

News from the Hoodoos

Greetings From the Desk of CoBA President

At this time of year, it's time to set your New Year's resolutions and reflect on past resolutions.

2002-3 resolutions were to locate a place and build our retirement home - we did and it's a small portion of Corral Bluffs.

2008 - after being alerted of the threat to Corral Bluffs [with plans for an ATV park] during last week of 2007, the resolution was to preserve and protect Corral Bluffs.

Continued on page 2.



Winter 2025 but dreaming of
spring

News Flash!

- Hikes at Corral Bluffs Open Space and Jimmy Camp Creek Park have been temporarily suspended due to restructuring of Corral Bluffs Alliance, the friends group that has been organizing and leading hikes since 2008. We look forward to new hikes in 2025. Please check our website for updates on signing up for a guided hike.
- Paula Watkins has resigned from the CoBA board, but is recognized as an Honorary Board Member for her dedication and work as Vice President, Treasurer, Hike Leader and Organizer, and Fund Raising Coordinator. The Board thanks her for her years of service and for sharing Corral Bluffs with thousands of people!



Continued from page 1
Subsequent years resolutions to achieve recognition of this world class asset were all exceeded thanks to a large part to work of CoBA (Corral Bluffs Alliance), and the countless number of others who have seen the value and worth of Corral Bluffs. Hundreds of hikers, researchers, and those who see the value and wonderful asset that exists in Corral Bluffs.

2025 resolution is for CoBA board to find a few great hike leaders, so we can continue informing/educating more conservation minded citizens who can help in a future Master Plan for this area. If you have an interest in helping, please reach out to any of the board members. It is my intent that in the late spring timeframe we'll be able to conduct a series of hike leaders training sessions. Everyone who comes to visit has learned a little more because of the assistance and guidance of the hike leaders.

Additionally in 2025, CoBA board is under transition. Several who have helped in countless ways have had to move to CoBA Board member Emeritus — Paula Watkins (Vice President, Treasurer, and hike leader extraordinaire... plus so much more). Additionally, Rose DiCenso, our hike leader with more local historical information than any others has let know she won't be able to lead hikes due to health concerns.

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Nature Notes

A Magnificent Bloom

A cold, blustery January day is the perfect time to start dreaming of summer flowers. The most spectacular flower at Corral Bluffs is the Colorado Four O'clock, *Mirabilis multiflora* (translation: marvelous multi-flowered plant). Few people witness this beautiful flower at Corral Bluffs, because as the name suggests, it only blooms in the late afternoon and evening, or shortly after a rainstorm. These fiery flowers give their peak performance right around the Fourth of July and the show can last into September! Each blossom lasts only a few hours but is followed day after day by multitudes of magenta flowers. Preferring sandy soil, the Colorado Four O'clock plant will grow to a height of about two feet and can spread six feet.

Mirabilis multiflora makes a wonderful xeriscape plant in your yard. It is easy to grow, requires little water, and returns each year. You can purchase seeds, or the easier to grow potted plants from nurseries that specialize in native plants such as High Country Gardens. <https://www.highcountrygardens.com>



More Nature Notes

Raptors Nesting in Corral Bluffs by Rose DiCenso

Paula Watkins and I have been monitoring raptors in Corral Bluffs since 2018. We are part of the Colorado Parks and Wildlife Raptor Monitoring Team.

This past nesting season, January 2024 to June 2024, we observed three nests in the Corral Bluffs and Wild Horse Ranch Open Spaces. The three nests were occupied by a great horned owl family, a red-tailed hawk family, and a golden eagle family.

The great horned owl family was living in an old barn on the property and occupied an old, abandoned nest. These owls usually lay their eggs in a hawk, crow, or magpie nest, but also use



stumps, large tree cavities, cliff ledges, and building ledges. They are very adaptable. This family had two babies that successfully fledged.

The red-tailed hawk adults chased away an owl that was going to use their old nest. They prefer open country and thrive in all Colorado ecosystems from the plains to the high mountains. These hawks had a nest in the Wild Horse Ranch Open Space next to a pond. Their nest was a bulky stick nest high in a tree. This nest produced two fledglings this past season.

The golden eagles had a successful nest on a cliffside. This was an historic nest that had not been used for several years. The previous cliffside nest had fallen down the cliff face. The eagles prefer a nest on a sheer cliff face often several hundred feet high. The adult pair will defend their nesting territories of several square miles. This past season, the eagles had one successful eaglet fledge.

The courtship of the eagles and the great horned owls start in January and sometimes as early as December. They both will start laying eggs as early as February. The red-tailed hawk usually starts courtship in March and starts laying eggs in April.

Soon Paula and I will start our observations of all these nests. We have also seen northern harriers, Cooper's hawk, turkey vultures, ferruginous hawks, Swainson's hawks, and prairie falcons in the area but haven't seen them nesting in the Open Spaces. If you see a nest, remember to stay at least 100 meters away from the owl nests, 600 meters away from a red-tailed hawk nest, and 800 meters away from any eagle's nest.

Stones and Bones

The fossil skull and jaw of a chinchilla-sized mammal discovered in Corral Bluffs has been determined to be a new genus and species. The skull was found in December of 2020, and a separate tiny jaw was found in September 2016.

Although it resembles modern rodents, *Militocodon* is a part of the group of early mammals that gave rise to all the hoofed mammals of today. Based on its teeth, this small mammal was likely an omnivore. Its sturdy molars show that it likely took advantage of the new food source that appeared at the same time, legumes. The illustration shows *Militocodon* on the forest floor in search of seeds and legumes.

The name of this new genus and species is in honor of Sharon Milito, DMNS volunteer, and for museum supporter, Lyda Hill.

The lead author of the study is Luke Weaver, professor at University of Michigan. The full paper can be read at this website:

<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10914-024-09716-5>



3 cm

Photo: *Militocodon lydae* fossil skull. DMNS



Artist reconstruction of *Militocodon lydae*. Andrey Atuchin. Denver Museum of Nature & Science

Days of Yore

Corral Bluffs Cultural History

by Mark Cervantes, Archaeologist

Colorado Springs Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services



Corral Bluffs is a unique property owned and managed by the City of Colorado Springs. The area is named after its unique landscape. Corral Bluffs became the name of the area because the **Bluffs** created a natural **Corral** for cattle ranchers that were passing through the area. This landscape was very useful to the livestock ranchers due to the rather flat and open landscape surrounding the bluffs. Not only do the bluffs provide a natural corral, but the drainages create opportunities for water and other resources. This landscape was also important to the Native American groups that have inhabited the Pikes Peak region for thousands of years. The density of cultural resources in Corral Bluffs and the adjacent property known as Jimmy Camp are comparable to the number of cultural resources in the Southwest corner of Colorado. The City of Colorado Springs has been active in doing consultations with Tribes that affiliate themselves with the area. Through these consultations, the understanding of the importance of this area to the Tribes is apparent and the City understands that being the best stewards of the natural and cultural resources that are on the property is vital.

For more information on human history studies at Corral Bluffs read this article in The Gazette: https://gazette.com/denver-gazette/deep-human-history-the-latest-focus-of-research-at-corral-bluffs-east-of-colorado-springs/article_6aa3224a-9613-11ee-911c-7381525d73a7.html

**JOIN CORRAL BLUFFS ALLIANCE
(CoBA)**

***"Corral Bluffs is the center of the
Paleontological Universe."***

***George Sparks, President
Denver Museum of Nature & Science***



By joining CoBA you will be supporting:

- Preservation of world-class fossil sites
- Preservation of sites telling the stories of ancient Native Americans, Trappers, Pioneers, and Cattle drives
- Conservation of ecosystems unique in the Colorado Springs area
- Protection of native prairie plants and animals
- Opportunities for spectacular views spanning from the Spanish Peaks to the Rampart Range
- Guided, interpretive hikes



I'D LIKE TO JOIN CORRAL BLUFFS ALLIANCE

Check One:

- ☐ Individual membership \$25 for one year
- ☐ Family membership \$30 for one year
(Membership renewal date is July 1 each year)

What you get for your membership:

- Volunteer opportunities
- Once per year members-only hike, with snacks and a free CoBA sticker
- Newsletter emailed directly to you

Send this form and your check to:

**Corral Bluffs Alliance
12721 Corral Bluffs View
Falcon, CO 80831**

Name _____

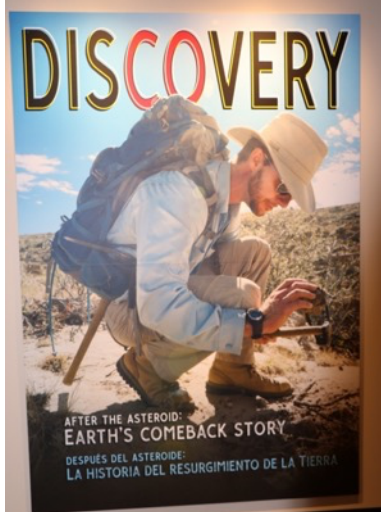
Address _____

City _____ Zip _____

Email _____

Primary phone _____

JOIN CoBA! Please print and mail the above membership form, along with a check, to become a part of preserving this world-class site. New memberships are good through July 1, 2026. To get the most of your membership, join soon!



See it while you can! The Corral Bluffs exhibit, "After the Asteroid" at the Denver Museum of Nature & Science is still on display!

Corral Bluffs Alliance Board of Directors

Jax Hilaire: President, Hike Leader

Rose DiCenso: Fund Raising, Hike
Leader, Facebook page Admin

Bill Koerner

Cristine Watkins

Ellie Rosenberg

Sharon Milito: Secretary,
Newsletter, Website, Hike Leader

Jennifer Heiny, Hike Leader

David Lumb

Paula Watkins, Lifetime Honorary
Board Member



Contact Us: www.corralbluffs.org

info@corralbluffs.org

**The following groups and organizations have spent
extended time at Corral Bluffs**

[Denver Museum of Nature & Science](#)

[Smithsonian Institution](#)

[Colorado College](#)

[Colorado Parks and Wildlife](#)

[Colorado Natural Areas Program](#)

[US Fish and Wildlife Service](#)

[Aiken Audubon Society](#)

[Mile High Bug Club](#)

[Colorado Native Plant Society](#)

[Colorado Mycological Society](#)

[University of New Hampshire Earth Sciences](#)

Corral Bluffs is a [Leave No Trace](#)
site. CoBA supports the seven
stewardship principals of Leave No
Trace

- Plan Ahead & Prepare
- Travel on Durable Surfaces.
- Dispose of Waste Properly
- Leave What You Find
- Minimize Campfire Impacts
- Respect Wildlife
- Be Considerate of Others

