

Five Questions

Carter Lake's Ricky Goltz: Working in the great outdoors

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Ricky Goltz

Occupation: Facilities supervisor with the Larimer County Department of Natural Resources, Carter Lake District, which includes Carter Lake, Flatiron and Pinewood reservoirs and Little Thompson Farm.

Age: 63

How long in Loveland: 45 years; 23 seasons with Larimer County.

Prime camping season is right around the corner, and reservations are filling up for the spring and summer months in Larimer County's campgrounds.

When campers arrive, their sites are clean, tidy and ready for outdoor fun thanks to Ricky Goltz and his seasonal crew who work behind the scenes at Carter Lake, Flatiron and Pinewood reservoirs.

For more than two decades, Ricky has been working year-round in some of Larimer County's prettiest areas with the great outdoors and his truck as his primary office. He sees wildlife close up, not just on the side of the road, including raptors, bobcat, mountain lions, deer, elk, fox, coyotes and more, and does everything he can to offer a great camping experience without dangerous wildlife encounters.

1. Exactly what do you do to get campsites ready for the next batch of campers each and every day in the summer? What does your job entail in the off-season?

We clean fire grates, rake (tent) pads, clean tables, pick up trash. This is done with the help of our camp hosts when they are here, BIG help. As needed, we mow grass, trim

trees, empty trash cans (Mondays and Fridays), fix water fountains and roads, replace tables to their sites.

With our reservation system, our season has gone from May through September, Fridays through Sundays, to April through October being almost full seven days a week. So "off" season we spend it working on the few things that can't be done when we are normally full. We fix and replace buoys and docks, replace tables and grates as needed, rebuild fences, cut down trees, add material to sites and roads, paint and fix restrooms, 24 in all. (We also) install three teepees each spring and take them down in fall. I spend time updating my licenses (well operator, CPR instructor), buying material and items for next season, finding (seasonal employees) for the next season, working on next year's project lists, attending meetings, and because we live in Colorado, sometimes I need to plow snow to keep access for our customers and staff. I also work with volunteer groups all year round as needed.

2. What is the strangest find you've ever made in a campsite?

People have left almost any thing you can think of behind when they leave — pots and pans, knives, axes, coolers, tents, chairs and clothes, axes in trees, clothes on our swim beach. (Sometimes we think they had to go home in the buff). Best is when they are done camping for the year, a few have left all their camping gear next to a trash can with a "Free" sign on it; I believe it's because they can't store it over the winter at home.

3. How do you prepare new fire grates for use? What becomes of the ashes you clean out of the grates between campers?

We have been buying a pre-built grate and putting it into a 3-foot square pad of cement. This is done 10 to 12 at a time with old ones in good condition being placed in new cement pads, which we pour at one time and then set the grates in place. After cured, we test burn, and then as needed replace them in the campsites. There are 182 sites in my district.

Unfortunately with all the extra stuff we find in the ashes, it can't be used for something like amending soil in our system. So we have to haul it to the land fill, about 4 cubic yards a week May through September. Maybe one day it will be clean, and we'll be able to find a place to use it that will help all of us.

4. What advice would you give to campers to keep their sites maintained and to avoid unwanted animal interactions?

Five Questions

Is there someone you'd like to know more about? Email nominations for the new Five Questions feature to news@reporter-herald.com.

Try and keep it as clean as you can. Use a trash bag for each meal, and take it to the trash cans afterwards; never leave trash in your campsite overnight. Keep coolers out of site if possible and closed, and keep food out of tents if tent camping. And remember, fire grates are for wood not trash.

5. What changes/trends have you seen during your career?

I'm not sure you have enough space for it all. We have gone from just having a place to come camping to sites that are designed to fit most anyone's needs. Restrooms, which are still outhouses, are kept as clean and in good working order and as stocked as we can. Boat docks are now made like you might find at any lake, not from surplus military

material, and we have some of the newest equipment needed to do our jobs. We also have a staff that takes a lot of pride in making sure everyone has the best experience they can when staying with us.

And as a bonus question: Do you camp on your time off? What is your favorite camp site?

I did for over 20 years with Boy Scouts and family, but not as much lately. (I like) the teepees at Flatiron, quiet and a little "old time" feel.

— Pamela Johnson

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One-way ramps allow boats to stay after hours on Carter, Horsetooth

By Pamela Johnson

Reporter-Herald Staff Writer
Loveland Reporter-Herald

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Larimer County is installing new gates at Carter Lake and Horsetooth Reservoir that will allow boaters to stay on the water past inspection times.

"We were able to install a one-way exit ramp," explained James Bishop, spokesman for the Bureau of Reclamation, one of three partners involved in the Colorado-Big Thompson Project reservoirs and in the gate project.

At both reservoirs, boaters must go through an on-site inspection process designed to prevent the spread of invasive mussels into clean waters before launching their vessels. The requirement is part of a statewide movement, spearheaded by Colorado Parks and Wildlife, to protect waters from the costly and damaging mussels that spread by attaching to boats.

The reservoirs have set boating hours, during which inspectors are on site and boaters can launch. Last year, park managers would lock gates across the ramps at the end of boating hours to prevent people from going onto the waters without inspection. But it also prevented boaters from coming off the waters after that time, essentially setting a boating curfew.

In response to boaters who wanted to stay on the water longer, Larimer County, the Bureau of Reclamation and Northern Water have installed the one-way gates. An exit lane protected with spike strips will remain open at each reservoir, allowing boats to leave but preventing them from launching on the waters outside of inspection hours.

"We wanted to find a solution and still protect the waters," Bishop said.

At Horsetooth, the after-hours gate system is at the South Bay day use area. At Carter, it is being installed this week at the North Pines ramp, which will open for the boating season on Monday, April 15.

Some but not all of the ramps opened at Horsetooth and Carter Lake on April 1. The number of ramps open and the boating hours will increase as the season continues. Updated hours are available at larimer.org/boating.

The Bureau of Reclamation, which owns the reservoirs, and Northern Water, which manages the water distribution, paid for the gates. Larimer County, which manages recreation at the sites, installed the gates for use this season.

The overall value of the project is estimated at \$20,000 — half for materials and half for labor.

All three agencies work together to protect the waters from nuisance species, including sharing the cost of the mussel inspection process in the past. While Colorado waters have remained clean of zebra mussels and quagga mussels, inspectors across the state have prevented infected vessels from hitting waters every year.

Last year, [inspectors intercepted 11 infested boats](#) before they hit Horsetooth, which was the most on any body of water in Colorado, and one boat before it launched onto Carter. Inspectors at both reservoirs checked 57,114 boats last season alone.

When invasive mussels take hold, they spread quickly and damage both the infrastructure and the aquatic habitat. At Lake Powell in Utah and Lake Mead in Nevada and Arizona, managers spend millions of dollars each year to clean infrastructure that is plugged and damaged by these mussels.

No one has found away to remove the pest from the waters once they take hold, so the focus is on preventing them from spreading into clean waters.

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