

**Media Contact:**  
Katy Schneider  
[katy@ftcollins.com](mailto:katy@ftcollins.com)  
970-481-4644



## **What's New: Winter 2019 Fort Collins, Colo.**

### **CREATIVE CULTURE; COLLEGE TOWN**

Most people know Fort Collins as the home of Colorado State University (CSU), a Mecca for beer enthusiasts and the jumping off point for outdoor adventure in the northernmost part of the state. What many people don't know is that Fort Collins is also a creative culture hub. This unassumingly hip Northern Colorado college town is home to entrepreneurs and craftspeople at the top of their trade, including craft beverage brewers, third wave coffee shops, bike manufacturers, homegrown bands, food fanatics and fine artists.

#### **Brew News**

***Hemp Meets Hops:*** The brewers at New Belgium Brewing Co. have found yet another use for hemp with the release of their latest creation, The Hemporer. Debuting April 2 nationwide, the new "HPA" (a New Belgium trademark), is a unique combination of hops and hemp. It hits store shelves in May 2018.

***Brewing on Campus:*** Colorado State University unveiled its new campus craft brewery in April 2018. The Ramskeller brewpub marks Fort Collins' 23rd brewery and houses the largest brewing system of any four-year university in the country. Students in the college's fermentation science and technology program will brew the beer served at Ramskeller (which has served beer since 1969) and eventually it will also be for sale at CSU football games.

***Hopped Up Coffee:*** Fort Collins' Old Town Spice Shop has created the ultimate pick-me-up for beer fans. Hopped Up Coffee is a single origin coffee blended with a variety of hops and malted barley to add the texture and sweetness found in different beer styles. There are several options to choose from both online and in-store, including Black IPA, Chocolate Stout, Lemon Wit, Scottish Ale, and Winter Warmer.

### **Fort Collins makes *Outside Magazine's* 25 "America's Best Towns Ever" list as 'Best Bike-To Happy Hour Town'**

*Outside Magazine's* experts say: "This college town in the foothills of the Rocky Mountains has more than 20 breweries, most notably New Belgium and Odell. Borrow a cruiser from Fort Collins Bike Share and you can even put together a self-guided tour of local breweries." The magazine's 25 best towns ever issue features the "greatest places in America" based upon specific categories under an overall 'best adventure town' designation. The winners were chosen based upon past coverage and the expertise of a

special advisory council. The issue hits newsstands in July 2017.

<http://www.visitftcollins.com/fort-collins-makes-outside-magazines-25-best-towns-ever-list/>

### **Fort Collins #3 on Travelocity Beer Tourism Index and #2 for Best Beer Scene by USA Today Readers**

Thanks to the growing popularity of beer tourism (the Brewers Association estimates more than 10 million people toured small and independent craft breweries in 2014), Travelocity launched a beer tourism index in late 2016. It's no surprise Fort Collins appears in the number three slot for Top Small Metro Areas. Travelocity's beer index identifies the best large and small metro areas for sampling some of the best craft beers in the U.S. by examining the location of all breweries in the country, taking into account factors important to a successful "beercation," including the availability of rideshare services, accessibility via air and the average cost of lodging.

<http://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/americas-best-beer-destinations-named-in-the-first-travelocity-beer-tourism-index-300346468.html>.

In addition, *USA Today* readers picked Fort Collins as number two for Best Beer Scene in the nation.

### **Forward Focused Food**

Fort Collins' creative spirit most certainly extends to its food offerings. Fresh, local and inspired describe the current trend, though standbys like The Silver Grill Café and Choice City Butcher & Deli remain Northern Colorado favorites for good reason.

New eateries at [The Exchange](#), an innovative new development in Old Town where food and craft beverages are served from shipping containers, have opened and created a lot of buzz over the last few months. [Fort Collins Donut Company](#) serves up fresh, hot donuts in flavors like strawberry rhubarb, salted honey and FoCo Cream (a take on the Boston cream). [Chick'nCone](#), featuring fried chicken stuffed waffle cones, opened in August. [Vatos Tacos and Tequila](#) also recently opened. [Churn](#), the latest endeavor from Denver-based Little Man Ice Cream, will open the end of October, as will [Crooked Stave Artisan Beer Project](#), which includes an experimental brewery and taproom. [The Pizza Press](#) and [CopperMuse Distillery](#) anchor the project and are both open. On the horizon at The Exchange: [Steamies Burger Bar](#), Urban winery [Infinite Monkey Theorem](#) (aiming for the end of this year), and Japanese sushi spot Japango (aiming for the first part of 2019). Along with plenty of tasty food and drinks, there's also a music venue and outdoor projection screen for live music, movie showings and year-round events at The Exchange.

Wine Spectator recently honored wine cellars at five area restaurants. Sonny Lubick Steakhouse, Social, The Melting Pot and The Cache at Ginger and Baker earned the coveted 2018 Award of Excellence from the prestigious publication. The wine cellars, each with at least 90 selections, are judged by their offerings and how well the lineup pairs with the restaurant's menu.

[Farm Fusion](#), a popular Fort Collins food truck, recently expanded and now offers fun classes in its teaching kitchen. The classes are taught in a beautiful red barn nestled between two lakes on a working ranch. Learn how to make three types of homemade cheese at the “Oh La La, Cheese Please” class, or come for “Yoga and Yakitori,” which starts with a rejuvenating lakeside yoga class followed by a class where you’ll learn how to make a four-course meal including yakitori, dipping sauces, and even dessert. Along with classes, the venue is available for private parties, including birthdays, company events and bachelor/bachelorette celebrations. Visit [www.farmfusion.org](http://www.farmfusion.org) for more information.

[The Gold Leaf Collective](#) – featuring The Gold Leaf Restaurant, The Silver Seed Food Truck, Leaf & Seed Catering Co. and Laurel St. Bakery – is a premier plant-based restaurant experience that’s focused on hyper-local and foraged ‘New Colorado Cuisine.’ The menu, including breakfast, lunch and dinner plates paired with a unique selection of local beverages, changes with the season based upon what’s IN season and what can be sustainably preserved. The collective’s goal? To disconnect from corporate food distribution companies by sourcing indigenous ingredients found in Colorado, both foraged and harvested. The restaurant also garnered a [recent nod from Food & Wine](#) as the best vegan restaurant in Colorado.

Farm-to-table restaurant [Locality](#) opened in October 2016 in southeast Fort Collins. It will soon feature a hydroponic grow wall that will produce vegetables and microgreens for dishes on the menu, which is expected to change every three months.

[The Emporium Kitchen & Wine Market](#), located inside the new Elizabeth Hotel, offers everything from gourmet sammys and grilled pizzas to charcuterie platters and signature dishes made using locally-sourced, high-quality ingredients. Signature menu items include Bangs Island Mussels and Fries, Skuna Bay Salmon en Papillote, and Elk Wellington. The Market “boasts approachability, variety, and thoughtfully selected offerings,” as well as wine tastings and cooking classes.

A slew of new restaurants have opened elsewhere in town, including Butterfly Café in the former Poudre creamery across from the Larimer County Justice Center in Old Town; Cacciatore at Heller’s Kitchen, a full-service Italian and Mediterranean restaurant from Chef Troy Heller, Potbelly Sandwich Shop, a 40-year-old chain with 400 stores across the country; City Park Gelato & Amore with a dozen varieties of homemade gelato and fruit-flavored sorbets, as well as takeout pizza, porchetta sandwiches, pasta, sauces, cheeses and meats; and Coneucopia food cart where waffle cones are piled high with pulled pork and topped with apple beet slaw. The recently redeveloped Foothills Mall and the surrounding area has a reinvigorated dining scene with Zoes Kitchen, Longhorn Steakhouse, Bad Daddy’s Burger Bar, Smokin’ Fins Seafood Grill and Torchy’s Tacos.

Coming immediately (in fact these options may already be open): Look out for Cabana, from restaurateur Steve Lauer featuring Cuban fare and a seafood market; California-based franchise Cinnaholic, a build-your-own cinnamon roll bakery on South College; national chain Peace, Love and Little Donuts; Famous Toastery, a new breakfast-and-lunch restaurant at Harmony Commons; Mac’d Up, serving gourmet

mac-n-cheese; LeiLo for tapas; and The Emporium Kitchen & Wine Market located within the new Elizabeth Hotel in Old Town.

For a tasty treat, check out [Nuance Chocolate](#) in Old Town, which makes small batch chocolates from beans that are roasted and ground onsite. The owners were inspired to open the shop after visiting a chocolate museum in Costa Rica; what started as a family hobby quickly outgrew their home kitchen. Nuance Chocolate is now one of a very small number of true bean-to-bar chocolate makers in the United States.

Also located in Old Town, [Revolution Artisan Pops](#) — as in popsicles — uses locally sourced ingredients to create its frozen treats, available in either creamy, like Harbinger’s Coffee with Sweet Cream or Mexican hot chocolate with cinnamon, or fruity varieties, like Meyer Lemon with Strawberry or Cucumber Lime. They also offer “pup-cicles” for your furry friend and have recently opened Revolution Market, an affordable artisan grocery store and deli.

### **Pinball Revival**

Pinball Jones, an Old Town original since 2011, recently expanded to a second location thanks to booming business. This “barcade” (bar plus arcade) is a true arcade, chock full of vintage and brand-new pinball machines, as well as pool tables, air-hockey tables, skeeball and all manner of arcade cabinets – old and new. Guests over 21 can enjoy a Colorado craft brew from the bar, but owners say this is a great place to bring the family. The Old Town location hosts leagues and monthly tournaments. And, starting in April, they’ll also offer a beginner’s league where participants learn to best play two different machines a week. The Pinball Jones Campus West location hosts affordable live music – show tickets typically cost \$5-\$10. Oh, and don’t miss the distinctive hand-painted murals; yet another nod to FoCo’s collective creativity.

### **From Roots to Renewal**

The new [on-campus stadium at Colorado State University](#), which debuted for the fall 2017 football season, serves as the cornerstone for CSU Athletics, as well as housing the new Alumni Center. If you missed it, mark your calendar for Sept. 3, 2018 when the new stadium hosts the return of the Fortitude 10K.

The new 164-room [Elizabeth Hotel](#) in Old Town (111 Chestnut Street) opened to the public in December and pays tribute to FoCo’s deep-rooted music scene. With record players in the guest rooms, inspired artwork, a piano and jazz music at the rooftop Sunset Lounge, and rock ‘n roll at The Magic Rat live music venue, a musical theme permeates this modern luxury hotel. Don’t miss this hip hotel’s three over-the-top themed suites: Beer & Bike; Music; and The Green and Gold Room. [The Emporium Kitchen & Wine Market](#), located inside the hotel, offers everything from gourmet sammys and grilled pizzas to charcuterie platters and signature dishes made using locally-sourced, high-quality ingredients.

Meanwhile the [Hilton Fort Collins](#), located on West Prospect Road, recently wrapped up a multi-million dollar renovation that includes refreshed guest rooms, lobby, restaurant and café, pool and fitness center.

Another new hotel is on the horizon; developers are in the planning stages for a new 107-room Staybridge Suites and a standalone restaurant along the banks of the Poudre River in the up-and-coming River District, also dubbed the Beer Triangle.

Speaking of the River District, [Ginger and Baker](#) opened in November in the former Northern Colorado Feeders Supply at 359 Linden Street. The charming spot includes a pie shop and restaurant, teaching kitchen and retail space. Nearby, a 5,600-square-foot restaurant called Union opened in early Spring. This project is part of Linden Street's steady transformation from an industrial area to a destination featuring restaurants, bars, distilleries and coffee shops, upscale apartments and entertainment.

An additional destination project is underway on Harmony Road near Interstate 25. Harmony Commons is already bustling with restaurants, retail and neighborhood services. Still in the works is a new 107-room Fairfield Inn & Suites at Harmony Commons, built by Spirit Hospitality. And a [Home2 Suites by Hilton](#) is slated to open by mid-May 2018.

The “Capital of Craft Beer” just welcomed a new micro distillery that aims to put Fort Collins on the map as one of America's great craft spirit distillation capitals, as well. [NoCo Distillery](#) uses small, hand-crafted American-made copper stills, and American and European oak casks for aging. The operation also believes in sourcing – and outsourcing – locally whenever possible, working with local breweries, suppliers, farms and orchards. NoCo Distillery produces whiskeys, gins, rums, vodka and Brandy (Eau-de-Vie).

### **The Gardens are Growing**

The Gardens on Spring Creek, a city-run facility offering educational opportunities, respite and renewal and a connection to nature, is expanding. The five acres of new gardens include a multi-use venue to accommodate outdoor performances, and new sanctuary spaces for growing and exploring. The project consists of three phases. Phase 1 includes completion of the Great Lawn and stage surrounded by themed gardens, the Undaunted Garden – a xeriscape demonstration garden, the Foothills and Prairie Gardens. Phase 2 includes completion of the Visitors' Center, with a conservatory, community meeting room, new lobby and gift shop, and additional office space. Phase 3 features an endowment component to support operations and sustainability. With the new expansion project underway, as well as a Children's Garden, the Garden of Eatin', and several special events including ARTiculture: Celebrating Art in the Gardens, Garden of Lights in December and annual plant sales, there is no shortage of offerings for residents and visitors alike.

**Butterflies coming soon to the Gardens on Spring Creek:** Fort Collins will soon be home to Northern Colorado's first and only permanent Butterfly House, featuring up to

400 free-flying North American butterflies, thanks to a partnership between the Gardens on Spring Creek in Fort Collins and Butterfly Pavilion in Westminster. The North American Butterfly House is expected to open in 2019. **Happening now:** The Gardens, in partnership with local artist Ren Burke, have launched The Butterfly Project. The fundraiser features customized metal iridescent butterflies for limited-time purchase to support an expansion that includes the new North American Butterfly House. Each butterfly is 7.5 inches wide by 6.25 inches tall, with wing color options in shimmering blue, purple or orange. A \$1,000 donation allows donors to personalize their butterfly with a favorite word, name, dedication or phrase. The butterflies will reside permanently on the walls of the new, expanded Visitor's Center at the Gardens. The expansion includes five acres of new gardens, completion of the Visitor's Center and the North American Butterfly House, which are all part of The Gardens Master Plan. For information or donations visit [www.fcgov.com/gardens](http://www.fcgov.com/gardens) or call 970-416-2486.

### **Fort Collins Music Landscape Continues to Bloom**

The Fort Collins music landscape is blooming like never before. This Northern Colorado culture hub is nationally recognized as a hot spot for creative music and talented new musicians. In short, the music scene in Fort Collins is coming up roses.

#### *New stages complement existing venues*

Visitors and locals alike are buzzing about [Washington's](#), the newest music venue in town anchoring an ever-growing music scene. This Old Town Fort Collins landmark was purchased by the Bohemian Foundation and renovated with a state-of-the-art sound and lighting system. Now the 900-capacity venue is bringing local and national bands to the region. Trombone Shorty & Orleans Avenue show, Karl Denson's Tiny Universe, Martin Sexton, Keller Williams and more have performed since it opened in early February; This summer, Cowboy Junkies, Todd Snider, Toad the Wet Sprocket and Robert Randolph and the Family Band will perform, along with many other well-known acts.

Also new, the very refined-yet-offbeat [Magic Rat Live Music](#), located inside the new luxury Elizabeth Hotel in Old Town, hosts big name artists and local late night jam sessions.

Concerts at [The Armory](#) pair a local artist with a nationally-known musician in an intimate 200-capacity (seated) listening room. Big names like John Oates, Shawn Colvin, Shelby Lynne, Brett Dennen, Gregory Alan Isakov and many others have played this one-of-a-kind venue housed in a historic Fort Collins building.

A handful of other longtime local venues, including the [Downtown Artery](#), [Hodi's Half Note](#), [Avogadro's Number](#) and the historic [Aggie Theatre](#), round out the live music venues, along with local bars and breweries. The new mixology bar [Blue Door](#) hosts live music, as does [Ace Gillett's Lounge](#) where sultry jazz music tempts people to this underground speakeasy each week. Likewise, many of the more than 20 local breweries host live music on the reg, including New Belgium Brewing, [Equinox Brewing](#), [Odell Brewing Company](#) and [Maxline Brewing](#).

### ***Music everywhere***

Many other establishments and events pay tribute to FoCo's deep-rooted music scene. The year-and-a-half old [Music District](#) is helping drive the city's thriving music landscape. The district's campus boasts gathering spaces, apartment for artists-in-residence, a radio station, state-of-the-art rehearsal studios and performance spaces, making it a creative playground for the music community. Take lessons, rent equipment, write or compose in the treehouse or another space, learn production skills; you can do all of this and more at the district, which is backed by the Bohemian Foundation and aims to attract both music lovers and novice-to-pro musicians. With at least 100 workshops and events on tap for 2018, they hope to get everyone involved in some way.

Jam out on guitars, drums, marimbas and even a theremin at the [Fort Collins Museum of Discovery](#), which features a permanent music-oriented exhibit. The Music & Sound Lab explores the physics of sound, the history of the Fort Collins music scene and some of the technology behind everything from Edison wax cylinders to iPods. The museum's OtterBox Digital Dome Theater hosts concerts as well as a monthly "Acoustic Treatment" event, where a rising local musician shares tales in between an intimate acoustic set.

[FoCoMX](#), the annual spring festival held in Old Town, is slated for April 27 and 28. The popular event features over 300 Northern Colorado-based bands at more than 30 downtown venues. FoCoMX is celebrating 10 years this year.

A musical theme permeates the luxurious 164-room [Elizabeth Hotel](#), which opened to the public in November 2017. The modern hotel features record players in the guest rooms as well as a 1,200 record vinyl collection, a piano and jazz music at the rooftop Sunset Lounge and a lending library chock full of musical instruments you can borrow.

### ***Music under the sun (or stars)***

The iconic [Mishawaka Amphitheatre](#) (called "The Mish" by locals) is a bucket-list venue in Poudre Canyon that celebrated its 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2016. Summer season highlights include Xavier Rudd on June 2, Cold War Kids on June 27 and Bruce Hornsby & The Noisemakers on Aug. 4.

Other key dates to add to your music-centric calendar include [Arise Music Festival](#) Aug. 3-5 in nearby Loveland and [Bohemian Nights at NewWestFest](#) Aug. 10-12.

Live music can be heard any night of the week in Fort Collins — even mid-week. Music lovers gather at Oak Street Plaza for the intimate [Noontime Notes Concert Series](#), live concerts that take place on Tuesdays from June through August. And over at Colorado State University (CSU), The [Lagoon Series](#) is a free summer concert series slated for Wednesday evenings June 14-Aug. 2. Catch well-known (mostly) Colorado bands including Pandas & People, Danielle Ate the Sandwich and The Wendy Woo Band. And the first of the [Thursday Night Live](#) free weekly Thursday night summer concerts in Old

Town takes place May 31. The lineup is usually announced in May. On Fridays, catch the free [Downtown Sessions](#) concert series in Old Town

Soon music lovers will enjoy a new outdoor gathering space. The [Gardens on Spring Creek](#) will include a new multi-use venue perfect for outdoor performances on the Great Lawn.

### **Historic Jessup Farm Artisan Village**

Jessup Farm artisan village opened in fall 2015 with businesses focused on handcrafted and locally-sourced products, housed in rebuilt and remodeled chicken coops, a loafing shed, a saddle shop and an old barn and farmhouse:

- Bindle Coffee (in the converted 19th century mechanics shop)
- Clayton Jenkins Photography (in the old loafing shed)
- The Farmhouse at Jessup Farm restaurant (in a 130-year-old home)
- HeyDay clothing and home furnishings (in the old loafing shed)
- Jessup Farm Barrel House (in a renovated 130-year-old barn)
- Kennedy's Lucky 27 Barbershop & Social Club (in the Jessup Farm shop)
- Cacciatore at Heller's Kitchen (in the old loafing shed)
- Knapsack (in the old saddle shop)
- Reve Fitness by Miramont (in a newly constructed facility).

The Jessup Farm was one of the Fort Collins Urban Growth Area's best preserved and most intact farm complexes. It received landmark preservation designation from the city, state and federal governments. The farm is located south of the intersection of Prospect and Timberline on the east side of the road.

### **Anniversaries Worth Noting:**

#### ***50th Anniversary of the Wild & Scenic Rivers Systems***

In the United States, 12,734 miles of river are protected under the Wild & Scenic Rivers Act. This year marks the 50th anniversary of the Wild & Scenic Rivers Systems and there's only one river in Colorado with this designation — the Cache la Poudre River. Located in the northern Front Range and dubbed the “Poudre” by local residents and longtime visitors, the main and south forks of the river originate in Rocky Mountain National Park and then flow north and east through the Roosevelt National Forest before eventually passing through Fort Collins.

Visit [www.rivers.gov/rivers/cache-la-poudre.php](http://www.rivers.gov/rivers/cache-la-poudre.php) to learn more.

#### ***35th Anniversary of the National Heritage Areas***

The National Heritage Areas celebrates its 35th anniversary in 2018. There are three national Heritage Areas in Colorado, including the Cache La Poudre River Natural Heritage Area. There are a number of ways to explore the area, including walking and biking tours near parks, lakes, the Poudre River Trail and numerous historical sites. For example, the beautiful brick Fort Collins Water Works building (open for tours the second Saturday of each month May through October) and the Great Western Sugar Flume, built in the early 1900s and one of the few remaining structures related to the sugar beet industry, an important cash crop in the area. At its peak, some 2.5 million tons



of beets produced 364,000 tons of sugar annually. Visit [poudreheritage.org](http://poudreheritage.org) for an interactive map and more.

### ***25th Anniversary of Fort Collins' Natural Areas***

In January, the City of Fort Collins celebrated the 25th anniversary of the Fort Collins Natural Areas. Four new natural areas have been added to Fort Collins' network of 50 sites: Tanglewood, a 10-acre site on Spring Creek, is now open as is the four-acre Goose Hollow; two are in planning stages – Soaring Vista and Flores del Sol. Natural Areas offer exceptional bird watching, and many enable regular raptor and wildlife viewing (Master Naturalists and staff offer free Eagle Watches in the winter). Bison watchers can catch another glimpse of the genetically pure plains bison herd, including this summer's calves, at Soapstone Prairie Natural Area until the end of November when Soapstone closes for the season. The area reopens to visitors at the beginning of March.

### ***Looking Ahead: 30th Anniversary for the Colorado Scenic and Historic Byways in 2019***

And looking ahead, in 2019, the Colorado Scenic and Historic Byways will celebrate its 30th anniversary. The statewide program is directed by the Colorado Scenic and Historic Byways Commission. The Northern Colorado Loop Tour takes you across 360 stunning miles; the driving loop connects three central scenic byways in the area with the Cache la Poudre National Heritage Area. The Cache la Poudre — North Park Scenic & Historic Byway portion of the tour is 101 miles packed full of scenery and wildlife. This byway meanders from the plains and hogbacks into the magnificent Poudre Canyon, over Cameron Pass and into North Park and then Walden. This exceptionally scenic drive provides visitors a glimpse into the past while offering a bounty of recreational activities.

### **WIDE OPEN SPACES**

Abundant outdoor adventure heavily factors into Fort Collins' reputation as a top destination – both for visitors and those looking for a new hometown. The city boasts 820 acres of developed park land, including 6 community parks and 50 neighborhood/pocket parks, 280-plus miles of trails – including paved and unpaved walking and bike trails, four recreation centers and swimming pools, three public golf courses and a racquet sports complex, two sheets of ice for hockey and free skating, and skateboard and dog parks. Add in Horsetooth Reservoir, the Poudre Canyon and acres of Natural Areas, National Forest and surrounding National Park lands and let abundance inspire adventure.

### **Four New Natural Areas**

Four new natural areas have been added to Fort Collins' network of 50 sites: Tanglewood and Goose Hollow are now open; two are in planning stages – Soaring Vista and Flores del Sol. Natural Areas offer exceptional bird watching, and many enable regular raptor and wildlife viewing. Bison watchers can catch another glimpse of the genetically pure plains bison herd, including this summer's calves, at Soapstone Prairie Natural Area until the end of November when Soapstone closes for the season. The area reopens to visitors at the beginning of March.

### **Hidden Gems: Little Known Options at Three Fort Collins Natural Areas**

***Hidden Clues Trail at Coyote Ridge Natural Area*** – This short loop trail originating from the cabin (located one mile from the trailhead) boasts interactive interpretive signs designed for little hikers.

***Running Deer Natural Area Fire Tower*** – The historic fire tower at Running Deer Natural Area is an interesting and nearly solitary destination, featuring a flat, easy trail and expansive views of the Front Range.

***Cathy Fromme Prairie Natural Area Observatory*** – The raptor observatory at Cathy Fromme Prairie is an off-the-beaten-path destination with fun signs, a sod-topped shelter and views of the foothills.

### **Star Gaze Away**

The areas around Fort Collins offer some of the best stargazing hot spots in Colorado and city leaders are working toward dark-sky certification for all the Natural Areas, some of which are among the darkest in the county. Try Red Mountain Open Space, Soapstone Prairie Natural Area, Coyote Ridge Natural Area or head up to the trailhead for Horsetooth Mountain Open Space. If you want to learn more about the night skies, there are plenty of resources. The Northern Colorado Astronomical Society hosts dozens of public observation events per year. Visit [nocoastro.org](http://nocoastro.org) to learn more. Stop by the Sunlight Peak Observatory at Front Range Community College or the Stargazer Observatory at Observatory Village in southeast Fort Collins, both of which host community nights each month, weather permitting. Visit [facebook.com/sunlightpeak](https://www.facebook.com/sunlightpeak) and [stargazerobservatory.com](http://stargazerobservatory.com) for dates.

### **Another Bison Breakthrough: First IVF Calf Joins NoCo Herd**

The Laramie Foothills Bison Conservation Herd is growing. There are now 44 animals, including one 10-month-old calf known as IVF 1. She is the first bison calf conceived using *in vitro* fertilization, or IVF, at Colorado State University (CSU). “IVF 1” also is the first bison calf in the world conceived with Yellowstone National Park bison reproductive material. This is great news for scientists seeking ways to avoid extinction of certain species.

The Laramie Foothills Bison Conservation Herd was established at Soapstone Prairie Natural Area and Red Mountain Open Space in November 2015.

Summer and early fall are the best times of year to visit Soapstone and view the bison in their 1,000-acre enclosure from the road in Soapstone Prairie Natural Area, which is open during daylight hours. Look for interpretive signs and a roadside pull off. Find more information about the herd and when/where (including a map) to see the animals [here](#).

History: In fall 2015, plains bison were reintroduced to Soapstone Prairie Natural Area thanks to a partnership between the City of Fort Collins, Colorado State University (CSU), the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture’s Animal Plant Health Inspection Service and Larimer County Natural Resources Dept. Bison once roamed this area and are integral to its ecology. They were hunted to near extinction in the 1800s and later bred with cattle,

accidentally and unintentionally, making bison herds without some level of cattle ancestry rare. Through assisted reproductive technology and processes implemented by CSU's Animal Reproduction and Biotechnology Laboratory, experts are hopeful they can preserve genetic diversity and mitigate brucellosis, a disease that can harm domestic cattle and infect people; brucellosis is carried by genetically pure bison in nearby Yellowstone National Park. This technology allows genetic material from Yellowstone National Park bison to be cleansed of brucellosis and used to create embryos that are transferred to bison in Fort Collins. The resulting offspring are disease-free genetic descendants of genetically pure Yellowstone bison. These descendants are the seed herd, called the Laramie Foothills Conservation Herd, that will live at Soapstone Prairie (on about 800 acres) and Larimer County's Red Mountain Open Space (about 80 acres). The herd was introduced with 12 animals to start. A ceremony was held on Sunday, Nov. 1, 2015, National Bison Day and the first day of Native American History Month, and the bison were introduced to their new home. Find more information at [www.fcgov.com/naturalareas/bison.php](http://www.fcgov.com/naturalareas/bison.php).

### **Colorado's Only "Wild & Scenic" River**

The Cache La Poudre River, running through the heart of Fort Collins, is the only nationally designated 'Wild & Scenic' river in Colorado (similar to a National Park designation). In an effort to keep the river wild and the experience incomparable, commercial rafting trips are limited and there is almost no commercial development along the river's banks. This, combined with a 7,000 foot drop from headwaters to confluence, convenient access, clear water, challenging rapids and pristine scenery, makes a descent of the Cache La Poudre one of the most unique river expeditions in the state.

### ***2018: America's Wild & Scenic Rivers Celebrate 50 Years***

In the United States, 12,734 miles of river are protected under the Wild & Scenic Rivers Act. This year marks the 50th anniversary of the Wild & Scenic Rivers Systems and there's only one river in Colorado with this designation — the Cache la Poudre River. Located in the northern Front Range and dubbed the "Poudre" by local residents and longtime visitors, the main and south forks of the river originate in Rocky Mountain National Park and then flow north and east through the Roosevelt National Forest before eventually passing through Fort Collins.

Visit [www.rivers.gov/rivers/cache-la-poudre.php](http://www.rivers.gov/rivers/cache-la-poudre.php) to learn more.

### ***Update: Poudre River Whitewater Park***

Work on the new [Poudre River Whitewater Park](#) gets underway in fall of 2018, after receiving delayed final permitting from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Located on the river east of College Avenue in the booming river district, the whitewater park includes a boulder-lined boat chute, rock features, holes for kayaking, stand-up paddleboarding (SUP) and tubing, and shallow play along the shore. It should be complete by summer 2019.

### ***Poudre River National Heritage Area***

The Cache la Poudre River is the heart of the National Heritage Area, which follows the

river downstream for 45 miles. The Poudre is essential to the lives of the more than a half-million people in the northern Colorado Front Range. Originating among the Rocky Mountains and dropping some 7,000 feet to the Great Plains, the Cache la Poudre River is relatively short —125 miles from start to end. The Poudre is significant for its contribution to the development of western water law and the evolution of complex water delivery systems. The Poudre has also played a crucial role in regional economic development and has become a focal point for recreation. Learn more about the Poudre with a **walking, driving or water tour** with the Cache la Poudre River National Heritage Area group: <http://poudreheritage.org/tours/>. Or, join the **Heritage Hunt**, a fun, local way to get fit thanks to activity options, educational opportunities and interactive experiences: <http://poudreheritage.org/wellness-program/>.

### ***Cache la Poudre – North Park Scenic Byway***

One of Colorado’s 26 Scenic and Historic Byways (11 are federally designated ‘America’s Byways’), the Cache la Poudre – North Park Scenic Byway follows the route used by settlers to connect Colorado’s northern plains to the Green River settlement in Utah. The byway begins in Fort Collins and ends in Walden, following the Wild and Scenic Cache la Poudre river.

<http://www.colorado.com/articles/colorado-scenic-byways-profile-cache-la-poudre-north-park>

### **USA Today Names Fort Collins Number Two ‘Best U.S. Cycling Town’**

Fort Collins finished second in a public poll by USA Today; a 10 Best competition for top U.S. cycling towns. According to USA Today Travel: “What’s not to like about a city with a local brewery (New Belgium) that hosts an annual Bike-In Cinema series on its front lawn? Fort Collins’ 310-mile network of paths and bike lanes, a bike share program, and miles upon miles of mountain biking trails in the surrounding plains and mountains simply add to the appeal of this city, one of only five to hold the League of American Bicyclists platinum level ranking.” Davis, Calif. took top honors in the pole; Durango also appeared in the top 10.

### **Why Fort Collins Tops Best Of Lists for Bicyclists**

Cycling opportunities prevail in and around Fort Collins and getting to know the area atop two wheels offers a bounty of benefits. Road cyclists will appreciate the 285+ miles of relatively flat, wide bike lanes, trails and paths, including three main bike trails offering 19 miles of paved surface: the Poudre trail that follows the Cache La Poudre River; Spring Creek trail following the creek; and Fossil Creek trail covering miles of open prairie.

Mountain bikers have lots of options minutes from downtown, and more just a bit further into the backcountry surrounding Fort Collins. Lory State Park, Horsetooth Mountain Park and Soapstone Prairie Natural Areas are three well-known mountain bike destinations. Red Mountain Open Space also offers some intrigue. The 15,000-acre open space is adjacent to Soapstone Prairie so hikers, bikers, and horseback riders have endless opportunities within two open space areas for exploration. The protection of Red Mountain is part of the [Laramie Foothills Mountains to Plains Project](#). This area was

home to some of the first humans in North America nearly 12,000 years ago. Just a 15-minute drive from downtown Fort Collins, Lory State Park boasts 26 miles of hiking and biking trails, and The Corral Center Mountain Bike Park. The park's old horse corrals, located southeast of the visitor center, have been converted into a 70,000-square-foot mountain bike park for riders of all abilities. The park is Colorado's first officially state-sponsored dirt/pump track.

### **Hire a Guide for That Ride**

If you would like a little guidance on your first adventure, Fort Collins-based [Front Range Ride Guides](#) is ready to take you on your first fat-bike adventure. Be it on a snow packed trail or singletrack, atop one of their bikes or your own, the tours also include lunch and a video of your tour. And if beers and biking are two of your favorite pastimes, [Beer & Bike Tours](#) bring the two joys together with their brewery to brewery tours.

### **Bicycle Co-op Furthers FoCo's Bike-ability**

Need a bike but short on funds? Commit to a few hours of labor for a local non-profit and get a bicycle built especially for you. The Fort Collins Bicycle Co-op recycles bikes and bike parts, helping to further Fort Collins' reputation as a bike friendly community. The organization thrives thanks to the 80 to 120 volunteers per year who work on bikes as a contribution to the welfare of that community. The Bike Co-op offers an Earn-a-Bike program, which awards a freshly-restored bike to anyone willing to devote between 10 and 20 hours of labor to a local non-profit. The Co-op also makes it possible for someone to receive an "as is" bike and pay an hourly fee to work with a volunteer mechanic who'll help them get it back into riding condition. Anyone in the community can take part in the shop's "mechanic service," a personal bike repair session supervised by a mechanic for just \$12 per hour. Another popular option is "Women's Wrenching Night," a class in bicycle repair and maintenance conducted by women for women and the LGBTQ community only. The business supports these give-back endeavors with a robust retail arm: donated bicycles are repaired, refurbished, tuned and offered for sale.

### **More That Makes This Community Bike-Crazy**

Also of note: Fort Collins was again awarded a Platinum Level Bicycle Friendly designation from the Community League of American Bicyclists in May 2017. The city was first designated Platinum in 2013; the latest announcement renews that designation for another four years. Since receiving the 2013 Platinum designation, the City of Fort Collins and community partners have implemented new programs and projects that aim to make bicycling more accessible across the community, including: adopting and implementing a new Bicycle Master Plan; launching new initiatives like Open Streets, Bike Share, Ride Smart Drive Smart, and a Bicycle Friendly Driver Program; and constructing new and innovative bicycle infrastructure projects to create a low-stress bikeway network. The community has also received new Bicycle Friendly Business designations and a Platinum Bicycle Friendly University designation from the League of American Bicyclists. Fort Collins is still one of just five Platinum Level Bicycle Friendly communities in the country.

Fort Collins boasts two bike coordinators on the city staff roster, ensuring this

recreational pursuit gets due attention. In addition, Bike Fort Collins, formed in 2005, recently hired its first executive director, Chris Johnson.

As would be expected, the city is home to a variety of races – pro and amateur – including a once-a-week in-town cyclocross race and New Belgium Brewing Company’s legendary Tour de Fat.

**FoCo Accolades**

- No. 2 ‘Best U.S. Cycling Town’ — *USA Today*
- No. 2 Best Beer Scene in the nation — *USA Today*
- No. 3 on *Travelocity*’s Beer Tourism Index for Top Small Metro Areas
- Best Bike to Happy Hour Town and one of 25 towns named America’s Best Towns Ever — *Outside Magazine*
- Top Beer Tourism Destination — *Expedia.com*

**ABOUT:** Called vibrant, eclectic and authentic, Fort Collins tops “best of” lists year after year thanks to its myriad of cultural opportunities. A thriving arts and music scene, diverse and inviting shops and restaurants, and more craft beer, craft coffee and craft spirits than nearly any city of its size only heightens the appeal. Home to the state’s only nationally-designated “Wild & Scenic River,” hundreds of miles of biking, hiking and walking paths, year-round bird watching, and the newest nearby residents—a herd of genetically-pure bison, it’s no surprise this northern Colorado gem is wildly appealing to outdoor devotees. Home to Colorado State University and startups galore, Fort Collins also is an entrepreneurial hotbed and a tech trade town, furthering the area’s allure.

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