Juniper Trees

Usually juniper trees are very full and bushy, but there are some juniper trees at Betasso Preserve that look like the photo on the map above. What do you think happened to these trees that they don’t have any lower branches or leaves?

________________________
________________________

Human Sounds | Nature Sounds

Let’s Listen!

Have grown-ups join in this one! Sit on the bench, or find a nice spot nearby. Get someone in your group to time you for five minutes. Your goal is to silently listen and be a detective. At the end of the five minutes, write down three sounds you heard that come from nature, and three human-made sounds.

Juniper Trees

Map Your Hike

On the map above, put a triangle ▲ where you started your hike and a star ★ where you turned around to come back to your car.

Animal Tracking

Many wild animals, both large and small live here. As you hike the trail, keep your eyes peeled for tracks, scat (poop), or other animal signs. When you find one sign, draw it in the box below and mark an X on the map where you found it.

Point of Interest:
The tan building you see here is very important to the City of Boulder. It is a water treatment plant. Water from melted snow comes from the peaks above and some of it flows to the plant, where it is filtered and cleaned. The clean water is sent down the mountain to our houses for drinking.
Your Favorite Thing

You are the mastermind for this activity! Find a nice spot to sit. Pick one favorite thing that you notice about Betasso Preserve and draw a picture that describes it. If you can, think of even things you can’t hold in your hand, such as the wind or sunlight. Write down how you notice, and draw the picture at the bottom.

Title for your drawing: _____________________________________________________

The pine trees in this ecosystem are called ponderosa pine. You might see an Abert’s squirrel here; look for their pointy tufted ears! These trees are their homes. Get close to one of these trees, and write down three things you notice. Really investigate this, detective! There is one feature about this tree that is very unique.

Things you noticed about a ponderosa pine tree:

a) ________________________________________________________________________

b) ________________________________________________________________________

c) ________________________________________________________________________

Clue: You can’t see this unique feature! What other senses could you use?

Draw here!

Mystery Guide

Take this Mystery Guide and a pen or pencil with you as you explore. To complete your Nature Detective training at this park, complete at least 3 of the 6 activities.

Inside you will find a map of the park, which will serve as a guide. Some activities correspond to locations on the map, 🌱, and some activities can be done anywhere.

Feel free to get help from grown-ups on this, but remember, these activities are for you! You can write or draw anywhere in this mystery guide. The more thoughtful and artistic, the better!

Your Case: Betasso Preserve

This park is a ponderosa pine ecosystem and is home to the tuft-eared Abert’s squirrel, birds of prey, foxes, coyotes, mountain lions, mule deer, and many other animals. This was a working ranch for many years. If you look closely, you can still find old buildings and remnants from the ranching days.

Nature Detectives Club

Mystery Guides can be found at:

1) Agricultural Heritage Center
2) Anne U. White Trail
3) Bald Mountain Scenic Area
4) Betasso Preserve
5) Caribou Ranch Open Space
6) Carolyn Holmberg Preserve
7) Heil Valley Ranch
8) Mud Lake Open Space
9) Pella Crossing
10) Walden Ponds Wildlife Habitat

Drop completed mystery guides in the Nature Detectives Club mailbox at each park. If you need to finish at home, mail to:
Nature Detectives Club, Boulder County Parks & Open Space, 5201 St. Vrain Road, Longmont, CO 80503

Complete the information below so we can send you prizes and return your mystery guides!

Grown-ups, please provide the following information:

Detective’s name: ___________________________ Age: ______

Address: ____________________________________________

City, State: __________________________ Zip code: __________

Phone: __________________________

Look for Nature Detective inserts and activities in each issue of Images.

BETASSO PRESERVE

A mystery awaits in this county park full of clues!

Your mission is to become a young Nature Detective, collecting clues from the world around you, and solving mysteries of the forest, prairie, wetlands, and mountains.

After completing a mystery guide we will send you a useful tool for your future outdoor adventures.

All right detective, let’s go!

(Intended for ages 4-11)