



## National Public Lands Day – September 24

National Public Lands Day celebrates the connection between people and green space in their community, inspires environmental stewardship, and encourages use of open space for education, recreation, and health benefits.

# Welcome to Your Public Lands

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# From the Commissioners

## A Space for All

Stewardship is a Boulder County value and nowhere is that more evident than in our commitment to protecting and preserving over 100,000 acres of land for our community and future generations. As part of this stewardship, we acknowledge that for much longer than Boulder County Parks & Open Space's history of stewarding open space, the land in this community has been important to the diverse Indigenous communities that continue to thrive here. We are partnering with Indigenous people to make meaningful changes to how we do our work that include Indigenous people, incorporate their perspectives, and honor their land stewardship legacy.

We'd like to thank Boulder County residents for their generous support for open space acquisition, which enables us to preserve lands for wildlife habitat, agriculture, and scenic vistas. This fall, and in every season, we invite you to enjoy Boulder County's Parks & Open Space lands.

## A (Beginner's) Guide to Open Space

If you're new to the area or haven't previously visited the county's open space, this publication is a great place to find out about the free resources and amenities available to people of all ages and abilities.

In the next few pages, you can find out about hikes and events for kids, seniors, and families, as well as the best spots for fishing, shaded picnic areas to gather with friends and families, and the perfect places to learn about the history of Boulder County.

Land conservation is a large part of our mission as stewards of Boulder County and in this publication you can also read about ecological restoration and open space acquisition. In the agriculture section, there are updates on soil health, carbon sequestration, and local food production on county land.

We encourage you to sign up to receive Boulder County Parks & Open Space communications, so you don't miss future updates on projects, educational programs, investment, and volunteer opportunities. See the back cover for details.

## Take Some Time for Yourself

Exposure to nature has been linked to a host of health benefits, including lower stress and a better mood. It has been a difficult couple of years for Boulder County and we hope that enjoying our open space, whether it's your first or five hundredth time, provides you with a well-deserved opportunity to relax and unwind.

*See you on the trails!*

Commissioner **Marta Loachamin**



Commissioner **Claire Levy**



Commissioner **Matt Jones**





# From the Director



As we emerge from the pandemic, we realize that open space is more valuable than ever. For the last two-plus years, we have reaffirmed that open space is a place to get fresh air, exercise, reduce our stress, and find peace in nature. It is a place to connect with friends and family without masks and rebuild our spirit. These are just a few of the reasons why we love Boulder County.

Boulder County Parks & Open Space is working on key priorities in the next several years. First is outreach to our Latinx community. We want parks that are accessible and used by our Latinx families, educational programs that bring in the Latinx history, and staff with bilingual skills for education and interactions on our trails.

Another priority is climate action. Parks & Open Space regional trails provide non-polluting commuting options. Our farmer partners are working on carbon farming. Our staff and volunteers of all ages are restoring forests and wetlands that increase carbon sequestration and provide valuable wildlife habitat.

Boulder County Parks & Open Space has a place for everyone. You may like watching our osprey camera, hiking or biking our mountain trails, or walking your dog on a regional trail. You can learn about all we do in these articles, and find your niche in the beautiful outdoors of Boulder County.

**Therese Glowacki**, *Director*  
Boulder County Parks & Open Space

How much land does  
the county protect  
from development?

LAND TYPE	ACRES
Public Land	66,619
Conservation Easements (protected private land)	39,624
Total	106,243





# Enjoy your open space with the whole family



## Picnic Shelters/ Gatherings

Gather the family at 15 picnic shelters and many picnic tables throughout our parks. All shelters are available on a first-come, first-served basis, unless they've been reserved. Some shelters are available to reserve for a small non-refundable fee. For more information about shelters, go to [boco.org/shelters](http://boco.org/shelters).



## Hikes & Events

Enjoy naturalist-led group hikes, indoor programs, special events, senior hikes, kids' programs, and other Parks & Open Space events. From gold panning, to wildlife watching, to night hikes—find them all at [boco.org/hikes](http://boco.org/hikes).



## Fishing

Enjoy fishing at seven parks throughout the county! We're improving fishing access this fall with new dedicated fishing spots at Stearns Lake at Carolyn Holmberg Preserve at Rock Creek Farm and Bass and Wally Toevs ponds at Walden Ponds Wildlife Habitat. Cottonwood and willow trees have been planted at some of the Bass Pond sites for growing shade! For more information about Fishing on County Open Space go to [boco.org/fishing](http://boco.org/fishing).



## Say hello to our rangers!



Love of the outdoors and creating memorable experiences are only some of the reasons we become park rangers. Whether answering questions on the trails or rescuing lost and injured visitors, you can always count on your rangers to be well equipped, well trained, and ready to help. We look forward to hitting the trails and showing visitors what Boulder County Parks & Open Space has to offer. Say hello to your new park rangers Juan, Sully, and Lucero. Contact them with any questions at [POSinfo@bouldercounty.org](mailto:POSinfo@bouldercounty.org).

*El amor del aire libre y la creación de experiencias memorables son algunas de las razones que nos convertimos en guardaparques. Ya sea respondiendo preguntas en los senderos o rescatando a visitantes perdidos o heridos, siempre puede contar que sus guardaparques estén bien equipados, entrenados y listos para ayudar. Estamos emocionados de mostrarles a los visitantes lo que los Parques y Espacios Abiertos del Condado de Boulder tienen para ofrecer. Saluda a tus nuevos guardaparques Juan, Sully, Lucero y contactalos con cualquier pregunta en [POSinfo@bouldercounty.org](mailto:POSinfo@bouldercounty.org).*

# Just for Kids

## Nature Detectives Kids Club, Ages 4-11

This self-guided program is geared towards children 4 to 11 years old. Families are invited to join the Nature Detectives by participating in self-guided tours and activities. Each mystery guide takes you on an exploration of a specific open space property. Kids do not need any special knowledge or equipment – just curious minds and a sense of adventure! Mystery guides are available at trailheads in English and Spanish during summer months or anytime at [boco.org/NatureDetectives](http://boco.org/NatureDetectives).



## Left Hand Outdoor Challenge, Ages 14-18

The Left Hand Outdoor Challenge is an outdoor youth program scheduled during the school year for ages 14-18. LHOC is designed to inspire teens to appreciate natural resources at a deeper level and to encourage them to challenge themselves, contribute to their community, pursue environmental stewardship, and explore outdoor careers. Applications are accepted each July, and the program includes monthly Saturday challenges and Wednesday evening base camps from October through May. Innovative challenges are hosted by Parks & Open Space staff from various specialties exposing teens to many different resource management issues and natural environments. For more information, visit [boco.org/lhoc](http://boco.org/lhoc).



## Youth Corps, Ages 14-17

The Youth Corps provides summer employment opportunities for Boulder County teens. Corpmembers develop a sense of community involvement through personal accomplishment, teamwork, and service to the county. Since 1996, participants aged 14-17 have been completing projects for Boulder County departments, municipalities, and towns. The Youth Corps works exclusively on outdoor service projects. Projects include trail building, landscaping, forestry, historic preservation, fence building, and noxious weed removal. Applications are accepted in March of each year and the season runs for six 30-hour weeks from mid-June to early August. For more information, visit [boco.org/yc](http://boco.org/yc).





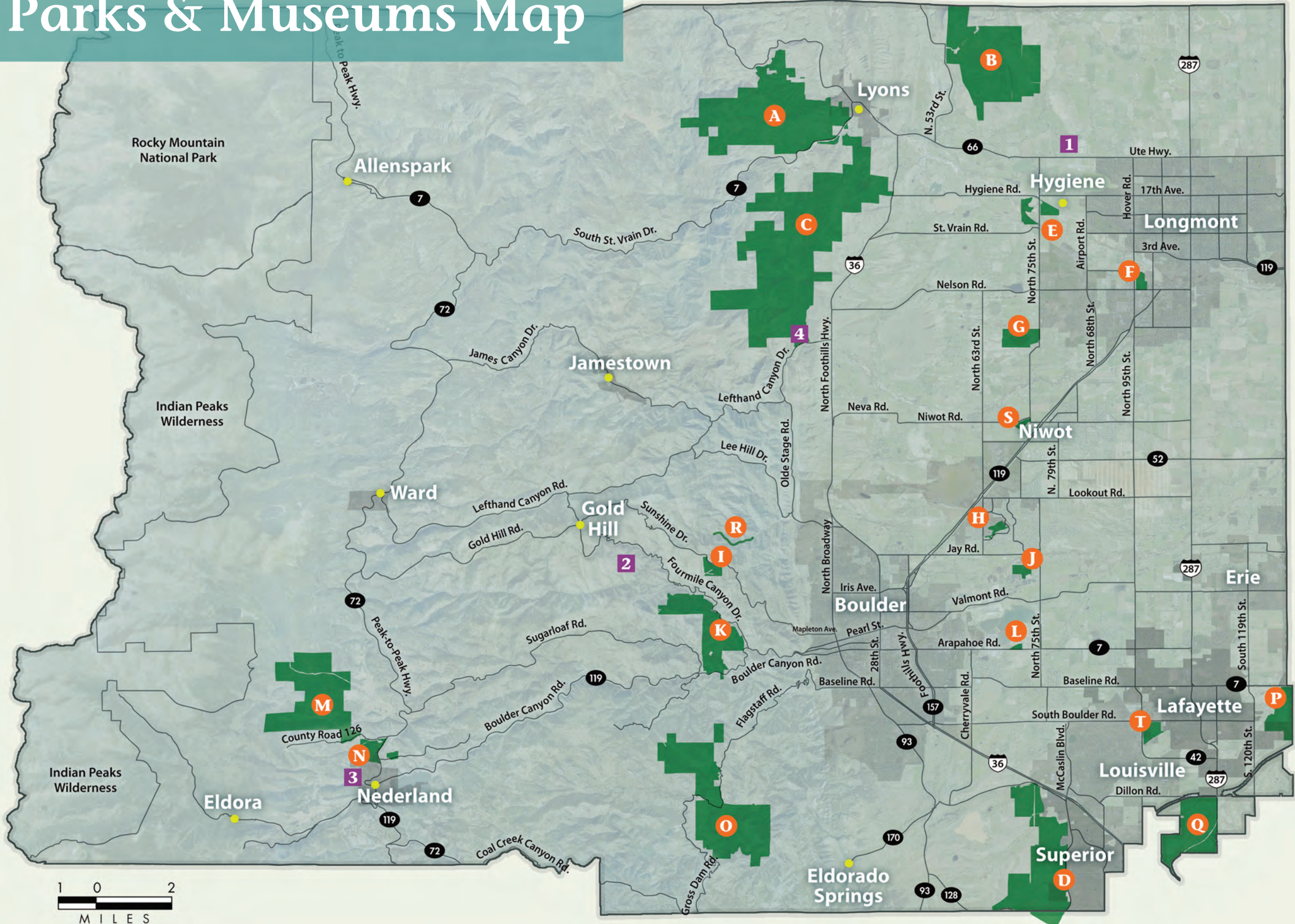
### Parks & Open Space Mission:

To conserve natural, cultural, and agricultural resources and provide public uses that reflect sound resource management and community values.

### Parks & Open Space Goals

1. To preserve rural lands and buffers.
2. To preserve and restore natural resources for the benefit of the environment and the public.
3. To provide public outreach, partnerships, and volunteer opportunities to increase awareness and appreciation of Boulder County's open space.
4. To protect, restore, and interpret cultural resources for the education and enjoyment of current and future generations.
5. To provide quality recreational experiences while protecting open space resources.
6. To promote and provide for sustainable agriculture in Boulder County for the natural, cultural, and economic values it provides.
7. To develop human resources potential, employ sustainable and sound business practices, and pursue technological advancements.

# Parks & Museums Map



## County Parks

- A** Hall Ranch
- B** Ron Stewart Preserve at Rabbit Mountain
- C** Heil Valley Ranch
- D** Coalton Trailhead
- E** Pella Crossing
- F** Boulder County Fairgrounds
- G** Lagerman Reservoir
- H** Twin Lakes
- I** Bald Mountain Scenic Area
- J** Walden Ponds Wildlife Habitat
- K** Betasso Preserve
- L** Legion Park
- M** Caribou Ranch
- N** Mud Lake
- O** Walker Ranch
- P** Flagg Park
- Q** Carolyn Holmberg Preserve at Rock Creek Farm
- R** Anne U. White
- S** Dodd Lake
- T** Harney Lastoka

## Museums

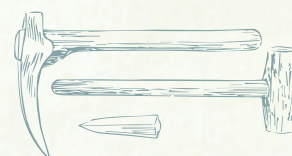
- 1** Agricultural Heritage Center
- 2** James F. Bailey Assay Office Museum
- 3** Nederland Mining Museum
- 4** Altona Schoolhouse

# Connecting with History



## Agricultural Heritage Center at Lohr / McIntosh Farm

Get a glimpse into the history of agriculture in Boulder County and enjoy the rural surroundings. This site focuses on the years 1900 to 1925 when local families prospered as farmers and witnessed the coming of the Modern Age. The site is open April through October on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. **For more information, go to [boco.org/ahc](http://boco.org/ahc)**



## James F. Bailey Assay Office Museum

At the turn of the 20th century, hard rock mining in Boulder County was in full swing, and the area known as Wall Street (west of Boulder in Fourmile Canyon) played a prominent role in this chapter of our community's history. The assay office was the place where prospectors would take their ore samples to find out whether they had potentially "struck it rich." The museum displays many tools used in the assaying process, as well as furniture and artwork owned by the Bailey family. The museum is open the third Saturday of the month May through October. **For more information, go to [boco.org/aom](http://boco.org/aom)**



**COMING SOON!** A master planning process is underway for the Agricultural Heritage Center, Nederland Mining Museum, and Assay Office Museum — the three museums will add new exhibits displaying the county's multicultural, agricultural, and mining history.



## Altona Schoolhouse

Visit the newly opened historic Altona Schoolhouse! The one-room country school was built in 1880 and operated into the 1940s. The schoolhouse has been restored and looks much like it did when it was first built. The schoolhouse is a perfect example of a utilitarian design and was built with locally available materials. The schoolhouse features one open room, a stove, student desks, a teacher's desk, and a chalkboard. **For more information and seasonal hours, go to [boco.org/AltonaSchoolhouse](http://boco.org/AltonaSchoolhouse)**



## Nederland Mining Museum

Visit the Nederland Mining Museum and get a glimpse into the world of hard rock mining days in Boulder County during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Learn about the lives of the miners of yesteryear. The museum is open June through October on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. **For more information, go to [boco.org/nmm](http://boco.org/nmm)**

# Healthy Land and Water for a Healthy Community



## Soil Health

Boulder County collaborates with tenant farmers to ensure Boulder County has thriving agricultural lands for generations to come. On Boulder County agricultural properties, staff focuses on conserving the natural resources for healthy food production. In addition to using water in an efficient and effective manner, staff works to preserve and enhance soil health. Soil health is the ability of a soil to perform ecosystem services such as cycling of nutrients, filtering and storing water, providing a physical medium for the growth of plants, and a habitat for organisms.



## Carbon Sequestration

Parks & Open Space has been working with other partners and government agencies to learn more about managing county-owned land to improve carbon sequestration. Biological carbon sequestration is the storage of carbon dioxide in vegetation such as grasslands or forests, as well as in soils and water. It is an effective method of reducing the amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere with the goal of reducing global climate change.

A 2020 study of carbon storage on Boulder County forested lands showed that large disturbances (insect infestations, disease, wildfire, and development) in forests can lead to large releases of carbon into the atmosphere while also decreasing the amount of carbon the forest can store. Stream restoration projects that were recently completed will also

make a big impact in our local and global carbon sequestration needs over time.



Maintaining healthy forests and streams are just two examples of how we can improve carbon sequestration through management practices on Parks & Open Space lands. The county will continue to use what is learned about carbon sequestration to help guide future land management practices on county-owned properties to help offset emissions.





## St. Vrain Creek Restoration from 2013 Flood

Following the 2013 flood, Boulder County Parks & Open Space began multiple stream restoration projects on the St. Vrain Creek. Staff and volunteers restored over 2.35 miles of St. Vrain Creek, from upstream of Lyons to the town of Hygiene. The project focused on reducing immediate and future threats to buildings and public safety while improving the natural health of the creek and riparian habitat.

The design focused on natural solutions that blended with the environment. Final restoration of the area included planting thousands of cottonwoods, willows, native riparian shrubs, and other wetland plants. Today, with all the work complete and nature left to its own recovery, the damage done by the devastating floods are barely visible.



## Niwot Ditch Diversion Passage

The Niwot Ditch diversion dam on St. Vrain Creek between 75th Street and Airport Road was in a dilapidated state and vulnerable to structural failure during high river flows, which threatened vital access to water for local agriculture. Additionally, the dam created a water drop in the creek, increasing the risk of erosion and flooding, and disrupting important natural stream processes, such as sediment movement. Boulder County worked with the Niwot Ditch Company and associated unincorporated ditch owners on the reconstruction of the Niwot Ditch diversion dam to replace the aging dam with an environmentally sustainable structure.

Using natural stream channel design, the new water diversion is a multi-benefit structure built from natural materials that is more resilient to high flows, reduces flood risk, passes more sediment, and facilitates natural stream processes and function. The incorporation of a fish passage has reconnected a large amount of habitat needed by



imperiled native fish species. The stream and riparian habitat restoration projects also help the federally threatened Preble's meadow jumping mouse which occurs along the waterway.



## Connect with Us!

### Visit [BoulderCountyOpenSpace.org](https://BoulderCountyOpenSpace.org)

- Current news and events
- Current trail conditions
- Maps and directions
- Property information and photos

### Follow Us

- Facebook
- Instagram
- Twitter
- YouTube

### Sign up for our Email Updates and Newsletters at [boco.org/BCPOSnewsletters](https://boco.org/BCPOSnewsletters)

- Parks & Open Space News
- Community Forestry Sort Yards
- Firewood Permits
- Hikes & Events
- Images Magazine
- Kids & Family Events
- Parks & Open Space Advisory Committee
- Trail Closures
- Wild Work Volunteer Projects
- Youth Corps

## Get Involved!

### Volunteer

Parks & Open Space has a wealth of volunteer opportunities, from single-day events to ongoing programs.

Go to [boco.org/BCPOSvolunteer](https://boco.org/BCPOSvolunteer) to learn more about volunteer opportunities or to sign up!



### Parks & Open Space Advisory Committee

POSAC reviews staff proposals and public input and advises Parks & Open Space staff and the Board of County Commissioners on open space issues, new land acquisitions, and the management of existing properties. Meetings take place every month on the fourth Thursday at 6:30 p.m. Go to [boco.org/posac](https://boco.org/posac) to see agendas, videos of past meetings, and write in or sign up to speak.



Boulder County Parks & Open Space  
5201 St. Vrain Road  
Longmont, CO 80503  
303-678-6200 | [POSinfo@bouldercounty.org](mailto:POSinfo@bouldercounty.org)