

Junior Ranger Guide



Recommended for Ages 7-12

Photo: Charlie Johnson

Larimer County Natural Resources
1800 S. Country Rd. 31
Loveland, CO 80537
(970) 619-4570
larimer.org/naturalresources



Hi! I'm Barry the Bear and I'm excited to help you become a Larimer County Junior Ranger!



Rangers keep parks and open spaces safe for everyone to enjoy. Junior Rangers can help, too! This guide will teach you how to enjoy and take care of the plants, animals, and ecosystems of Larimer County and anywhere you go.

When you've completed at least 5 activities, bring your guide to the Larimer County Natural Resources Administrative Offices to receive your official Junior Ranger badge. You'll also get entered into a drawing to win a bigger prize, donated by REI - Fort Collins!

You can also mail your Junior Ranger Guide to:

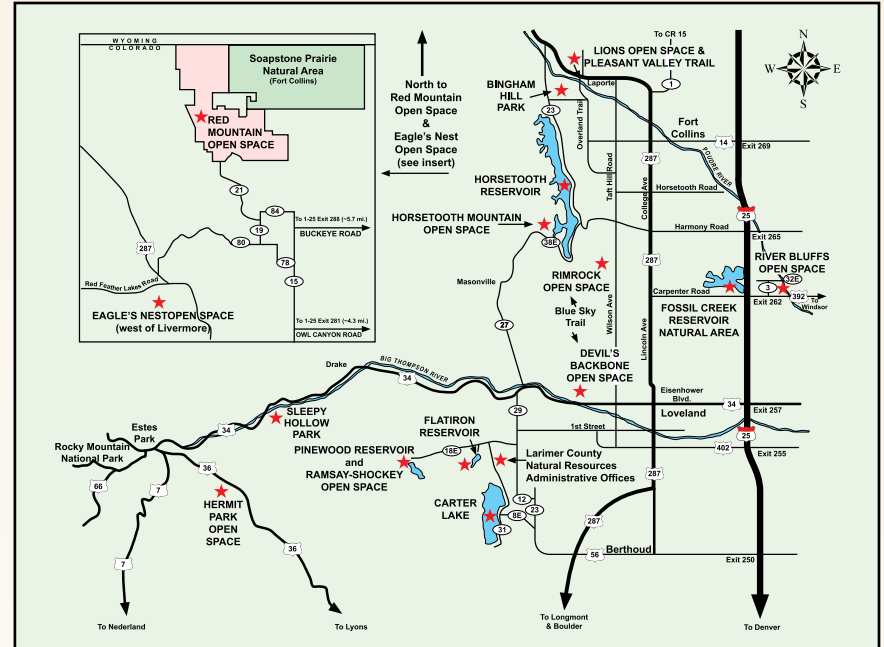
Larimer County Natural Resources
Attn: Education Program
1800 S. Country Rd. 31
Loveland, CO 80537

We'll mail back your Junior Ranger Guide and badge.



Hi, my name is **Ranger Sam!** Larimer County Natural Resources manages some great parks and open spaces. With over 43,000 acres of open space and 8 parks, there is always something to do outside! Check in with me throughout this guide for fun facts and ways to stay safe!

Larimer County's Parks and Open Spaces



- Bingham Hill Park
- Big Thompson Parks
- Carter Lake County Park
- Devil's Backbone Open Space
- Eagle's Nest Open Space
- Flatiron Reservoir County Park
- Hermit Park Open Space
- Horsetooth Mountain Open Space
- Horsetooth Reservoir County Park
- Lions' Open Space and Pleasant Valley Trail
- Pinewood Reservoir County Park
- Ramsay-Shockey Open Space
- Red Mountain Open Space
- Rimrock Open Space
- River Bluffs Open Space
- Soderberg Open Space

You'll get to visit some of these places as a Junior Ranger! Look for the line asking for an adult's initials on activity pages where you visit a park or open space.

Larimer County's Open Lands Program is funded by a 1/4-cent Help Preserve Open Spaces sales tax, started by citizens in 1996.



Colorado Life Zones

There are 6 different life zones in Larimer County. The plants and animals you find in an area depends on which life zone you are in!

There are 15 activities in this guide. Some activities happen in a specific life zone while others take place in several life zones. You will see the life zone on each activity page.



Did you know? The riparian life zone can be found at any elevation where there are lakes, rivers or streams.

Elevation (feet)

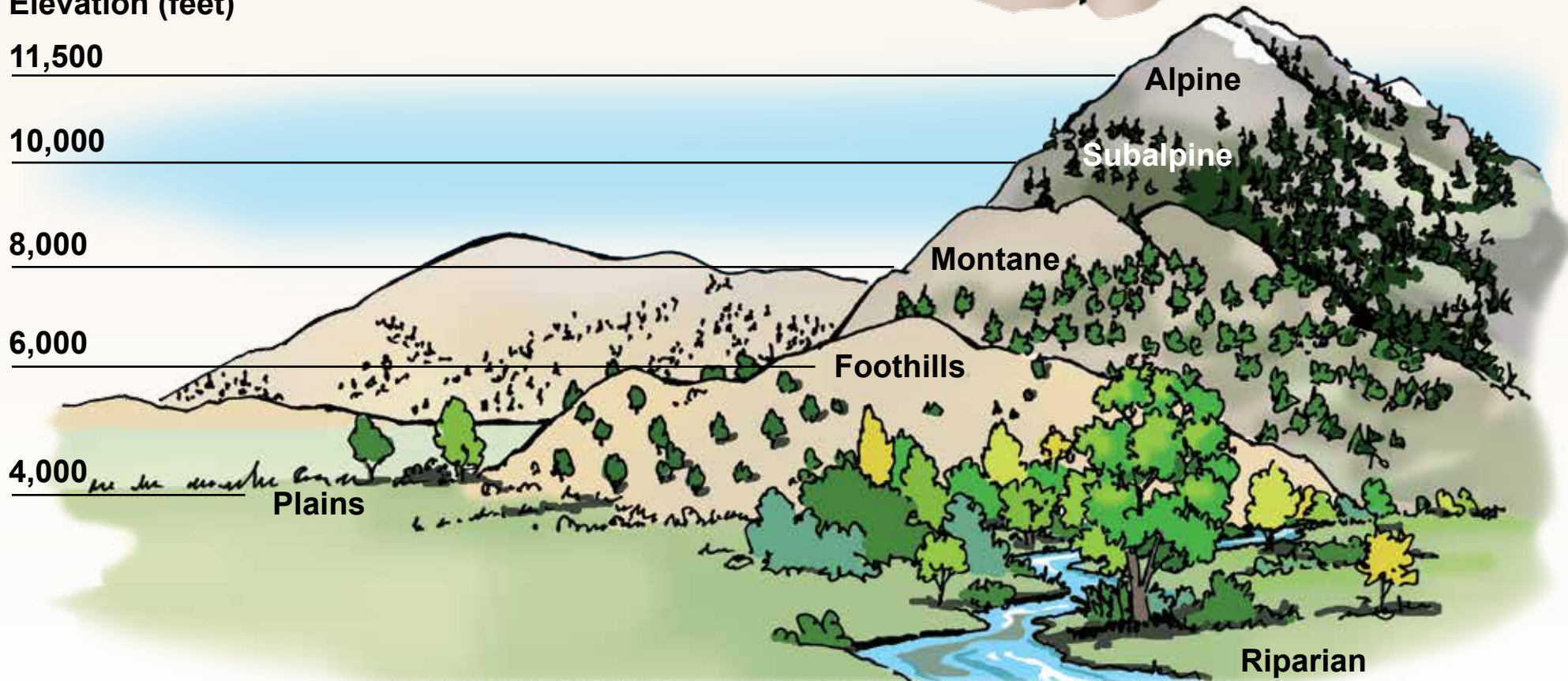
11,500

10,000

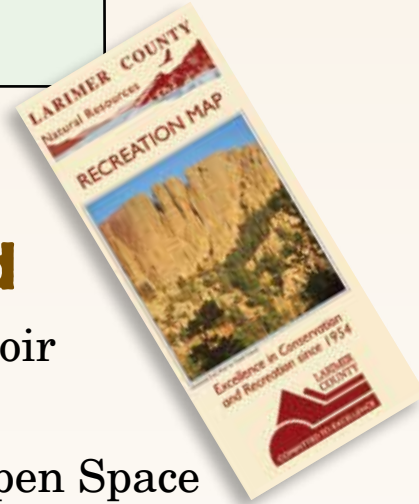
8,000

6,000

4,000



Pick up a Larimer County Natural Resources Recreation Map at any trailhead, gate house or office. Use the map to find the places you'll visit on your journey to become a Junior Ranger! Check each place off the list when you've found it on the map.



1. Places to Find

- Carter Lake Reservoir County Park
- Devil's Backbone Open Space
- Flatiron Reservoir County Park
- Hermit Park Open Space
- Horsetooth Mountain Open Space
- Horsetooth Reservoir County Park
- Pinewood Reservoir County Park
- Red Mountain Open Space
- River Bluffs Open Space

2. Hike the Bent Rock Trail at Red Mountain Open Space

(Plains / Foothills Life Zone)

What date did you hike the Bent Rock Trail? _____
 Adult's Initials _____

Humans have lived at Red Mountain Open Space for a long time, 10,000-12,000 years! Long ago, they didn't have houses or grocery stores, so they had to build their own shelters and hunt and gather food and water. Look around and imagine that you were living here long ago. Then, answer the questions below.



What would be the hardest part of living at Red Mountain Open Space 10,000-12,000 years ago? _____

What would be the most fun part of living in this area long ago? _____

Did you know? **Where** cultural artifacts are found is just as important as **what** is found for archaeologists. Be sure to leave artifacts where you find them by not picking them up. If you find something mark the spot with a GPS or on a map and call (970) 619-4570.



3. Visit River Bluffs Open Space and Bike on the Poudre River Trail

(Riparian Life Zone)

What date did you ride your bike on the Poudre River Trail? _____ Adult's Initials _____

Did you know? It's important to bike safely! Check out this list to learn how you can have fun AND be safe, then test out your new knowledge on the Poudre River Trail.



Biking safety checklist:

- Wear a helmet.
- Make sure your tires are properly inflated and your brakes work.
- Wear bright colors so other people on the trail can see you.
- Be aware of others on the trail and don't ride too fast!
- Carry extra inner tubes and a bike pump.
- Announce yourself if you're passing other trail users.
- Stay to the right-hand side of the trail.
- Bring plenty of water.

4. Use Your Senses

Find a spot by the Poudre River to take a break. Use your senses to explore.

What do you see?



What do you hear?



What do you smell?



What do you feel?



5. Visit the Keyhole at Devil's Backbone Open Space *(Foothills Life Zone)*

I visited the keyhole at Devil's Backbone Open Space on this date: _____ Adult's Initials _____



Taking time to draw a place we visit can be fun and help us remember it better. Sketch the Devil's Backbone in the space to the right.

Did you know? Alfred Wild lived at Devil's Backbone Open Space in the late 1800's perhaps when your grandparent's parents were alive!

He grew crops and mined for gypsum, a white chalky mineral used in drywall and plaster. The remains of the building you see near the trailhead is his old gypsum mill.

A large, empty rectangular box with a black border, intended for sketching the Devil's Backbone. It occupies the right half of the page.

6. Visit a Swim Beach

(Foothills Life Zone)

Choose a location (circle one):

- Horsetooth Reservoir County Park-South Bay
- Horsetooth Reservoir County Park-Sunrise Day Use Area
- Carter Lake County Park

What date did you swim here? _____

Adult's Initials _____



Swimming is fun, especially on a hot summer day! Circle the items you would bring to the swim beach.



7. Meet a Ranger!



Find a ranger to interview during your visit to a park or open space. Ask them the questions below.

1) What is your name?

2) Where do you work?

3) What is your favorite part of your job?

4) How long have you been a ranger?

5) What is your favorite trail?

6) Write your own question!

Ranger's Autograph: _____

8. Hike to Horsetooth Falls at Horsetooth Mountain Open Space (Foothills Life Zone)

On the way to Horsetooth Falls, use your senses to look for signs of wildlife and learn more about the world around you! Draw a picture or describe each item below. On the next page, match each animal with the correct track.



A songbird	An Abert's squirrel	A mule deer	Wildlife tracks
A raptor	An insect of some kind	Something you want to learn more about	Wildlife scat

9. Match the Track



Mountain lion
(*Felis concolor*)



Mule deer
(*Odocoileus hemionus*)



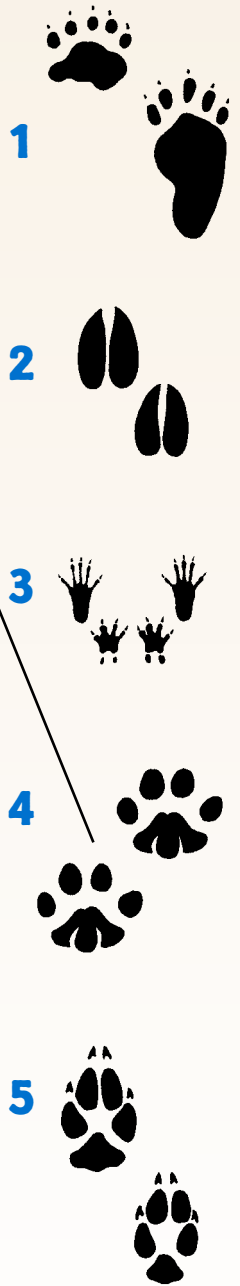
Black bear
(*Ursus americanus*)



Abert's squirrel
(*Sciurus aberti*)



Coyote
(*Canis latrans*)



Answers: Mountain lion-4, Mule deer-2, Black bear-1, Abert's squirrel-3, Coyote-5

10. Go Camping at a Larimer County Park

(Foothills / Montane Life Zone)

Choose a location (circle one):

- Horsetooth Reservoir County Park *(Foothills)*
- Carter Lake County Park *(Foothills)*
- Flatiron Reservoir County Park *(Foothills)*
- Pinewood Reservoir County Park *(Foothills)*
- Hermit Park Open Space *(Montane)*

When did you camp here? _____

Adult's Initials _____

Write 1-2 sentences about your trip.

Principles of Leave No Trace:

1. Plan ahead and prepare.
2. Travel and camp on durable surfaces.
3. Dispose of waste properly (pack it in, pack it out).
4. Leave what you find.
5. Minimize campfire impacts.
6. Respect wildlife.
7. Be considerate of other visitors.



Did you know?

Following the principles of Leave No Trace protects our parks and open spaces for all visitors!

11. What's Wrong with This Campsite?



Using the principles of Leave No Trace, list all of the things that don't belong in this unattended campsite. Find all 10!

- | | |
|---------|----------|
| 1 _____ | 6 _____ |
| 2 _____ | 7 _____ |
| 3 _____ | 8 _____ |
| 4 _____ | 9 _____ |
| 5 _____ | 10 _____ |



Answers: Car off road, dog left unattended, water spigot left on, litter, toilet paper, campfire unattended, tree chopped down, ax left in tree, shovel in ground, food left out for wildlife, picnic table left on, litter, toilet paper

12. Attend a Campground Program*

Choose a location (circle one):

- Horsetooth Reservoir
- Hermit Park Open Space
- Carter Lake Campground
- Flatiron Reservoir Campground
- Other: _____

What program did you attend? _____

List 3 things you learned:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Presenter's signature: _____

13. Attend a Guided Hike*

Choose a location (circle one):

- Devil's Backbone Open Space
- Horsetooth Mountain Open Space
- River Bluffs Open Space
- Other: _____

What program did you attend? _____

List 3 things you learned:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Presenter's signature: _____

*For a list of campground programs and guided hikes, visit larimer.org/NRnews.

14. Project Noah Submission

Take a photo of a plant or animal in a Larimer County park or open space. Visit projectnoah.org, create an account and upload a photo to the "Larimer County Flora and Fauna" mission. projectnoah.org/missions/43787036



I uploaded my photo on this date: _____

My photo was of a _____ (species).

15. Project Budburst Submission



Junior Rangers are also good scientists! Visit budburst.org/lcnr to learn how to observe all sorts of plant species.

I made my observation on this date: _____

My observation was of a _____ (species).

Junior Ranger Pledge

Congratulations! You are now a Junior Ranger! Your new knowledge is an important part of keeping Larimer County's parks and open spaces safe and beautiful for everyone to enjoy.



AS A JUNIOR RANGER, I PLEDGE TO:

- *Take care of plants and animals.*
- *Share my new knowledge with a friend.*
- *Visit a park or open space often.*
- *Follow Leave No Trace principles.*

Junior Ranger Signature _____

Larimer County Ranger Signature _____

Want more info on happenings in parks and open spaces?



- Like us on Facebook:
facebook.com/LCNaturalResources



- Follow us on Twitter: @LCDNR
- larimer.org/naturalresources