



Rocky
Mountain
Conservancy

QUARTERLY

Autumn 2015

100 YEARS LATER: ENOS MILLS REFLECTS ON A DREAM

From the ether of history, we summoned Enos Mills to give perspective on a most recent milestone.

Time travel is a wondrous thing.

On September 4, 1915, addressing an enthusiastic crowd at the dedication of Rocky Mountain National Park, I declared that the greatest dream of my lifetime had come true. Though exhausted from the six-year campaign for its creation, I was equally exhilarated in that glorious moment when the world celebrated the new park that encompassed magnificent and unsurpassed scenery, gardens of wild plants and majestic animals, all to be preserved in their primeval state for the generations of tomorrow.

How truly extraordinary, then, that I should be here to witness the 100th anniversary of that great moment in history.

And how extraordinary, too, that I should be a messenger of a new dream to all of you. More about that in a moment.

In 2015, much like 1915, I find myself reflecting. I think back to the very first time I beheld Colorado as a lad of 14. I think back to that same boy, one year later, standing on the

summit of 14,259-foot Longs Peak. I think back to over 300 more ascents up that same mountain, 257 of those spent guiding others on their thrilling summits into towering splendor. I think of my time as Colorado's official state snow observer, traversing up and down the Continental Divide, marveling at snowfields, open skies and curious grizzly bears. I think of my time operating Longs Peak Inn and the excited guests whose spirits were restored by days spent in nature's

grandeur. I think of the many courageous people who began to champion the idea of a national park, despite legions of opposition. I think of those six years of writing, lecturing, traveling and pleading the case across the nation. I think of weary days when I considered abandoning a seemingly doomed cause,

In my own time, I reminded my contemporaries that the actions that good people had taken to preserve our greatest natural treasures in the form of national parks was nothing short of epoch-making.

and how, at the right moment, I would receive an encouraging letter from the likes of John Muir, whose hopeful spirit revitalized my own.

And I recall that September day in 1915 when, against all odds, one moment might serve as a rallying cry to us all. In our lives, let us each be inspired to dream our dreams as big as a national park.

For me, 2014 and 2015 were truly

(100 Years Later continued on page 2)



(100 Years Later continued)

the reliving of my greatest dream. Throughout the yearlong festivities of Rocky Mountain National Park's 100th anniversary, I was summoned forth from my repose. I appeared at many special occasions, an ambassador of sorts to this grand centennial — the commemoration of an idea and a place that I discovered remains revered by millions today.

And what an honor, upon the anniversary year finale, to have been among the invited dignitaries on September 4, 2015, when Rocky Mountain National Park was officially rededicated.

In my own time, I reminded my contemporaries that the actions that good people had taken to preserve our greatest natural treasures in the form of national parks was nothing short of epoch-making. In 1915, we did not have the span of time nor the scope of history to appreciate or understand fully the profound magnitude of the great deeds that had been done. Perhaps, I marveled, our civiliza-



tion would begin to have that span of understanding in 25 or 50 years.

Or perhaps in one hundred.

During my remarks at the 1915 dedication of Rocky Mountain National Park, I caused a provocation when I challenged the attendees to dream even bigger. "This park should be expanded!" I declared. I had originally lobbied for Rocky to span 1000 square miles. While I was profoundly grateful for every one of the 350 square miles preserved within those original park boundaries, I never stopped dreaming.

That is why I find myself so grateful for today's Rocky Mountain

Conservancy. The good men and women who support this organization are working not only toward my cherished goals of nature education, but also for the expansion of the national park. In 2015, I learned of a most unique and extraordinary opportunity: the acquisition of Cascade Cottages will secure for Rocky Mountain National Park the largest remaining private holding. I am most hopeful and enthusiastic that this

challenge will be realized.

I will soon be summoned back into the legends of history, but before I go, I invite you to join this great cause. May this new dream be fulfilled for new generations.

Conjuring Enos Mills from the past is no easy feat, but these words were delivered to us by Kurtis Kelly, a history storyteller and reenactor based in Estes Park. Kelly's recent performance as Enos Mills on the prestigious TEDxFrontRange stage can be seen on YouTube online.

Happy Birthday Rocky!!

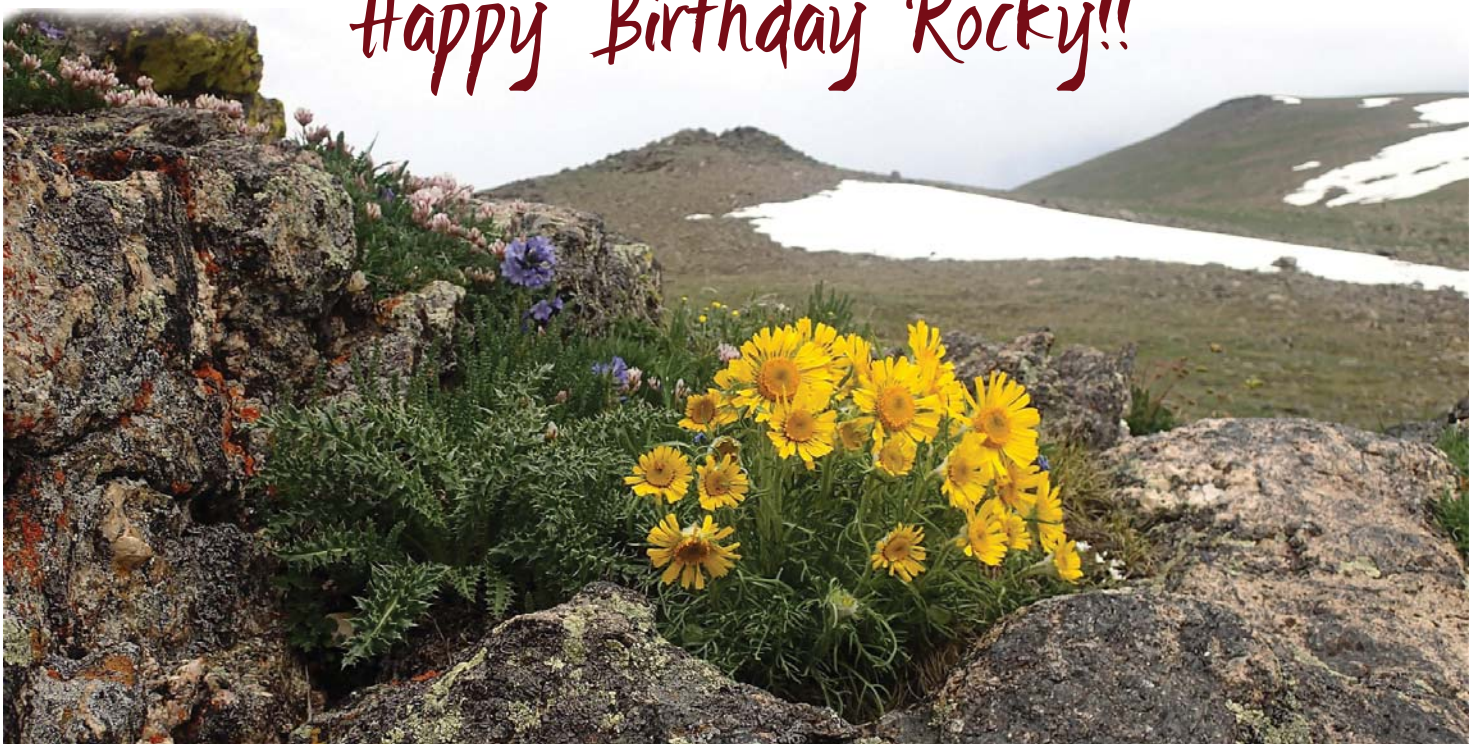
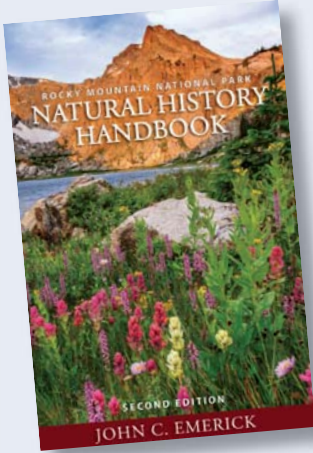


Photo: Marlene Borneman



Rocky Mountain Conservancy Publishes 2nd Edition of Park Classic

Rocky Mountain National Park Natural History Handbook 2nd Edition by John Emerick

From its geological origins to today's inspiring landscapes, a seasoned naturalist reveals the wonders of Rocky Mountain National Park in this natural history handbook, now in its second edition. The region's human history, from ancient hunters to modern settlement, is followed by the geology, climate and the five ecosystem environments found in the park. Striking images enhance the author's comprehensive descriptions of the park's ecosystems and the flora and fauna found in each.

Explore the alpine tundra, a rare and beautiful wilderness found in Rocky above treeline. Discover the life in and around rivers and lakes. Learn about some of the issues facing Rocky. Enjoy this ecological overview of the park and delve into the essence of what has made Rocky one of the most popular national parks in the country. Softcover, 184 pages. \$16.95 plus shipping.

Now available in Conservancy Nature Stores and on our website at RMConservancy.org

Cover photo credits

(Upper): "Autumn Foraging" by Conservancy Member Marlene Borneman, Estes Park, CO; (Lower) "Autumn Morning Bear Lake" by Conservancy Staff Member Jeremiah Ramirez, Estes Park, CO

Please send high-resolution images to nancy.wilson@RMConservancy.org by December 1 for publication in the 2015 Winter Quarterly.

Photos are always appreciated! Scenery, wildlife and wildflowers greatly enhance this publication, so get out there and take a hike! **Thank You!**

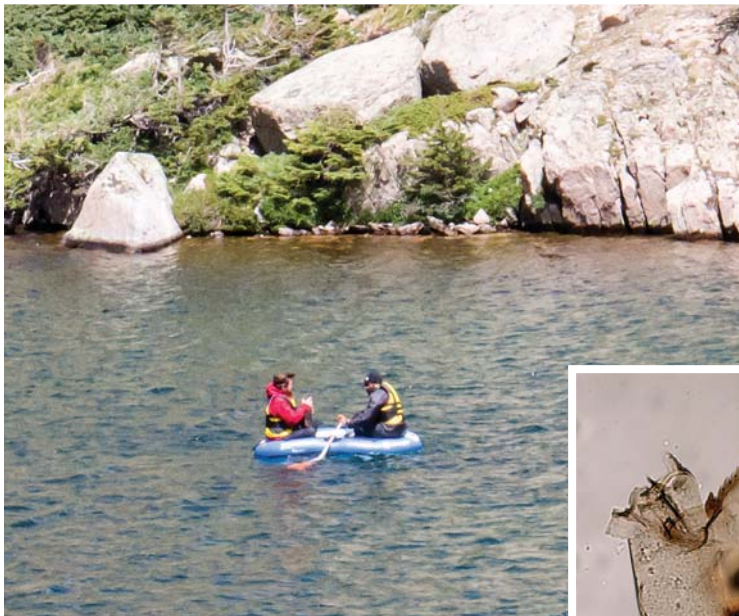
Ask Nancy

Quarterly Editor Nancy Wilson attempts to unearth answers to any questions asked by Conservancy members and park visitors. If you are curious about something in or about the park, email nancy.wilson@rmconservancy.org or write: Nancy Wilson, Rocky Mountain Conservancy, PO Box 3100, Estes Park, CO 80517.

Is the fact that there are only about 24 black bears in the park indicative of any environmental issues, or is this a healthy population for the area? The number of bears estimated in the park from the most recent bear research study between 2003 and 2006 was 20–24 bear (*Baldwin and Bender, 2009*). This estimate was similar to research conducted two decades earlier indicating a relatively low but stable bear population. Low numbers were attributed to high-elevation habitats and short growing seasons which limit natural foods available to bears and results in fewer bears. That research also indicated that bears were utilizing more human food and trash as food sources. Use of these unnatural food sources could increase the bear population. Today, the park is actively working to keep these unnatural food sources away from bears through education and with bear-resistant facilities. Ultimately, a low bear population is simply the result of the natural habitat available and is likely a "healthy" population for the park. — *RMNP Wildlife, Fisheries and Water Rights Biologist Mary Kay Watry*

Are there any flower or other vegetation species from historic homestead and lodge sites that still remain in the park? Yes, a variety of different plants are still at McGraw Ranch. In the early 1900s, Irene McGraw brought balm of Gilead seedlings from Pennsylvania and planted them around the main house. Offshoots from these original trees can still be seen around the main house and throughout the property. Also visible are blue spruce trees that were planted by Frank McGraw between 1946 and 1948. The blue spruce trees were planted between and in front of the cabins, and along the east side of the entry road. Lilacs can be seen at McGraw Ranch, the Mill Creek Ranger Station and around the Backcountry Office. There are two apple trees; one in the Utility Area and another on High Drive – and I'm sure there are more examples within the park. — *RMNP Cultural Resources Specialist Kelly Stehman*

How do the tiny nests of hummingbirds stay secure on the branches on which they are built? Female hummingbirds build their nests 10 to 90 feet high, generally in trees or shrubs (with a few exceptions). They build velvety, compact cups with spongy floors and elastic sides that stretch as the young grow. They weave together twigs, plant fibers, and bits of leaves and use spider silk as threads to bind their nests together and anchor them to the foundation. I've actually seen footage of them flying around the branch pulling the strand of web into place. Luckily, juvenile hummingbirds fledge a mere 18 – 28 days after hatching. Amazing! — *Master Birdbander Brenda Wiard, Salida, CO*



Stephen Cooper (undergrad assistant) and Dave Porinchu (academic advisor and professor extraordinaire) employed an inflatable raft on Eagle Lake to collect characteristics of the lake, such as pH, temperature and conductivity. After collecting data to help classify and characterize the lake, a small corer was used to collect sediment from the center of the lake.

by James Westfall

Photos by James Westfall

Science is not only about stuffy laboratories. Some scientists are lucky enough to gather their data in the outdoor natural lab that is Rocky Mountain National Park. For these scientists, the hard work and often-unpredictable weather conditions are part and parcel with immersion in the spectacular natural beauty found deep within the park.

After an unsuccessful attempt to gather samples of lake sediments in 2014, Ph.D. candidate Danielle Haskett and her advisor Dr. David Porinchu, both from the University of Georgia, returned this year, determined to be successful. I joined them as a park "Science Squad" volunteer, to help carry their loads and show them the way to a few of the lakes in Wild Basin. I also brought along my knowledge of Rocky and its many plants, animals, lakes and mountain peaks. It was part of the deal to carry our 50-pound packs over long miles and up steep slopes to get our food and research equipment to the pristine alpine lakes.

All this to get to the sediments that lurk at the bottom of some of these alpine lakes. But not just any sediments. These particular sediments carry an encrypted record of the climate conditions over the millennia. Using the tools of a science called paleolimnology, this record of climate history can be deciphered. The tools include radioisotope dating of the layers of the sediment and the analysis of head capsules of a small insect, called a chironomid, which is found in the sediment. This analysis gives researchers a way to look back in time and get a glimpse of how Rocky's climate may have changed over the last few hundred years.

Early on in the trip, we feared we might suffer the fate of last year's unsuccessful sampling attempt. On the initial hike in, one of the team members suffered from altitude sickness and had to be escorted back to town and medical care. Then, the weather

Research adventures in the park...

A Sedimental Journey to Uncover Past Climates in Rocky



A microscope image of a head capsule from Cladopelma that was collected in 2012 from the Sawatch Range. It is a genus that belongs to the "bloodworm" tribe Chironomini. This tribe typically have beautiful fan-shaped ventromental plates and exaggerated teeth on the mentum, making it relatively easy to identify.

dealt us a severe blow. While we were collecting sediment samples on Cony Lake, the wind pushed the team's raft into shore where it was severely damaged. However, we were able to gather water samples which, though a secondary goal, immediately made this year's effort a step more successful than 2014.

Additionally, while stuck up in the mountains without a boat, the team did have the opportunity to continue their acclimation to the altitude and

enjoy the spectacular alpine scenery at the Pear Lake backcountry site while we waited for a support team to help us carry out our gear.

We hiked back out to the trailhead to pick up a new boat, patch kit, and extra supplies for the rest of the trip. We then turned around and hiked back up to the remote

Sleeping under a starry sky in this delightful alpine setting made all the hard work worthwhile — and what science lab can compete with this?

sites of Eagle and Box lakes. We had perfect weather which allowed us to successfully collect sediment cores from both lakes. Excited by this accomplishment, we returned to camp for our evening meal, where we found

that a hungry black bear had come to join us for dinner. We caught him red-pawed (so to speak), attempting to break into our “cookie jar,” a.k.a. the bear canister, without any luck. The bear was easily intimidated by our gentle hazing efforts and wandered off to find food more suitable for a bear.

Pipit Lake was our next goal for obtaining samples of lake sediments. But first we had to overcome the logistical challenge of transporting a large quantity of gear with our minimal staff to our camp at Upper Ouzel Creek. Fourteen miles and 3,000 feet later, we successfully landed all the gear at the campsite. Sleeping under a starry sky in this delightful alpine setting made all the hard work worthwhile — and what science lab can compete with this?

Pipit Lake offered the usual challenges of scrambling over giant boulders, negotiating snowfields and bashing through thickets of krummholz. By now we realized that this was just another fine day at the office. Adventure comes with the territory.

This turned out to be a hard but successful research campaign in

Rocky. The samples we took will help Danielle complete her research and finalize her dissertation. She will one day enter the ranks of scientists studying our climate history and her work will become a valuable part of the knowledge that describes conditions that exist in Rocky now and will help infer conditions that existed during the past few hundred years. Danielle’s work also provides a baseline against which other scientists can make comparisons for decades to come.

It was challenging gathering these data at these remote high elevation lakes, but who says that science and the pursuit of new information should be easy? While this experience was no walk in the park, it was fun to be a small part of this worthy project. It also gave me a unique opportunity to see firsthand that park research involves a lot more than sitting in a lab, peering into a microscope.

Jim Westfall received a Bachelor’s degree in Biology from the University of California, Santa Barbara, in the early 70s. He then lost his way and spent the next 40+ years doing engineering physics. Now that he is retired, Jim has found his way again and spends as much time as possible volunteering at Rocky Mountain National Park supporting research efforts within the Resource Stewardship Group and with the Continental Divide Research Learning Center (CDRLC).

The chironomid life cycle begins with an adult fly depositing an egg mass on the surface of the lake. This mass falls down through the water column and eventually settles at the bottom of the lake. Worm-like larvae hatch and exist on the sediment-water interface where they grow and change through four different stages (or instars). These larvae possess a

hard, chitinous head capsule that is left behind in the sediment and preserved for future study. The chironomids then metamorphose to pupae that rise through the water column. When they emerge from the water, the process is complete and they become a winged adult.

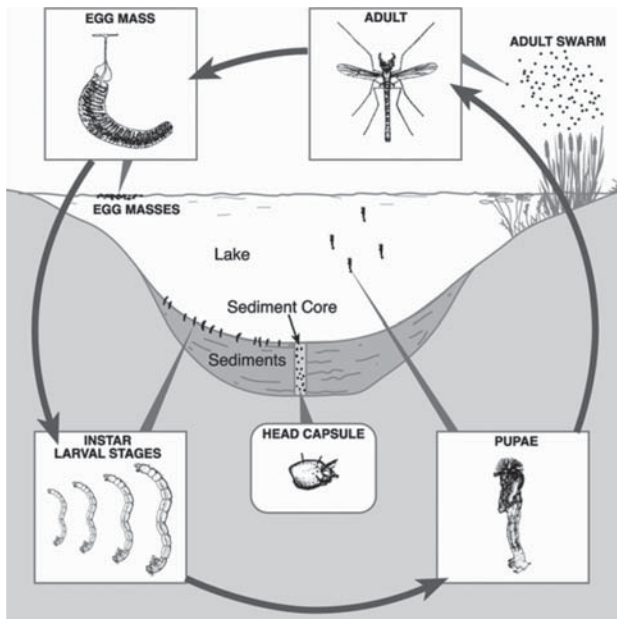
Lifecycle figure: Porinchi, D.F. and MacDonald, G.M. 2003. The use and application of freshwater midges in geographical research. *Progress in Physical Geography*, 27: 409-453.



Sediments collected from the center of the lake are often sectioned in the field as soon as possible. The core collected from Pipit Lake was sectioned at 0.25 cm increments which will offer high-resolution data for environmental and climatic change. The sediment in the image clumped together nicely due to the high clay content present and made the sediment easier to bag for future analysis.

Continental Divide Research Learning Center Volunteers

Jim Westfall is a shining example of the volunteers involved in the Continental Divide Research Learning Center’s “Science Squad” at Rocky Mountain National Park. Jim assists our research partners by ensuring that the field research is done in a safe and environmentally sensitive manner. He provides logistical support for the scientists, helps with data collection, and gathers stories of scientific discovery through writing and photography. Some assignments require extensive backcountry skills, other assignments such as collecting visitor use data or assisting with citizen science projects are less physically demanding. To learn more about joining the Science Squad, contact Paul McLaughlin at paul_mclaughlin@nps.gov. To learn about all the volunteering opportunities in the park, contact Lindsey Lewis at lindsey_lewis@nps.gov.





A Conservation Corps Story: Bringing the Little Buckaroo Barn Back to Life

by Jenna Mulligan

Kawuneeche Valley is an Arapaho name that means “valley of the coyote,” and it is where the sixth and newest Rocky Mountain Conservancy Conservation Corps crew lived and worked this summer. As a member of this crew, I woke on many mornings to the yips and howls of coyotes in the meadows below the Never Summer Mountains, their calls drifting in through my window just as the sun rose.

This crew focused efforts on the historic buildings within the park instead of the trails that stretch throughout it, and we worked alongside and under the direction of the Historic Preservation and Special Projects section of the Park Service.

Our work this summer primarily centered at two sites on the west side of the park: the restoration of the Lake Irene mess hall, and the stabilization of the Little Buckaroo Barn on the former Betty Dick property. While our goals for the two structures were similar — essentially, keeping them standing and secure — the buildings and their locations required very different approaches and work methods.

The Lake Irene mess hall sits near the Lake Irene parking lot and picnic area, with access to Lake Irene only a quarter mile down the trail. Our first days at the worksite were spent shoveling eight-foot banks of snow from the sides of the building we would be restoring — a former mess hall and residence that was built in 1926 by the Park Service and used for the subsequent 50 years. NPS workers and later, members of the Civilian Conservation Corps, used this building while constructing Trail Ridge Road.

After freeing the ground from its winter dormancy beneath the snow, we learned how to build scaffolding, which we raised around the cabin’s perimeter. To begin the roofing project, we had to saw off and replace the ends of the sturdy log rafters that had rotted, matching the size and the descending angle of each rafter beam before drilling rebar and securing the end tails with sticky black epoxy glue.

We then peeled back and sloughed off layers of weathered grey shingles and spent the next weeks layering that

roof with the rich rust color of cedar shake shingles. As novice roofers, we learned about the need for precision in laying the shingles for each row, the pattern of the shingles that vary in size, and the hand cramps inflicted by the endless firing of the nail gun, all of which resulted in immense pride as

we placed the last pieces on the central crown of that roof.

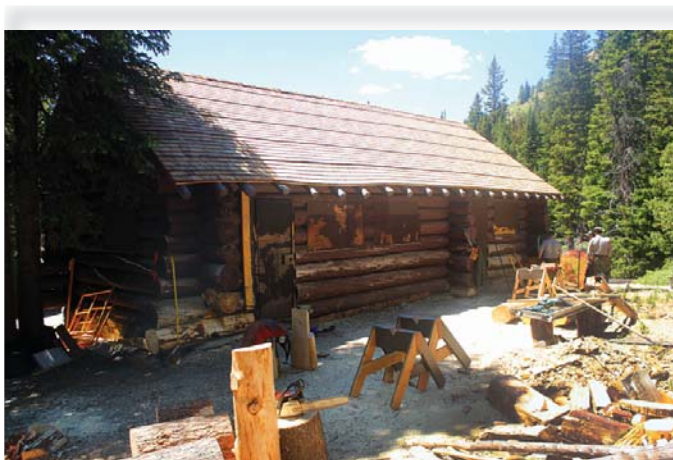
Additional projects to restore this structure included a reconstructed exterior staircase and new bracing where logs had rotted away.

Down the road, the iconic Little Buckaroo Barn stands in a meadow at the edge of the Continental Divide Trail that passes through Rocky. The historic barn is situated in proposed wilderness which restricted our work to using only hand-mechanized tools and gave us a quarter-mile haul between our truck and the worksite. But the views were astonishing from that trail — thick morning fog shrouding tall grasses, clouds rolling in over Baker Peak, moose strolling all around us.

This barn was built in the 1940s, and in order to enter it, three of our crewmembers were trained and fitted with respirators. Dressed in full protective suits, they spent hours spraying down the entire interior with Clorox to eliminate any possibility of anyone contracting hantavirus.

At the time of this writing, our shingling process on this barn has been similar to the Lake Irene mess hall on both the hayloft and main level of the roof, though executed by handsaws and human-powered hammers. Before the summer ends, we will have replaced the supportive crossbeams and exterior siding to safeguard its place as a west-side jewel for years to come.

Jenna Mulligan just graduated with a degree in Journalism and Spanish from Gonzaga University in Spokane, WA. This was her first summer with the Rocky Mountain Conservancy - Conservation Corps.





The last great Ice Age was over and the climate was warming when the first paleo-hunters came to Moraine Park and Estes Park, two scenic valleys in today's Rocky Mountain National Park area. Other Indian tribes, notably the Ute and Arapaho, followed in their footprints to stalk the valleys' abundant game.

Trappers, explorers and adven-

A Next Generation Fund Project

Mountain Valley Journals

Sketches of Moraine Park and Estes Park Through Time

turers came and went as America completed its westward expansion. Pioneer settlers built cattle ranches. In the Estes Valley, a tiny settlement grew into a renowned national park gateway resort. In Moraine Park, a different story played out.

This book's beautiful illustrations by noted Denver artist Thomas Haller Buchanan will take you on a trip through 12,000 years of history in the Moraine Park and Estes Park valleys. Artists' journal entries give

voice to iconic characters representing key periods along the valleys' historical timeline and introduce readers to important people and events that shaped the valleys — past and present. Softcover, \$12.95 plus shipping.

Now available in Conservancy Nature Stores in park visitor centers, and on our website at RMConservancy.org

Park Puzzler

by RM Conservancy Member Joel Kaplow

Across

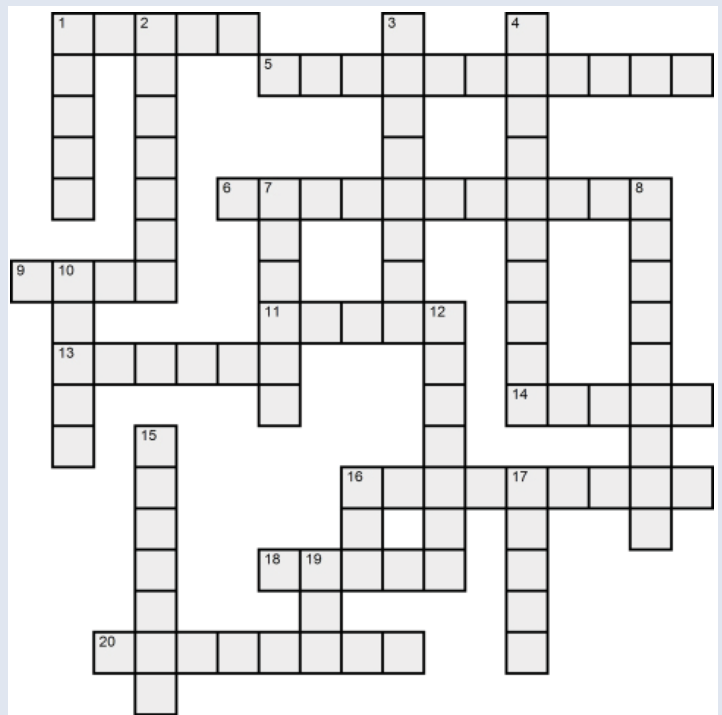
- Rainbow, brown, brook and cutthroat are types of ___ anglers go for in RMNP.
- Sometimes Mother Nature ain't nice. Common in the bird world, if a little 'un is too small, too slow or less fit, a parent may aggressively do away with it, or passively withhold food or abandon it. If the critter succumbs, this is termed as ___.
- William ___ wrote, "One touch of nature makes the whole world kin."
- Backcountry campers in Rocky must bring ___-resistant food canisters on their excursions. These can be rented or bought in conveniently located Estes Park and Grand Lake.
- During Rocky's dedication ceremony one hundred years ago, 16-Across said, "I have lived to see the realization of a great ___ come true."
- While hiking in the park's high country, you may be startled by a well-camouflaged white-tailed ptarmigan fluttering up in front of you. They are the smallest members of the ___ family.
- You can have all of your bighorn questions answered at the ___ Lakes information station in Horseshoe Park.
- Local luminary ___ served as emcee at Rocky Mountain National Park's dedication ceremony on Sept 4, 1915. (2 wds.)
- Which of the park's non-hibernating critters have fur on the soles of their feet to help them get a grip on winter's ice and snow?
- What was the first state to adopt an air-quality standard specifically designed to protect a national park?

Down

- At the time of Rocky's birth in 1915, it was staffed by full complement of ___ rangers!
- RMNP backcountry permits, at \$26 a pop, are required between May 1 and ___ 31, leaving the hardier winter campers fee-free.
- About 75% of 18-Across' stored food consists of alpine avens, which just happens to contain chemicals that act as a preservative, and slow the growth of ___. *How did they know?*
- The RM Conservancy asked Fall River Productions of Estes Park to put together a film for the Centennial, and they came through with ___, *Wildlife, Wonder*, which can be viewed at the Beaver Meadows and Kawuneeche visitor centers. You can also buy the DVD there to bring home.
- The Junior Ranger Headquarters can be found at Rocky's ___ Valley, site of the dismantled ski area.
- Banned by the EPA in 1972, DDT had a deleterious effect on countless animals, but birds of prey such as falcons, hawks, ospreys and eagles were

especially impacted, as it caused thinning of their ___, and their numbers plummeted.

- At RMNP's tundra elevation, the average daily temperature is below freezing for up to ___ months of the year.
- When the park's ___, plump members of the squirrel family, go into hibernation, they slow their heartbeat to one per minute, and breathe about once every five minutes in their communal burrows.
- Located on Trail Ridge Road at 11,796 feet, Rocky boasts the highest ___ center in the national park system.
- With a special license fee and a "qualifying donation" to the Rocky Mountain Conservancy, you can be the envy of your block with a Rocky Mountain National Park license plate. It features a depiction of a bull ___ in the center, and will be appearing soon in a driveway near you.
- To deter visitors from digging up the ground in RMNP, ___ detectors may not be used here.
- For a hard-but-doable and rewarding hike, start at Milner Pass and walk south on the well-defined trail. After 4.8 miles and 2,100 feet of gain, you'll be standing proudly on top of Mt. ___.



Cascade Cottages: Your Centennial Gift to Rocky Mountain National Park



Photo: Gene Putney

Rocky Mountain National Park's centennial celebrates a historic milestone for this magnificent and beloved place. In honor of this occasion, the Rocky Mountain Conservancy looks forward to the next 100 years by providing those who love the park an opportunity to fulfill the park's greatest and most meaningful needs. The last remaining privately held property within park boundaries is waiting to be placed within the protection of the public domain. The acquisition of this highly visible 40-acre parcel is the park's highest priority for this centennial year, and we ask for your support and generosity to continue the proud tradition of permanently protecting these lands.



Situated within one mile of the Fall River entrance to the park, the property's 40 acres is divided by Fall River Road, with roughly half the land on the north side of the road and half on the south.

The north side is currently undeveloped and provides habitat for a variety of wildlife, including the iconic bighorn sheep. The south side is randomly developed with more than a dozen rustic

cabins and multiple gravel lanes spread along an especially scenic stretch of Fall River where the river transforms from a meandering stream to a roaring cascade. The cabins are currently rented during the summer, catering primarily to short-term visitors.

Why this campaign matters

Imagine that you are visiting Rocky Mountain National Park for the first time, maybe it is even your first national park, as is it is for millions of Americans from east of the Rockies. Excitement

builds as you enter the park on U.S. Highway 34. You pass by a campground and through pristine meadows with grazing elk.

And there, within the first couple of minutes of your park experience, you discover a welcoming wooded glade on the banks of a roaring river. You are completely surrounded by the sounds of nature and the absence of the trappings of the modern world. You think, "Now I understand what national parks are all about."

Or, imagine a different scenario. You round that first turn to find development

spread out on both sides of the road, obscuring your view of the river and limiting your opportunities to have the ideal park experience.

Both of these scenarios are possible, but right now we have the opportunity to choose. The Cascade Cottages property has been in private hands since before Rocky Mountain National Park was established 100 years ago. Now, we can preserve and protect it for the enjoyment of all those first-time and hundredth-time visitors.

Forty acres along Fall River Road within a mile of the entrance to the park — what an extraordinary gift to the American people as a part of the centennial celebration of Rocky Mountain National Park and the National Park Service. You, together with other friends of the Rocky Mountain Conservancy, can make this gift a reality!

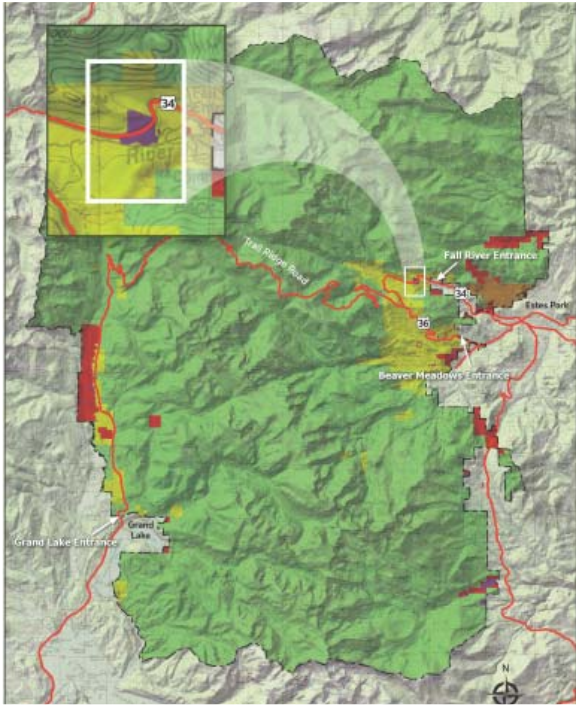
Why the timing is critical

The owners of Cascade Cottages have indicated a desire to sell the property as soon as is practical. Honoring the wishes of their grandfather, they have provided Rocky Mountain National Park the first right of refusal on the sale. Our partner, The Trust for Public Land (TPL), has secured an option to purchase the property for inclusion in the park.

Thanks to this opportunity, we are at a once-in-a-lifetime crossroads where



Photo: Julie Klett



Located just inside the Fall River Entrance of Rocky Mountain National Park, the 40 acres for this property spans the road to encompass prime bighorn sheep habitat.

we must make the best decision for the park and those who love it.

One path leads to the regrettable impact that could be caused by a new commercial lodging operation requiring new utilities, larger accommodations and creating increased traffic.

The other route offers the permanent preservation of open space, maintenance of important wildlife corridors, and access to a beautiful stretch of wild water. The National Park Service, the Rocky Mountain Conservancy, and TPL have committed to the latter. Together, we have identified this acquisition as the park's highest priority and the signature project of Rocky Mountain National Park's centennial and the 100th anniversary of the founding of the National Park Service.

About the Property

As the map to the left illustrates, the Cascade Cottages property is in a highly visible and well-traveled part of the park.

Every year, the hundreds of thousands of visitors that enter the park by way of the Fall River Entrance pass through the property. Additionally, the popular Aspenglen Campground is within walking (and hearing) distance, just to the east of the parcel.

Stunning Horseshoe Park, a favorite elk and bighorn sheep viewing area, is immediately around the next bend to the west. And Fall River, which marks the property's southernmost border, after meandering its way through Horseshoe Park, offers trout fishing opportunities for anglers.

What we will do

The Rocky Mountain Conservancy is undertaking the acquisition of Cascade Cottages in partnership with TPL. TPL has a long and very successful history of placing lands of high ecological or historic value into the public domain. TPL with their legal, real estate, government and community relations expertise will take the lead in negotiating a fair market price for the property with the landowners.

A preliminary estimate of the purchase and acquisition costs is \$3.6 million. Of this, the Conservancy has identified more than \$500,000 within its own resources to launch the campaign and leverage initial gifts. It is expected that the campaign will have a three-year horizon with the purchase taking place in 2016 or early 2017.

Following the acquisition and transfer of the land to the National Park Service, Rocky Mountain National Park and the Conservancy will assess the land and structures for restoration and/or reuse.

Located within Rocky Mountain National Park and with more than 14,000 donors and members, the Rocky Mountain Conservancy is uniquely qualified to acquire the private inholding known as Cascade Cottages and fully support its incorporation into Rocky Mountain National Park.

As you view the map above, note that the entire Cascade Cottages parcel is surrounded by land that is currently under the protection of Rocky Mountain National Park. You also will note that it is the only significant property left in the area (within park boundaries) that remains unprotected. With your help, we will secure this missing piece of the puzzle and place it under protection forever.

Protection

It is not enough to understand the natural world; the point is to defend and preserve it.
— Edward Abbey



Photo: Scott Pope

Join us! Make your gift or pledge today.

To get involved, or for more information, contact:

Charles Money, Executive Director
970-586-0108

Charles.Money@RMConservancy.org
RMConservancy.org

Rocky Mountain National Park Fund Project Priorities Identified for 2016



BEST USE

Selecting this option for your gift allows us flexibility to respond quickly to greatest needs as they arise. There are many ways your donation may be used to support the park, including projects and programs such as trail restoration, youth education, publications and exhibits, land protection, historic preservation and much more. These and many other projects would not be possible without you.

Please give what you can today using the convenient envelope attached.



CASCADE COTTAGES CENTENNIAL CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

The last remaining privately held commercial property within park boundaries is waiting to be placed within the protection of the public domain. The acquisition of this highly visible 40-acre parcel is the park's highest priority for this centennial year. Undesignated gifts are the most versatile donations we receive because they allow us to apply the funds when and where they are most needed.



NEXT GENERATION FUND

With great support from our friends, the Rocky Mountain Conservancy makes sizable contributions to the educational programs of Rocky Mountain National Park — to the tune of more than \$500K per year. Highly regarded programs for youth include the beloved Junior Ranger Program, park internships, our own Conservation Corps, and Field Institute classes for kids. Help reach and inspire many thousands of young people, the youth who will care for our public lands in the future.

CONSERVATION CORPS

Every summer, the Conservancy engages youth through the Conservation Corps program, providing life-changing experiences through working and learning in our public lands. Young people get on-the-ground conservation experience, gain knowledge of conservation and resource management, and receive training and professional development to foster their ongoing personal and professional growth as the future stewards of our public lands. *"The Rocky Mountain Conservancy Conservation Corps program is truly special. It has given me two of the best summers of my life, as both a Rawah crew member and the Boulder crew leader. It has made me a better leader, a more experienced woodsman, and a more competent steward of our public lands."* — Reid Grinspoon

RMNP License Plate Available January, 2016

Thanks to the overwhelming support of thousands of Colorado residents, the Rocky Mountain National Park Group Special License Plate will soon be a reality. The Conservancy will administer this group special license plate which will be available to Colorado-registered vehicle owners. It will not replace the standard Colorado state license plate, but will be a voluntary fund-raising option through the State's Group Special Plate program.

In addition to the usual fees imposed by the state for a special plate, a \$30 donation to the Rocky Mountain Conservancy (the park's



official fund-raising partner organization) will be assessed. 100% of the funds generated, estimated at thousands of dollars annually, will directly support Rocky Mountain National Park.

To learn more, visit the Rocky Mountain Conservancy's website at RMConservancy.org.



Dear Friends,

As you know, 2015 is Rocky Mountain National Park's centennial year. The Rocky Mountain Conservancy has worked hand-in-hand with the park for 85 of those 100 years, carrying forward the hopes and dreams of Enos Mills and the many others who had the foresight to protect this magnificent place for everyone to enjoy.

Together with other friends of the park and the Rocky Mountain Conservancy, your generosity supported the park in those first 100 years, building and restoring trails, protecting land and historic structures, and, perhaps most importantly, educating visitors about their park and nurturing the public lands stewards of the future. Thank you!

This momentous occasion has also tasked the Conservancy with perhaps our most significant land protection opportunity to date — the Centennial Campaign for Cascade Cottages. The park has requested our help to purchase this 40-acre commercial inholding near the Fall River Entrance, and we have wholeheartedly agreed. With your help, and with the assistance of the Trust for Public Land, we will raise the \$3.6 million needed to acquire this parcel and we will transfer it to the park for permanent protection. What auspicious timing! We can think of no better gift to the park in honor of its 100th birthday and on the eve of the National Park Service's own centennial. We hope you will consider being a part of this challenging effort that will help complete the park as its founders envisioned.

Our priorities for 2016:

Best Use: As always, selecting this option for your gift allows us the flexibility to respond quickly to greatest needs as they arise. There are many ways your donation may be used to support the park, including the Cascade Cottages project.

The Cascade Cottages Centennial Capital Campaign: We are just halfway toward raising the \$3.6 million to purchase and protect this 40-acre privately held parcel near the Fall River Entrance. The sooner we meet our goal, the sooner this land will be permanently protected. (Learn more by watching the short film on this project at RMConservancy.org)

The Next Generation Fund: This year, thanks to you, the park's Education staff served nearly 11,000 students in Front Range schools from Ft. Collins to Denver. Many of these same students were also able to visit the park. In 2015, approximately 44,000 Junior Ranger booklets were distributed and 16,000 children received their badges! YOU can provide life-changing environmental education for thousands of kids again this year.

The Rocky Mountain Conservancy — Conservation Corps: This summer, you placed 36 enthusiastic youth in conservation crews in RMNP and nearby national forests. They maintained 320 miles of trail, restored the historic Little Buckaroo Barn, planted 4,500 native seedlings, and more, all on YOUR public lands. Help us continue these efforts in 2016.

Whichever project is closest to your heart, please take a moment to return the enclosed envelope with your first gift for the next 100 years! *You* make the Conservancy's work possible. Thank you! We simply can't do it without your help.

As always, contact me any time. I'd love to hear from you.

Best regards.

Charles A. Money
Executive Director

! You can also make
a gift online at
RMConservancy.org

Nature. Pass it on.

Conservancy Transfers Johnson Property to Rocky

Completing a land protection effort that began in 2012, the Rocky Mountain Conservancy announced in early August that it had transferred the Johnson Property to Rocky Mountain National Park.

In 2012, Rocky Mountain National Park identified the private inholding known as the Johnson Property as a high priority for acquisition and enlisted the Conservancy's assistance to raise the needed funds. The 3.89-acre parcel is located on the park's west side in the scenic Kawuneeche Valley, home of the headwaters of the Colorado River, and within view of the Continental Divide Trail.

More than 900 donors contributed to the \$400,000 project to purchase the Johnson Property so that it could be transferred to RMNP for permanent protection. The property was purchased by the Conservancy in February 2013.

Now that the transfer is complete, the park will remove several small structures, power lines and a one-mile access road. The land will be returned to its natural state, enhancing valuable wildlife habitat and improving the visitor experience.

"The addition of this property to Rocky Mountain National Park continues the legacy of community support and individual philanthropy established by Enos Mills, F.O. Stanley, Mrs. John D. Sherman and others who founded this park," said Charles Money, the Conservancy's executive director. "This is especially significant during this, the park's centennial year," he added.

The Rocky Mountain Conservancy has an ongoing Land Protection Fund which sets aside money for future land protection efforts. Often, property sales by willing owners have a short time frame to allow for acquisition and long term protection. This fund allows the organization to move quickly to purchase available parcels. Donations are always welcome and needed.

Funds received by the Conservancy from the transfer of the land to the park will be applied to future land acquisition projects.

*Bringing up the Next Generation*Six-year-old Ellie Kostadinov
Summits Longs Peak*Under the watchful guidance of mom and dad...*

and wanted to take on such a thing. And we needed to let her know that it was okay to make an attempt and not reach the top. We also needed to let her know that we may abort the climb at any time for any reason, and that she would have to be okay with that.

My husband, Alex, is the only person I would trust to keep my daughter safe on a peak of this magnitude. He worked as a professional mountain guide for more than a decade, and he is the most skilled alpinist I know. And no one has a more vested interest in keeping our daughter safe than he and I. And I knew I needed to be there, too.

In preparation, I climbed Longs Peak six times in June and July in order to perform reconnaissance for the route so that I would be well versed on up-to-the-day conditions on the peak. I even stood on the summit just the day before we began our journey with our little daughter.

Nothing about this undertaking was flippant, cavalier or careless.

When the weather forecast surprised us with favorable conditions during the time our friends were planning to attempt Longs Peak with their daughter, we made the decision to join them at the campsite they had reserved at the Boulder Field which lies at 12,750 feet, at the base of the more challenging section of the Keyhole Route of Longs Peak. The high elevation of this camp is one of the reasons we needed a three-day window of good weather, and somehow we got it.

We hiked the six miles to the Boulder Field camp on Monday, July 27, and met up with our friends. The girls had a great time and even roasted marshmallows over the camp stove. Our friends had attempted to climb to the summit that day with their seven-year-old daughter, and she had made a valiant effort and climbed three-quarters of the way up The Trough before turning back. They opted to hike out to the trailhead the next day, just as we were going to begin our summit bid.

On Tuesday, July 28, we geared up for the climb and tackled the very complicated terrain to the summit of Longs Peak. We roped Ellie up at the Agnes Vaille Memorial Shelter below the Keyhole formation and negotiated the 1.5 miles of tricky terrain to the summit, with Alex short-roping her the entire way (the rope there only in case of a

fall, but not to aid in climbing), and with me behind as a spotter. We laughed. We sang songs. We stopped for "snuggle breaks." We ate lots of M&M's and Sour Patch Kids.

We made it to the summit of Longs Peak. Ellie was elated, and

two marmots provided ample entertainment on top. Our climbing day started out windy, which helped us a lot, because it turned around all of the casual hikers at The Keyhole. We knew that the wind was forecast to die down as the day wore on, and we also knew that once we passed through The Keyhole formation and turned the corner onto The Ledges that we would be more sheltered from the brunt of it. With the majority of the hikers turning back at The Keyhole, we avoided the usual hordes of people climbing up The Trough, across The Narrows, and up The Homestretch, which created minimal risk for rockfall or dealing with dreaded bottlenecks at crucial points along the route.

After we enjoyed some magical family time on the summit of Longs Peak, appreciating the views, reveling in the glory of Ellie's accomplishment, and having a hearty lunch, we descended back to the Boulder Field camp for a second night.

On Wednesday, July 29, we hiked the six long miles back to the Longs Peak Trailhead.

Ellie did it all under her own power, all with a smile on her face, singing songs as she went, and all with great joy and appreciation for the beauty of the scenery and the peak.

It was a beautiful and powerful experience and I am forever grateful to have shared these moments with her.

Once in the tent on Tuesday night, after the big climb, she said to me, "Mama, I want to climb it again, I loved it!" After I recovered from my shock, I laughed and jested, "Okay, how about tomorrow?" Ellie thought about it, and replied, "No, not tomorrow. But soon. Good night, Mama!" And she snuggled down into her sleeping bag and went fast to sleep.

Congratulations to my sweet girl!



Kostadinov/Foster family on the summit of Longs Peak, July 28, 2015

by Lisa Foster

Photos by Lisa Foster

For years, people have asked me when I was going to take my daughter, Ellie, up Longs Peak, the highest peak in Rocky Mountain National Park. My answer has always been "When she's 18 and can make her own decisions!" But this past summer, a friend called me and explained that his seven-year-old daughter set a goal for herself to climb Longs Peak. She had a tough training schedule, which included hiking Flattop Mountain and Mount Chiquita. He asked if my 6-year-old daughter and I would like to join them. I immediately said "No!" Ellie overheard this conversation and told me that she wanted to climb Longs Peak with her friend. She had heard about Longs Peak for years, and her bedroom window has an impressive view of the 14,259 foot peak. Every day we assessed the weather in terms of whether or not it's a "Longs Peak day."

In kindergarten last year, her class read the story *High as a Hawk: A Brave Girl's Historic Climb*, by T.A. Barron, about 8-year-old Harriet Peters, who climbed Longs Peak in 1905 with Enos Mills, the founder of Rocky Mountain National Park. My daughter has climbed three 14ers to date, two when she was five, and one this past summer, when she was six. I deemed those 14ers "safer" than Longs because they are not as hazardous and not as lengthy. But when Ellie kept asking about climbing Longs Peak with her friend, I asked my husband about the prospect, fully anticipating him to scoff and say "No way!" Instead, he thoughtfully laid out the conditions under which he would allow such an undertaking. And then he said he wanted to do it. We needed a three-day stretch of good weather, including a weather forecast that had a zero percent chance of thunderstorms. The summer of 2015 was a monsoon season of sorts, with rain forecast almost every day. So, I thought a forecast like that made an ascent with Ellie very unlikely. We also needed to make sure that our daughter understood the scope of the project



Alex Kostadinov and Ellie negotiate The Ledges of Longs Peak.



Rocky Mountain Conservancy

The Rocky Mountain Conservancy expresses special thanks to the following people for their donations toward projects in Rocky Mountain National Park:

June 17, 2015 – September 21, 2015
247 gifts ~ total donations \$264,248

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CORRECTION:
 The summer 2015 *Quarterly* mis-
 takenly posted a donation toward
 Best Use as given by Helen Anderson
 in memory of Marianne Lynch.

The correct listing is as follows:
 Helen Anderson and Roger Walton,
 Lakewood, CO:

In Memory of Jerome Lynch
Our most sincere apologies!

PARK PUZZLER SOLUTION





(From left) Hiking buddies Douglas Klink, Forrest Shafer, Jennifer Klink, Madeline Wilson and Joey Sisk at Bluebird Lake (Photo: Madeline Wilson)

"You are so lucky to have grown up in such a beautiful place!" the tourists would tell me regularly.

"Yeah, it's fine," I'd respond stoically. And so it went for the first eighteen years of my life.

I was born in Estes Park, Colorado, and for my entire life I've lived a mere ten-minute drive from Rocky Mountain National Park. For eighteen years, I barely noticed these mountains — the silent giants that surround my little hometown. I liked horses, gymnastics, writing stories and was vehemently opposed to any activity that contained the words *hiking* or *national park*. Despite having raised me in and near national parks my entire life, I'm pretty sure my parents had given up on me developing any appreciation of the natural world.

My senior year of high school was the hardest I had encountered to date. In a world of college applications, tattered friendships and an unknown future, I found myself searching for something I didn't understand. I suppose I was looking for a sense of security, a place to rely on. And so, the day before graduation, through some unexplained, unexpected twist of events — the reasoning behind this still confounds me today — I decided to go hiking.

Perhaps it was the desire to escape the seemingly insurmountable challenges that confronted me starting college; perhaps it was the subconscious need that the mountains remained a stagnant refuge when everything around me was changing. I'm not sure I'll ever know.

In any case, I called up my best friend, Jennifer, and our acquaintance, Forrest,

A Voice From the Next Generation...

Finding Home in Rocky

by Madeline Wilson

whom I knew liked to hike in the park, and we headed for Sky Pond. As it turned out, we didn't make it to our destination that day. Instead, we arrived at Lake of Glass where Jennifer was convinced that we were actually at Sky Pond. I had fallen, covering my thigh in tiny cuts — and it was snowing. So, we turned around. But that hike sparked what would grow to become a massive wildfire within me.

The three of us hiked all summer with a couple other close friends, each week choosing harder and more obscure destinations. The cycle repeated the following summer. Each year I spent at college in the flatlands of Minnesota intensified my desire to return to the mountains. At first, I enjoyed the hikes because it meant quality time spent adventuring with my friends. But this interest has grown and developed into a passion for the mountains so great that I spent almost every one of my limited days off this summer rising at the crack of dawn to get on the trail — alone or with my mom.

Looking back, I can see that this spark was in me all along. I see it in the home videos of me at age two, frolicking in the freezing cold lakes; the pride in my childhood

summits of the rocky hill behind my house. It's in the summer evenings on the deck with our family friend, Curt, reading aloud *Madeline of the Mountains*, the adventure stories he wrote for me. It's the hikes my mom and I took with my best friend's family every Sunday one summer in middle school, and the smell of the fabric of my dad's park ranger uniform when I hugged him each day he returned from work. This thread the color of mountains is woven into every value my parents instilled in me.

So, this year, as we celebrate our park turning one hundred years old, I urge you: Teach your children to love this planet we call home. Don't give up on us. We may seem uninterested or blow you off; we may pay more attention to our cell phones; it may seem pointless and you may want to quit — but please, don't. The life I lead and the things I love are proof that gently and persistently offering your children access to the natural world can quietly foster a deeply seated appreciation for nature.

I'm 21 now, and these days I am proud to call Rocky not only one of my favorite places in the world, but also one of those I know best. This summer, I hiked more than 350 miles to remote and incredibly beautiful places. I pushed through the aching joints, bone spurs, blisters the size of cherries, and a nasty encounter with high-altitude pulmonary edema. I've stitched up holes in my shoes so they could hike another mile and covered my backpack with relics from my travels: the shoelace we found on Mount Lady Washington, the beads from Peru that Forrest gave me one windy morning at Andrew's Tarn, and the little American flag I happened across halfway down Meeker.

Each time I leave again for college, I leave a part of myself in these mountains, but I carry with me something so much bigger. So, thanks Mom and Dad, for opening up this world to me and letting me fall in love with it at my own pace. And happy 100th, Rocky. You've given me a place to call home and shown me what it means to truly live.



Engaging with the park as one's playground may just be the ticket for the next generation of park stewards! (Photo: Stuart Gordon)

Madeline Wilson is a senior at St. Olaf College in Northfield, Minnesota, and is studying for her B.A. in Nursing.



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It's that time of year!

Photo: Conservancy Member Jim Ward

Nature Notes

Significant rainfall occurred in spring and early summer, but from July onward, it's been a dry season. Nonetheless, those early rains did sustain the green meadows and rushing creeks in the area for longer than usual, even into late August....Park Ecologist **Hanem Abouelezz** confirmed rumors of (two) river otter on the east side of the park. The park's "Exotics Crew" saw a river otter in late September in the Big Thompson River, adjacent to Bear Lake Road, right near Moraine Park....Conservancy member and photographer **Gene Putney** was at Sheep Lakes in mid-August watching an elk herd in the meadow when he heard someone mention that a bull moose was in the meadow down the road. In disbelief, he went to check it out; and sure enough, a young bull moose was grazing in the meadow, just down the road from the ponds toward the park entrance....Also, in early July, Gene spotted an American mink in the Endovalley Picnic Area that was taking a break in the shade by the river. It was characteristically long, black and slinky. As he watched, it scampered along the water's edge and slipped into a hole in the riverbank....**Richard Hohensee**, Park Volunteer, observed what he thought to be a rather early sighting of a rough-legged hawk west of Forest Canyon on August 28....Conservancy Office Hummingbird Nest Update: it appears, and is assumed, that the two nesting hummingbirds in the tree just outside the attic office window successfully fledged as they (and their hustling mother) were no longer to be seen after the 4th of July weekend. Pygmy nuthatches were seen harassing the nest just before the hummingbirds disappeared, but there's no reason to suggest foul (fowl?) play....Park visitor **Madeline Wilson** reported being chased by a snowshoe hare across a bridge on the Glacier Gorge trail in late August. She saw the bunny in the grasses at the edge of the trail and when she turned to continue hiking, it followed her, turning away at one point, hesitating, then continuing toward her across the bridge in hot pursuit until about three feet from her boots....RM Conservancy Development Assistant **Victoria Alexander** was in her cabin near the Beaver Meadows Entrance of Rocky when a yearling bear peeked in her living room window from the deck, scaring Victoria half to death....And, in early July, there was a lightning strike in the meadow right near Victoria's cabin that knocked out the electricity and foiled her banana bread baking efforts.... Retired RMNP Wildlife Biologist **Gary Miller** reported that the Rocky "Flight Crew," who led the morning bird walks at Upper Beaver Meadows this summer, frequently saw Cordilleran flycatchers, Williamson's sapsuckers, and the usual complement of cavity nesters during their walks....Of special note, he and **Kathy Brazelton** found a lot of evidence of American three-toed woodpecker activity (many trees with the large bark peelings typical of their

foraging) on a hike to Lulu City....They also confirmed that the beaver(s) at Lily Lake was still going strong as of late July.... This in from "Flight Crew" leader **Ron Harden**: Olive-sided flycatchers were seen on the Solstice Bird Survey along the Mill Creek Trail out of Hollowell Park; Hammond's flycatchers were seen in Upper Beaver Meadows, as usual, but not the dusky flycatchers which are usually more numerous. Wild turkeys were spotted there as well and increased sightings seem to confirm an increase in their population in the park. The most celebrated bird seen by bird walk participants this summer was the Western tanager, because of its flashy yellow and red coloring, but Ron noted in particular the subtle beauty of the Townsend solitaire, if one is inclined to study it more closely....Park aficionado **Susi Sisk** was at a picnic at a friend's house in Stanley Heights in Estes Park when a bear casually strolled through the property. As if that weren't enough, they suddenly heard a high-pitched animal scream, shortly followed by the sight of a coyote chasing a young elk along one side of the property. Catching glimpses of the action through the trees, the picnickers could see the coyote closing in on its prey. As the chase turned along another side of the property, it looked like the elk (still screaming) was a goner when, just in the nick of time, the young elk reconnected with the herd. <Whew!>....Fort Collins photographer **Dave Dahms** observed a red-naped sapsucker nest very close and in the same ponderosa pine tree as a white-breasted nuthatch nest at the Upper Beaver Meadow picnic area. The sapsucker chicks were constantly chirping as they always do and whenever the adult sapsuckers tried to feed their chicks, and the nuthatches dive-bombed the sapsuckers and scared them away. Occasionally the sapsuckers could perch on the side of the tree long enough to toss in their beakful of bugs before being attacked. Oddly, sometimes the nuthatches brought a worm and fed the sapsucker chicks themselves....Winter is coming....are YOU ready for this?



*This endearing shot of an American badger, taken in the park by Conservancy Warehouse Manager **Jeremiah Ramirez**, belies the fierceness of these elusive but highly aggressive hunters.*