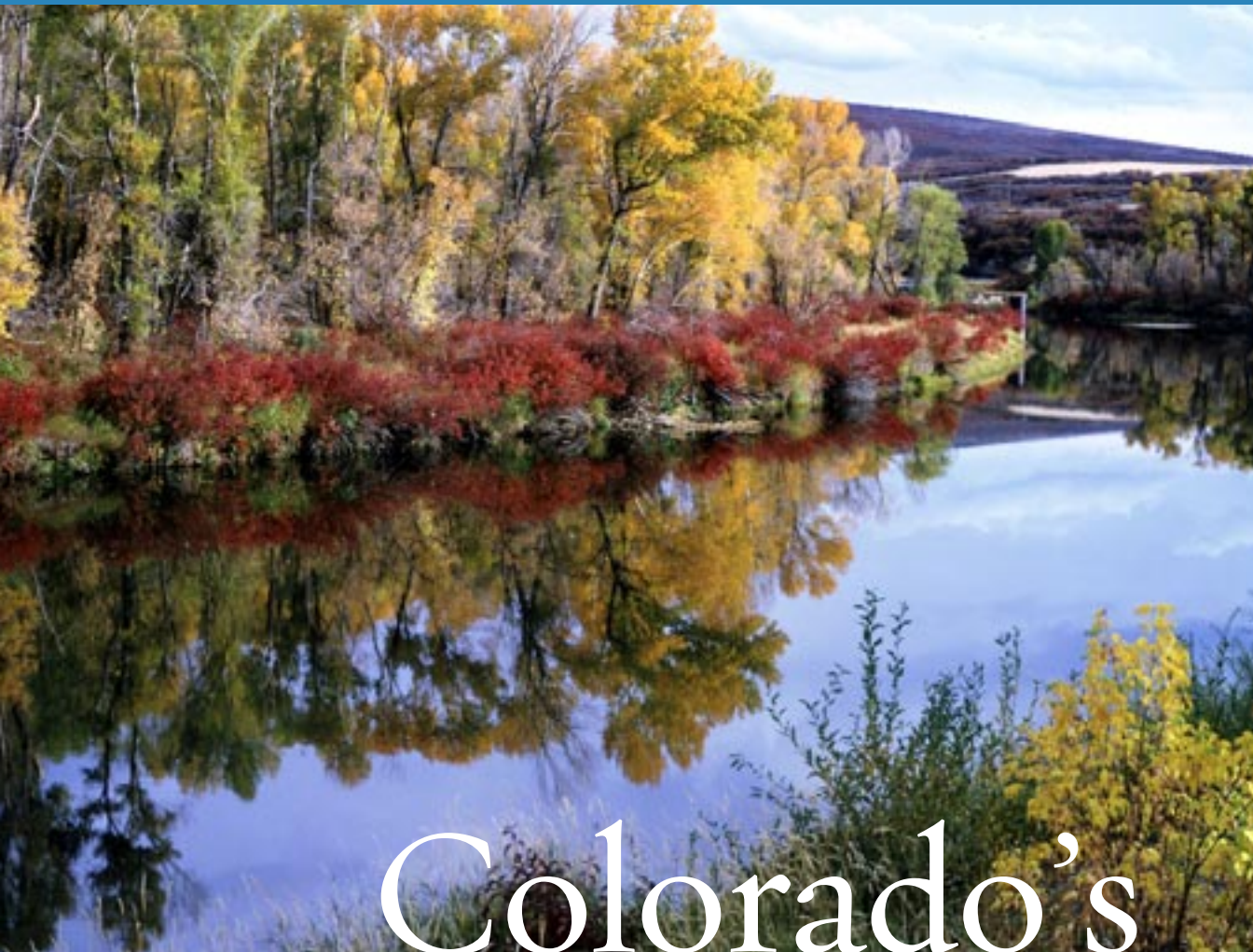




SAVING THE LAST GREAT PLACES ON EARTH



Colorado's Last Great Places

Nature Conservancy Preserves &
Cooperative Projects You Can Visit



The mission of The Nature Conservancy is to preserve the plants, animals and natural communities that represent the diversity of life of Earth by protecting the lands and waters they need to survive.

For more than 50 years, The Nature Conservancy has been preserving places in the natural world close to your home and heart. We work locally and in communities around the world to protect precious habitat and the plant and animal species it supports. We call these areas Last Great Places.

In Colorado, The Nature Conservancy has helped protect more than 437,000 acres of precious landscapes. Some of these places are Nature Conservancy preserves and others are managed by partner agencies and organizations. We invite you to visit these special places to enjoy their natural splendor and timeless beauty.

These areas are fragile, so please leave pets at home, pack out all trash and leave flowers, rocks and other natural assets in their place. **The Nature Conservancy offers guided field trips and workshops at many of our preserves. Please visit us on the Web at nature.org/colorado for a current schedule of events.**

Colorado preserves and projects



Nature Conservancy Preserves

For further information about these preserves,
please visit us on the web at nature.org/colorado.



Aiken Canyon Preserve

Aiken Canyon Preserve is located in one of the highest-quality foothills ecosystems along Colorado's Front Range. This 1,621-acre preserve contains significant red-rock geologic formations, diverse plant communities and provides habitat for a large number of animal species. More than 100 species of birds have been documented at Aiken Canyon and black bear, mountain lion, gray fox and tuft-eared squirrels inhabit the area. A well-maintained 4-mile loop hiking trail begins at the entrance and features interpretive signs along the way. Visitors can learn about Aiken Canyon's natural history by stopping by the eco-friendly interpretive center.

About the preserve

Location: 15.8 miles south of Colorado Springs

Preserve Hours: Saturday, Sunday & Monday, dawn until dusk

Interpretive Center Hours: Saturday & Sunday, 9am – 3pm (summer only)

Contact: (719) 576-4336

Directions: From Denver, take Interstate 25 south toward Colorado Springs. Take Exit 135 west to Highway 115. Take 115 south 11.5 miles to Turkey Canyon Ranch Road (located 0.1 mile south of milepost 32.) Turn right (west) and drive 200 yards to the preserve parking area.

Bohart Ranch

About the preserve

Location: Southcentral Colorado, south of Ellicott

Contact: (719) 632-0534

Visiting the Ranch: Please contact Colorado Springs office to inquire about opportunities to visit.

At first glance, most visitors would not guess that the wind-swept sandsage prairie of Colorado's eastern plains is teeming with life. But take a closer look, and you may spy a golden eagle, swift fox, prairie falcon or the rare mountain plover. This 47,000-acre working cattle ranch, leased to The Nature Conservancy by the Colorado State Land Board, supports extensive sandsage and shortgrass prairie. Many grassland birds – lark sparrow, grasshopper sparrow, Cassin's sparrow and lark bunting to name a few – make the prairie in the Chico Basin their home. Because this is a working ranch, visitation is only permitted in pre-arranged groups.



Carpenter Ranch

About the preserve

Location: West of Steamboat Springs, near Hayden

Seasonal Open Hours:
May 15 - September 1

Ranch and Education Center
May 15 - September 1

Hours: Thursday, Friday & Saturday, 9am - Noon

Contact: (970) 276-4626

Directions: From Steamboat Springs, head west on Hwy 40 for 20 miles. Look for Carpenter Ranch on the north side of the road, 4 miles east of Hayden.

The historic and ecologically important Carpenter Ranch harbors some of the highest-quality riparian (streamside) habitat in the western United States. Nearly 150 bird species have been documented on the ranch including nesting bald eagles and greater sandhill cranes. As one of the oldest ranches in the Yampa Valley with its original buildings still intact, the ranch also retains some of the area's agricultural heritage. The Carpenter Ranch has been an operating cattle ranch since 1903 and The Nature Conservancy uses the site to demonstrate how agriculture and conservation go hand-in-hand. Visitors can learn about the historic, ecological and agricultural values on the ranch in the on-site Education Center. Consider also visiting the nearby Yampa River Preserve.

High Creek Fen

About the preserve

Location: Central Colorado, south of Fairplay

Preserve Hours: Dawn until Dusk, Year-round

Contact: (303) 444-2950

Directions: The preserve is located 8.5 miles south of Fairplay on Highway 285, just .2 miles south of mile post 175. Turn east on the private gravel road, cross a cattle guard and drive about 1 mile. Park at the small graveled parking area across from the visitor kiosk. No established trails, hike wherever you like.

Situated at just under 10,000 feet, High Creek Fen Preserve is an astonishing vestige of the last Ice Age. The fen occurs in an area where numerous perennial springs bring calcium-rich groundwater to the surface creating a lush and vital wetland. This 2,360-acre preserve contains an unusually large concentration of rare plants and provides habitat for a variety of wildlife species ranging from pronghorn to shorebirds. Visit during mid-July to enjoy wildflowers in bloom such as Indian paintbrush, bluebell, wood lily, pale blue-eyed grass and shrubby cinquefoil.

Medano-Zapata Ranch

Surrounded by the towering beauty of the Southern Rocky Mountains, the spectacular Medano-Zapata Ranch lies on 103,000 acres adjacent to the Great Sand Dunes. Rich in wetlands and year-round streams, the ranch is host to distinctive ecosystems including wet meadows, desert shrublands, pinyon-juniper woodlands and a large portion of the great sand dunes. Scientists refer to this area as a biological hotspot – a place where more than 200 species of birds, herds of elk, bison, and a number of rare plant and animal species flourish. Some species, such as the Great Sand Dunes tiger beetle, live nowhere else on Earth.

About the preserve

Location: Southcentral Colorado, near Mosca

Contact: (719) 378-2356 or cofieldtrips@tnc.org

Visiting the Ranch: A series of weekend Naturalist Workshops are offered from March – October.

Ranch tours Weekend Naturalist Workshops and guided Ranch Tours are offered. Please visit nature.org/colorado for a schedule.



Phantom Canyon Preserve

Phantom Canyon Preserve is a spectacular, roadless canyon encompassing 6 miles of the North Fork of the Cache la Poudre River in the Laramie Foothills. This 1,700-acre rim-to-rim sanctuary is host to a variety of wildlife and more than 100 species of birds. Its varied topography, slope and soil conditions supports more than 200 plant species including the Larimer Aletes, a rare plant found in only a handful of places on Earth. Visit during early summer to experience the migration of neotropical songbirds and native wildflowers in bloom. Two well-maintained trails wind through the canyon and along the rim above the river.

About the preserve

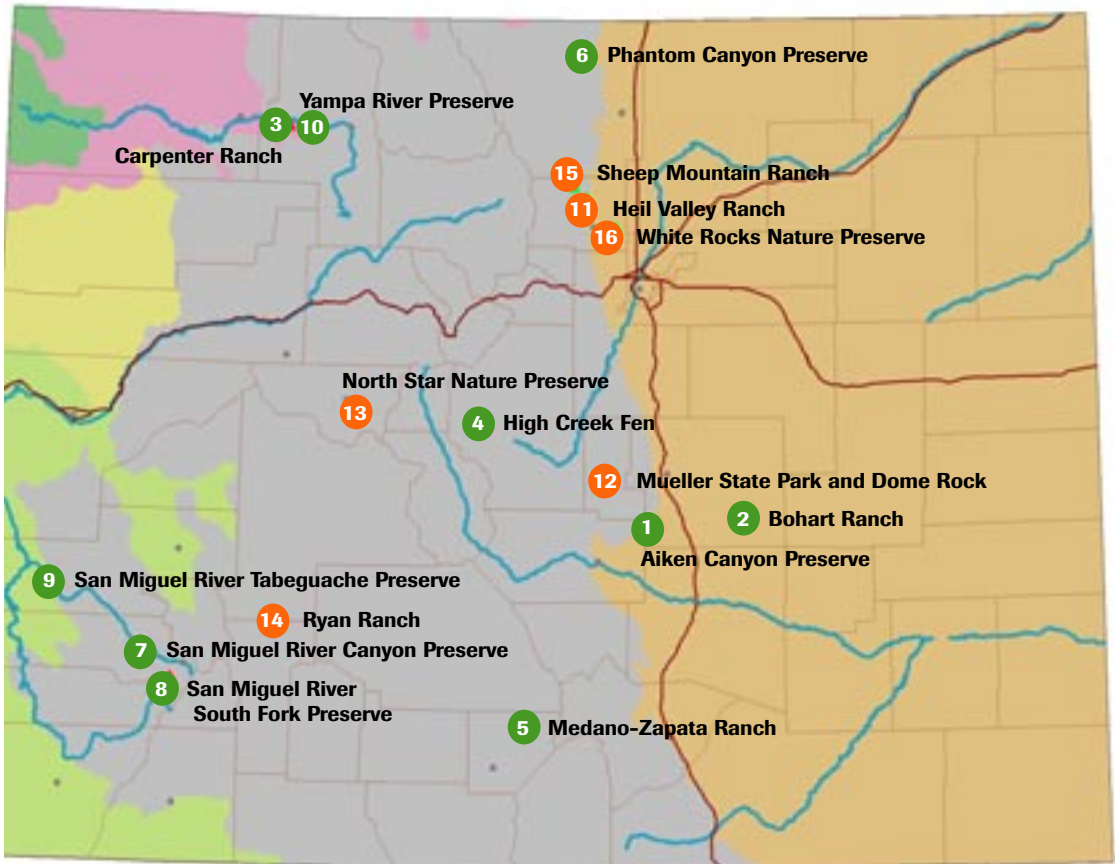
Location: Northwest of Ft. Collins

Contact: (970) 416-8620

Visiting the Preserve: Because Phantom Canyon Preserve is surrounded by private property, visitors must join a Nature Conservancy field trip or volunteer workday to enjoy the preserve. Please visit [nature.org/colorado](https://www.nature.org/colorado) for a schedule.

Colorado's Last Great Places

Nature Conservancy Preserves & Cooperative Projects You Can Visit



Nature Conservancy Preserves

- 1) Aiken Canyon Preserve
- 2) Bohart Ranch
- 3) Carpenter Ranch
- 4) High Creek Fen
- 5) Medano-Zapata Ranch
- 6) Phantom Canyon Preserve
San Miguel River Preserves
- 7) San Miguel River Canyon Preserve
- 8) San Miguel River South Fork Preserve
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Nature Conservancy Cooperative Projects

- 11) Heil Valley Ranch
- 12) Mueller State Park and Dome Rock State Wildlife Area
- 13) North Star Nature Preserve
- 14) Ryan Ranch
- 15) Sheep Mountain Ranch
- 16) White Rocks Nature Preserve

**For further information about these places,
please visit us on the web at nature.org/colorado.**



San Miguel River Preserves

About the preserve

Preserve Hours: Year-round,
dawn to dusk

Contact: (970) 728-5291

Natural flood cycles and a history of very limited development have kept many portions of the San Miguel River in pristine condition, much as they were before the state was settled. The riparian habitat, with its varying topography and slope, supports a vast array of wildlife such as great blue heron, bald eagle, river otter, beaver, black bear, elk and porcupine. The Nature Conservancy has protected more than 950 acres within 3 preserves along the San Miguel River.

San Miguel River

Canyon Preserve

Dramatic, narrow, red-rock canyons loom nearly 2,000 feet above the San Miguel providing habitat for nesting American dippers. No well-established trails, but foot traffic is allowed.

About the preserve

Directions: From Telluride, take Hwy 145 north toward Placerville. Turn left, remaining on Hwy 145 past Norwood. Continue for 4 miles until you see the preserve sign on the left. Park at any turnout for the next two miles.

San Miguel River South Fork Preserve

Perhaps the most striking of the three Conservancy-protected preserves along the San Miguel, the South Fork Preserve lies below the towering 14,000-foot Wilson Peak of the western San Juan Mountains. There is a handicap-accessible, 180-foot elevated boardwalk and viewing platform with interpretive signage.

About the preserve

Directions: From the north, take Hwy 145 south towards Telluride. Turn right on Ilium Valley road at the bottom of Keystone Hill and follow it to the preserve (approximately 5 miles).

San Miguel River Tabeguache Preserve

A 7-mile stretch of the San Miguel meanders through this preserve, occupying a broad floodplain. Unlike areas upstream, the waters flowing through this site are tame and peaceful. A picnic area, kiosk and outhouses are available for public use.

About the preserve

Directions: From Telluride, take Hwy 145 north to Placerville. Turn left, remaining on Hwy 145 past Norwood. Turn left onto Hwy 141 through Naturita. Park in the visitor area on the north side of the road at mile post 74. The preserve runs from mile post 67.2 to 74.

Yampa River Preserve



About the preserve

Location: West of Steamboat Springs

Preserve Hours: Year-round, dawn to dusk

Contact: (970) 879-1546

Directions: From Steamboat Springs, drive west on Hwy 40 for approximately 17 miles. Once you cross railroad tracks and a bridge ("5-Mile Bridge"), make an immediate left into a parking area for the preserve.

The Yampa River is one of the few rivers remaining in the West that can support an extensive riparian (streamside) ecosystem. Seventeen miles west of Steamboat Springs, the Yampa River drops through a narrow gap before flowing onto one of the broadest floodplains in western Colorado. The 580-acre Yampa River Preserve is located on the eastern edge of this floodplain. The preserve protects 3 miles of riparian habitat and harbors the rare box-elder narrowleaf cottonwood/red-osier dogwood plant community. Visitors can access 265 acres of the preserve and enjoy a 2-mile roundtrip walk through the cottonwoods.

Nature Conservancy

Cooperative Projects

Heil Valley Ranch

In 1994, The Nature Conservancy partnered with Boulder County to protect one of the largest undeveloped pieces of private land remaining in the county. Boulder County, through a loan from The Nature Conservancy, purchased 2,374 acres of what is now the 4,923-acre Heil Valley Ranch Open Space. The site's natural values include a ponderosa pine/mountain mahogany/big bluestem plant community, critical wintering ground for elk and a golden eagle nesting site. The Heil Valley Ranch also serves as an integral part of a larger landscape that connects lands managed by the U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management and Boulder County. The area is managed by Boulder County Parks and Open Space and is open for year-round recreational activities.

About the cooperative

Location: Northwest of Boulder
More Information: Visit Boulder County Parks and Open Space on the web at:

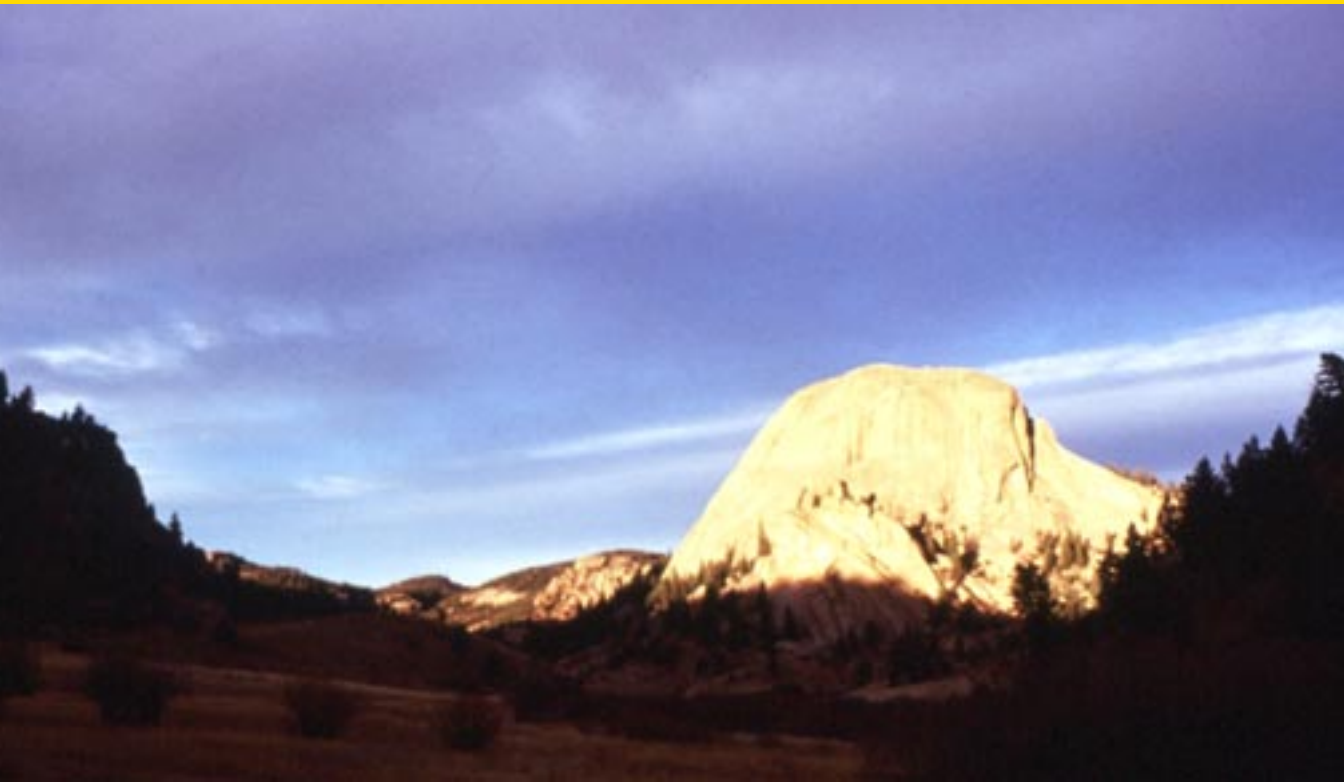
www.co.boulder.co.us/openspace/recreating

Visiting Open Space: Contact Boulder County Parks and Open Space for a map and recreation information regarding Heil Valley Ranch

About Nature Conservancy Cooperative Projects

The Nature Conservancy assists government agencies and other conservation organizations in acquiring ecologically significant places for natural areas, parks and other conservation purposes.

Mueller State Park and Dome Rock State Wildlife Area



About the cooperative

Location: 25 miles west of
Colorado Springs

Mueller State Park:
(719) 687-2366 or
<http://parks.state.co.us>

Dome Rock State Wildlife Area:
[http://wildlife.state.co.us/swa/view
.asp](http://wildlife.state.co.us/swa/view.asp)

Directions: Take U.S. Highway 24
west from Colorado Springs for 25
miles to Divide. Turn left onto
South Highway 67 for 3.5 miles.

The Nature Conservancy began acquiring the Mueller Ranch in 1978 and in 1980 transferred the property to the State of Colorado. The original property is now divided into two protected areas: Mueller State Park managed by Colorado State Parks and Dome Rock State Wildlife Area, managed by the Colorado Division of Wildlife. The two sites combined protect more than 12,000 acres of prime wildlife habitat. Mueller State Park offers a full range of recreational activities and more than 50 miles of trails. The Wildlife Area offers hiking and fishing, but no camping.

North Star Nature Preserve

In 1977, the 175-acre North Star Nature Preserve was acquired by The Nature Conservancy and transferred to Pitkin County the following year becoming the County's first significant open space acquisition. The preserve has grown to 315 acres and protects important riparian (streamside) habitat along the Roaring Fork River. It harbors a blue heron colony as well as elk, deer and beaver. Portions of the preserve are wildlife areas and are therefore closed to the public, but other areas – between Roaring Fork River and Hwy 82 – contain a wildlife viewing area and trails designated for hiking.

About the cooperative

Location: Near Aspen
More Information: View Pitkin County Open Space and Trails

On the web at:
<http://www.aspenpitkin.com/depts/21/>

Contact: (970) 920-5232.

Directions: There are access points to trailheads along Hwy 82. Contact Pitkin County Open Space and Trails for details.

Ryan Ranch

Located just outside of Gunnison County, the 829-acre Ryan Ranch represents a partnership between The Nature Conservancy and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). The Conservancy purchased the ranch in 1990 and transferred it to the BLM the following year. Managed by the BLM, this site protects a rare plant community of narrowleaf cottonwood-Colorado blue spruce/thinleaf alder. It also provides important public access to the BLM's Powderhorn Wilderness Study Area and is open to the public year-round for day use.

About the cooperative

Location: Southwest Colorado, near Lake City

More Information: Visit the BLM, Gunnison Field Office

On the web at:
<http://www.co.blm.gov/gra/index.html> or

Contact: Gunnison Field Office at (970) 641-0471

Directions: Ryan Ranch is located 2 miles south of the Gunnison and Hinsdale County lines. From Lake City, drive north on State Hwy 149 for 6.75 miles. Turn right on a gravel road at a BLM sign. Drive 200 yards to the river and park on the left side of the road. The property extends downstream for about one mile on the east bank of the river.

Sheep Mountain Ranch

About the cooperative

Location: Near Boulder, along North St. Vrain Creek

More Information: Visit the Arapahoe-Roosevelt National Forest **on the web at:**

<http://www.fs.fed.us/arnf/>.

Click on Recreation Information, click on Boulder Ranger District, and click on Hiking to access the trail map for Coulson's Gulch Trail.

Directions: Take US Hwy 36 about 9 miles west of Lyons, and turn on County Road 118 to Big Elk Meadows. Follow the Coulson's Gulch Trail to St. Vrain Creek. Hike upstream along the jeep trail for about a mile, then follow the foot path, along the creek for another mile. The Sheep Mountain Ranch straddles the creek on the north and south.



In the summer of 1990, The Nature Conservancy protected the Sheep Mountain Ranch, 320 acres of beautiful canyon country along the North St. Vrain Creek in Boulder County. Later that year, the Conservancy transferred the property to the U.S. Forest Service to become part of the Arapahoe-Roosevelt National Forest. Carved into precambrian granite by North St. Vrain Creek, the Sheep Mountain Ranch boasts steep canyon walls, spectacular scenery and great fishing.

White Rocks Nature Preserve

In 1982, The Nature Conservancy and the City of Boulder entered into an agreement to purchase a conservation easement on approximately 200 acres adjacent to Teller Lake and Teller Preserve. The Nature Conservancy loaned the City funds to protect White Rock's fragile sandstone cliffs. The City repaid the loan and currently manages the land as open space. The area is host to magnificent sandstone outcroppings that support lush vegetation such as a rare, small fern called *Asplenium andrewsii*. The site also supports a wide variety of mammals, birds and reptiles including a heron rookery, barn owls and mule deer. Due to the fragility of the cliffs, a portion of the property is not open for hiking, however visitors can walk along East Boulder Trail through the preserve.

About the cooperative

Location: Boulder
More Information: Visit the City of Boulder Open Space and Mountain Parks **on the web at:** <http://www.ci.boulder.co.us/open-space/>

Contact: (303) 441-3440
Directions: From Boulder, take Valmont Road east to 95th Street. Go north (left) on 95th Street for approximately 1.5 miles and then head west (left) on W. Phillips Road. Park in the small parking area on the north side of the road at the trailhead.

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