecology (18%).

Elementary-school-age (K–5th grade) program requests continued to lead the way in participation with 55% of all requested programs, up from 40% in 2018. Preschool program requests (21%) remained about the same in 2019, while middle school program requests decreased from 13% of program requests in 2018 to 7% in 2019.



As an agency partner in the GOCO Nature Kids grant, we teamed up with other environmental education organizations in Boulder County to provide programming for elementary school students in Lafayette. For the preschool programs, we provided classroom programs about wildlife for all four elementary preschools in Lafayette. Also as part of the grant, foothill ecology field trips were conducted in September and October for nine second-grade classes from Alicia Sanchez International, Escuela Bilingüe Pioneer, and Ryan elementary schools.

76% of requested program participants were pre-K and elementary-school-aged kids.
81% of public program participants were adults.

Citizen science wildlife camera project with Longs Peak Middle School's after-school STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) Club. The students, who come from a wide range of ethnic and economic backgrounds, collected data from several cameras along St. Vrain Creek and at Ron Stewart Preserve at Rabbit Mountain.

Informal Education

Local Town Festivals & Special Events: We talked with 1,847 people about Boulder County Parks & Open Space (BCPOS) properties, management activities, and volunteer opportunities. Local events included the Wild Bird Basin event, Superior's National Trails Day, the Harney Lastoka Farm Event, Longmont's Pride Festival, Lafayette's Peach Festival, the Celebrating Bird Migration event, and a handful of school and library special events.

Trailhead Displays: 1,842 park visitors stopped by one of our 44 trailhead displays at different open space properties. Themes included: Abert's squirrel, beaver, trail etiquette, black bear, coyote, dog safety and regulations, elk, golden eagle, rattlesnake, great blue heron, hawk and prairie dog, horned owl and pelican, moose, mountain lion, and red fox.

Fishing Events: Two kids' fishing clinics attracted 337 children and their parents, and we sponsored drop-in fishing at Cattail Pond during the Boulder County Fair for 26 kids. At the clinics, kids learned how to cast, bait a hook, handle a wet fish, and tie knots before they borrowed a pole to practice their new skills. We also held the Jr. & Sr. Fishing Derby with 11 teams, Senior Fish-off with 21 seniors, and two Catfish Nights at Stearns Lake with 34 anglers who fished until 11 p.m.

Detective Mystery Guides: 318 children returned mystery guides from nine open space properties where their families explored nature and recorded their observations.

Art Programs: Six *en plein air* and photography sessions were held on open space involving 84 artists. Six artists stayed at Caribou Ranch as part of the Artist-in-Residence Program. The department held the fourth photography exhibit, with approximately 200 attending the event opening.



Informal Education

iNaturalist: In the fourth year of the Boulder County Wildlife project on the iNaturalist webpage, we increased observations to approximately 18,500. The City of Boulder and the WILD Foundation partner with us to manage the site.

Images Magazine: 708 subscribers received hard copies, and 507 people got electronic copies of the quarterly magazine that highlights the department's management activities, natural resources, recreational opportunities, and local history.

Email Listserve Communications: 906 people received monthly notices about hikes and events (8% increase from previous year), and 566 people received notices for kids' events (14% increase).

Nederland Mining Museum: Exhibit signs were standardized, messages were shortened to highlight local hard rock mining stories, and all signs were fabricated on durable material.

Trailside Panels: Six panels were created in-house for the Schoolhouse Loop Trail and Altona School that focused on the area's history, natural resources, and 2003 Overland Fire that consumed part of the hillside that can be seen by trail users.

Partnership: We were consultants for a Colorado University (CU) environmental design class that was tasked to reimagine how design could support historic preservation and education. We were so impressed by their work that one of the three prototypes constructed for their final presentation was purchased to display at Cardinal Mill.

Volunteer Work Projects: 2,005 volunteers participated in one-day projects where they were presented brief summaries of the cultural and natural resources of the open space, as well how the their work played in the overall management of the property.



Education & Outreach Strategic Plans

GOAL ONE: Inform the public about the county's open space resources, management practices, and visitor opportunities.

- ◆ Provide informational and educational materials.
- ◆ Interpret the full range of the department's conservation and preservation efforts.
- ◆ Engage local schools, universities and programs (e.g. scout troops) to enhance educational experiences by using properties as centers of learning.
- ◆ Proactively embrace technology.
- ◆ Encourage behaviors that minimize impacts on the resources and other visitors.

GOAL TWO: Offer opportunities throughout Boulder County that meet the interests of our diverse population.

- ◆ Develop multiple points of entry for people of all backgrounds to engage with parks from introductory experiences to park stewardship opportunities.
- ◆ Create programs that spark curiosity and encourage stewardship of nature, history, and agriculture on our open space.
- ◆ Make local history and cultural resources accessible in ways that reveal the impacts of all the people, places, and events that have shaped Boulder County, while maintaining relevance to contemporary life.
- ◆ Encourage the use of parks and open spaces for active living, healthy lifestyles, and quality of life benefits.

GOAL THREE: Evaluate the department's services and programs to better meet the public's needs.

- ◆ Gather feedback from volunteers, staff, and program participants.
- ◆ Get to know our visitors to enhance the visitor experience.



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