

OUTDOOR RECREATION

Lyons is justly famed for access to wilderness areas that begin at the town borders. Many of the people who associate Lyons with the Roosevelt National Forest or Rocky Mountain National Park or Heil Ranch fail to notice the wonderful natural assets within our borders. The people of Lyons make enthusiastic use of five distinctive town parks located within a short stroll of each other. In addition, the town sponsors a number of recreation programs and offers special use permits through its Parks and Recreation Department.

Lyons Town Parks

Bohn Park *located over the bridge on 2nd Avenue south of Hwy. 36 (Main St.)*

Bohn Park is just south of the confluence of the North and South St. Vrain Rivers. This beautiful park has lighted ball fields, a playground, fishing ponds, a shelter house and restrooms, picnic area and a fishing ramp for the handicapped. Bohn Park was recognized by the Colorado Lottery for creative use of funds. (Dog friendly areas.)

Kurt Carlson Skate Park *located at the intersection of 5th Ave and Broadway.* A favorite of local kids and visitors alike, this small facility near the library is in nearly constant use.

Sandstone Park *located on Broadway in the center of downtown.* Sandstone Park features a visitors center and public restrooms. The visitors center is staffed by volunteers who assist over 20,000 visitors per year with information about Lyons and the surrounding area. The park plays hosts to the annual Summer Concerts in the Park series on varied Thursday nights in July and August. (Dog friendly areas.)

Lyons Whitewater Park *located across from the Black Bear Inn on State Route 36 about one mile east of town.* The river has been carefully crafted to provide some of the best kayak water in this part of Colorado.

Meadow Park *Located in town just west of the intersection of Highway 7 (5th Ave.) and Railroad Ave.*

Meadow Park is bounded on three sides by the North St. Vrain River and by sandstone cliffs. It features playgrounds, picnic sites, excellent fishing and a horseshoe pitching area. The Old Swimming Hole is the site where many inner-tubers and kayakers enter the water to begin their river trip east. The Meadow Park Shelter House has been declared a historic site. RV camping is available for a small fee. Dog friendly areas.

Boulder County Wilderness Areas A 10 Minute Walk From Downtown Lyons

Over eight thousand acres of spectacular Open Space attracts visitors from Front Range communities. This Open Space is divided into two parcels – the Hall Ranch and the Heil Valley Ranch.

Heil Valley Ranch Located at the southwest edge of town, Heil Valley Ranch consists of 4,923 acres of rugged terrain that has remained relatively undeveloped from prehistoric times through present day. The topography of the area is dramatic and complex. It is at the geologically active junction where the Great Plains meets the southern Rocky Mountains. The Lichen Trail provides spectacular views of the upturned sedimentary rock and lichen-covered boulders that are typical of the fault and fracture zone of the Boulder County foothills. This premier wildlife habitat contains a variety of ecosystems, grasslands, shrublands, woodlands, forests and canyons which supports an abundance of wildlife unparalleled in Boulder County. Abert's squirrels, cottontail rabbits, prairie dogs, marmots, red and gray foxes, mule deer, bobcats, black bears and mountain lions all live here.

Heil Valley Ranch is an important winter range for elk who migrate from the Indian Peaks Wilderness Area – the only herd along the Front Range who journey from the Continental Divide to the Plains. It is also a rich breeding habitat for a large variety of birds.

Hall Ranch Located just past the southwest edge of town, Hall Ranch has been heralded as a crucial

wildlife habitat. It is home to the tiny ruby-crowned kinglet, golden eagle, great horned owl, Cooper's hawk, night hawk, mountain lion, elk, bighorn sheep, prairie rattlesnake, white-tailed deer, black-tailed prairie dog, coyote, fox, badger and bobcat. Hall Ranch consists of 3,206 acres of backcountry. Because of its importance as a wildlife habitat, Boulder County makes an earnest effort to balance the protection of wildlife with recreational opportunities for citizens. Therefore, dogs are not allowed on this open space.

Hall Ranch is located at the interface between the mountains and the plains. The western portion of the ranch is made up of igneous rock formed more than a billion years ago. The eastern side is composed of more recent, red sedimentary Fountain and Lyons Formations which has been extensively quarried. Many of the buildings on the University of Colorado's Boulder campus were built using stone from these quarries. The property was the home of the Arapaho and Cheyenne Indian tribes when the settlers arrived. In time, more than 20 different non-native families lived and operated businesses on Hall Ranch. These families prospected, farmed and quarried sandstone. If you travel on the Nelson Loop Trail, you will be in the historic Antelope Parks area which was originally homesteaded by Rich Clark in 1890. In 1922, the homestead was purchased by the Nelson Family. In the mid-1940s, Hallyn and June Hall bought the property, and for more than 50 years it was a working ranch.

Boulder County Wilderness Areas Within a Few Miles of Lyons

Rabbit Mountain Open Space: 2,888 acres of backcountry containing over 5 miles of multiuse trails on the north side of Route 66 approximately two miles east of Lyons. Rabbit Mountain is known for its interesting geologic features and Indian teepee rings. Picnic tables are available and dogs are allowed but must be leashed. Carry water for your dog as there are no sources of ground water in the Rabbit Mountain Wilderness Area.

Button Rock Preserve: A quiet river valley about 7 miles west of Lyons with plenty of back country fishing opportunities including Button Rock Reservoir. Trails within Button Rock Preserve offer scenic views and also enable anglers to access many backcountry fishing locations.