

**Society for Range Management – High School Youth Forum - Denver**  
**Ecological Tour Agenda**  
**February 17, 2020**

8:00-10:00 am Opening Plenary Session, Sheraton Hotel

10:30 am Depart Downtown Denver Sheraton  
*(buses will leave from hotel at exit between  
Director's Row rooms H & I)*  
History & Ecology of Colorado's Front Range

Ben Berlinger, NRCS, Range Specialist (ret.)  
Annie Overlin, CSU Extension, SE Area Range Specialist

11:15 am Arrive Lowry Ranch (main gate)

Nick Trainor, Ranch Manager  
William Woolston, CO State Land Board (invited)  
Dan Nosal, NRCS, Range Management Specialist  
Rachel Wertsbaugh, CO Natural Heritage Program (invited)

Stop 1: Piedmont Tallgrass Prairie  
Wildlife Concerns  
Range Monitoring

Stop 2: Riparian Area  
Planned Grazing Management  
Woody Recruitment

Stop 3: Ranch Infrastructure  
Facilitating Grazing Management  
Water Development & Fencing

1:15 pm Depart Lowry Ranch

1:30 pm Arrive Box Lunch Stop; Plains Conservation Center

Joy Thompson, Education & Outreach Specialist

2:00 pm Depart for the Rocky Mountain Arsenal NWR

2:30 pm Arrive Rocky Mountain Arsenal NWR Visitors Center

Tom Ronning, USFWS, Grassland Ecology & Restoration

Stop 1: Visitors Center  
History & Present Management

Stop 2: Wildlife Viewing & Habitat Discussion  
Bald eagles, Mule/Whitetail deer,  
Coyotes, Prairie Dogs, Black-Footed Ferret Program

Stop 3: Bison Management  
Grazing Program  
Animal Husbandry

4:30pm Depart Rocky Mountain Arsenal NWR

5:15 pm Arrive Downtown Denver Sheraton

## ***The Lowry Ranch***



The Lowry Ranch property is held by the School Trust and managed on behalf of that Trust by the Colorado State Board of Land Commissioners (CSLB). The property is in unincorporated Arapahoe County at the southeastern edge of the greater metropolitan Denver area. Since the Lowry Ranch was acquired by the CSLB in the 1960s it has been used for grazing, limited mineral development, low-impact recreational use, and for multiple rights of way—in all, approximately 20 leases exist on the 26,000-acre Lowry Ranch. The ranch is also home to many diverse species including pronghorn antelope, well over 150 bird species including nesting bald eagles and 13 other raptor species, and one of the largest contiguous tracts in Colorado of an important type of native grasslands—remnant Piedmont Foothills prairie. The CSLB is working with TNC to meet certain conservation goals such as improved wildlife habitat for birds and balancing prairie dog conservation with a viable agricultural operation. Overseeing this project is William Woolston, the CSLB North Central District Resource Specialist. Because of its size, location, and complexity, both the CSLB and TNC believe that the operation at Lowry offers a great opportunity to show that Holistic Management can be a powerful tool for advancing a successful ranching operation that meets the requirements of ownership and that supports ecosystem and rangeland health and the conservation of many species of plants and animals.



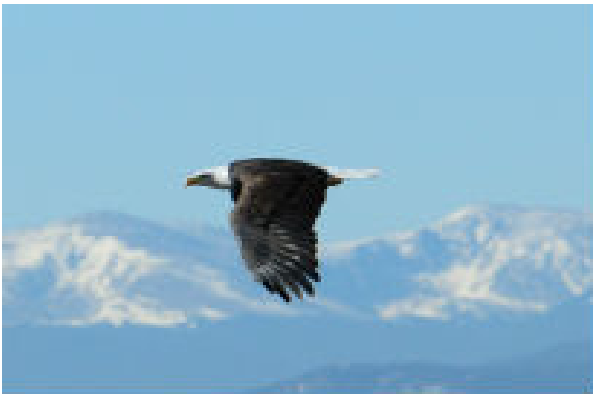
*The Lowry Ranch at sunset. One of the riparian areas showing a plains cottonwood stand. Nick Trainor manages the livestock enterprise on the Lowry.*

## ***The Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge***



Located just northeast of Denver, the Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge is a 15,000-acre expanse of short and mixed-grass prairie, wetland and woodland habitat. The land has a unique story - it has survived the test of time and transitioned from farmland, to war-time manufacturing site, to wildlife sanctuary. It may be one of the finest conservation success stories in history and a place where wildlife thrives.

The Refuge supports more than 330 species of wildlife including bald eagles, bison, black-footed ferrets, deer, coyotes, burrowing owls, and prairie dogs. The Refuge also provides important feeding and nesting habitat for resident and migratory song birds.



*The Refuge provides winter habitat for the Bald Eagle.*



*Bison are grazed on the Refuge as a tool for habitat management.*



*Mule deer on the Refuge.*



*Burrowing owls nest and raise their young in unoccupied prairie dog burrows.*



### ***The Plains Conservation Center***

Lunch break will be at the ***Plains Conservation Center*** in Aurora, Colorado. It is owned and operated by the City of Aurora, Denver Botanic Gardens, and Colorado’s Conservation Districts. This Aurora-based center helps students and adults grow their knowledge and appreciation of the prairie ecosystem and the cultural history of Colorado through a variety of educational programs managed by Denver Botanic Gardens in cooperation with the City of Aurora. Box lunch is sponsored by *Douglas County, Colorado, Open Space & Natural Resources Division, in care of Michael Butterfield, Land Management Specialist.*

