

School Programs

Geology & ecology programs are offered to complement school curriculum



Geology at Devil's Backbone Open Space

Journey through geologic time with Larimer County Naturalists. Students will rotate through four (4) stations on Morrison Loop trail in this half day experience. Teachers can choose each station's topic from the list below. This program can accommodate up to 80 students.

1. **Rocks, Rocks Everywhere:** Cover the three (3) rock types and their distinguishing characteristics. Students will understand the rock cycle and processes that make each rock type.
2. **The Present Doesn't Look Like the Past:** Introduction to the four (4) Geologic Layers of rocks, their characteristics and how/why they are present at Devil's Backbone Open Space.
3. **Rocks Can Fall Apart:** Introduction to the cause and effect of weathering, erosion and deposition.
4. **Minerals Around Us:** Students will consider how minerals are formed and that they are the building blocks of rocks. We will also look at how humans use minerals in our everyday lives.
5. **Human Connection:** Students will learn the history of Alfred Wild and why he is significant to the area around the Devil's Backbone. Students will learn the importance of how non-living things (rocks and minerals) can affect us and the other living things around them and how humans can affect the landscape around them.
6. **What's Living What's Not:** Students will inspect how nonliving (abiotic) factors influence what living (biotic) organisms live in a certain area or habitat.
7. **Natural Disasters:** Discuss how floods, erosion, fires and other natural disasters can affect the natural and human built world. How can we better prepare to protect our environment and ourselves in the face of these disasters?

Keep the fun and learning going!

Extended your field trip to a full day trail experience. Teachers and chaperones are welcome to lead a hike on the Wild Loop trail after the morning program. This offers an opportunity to further discuss what the students learned. (Groups must hike in smaller groups of 15 – 20 participants and hike at staggered intervals to not displace or overwhelm other trail users.)

Groups with a total of 24 or less students may schedule a full day trail experience with Naturalists.

Don't see a program that fits? Contact us to discuss if we have a better option to meet your group's interests.
jenderby@larimer.org 970-619-4552

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Ecology

Horsetooth Mountain, Lions Open Space, Ramsay-Shockey Open Space or River Bluffs Open Space

Connect your students to the natural world all around them.

Lions Open Space/River Bluffs Open Space – students will rotate through four (4) stations led by Larimer County Naturalists. This program can accommodate up to 80 students.

Horsetooth Mountain Open Space/Ramsay-Shockey Open Space – students will venture on a full or half day trail experience led by Larimer County Naturalists. This program can accommodate up to 60 students.

1. **Through The Eyes of Insects:** Students observe habitats to determine if different arthropods live in different habitats. Then, using insect nets they'll catch arthropods within these different habitats and discuss if their observations were correct.
2. **River Habitat Study:** (only at River Bluffs and Lions Open Spaces) Students will observe the river and surrounding area to hypothesize if the river is healthy or unhealthy habitat. Using dip nets to catch macroinvertebrates and identify them they will be able to ascertain the general health of the river using a pollution tolerance index.
3. **What this Habitat Needs:** (Oh Deer) Using Project WILDs Oh Deer activity students will explore what animals need in their habitat to survive and how excess or lack of certain resources can affect animal populations.
4. **Ecology/Habitat Walk:** As students walk along an open space trail they will look for signs of what animals use the area as habitat and consider why the area is good or bad habitat for the species who may live there.
5. **Life Zones:** Students will explore how different factors such as elevation, weather, water and sun availability effect the plant species in an area and how that can help determine what animal species call an area home.
6. **Seeds, Shoots and Trees:** Students will explore what plants need to survive in different environments, how the soil, sun and water availability can affect how well a plant can or cannot survive in different habitats.
7. **Natural Disasters:** see geology list above

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