HARVEST AND HOME, TOGETHER
Matthew "Quint" Redmond walks a lettuce field in Lakewood. Redmond sees a future where homes are engulfed by farms that feed them — and make income by also selling to local restaurants. His 944-home project in Milliken is ready to break ground. Photos by Craig F. Walker, The Denver Post

"Agriburbia" blooms
Golden developer sows communities around farm fields to produce food, profit.

By Jason Blevins The Denver Post

Six years ago, Matthew "Quint" Redmond suggested to Milliken planners that a corn farm north of Denver could increase its agricultural value and still anchor nearly a thousand homes.

"I got laughed out of the room," Redmond said.

Today, Milliken's 618-acre Platte River Village is ready for construction, with 944 planned homes surrounded by 108 acres of backyard farms and 152 acres of drip-irrigated community farms. The plan is for the farms to feed local residents and supply restaurants while paying for community upkeep. And Redmond, a 47-year-old planner-farmer, has other Front Range projects mulling his "agriburbia" concept.

Redmond, co-founder of the Golden-base design firm TSR Group, travels the country preaching his urban farming and development idea. He envisions a future where the nation's 31 million acres of lawn are converted to food production. He sees golf-course greens redefined with herbs; sand traps as "kale traps." He sees retirement homes engulfed by farms and office buildings where workers escape cubicles on farming breaks.

Jenny Redmond, Matthew's wife, inspect lettuce in the Lakewood plot.
Soapstone will lasso you in.

constructed in and out of dry washes and on the ledges of ridges buffered from the unanswerable Wyoming wind. Thankfully, three leaf sumac in fall color resembling burning campfire embers of American Indians who long ago used this area to hunt buffalo and dotting the expansive hillside of tawny grasses pulled me from my bike seat for photo ops.

Don’t quote me, but pedaling up this trail that with each pedal power up toward better and better scenery, I think I had something like 25 square miles to my right and the woods. At least, I didn’t see anybody. And that’s exactly what I wanted as I left my office mid-morning, tire of the cubicle curse that plagued those of us who prefer remoteness but are shackled to the man and the mortgage payment he so generously allows us to pay.

I have no particular fear of my bike ending up in the belly of hungry coyotes. It’s a circle-of-life kind of mentality. Dead is dead.

But after reading a recent column, I was prompted to call my wife and tell her to look for my carcass along the Cheyenne Ridge Trail I should not return. This is country where even agile white-banded northern suckers have wings flapping spasmodically levering to adjust for wind gusts.

The remoteness is what draws people like me up here and what makes some myopic people peeved.

As close to natural as an area has to offer, I pedaled through a draw then ascended a rise and had time on my soft coat down the trail to feel that remoteness — stiff, brown buffalo grass; waving wind of blonde sedgy grass; cottonwood’s frames — and I could sense the Big Hole before seeing it.

This geologic phenomenon is the reason for pedaling the hour up this trail.

See SOAPSTONE / Page 27

Miles Blumhardt
Loveland Connection

SOAPSTONE
RED MOUNTAIN TRAILS

All trails open to hiking, mountain biking and horseback riding unless otherwise indicated.

Soapstone
- Cheyenne Rim Trail: 15 miles with connection to Canyon Trail and Red Mountain Open Space.
- Prowhorn Loop: 7.5 mile loop with connection to Prowhorn Trail and Sand Wash Trail.
- Prowhorn Trail: 7 miles, open April 1 - July 15 for good birding, connects to Prowhorn Loop and Sandwash Trail.
- Linderman Overlook: 5 mile paved trail to pavilion with interpretive signs and seating. Horses allowed.
- Mahogany Trail: 5 mile with connection to Canyon Trail and Prowhorn Loop. Horses not allowed.
- Towshee Trail: 3 mile hike only with connection to Mahogany Trail and Canyon Trail.
- Canyon Trail: 5 mile north edge of property, connection to Prowhorn Trail and Red Mountain Open Space. Horses not allowed.
- Sand Wash Trail: 1.5 mile connects Canyon Trail to Prowhorn Loop. Horses allowed.

Red Mountain
- Bent Rock Trail: 2.3 miles easy, hiking only.
- Sinking Sun Trail: 1.2 miles.
- Big Hole Wash Trail: 2.5 miles, easy, connects to Soapstone Natural Area.
- Ruby Wash Trail: 2.5 miles easy.
- Cheyenne Rim Trail: 15 miles, moderate to difficult, connects to Soapstone Area.

Fall is an ideal time to mountain bike, hike or horseback ride at Soapstone Natural Area and Red Mountain Open Space.

warms day of the year — actually held its breath for a split second.

My cubicle never felt so small, yet thankfully so far away.
From office space to open space

Stunning Soapstone/Red Mtn. cure cubicle blues

BY MILES BLUMHARDT
miles@blumhardt.com

Wyoming was on the wind as I stroked the creaking mountain bike to the top of Cheyenne Ridge.

Pumping 'not-as-young-as-they-used-to-be' lungs and legs my goal was as clear as the horizon was cloudy. I would pedal as much of the 11-mile Cheyenne Ridge Trail at Soapstone Prairie Natural Area that eventually lassoed you into the Cowboy State as I forecasted the building thunderstorms to the northwest would allow.

Weather isn't an exact science, you know.

So I huffed and puffed, blowing, kind of, through the curves and trail thoughtfully constructed in and out of dry washes and on the lee side of ridges buffered from the unwavering Wyoming wind.

Thankfully, three leaf sumac in full color resembling burning campfire embers of American Indians who long ago used this area to hunt buffalo and dotting the expansive hillsides of tawny grasses pulled me from my bike seat for photo ops.

Don't quote me, but pedaling up this trail that with each stroke powered me toward better and better scenery. I think I had something like 36 square miles to myself midday last week. At least, I didn't see anybody. And that's exactly what I wanted as I left my office mid-morning, tired of the cubicle curse that plagues those of us who prefer remote...

The Cheyenne Ridge Trail, above, offers stunning views of Red Mountain Open Space's Big Hole. Pronghorn antelope, such as the ones shown at top, are commonly seen at Soapstone Prairie Natural Area near the Wyoming border.
SOAPSTONE PRAIRIE NATURAL AREA/RED MOUNTAIN OPEN SPACE

Soapstone Natural Area
 dirección: Take Colorado Highway 17/Terry Lake Road to County Road 15 north, turn north onto Rabbit Trail Road and continue north to the entrance station.
> Hours: Dawn to dusk, but better hurry as the site is closed for winter starting Nov. 1.
> Acreage: 18.700
> Pets: Not allowed, even in vehicles
> Information: www.tcgov.com/naturalareas

Red Mountain Open Space
 dirección: Take Colorado Highway 17 (Terry Lake Road) to Larimer County Road 15 (Waverlyturnout), go left on County Road 15 to County Road 78. Go left on County Road 78 to County Road 17. Go right on County Road 17 to County Road 80, Go left on County Road 80 to County Road 19. Go right on County Road 19 to County Road 21, Go left on County Road 21 for about seven miles to the trailhead parking area.
> Hours: Dawn to dusk, but better hurry as the site is closed for winter starting Nov. 1.
> Acreage: 15.000
> Pets: Not allowed
> Information: www.larimer.org/naturalresources/aranima_400.html

Soapstone/Red Mountain trails
All trails open to hiking, mountain biking and horseback riding unless otherwise indicated:
Soapstone
> Cheyenne Rim Trail: 11.7 miles with connection to Canyon Trail and Red Mountain Open Space.
> Pronghorn Loop: 7.5 mile loop with connection to River Trail and Sand Wash Trail
> River Trail: 7 miles, closed April 1 - July 15 for grassland birds, connects to Pronghorn Loop and Sand Wash Trail.
> Lindenmeier Overlook: 1/4 mile paved trail to pavilion with interpretive signs and seating. Horses not allowed.

Red Mountain
> Bent Rock Trail: 2.3 miles, easy, hiking only
> Sinking Sun Trail: 1.2 miles, easy
> Big Hole Wash Trail: 2.8 miles, easy, connects to Soapstone Natural Area
> Ruby Wash Trail: 2.5 miles, easy
> Cheyenne Rim Trail: 3.6 miles, moderate to difficult, connects to Soapstone Natural Area

Mahogany Trail: 5 mile trail with connection to Canyon Trail and Pronghorn Loop
Sand Wash Trail: 1.5 mile connects Canyon Trail and Pronghorn Loop. Horses not allowed.

Time slots are filled for county’s firework program
FORT COLLINS — Reserved time slots for the Larimer County Department of Natural Resources’ firework program have been filled. People can check for canceled time slots at www.larimer.org/fireworks. Click “Sign up for one of the time slots,” click the drop-down for “Time Slot,” select a time slot that is not full, and reserve that time slot by filling in your name and e-mail address, and then clicking Reserve Collection Time.

Tuesday, Reporter-Telegram
October 3, 2009

LARIMER COUNTY OUTDOORS
Guided Hikes and Programs
Friday, Oct. 2
Unveiling of Art Inspired by Larimer County Open Spaces 5 to 7 p.m. at the Cache Hawk & Trust at 100 S. College Ave.
Fort Collins Larimer County Open Lands 2009 Visual Artist of the Year, Diane Findley, will unveil several paintings inspired by Larimer County Open Spaces at a show entitled Open Landscape Paintings. To learn more about the Open Lands Visual Artist Program, please visit the website at www.larimer.org/openlands/artists.htm
Saturday, Oct. 3
“Red Mountain’s Golden Eagles” 9 a.m. to noon. Join naturalist and former veterinarian Bob for a wildlife hike highlighting Red Mountain’s majestic resident, the Golden Eagle. The Open Space trailhead is located 25 miles north of Fort Collins. Program lasts approximately 3 hours. Sign up is required. Contact Justin Scharton at 970-679-4489 or jscharton@larimer.org.
Soapstone
Continued from Page C4
ness but are asked to the
man and the mortgage pay-
ment be so generously allows
us to pay.
I have no particular fear of
my guts ending up in the
belly of hungry coyotes. It’s a
circle-of-life kind of mental-
ity. Dead is dead. But after
reading Rich Bachand’s col-
umn in last week’s Xplore
Open space column, it
prompted me to call my wife
and tell her to look for my car-
ease along the Cheyenne
Ridge Trail should I not
return.
I mean, up here, we’re not
in Fort Collins, anymore.
A rain shower in
Fort Collins can mean snow
up here. A breeze in Fort
Collins can mean a real blow
up here. This is country
where even agile wind-
whipped northern hospitality have
wing flaps caudally
leaving to adjust for wind
gusts. But the remoteness is
what drives people like me up
here but what makes some
mystic people peeved.
I pedaled through a draw
then ascended a rise and had
time on my soft coast down
the trail to feel that remedia-
ness — stiff, brown, buffalo
grass; waving hordes of
blackjack, ameliorant
acacia, ponderosa pines,
leaved to convolute
mountain mahogany branch-
es; sun splashing down
sweeping white rock slopes;
one minute then suddenly
disappearing the next, mut-
ing the entire landscape.
I could sense the Big Hole
before seeing it. This geologic
phenomenon is the reason for
descending the hour up this
trail. Like the sun, on
time all you see is uninter-
rupted grassland and the
next you pop up on the rim to
a magnificent scene framed
by your handfuls of granite
outcroppings falling
hundreds of feet to a hole col-
ored by gorgon redrock,
struck with dry washes
whose banks were colored
with smudge.

The stretch of trail along
the rim is one of the best, if
not the best, section of trail to
be found in our natural areas
and open spaces.
I descended to the
Cheyenne Ridge Trail’s inter-
sectio
the Big Hole Wash Trail and wanted
to explore more. But the clouds
to the northwest warned of
rain so I pedaled back up to
the rim for one last look
before returning to my cabin.
A red-tailed hawk with sun
intensively illuminating its
tail red soared on thermals,
the sun smiled and
frowned on the Big Hole, mixing
its moods, rain fell from
darkening clouds on the dis-
tant horizon and the wind
unreasonably warm on this,
the last warmest day of the
year — actually held its breath
for a split-second.
My cubicle never felt so
tiny, yet thankfully so far
away.

Hermit Park stewards earn Starburst Conservation Award
BY PAMELA DICKMAN
reporter@familystate-wire.com
FORT COLLINS — Fifteen
people lined the chairs in the Larimer
County commissioners office Tues-
day — only a fraction of those in-
volved in preserving Hermit Park.
They applauded loudly when
Matt Robbins, spokesman for the
Colorado Lottery, handed out the
Starburst Conservation Award rec-
ognizing the open space.
"We earned it," said Commiss-
ioner Kathi Trauth, referring to
the many cities, towns, conserva-
tion agencies and individuals who
worked together to pay for the $8.7
million project.
This county earned this award,
the work, all the partners. All
these people came together
and said, "This land needs this.
"Hermit Park, located just outside
Estes Park, was a private play-
ground for Hewlett-Packard
and Agents employees from 1967 to
2006, when the company decided
to sell the property.
Trying to keep the forests, mead-
ows and wetlands free from develop-
ment, the county first offered the
land to the county.
The county and other area agen-
cies moved quickly, gathering the
money, including $700,000 from
the Snow Mountain Land Trust and
$420,000 from the city of Loveland.
Even with a $700,000 Grant Out-
doors Colorado grant, $1 million
from Larimer County and contri-
butions from city of Fort Collins,
town of Berthoud and others, the
effort was $1.2 million short.
A team, including private resi-
dents, raised that amount in six
months, and the county owned

The open space also has two
trails and a group picnic area, open
for gatherings and weddings,
and widespread cooperation to
preserve the land as well as the di-
verse habitat led to the award.

By the numbers
15,000 people have visited Hermit Park so far this year.
15 cabins can be rented year-round, including for the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays this year.
80 campsites are available.
1,362 acres are preserved at Hermit Park.

Robbins said, "The project is a
crown jewel not only of this region
but the state."

ON THE NET: For more information, go
to www.larimer.org.
County earns accolades for open space work

BY BOBBY MAGILL
For Loveland Connection

With Longs Peak shrouded in clouds and Kruger Rock looming over a broad meadow, Kerry Rollins bounded her Chewy Suburban along a gravel road last week to show off one of Larimer County’s newest open space parks.

Seem to be the recipient of the Colorado Lottery’s Sturbrunt Director’s Choice Award, Hermitt Park Open Space, a former Agilent Technologies and Hewlett-Packard private employee resort southeast of Estes Park, opened to the public in 2007 after the county purchased it.

Rollins, Larimer County Department of Natural Resources outdoor specialist, is nothing if not proud of the 138-acre property full of secluded campites, hiking trails and pastural views.

“It’s a family place,” Rollins said while walking two Larimer County Open Space Advisory Board members on a tour of Hermitt Park.

The Sturbrunt award, which will be presented to the county this week, honors the county’s use of a $700,000 Great Outdoors Colorado grant, which helped purchase the property.

The county launched a major capital campaign to buy Hermitt Park for $6.5 million in 2007.

Larimer County Department of Natural Resources District Manager Chris Fleming said Hermitt Park opened to the public in phases, with many improvements to come.

One of the open space’s biggest attractions is Kruger Rock, a towering promontory in Roosevelt National Forest looking over the property. The county plans to construct a formal trailhead for Kruger Rock within Hermitt Park, she said.

Hermitt Park’s extensive campgrounds offer sites widely spread apart, some nestled beneath gnarled trees and boulders near prime moose and elk habitat.

The campgrounds are so nice and offer so much seclusion to campers, they’re better than the campsites nearby Rocky Mountain National Park offers, advisory board member Frank Gillespie said.

Most of the campsites are scheduled to be refurbished and upgraded, however.

The ultimate goal for Hermitt Park, Fleming said, is for it to be financially self-sustaining.

Currently, it is partially funded by the county’s Help Preserve Open Space sales tax, but eventually, entrance, camping and lodging fees will fully fund the park, she said.

Photogs wanted to capture nature scene

Larimer County Department of Natural Resources is recruiting people interested in photography.

People are needed to be in the field to capture pictures of visitors recreating in the county’s parks and open spaces.

If you have an interest in photography contact CJ Collins at 679-4562.

For more information, visit www.larimer.org/natural-resources.

Learn about Red Mountain

Larimer County Parks and Open Space will offer a program on the culture of Red Mountain Open Space at 9 a.m. Saturday.

Red Mountain Open Space is located 5 miles north of Fort Collins, between Interstate 25 and U.S. 287.

The easy hike will last about three hours and will focus on the land’s ancient and contemporary uses.

Open space cabins add holiday dates

Reservations have been expanded for the cabin cabins at Hermitt Park Open Space, two miles south of Estes Park, to include Thanksgiving, Christmas, New Year’s and New Year’s Eve.

To make reservations, visit www.larimercounty.com or call (800) 837-7795.

November through March, these cabins are usually reservable only for Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays.

Occupancy rates remain at $60 per night.

For information about Hermitt Park Open Space, visit www.larimer.org/natural-resources/hermitpark.htm
Astronomy viewing events open to the public

Area residents have two opportunities for seeing stars. At 7-30-11 p.m. Friday, the Little Thompson Observatory at 850 Spartan Ave. by Berthoud High School in Berthoud will be open for Public Star Night.

Dr. Irene and Stephen Little of Estes Park will talk about "Time and Calendars," including the calendars of ancient peoples such as the Mayan, Incas and Aztecs, and how these calendars are still of interest today. Visitors will be able to look through the large 18-inch telescope at various celestial objects.

Parking will be available east of Berthoud High School. For details, call 613-7793 or visit www.wssakids.org.

At 6:30 p.m. Friday, Oct. 23, "Astronomy at Fossil Creek" will take place at the Northern Colorado Astronomical Society's new program at Fossil Creek Reservoir Open Space, one mile west of Interstate 25 on Carpenter Road, Fort Collins.

Participants can enjoy views of the constellations, satellites and meteors. Visitors can try several types of telescopes and get close-up views of the moon's craters, mountains and rings, using binoculars for tips on sky targets.

The event may be canceled due to cloudy skies or high winds. Dress for colder evening temperatures and bring along a folding chair.

The three-hour program is free and open to the public. Check www.ncc.org for event status and visible planets. Contact Rob Novak at 679-4561 for more information.

— Reporter-Herald staff

Public input sought on plan to boost park fees

FORT COLLINS — The Larimer County Parks Advisory Board will meet at 5:30 p.m. Tuesday in the Boyd Lake Room at the Larimer County Courthouse, 200 W. Oak St.

The board will consider a final recommendation to the county commissioners on proposed park permit fee increases for 2010. The public is invited to attend and offer comments on the proposed changes.

Other agenda topics include a final comment recommendation for the Estes Valley Campground Partnership a status update on Big Thompson Canyon public access and the Carter Lake Sail Club license renewal.

For details, call Gary Buffington, Natural Resources director, 679-4560.

— Reporter-Herald staff

Guided hikes in Larimer County

Saturday, Oct. 10 at 10 a.m. "The Elk Rut," join naturalist Bob for a program dedicated to the Rockies' most charismatic four-legged critter the elk — at Hermit Park Open Space, located just south of the town of Estes Park, off of Hwy 36.

This program will describe the rut season, talk about the importance of elk habitat, and give insight into the amazing adaptations of the bull and the cow. Perfect way to spend the morning before a hike to Homestead Meadows or Kruger Rock.

Saturday, Oct. 17 at 9 a.m. "12,000 Years in the Making — Culture of Red Mountain Open Space." Join naturalist Thuorn for a presentation dedicated to the fascinating cultural history of Red Mountain Open Space, located 35 miles north of Fort Collins, off of CR58. Thuorn will take you through ancient land use and more contemporary times as you engage in the area's most recent use — hiking. Approximately three-hour program. Hike rating: easy. Registration required — please visit www.larimer.org/naturalresources/registration to sign up.

Saturday, Oct. 31 at 9:30 a.m. "Owls: How to Meet Them at Horsetooth Mountain Open Space." Join naturalist Bob for a guided hike to meet some of the nocturnal creatures at Horsetooth Mountain Open Space. Located just south of Fort Collins, off of CR38E. This short moonlight hike will give you insight into owls, and the other nocturnal critters that have long captured people's attention. Approximately two-hour program. Hike rating: Easy. Registration required. Please go to www.larimer.org/naturalresources/registration to sign up.

To learn more about Larimer County's parks and open spaces, go to www.larimer.org/naturalresources/