



ROCKY MOUNTAIN NATURE ASSOCIATION

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QUARTERLY



VOICES FROM THE PAST, MORE ALIVE THAN EVER

by Kurtis Kelly

I am conscious of my eccentricity. But I don't let others know it. Instead, I move along the trail like anyone else on a hiking destination. Passers-by respond politely as I greet them, but their gazes reveal bewilderment and curiosity. Maybe it's my gait, as I walk along with my cane, squinting through my metal-rimmed glasses. Maybe it's my bowler hat or my long dark riding coat. On another day, maybe it's unusual to see a man in knickers traversing a path in Endovalley or in Moraine Park. I humor the attention but continue along toward my intended audience: today, a group of fourth graders who, though expecting me, will be equally intrigued by this visitor from the past. They, like other witnesses, can say they've seen a ghost today.

Since the late 1990s, I have appeared in more than a hundred historic character re-enactments. Sometimes my audience is students on a field trip inside Rocky Mountain National Park. Another time it may be families gathered for storytelling around a campfire. Or a seated group inside a museum. Whomever and

wherever, I am keenly aware of the important responsibilities and opportunities in these interactive programs. If I succeed in my task, the audience will leave with a deeper appreciation of these lands and their history: they will leave not only informed but with an emotional connection from seeing and hearing the pioneers who walked before us.

"What is it you call that thing you do?" someone once asked. Those who put on vintage costumes and assume the identity of an historic figure are re-enactors, living-history portrayalists, Chautauquans, storytellers. Whatever the job title, the goal is the same: transform a third-person history lesson into a first-person performance that brings its subject, almost literally, alive, and inspires participants to see history and their modern world in an entirely new way.

It all begins with the character. Among my summertime Rocky Mountain Nature Association performances are three historic legends. Abner Sprague (1850-1943) conjures the tenacious pioneering spirit of a Moraine Park homesteader turned lodging proprietor, as railroads he himself surveyed would awaken a burgeoning tourist industry. Sprague skirmished with agents of another of my characters,

(Alive, continued on page 2)

(Alive, continued)

Windham Thomas Wyndham-Quin (1841-1926), popularly called Lord Dunraven, a wealthy hunter turned land baron who poses a tantalizing complexity of hidden motives. Enos Mills (1870-1922), revered as Father of Rocky Mountain National Park, is a third character in my “council of the conjured.”

Fortunately for me, and in turn my audiences, each of these three figures was an avid writer, leaving behind extraordinary records of their active lives and careers. In assuming these roles, my first step is to learn all I can about their lives—through what they have written, and what has been written about them. Much like a nature guide or museum interpreter who helps the public understand a wetlands or a collection of arrowheads, figures like Sprague, Dunraven and Mills are whole ecosystems and artifacts unto themselves. They are complex—their actions and accomplishments are woven into the lives of others and the aspirations of their times. When I prepare for a presentation, I “hit the books” afresh each time and always find myself learning something new.

A core component in the Abner



This portrait of the Earl of Dunraven is prominently displayed in the parlor of the Stanley Hotel (whose restaurant is named the Dunraven Grille). The image was reproduced from a painting by Sir Arthur Cope.

Sprague story has to be his first winter in a homestead cabin in Moraine Park (then Willow Park). Sprague recalls the first snows coming on September 20 and the last the following May 22. He fished, met hunters, tried to keep his cattle alive, marveled at a bear, and tells of living in a windowless cabin with a peat ceiling (which, typical of such a structure, occasionally caught fire when a spark ignited the roof). Sprague had rare insights in his own time, and for today’s audiences, he takes us down an extraordinary pathway where we relate to the pioneering spirit in a personal and profound way.

Today, visitors arriving by rapid-paced highway travel into Rocky Mountain National Park might never ponder the slow-savored journey of times past, were it not for stories. Dunraven wrote of several days spent in Denver anticipating his trip to the mountains, the acquisition of mules and wagon, the slow trek and discoveries along the way, ultimately gazing toward Longs Peak. His account gives modern



Kelly performing as Abner Sprague at the YMCA in Estes Park.

listeners a richer context for wild places, once unmapped and more mysterious, revealing the enthusiasm of the next day’s anticipated exploration, as he and his party “listened to the howling of the wind, till the noise of the tempest, confusedly mingling with our dreams, we finally hushed in deep unbroken sleep.”

What [stories] do they have to tell a modern audience that might help listeners think more clearly, deeply and critically about places and their connection to the past?

When planning for a re-enactment, be it 10 minutes, 60 minutes, or anywhere in between, I am faced with the challenge of selecting what to include among so rich an array of stories and adventures. I find myself asking: What story or approach will capture an audience’s interest right from the start? Which stories will

represent the highlights of this individual’s life—their proudest achievements? What do they have to tell a modern audience that might help listeners think more clearly, deeply and critically about places and their connection to the past? This is the second ingredient in the recipe: drawing upon the historic record, the performer’s skills of story selection are essential.

Beyond these questions, I am always on the lookout for stories that convey the passion of whomever I’m portraying. After an audience hears Enos Mills recount his years crusading for a national park, they may better understand his unabated determination when speaking at the 1915 dedication of his dream: “We should enlarge this park. Rocky Mountain National Park should extend from Wyoming on the north all the way to the Pikes Peak Highway on the south.” A modern audience knows this will never be possible, but it has the perspective to appreciate the challenges—and to learn that the Park did grow to include the Never Summer Range. Still today, the words of Enos Mills are as provocative and powerful as they were in 1915.

If Mills was effectively provocative, sometimes the mysteries of history are starkly thought-provoking. Dunraven, while a major figure in shaping the

area's destiny in the 1870s and beyond, came to be despised by some of the earliest recorders of history. Reverend Elkanah Lamb and even Abner Sprague suggest Dunraven's complicity in the 1874 murder of "Rocky Mountain Jim" Nugent, which Dunraven refutes. The accusations and varying accounts can give us a bird's eye view perhaps unavailable during the original events. My re-enacted Dunraven is able to discuss all accounts, while ending as he would with his side of the story. In doing so, I'm able to present audiences with a fair spectrum: by articulating the arguments of his critics, Dunraven gives us a legal drama of a case never resolved by the courts. My Dunraven states, "I am grateful to you for serving as the jury I never had," leaving members of the audience, intrigued at one of history's unsolved mysteries, to form their own verdicts as they reflect later on what they've heard.

Remaining ever-conscious of one's audience is undoubtedly key to all of this: combined with the historic character and the informed performer, the audience is that third essential ingredient in the mix. This three-part concept is not an original one. William Lewis, a renowned scholar of heritage interpretation, emphasized this dynamic relationship between resource, interpreter and visitor. My own performances are always influenced by my experiences with audiences.

(Alive, continued on page 15)



Kelly personifying Lord Dunraven at Barlow Plaza in Estes Park. Sponsored by surrounding businesses, these performances gave visitors a snapshot of the area's rich history during their stroll along the Riverwalk.

Cover photo credits

Cover photos (clockwise from lower left to upper right):

“Enos Mills Remembered,” by Kurtis Kelly, Estes Park, CO; “Above Treeline,” by RMNA Member Cynthia McKee Brady, Oklahoma City, OK; “Snowface” by RMNA Member Gene Putney, Longmont, CO. Please send photos or high resolution digital files to nancy.wilson@rmna.org by March 1 for publication in the 2014 Spring *Quarterly*.

Photos are always appreciated! Scenery, wildlife and wildflowers greatly enhance this publication so take a hike and carry your camera with you! Think simple and high contrast for best reproduction results. Thank You!

Ask Nancy

[RMNA Quarterly Editor Nancy Wilson will attempt to unearth answers to any questions asked by RMNA members and park visitors. If you are curious about something in or about the park, write: Nancy Wilson, RMNA, PO Box 3100, Estes Park, CO 80517.

Or, email her at nancy.wilson@rmna.org]

What triggers bears' hibernation? Bear hibernation can last from 3-8 months and its onset likely is affected by a host of regional environmental factors, including temperature, weather, photoperiod and food availability. The environmental factors, however, are likely indirectly connected to a more significant factor of reduced quality and quantity of food available going into winter which, in addition to a bear's body condition, determines the onset of hibernation. Food quantity and quality and a bear's integral response to it might explain why, in some instances, people see bears or bear tracks when snow is all around – a bear might still be exploiting a high quality, readily available food source during winter (e.g. bears feeding on bison or elk carcasses in Yellowstone or acorns in Pennsylvania). — *RMNP Biologist John Mack*

Do any eagles live full-time in RMNP? If so, does the park reveal their nesting location? Both bald and golden eagles utilize habitat in RMNP. Golden eagles are migratory and vacate the park in the winter. During the remainder of the year, golden eagles are known to nest within park boundaries, although we do not reveal nest locations of eagles or other birds of prey for their protection. They are among the earliest nesting raptors, and each year there are sightings with increasing frequency in February, March and April. Golden eagles tend to nest on south-facing, rocky outcrops and can be spotted in these areas and seen soaring above meadows as they hunt for prey. Bald eagles will use trees to roost (rest and sleep) in the park but there has been no confirmed nesting. Bald eagles are most frequently spotted outside of the park around Lake Estes in the spring, or along the Colorado River, year-round. — *RMNP Biologist Mary Kay Watry*

I have a place where I've cut down the beetle kill trees. I now have a lot of pine trees coming back, but I want to transplant them more evenly. When is a good time of year to do that? The best time to transplant trees is during the spring months after the soil has thawed and night time temperatures consistently remain above freezing. For best success, water trees and the soil around them every-other day for about one week prior. This will moisten and loosen the soil, making it easier to dig and less prone to damaging roots during transplant. The extra hydration during the stress of relocation is also a bonus. Smaller trees (less than a few feet tall) will transplant with better success than large trees. Regarding the size of the root ball, a general "rule of thumb" is that the above-ground portion of the tree is about 1/3rd of the tree's biomass, with 2/3rds of the tree (as roots) underground. To determine how big of a soil ball you should remove, look at the diameter of the branches at the base of the tree. The root ball should be twice the width of the lowest branches and equally as deep. Dig the hole where you intend to plant the tree first, then dig out the tree, so that you are able to immediately transfer the tree into the ground. Lightly water - don't flood - the tree after transplanting. Fences around the trees will protect them from wildlife and trampling. Lastly, species diversity is worth mentioning. A mixture of pine, spruce, and fir trees will ensure that, in the event of another insect epidemic, you might lose lots of one species, but not the entire forest! — *RMNP Forester Brian Verhulst*



Wing of Shadow showing transmitter.

Photo: Mike Britten

Where do the migratory birds in Rocky go for the winter? It's an important question. Populations of many migrating birds are declining and in order to reverse this trend a better understanding of their full life cycle, including their migration, is necessary.

Unlike the indigenous birds that stay in their breeding areas year round, neotropical migratory birds make a perilous journey twice a year following corridors used by countless generations of birds that often cover thousands of miles. These birds can't tell us about their vacation when they get back, so how can a researcher really know where they go?

Understanding the corridors that birds use to migrate is key. "These corridors are like a highway getting the

birds from point A to point B, providing avenues for the next generation of birds to travel. Understanding them helps managers work across boundaries to protect these corridors and these species for future generations," said Dr. Ben Bobowski, chief of the Resources Stewardship Division in Rocky Mountain National Park (RMNP).

To effectively conserve neotropical migratory bird populations it is important to show connections between summer breeding habitats in North America and wintering habitats in subtropical and tropical regions in Mexico, Central and South America. The National Park Service and the Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory (RMBO) are working together to identify these connections. Recent advances in tracking technology make demonstrating migratory connectivity between protected areas and countries possible. By using geolocators and satellite transmitters, scientists from the National Park Service and Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory are learning about birds that breed in or adjacent to RMNP, their migratory corridors, stop over sites and winter ranges.



Osprey backpack

Photo: Mike Britten

Birds without Borders: USING TECHNOLOGY TO UNDERSTAND BIRD MIGRATION

by Jeff Connor, Ben Baldwin and Holly Nickel

A collaborative project between RMNP, RMBO, the protected areas of Monteverde, Costa Rica and the adjacent Sister Cities of Estes Park, Colorado and Santa Elena, Costa Rica, began in 2012. Ten Western tangers in RMNP were trapped, banded and released with geolocators, and in 2013, two female ospreys were released with satellite transmitters.

The geocator is a tiny electronic device that is placed on the bird like a tiny backpack, allowing researchers to gain insight into the annual travel patterns of the birds without following them around. The geolocators determine the location of the birds based on ambient light-level readings with reference to time. Latitude is calculated by the length of day and longitude is determined by time of sunrise/sunset.

The geolocators require the recapturing of the Western tangers to download the data. The satellite transmitters on the osprey, however, send GPS locations to a satellite that can be downloaded in real time and does not require recapturing the birds for data acquisition which makes the satellite transmitters less invasive and ultimately more accurate.

In 2013, two of the ten tangers were recaptured and the data downloaded. The data revealed migration routes, stopover sites and

wintering area. Western tanagers are one of five species that conducts a molt migration. This involves migrating to an area that has an abundance of food resources (from late-summer monsoonal moisture, for example) and taking advantage of these resources to molt. The RMNP tanagers appear to have gone to southeast New Mexico/west Texas to molt and then moved further south to Mexico and possibly Guatemala to spend the winter (see figure 1).

The two tanagers provide insight to where Western tanagers of RMNP may winter. More accurate data is necessary to pinpoint the habitat and other protected areas within the range of their stopover sites and wintering areas. Once identified, RMBO and RMNP will reach out to the communities that surround these protected areas to provide information and tools to protect these areas.

The two osprey that were captured in 2013 on Unites States Forest Service-managed land near Grand Lake, Colorado, (named Shadow and Rainbow based on the capture sites) are currently being tracked to their winter habitat. The current data indicate that the birds, instead of heading directly south when they left the Grand Lake area, crossed the Continental Divide, flew east into Kansas and then headed south through Oklahoma, Texas and, as of November 19, 2013, have stopped for the winter in Mexico.

Shadow seems to be spending the winter at Laguna Madre, an internationally recognized protected area. The extensive Laguna Madre wetland complex is the first binational Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network (WHSRN) site, spanning from Port Mansfield in Texas (United States) to the Soto la Marina River in Tamaulipas (Mexico). This area was first designated a WHSRN Site of International Importance in September, 2000. Rainbow's wintering area appears to be along the Rio Tampaon in primarily an agricultural area.

Even though we know that Western

tanager and osprey occur in Costa Rica during the winter, data from the captured birds in and near RMNP indicate that these specific birds go into southern Mexico, with one of the tanagers possibly going to northern Guatemala. With such a small sample size, however – data from just two tanagers and two ospreys – it is impossible to determine core wintering areas for Western tanagers and osprey breeding in and near RMNP. Some tanagers from RMNP may travel further south to Costa Rica or beyond, but more research is needed to determine how far they travel.

In 2014, the park hopes to recapture the two Western tanagers that returned to RMNP that were not recaptured in 2013, as well as one Swainson's thrush in the park that was outfitted with a geolocator in 2013. Additionally, a satellite transmitter will be placed on one Peregrine falcon to track its migration to see if it passes through or winters in Costa Rica.

Meanwhile, in the winter of 2013-2014, RMBO biologists will use the information collected to reach out to colleagues in Mexico. Educators from RMNP and RMBO will work with schools in Colorado and Costa Rica to expand the knowledge of neotropical migratory birds and their shared habitat across countries. Most importantly, these projects will educate and provide information about what we all can do to protect these birds for future generations.

In addition, RMNP and RMBO are reaching out to the communities surrounding RMNP and protected areas in Mexico and Monteverde, Costa Rica, to promote awareness of these species. RMNP is working collaboratively with scientists and managers of protected areas in Monteverde to help define actions to conserve these migratory species for the future. RMBO also is working in Mexico and Central America.



Osprey in nest

Another exciting project that was completed in 2013 was the movie "Birds without Borders" produced and directed by Nick Mollé of Nick Mollé Productions. This movie tracked the Wilson's warbler, yellow warbler, Western tanager and Swainson's thrush from RMNP to Costa Rica. Stay tuned for when and where this wonderful movie will be shown.

To learn more about these projects and to track the progress of Shadow and Rainbow, go to www.rmbo.org, click on the Osprey Project and look for the maps.

Jeff Connor is a retired RMNP natural resources specialist currently involved in the Estes Park Sister Cities Program with Monteverde Costa Rica; Ben Baldwin is the Acting Director of the RMNP Continental Divide Research Learning Center; Holly Nickel is an Education Technician at the Center.



Tanager map. Figure 1.

Keeping Your Mind and Soul Engaged...

Rocky Mountain Field Seminars to Liven Up Your Winter!



Winter Ecology: A Snowshoeing Trek for Kids and Families

January 25; February 8, 25; and March 8, 22

This easy, 4-hour snowshoe adventure begins in Wild Basin and travels through spruce/fir forests to the foot of Hidden Falls, an amazing ice-covered waterfall. Along the way, discover the subalpine ecosystem, snow facts and wintertime plant and wildlife adaptations. *(Snowshoes are provided for kids 12 and under.)*



Winter Subalpine Ecology & Cross-country Ski Adventure

February 1, 22 and March 15

Enjoy a leisurely cross-country ski adventure with local guide and outfitter Kaiyote Snow. Along the way, explore the wintertime behaviors of animals, plant adaptations and unique weather patterns. *(Snacks and water will be provided.)*



Light and Snow: Winter Photography

February 28 - March 2

Join renowned Colorado photographer Glenn Randall on a winter exploration of light and discover new perspectives on the seasonal qualities of snow. Capture your best landscape photographs in winter using natural light and well-timed shots to convey the feeling of the season.

Photo: Ann Duncan



Illustration: Karen Ramsay

Beginning Watercolor for the Nature Enthusiast

March 8

Karen Ramsay is leading a beginning watercolor seminar exploring new indoor painting techniques, and honing skills for choosing a subject, blending color, and shadowing images. A follow-up class is planned for the summer which will allow participants to learn more advanced watercolor techniques and provide tips on how to take skills to the next level.



Photo: Lyn Ferguson

Coyotes: Song Dogs of the West

March 29

Explore the fascinating world of coyotes and their ability to survive and thrive in the mountains. Seek out coyotes in their natural habitat to observe how they hunt, communicate and travel in the wild.

Information about these and other exciting Field Seminars is available in our 2014 catalog, or online at www.rmna.org.

Call us at 970-586-3262 with questions or to reserve your adventure now!



Rocky Mountain Kids' Camp

January 10; February 7
March 7, 14; April 25

This class is designed for Estes Park school children and offers a fun, learning-centered option for children in grades k-5 who are out of school due to district closures. These all-day adventures are themed and include activities such as hiking, arts-and-crafts activities, movies, games and teambuilding exercises exploring the environment.



Custom Winter Bus Adventures

New, custom tour options are designed to take groups of all ages into RMNP during the winter to view wildlife and explore topics of interest, including wildlife natural history, snow ecology and more. Custom travel sites include the Bear Lake corridor, Trail Ridge Road (to the winter closure point) and the Horseshoe Park area. Contact us for more information, or to set up your own custom adventure!


WINTER HIKING

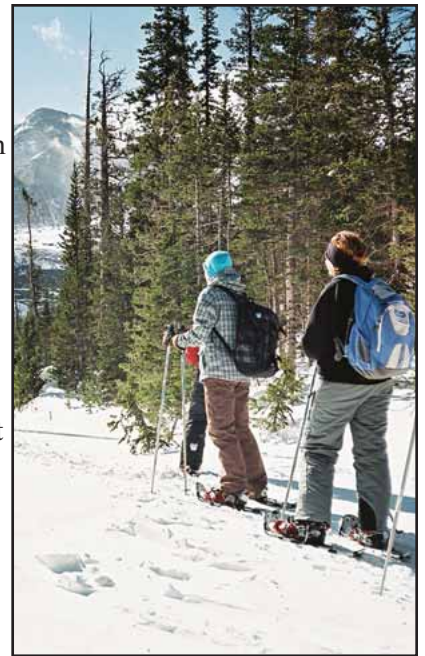
We'll admit it. It can be rugged up here in the winter. Some days are only for the indomitable outdoor enthusiast. However, let it be known that, to date, not a single Member Hike has been held in foul weather - and Curtis Carman takes the credit for that. Go figure.

Join Membership Manager Curtis Carman for monthly hikes in Rocky Mountain National Park throughout the year!

This free hiking series gives RMNA Members the opportunity to hike to various sites in Rocky Mountain National Park with a group of like-minded individuals while learning more about RMNA, RMNP and each other. Limited to 15 people per hike, outings explore a different area in Rocky Mountain National Park each month. Come with your questions about current RMNA projects, park management issues and natural history stories.

Call Curtis Carman at (970) 586-0108. Or, email him at curtis.carman@rmna.org

Winter Schedule: **January 24- Hike to Dream Lake**
February 14 - Hike to Gem Lake 
March 28- Hike to Bierstadt Lake



Park Puzzler by RMNA Member Joel Kaplow

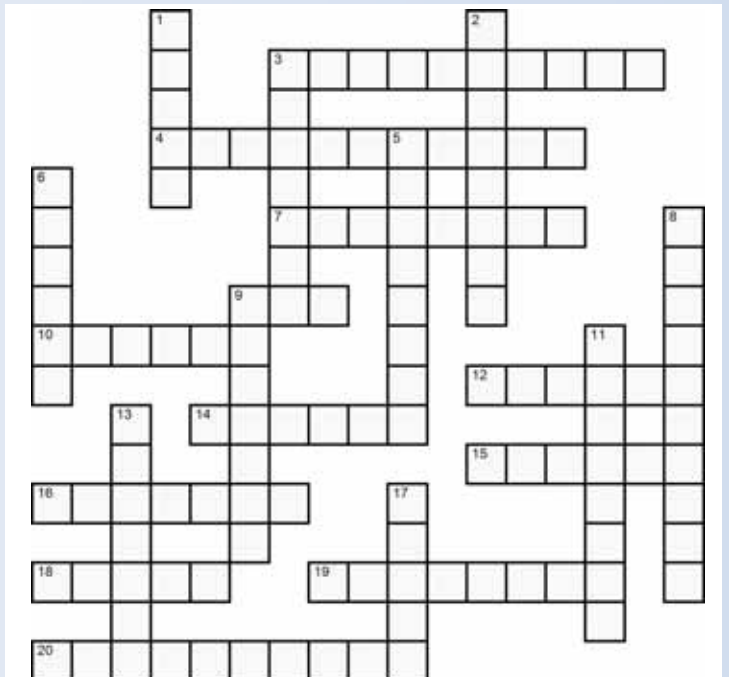
ACROSS

- 3 During the September flooding, US Highways 34 and 36, and State Highway 7, were closed. That left only ___ Road to evacuate thousands of RMNP visitors and staff. (2 wds.)
- 4 A part of the park exists as a small "island," a little over one square mile, that is not connected to the main section. It contains ___ Peaks which, when climbed, afford a great view of Longs Peak to the west as your reward! (2 wds.)
- 7 Just as it did in July 1982, Roaring River roared again with the September flooding and brought down mud, rocks and debris forming yet another ___ fan in Horseshoe Park.
- 9 It's hard to find a mature aspen tree in the park that doesn't have some black scars in the bark near its base. This is due to the munchings of beavers and ___.
- 10 Southwest of Sky Pond in Loch Vale, you'll find a peak and glacier named by Abner Sprague for Albert ___, president of Illinois' Millikin University.
- 12 A large feature on the west side of RMNP is the Kawuneeche Valley, reflecting the Arapaho word meaning "___."
- 14 The blooms that form on aspen in the spring resemble those of the pussy willow. What is this type of fuzzy female flower called?
- 15 Occasionally, you'll notice unsightly clusters of small shoots among normal-looking tree branches. These may be caused by parasitic mistletoe, fungi, insects and other factors, and are known whimsically as witches' ___.
- 16 Albinism is a potential condition in all vertebrates caused by a genetic mutation that results in the inability to produce this normal coloring pigment. What is it?
- 18 As of 2009, RMNP was home to 84 species of eumycetozoans. These are more commonly known as ___ molds.
- 19 After a conflagration, new life soon rises from the ashes. One such plant, *Chamerion danielsii*, can grow a few feet tall with pinkish-purple flowers. What is its fitting common name?
- 20 During the September flooding, Lyons, east of RMNP, was particularly hard-hit as it is located where North St. Vrain and South St. Vrain creeks come together. What is the term for the point where two streams join?

DOWN

- 1 Flower, or weed? The dandelion can be found at most elevations in the park, even above 2-Down. "Dandelion" is derived from the French "dent de lion" which means "lion's ___," referring to the shape of the leaf, not the yellow bloom.
- 2 Woody plants cannot survive in places where the average annual temperature is below 50 degrees F. At a certain elevation, nature draws this delineation known as ___. In the park, this occurs at around 11,000 to 12,000 feet, depending on the topography.
- 3 Nestled between Flattop Mountain and Hallett Peak is a glacier named for John ___, an Irish physicist who studied glaciers, among many other things.
- 5 It is extremely rare for RMNP to be closed for any reason, but it happened during the September flooding, and then again on October 1 due to the government ___, prompting yet another, thought different, evacuation.

- 6 If you see an ___ squirrel, then you know there are ponderosa pines nearby. This critter relies on them for most of its food, lives in their branches, and at times uses 15-Across for nests. This squirrel is unusual in that it doesn't cache food for the winter, thus requiring activity all year.
- 8 After a forest fire, small plants will sprout almost immediately, followed by taller ones that will eventually block the sun from the lower ones, creating new populations over time. This progression of change in flora is known as plant ___.
- 9 Occasionally, you will come across a rock or large boulder that doesn't seem to "belong" with the surrounding rocks. They can sometimes be balanced on bedrock. It's probably been carried downslope by a glacier that has long since disappeared, leaving this oddball called a glacial ___.
- 11 It's fun to jump across the river that has carved the Grand Canyon. Perhaps the only place this can be done is at the head of the Kawuneeche Valley, where the ___ River arises as a small stream.
- 13 Metamorphic rock is formed miles down in the Earth where it is squeezed under immense pressure. It can rise to the surface through tectonic action and be exposed by erosion. The oldest rocks in RMNP are metamorphic, and are about 1.7 ___ years old.
- 17 A hiker's paradise, RMNP boasts a total of approximately ___ hundred fifty-five miles of trails. These boots are made for walkin'!



Maintaining ties to our mission, the public lands that we serve, and our friends that support us...

Rocky Mountain Nature Association Announces New Name for Organization

The name of the Rocky Mountain Nature Association (RMNA) dates from the beginning of the organization's inception in 1931. One of the oldest organizations of its kind, RMNA has been a leader in education, interpretative services, publishing and philanthropy. Despite a period of time when the organization was split to accommodate National Park Service policy, the primary name has remained constant. While the choice of the name may be lost but to the most diligent historian, it is likely that it closely followed the National Park Service (NPS) naming of similar organizations of that time – natural history associations.

During the first three quarters of the Twentieth Century, the names of these support organizations remained unchanged, including the Yosemite Natural History Association, Yellowstone Natural History Association, Grand Canyon Natural History Association, etc. Most of these nonprofit associations fit into the standard mold of the day, strongly guided by the NPS, operating bookstores within visitor centers, and publishing

books unavailable through commercial publishers. And while they were independent nonprofit corporations, the organizations were largely unknown to the public. Indeed, they took pride in being indistinguishable from their NPS founders.

Then, in the late 1970's and early 1980's, rapidly expanding visitation to many of the national parks started to outstrip stagnant federal budgets, and a few entrepreneurial managers saw the potential of their nonprofit partners to access public philanthropy to meet their funding gap. Suddenly, it became important for the public to recognize these heretofore "behind the scenes" organizations. At first, only a few stepped up to the challenge, such as Yosemite, Golden Gate and Rocky Mountain. Some of them were forced to spin off other organizations in order to raise funds. Yosemite Natural History Association launched the Yosemite Fund and RMNA created the Rocky Mountain National Park Associates.

Most associations initially rejected the broader role that was slowly gaining popularity. However, by the turn of this



RMNA Executive Director, Charley Money

century it became apparent that those organizations that had the best chance of survival were those that leveraged their book sales revenue into raising significant contributed income for their partner. Only then could the expanding needs of their agency partners be fully met.. Those organizations quickly realized that their names had to be synonymous with the greater responsible and progressive role that they had taken on. "Natural History Association" no longer conveyed dynamic nature of their mission. Thus, the "conservancy" was born, modeled after the Nature Conservancy and the Central Park Conservancy. Today, some of the most well-rounded and progressive organizations of our kind bear that appellation, including Yosemite Conservancy, Conservancy of Cuyahoga

Longs Peak - the iconic mountain of Rocky Mountain National Park, bridging both the east and the west sides of the park

The name, Rocky Mountain Conservancy, encompasses both our primary partner, Rocky Mountain National Park, and the entire Rocky Mountain region, where our partner agencies are located.

Rocky Mountain Conservancy

Bighorn sheep - another icon of Rocky Mountain National Park, but also endemic to the Rocky Mountains. A magnificent animal, the image of which is also linked to RMNA's (now former!) logo.



The new logo was designed by artist Dan Miller of Dan Miller Graphics in Anchorage, AK. No small amount of thought went into this - the entire undertaking took just over 6 months to conceive and create.

Valley, Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy, and, most recently, Glacier National Park Conservancy.

In late 2005, in recognition of the power of one name, one brand, the Rocky Mountain National Park Associates and the Rocky Mountain Nature Association merged. However, the organization is still seen by many as the cooperating association of old without the recognition of our highly regarded field seminars or Next Generation Fund programs or American Conservation Corps, or the growing list of park improvement projects or the lands we have protected. While we are well-known for select activities and accomplishments by a loyal few, we have not made any significant inroads in our local communities beyond the occasional and infrequent mention by our fans.

With the park's centennial upon us

and new opportunities to collaborate with our agency partner arising almost daily, it is time to shed our cocoon and direct the light on our successes and future potential. A new strategic plan has been launched, development of a new website is underway, a new logo for our organization has been designed, and a new optimism in our staff and board is rising. There is not a better time to punctuate our fresh new vision for the future with a new name than now – Rocky Mountain Conservancy.

With formal approval by the Board of Directors in hand, we are ready to roll out the new name this spring. We're delighted to present this exciting change to you, our members, celebrating the phenomenal work we've done together as the Rocky Mountain Nature Association, and embracing our future as the Rocky Mountain Conservancy.



ROCKY MOUNTAIN CONSERVANCY PROGRAM AND CONTACT NAME CHANGE INFORMATION:

Website:

www.rmconservancy.org

(The old website name will automatically redirect to the new domain name.)

Rocky Mountain Conservancy:
Field Institute

(Still the same great Field Seminars program, always growing and offering exciting learning adventures!)

Rocky Mountain Conservation Corps

(More reflective of its Rocky Mountain focus, the Conservation Corps will continue to operate in Rocky Mountain National Park and National Forests nearby.)

Flood Damage Results in Old Fall River Road Closure Through 2014

Rocky Mountain National Park received significant damages on bridges, roads and trails in the historic floods that occurred in September. However, damages in the park were relatively minor in comparison to the disastrous flooding that downstream communities east of the park experienced. The west side of the park was largely unaffected by the storm with flooding occurring only east of the Continental Divide.

Damages on Old Fall River Road have proven to be extensive, however, and the road will remain closed to vehicles through 2014. Old Fall River Road is an historic dirt road built between 1913 and 1920. Due to the winding, narrow nature of the road, the scenic 9.4-mile route is one-way only and normally opens from the fourth of July to early October. It follows the steep slope of Mount Chapin's south face.

It is unknown at this time whether hikers and bicyclists will be allowed on the road next year. Park staff is working with the Federal Highway

Administration to assess the Alluvial Fan area and Old Fall River Road. Cost estimates and design concepts are still being determined.

Repair work has been completed in the Wild Basin parking lot, the Twin Sisters Road, and is nearing completion on the McGraw Ranch Bridge and the Aspenglen Bridge.

Known damage to trails and pedestrian access are mainly in the Fall River, Lumpy Ridge, Bear Lake, Northfork, Twin Sisters and Wild Basin areas. Some trails are closed to stock use.

The next step will be to assess to what level park staff will repair damaged trails. The flood was a natural event which will be taken in to consideration as park staff moves forward in determining what repairs should be made.

Due to the flood, backcountry travelers may encounter different



Massive amounts of erosion on Old Fall River Road, among other issues, will close this road for 2014.

conditions than they have experienced in the past. Visitors may find missing foot bridges, missing trail segments, uneven trail surfaces, unstable slopes and fallen trees. In addition, rutted trails and steps, difficult water crossings, and missing directional signs may also be encountered.

For more detailed information about the impact of the flood on trails please visit the park's website, www.nps.gov/romo, or call the park's Information Office at (970) 586-1206.

ROCKY MOUNTAIN NATIONAL PARK FUND REPORTS

Autumn Giving Update

Between the flood and the government shut-down, this was an unusual autumn here in the high country of the Rocky Mountains. We asked for your help several times and you really responded.

RMNP Flood Recovery Fund

Immediately after the flood, we asked you to pitch in to support recovery efforts in RMNP. As you probably know, a number of locations were devastated. Trails, footbridges, wayside signs and more were damaged or destroyed. The park is still assessing the work that needs to be done, with most of scheduled to begin next spring. You contributed 187 gifts totaling \$50,100 that will directly support their efforts. Wow!

RMNA Flood Recovery Fund

A number of you reached out to help us recover from the damage the flood did to our own offices and retail warehouse. These gifts have special meaning for us at RMNA. They will help repair and replace carpets, electronics, furniture, drywall and more – all critical to continuing our efforts toward achieving our mission. Ultimately, your investment will restore our ability to serve the needs of our partners and the visitors to RMNP and other public lands.

Special Thanks to RMNP...

We extend special thanks to Rocky Mountain National Park for their help in clearing the damage from our offices after that fateful event. They loaned us a Hot Shot crew and a Trails crew, all of whom made short work of the heavy lifting and debris removal. We so appreciated the hands-on heavy-lifting assistance as we were racing around recovering what we could and sweeping, shoveling and pushing water out of the basement as fast as we could!

RMNA Annual Appeal

Many thanks to those that have already responded to our Annual Appeal! This is the one time of year that we ask everyone in our community do what they can to support our work. As of today, we have received 707 gifts totaling \$128,215. That is tremendous!

If you have not yet made a gift there is still time! Priority fundraising projects for 2014 are: the Trail Improvement Fund, the Next Generation Fund and the American Conservation Corps. Give what you can to your favorite project!. For information on any RMNA fundraising projects, visit www.rmna.org and click on Park Projects.



Have You Found Us on Facebook?

Our Facebook community has grown to 4,450 fans! Are you one of them? Facebook is a fun way to stay in touch with the RMNA community. We post fun facts, news updates, and fabulous photos, and we love the park photos and stories you share! Join us today at: www.facebook.com/RockyMountainNature

A Rousing Success for Rocky!



Once again, we had a tremendous response to Colorado Gives Day, this year on December 10. Dozens of Rocky Mountain National Park fans, some brand new to our growing RMNA team, gave a total of more than \$16,700 via the GivingFirst.org web site. Most gifts will be directed to our Next Generation Fund, which supports youth education. We had lots of fun on Facebook, too, posting little known facts about RMNA's many projects over the years, and plenty of compelling, inspirational photos. It's wonderful to see how much people love Rocky Mountain National Park and thrilling to acknowledge the work we all do together. Thank you! Keep your eyes peeled for next year's event!

Rocky Mountain Park Inn Wins Philanthropy Award

We are pleased to announce that the Rocky Mountain Park Inn won the 2013 Business Philanthropist of the Year Award during Estes Park's National Philanthropy Day Celebration.

Since 2011, the guests of the Rocky Mountain Park Inn have donated more than \$29,000 to the Rocky Mountain Nature Association through our Dollar-a-Day Program. The Inn provides guests with the opportunity to make a one-dollar-per-day donation to support RMNP. So far, the funds raised have been used for several critical needs in Rocky Mountain National Park, including the purchase of the Johnson Property on the west side of RMNP and the Next Generation Fund.

Additionally, when the floods hit, the Rocky Mountain Park Inn stepped forward to assist with the emergency evacuation center, housing those in need and to those offering assistance to our town. Please help us thank the Inn's guests, staff, and manager, Chris Cook.

To learn more about RMNA's Dollar-a-Day Program, contact Julie Klett, Julie.Klett@rmna.org, 970-586-0108, ext. 11.

Keeping up with the times...

RMNA Changes Membership Dues

Your membership is the best way to stay connected to Rocky Mountain National Park, even when you can't be here. Membership supports the work we are able to do for the park and other public lands. Without your support, we couldn't do what we do!

To keep up with increasing costs and to continue to support the work of the Rocky Mountain Nature Association, we are slightly increasing some of our membership rates as follows:

Individual	\$35 (formerly \$30)
Family	\$50 (formerly \$45)
Supporting	\$100
Contributing	\$500

In 2014, RMNA will launch a new **Sustaining Membership** which will allow for an automatic monthly account debit. We hope you will find this a convenient way to give. More information coming soon!

The Rocky Mountain National Park Fund

*expresses special thanks to the following
people for their donations to RMNP projects:*

September 23, 2013 - December 8, 2013

1,002 Gifts ~ total donations: \$389,796



RMNP FLOOD RECOVERY FUND

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 Alfred and Judith Miller, Tucson, AZ
 Gwen and Richard Powell, Tucson, AZ

(Alive, continued from page 2)



Kelly portraying Abner Sprague during the Nature Association's campfire ghost story series, held on the YMCA of the Rockies grounds. The full-length programs gave listeners a glimpse into the region's heritage, after which they enjoyed marshmallows by the campfire.

The stories that evoke reactions among my audience, through listeners' facial expressions and through follow-up questions, in turn instruct me in how to keep my characters relevant and engaging for the next audience. While every audience is different, there is still a vibrant force at work: every audience helps guide the next audience's experience. And I am at my best when I receive their wisdom.

Therein dwells the magic of this three-part living experience. When it succeeds, attendees will enjoy a nature-history encounter that stays with them and helps them see their world in a new way. To that goal, I seek always to leave audiences inspired in some way by the character they have just seen. If it happens to be Abner Sprague, he will tell an audience of his celebrated climb of Longs Peak on July 24, 1926. Celebrated because, at age 74, the climb was exactly fifty years to the day following his first ascent. As if in reward, nature gave him this gift:

"We who saw it will never forget. Four thousand feet below the top, there was the slightly roughened surface of a sea of clouds to the east as far as one could see. Here and there, the higher mountains shone like islands in a sea of foam. To the north, south and west, range after range of high peaks showing in the bright sunlight made a picture which would brand any artist who thought he could portray it on canvas as an egoist."

More than phantoms from the past, a conjuring of our historic legends may, too, inspire you in new and hitherto-unimagined ways. They—and you as audience—have profoundly inspired me.

Kurtis Kelly is a well-known performer, actor and storyteller in Estes Park. He has led hundreds of people on ghost story tours of the Stanley Hotel and has appeared on National Public Radio and has performed in many theatrical productions. He is the reference and programs librarian at the Estes Valley Library.

PARK PUZZLE ANSWERS





Blue grouse in winter

Photo by RMNA Member Marlene Borneman



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NATURE ASSOCIATION NOTES...

Greetings in the New Year! Fluffy white clouds scud swiftly across the summit of Longs Peak under a stunningly blue sky, but ponderosa pines are whipping back and forth in high winds that have been buffeting east of the Divide since the beginning of December. Crows have been seen flapping uselessly against the gale-force winds and elk are hunkering down in the trees for shelter. Winter is here, teasing us with sunny days just on the brink of shedding warmth only to shift to the polar opposite on a dime. Such is weather in the high country!.....In early December, RMNA Development Manager **Julie Klett** watched about a dozen crows mobbing a mature bald eagle in the air. The eagle seemed to be playing with the crows as it would occasionally turn and chase them.....Park Interpreter **Kathy Brazelton** participated in the annual Audubon Christmas Bird Count in mid-December. The gusty, frigid winds kept the birds down, but they enjoyed seeing the usual suspects in the park, including chickadees, Clark's nutcrackers, Steller's jays, and more....RMNA Publications Manager **Nancy Wilson** was pleasantly startled when an owl flew low across the hood of her car one dark night in early December. Most likely a Great-horned owl, the light of her headlights illuminated the speckled breast and the breadth of its amazing wingspan.....Colorado River District Systems Specialist **Debbie Mason** reported seeing visitors in Grand Lake in late November that were <gasp!> feeding a red fox on the boardwalk in town. They were dropping big chunks of food onto the snow and the fox was gulping it down with a relish.....Closer to the park, Debbie's dog has been routinely "teased" by a fox that knows it can come fairly close to the yard without consequences. The poor dog can only bark in frustration.....Retired RMNP Wildlife Biologist **Gary Miller** noted that he been seeing large groups of mule deer hanging out on the south-facing

slopes. This might indicate a better-than-average survival rate for fawns in 2013.....Folks may be wondering whether the recent "deep freeze" cold weather here in early December might have been enough to knock down the Mountain pine beetles. Sadly, according to **Dave Leatherman**, retired forest entomologist with the Colorado State Forest Service, it's likely that it was too little, too late. By then, beetles would have already increased their glycol content, which is the beetles' anti-freeze, to combat the freezing temperatures..... The week after the flood, NPS and RMNA volunteers **Forrest McVicar** and **John Olsen** caught sight of a young otter



All that remains...a bighorn sheep skull found near the base of Knobtop Mountain. Photo: Dean Martinson

frantically running around near the river behind the Estes Park Visitor Center. Other previous otter sightings in that area will attest to the presence of otter in that neck of the woods.....Last fall, RMNA Member **Larry Van Sickle** spotted a young elk with an antler issue. He sported one antler tending out toward the back of his head, the other sprouting forward, unicorn style. At the time, Larry feared for the long term welfare of this young bull, concerned that the angle of the antler on his forehead would interfere with his ability to graze. Recently, last November, Larry caught sight of the same elk hanging out near the 18-hole golf course with a large herd in Estes Park. So, he's still around. And he still has antler issues.....RMNA Member **Cheryl Wagner** reported a visitation by a neighborhood bobcat that hunkered down in the drainage pipe by her house for a few days.....RMNA Member **Marlene Borneman** interacted with some assertive Gray jays on a snowshoe hike on the Emerald Lake Trail this winter. One landed on her glove as she was taking a photo, and while the jay's curiosity, tenacity and fearlessness won over the hearts of several visitors on the trail, it was decided that the jay needed a bit more study on the differences between a digital camera and a granola bar in hand.....Marlene also has observed an incredible amount of pinecones on the upper part of spruce trees this winter which may be an indicator of tree/ environmental stress.....Enjoy the gifts of your amazing public lands and protected areas, wherever they may be — Nature shares its myriad good tidings whether we're listening or not!



RMNP License Plate Petition Update

Two months ago, in November, RMNA launched a petition to gain support for a Rocky Mountain

National Park Colorado license plate. As of press time, we had gathered 2,282 signatures.

Getting 3000 signatures are just the first step in a lengthy application process, but there's still time to sign the petition and get your Colorado friends to sign, too. We need everybody!!!! Go to www.rmna.org for the link and watch our Facebook page and your email for updates!