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**What's New: 2017-18  
Fort Collins, Colo.****CRAFT CULTURE; COLLEGE TOWN**

Most people know Fort Collins as the home of Colorado State University (CSU), a Mecca for beer enthusiasts and the jumping off point for outdoor adventure in the northernmost part of the state. What many people don't know is that Fort Collins is also a craft culture hub. This unassumingly hip Northern Colorado college town is home to entrepreneurs and craftspeople at the top of their trade, including craft beverage brewers, third wave coffee shops, bike manufacturers, homegrown bands, food fanatics and fine artists.

**Craft Coffee Movement in the Capital of Craft Brews**

Third-wave coffee makes a splash in Fort Collins with a burgeoning craft community, including Harbinger Coffee, Coffee Shrub, The Bean Cycle, The Coffee Registry, Bindle Coffee, Everyday Joe's and newbie Peritus Coffee Roasters – a family company founded by avid cyclists that shares a space with Source Endurance cycling training gym. Experts say the third-wave trend is brewing much like the Fort Collins beer scene. According to Coffee Shrub's Christopher Schooley, craft coffee currently holds the same market share as its sudsy counterpart. Why? They're both accessible and interesting.

**New Brews Flow in Colorado's Craft Beer Capital**

2017 is shaping up to be another banner year for brewers in Colorado's Craft Beer Capital. Fort Collins welcomed two new breweries early in the new year: the Gilded Goat Brewing Company and DC Oakes Brewhouse & Eatery. A self-described 'specialized brewery,' the Gilded Goat brews balanced beer influenced by the Colorado lifestyle. The brewery's full-flavored ales and lagers are born from the belief that art and science must work together to create good beer. DC Oakes specializes in small batch brews, and the taproom also features beers made by a variety of Colorado craft breweries, cocktails made with house spirits, plus a list of great wines and an impressive variety of yummy options from the on-site kitchen (they had us at Bacon Marmalade Burger). On tap for this summer (fingers crossed): Freedonia Brewery, featuring a native German owner/head brewer (Ralf Kracke-Berndorff) and a 100-year-old copper Jacob Carl Brewhouse system. Freedonia will feature – you guessed it – German-style lagers.

Keep track of your FoCo favorites with Visit Fort Collins' new beer tasting journal – free from the Visitors Center conveniently located in Old Town.

**Fort Collins #3 on Travelocity Beer Tourism Index and #2 for Best Beer Scene by USA Today Readers**

Thanks to the growing popularity of beer tourism (the Brewers Association estimates

more than 10 million people toured small and independent craft breweries in 2014), Travelocity launched a beer tourism index in late 2016. It's no surprise Fort Collins appears in the number three slot for Top Small Metro Areas. Travelocity's beer index identifies the best large and small metro areas for sampling some of the best craft beers in the U.S. by examining the location of all breweries in the country, taking into account factors important to a successful "beercation," including the availability of rideshare services, accessibility via air and the average cost of lodging.

<http://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/americas-best-beer-destinations-named-in-the-first-travelocity-beer-tourism-index-300346468.html>.

In addition, *USA Today* readers picked Fort Collins as number two for Best Beer Scene in the nation.

### **Foodie Focus**

Long known for its foodie culture, and with more restaurants per capita than most U.S. cities of similar size, the food-focused landscape only continues to blossom in Fort Collins.

The newest and perhaps most down-to-earth dining experience to arrive in Fort Collins is officially open. [The Gold Leaf Collective](#) – featuring The Gold Leaf Restaurant, The Silver Seed Food Truck, Leaf & Seed Catering Co. and Laurel St. Bakery – is a premier plant-based restaurant experience featuring hyper-local and foraged 'New Colorado Cuisine.' The menu, including breakfast, lunch and dinner plates paired with a unique selection of local beverages, changes with the season based upon what's IN season and what can be sustainably preserved. The collective's goal? To disconnect from corporate food distribution companies by sourcing indigenous ingredients found in Colorado, both foraged and harvested.

Farm-to-table restaurant [Locality](#) opened in October 2016 in southeast Fort Collins. It will soon feature a hydroponic grow wall that will produce vegetables and microgreens for dishes on the menu, which is expected to change every three months.

A slew of new restaurants have opened elsewhere in town, including Butterfly Café in the former Poudre creamery across from the Larimer County Justice Center in Old Town; Cacciatore at Heller's Kitchen, a full-service Italian and Mediterranean restaurant from Chef Troy Heller, which replaces the Loafing Shed at Jessup Farm; Potbelly Sandwich Shop, a 40-year-old chain with 400 stores across the country; City Park Gelato & Amore with a dozen varieties of homemade gelato and fruit-flavored sorbets, as well as takeout pizza, porchetta sandwiches, pasta, sauces, cheeses and meats; and Coneucopia food cart where waffle cones are piled high with pulled pork and topped with apple beet slaw. The recently redeveloped Foothills Mall and the surrounding area has a reinvigorated dining scene with The Melt (a paradise for cheese lovers), Zoes Kitchen, Longhorn Steakhouse, Bad Daddy's Burger Bar, Smokin' Fins Seafood Grill and Torchy's Tacos.

Coming immediately (in fact these options may already be open): Look out for Cabana, from restaurateur Steve Lauer featuring Cuban fare and a seafood market; California-based franchise Cinnaholic, a build-your-own cinnamon roll bakery on South College; national chain Peace, Love and Little Donuts; Famous Toastery, a new breakfast-and-

lunch restaurant at Harmony Commons; Mac'd Up, serving gourmet mac-n-cheese; LeiLo for tapas; and The Emporium Kitchen & Wine Market located within the new Elizabeth Hotel in Old Town (opening fall 2017).

For a tasty treat, check out [Nuance Chocolate](#) in Old Town, which makes small batch chocolates from beans that are roasted and ground onsite. The owners were inspired to open the shop after visiting a chocolate museum in Costa Rica; what started as a family hobby quickly outgrew their home kitchen. Nuance Chocolate is now one of a very small number of true bean-to-bar chocolate makers in the United States.

Also located in Old Town, [Revolution Artisan Pops](#) — as in popsicles — uses locally sourced ingredients to create its frozen treats, available in either creamy — like Harbinger's Coffee with Sweet Cream or Mexican hot chocolate with cinnamon — or fruity varieties, like Meyer Lemon with Strawberry or Cucumber Lime. They also offer “pup-cicles” for your furry friend and have recently opened Revolution Market – an affordable artisan grocery store and deli.

From savory to sweet and offering more than 120 unique flavors, [Rebel Popcorn](#) makes small batch, handcrafted, artisanal popcorn. Forget the usual suspects – butter, cheese or caramel – and instead try blue cheese and caramelized onion or chipotle bacon barbeque. There's also chai and butter pecan for dessert.

New Life for Fort Collins Feeder Supply – The historic Fort Collins Feeder Supply building is on-track to become a foodie haven, replete with a coffee and pie shop, two restaurants — a fine dining and a casual option — as well as a small retail store, wine cellar, tasting room, teaching kitchen and banquet room. Husband-wife team Jack and Ginger Graham began construction on the century-old building in late 2016; it's slated to open in late 2017. This project is part of the transformation of Linden Street from an industrial area to a destination featuring restaurants, bars, distilleries and coffee shops, upscale apartments and entertainment.

### **Destination Fort Collins**

Two new destination projects are underway in Fort Collins: Harmony Commons on Harmony Road near Interstate 25, and The Exchange located at Old Town's 200 block on North College Ave. Harmony Commons comes online this spring and summer, and includes restaurants, retail and neighborhood services. The Exchange features food, entertainment, mercantile and creative outdoor areas. The Entertainment District includes a music venue and outdoor projection screen for live music, movie showings and year-round events. Food and craft beverages are served from shipping container cars, and Churn, the latest endeavor from Little Man Ice Cream, will anchor the open-air central quarter. The Exchange opening is targeted for the spring of 2017; the full project will be complete in the summer of 2017

### **Hotel News**

Coming soon: the Fort Collins Hilton completes an extensive renovation; the historic and beloved Armstrong Hotel located in Old Town Fort Collins also completes an extensive renovation; the new 164-room Elizabeth Hotel in Old Town opens to the public (fall

2017); and a new 107-room hotel operated by Spirit Hospitality joins a host of exciting new developments on Harmony Road

### **FoCo's Craft Culture Also Breeds Alternative Beverages**

Locals say the craft spirits scene in Fort Collins is akin to the city's craft brewing industry of 15 years ago. The industry is most certainly growing. Fort Collins is now home to five distilleries: [Feisty Spirits Distillery](#), [CopperMuse Distillery](#), Old Elk Distillery, [Elevation 5003 Distillery](#) and, the latest addition, [Mobb Mountain Distillers](#). Elevation 5003 – a nod to Fort Collins' elevation – is a grain-to-bottle facility, which encompasses cooking, fermenting, distilling, proofing and bottling on-site. The distillery/tasting room is located in a shopping center near Drake Road and Lemay Ave. Vino lovers should check out Lost Prairie Winery in Old Town where wine tastings are offered daily and nearby [Ten Bears Winery](#), which is located in LaPorte.

### **Making Community Cider from Home-Grown (Literally) Apple Trees**

[Branch Out Cider](#) endeavors to "make something great out of apples grown in yards across Northern Colorado." The company's goal is to create a community orchard using apples from trees in individual yards. Branch Out Cider is determined to break America's dependence on foreign apples – over 80 percent of apple juice consumed in the U.S. comes from another country. The company picks the apples from the trees, preventing rotting apples from sitting in yards, and creates their own Apple Wine. Tree contributors get the first chance to purchase at a discounted price.

### **From Garden to...**

The Gardens on Spring Creek are a city-run facility offering education on sustainable horticulture and ecology; providing a setting for enjoyment, renewal and healing; connecting people with nature, each other, and our local place; and encouraging public involvement, partnerships, and community service. The Garden of Eatin' portion of the gardens has partnered with Odell Brewing to grow hops and other ingredients for beer. With a Children's Garden, the Garden of Eatin', and several special events including ARTiculture: Celebrating Art in the Gardens, Garden of Lights in December and annual plant sales, there is no shortage of offerings for residents and visitors alike.

**New: Butterflies coming soon to the Gardens on Spring Creek:** Fort Collins will soon be home to a butterfly house, featuring up to 400 free-flying North American butterflies, thanks to a partnership between the Gardens on Spring Creek in Fort Collins and Butterfly Pavilion in Westminster. The North American butterfly house is expected to open in 2019.

### **CSAs Not Just for Veggies**

Beer lovers in Fort Collins can enjoy craft brew at home thanks to the new Soul Squared Brewing Company CSA. This CSA – or community-supported agriculture – delivers cases consisting of 22-oz. bombers from farm to member on a monthly basis. Co-owner Jay Shambo operates the tiny one-barrel operation in space leased from a Fort Collins farmer, using hops and other ingredients from the farm to create the brewery's seasonal options, including a Saison (July), an American Wheat (August), an IPA

(September), a Cascadian Dark Ale (October), an Imperial Wit (November) and an Imperial Stout (December). Cost to join is \$500 for six months. Shambo, a high school English teacher and homebrewer, hopes to turn his side business into a full-time job. He is a Great American Beer Festival Pro-Am gold medal winner and a Taste of Fort Collins gold medal winner. He has collaborated with local breweries including Verboten, New Belgium Brewing Company and Odell Brewing Company. For information visit <http://soulsquaredbrewing.com/>.

### **The Downtown Artery**

Located in Old Town Fort Collins, The Downtown Artery is dedicated to the revival of the working artist. This eclectic arts space caters to those who are ready to take the leap of faith, making their passion their profession. The Downtown Artery includes 16 studio rental spaces, a remodeled gallery with attached bar, a café, and two Bed and Breakfast rooms. The space also acts as a unique venue for all types of concerts, poetry readings, dance performances, yoga classes, etc. The building also houses State Line Studios, Peculiar Press, PhoCo, and V3 Media Marketing. What to see: extravagant First Friday Gallery Walk exhibits, State Line Sessions – an intimate live music series, and more. Cool opportunities: The Music Lab, a workshop for young musicians (ages 12-18) looking to hone their skills and expand their knowledge of the music industry. Interested musicians must apply and prerequisites include at least one year of experience on a chosen instrument. The weeklong workshop takes place in September. More at [downtownartery.com](http://downtownartery.com).

### **Letterpress & Publick House**

Wolverine Farm Publishing is a non-profit literary arts organization in Fort Collins. Along with publishing books, newspapers and online content, they run a bookstore inside The Bean Cycle Coffee Shop and recently opened Letterpress & Publick House in the River District, not far from New Belgium Brewing Company. The nonprofit event space, letterpress print shop and bar/café hosts many events and rents space for meetings and parties. Stop in for a snack or a local beverage and shop the local makers retail space.

### **Burgeoning Band Base**

Add bands to the Fort Collins combo of bikes and beer; this Northern Colorado college town is quickly becoming recognized as a hot spot for creative music and talented new musicians. The recently opened [Music District](#) is a dynamic gathering hub, workspace, and creative playground for the music community. For the novice or pro, it's a place where anyone can hone their craft, learn the business, and share skills and passions with musicians and music lovers.

FoCoMX, an annual spring festival held in Old Town, features over 250 Northern Colorado-based bands at more than 20 downtown venues. Looking for the latest local talent? Check out the Armory, The Mishawaka, The Downtown Artery, or any number of college hangout-type venues. Speaking of The Mishawaka (called “The Mish” by locals), this legendary venue celebrated its 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2016.

And there are three new large music venues on the horizon: The Bohemian Foundation (which owns the Armory) is turning Washington's Bar & Grill into a new 750-seat venue; the Gardens on Spring Creek has an initial green light from the city's planning

and zoning board for a 1,500-capacity outdoor performance area; and north of Fort Collins, Mountain Whitewater Descents, a whitewater rafting company, plans to expand Paddler's Pub to create a 1,200-capacity music venue called Fire and Ice.

### **Historic Jessup Farm Artisan Village**

The long planned and much anticipated Jessup Farm artisan village opened in fall 2015 with new businesses focused on handcrafted and locally-sourced products, and an 1,100-home neighborhood, called Bucking Horse. Envisioned and created by Gino, Mike and Tony Campana, the project includes rebuilt and remodeled chicken coops, a loafing shed, a saddle shop and an old barn and farmhouse. New businesses at Jessup Farm include: Bindle Coffee (open in the converted 19th century mechanics shop); Clayton Jenkins Photography (located in the old loafing shed); The Farmhouse at Jessup Farm restaurant; HeyDay clothing and home furnishings (located in the old loafing shed); Jessup Farm Barrel House, featuring beer blending and barrel aging; Kennedy's Lucky 27 Barbershop & Social Club (in the Jessup Farm shop); Cacciatore at Heller's Kitchen (in the old loafing shed); Knapsack (in the old saddle shop) and Reve Fitness by Miramont (in a newly constructed facility). The Jessup Farm was one of the Fort Collins Urban Growth Area's best preserved and most intact farm complexes. It received landmark preservation designation from the city, state and federal governments, allowing the Campanas to obtain the necessary renovation permits. The farm is located south of the intersection of Prospect and Timberline on the east side of the road.

### **The Farmhouse at Jessup Farm**

Located in a 130-year-old-home at the new Jessup Farm artisan village, The Farmhouse at Jessup Farm takes an evolutionary approach to food. Chef Joel Navajas uses the Village's small farm and garden operation to create the menu and, using local purveyors, sources what he doesn't grow. Expect tradition with an elevated presentation: braised lamb shank, skillet chicken pot pie, pan-fried Colorado trout, herb-brined pork chops, and more. Thanks to owner Jesse Doerffel, the vibe is sociable, approachable and relaxed.

### **Jessup Farm Barrel House**

Born in a renovated 130-year-old barn, the new Jessup Farm Barrel House produces barrel-aged beer. The new brew house is the latest endeavor from owners of Funkwerks, Brad Lincoln and Gordon Schuck and partner/main beer producer Jeff Albarella. Using a mix of Colorado whiskey barrels, Breckenridge bourbon barrels, tequila barrels from Mexico and Nicaraguan rum barrels, the trio is pushing traditional beer boundaries. "By blending beers with different fermentation variations we are able to create unique and original flavors. Our goal is to take the robust characteristics from the barrels, and blend to bring out the complexities and delicacy of the flavors," they say on their website. Small plates and desserts are also on the menu. The building itself — a 133-year-old, 3,000-square-foot restored barn — showcases much of its original charm. The floor, ceiling and some of the exterior wood of the barn have been conserved from the original building. The first floor of the building is used for fermenting, blending and storage while the upstairs includes a wrap around bar and communal seating. In the summer, sit in the beer garden where lawn games like cornhole and horseshoes are sure to entertain.

### **THE FLIP SIDE OF CRAFT: FOCO'S BOOMING TECH TRADE**

Fort Collins boasts an alter ego born from its college town roots and its reputation as the

“Choice City,” topping a bevy of “best of” lists, for everything from retirement to riding a bike. Colorado State University (CSU) innovations and innovators fuel the town’s tech trade and new tech start-ups are drawn to the Northern Colorado capitol like bees to the flower.

#### **The Next Cities for Tech Jobs: Fort Collins Ranks No. 4**

ZipRecruiter recently released a list of the Top 10 Up-and-Coming Cities for Tech Jobs in 2015. The rankings were based upon job market activity across America; the website tracked hiring patterns to compile its list. Results reflect the cities that are increasing job listings in the tech industry at the fastest rate and which have the highest volume of tech jobs compared against other industries. The full list includes, in order starting with number one: Austin, Texas; Raleigh, NC; Provo, Utah; Fort Collins; Hartford, Conn; Indianapolis; Boise, Idaho; Manchester, NH; Nashville, Tenn; and Eugene, Oregon.

#### **NerdWallet Names Fort Collins No. 6 in Tech Hub Ranking**

NerdWallet, an online resource “focused on helping people lead better lives through financial education and empowerment,” recently ranked Fort Collins No. 6 in its “America’s most innovative tech hubs” line-up. The city came in ahead of recognized tech hubs, like Austin (No. 8), Boston (No. 10) and Denver (No. 14). Three factors played into the rankings: patents per 1,000 residents, venture capital per capita; and tech startup density, which is where the city excelled. Tech startup density is derived from the number of new tech companies created during the year as compared to the city’s population (152,061). That number is compared to similar statistics for the U.S. Fort Collins has three times the national average of tech startups per year – “a huge sign of innovation and tech growth” according to NerdWallet. In fact, Fort Collins’ tech density, a 3.0, ranked ahead of San Jose, Calif. (2.6) and San Francisco (2.4).

#### **Starting a Business in Fort Collins 101**

Fort Collins has an active entrepreneurial community, with strengths in cleantech and energy, as well as startups spun out of Colorado State University (CSU), located in the city. Want to learn more about starting a new business in Fort Collins? Chris J. and Brianne Snook, co-founders of Launch Haus, created *The Definitive Guide to the Fort Collins, Colorado Startup Scene*. <http://www.ftcstartupweek.co/resourceguides>.

#### **Colorado State University’s (CSU) Innosphere**

Rocky Mountain Innosphere, with headquarters in Fort Collins, is a nonprofit incubator focused on supporting entrepreneurs who are building potential high-growth companies in cleantech, software, biosciences and digital health. Innosphere’s incubation program for startups focuses on mentoring, capital, strategy and growth. Innosphere locations across the state provide access to office and meeting space, as well as specialized test and demonstration equipment. [www.innosphere.org](http://www.innosphere.org). Want to learn more about CSU’s laboratories, innovative technologies and state-of-the-art facilities, and meet faculty and staff who are leading experts in their fields? Take a RamTrax Tour. Tours are typically free of charge unless otherwise noted and duration is approximately one and one-half hours. [www.ramtrax.colostate.edu](http://www.ramtrax.colostate.edu).

#### **WIDE OPEN SPACES**

Abundant outdoor adventure heavily factors into Fort Collins’ reputation as a top

destination – both for visitors and those looking for a new hometown. The city boasts 50 parks, 280-plus miles of trails – including paved and unpaved walking and bike trails, four recreation centers and swimming pools, three public golf courses and a racquet sports complex, two sheets of ice for hockey and free skating, and skateboard and dog parks. Add in Horsetooth Reservoir, the Poudre Canyon and acres of Natural Areas, National Forest and surrounding National Park lands and let abundance inspire adventure.

### **Four New Natural Areas**

Four new natural areas have been added to Fort Collins' network of 41 sites: Tanglewood is now open and Goose Hollow will open in 2017; two are in planning stages – Soaring Vista and Flores del Sol. Natural Areas offer exceptional bird watching, and many enable regular raptor and wildlife viewing (Master Naturalists and staff offer free Eagle Watches in the winter). Bison watchers can catch another glimpse of the genetically pure plains bison herd, including this summer's calves, at Soapstone Prairie Natural Area until the end of November when Soapstone closes for the season. The area reopens to visitors at the beginning of March.

### **Hidden Gems: Little Known Options at Three Fort Collins Natural Areas**

*Hidden Clues Trail at Coyote Ridge Natural Area* – This short loop trail originating from the cabin (located one mile from the trailhead) boasts interactive interpretive signs designed for little hikers.

*Running Deer Natural Area Fire Tower* – The historic fire tower at Running Deer Natural Area is an interesting and nearly solitary destination, featuring a flat, easy trail and expansive views of the Front Range.

*Cathy Fromme Prairie Natural Area Observatory* – The raptor observatory at Cathy Fromme Prairie is an off-the-beaten-path destination with fun signs, a sod-topped shelter and views of the foothills.

### **Star Gaze Away**

The areas around Fort Collins offer some of the best stargazing hot spots in Colorado and city leaders are working toward dark-sky certification for all the Natural Areas, some of which are among the darkest in the county. Try Red Mountain Open Space, Soapstone Prairie Natural Area, Coyote Ridge Natural Area or head up to the trailhead for Horsetooth Mountain Open Space. If you want to learn more about the night skies, there are plenty of resources. The Northern Colorado Astronomical Society hosts dozens of public observation events per year. Visit [nocoastro.org](http://nocoastro.org) to learn more. Stop by the Sunlight Peak Observatory at Front Range Community College or the Stargazer Observatory at Observatory Village in southeast Fort Collins, both of which host community nights each month, weather permitting. Visit [facebook.com/sunlightpeak](https://www.facebook.com/sunlightpeak) and [stargazerobservatory.com](http://stargazerobservatory.com) for dates.

### **For the Bird(er)s**

Bird watching is big business. According to a 2011 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service report, birders spent an estimated \$41 billion within the year on trip-related expenses and equipment. The report also states that one million Coloradans surveyed classified themselves as bird watchers, and there are 47 million bird-watchers ages 16 or older in

the U.S. These statistics make bird watching the second fastest growing hobby in the country, after gardening. Colorado is a hotbed for birders, boasting nearly 500 recorded species, including the rare American Woodcock recently spotted at Bobcat Ridge Natural Area. Fort Collins offers exceptional opportunities to view many of these birds thanks to 44 protected Natural Areas encompassing over 41,000 acres and 114 miles of trail. Natural Areas are pockets of land that offer recreation, education, scientific data collection, culture, ecological enhancement and aesthetics – oases in an urban environment. Soapstone Prairie, Pineridge and Bobcat Ridge Natural Areas are identified as among the best for birders. Enthusiasts also appreciate the CSU Environmental Learning Center, which features a setting perfect for spotting waterfowl, owls, hawks, flickers and a variety of songbirds, and outdoor Rocky Mountain Raptor Center cages that house eagles, owls and hawks. Local birders also frequent City Park/Grandview Cemetery, Lee Martinez Park, Fossil Creek Reservoir Natural Area and Pawnee National Grassland. Birds to spot: Northern goshawk, white-tailed ptarmigan, mountain bluebird, Western tanager, sandhill crane and burrowing owl.

Learn more from the experts:

- For a checklist of local birds visit [www.fcgov.com/naturalareas/pdf/birdlist15.pdf](http://www.fcgov.com/naturalareas/pdf/birdlist15.pdf).
- The City of Fort Collins Natural Areas Department volunteer Master Naturalists and staff offer many free outdoor summer activities, including bird walks and educational presentations, as well as Eagle Watches during the winter: [www.fcgov.com/naturalareas](http://www.fcgov.com/naturalareas). Or, find them on Facebook and Twitter by searching FCNaturalAreas.
- The Fort Collins Audubon Society offers free birding field trips throughout the year. [www.fortnet.org/Audubon](http://www.fortnet.org/Audubon). And, The Nature Conservancy's 1,700-acre Phantom Canyon Preserve, home to an estimated 100 or more species and located 30 miles northwest of Fort Collins, is open to the public only through The Nature Conservancy guided hikes and volunteer outings, which include birding hikes.

### **Bison Return to Soapstone Prairie Natural Area**

Springtime is calf time for the Laramie Foothills Bison Conservation Herd that calls Soapstone Prairie Natural Area and Red Mountain Open Space home. Currently, there are 22 animals, all descendants of genetically pure Yellowstone bison. An additional Yellowstone bull joined the herd briefly this year to diversify the genetics and nine calves are expected this spring/early summer.

Summer and early fall are the best times of year to visit Soapstone and view the bison in their 1,000-acre enclosure from the road in Soapstone Prairie Natural Area, which is open during daylight hours. Look for new interpretive signs in the area, as well as a new roadside pull off. Find more information about the herd and when/where (including a map) to see the animals [here](#).

History: In fall 2015, plains bison were reintroduced to Soapstone Prairie Natural Area thanks to a partnership between the City of Fort Collins, Colorado State University (CSU), the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture's Animal Plant Health Inspection Service and Larimer County Natural Resources Dept. Bison once roamed this area and are integral to its ecology. They were hunted to near extinction in the 1800s and later bred with cattle,

accidentally and unintentionally, making bison herds without some level of cattle ancestry rare. Through assisted reproductive technology and processes implemented by CSU's Animal Reproduction and Biotechnology Laboratory, experts are hopeful they can preserve genetic diversity and mitigate brucellosis, a disease that can harm domestic cattle and infect people; brucellosis is carried by genetically pure bison in nearby Yellowstone National Park. This technology allows genetic material from Yellowstone National Park bison to be cleansed of brucellosis and used to create embryos that are transferred to bison in Fort Collins. The resulting offspring are disease-free genetic descendants of genetically pure Yellowstone bison. These descendants are the seed herd, called the Laramie Foothills Conservation Herd, that will live at Soapstone Prairie (on about 800 acres) and Larimer County's Red Mountain Open Space (about 80 acres). The herd was introduced with 12 animals to start. A ceremony was held on Sunday, Nov. 1, 2015, National Bison Day and the first day of Native American History Month, and the bison were introduced to their new home. Find more information at [www.fcgov.com/naturalareas/bison.php](http://www.fcgov.com/naturalareas/bison.php).

### **Visit and Volunteer:**

#### ***Master Naturalist Assistant***

A rewarding way to enjoy Fort Collins' Natural Areas: become a Master Naturalist Assistant, helping out with field trips at a variety of local and regional Natural Areas. Assistants help Master Naturalists with props, equipment, handouts and evaluations.

<https://engage.fcgov.com/d/NA/App/MasterNaturalistAssistant>

#### ***Citizen Scientist Volunteers***

The City of Fort Collins is searching for Citizen Scientists to assist with the Nature in the City program. Volunteers learn to monitor urban wildlife across Fort Collins and support conservation efforts. Efforts include bird and butterfly surveys.

<https://engage.fcgov.com/d/na>

Of Note: The Fort Collins [Nature in the City program](#) is one of 100 programs recognized by the Ash Center for Democratic Governance and Innovation at the John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University. The program was named a semifinalist in this year's Innovations in American Government Awards competition. Nature in the City will compete to be named a finalist in the competition and have the chance to be awarded the \$100,000 grand prize in Cambridge this spring. Nature in the City is also being featured as a "Bright Idea" on the Ash Center website, <http://ash.harvard.edu/>.

#### ***Cache la Poudre River National Heritage Area Heritage Culturalist Volunteer***

This volunteer ambassador program trains volunteers as certified experts in the rich history and recreation opportunities of the Cache la Poudre River National Heritage Area. Volunteers provide interpretation and expertise to the public at Poudre Heritage Alliance programs and events. Learn more: <http://poudreheritage.org/heritage-culturalist-volunteers/>.

#### ***Cameron Pass Nordic Rangers Program***

Each fall, the Canyon Lakes Ranger District recruits volunteers for its Nordic Ranger program. Now in its 24<sup>th</sup> season, Nordic Rangers help patrol trails in the Cameron Pass area west of Fort Collins, assisting with safety, providing information to winter users,

helping maintain trailheads and gathering visitor use information to aid in U.S. Forest Service planning. Volunteers must commit to a minimum of four days patrolling and attending a U.S. Forest Service-led training.

### **Countdown to Kickoff**

Colorado State University's new 36,000-seat on-campus stadium is scheduled for completion in time to host the Ram's first home football game on Aug. 26, 2017 against Oregon State. Construction on the new LEED-certified stadium began in the fall of 2015, and, once completed, the new facility will accommodate up to 41,200 Ram fans. The new facility also includes academic classrooms, an alumni association center, a center for advising and student achievement, a Hall of Champions and six retail outlets.

### ***Inaugural FORTitude 10K Showcases New CSU Stadium***

A new Labor Day running race called FORTitude 10K takes participants on a scenic route through Fort Collins, passing landmarks, including City Park, the CSU Oval and classic Fort Collins neighborhoods, like Avery and Mountain Avenue. The race finishes at the newly completed Sonny Lubick Field at CSU Stadium. Racers receive a limited edition inaugural race shirt, bib with official timing chip, finish line photo, finisher's certificate, commemorative training calendar, snacks and a drink. FORTitude 10K takes place on Monday, September 4, 2017. <http://fortitude10k.bolderboulder.com/>

### **Yoga, Yoga Anywhere**

Who says you need to practice yoga in a studio? Not these forward-thinking Fort Collins businesses:

Om Kai Yoga in Fort Collins recently hosted puppy yoga classes to benefit Fort Collins' Bounce Animal Rescue. Kitten yoga is coming soon, along with goat yoga at three area farms. Visit [omkaiyoga.com](http://omkaiyoga.com) to learn more.

Zwei Brewing, a German-style Fort Collins brewery located at 4612 S. Mason Street Ste. 120, hosts yoga classes once a month. The fee is \$10 and includes a medium beer. A portion of the fee is donated to Animal House Rescue and Grooming in Fort Collins.

Fort Collins Brewery hosts power yoga every Sunday from 10 to 11 a.m. Enjoy a beer or Bloody Mary following the class. The fee is \$15 per class and it's capped at 20 registrants. Proceeds benefit FoCo Café, a nonprofit café in Fort Collins that offers nutritious, delicious meals in a pay-what-you-can setting. More info on the café at [fococafe.org](http://fococafe.org).

New Belgium Brewery offers Yoga Thirstdays with CorePower yoga. Enjoy free yoga on their lawn throughout the summer. Visit [www.newbelgium.com](http://www.newbelgium.com) for dates and details.

### **Colorado's Only "Wild & Scenic" River**

The Cache La Poudre River, running through the heart of Fort Collins, is the only nationally designated 'Wild & Scenic' river in Colorado (similar to a National Park designation). In an effort to keep the river wild and the experience incomparable, commercial rafting trips are limited and there is almost no commercial development along the river's banks. This, combined with a 7,000 foot drop from headwaters to

confluence, convenient access, clear water, challenging rapids and pristine scenery, makes a descent of the Cache La Poudre one of the most unique river expeditions in the state.

### ***New: Poudre River Whitewater Park***

Fort Collins has the opportunity to reclaim an abandoned water diversion area along the Poudre River and transform it into the crown jewel of the city's many riverside parks. The park would reconnect stream ecosystems that are currently divided and create a variety of improvements for year-round recreation, including tubing, fishing, surfing, swimming, riverboarding and kayaking. Landscaping and other modifications would improve access, reestablish aquatic and riparian zone habitats, and restore the area to a more natural appearance. The new Poudre River kayak park breaks ground in fall 2017 (for a 2018 opening).

### ***Poudre River National Heritage Area***

The Cache la Poudre River is the heart of the National Heritage Area, which follows the river downstream for 45 miles. The Poudre is essential to the lives of the more than a half-million people in the northern Colorado Front Range. Originating among the Rocky Mountains and dropping some 7,000 feet to the Great Plains, the Cache la Poudre River is relatively short —125 miles from start to end. The Poudre is significant for its contribution to the development of western water law and the evolution of complex water delivery systems. The Poudre has also played a crucial role in regional economic development and has become a focal point for recreation. Learn more about the Poudre with a **walking, driving or water tour** with the Cache la Poudre River National Heritage Area group: <http://poudreheritage.org/tours/>. Or, join the **Heritage Hunt**, a fun, local way to get fit thanks to activity options, educational opportunities and interactive experiences: <http://poudreheritage.org/wellness-program/>.

### ***Cache la Poudre – North Park Scenic Byway***

One of Colorado's 26 Scenic and Historic Byways (11 are federally designated 'America's Byways'), the Cache la Poudre – North Park Scenic Byway follows the route used by settlers to connect Colorado's northern plains to the Green River settlement in Utah. The byway begins in Fort Collins and ends in Walden, following the Wild and Scenic Cache la Poudre river. <http://www.colorado.com/articles/colorado-scenic-byways-profile-cache-la-poudre-north-park>

### **USA Today Names Fort Collins Number Two 'Best U.S. Cycling Town'**

Fort Collins finished second in a public poll by USA Today; a 10 Best competition for top U.S. cycling towns. According to USA Today Travel: "What's not to like about a city with a local brewery (New Belgium) that hosts an annual Bike-In Cinema series on its front lawn? Fort Collins' 310-mile network of paths and bike lanes, an innovative bike share program started back in 2008, and miles upon miles of mountain biking trails in the surrounding plains and mountains simply add to the appeal of this city, one of only five to hold the League of American Bicyclists platinum level ranking." Davis, Calif. took top honors in the pole; Durango also appeared in the top 10.

### **Why Fort Collins Tops Best Of Lists for Bicyclists**

Cycling opportunities prevail in and around Fort Collins and getting to know the area

atop two wheels offers a bounty of benefits. Road cyclists will appreciate the 285+ miles of relatively flat, wide bike lanes, trails and paths, including three main bike trails offering 19 miles of paved surface: the Poudre trail that follows the Cache La Poudre River; Spring Creek trail following the creek; and Fossil Creek trail covering miles of open prairie.

Mountain bikers have lots of options minutes from downtown, and more just a bit further into the backcountry surrounding Fort Collins. Lory State Park, Horsetooth Mountain Park and Soapstone Prairie Natural Areas are three well-known mountain bike destinations. Red Mountain Open Space also offers some intrigue. The 15,000-acre open space is adjacent to Soapstone Prairie so hikers, bikers, and horseback riders have endless opportunities within two open space areas for exploration. The protection of Red Mountain is part of the [Laramie Foothills Mountains to Plains Project](#). This area was home to some of the first humans in North America nearly 12,000 years ago. Lory State Park also features a great destination for bike park buffs called The Corral Center Mountain Bike Park. The park's old horse corrals, located southeast of the visitor center, have been converted into a 70,000-square-foot mountain bike park for riders of all abilities. The park is Colorado's first officially state-sponsored dirt/pump track.

Fort Collins boasts two bike coordinators on the city staff roster, ensuring this recreational pursuit gets due attention. In addition, Bike Fort Collins, formed in 2005, recently hired its first executive director, Chris Johnson.

As would be expected, the city is home to a variety of races – pro and amateur – including a once-a-week in-town cyclocross race and New Belgium Brewing Company's legendary Tour de Fat.

Also of note: Fort Collins was again awarded a Platinum Level Bicycle Friendly designation from the Community League of American Bicyclists in May 2017. The city was first designated Platinum in 2013; the latest announcement renews that designation for another four years. Since receiving the 2013 Platinum designation, the City of Fort Collins and community partners have implemented new programs and projects that aim to make bicycling more accessible across the community, including: adopting and implementing a new Bicycle Master Plan; launching new initiatives like Open Streets, Bike Share, Ride Smart Drive Smart, and a Bicycle Friendly Driver Program; and constructing new and innovative bicycle infrastructure projects to create a low-stress bikeway network. The community has also received new Bicycle Friendly Business designations and a Platinum Bicycle Friendly University designation from the League of American Bicyclists. Fort Collins is still one of just five Platinum Level Bicycle Friendly communities in the country.

And, as a tribute to the city's love of all things bike, Bike Fort Collins is determined to create a bike museum. Until the time when the organization can establish a building for the purpose of collecting and showcasing, museum quality bikes are being placed in various business in the Old Town area as a "Bike Museum Without Walls." Locations are listed on the website: [www.bikefortcollins.org](http://www.bikefortcollins.org).

**ABOUT:** Called vibrant, eclectic and authentic, Fort Collins tops “best of” lists year after year thanks to its myriad of cultural opportunities. A thriving arts and music scene, diverse and inviting shops and restaurants, and more craft beer, craft coffee and craft spirits than nearly any city of its size only heightens the appeal. Home to the state’s only nationally-designated “Wild & Scenic River,” hundreds of miles of biking, hiking and walking paths, year-round bird watching, and the newest nearby residents—a herd of genetically-pure bison, it’s no surprise this northern Colorado gem is wildly appealing to outdoor devotees. Home to Colorado State University and startup galore, Fort Collins also is an entrepreneurial hotbed and a tech trade town, furthering the area’s allure.

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