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Travel: Urban Hikes by Julie Collins

SAND CREEK REGIONAL GREENWAY TRAIL

Denver, Colorado

This 13-mile trail nestled on the banks of Sand Creek winds through Commerce City, Denver, and Aurora, boldly illustrating the dramatic contrasts of wildlife juxtaposed with an urban setting.

The diverse ecosystem along the trail is home to a variety of critters and plants. Keep an eye out for Bluff Lake Nature Center, a 123-acre wildlife oasis located in the middle of a sprawling urban development but ideal for quiet hikes. Bluff Lake is home to deer, beaver, raptors, frogs, snakes, and owls, among other wildlife. And Star K Ranch, a 200-acre recreation area near industrial Aurora, is replete with prairie grassland, wetland, and groves of cottonwoods. One hundred-year-old trees, hunting eagles, and lively mule deer herds might catch your eye as you wander through the wilderness.

The trail even travels through a historic runway tunnel at the old Stapleton airport. And for those who yearn for things to do in addition to hiking, Sand Creek is also a prime destination for picnics, horseback rides, and other outdoor adventures.

The trail is open from sunrise to sunset daily. For more information, contact the Sand Creek Regional Greenway Partnership at 303/468-3260 or visit www.sandcreekgreenway.org.

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