



On the Trail to Health, Heritage, and Happiness Route 2: "Past, Present, and Future Fort Collins"

<https://goo.gl/maps/V1o5KXyoEf12>

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| County, City/Town: | Larimer, Fort Collins |
| One-way length: | 2.8 miles, approximately |
| Estimated travel time: | Walking time one-way and stopping to answer questions and take pictures = 1.5 hours |
| Suggested Season: | Winter, Fall |
| Cell phone coverage: | Available for entire route |

Route Recommendations: The route and Points of Interest (POIs) are described travelling from west to east, beginning at Taft Hill Road and Ending at Old Fort Collins Heritage Park. Easily complete a 6 mile round-trip by bike, walk 1.5 miles to the halfway point and then turn back to complete 3 miles, or walk the entire 3 mile route by bringing a friend and two cars — park one at the Taft Hill Road trailhead and the other at Old Fort Collins Heritage Park. If you are biking, you may have to walk your bike while on the dirt portion of the Hickory Trail, depending on conditions.

Getting there:

- **Trailhead at Taft Hill Road (recommended starting point):** **The trailhead is located at 1457 N. Taft Hill Road in Fort Collins, CO.** From NCRH, head west on Hwy 34 and take the I-25 north exit. Proceed on I-25 for 10.9 miles and then take the exit for Prospect Rd (Exit 268), headed west. Follow Prospect Rd through Fort Collins for 6 miles. Turn right (north) onto N. Taft Hill Road and proceed 2.8 miles to the trailhead. The parking lot will be on the east side of the road. (We recommend using Prospect Rd due to a section of Mulberry St near City Park being closed for construction).
- **Old Fort Collins Heritage Park:** **Heritage Park is located at 112 Willow St, Fort Collins, CO.** From NCRH, head west on Hwy 34 take the I-25 north exit. Proceed on I-25 for 13.2 miles and then take the exit for CO-14/Mulberry St (Exit 269B), headed west. Follow Mulberry Street through Fort Collins for 3.4 miles. Turn right onto Riverside Dr for .6 miles, then right onto Lincoln Ave for .1 mile, and then right onto Willow St. To access the parking lot for Heritage Park, turn right onto Pine Street. This is also the parking lot for the North Atzlan Community Center. The Poudre Trail is accessed from the parking lot that is adjacent to the northeast corner of the community center.
- **Heritage Park to Taft Hill Road Trailhead:** If you decide to bring two cars and leave one at each end of the route, we recommend leaving a car first at Heritage Park and then driving to N. Taft Hill Road to start the route. From the Heritage Park/North Atzlan Community Center parking lot, head northwest on Willow St toward N College Ave. Cross College Avenue and continue west on Cherry St for 1 mile. Turn right (north) onto Shields Ave and proceed for .3 miles to W. Vine Dr. At the traffic circle, take the 3rd exit onto W. Vine Dr. Head west on W. Vine Dr for 1 mile and then turn right (north) onto N. Taft Hill Rd. Proceed 1.8 miles to the trailhead. The parking lot will be on the east side of the road.

Make a day of it—Fun for the whole family! Looking for a fun excursion for your family? Take a slight detour between POI's #4 and #6 and spend a couple of hours in the Fort Collins Museum of Discovery or at Lee Martinez Farm!

- **The Fort Collins Museum of Discovery** is an innovative blend of history, science, and culture, and features interactive exhibits for all ages including a music and sound lab, an exploration of people on the move, a look into the wild lands and wildlife of the area, a fossil wall, live black-footed ferrets, and an archive of the area's rich local history.
- **The Farm at Lee Martinez Park** is educational, interactive, and features farm animals, pony rides, and a large display of farming tools and machinery.

Fort Collins Museum of Discovery: 408 Mason Ct in Fort Collins. 970-221-6738. www.fcmod.org

- **Tickets:** Adults \$9.50, Seniors \$7, Students (w/ valid ID) \$7, Juniors (ages 3-12) \$6, Children 2 & under FREE
- **Hours:** Tuesday-Sunday 10AM-5PM, Thursday open until 8PM, Closed Mondays and Holidays

Farm at Lee Martinez Park: 600 N. Sherwood in Fort Collins. (970) 221-6665. <http://www.fcgov.com/recreation/thefarm.php>

- **Tickets:** Adults and Children \$3, Children under 2 are FREE
- **Hours:** Nov-Mar: Sun 12-4pm, Mon & Tues closed, Wed-Sat 10am-4pm. Apr-May & Sept-Oct: Sun 12-5pm, Mon & Tues closed, Wed-Sat 10am-5pm. June-Aug: Sun 12-5pm, Mon closed, Tues-Sat 10am-5pm



Route 2: “Past, Present, and Future Fort Collins” <https://goo.gl/maps/V1o5KXyoEf12>

START: Trailhead parking lot at 1457 N. Taft Hill Road, Fort Collins. Head east onto the Poudre Trail.

POI #1: Poudre Trail crosses ditch — .3 miles. Head straight east between two ponds. The trail then heads through a tunnel and turn slightly southwest.



POI #1: Panoramic photo taken where the trail crosses a ditch and proceeds east between two ponds.

POI #2: Wayside interpretive sign — .9 miles.

- **Heritage Hunt Question:** What six towns shown on this map are part of the Heritage Area?
- **Heritage Hunt Question:** Scan the QR code on the interpretive sign (or visit the website listed by the QR code: www.poudrerivertour.com/waterlaw and watch the *River Health* video and answer this question: What fraction of the river is diverted before it even reaches Fort Collins?



POI #2: Wayside interpretive sign with Poudre River in background (looking north)

Gone by Not Forgotten—The Josh Ames Ditch: Part I. Are you wondering why there is a sign here? Just upriver from this sign you will find a turnout that has a small hill. Head up that hill and you'll see some carefully placed stones and a sign on the opposite bank. Visit that sign via a trail from the N. Shields Ponds Natural Area.

Up until November 2013, one section of the Josh Ames Ditch stood at this spot. The diversion dam, head gate, and pipeline were built in 1966. You can view the 1867 segment near POI 3 & 4. The Josh Ames ditch served small-scaled irrigation and domestic needs and later provided water to the Great Western Sugar Factory.



Before (above) & during (right) demolition. The best spot for viewing is the area under the excavator arm. Watch the removal of the dam at: fcgov.com/naturalareas/qr



Delightful Diversion—Soldier Creek - Art in Public Places. A short distance past the wayside interpretive sign, you will cross a bridge and notice a seating area with outdoor art next to the river. The interpretive plaza features benches and a hand carved sandstone floodway table that maps the West Vine Basin, streets, and floodway. Five graphic panels illustrate the significant historical crossings of Soldier Creek, including the Overland Stage Route, Spring Canyon Dam, and current bike path. Check it out!

Continue heading east on the Poudre Trail: The Poudre Trail goes under Shields St. – 1.1 miles. For safety, be sure you go *under* Shields St and not over it.

POI #3: HALFWAY POINT – McMurry Natural Area River Gage - 1.7 miles. A bridge crosses the Poudre River where you can view a river gage that is mounted on the bridge support and an interpretive sign is available for your information.

- **Seasonal Selfie:** Take a selfie with the river gage in the background, showing the height of the river during your visit.



POI #4: River gage and interpretive sign.



Gone by Not Forgotten—The Josh Ames Ditch: Part II.

If you walk across the McMurry Bridge, and then take the path to the right into Salyer Natural Area, you will be walking near the remains of the 1867 portion of the Josh Ames head gate and ditch, but you probably won't realize it. What remains of the ditch is about 1/2 mile long and mostly filled in by vegetation.

In 1862, Josh Ames and his brother left New York and headed to Colorado Territory instead of volunteering to fight in the Civil War. Ames returned to the Midwest briefly in 1866 to marry, and then returned to Colorado

with his wife Eliza where they raised 4 children before selling their land in the 1870s. Ames and his neighbor, Peter Anderson, constructed the 1.75 ditch, which watered both their fields. Read all about the trials and tribulations of Josh and Eliza Ames, as well as the fascinating history of the ditch itself which extends into the 1970s, on our website: poudreheritage.org/resources

POI #4: Interpretive Kiosk near Lee Martinez Park - 2 miles. On the right-side kiosk sign, take a look at the map of the Cache la Poudre River and answer the question below.

- **Heritage Hunt Question:** In between which two Fort Collins' Natural Areas are you standing right now?



Off the Paved Path to the Next POI: Standing at the kiosk, you'll see the paved trail heads in three directions: 1) West on the Poudre Trail (back the way you came), 2) South on the Poudre Trail to Lee Martinez Park, or 3) Northeast on the Hickory Trail to the next POI. Once you are past the Kiosk on the Hickory Trail, you will see a dirt (or snow-covered, depending on the time of year) path that branches off to the right. Take this trail, and then when it splits, head left where you will see an interpretive sign to the north.



Take this dirt (snow) path.



Here's the interpretive sign.



- 1) West on the Poudre Trail (back the way you came)
- 2) South on the Poudre Trail to Lee Martinez Park
- 3) Northeast on the Hickory Trail to the next POI (the way you want to go)



POI #5: Lake Canal wayside interpretive sign on the Hickory Trail in Lee Martinez Park — 2.1 miles

- **Heritage Hunt Question:** Where did the communities of Fort Collins and Greeley meet to settle the 1874 conflict over the Lake Canal?
- **Heritage Hunt Question:** Scan the QR code on the interpretive sign (or visit the website listed by the QR code: www.poudrerivertour.com/lakecanal), watch the **Western Water Law** video and fill in the blanks. The conflict that was settled on July 15, 1874, determined how water was allocated: “the person or irrigation company who had first _____ water from the river is the first person to _____ the water from the river for beneficial use.”



Delightful Diversion—Lake Canal Diversion Dam. Follow the path that goes directly behind the interpretive sign and you can see the diversion dam, head gate, and canal that started the “Colorado Doctrine,” the water appropriation system that has since prevailed throughout the west. If you're there when ice is present, please use caution and do not attempt to walk onto the ice. Conditions permitting, you can follow the path downriver where it will meet back up with the Hickory Trail.



Getting back to pavement and on to the Next POI: From the Lake Canal Interpretive Sign, proceed southeast on the dirt Hickory Trail (back the way you came). Instead of turning right and going back toward the kiosk near Lee Martinez Park, keep heading southeast. Hickory Trail will curve around and then meet back up with the paved Poudre Trail. Once you're on the trail, look east and head towards the railroad trestle bridge and College Ave. Cross under the trestle and College Ave.



POI #8: Coy Ditch Diversion structure — 2.5 miles

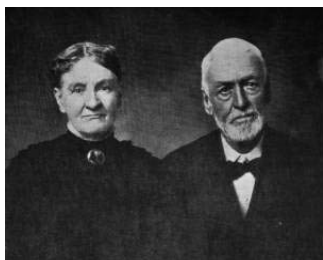
Going, Going, Gone? But Not Forgotten. Depending on when you visit this POI, you may see the diversion dam and head gate of the Coy Ditch, as well as our Wayside Interpretive Sign, or you may not! As of 2015, the City of Fort Collins is in the process of removing the diversion structure and possibly the head gate of the ditch (visible on the north bank) to make way for a kayak course as part of its Poudre River Downtown Master Plan! So, here's a little history of the Coy ditch and homestead, in case you're looking at free-flowing section of river without a sign!



Approaching the viewing area
(near bench)

In the summer of 1862, when Congress passed the Homestead Act, John and Emily Coy set out for California. They ran into many obstacles during their trip and ended up making camp near the Poudre River for the winter before continuing west. The

Coys occasionally encountered other inhabitants, scattered settlers there since the fur trading days of the 1840s and a few people farming small plots in the river's bottomlands.



John and Emily Coy, c. 1911.
Photo courtesy of Fort Collins
Local History Archive

The US Government had recently moved the overland stage route down from the north and arranged for military installations from Camp Collins in Laporte to protect the route and settlers from violence from the restless Arapahoe, Cheyenne, Ute, and Sioux tribes. The Coy family eventually homesteaded land that, today, is located at the southwest corner of Lemay and Lincoln (you can see their homestead if you wish to extend your trail past this route—see details below).



John Coy's water rights off the Poudre Heritage Alliance River are dated 1865. He constructed a diversion off the Poudre River which led to his farm, where the family prospered. If the diversion is present, you will notice a small gap in the middle which is a "canoe chute" or recreational in-channel diversion (RICD).

- **Seasonal Selfie:** Take a selfie with the Coy Ditch Diversion structure (or its former location) in the background.

You're almost done! One more POI to go! Continue to head east on the Poudre Trail, under the bridge, to Heritage Park!

POI #9: Informational kiosk in Heritage Park — 2.8 miles

- **Heritage Hunt Question:** There is a wealth of information on this kiosk about the history of the Cache la Poudre River National Heritage Area. In the space below, write down something new that you learned from this Kiosk:



END: Parking lot at Atzlan Community Center, 112 Willow St, Fort Collins — 2.8 miles. From the Kiosk, head southwest through Heritage Park to the parking lot that is adjacent to the northeast corner of Atzlan Community Center.



Continue your journey - The Coy Homestead is just another 1.2 miles east! As you continue walking east past the Heritage Park kiosk, you will pass by the site of the original “Fort” Collins. Turn right onto Linden street towards Jefferson where you can view signs documenting this site. Once you return to the Poudre Trail continue east until you come to the Woodward Campus, which is under construction. On the campus, you can view the Coy-Hoffman Barn. It is in this area that John Coy irrigated the bottom lands that were his farm. The Coy Ditch traversed approximately 1.5 miles between the diversion off the Poudre River and the farm. The Coy family and their descendants, the Hoffmans, farmed continuously using water from water rights from the Coy Ditch for over 100 years.

In 1958, the City of Fort Collins bought half of the water rights from the Hoffmans to add to the city’s water supply. The Coy Ditch still continued to irrigate the land around the Coy Farm, even when the farm was sold around 1980 and developed into Link-N-Greens golf course. After the sale, the Coy Ditch retained half of its original water rights to irrigate the golf course area. The ditch continued to provide irrigation to the golf course through 2012 when the land was again sold. The new owners of the land, Woodward, Inc., had no need for the irrigation ditch, so the remaining water rights were sold in 2013 to the City of Fort Collins for \$700,000. The water is no longer be diverted through Coy Ditch for irrigation, but is now used to supplement the city’s plans for natural area development and recreation opportunities on the Cache la Poudre River. (Description taken from: Public Lands History Center, Colorado State University http://publiclands.colostate.edu/digital_projects/dp/poudre-river/moving-storing/ditches-dams-diversions/coy-ditch/)



Coy-Hoffman Barn and parlor of the Coy home, John & Emily Coy on right.

Photos courtesy of Loveland Reporter Herald and Forgotten Fort Collins