Prey is an animal that is hunted for food. Every day is a struggle to survive as they must search for food and avoid being eaten. That’s why prey use different tricks, called adaptations, to hide from danger. For example, a skunk’s adaptation is its stinky smell, and a turtle’s adaptation is its hard, protective shell. Pretend you are a prey animal. In the box, draw yourself and write what adaptations you use to survive.

Who Am I?
Black bear, elk, and wild turkey are three animals that call Heil Valley Ranch home. Draw a line connecting each animal to the appropriate description.

Yummy yummy in my tummy.
I spy something an animal might eat.

Pick up a rock and look underneath.
I spy an insect.

Look up! I spy something in the sky.
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: HEIL VALLEY RANCH

This park is home to a variety of wildlife. Tuft-eared Abert’s squirrels are often seen in this pine forest, and elk migrate here in winter from higher elevations. In the past, Native Americans, beaver trappers, gold seekers, and cattle ranchers have also called Heil Valley Ranch home.

Start here!

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.

HEIL VALLEY RANCH

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)