

Regulations

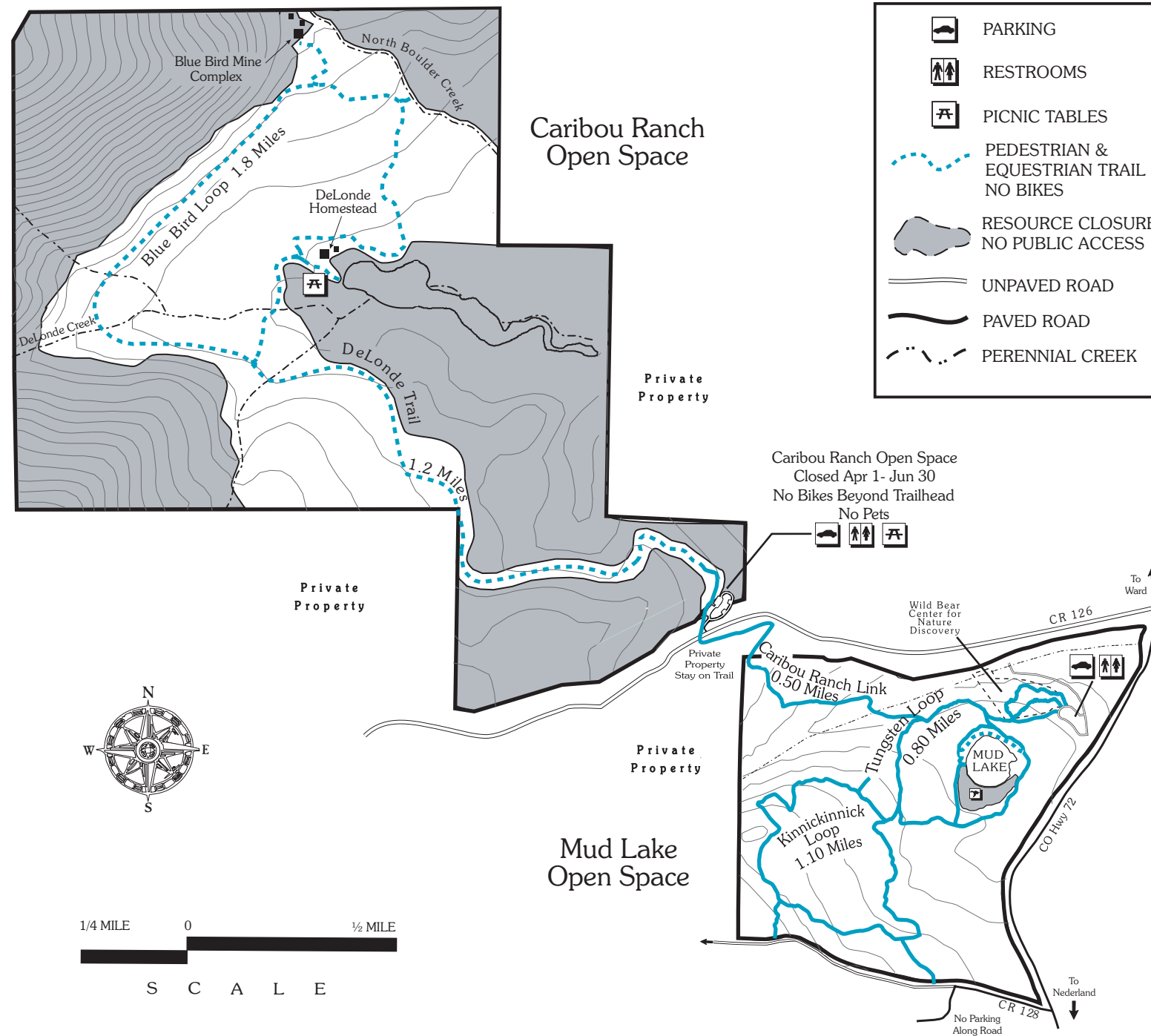
- Dogs are not permitted at Caribou Ranch Open Space.
- Mountain biking is not permitted at Caribou Ranch. It is permitted at Mud Lake on officially designated trails.
- Property is open from sunrise to sunset-no camping. When parks are closed, unattended vehicles will be ticketed.
- Collecting, removing, destroying or defacing any natural or man made objects is not permitted.
- Feeding, disturbing, trapping, hunting or killing wildlife is not permitted.
- Building ground fires is not permitted (fine \$300).
- Discharging or carrying firearms, crossbows, fireworks or projectile weapons of any kind is not permitted (fine \$300).
- No unauthorized motorized vehicles permitted beyond parking lot.
- It is unlawful to carry or possess any glass bottle or container outside an enclosed vehicle.
- Group reservations are required for any groups larger than 25 people.
- No commercial use is allowed.
- No posting of advertisements in park or on vehicles is permitted.

NOTE: This is a partial list of rules and regulations. Please visit www.BoulderCountyOpenSpace.org for a complete list.

Boulder County Parks and Open Space
5201 St. Vrain Road
Longmont, CO 80503
303-678-6200
www.BoulderCountyOpenSpace.org

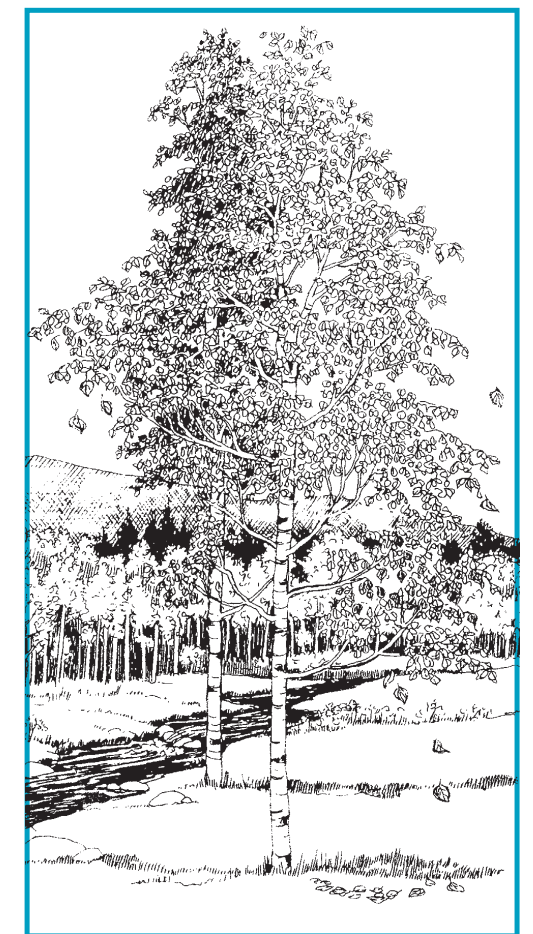


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Caribou Ranch

BOULDER COUNTY PARKS AND OPEN SPACE



Your Visit

Caribou Ranch is located between Nederland and the Indian Peaks Wilderness Area. The 2,151 acres of Caribou Ranch offers a variety of landscapes to explore including wetlands, meadows, streams and forests. An additional 1,489 acres adjacent to the property are protected by a conservation easement.

The property lies mainly in the montane life zone between 8,300 and 10,000 feet in elevation.

Restrooms — available near the trailhead.

Trails — The current trail system is 4.5 miles round-trip from the main parking lot, consisting of the DeLonde and Blue Bird Loop trails. You are welcome to hike, snowshoe, cross-country ski and ride horses. Mountain biking is not allowed. Visitors must stay on-trail.

Dogs — not permitted at Caribou Ranch Open Space for wildlife habitat and water quality protection.

Horse trailer parking — available at Mud Lake parking lot, ¾ mile east of the main parking lot with a connecting trail to Caribou Ranch Open Space.

Closures — there is an annual spring closure from April 1 to June 30 to protect spring migratory birds, overwinter elk survival and calf-rearing activities.

Winter trail etiquette:

- Snowshoers should always yield to cross-country skiers.
- Do not snowshoe or hike on ski tracks whenever possible.
- Snowshoe along the edge of the trail, leaving the center of the trail to cross-country skiers.
- Slow down when approaching or overtaking another user. When stopped, do not block the trail.

Geology

As you hike in Caribou Ranch, much of the ground you step on is 1.7 billion-year-old (Precambrian) Boulder Creek Granodiorite.

An even older rock found here is biotite (black mica) gneiss. This metamorphic rock, made up of dark and light mineral layers, is 1.8 billion years old.

Granodiorite and biotite gneiss were formed miles beneath the earth's surface. About 1.7-1.8 billion years ago the edge of the North American continent was along the Wyoming/Northern Colorado border — and an ocean lay to the south. The collision of the oceanic and North American plates produced extreme heat and pressure that created these ancient igneous and metamorphic rocks. Many periods of uplift and erosion exposed these rocks at the surface where we see them today.

Glacial activity also impacted Caribou Ranch. Glaciers formed above 8,000 feet elevation and carved U-shaped valleys as they moved down-slope.

Glacial material, including till and outwash gravel is present over the northern and east-central portions of the property and follows the path of North Boulder Creek.

The Pinedale Glaciation deposits within the North Boulder Creek drainage blocked flows from Caribou Creek resulting in the formation of glacial Lake Devlin.



Equestrians pass in front of the newly restored DeLonde Barn.

History

Although the prehistoric period is not as evident on the land as historic times, this area provided diverse resources for the nomadic lifestyle. Near the end of the 1800s, however, the painted ponies that carried the Native Americans began to give way to other forms of locomotion.

The Switzerland Trail, is the former route of the Denver, Boulder & Western Railroad which ran from 1904 to 1919. In addition to trains hauling ore, popular excursion trains ran from Boulder during the summer months.

Blue azurite, often found in silver ore, gave the Blue Bird Mine its name. In the 1870s, miners flocked to work at this and other mines in the area.

Through the years the property changed hands. In 1936, Lynn W. Van Vleet purchased the ranch and established Colorado's first Arabian horse breeding operation.

In 1971 a music producer purchased the property and converted a barn into recording studio, attracting the "who's who" of rock music of the 1970s including Chicago, Elton John and Rod Stewart. The ranch was intended to be inspirational and less distracting to recording artists. The recording studio, located on private land, closed after a fire in 1985 destroyed the control room.

Plants

The open space is dominated by coniferous forest. At lower elevations and drier sites, you'll see ponderosa pine and Douglas fir forests. The forest floor among the ponderosa pines is home to grasses like mountain muhly and june grass, as well as kinnikinnik.

Engelmann spruce/subalpine fir forests grow at higher elevations. Quaking aspen and lodgepole pine colonize sites of recent disturbances such as fire and logging.

One of the most striking sights at Caribou Ranch are the wildflowers. Come up to view wildflowers starting July 1, when the property opens for the season. Colorado columbine, wood lily, golden banner and common harebell decorate the landscape. These are fragile flowers; help take care of them by staying on the trail.

Wildlife

The mixture of wetlands, meadows, streams, forests, and woodlands provides excellent habitat to dozens of species of mammals. Elk, black bear, mule deer, mountain lion, coyote, bobcat, beaver, bat and short-tailed weasel live within or pass through the open space.

In recent years, moose have been observed on portions of the property.

The local elk herd arrives annually around April, as they migrate from lower elevations. Females calve on the property and remain until June or July when they move to higher elevations. In September, the bugling calls of the bull elk can be heard here. This signals the reuniting of the whole herd to the area for the fall rut.

This property also hosts nearly 90 species of birds. Mixed-conifer woodlands provide a home to the pygmy nuthatch, MacGillivray's warbler, western tanager and northern saw-whet owl. The Delonde willow carr supports ring-necked duck, fox sparrow, sora, yellow warbler, black-headed grosbeak and others.

Amphibians and reptiles on the property include striped chorus frogs and western terrestrial garter snakes, as well as others.

Management Activities

Boulder County Parks and Open Space seeks to find a balance between providing recreational activities and protection of wildlife habitats and natural resources. Caribou Ranch Open Space includes two designated conservation areas closed to the public year-round. These areas protect important wildlife, plant and cultural resources.

Moose, elk, trout, bats and amphibians are monitored here. The property is also surveyed for breeding birds and goshawks. Pine beetle mitigation is also part of ongoing efforts to maintain the beauty of Caribou Ranch.

The Parks and Open Space department recently completed the restoration of the DeLonde Barn with future plans to restore the DeLonde House. Historic preservation efforts continue at the Blue Bird Mine complex where you will be able to explore the area.



Colorado Columbine