

WOMEN FROM OUR PAST

The Cathy Fromme Prairie Natural Area is full of music.

Songbirds' arias trill a welcome. Breeze-tickled grasses whisper greetings from among Indian ricegrass and rabbitbrush. Black-tailed prairie dogs chirp warnings and dive for cover as raptors glide overhead. Fossil Creek trickles through the lowlands while nature's symphony ripples across 1,080 unspoiled acres nestled between Taft Hill and Shields. This uniquely diverse ecosystem is home to more than 160 plant species and a host of wildlife. It teems with the music of life.

So did Cathy Fromme. A musician in her school years, Cathy knew her way up and down flute and saxophone and across a piano's ivories. A friend

casually suggested to Cathy, new to the area in the late 1980s, that she become involved in the community.

And so Cathy, a young wife and mother, stepped into community service, first on the city golf board. Cathy participated, learned and grew in her commitment to Fort Collins. Eventually her effervescent personality won her a seat on city council. Even when sidelined by breast cancer, she kept in touch with council members via phone messages and e-mail.

One of the most significant issues tackled by that council was to define a natural areas policy plan, which provided the city with a way to identify and protect open space. A citizens' initiative on the 1992



since well-behaved women rarely make history...

ballot mobilized this new plan, which ultimately created open space buffer zones.

Although Cathy passed away before the culmination of the council's work, her colleagues and friends rallied to name one open area in her honor. Cathy's legacy calls us to embody her passion for helping others by our own service within our communities. Her amazing energy continues to touch lives, one prairie walk at a time.

Visit the 40 Natural Areas: www.fcgov.com/naturalareas/pdf/nnd.pdf or contact Susan Schafer, City of Fort Collins Natural Areas Education & Volunteer Coordinator: 416-2480. ✦

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