Rocky Mountain Conservancy

QUARTERLY

Winter 2016

Rocky Turns One Hundred

by C.W. Buchholtz

Centennials for parks, just like birthday parties for people, are something to celebrate. As everyone knows, this last year Rocky Mountain National Park turned one hundred. And this year, the National Park Service is celebrating its centennial as well. Congratulations all around, along with special events and wide acclaim. Milestones like these are always fun to note, even if they might be bittersweet to those being honored. (I know people who worry about aging and wince at the thought of birthdays.)

Centennials tend to be times for reflection, drawing out a bevy of historians ready to regale us about the good old days. Politicians take their bows for the never-ending flow of Congressional support that keeps the park running. Park officials may list their score of accomplishments. An adoring public arrives in multitudes, ready to express their enthusiasm for a park, greeting it like an old friend, hail and well met.

Truth be told, Rocky Mountain National Park has aged pretty well. Okay, we notice a few recent scars carved down mountainsides by the Flood of '13. And yes, there are a few dead trees caused by the recent beetle invasion. But overall, the park's topography looks pretty darn awesome (pardon an overused term). The landscape appears as scenic as ever with snowcapped peaks, forested slopes, a host of waterfalls, lakes and meadows. Wildlife abounds.

But, as we bask in the afterglow of adulation, perhaps it is wise to glance backward and examine what lessons we've discerned from the past. What, for example, has been positive about the park? What has been not so positive? It may be worth pondering what Rocky Mountain National Park could be like in 2115 — a hundred years from now — even though none of us will be around to enjoy it. What kind of park should we pass along to our progeny?

Feel free to answer these questions for yourself.

In the meantime, allow me to present a few observations (which are entirely my own and not those of my employer, my attorney, or my wife). People love parks. People especially love Rocky Mountain National Park. They love hiking, mountain climbing, picnicking, fishing, photography, driving Trail Ridge Road, and myriad other activities. To use a trite phrase, they are happy campers. It is safe to predict that the park will continue to attract millions of users in the foreseeable future.

Animals love Rocky. Elk, moose, bighorn sheep, mule deer and marmots — the list of creatures goes on and on. Rocky Mountain National Park affords living space for lots of wildlife. Rather than qualify these statements with worries about the health of the bighorns or the overpopulating problems of elk, the record of the past hundred years reveals an abundance of wild creatures calling the park home. People enjoy seeing wildlife and they are likely to enjoy seeing it in the years ahead.

The National Park Service loves Rocky. It goes almost without saying that people who work for the park and the National Park Service (including its partners, like the Rocky Mountain Conservancy, volunteers and concessionaires) have great affection for the place. Their critics may complain about "government bureaucracies," but few would question the dedication of park

*(**Rocky Turns 100** continued on page 2)*

INSIDE: RMNP License Plate Available January 1, 2016 (see page 10 for details)

(Rocky Turns 100, continued)

workers (here I am particularly thinking of the search and rescue teams, the long-suffering parking lot rangers at Bear Lake, the road guys plowing snow in the springtime, the trail crews, and dozens of others keeping the park in shipshape).

Surrounding communities love Rocky. Citizens and their elected representatives fostered the creation of the park. Communities all along the Front Range consider Rocky Mountain "their park." Grand Lake and Estes Park get top billing as gateway communities, but they are not alone in hosting visits or boasting of the park's attractions. History reveals that politicians learned to love Rocky. Over the last hundred years, the Colorado economy saw recreation increase in significance, and politics everywhere is closely allied with economics. Colorado's national parks and forests, its state parks and other public lands not only nurtured businesses, they enhanced the average citizen's quality of life. Over time, politicians with vision advocated more parks, forests, wilderness and even open space for urban areas.

Over the years, Rocky Mountain saw its boundaries expand. About 22,000 acres of today's park was once private land. Public-spirited citizens either sold or gifted their properties to be included in the park. Other long-term issues, like water rights, transportation and elk management have been tackled. Over time, park management has been generally accepted by the public with only a handful of controversies lingering in local memory. A reasonable balance exists between the basic park objectives: preservation of the land and its "freest use thereof."

Perhaps less positive: Over time, Rocky Mountain succumbed to a degree of urbanization. Two major highways, first the Fall River Road and then its successor, Trail Ridge Road, bisected the park. The Bear Lake corridor was similarly modified. As visitation increased, so did park regulations. Activities to preserve park resources came in fits and starts, perhaps more art than science. Resource management evolved slowly, even experimentally, in attempts to restore natural systems.

So what elements from the past are we most likely to carry forward toward 2115?

Park users and preservationists alike surely will voice concern if basic park values are threatened. To me, those basic values include concepts like wilderness, solitude and freedom. But what is valued will vary among park users, and those values can change over time, just like park policies. Yet, in 2013, we were reminded of something far more fundamental: Nature is really in charge. Whether it sends pine beetles in our direction or three days of hard rain or even a single bolt of lightning, there is no rule, regulation or policy to prevent it. Letting nature take its course is sometimes our only option.

Rocky Mountain might seek the advice of other mountain folk, like the Austrians or the Swiss, who, long ago, adopted the idea of electric trams and trains. A century ago, most park visitors entered Rocky on horseback. A hundred years from now, gasoline-driven machines may be as rare as horses are today.

What about ideas to improve the park or prepare it for the future? During the next decades, the National Park Service will need to adjust to the changing expectations of visitors as national demographic shifts require attention and service to new audiences. Until recently, innovation within public land agencies has always taken a back seat to tradition; and new approaches to old problems have come from progressive partnerships (acquiring Lily Lake and Fall River Visitor Center serve as excellent examples). Partnerships spread responsibility, engage public-spirited citizens and increase the chances for success.

Perhaps we can tackle long-term, festering problems, like transportation, with partnerships. Some places in the world have been involved in preservation and recreational tourism for a thousand years. After a mere century of history, Rocky Mountain might seek the advice of other mountain folk, like the Austrians or the Swiss, who, long ago, adopted the idea of electric trams and trains. A century ago, most park visitors entered Rocky on horseback. A hundred years from now, gasoline-driven machines may be as rare as horses are today. Where transportation is concerned, the park needs long-term solutions beyond mere buses and parking lots. It needs partnerships.

Why not expand the role for citizens in park affairs? Stewardship in the form of volunteers and philanthropic partners already exists. Why not expand that concept? An excellent example of citizen stewardship can be seen at Ebby's Landing National Historic Reserve on Washington's Whidbey Island. There, the Park Service works in tandem with local farmers and land owners to preserve villages, scenery and agriculture. In a more urban setting the Golden Gate Conservancy, together with the Park Service, has merged a host of natural and historic sites in the San Francisco Bay area into a seamless region of parklands.

One final idea brought forward from history: Why not substantially expand Rocky Mountain National Park? An original proposal for the establishment of the park included all the mountains from the Wyoming border south to Mount Evans. Of course, that idea failed due to mining interests. But perhaps it is time to revisit this idea of preserving the entire region, blending the national park together with national forests, even including the quaint neighboring villages (and perhaps excluding the less-quaint Blackhawk and Central City unless we need their revenue). Why not consider creating the Rocky Mountain National Reserve, stretching from Interstate 70 north to the Wyoming line?

Borrowing well-tested ideas from elsewhere, we can protect even more of nature and, at the same time, celebrate our mountain culture — including places as diverse as Grand Lake, Ward and Nederland. Centennials are more than mere milestones; indeed, they force us to contemplate the future.

Curt Buchholtz is a Director of Major and Planned Giving with the National Park Foundation.

Celebrating the National Park Service Centennial

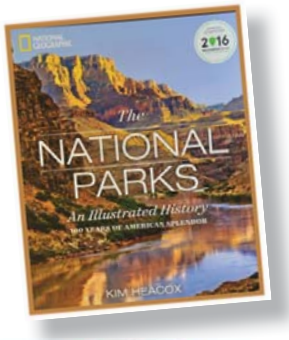
Join us in a second century of stewardship as the National Park Service celebrates its 100th birthday in 2016. More than 400 national parks and monuments preserve the natural and cultural identity of this nation. Help us promote conservation in America and around the world. **Call the Rocky Mountain Conservancy at 970-586-0121 Ext. 13, or visit RMConservancy.org to place your order today!**

2016 National Park Service Centennial Products

Official NPS Centennial Collectors Patch (Item 7239) **$4.99**
Measures 3 ½" x 2 ¼"

Official NPS Centennial Collectors Decal (Item 7240) **$1.99**
Measures 4 ½" x 3"

Official NPS Centennial Collectors Pin (Item 7238) **$4.99**
Measures 1 ⅛" x ¾"



The National Parks: An Illustrated History
An inspired tribute to the astonishing beauty and priceless cultural treasures of America's National Parks, this volume is a lavish celebration of the 100th anniversary of the National Park Service. This is a collection of the very best of National Geographic's photographs, combined with an expertly told history. Hardcover, 384 pages.
(Item 9888) **$42.50**

RMNP Map Mug
This nostalgic ceramic mug features a line drawing of Longs Peak with "Rocky Mountain National Park Est. 1915" on both sides of the mug. Inside is a map section of Rocky Mountain National Park. 4" tall, 3 ½" across. Dishwasher and microwave safe.
(Item 1198) **$12.95**

Cover photo credits

(Upper): **"Bobcat in Repose"** by Conservancy Member Dick Coe, Estes Park, CO; (Lower) **"Ice Cracks at Dream Lake"** by Jeremiah Ramirez, Estes Park, CO.

Please send high-resolution images to nancy.wilson@rmconservancy.org by March 1 for publication in the 2016 Spring *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.

I recently saw a tiny dung beetle in ROMO. It was rolling a large very round ball of what looked like deer scat.What is their scientific name? What do they do with the scat? How do they make such a perfectly round poo ball? Are there subspecies of beetles in ROMO that use different kinds of scat? Dung beetles haven't been documented in the park and thus aren't on the NPS species list for Rocky, but there are dozens of species of dung beetles in Colorado with most falling in the 5-10 mm range. Dung beetles are true beetles – scarabs (Order Coleoptera, Family Scarabaeidae) with multiple genera. Dung beetles use the balls of fecal material for feeding (caprophagy), gaining nutrition from undigested plant material in the feces. Depending upon the species, they may also use the ball as a dwelling, burrowing inside the ball and/or laying their eggs within the ball to provision newly hatched young. Unlike many insects, dung beetles exhibit parental care of young. Some species are specialists as to the species-of-origin of their prize, while others are more generalists – any old pile of poop will do. I recall a National Geographic article of a few years ago describing experiments on dung beetles' ability to navigate using stars. Investigators put little "hats" on dung beetle heads to prevent them from seeing the sky, and those so fitted were unable to navigate a straight line, while those without were able to travel directly to their destination. — *Gary Miller, retired RMNP wildlife biologist*

Several antennas have been installed near the old chow hall near Lake Irene on the west side of RMNP. What are they used for? The antennas are associated with a Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) SNOTEL (snow telemetry) site at Lake Irene. The park has several SNOTEL sites located in areas that provide information on the snowpack and water content of the snow, which is extremely valuable for water managers. The data collected is relayed via telemetry, hence the need for antennas.— *RMNP Chief, Branch of Planning & Compliance Larry Gamble*

We saw a lot of axe marks on trees along the trail to Twin Sisters at the end of August. Almost all the slashes were visible going down the trail, as opposed to up the trail. What could be the purpose of these markings? And are they made by the Park Service? This is an ongoing problem we have been noticing on Twin Sisters, in Wild Basin, and on a lot of our more remote trails; and we don't know who is responsible. It is called trail blazing and it is an outdated way for marking the trail corridor, especially in winter conditions. The more common method is using florescent markers that can be secured to a tree, as can be seen along some sections of the Thunder Lake Trail. As this park has become a designated wilderness and as its mission speaks more to a conservation approach (and not a management approach), this practice of marking trails is not one that we support. The park would prefer that all visitors/hikers use Leave No Trace methods such as maps, compasses, trail signs, and/or GPS units to navigate the park's backcountry. — *RMNP Trails Program Supervisor Kevin Soviak*

The first auto permit was issued by Ranger Jack Moomaw in June 1939 to Charles Reed (Brinwood Hotel), seated in his car. Also included in the ceremonial photo are Abner Sprague and Superintendent David Canfield. A coin flip was used to determine which of the two pioneers would be the first to pay a dollar to enter the park. Both men remembered the time when there were no park boundaries, and roads into the region were only trails. Photo: NPS

An Unconventional Approach to Entry Fees in Rocky

by Suzanne Silverthorn

It was only a matter of time that Rocky Mountain National Park (RMNP) would join more than 100 other Park Service units in increasing entrance fees to help offset an erosion in federal funding. The modest increases became effective October 1, 2015, representing the first rate hike since 2009.

There was an earlier time when RMNP had resisted entry fee collections; in fact, Rocky was the last of the great Western parks to change its free-access policy. While Glacier, Yellowstone and Yosemite were charging between $1 and $10 per vehicle at the time of RMNP's founding in 1915, it wasn't until 1939 – nearly a quarter century later – that visitors to RMNP began paying to enter the park. It was a $1 fee per automobile, good from June 1 to December 31.

Records suggest sensitivity to public opinion about this issue, and an interest in maintaining positive relationships with nearby communities played a role in maintaining free access during the park's initial years. Challenges over ownership and jurisdiction of park roads further complicated matters. And, in 1919 when the park's biggest advocates — Enos Mills and F.O. Stanley — became outspoken in their criticism of the park's decision to award an exclusive transportation franchise to an out-of-town operator, the park worked to overcome a public relations disaster by aggressively making its free admission policy known.

In 1921, a headline in the *Estes Park Trail*, "Mistaken Idea About Entrance Fee to Park," illustrates the park's vigorous efforts to dispel misinformation. The story alerts readers that "there is no possibility of a charge being made for several years yet and when that time comes we will have roads within the national park that will be worth the small annual fee charged, and which in turn will be used to improve and extend the roads." The explanation was attributed to U.S. Interior Secretary Albert B. Fall.

That same year, a change in the park's leadership occurred following the resignation of Superintendent L. Claude Way (1916 – 1921). As incoming superintendent of Rocky Mountain National Park, the affable Roger Toll sought to mend the park's soured relations with community leaders after several tumultuous years under Way's administration.

With attendance at Rocky Mountain National Park now outpacing visitors at Yellowstone, Yosemite and Glacier combined, Superintendent Toll (1921 – 1929) set the tone for the park's goodwill when arrangements were made to produce a souvenir sticker, joining 10 other parks that already had been producing the popular windshield collectible — with one distinction. In announcing the release of the new "ornamental poster" in 1923, as reported in the Estes Park Trail, RMNP became the only park that provided the stickers for free.

From the beginning, National Park Service Director Stephen Mather insisted that park fees should not impose a burden upon the visitor, even suggesting that auto fees could be reduced as the volume of motor travel increased. But as automobile travel surged, the demand for new roads and other infrastructure weighed heavily on the park system.

Funding for RMNP was challenging, at best, in those early years. Federal funding for the park was limited to not more than $10,000 a year from 1915 – 1918 for administration, protection and improvements. Furthermore, federal funds were prohibited from being used for improvements or maintenance of non-federal roads.

In 1919, Rocky Mountain National Park was awarded the same funding considerations given to other major parks.

10-72a (February 1939)
Fee, $1

No 1

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
ROCKY MOUNTAIN NATIONAL PARK

LICENSE TO OPERATE MOTOR VEHICLE

Issuing Station Thompson River Date JUN 1 1939

License Colo (State) 6-9067 (Number)

Remarks: Line 2 (08)

This license is issued and accepted subject to the regulations governing the park, and entitles the licensee to right of passage over any or all of the roads open to public travel within the park. It is void after December 31 of the year of issue and is not transferable to any other car. It must be kept conveniently and must be exhibited to park rangers on demand. Any erasure makes this license void.

INFORMATION FOR VISITOR

WELCOME TO THE NATIONAL PARK

PLEASE BEAR IN MIND THESE SIMPLE RULES THAT OTHERS MAY ENJOY THE PARK TO THE MAXIMUM

1. Make fires only in designated places.
BE CAREFUL WITH FIRE
2. Camp only in designated campgrounds.
3. Refrain from disturbing unduly the wild animals, birds, and all natural features, and the picking of flowers or collection of specimens.
4. Drive carefully and only on the highway or designated road.
5. For information—ASK THE RANGER.

U. S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE 6—10022

First auto permit issued on June 1, 1939. The $1 fee was good for the remainder of the year. Photo: NPS

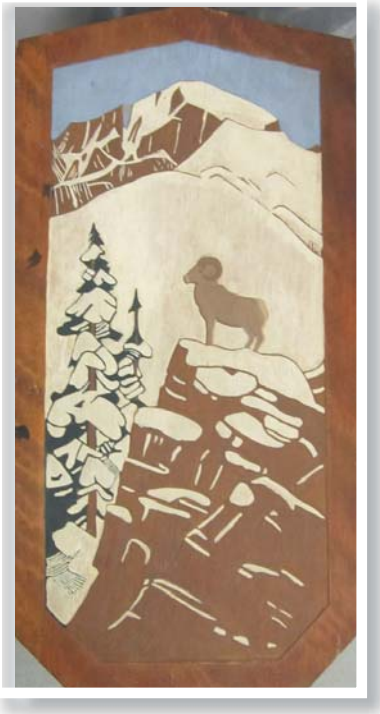
Despite this, RMNP continued to hold the line with free admission until a number of significant events had taken place, including the important matter of jurisdiction. In 1929, exclusive jurisdiction over the park was ceded to the federal government by the state of Colorado, thus removing lingering questions by state and county authorities about ownership of roads and maintenance responsibilities. By this time, the courts also had determined that the Park Service was within its rights to grant an exclusive transportation franchise. And in 1932, the first section of the new Trail Ridge Road was opened to motorists from Deer Ridge to Fall River Pass.

There also were changes in public opinion. This sentiment was best demonstrated in 1939 in the Colorado General Assembly when a resolution protesting the collection of an entrance fee at RMNP was soundly defeated, a reversal from a position taken by the state legislature in 1937 when it offered its opposition to an entry fee. Rep. Ted Herring, the legislator whose district included Estes Park, Loveland and Fort Collins, was instrumental in the defeat of the 1939 measure. In the park's monthly report for April, Acting Superintendent John McLaughlin noted, "It is apparent that the passing of the last two years has introduced new elements and a changed viewpoint on the entrance fee situation in the park."

In the park's next monthly update, Superintendent David Canfield (1937 – 1943, 1946 – 1954) proudly proclaims, "June 1939 will be remembered as a month of important events in Rocky Mountain National Park. The collection of entrance fees was initiated on June 1 and beginning June 15 the fees were collected on a 24-hour basis. As has previously been observed, public reaction has, on the whole, been favorable towards this change in policy." Earlier, he had feared the change would create an anticipated "local furor." Instead, he wrote that "almost the opposite has been the case."

Now, more than 70 years later, entry fees have become an essential component — and an accepted reality — in funding enhancements and improvements in Rocky Mountain National Park. The Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act of 2004, and its predecessor, the Fee Demonstration Program of 1996, allow 80 percent of the fees collected within the park to be retained for projects that directly benefit visitors. Since then, RMNP has spent more than $66 million in repairs, renovations, improvements and resource restoration. Projects include operation of the visitor shuttle system, renovation of campgrounds, installation of sustainable picnic tables, hazard tree mitigation and trail enhancements, as well as additional projects funded by the Rocky Mountain Conservancy.

True to form, Rocky Mountain National Park was one of the last of the large parks in the Western region to implement the latest fee increase, perhaps upholding a long tradition of visitor goodwill.



Park Superintendent Roger Toll carved the likeness of a bighorn ram in a wooden plaque that he displayed in his home. His residence also included six bronze bighorn sheep sculptures. The art pieces have since been donated to the RMNP archives. Photo: NPS

Suzanne Silverthorn is a member of the Rocky Mountain Conservancy and a regular contributor to the Quarterly. *She's the author of* Around Rocky Mountain National Park*, which showcases the park's history through vintage postcards.*

Windshield Stickers Become Popular Souvenirs

The park's most iconic animal, the bighorn sheep, was used to grace the free souvenir windshield stickers given by RMNP to visitors during the 1920s and 30s. The octagonal-shaped windshield sticker was among 22 such souvenirs issued by the park system representing locations across the country from approximately 1918 through 1940. Travelers once placed the stickers on their windshields as a proud trophy of their summer excursions, which ultimately caused the Park Service to reduce the size of the decals from the original 5" design to 2 ¼" because they had become a safety hazard. The back of the stickers contained various safety messages for driving in the park, such as "Keep out of the ruts" and "Horse-drawn vehicles have the right of way." Today the original stickers have become treasured collectors' items.

RMNP Curator Kelly Cahill suggests that the selection of a ram for the front of the sticker issued by Rocky Mountain National Park would have easily won approval by then Superintendent Roger Toll, the artist, photographer and writer naturalist. Toll's residence was decorated with several bighorn sheep bronze sculptures as well as a wood carving of a ram, striking a similar pose, all of which are now housed in the park's archives.

Photos from the author's collection, except for the backside of the 1923 decal (NPS)

Rocky in Winter is BEAUTIFUL!!

2016 Winter Rocky Mountain Conservancy Field Institute Classes

Winter Ecology: A Snowshoeing Trek for Kids & Families

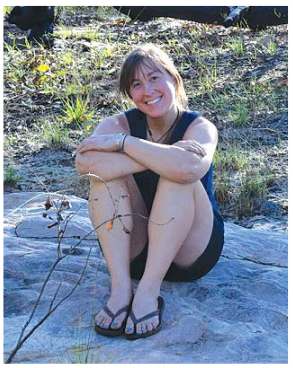
January 23; February 6, 13; March 5, 19
$15 per adult/child
Children 5 and under FREE

Discover the serene beauty of RMNP in the wintertime on this four-hour snowshoe hike. Learn how plants and animals survive winter and learn more about the properties of snow and how it can help the inhabitants of an area survive the long winter months.

Avalanche Awareness & Outdoor Safety in Winter

February 12 $40 per adult

Learn to identify how, when, where and why avalanches are likely to occur in Rocky Mountain National Park. Travel to Hidden Valley for a two-hour hike to study the snowpack and terrain aspects of avalanches and review the basics of avalanche rescue techniques.



Meet Winter Olson Fellow Carly Ward

Since 2006, Alan and Carol-Ann Olson of Boulder, Colorado, have donated to the Rocky Mountain Conservancy to fund two interns each year with the Rocky Mountain Conservancy's Field Institute.

Hometown: Mundelein, IL
College: University of Tasmania, Australia

Career Goal: To better communicate scientific concepts to a non-scientific community. I want to bridge the gap between science and other academic disciplines to create a more comprehensive understanding of what sustainable environmental management can be.

Internship Goals: Develop creative ways to convey key scientific concepts to a large, diverse audience.

Internship Duties: Teach interactive family, youth and school group nature activies and programs for the Rocky Mountain Conservancy, engage in community outreach and assist with program development.

Carly Likes: Cooking, Ultimate Frisbee, knitting, hiking, biking, snowboarding, cleaning, travelling, podcasts, coffee and craft beer

Halfway through college, Carly studied abroad in Tasmania, the island state of Australia. She decided to stay and become a full-time student, resulting in a Bachelor of Science from the University of Tasmania. While studying, she started volunteering and then working as a research assistant for the dendrochronology lab at the university, which she loved because it was such a practical and progressive job and gave her such easy access to the wilderness and remote hikes. Because it is a smaller university, she was recruited for many field trips in addition to class excursions. She was lucky enough to participate in a multitude of studies, including small animal trapping (possum, marsupial mice and antechinus), rescuing wallabies, shorebird surveys along the Bay of Fires, rainforest mapping in ancient Aboriginal lands, and wombat and kangaroo surveys. After finishing her degree, she stayed for an additional year and worked as a hiking guide for the largest tourism hiking company in the state, during which she learned how to cook gourmet meals for guests and teach them about the conservation area which showcased some of the most beautiful, remote beaches in the world. After the guiding season ended, she returned to the U.S. for her next adventure!

Frosty Hallet Morning
photo: RM Conservancy Member Walt Kaesler

Winter Survival Skills

February 27 $80 per adult

Explore contemporary, historic, and prehistoric strategies for surviving in the Rockies – even in winter. Then put your skills to the test outside – building shelters and making fire in the snow.

Photographing Winter Landscapes

February 25-27 $300 per adult

Learn about depth-of-field techniques, focusing, exposure range challenges and filtration. On the more fun side, learn about composition, the beauty that is unique to winter scenes, creative in-camera techniques, creative use of lenses, and more. Travel to Sprague Lake, Bear Lake, Nymph Lake, and, based on conditions, Dream Lake for photographic opportunities. This workshop is suitable for beginning, intermediate, and advanced photographers.

Coyotes: The Song Dogs of the West

March 26 $80 per adult

Often misunderstood and maligned, the coyote's impact on our everyday life is profound. Explore the country's second-largest canine's natural history, Native American stories, coyote discovery by Lewis and Clark, and expansion to the east.

Wintertime Wonders: On-demand Bus Tour

$250 for up to four people then $50 per each additional adult and $25 per each additional child ages 12 and under

Join a naturalist guide on a trip through the park in winter. From the comfort of a heated 14-passenger bus or 12-passenger van, guests will experience the serenity of areas such as Trail Ridge Road (to Many Parks Curve) and the Bear Lake corridor. Entrance into Rocky Mountain National Park and complimentary hot beverages are included in the registration fee.

"Isabella Bird" (Liz Potter) meets 21st century Rocky Mountain Conservancy members at the 2015 picnic event.

Simplify Your Giving with Sustaining Memberships

Stick to your budget and make a big difference!

Becoming a sustaining member is an easy and affordable way to support the Rocky Mountain Conservancy. Just choose an amount that fits your budget, and your contribution is charged to your credit card each month.

Your membership automatically renews each year, which helps us eliminate postage and other administrative costs. As a sustaining member, you enjoy the added benefit of knowing that more of your gift will go toward the Conservancy's efforts to protect and preserve Rocky Mountain National Park and other public lands.

Join the growing number of sustaining members today for as little as $10 a month. Your ongoing contribution makes a difference!

RMConservancy.org

Park Puzzler

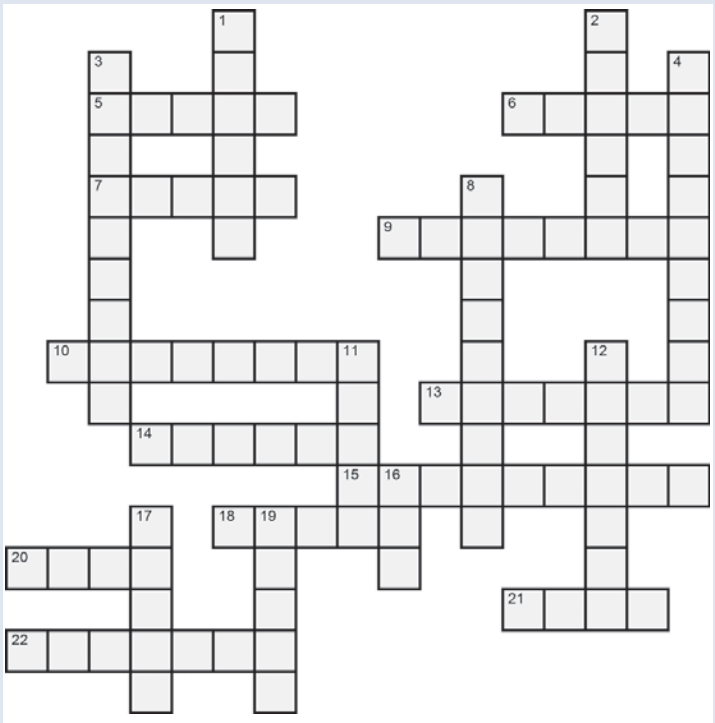
by RM Conservancy Member Joel Kaplow

Across

5 The Alva B. ___ Tunnel was completed in 1947, transporting water from Grand Lake to the East Portal near Emerald Mountain, 13.1 miles to the northeast. It was named for the Colorado senator who introduced the project's bill in 1937.
6 Cross-country ___ differ from the backcountry campsites, as the camper is allowed the freedom to pitch a tent anywhere within a large chunk of real estate, instead of a designated spot at a silver arrowhead marker.
7 Enos Mills' dream did come true, but it was not as grandiose as he originally had hoped. When he first envisioned protecting a large parcel of land from mining, logging and grazing, he wanted the southern boundary to be as far south as ___ Peak. With time and compromise, the southern boundary crept north to Mt. Evans, and then to Rollins Pass, until it finally stayed put near Meadow Mountain in 1915.
9 July 31, 1976 saw the Big ___ river swell and sweep down its namesake canyon in a 20-foot wall of water, destroying 418 homes and taking 145 lives. A stationary storm was to blame.
10 When you're out where the deer and antelope play, you will see the young ones frolicking with all four hooves in the air at the same time. The whole herd will leap this way while fleeing from danger. The term for this gait is stotting, or ___.
13 Straddling the Divide in central RMNP between Sprague and Ptarmigan passes is ___ Flats, a vast, open area named for a furry four-footed feral friend found flourishing in Rocky.
14 The source of 9-Across is at the head of RMNP's Forest Canyon, just east of ___ Pass.
15 Colorado's state fish, the ___ Cutthroat trout, was officially declared extinct in 1937. That was a little hasty, as some were rediscovered in 9-Across in RMNP in 1957. That was a little hasty too, as it was determined in1999 that these were hybridized and not "pure." Fortunately, a four-mile stretch of Bear River, southeast of Pike's Peak, was found to have 700 of the pure subspecies. *Whew!*
18 Rocky sees about ___ million visitors a year nowadays.
20 In addition to backcountry and car camping in RMNP, there is another designation for those technical rock-climbing folks with nerves of steel; bivouac camping. They must sleep on either snow or rock, and tents are not allowed. The sanest way to accomplish this is with the use of a ___ sack, which is like a sleeping bag on steroids.
21 Estes Park was named for ___ Estes, the first rancher to settle there in 1860. He was born in Kentucky in 1806.
22 In the warmer months, you may see a colorful bird visiting RMNP. The male Western ___ has a yellow breast, black wings with two sets of stripes, and a very distinctive red head. Interestingly, its red feathers don't grow that way all on their own; it comes from the pigment rhodoxanthin within the insects it eats, which in turn get it from the conifer needles they eat.

Down

1 There is a sad irony associated with the ___ Creek Campground on the west side of the park, as there is hardly any of its namesake left standing, due to the bark beetle infestation. But at least you will still find a creek there!
2 White-nose syndrome is wiping out vast populations of Eastern U.S. bats. It was first confirmed in New York in 2006, and has been working its way west. It was found in Nebraska and Oklahoma in 2014, and hasn't yet reached RMNP. The disease is caused by Pseudogymnoascus destructans, which is a newly discovered ___.
3 9-Across flows through tiny ___ Park in Forest Canyon. It was named for the fruit of a member of the rose family that both hikers and bears like to munch on when they ripen in late summer/early fall.
4 In addition to 1-Down, Rocky has Glacier Gorge (now temporarily closed), Moraine Park, Longs Peak and ___ campgrounds.
8 A small number of campsites are listed with a "(WF)" in the park's Backcountry Wilderness Camping Guide. This designation means that ___ are permitted. (2 wds.)
11 A group of lakes east of Mt. Ida, namely Highest, Azure, Inkwell, Doughnut, Arrowhead, Rock, Little Rock and Forest, are known collectively as the ___ Lakes. (Don't be afraid to check your Rocky topo map!)
12 Stretching for about two miles along Bear Creek Road is a lateral ___, a glacial feature named for famed landscape artist Albert Bierstadt, who visited the area in 1876.
16 Near Onahu Creek on Rocky's west side is Chickaree Lake, named for the critter also known as the Douglas, pine and American ___ squirrel.
17 The Peak to Peak Highway, now connecting Estes Park to I-70 to the south, was designated as Colorado's first scenic ___ in 1918.
19 It is thought that up to nine bat species may live in RMNP. In 2012, the BioBlitz could confirm only four, however; the big brown, little brown, long-legged and ___ bat.



Students work on identifying dragonfly larvae to family with ERS teacher Jon Anderson. (Photo: NPS)

Studying Mercury Levels in Rocky

by Holly Nickel and Jon Anderson

Are mercury levels a problem in national parks? How might mercury levels in national parks be studied? Which places in the U.S. have the highest amounts of mercury? Would there be a way to get multiple national parks to collaborate and citizens to participate in a study like this?

These questions were just a few of many that a group of Maine scientists and educators examined. The project began as part of Acadia Learning, a collaboration with the Schoodic Institute at Acadia National Park, the University of Maine and Maine Sea Grant.

Mercury is a toxic pollutant detrimental to the health of both wildlife and humans alike. Furthermore, it threatens the natural resources that the National Park Service (NPS) serves to protect. The main source of human-caused mercury in remote national park environments is atmospheric deposition from coal-burning power plants. Because mercury levels across the United States remain largely unknown with much data still needed to be collected, it was hypothesized that engaging park units through citizen science would prove beneficial in finding more answers in a shorter time frame. But how best could citizen scientists answer these questions?

Because mercury levels across the United States remain largely unknown with much data still needed to be collected, it was hypothesized that engaging park units through citizen science would prove beneficial in finding more answers in a shorter time frame.

As it turned out, dragonflies were the answer. Dragonflies spend most of their life (up to five years!) in the larval stage before morphing into their fast-flying, aerial predator adult selves. During the larval stage, dragonflies dwell in water and play an integral role in the aquatic ecosystem. Smaller insects (which may have ingested mercury) are often consumed by dragonfly larvae during this stage, a process called bio-accumulation.

The larvae accumulate mercury as they develop and grow, with concentrations increasing as mercury passes up the food chain. Ultimately, larger fish consume some of the larvae, creating an avenue by which mercury can be passed on to larger animals, including humans. Dragonfly larvae are relatively small, making them easy to amass and transport to the U.S. Geological Survey (U.S.G.S.) laboratory for analysis. For these reasons, the collection of dragonfly larvae seemed a choice option.

The study started in a handful of parks in 2010-2011, including Rocky Mountain National Park (RMNP). Now in its fifth year, the 2015 sampling season included more than 40 park sites and other open space areas.

The Dragonfly Mercury Project, as it is known today, is designed to engage citizen scientists in hands-on specimen collection and research. Since 2013, RMNP has conducted this project through a partnership with Eagle Rock School and Professional Development Center (ERS) and the Continental Divide Research Learning Center (CDRLC).

Over the past three years, the project has evolved into a five-week, spring semester course offered at ERS. Students spend four days out of each week dedicated to the project both in the classroom and out in the field. This teacher adoption model gave Jon Anderson, a 12-year veteran educator at ERS, freedom to develop relevant curricula on topics such as bioaccumulation in food webs, the transportation and deposition of mercury, riparian zone ecology, and dragonfly life cycles and their habitats.

The course incorporates a variety of learning styles with plenty of hands-on activities that are meaningful and structured in such a way to promote understanding, connections and background for the student citizen scientists. Former CDRLC Learning Specialist Ben Baldwin has seen this program come a long way:

"This is a great project that shows the potential of citizen science projects and the benefits from them. The dragonfly project enhances a classroom experience by using the park as a lab and field experience and provides the park with much-needed information. It highlights the nexus of public involvement in parks, science literacy and youth engagement. All of these result in youth having stronger connections to parks and stewardship." — Ben Baldwin

In 2015, the student citizen scientists collected samples from four bodies of water in RMNP, along with the help of park staff from the CDRLC. Prior to each collection, a scouting day occurred in which students made observations about the location, practiced sampling protocols and identified locations where dragonfly larvae could be found. During the second visit, a total of 20 dragonfly larvae (identified to the family level) were measured, bagged and prepared for analysis at the USGS laboratory. Along with the larvae samples, information and data gathered about each site (such as size, location and vegetation cover) were compiled and included. The students worked side by side with NPS staff members and their instructor to complete all of these steps – a real team effort!

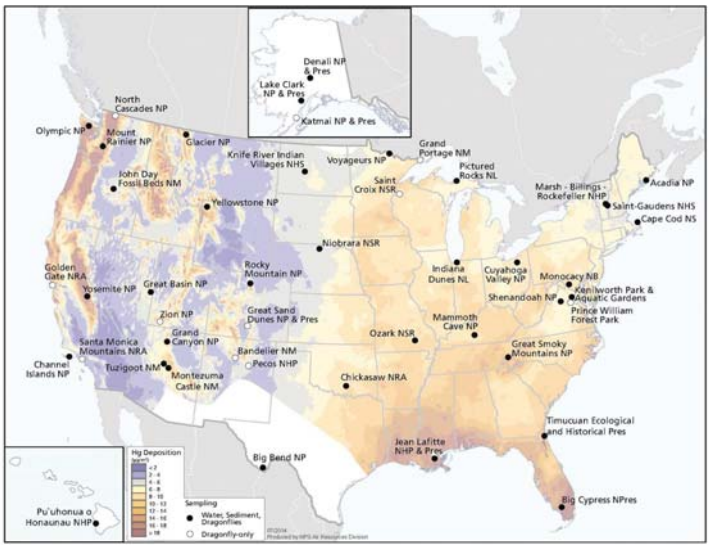
Additionally, Eagle Rock students had unique opportunities to network with park visitors while out in the field. These interactions led to special public outreach connections that enhanced the students' park experience and that of the visitors as well. Working alongside NPS staff allowed the class to come to life with authenticity and professionalism. Jon Anderson appreciated the opportunity for his students to get out of the classroom:

"As a teacher I like to provide real-world opportunities for students to learn about both science and about the wild places and the animals that live in them. Getting to work and partner with the CDRLC and RMNP give us these experiences. Students aren't just sitting in class reading about mercury and dragonflies; they are out in the field experiencing first-hand what it means to do place-based collaborative research. Students get to become the experts! Seeing students interact with the park staff, volunteers and the public while we have been out sampling has been a highlight. Students develop meaningful relationships with park employees and turn into educators themselves as they explain the project and share their knowledge of dragonflies with those they encounter." — Jon Anderson

The baseline data collected thus far is being used to answer myriad questions regarding mercury in our national parks. Further expansion of the project and collection of additional data over time will help scientists better understand the implications of their results.

This project serves as a successful model of how to use student citizen scientists to collect meaningful data that can influence park management. Stay connected with this project and others happening through the CDRLC via their website www.nps.gov/CDRLC.

Holly Nickel is an Education Technician for the Continental Divide Research Learning Center in Rocky. Jon Anderson is the Human Performance and Outdoor Education Instructor for Eagle Rock School and Professional Development Center.



Mercury deposition in the United States and National Parks participating in the Dragonfly Mercury Project in 2012. (Map: NPS/U.S.G.S.)

Students wade into Lily Lake to look for dragonfly larvae. (Photo: NPS)

Citizen Science Research in RMNP

Citizen science projects are intended to enhance scientific literacy of the participants and improve the overall stewardship of park resources. Park managers develop scientifically sound practices and then train volunteers to use these techniques and collect information for resource-related projects. These programs allow participants to experience the park while also helping to address important management questions. Rocky Mountain National Park has a long history of volunteer help in the park and continues to expand this through citizen science.

Past and current projects include blitz events (water, beaver, microbial, biodiversity), dragonfly mercury, hummingbird, butterfly and limber pine. Visit www.nps.gov/romo/learn/scienceresearch.htm for more information about this research learning program.

Centennial Campaign Rolls On

The Rocky Mountain Conservancy's Centennial Campaign for Cascade Cottages continues to gather steam as we enter the National Park Service's own centennial. This past year, the owners of this 40-acre parcel which lies just inside Rocky National Park's eastern boundary, offered the park first right of refusal to purchase the property. The Conservancy immediately took up the challenge and engaged the Trust for Public Land (TPL) to act as our partner in negotiating the purchase of the land. TPL is well-known throughout the national conservation community for their skill with assisting willing owners to place their land within the public domain. This left the Conservancy free to launch a campaign to raise the funds necessary to acquire the largest remaining inholding inside the park.

I am pleased to report that, as of this writing, the Conservancy has raised approximately $2.1 million of the $3.6 million necessary to complete the purchase. And it is thanks to you, among our hundreds of loyal and generous donors, that we are well on our way to meeting this ambitious goal. Another notable contribution came in the form of a challenge grant by the Larimer County Open Space Program. Larimer County agreed to pledge $50,000 toward the purchase if the Town of Estes Park and the Estes Valley Land Trust would match their pledge with contributions of $25,000 each. Both organizations readily agreed. This show of support by our local government and land trust is especially inspiring.

As we enter the second year of this three-year campaign, we have some exciting milestones to reach. By late March, we expect that our partner, TPL, will have completed the negotiations for acquiring the property. In the meantime, we will be doing our best to spread the word of this pending acquisition with a goal of raising an additional $1 million by the end of 2016 and the balance in 2017.

We hope you will join us in reaching out to the many other friends of Rocky Mountain National Park to include them in this opportunity to give the gift of permanent protection to this treasure within the park.

RMNP License Plate Available January 1

The new, much-anticipated Rocky Mountain National Park License Plate will be available January 1, 2016. The certificate for the issuance of the plate, which was approved by the Colorado General Assembly and signed into law by Governor Hickenlooper this past spring, will be available exclusively through the Rocky Mountain Conservancy. A minimum $30 one-time donation to the Conservancy's License Plate Fund is required to qualify for this plate.

The Rocky Mountain Conservancy, Rocky Mountain National Park's official nonprofit philanthropic partner, will administer the donation program for this new plate, which is available only to Colorado-registered vehicle owners. 100% of the funds generated, estimated at more than $100,000, will directly support Rocky Mountain National Park. Use of these funds will be determined jointly by the Conservancy and Rocky Mountain National Park. Since 1985, the Conservancy has raised over $23 million for the park and supports trail construction and maintenance, land and historic preservation, education, publications, and more.

The new plate, designed by the Conservancy, will not replace the standard Colorado state license plate, but will be available as a voluntary fundraising option through the State's Group Special Plate program.

To qualify for a set of these plates, you must make a minimum $30 donation to the Rocky Mountain Conservancy's License Plate Fund. Donations will be accepted beginning on January 1, 2016 at the Conservancy's website (www.RMConservancy.org). License plate donations cannot be combined with gifts to other funds, prior donations, or Conservancy membership dues.

After a qualifying donation is received by the Conservancy, a license plate certificate will be mailed to the donor. To obtain your plates, present this certificate to your local county motor vehicle office. They will assess two $25 (total $50) one-time fees in addition to other standard registration fees. All fees are due at the time of registration. Plates will be printed on demand and will be mailed directly to the donor, conveniently eliminating the need for a second visit to your county motor vehicle office.

For more information about the license plate program, visit RMConservancy.org.

Colorado Gives Day a Success!

Once again, we had tremendous response to the Colorado Gives Day event on December 8! Dozens of Rocky Mountain National Park fans, some brand-new to our growing Conservancy team, gave a total of more than $21,000 via the GivingFirst.org web site — a new record! It is always inspiring to see how much you love Rocky Mountain National Park and the work we all accomplish together. Thank you! We'll see you again

Annual Appeal Update

We hope you have received an invitation to support the Conservancy through our Annual Appeal campaign. This is the one time of year that we ask everyone on our team do what you can to contribute to our work. If everyone gives a gift, small or large (all gifts make a difference!). As of today, we have received more than 791 gifts totaling $234,390. That is tremendous — thank you!

If you have not yet made a gift, fear not! There is still time. For information on any of these projects (and others!) visit RMConservancy.org.

Experiencing Cascade Cottages: A Retrospective

by Darrell C. Schaper

We first learned of the death of Grace Sipes in a Christmas card received in December of 2014. I remarked to my wife, Judy, whether any of her children would take over the business of operating Cascade Cottages. If not, then according to the late L.V. Davis, the land would go back to Rocky Mountain National Park.

This was sad for us, for until our daughter became a professor at the State College of Idaho in Caldwell, Idaho, we stayed at Cascade Cottages for a week each summer while we enjoyed the park. However, we had not returned since 2000 as our route west shifted to crossing Wyoming on the way to Idaho, where I tried to get my mountain "fix" in the Wallowa Mountains near Enterprise and Joseph, Oregon.

So, although neither Judy nor I can hike in the mountains anymore, nor have we visited Colorado for some time, it was sad to learn that Cascade Cottages was up for sale. There was almost never a vacancy, unless at the last minute a guest cancelled a reservation due to unforeseen circumstance or had to leave early for the same reasons.

In fact, the regular clientele were so faithful that reservations had to be made a year in advance. For instance, you might ask for space when you came for the current year's stay for a specific time in the following summer. Your name would be penciled in on a big wall board with the days of the month marked out for the next year. Then, in the following January, the Davis family would attempt to fit everyone into a final assignment.

L.V. Davis was a retired college professor from Wichita, Kansas, where they resided when the Cottages were shut down for the winter. He firmly believed that guests came to the Rocky Mountains to enjoy nature in the wilderness. As such, there were no telephones or televisions in the cottages. What you *did* have were: hot water for a shower, indoor toilets during the summer months, a fireplace, in some cases, clean accommodations with cooking facilities and dry, comfortable lodging. A screened-in box-like cage was located outside of one of the kitchen windows to serve as a makeshift refrigerator since it always cooled down at night.

Our children had the opportunity to watch chipmunks, hummingbirds, the occasional deer, a porcupine, and on one occasion, even a black bear on the grounds. It was for a very good reason that L.V. drove his old station wagon around to each cottage in the evening to empty out the garbage cans and deposit the waste in a bear-proof container.

There was no playground equipment for the kids. Who needed that when there were big boulders and trees to climb and a rushing mountain stream to explore?

In our cottage, I made breakfast every morning while the rest of the family was getting up. Afterwards, Judy and I packed our noon lunches for our day packs while our two children went to the community wood pile and brought back enough firewood for our evening use in the fireplace. Since an afternoon shower was common in July and August, it was a good idea to have some dry wood stacked under the cottage.

Some evenings, we drove to one of the nearby campgrounds to participate in a ranger-led nature talk by a crackling fire. There, the audience sang songs, told what state they were from, and listened to the ranger programs about the history of the park, the flora and fauna and other interesting topics.

Were we the elite? No, we were among the lucky; faithful regulars that had discovered this haven on the advice of my parents who had stayed there before us.

We studied the week's activities in the park newspaper that was handed out when we entered the park. From this, we planned what ranger-led day hikes we might want to join. We liked these as we usually picked up additional tidbits of information about the trail and the terrain along the way.

The lobby at the office of Cascade Cottages was always open to the guests, though there wouldn't be anyone managing it in the morning while the laundry was being done. The towels and sheets were washed in wringer washing machines on an open deck in back of the main building. Homemade laundry soap was used, and clean laundry was hung on clotheslines in the backyard. It was planned that the dry mountain air would dry the clean laundry before any afternoon showers might come over the mountains.

But in the evening, you could go to the lobby, sit in front of a fire in the fireplace to visit with other guests or the hosts and look through several big photo albums of images of past guests, or events at Cascade Cottage. Cookies and coffee were always available and on some occasions, we would all be invited to enjoy homemade ice cream and cake.

After L.V. died, his daughter, Grace Sipes, took over the management. She decided it was high time to make some improvements in the cottages and she, along with her assistants Johnny and Kay Flook, made new curtains for the windows, painted some of the furniture and generally spruced up the interiors. New inner-spring mattresses were placed on the beds. In some cases, the exposed studs in some of the cottages were covered. They tried to match the kitchen chairs around the eating table. In the cottage in which we were staying they only had three chairs that matched at the table. I said that we had the cousin to those chairs at home in the barn (my mother had dabbled in the antique business at one time and there were some things that remained) and I offered to bring one out when we returned next summer. She was grateful, so the next summer, we loaded up the cousin chair and delivered it as promised.

L.V. Davis and his daughter Grace Sipes (photo courtesy of Darrell Schaper)

We appreciated the isolation from the workaday world. Cascade Cottages was our home away from home and a springboard for all of our day trips in and about Rocky Mountain National Park. It was always tranquil except for a child's gleeful voice about the wonders of it all and the mesmerizing sound of the rushing mountain stream spilling over its rocky bed which could quickly lull you to sleep.

Were we the elite? No, we were among the lucky; faithful regulars that had discovered this haven on the advice of my parents who had stayed there before us. Our family was very blessed to have had the opportunity to stay there one week each summer, especially during the time when our children were growing up. It was Shangri-La in Paradise. While those times are gone, they live on in our memories.

Darrell and Judith Schaper hail from Britt, IA, and they have been supporters of the Rocky Mountain Conservancy since 1997.

Rocky Mountain Conservancy

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

September 21, 2015 – December 14, 2015

876 gifts ~ total donations $429,030

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Susan Tower, Longmont, CO
Town of Estes Park, Estes Park, CO
Linda and Kermit Trout, Overland Park, KS
Linda Trzyna, Denver, CO
Anne Turner, Boulder, CO
Carole K. Tuttle, Fort Collins, CO
Floyd and Leslie Tyson, Eaton, CO
Linda Van Arsdale, Ham Lake, MN
John and Helen Vinck, Longmont, CO
Barbara Vogelsang, Madison, WI:
In honor of Billy and Louisa Sanders
William and Carole Walsh, Newark, DE
Robert and Lynn Waltman, Greeley, CO:
In honor of Ted Nelson
Roger Alan Walton and Helen T. Anderson, Lakewood, CO
Weldon and Eva Wamble, Houston, TX
Steve Watson, Bozrah, CT
Chuck Westerheide, Stillwater, OK:
In honor of Joe Westerheide's birthday
Stacy Westerholm, Phoenix, AZ
Judy Wild, Emporia, KS
Linda and Howard Williams, Colorado Springs, CO
Tom and Rachel Williams, Estes Park, CO
J. Michael & Peggy Wilson, Whitefish Bay, WI:
In memory of Grace Salome Nakdimen
Carolyn and Jerry Young, Madison, WI
Bill and Pamela Zarrella, Boca Raton, FL
John and Karen Zinanti, Arvada, CO

All in Memory of Charles Westerfield:
J.L. Heider, Estes Park, CO:
In loving memory of her husband on their 30th anniversary
Brian and Louise Desmond, Estes Park, CO
Carolyn E. Kilgore, Estes Park, CO

Search & Rescue Fund

Renate Edmundson, Estes Park, CO

Fall River Visitor Center Fund

Dr. and Mrs. John Christiano, Jupiter, FL:
In honor of Marilyn Hubbard
Dr. and Mrs. John Christiano, Jupiter, FL:
In memory of John P. Christiano

Conservancy General Operations Fund

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The Denver Foundation/William W. Grant, Denver, CO
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Thomas Heppner, Williston, VT:
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Janet and Larry Kilgore, Estes Park, CO
Karolyn Snow, Denver, CO
Tom and Linda Stanar, Highlands Ranch, CO
Paul Yeargain, Oviedo, FL

Next Generation Fund

Sandi Cardillo, Omaha, NE
Joanie Crockett, Estes Park, CO
Marjorie Dunmire, Estes Park, CO
Bruce and Lois Ellingwood, Estes Park, CO
Marianne Gaynor, Taylor, MI:
In honor of Martha and Gene Stehman
Marianne Gaynor, Taylor, MI:
In honor Kelly Stehman and Ryan Dick
Jennifer Gray, Thornton, CO
Richard and Elaine Greenwood, Oviedo, FL
Bruce Harshberger, Loveland, CO:
In memory of Robert and Edna Harshberger
Rochelle Hoff, Walnut Creek, CA:
In honor of Diane Friedman
Susan Hollinger, Prairie Village, KS
Jeffrey and Shirley Hyatt, Melbourne, FL
Dr. James and Gerry Irvine, Estes Park, CO
Louise H. Johnson, Bloomington, IN:
In honor of Mr. and Mrs. Robert Ludlum
Dr. Peggy A. Keefer, Geneva, IL:
In memory of Doreen Jacobchak
Mary and Mike Kottke, Fountain Hills, AZ
Karen and Vernon Lee, Iola, KS
Betty J. Luttkus, Aurora, CO:
In memory of George Luttkus
Jim and Louise Meiman, Fort Collins, CO
Ford and Merry Nielsen, Estes Park, CO:
In honor of Ruth Hess
Mike Phillips, Omaha, NE
Joseph and Barbara Rumburg, Rio Rico, AZ
Marvin and Marilyn Rutkowski, Tucson, AZ
Robert and Mary Seifert, Estes Park, CO
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In honor of Scott and Michelle Shonbeck
The Denver Foundation/Hallidie G. Haid, Denver, CO
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Jim Warner, Fort Collins, CO
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Canton and Ann O'Donnell, Denver, CO
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Diane Phillips, Wildwood, IL
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Janet Prehn, Arvada, CO
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Nancy Roberts, Longmont, CO
John Rossie, Ottumwa, IA
Joseph and Barbara Rumburg, Rio Rico, AZ
Tim Shropshire and Sherry McGlochlin, Boulder, CO
Herman Sievering, Boulder, CO
Tom and Linda Stanar, Highlands Ranch, CO
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William and Ann Duncan, Boulder, CO
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In memory of Kathryn Grotenhuis Van Grotenhuis and Kathryn Moore, Eden Prairie, MN:
In honor of Robert and Norma Moore
Bruce Harshberger, Loveland, CO
Dennis and Bonnie Henley, Estes Park, CO
Josephine Hereford, Saint Louis, MO
Ruth Hess, Loveland, CO:
In honor of Merry and Ford Nielsen
Ruth Hess, Loveland, CO:
In honor of Helen & Rocky Lee
Ruth Hess, Loveland, CO:
In honor of Inez Kelley
Ruth Hess, Loveland, CO:
In honor of Richard & Shirley Tucker
Susanne Hicks, Nashville, TN
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Beth Jenkins, Mentor, OH
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In memory of Marilyn Leupold
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In honor of Charlie Inderman, RMNP Ranger
Tammy Pelnik, Louisville, CO
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Tom and Linda Stanar, Highlands Ranch, CO
Mike and Carol Stolz, Fort Collins, CO
Kevin Stout, Dillon, CO:
In honor of Janice Stout
Swanson's Trailhead Sticks, Loveland, CO
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Trail River Ranch

Bonnie Severson, Grand Lake, CO

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In honor of RMNP's 100th anniversary
Gerald and Darcy Boock, River Falls, WI
Bruce and Catherine Bosley, Brush, CO
Paul S. and Naomi Bowman, Burke, VA
Denise and Mark Bretting, Loveland, CO
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Elinor and Stephen Feiss, Towson, MD
Ethelwyn Fellinger, Phoenix, AZ
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In honor of Meribeth and Rick Wilkinson
Mary Ferguson, Memphis, TN:
In honor of Mary and David Markham
Mary Ferguson, Memphis, TN:
In honor of Mr. and Mrs. Wyndell Thomas
Fidelity Charitable Gift Fund/Eric Corwin, Boston, MA
Fidelity Charitable Gift Fund/ Bob Ladenburger, Boston, MA
Fidelity Charitable Gift Fund/Henry Rasof, Boston, MA:
In memory of Beatrice Rasof
Fidelity Charitable Gift Fund/Allen Sanborn, Boston, MA
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Steven M. Fishburn, Austin, TX
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Richard J. Flynn, Boulder, CO
Alan Folz, Dallas, TX
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Charline and Robert Freitag, Lawrence, KS
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Helga Gaffron, Niwot, CO
Ruth and Jim Gaulke, Parker, CO
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In memory of Christopher George
Carol Gerlitz, Boulder, CO:
In memory of William Braddock
Miriam Gilbert, Boulder, CO
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Deryl Gingery, Loveland, CO
Duane and Janet Gingrich, Dunwoody, GA
Stanley Gray, Urbana, IL
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Cheryl & Jack Gummere, Grand Junction, CO:
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Harold and Ilene Gutjahr, Denver, CO
Reginald and Judy Guy, Estes Park, CO
Anne Elizabeth Hale, Westminster, CO
Shelley Hall, Vail, CO
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Alice Knox, Denver, CO
Curt & Tonya Knudsen, Highlands Ranch, CO
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Mary and Mike Kottke, Fountain Hills, AZ
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Ken and Nancy Larner, Evergreen, CO
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Joseph Lebel, Cornwallville, NY
Art and Trudi Leissa, Fort Collins, CO
JD Leonard, Westminster, CO
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Garland and Sue McAulay, Paris, TX
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In honor of Madeline Framson's birthday
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Martha and Philip Melcher, Saint Paul, MN
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Betty Naughton, Boulder, CO
Betty Neale, Estes Park, CO
Enos Nelson, Indianapolis, IN
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In honor of Carol M. Nelson
Karen Nesler, Fort Collins, CO
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Network For Good/Chadwick Griffin, Washington, DC:
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In memory of Bryant O'Donnell
James and Mary O'Hara, Denver, CO
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Albert and Dorothy Ossinger, Lakewood, CO
Donna Owens, Gunnison, CO
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Rick and Vicki Papineau, Estes Park, CO
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Jane and Ken Schroll, Highlands Ranch, CO
Susan and Robert Schubert, San Jose, CA
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In honor of RMNP's 100th Anniversary
John and Patricia Shearer, Johnstown, CO
Shell Oil Company Foundation Matching Gifts, Princeton, NJ
Janice Shirey, Louisville, CO
Ralph and Theresa Shroba, Boulder, CO
Doug and Lynn Singletary, Gulfport, MS
Peter & Stephanie Sinnott, Glen Haven, CO
Debbie and William A. Skarstad, Boulder, CO:
In memory of Papa & Mom
Carol Ann and Randolph Smith, Spring, TX
Francoise Smith, Fort Collins, CO
Jean and Gad Smith, Kansas City, MO
Robert and Deana Smith, Oklahoma City, OK
Bob and Sandy Biebel, Allenspark, CO
John C. Snider, Tuscaloosa, AL
Snowy Peaks Winery, Estes Park, CO
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Donna Spence and Darrell Slette, Waco, TX
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Gene and Martha Stehman, Fort Collins, CO
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Bill and Kay Sterrett, Fort Collins, CO
Rosemary Stoffel, Denver, CO
Marty Stokely, Zionsville, TN
Janet Stonington, Louisville, CO

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Wilbur and Geraldine Stutheit, Fort Collins, CO
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John and Tate Todd, Greeley, CO
Andrea Tolzmann, Chicago, IL: In honor of Jerry and Margaret Spangler
Sherry Tooker, Linda Doherty, Superior, CO
Mary Truax, Stow, OH
Larry & Linda Tryon, Fort Collins, CO
Susan Turman, Denver, CO: In memory of Marcia and Bill Turman
Charlie and Jan Turner, Golden, CO
Walter Turnquist, New London, CT: In honor of Dallas, ditch-digging snow-bound buddy
Union Pacific Railroad, Andover, MA
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Rob and Fran Wagner, Canton, MI
Ronald and Linda Wagner, Roeland Park, KS
Richard O. Walker, Butler, PA
Karen M. Waller, Saint Joseph, MO: In honor of our fantastic RMC staff
Gloria and John Walsh, Orland Park, IL
Claire Walter, Boulder, CO
Sharon Ward, Fort Collins, CO
Jim Warner, Fort Collins, CO
Arthur & Edith Wartburg, Boulder, CO
Thomas and Rachelle Washburn, Estes Park, CO
Joe and Barb Wasung, Greeley, CO
Allen & Georgia Weber, Lakeway, TX
Ronald & Marlys Weberg, Loveland, CO
Karen Weedman, Fort Collins, CO
Ruth Anne Weisenauer & David Neumann, Brevard, NC: In memory of Marlene Willey
Marlene and William Wenk, Denver, CO
Carol Wernet, Louisville, CO
Western Sod Installation/ Kenneth P. Juengst, Loveland, CO
Gary and Dawn Wexell, Sycamore, IL: In memory of Kris Medley
Donelda Wheatley, Yukon, OK
Pamela & Roger Whitted, Springport, IN
William and Kathleen Wilkes, Prairie Village, KS
Lawrence & Linda Williams, Estes Park, CO
Nancy Williams, Seattle, WA
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Canton and Ann O'Donnell, Denver, CO
Fred and Carolyn Seale, Longview, TX

All in Memory of Gordon Goff:
Austin & Mary Jo Andrews, Estes Park, CO
Erin S. and Stanley H. Clark, Normal, IL

All in Memory of George Guthrie:
Margaret Guthrie, Estes Park, CO
Susan Hoppenworth, Estes Park, CO
Kathryn Irons, Estes Park, CO

All in Memory of Tamara Schaefer:
Jack and Mary Overly, Estes Park, CO
Doris Berryhill, Estes Park, CO
Barbara and Ken Cole, Estes Park, CO
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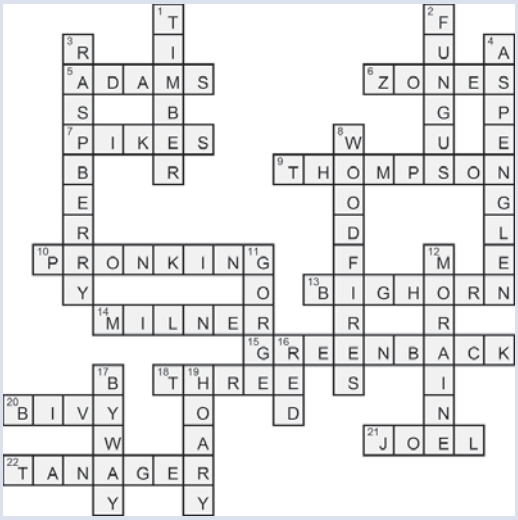
Park Puzzler Solution



Quick-Fix Science

Distribution and Habitat-use of Martens

Illustration: Wendy Smith

The Question: What is the distribution and habitat-use of American martens in the park?

American martens are arboreal (tree-dwelling) specialists that prey on chickarees and birds when in trees but also routinely take ground species such as voles and ground squirrels. Research has shown that although martens are unlikely to go extinct, local populations can be in danger of extirpation. One way to begin to monitor a species and its population status is to look at where the animal prefers to live and how often it is detected. Few studies have looked at habitat use at the southern range of the American marten, and none have been conducted in Rocky Mountain National Park. National parks are intended to protect all native species and park managers were interested in having baseline information on this beautiful but rarely seen mammal.

The Project: Use remote cameras placed five km apart throughout the park to determine habitat use and preference of martens in the park.

Roger Baldwin and Louis Bender from the New Mexico Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit placed 25 remote-sensor cameras throughout Rocky Mountain National Park from early August to late October in 2004-2006. They used bait to attract martens to the camera stations. Once the researchers collected the pictures from the cameras, they used three statistical models to analyze marten occurrence as a function of habitat and landscape variables (elevation, soil type, canopy cover, etc.). They also analyzed habitat use on the two sides of the Continental Divide and how humans influence marten behavior.

The Results: Marten habitat was best described as moist west side forests with riparian mixed conifer stands.

Martens were photographed at 22 of 25 (88 percent) sites on the west side of the Continental Divide and six of 32 (18.8 percent) on the east side. Martens occupied over 90 percent of the western part of the park, while occupancy rates were only 20-30 percent for the eastern part of the park. All three statistical models concluded that martens prefer the west side of the park in riparian mixed conifer stands. The drier lodgepole and ponderosa pine stands common east of the Continental Divide were typically avoided by martens. Also, martens were shown to avoid open habitats. One exception to this is their use of rockfields, which may provide cover and foraging opportunities.

This summary is based on published, peer-reviewed and/or unpublished reports available at the time of writing. For more information about the park's research program, see www.nps.gov/romo. (Photo and map: Roger Baldwin and Lou Bender)

Photo: NPS/Russell Smith

Ypsilon winter views
Photo: Conservancy Member Denny Longsworth

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Nature Notes

A white-tailed ptarmigan in winter plumage photographed on Flattop Mountain by Conservancy member Marlene Borneman. Males sport a fleshy red eyecomb above the eye as a brilliant but minimalist nod to the common flamboyance of male birds. Cool, but not too surprising that ptarmigan have feathers on their feet to provide extra insulation, but did you know they also have extra feathers in their nostrils? Every little bit helps in the land above the trees!

<Whew!> High winds in December on the park's east side are keeping us on our toes, while considerably less wind on the west side beckons outdoor enthusiasts to explore the many trails, snow and sublime scenery that remain a well-kept secret during the winter months.....RM Conservancy Director of Finance **Sarah Rhode** braked for three young-looking bobcats that ran right in front of her car in mid-December in Estes Park.....*Quarterly* Editor **Nancy Wilson** discovered a purple crocus blooming in her "dormant" garden in mid-November in Estes Park.....East District Naturalist **Kathy Brazelton** put her Halloween jack-o'-lantern out by the front porch for trash day. A buck mule deer came by and, while tasting it, got the ghoulish gourd hooked on one of his large antlers. He proudly promoted the holiday as he walked around all afternoon gaily festooned with the gored pumpkin.....Retired Colorado River District Information Specialist **Debbie Mason** witnessed a moose fight in late November on the west side of the park near Grand Lake. This was not the ritual antler-to-antler battle of the fall rut. This was a disagreement over whose salt lick was whose. The neighbor to one side of her home had a salt lick behind his house, but then added two more. Then, the neighbor on the other side of Debbie's home put a salt lick in *his* yard, all with the hope of drawing this gargantuan and unpredictable ungulate closer to his house. On this particular afternoon, Debbie noticed a cow and calf moose at the three-salt-lick house. Then she noticed a young bull at the one-salt-lick house on the other side. That was cool. Everyone was getting along. Then, the young bull joined the females at the three-salt-lick house. At first, the cow moved to a different salt lick with her calf, but the young bull followed her and she'd move again. After a while they agreed to be together. Then, a bit later, there were two cows with calves and the young bull. As Debbie watched, the young bull and one of the cows rose up on their hind legs and were swatting each other with their front legs. At least twice. Then the cow with the smaller calf left and the remaining three went back to licking salt at the three-salt-lick house.....Park Resident **Alison Rivers** reported a backed-up sewage line that was found to have been caused by a "playful" squirrel that thought it fun to drop pinecones down the sewer vent pipe in her yard.....Debbie also spotted an ermine slinking through the deep snow. It appeared as a shadow followed by a black dot — the pure white body leaving only the shadow but the black-tipped tail a dead giveaway..... Conservancy Member **Marlene Borneman** reported that a pine squirrel, a.k.a. chickaree, had been harvesting spruce and ponderosa cones from a wide area in her neighborhood in Estes Park and then storing them around her yard, including in a downspout and under the barbecue grill. Once the offending squirrel was given the nickname "Rocky," Marlene was loathe to chase him away. They now watch Rocky's daily scurrying and carefully note where he stores them.....Photographer **Gene Putney** went to Moraine Park in mid-December near sunset. He was the only person there and watched a pack of five coyotes hunting together as a team. The river was frozen and when they crossed it they were slipping and sliding, a comic side-note to an otherwise serious venture..... During a Field Institute hike to Lawn Lake this fall, leader **Geoff Elliot** and the group members caught sight of a cow moose and a calf browsing in the willows just below the old dam.....Also, while scouting the Chasm Lake trail for another program hike, Geoff observed a long-tailed weasel that was being chased off by a marmot after the wily predator tried to sneak up on some young marmots that were hanging out amidst the rocks..... Estes Park residents **Art Messal** and **Michelle Hiland** were out for a run in the park in early December, on the trail from the Upper Beaver Meadows Road to Deer Ridge Junction. On the way, they encountered two buck mule deer locked in a deadly battle. Their antlers were stuck together and one had already died, probably succumbing to the cold and fatigue. The other was struggling to free himself and was pulling the carcass of his defeated opponent slowly across the ground. Exhaustion was evident. Nature can be brutal. According to **Kyle Patterson**, park information officer, this type of antler entanglement is very rare. The park sent rangers to investigate and one of the deer was still alive. When assessing naturally occurring events, the park considers the safety of its personnel, visitors and wildlife to determine if additional intervention is warranted. In this case, the rangers took action to free the remaining live mule deer.....RM Conservancy Warehouse Dude **Jeremiah Ramirez** took the photo of Dream Lake Ice *(see cover image)* this winter. As he walked across the frozen, wind-swept lake, he was mesmerized by the designs of the seemingly endless cracks and bubbles embedded within the ice.....Estes Park residents **Michael** and **Susi Sisk** reported evidence of a bear that had figured out how to break into cars. One evening in early November, they looked outside to where their cars were parked in their driveway and noticed that the lights in all three vehicles were on. On closer inspection, they realized that all three had one door hanging open, and they were just in time to see the culprit backing out of the last car, rump first. The bear had systematically checked out each car, opening the latches on each. Luckily, it didn't get trapped in any of them because that can be a nightmare — for everyone!....We all are looking forward to the winter solstice and longer days — a beacon of hope in the dark of mid-winter. Have hope!