

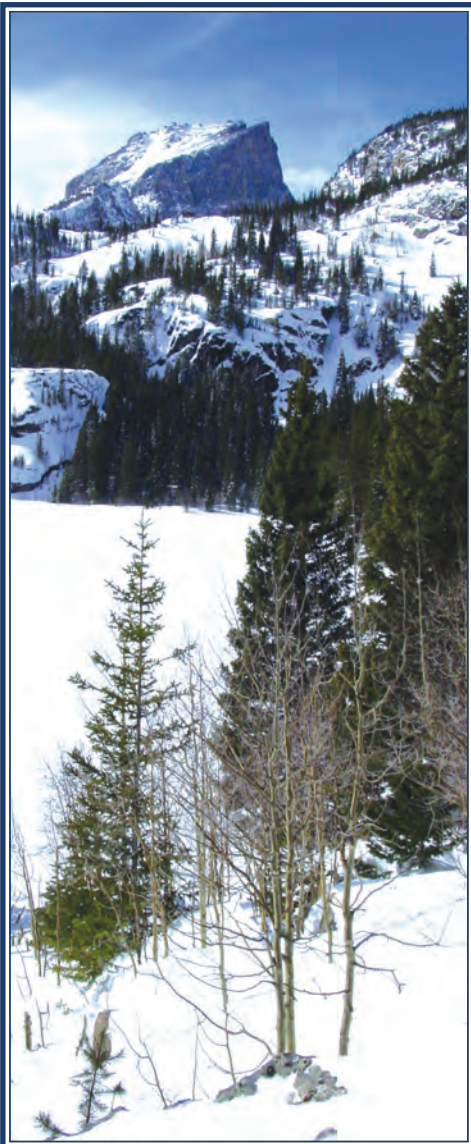


ROCKY MOUNTAIN NATURE ASSOCIATION

Spring 2011

\$2.00

# QUARTERLY



## THINKING AHEAD

by C.W. Buchholtz

It was a morning I won't forget. Carol Braun came to our office to join a group of volunteers stuffing envelopes. A couple of hours later, when that task was finished, she stepped into my office.

"Hi, Carol," I said, lightheartedly. "How's it going?" I knew she had been sick. I'd heard it was cancer.

"I'm okay," she replied, obviously moving a little slow for an avid hiker around fifty years old.

"You look great," I replied, trying to be cheery. "In fact, you look chipper."

She smiled at my remark, then moved across the room to sit in the chair beside my desk. "I'm dying," she announced quietly. "And I wondered if you could help me."

After shutting my office door, I replied "What are you talking about?" I was shocked by her matter-of-fact statement. "But you look great. Certainly the doctors..."

Carol ignored my attempt to console her and went straight to the purpose of this conversation: planned giving. She explained the nature of her illness. She described what the doctors predicted about the time she had left. She wanted to talk about the possessions she would be leaving behind, her house, her car, "my stuff."

We talked about her family and her

neighbors. We talked about a good friend she'd already chosen as her executor. We talked about attorneys and wills. She had questions about the Rocky Mountain Nature Association, its various projects, and especially its youth programs.

She didn't believe in medical miracles. Or hope. Instead, Carol wanted to know if the Rocky Mountain Nature Association could make use of her Estes Park home. If she gave us her life savings, what would we do with the funds? At that moment I suggested youth programs, the Next Generation Fund, a project with a vision for the future, adding thoughts about endowments.

We talked about a future she would not see. If we planned to use the house for interns or the American Conservation Corps, she asked, should she buy it some nice furniture now? A nice leather couch, she proposed, would last a long time.

She was planning ahead, yet she was running out of time. She was making decisions. This conversation would help create her legacy.

Death is not something most people like to talk about. In fact, if it's part of our conversation at all, we soften the subject by telling old jokes: So Ole dies and Lena heads to the newspaper office. "I want you to report that Ole died," says Lena to the editor. "Well," the editor advised, "perhaps we can say more than

*(Thinking Ahead, continued on page 2)*



*(Thinking Ahead, continued)*

that.” “Nope,” says Lena. “That’s enough.” “If expense is an issue,” replied the editor, “the first five words are free.” “Okay,” says Lena, “put it in the paper this way: Ole died. Boat for sale.”

Notice how quickly I shifted away from a very serious conversation to something lighthearted. That’s how our minds tend to work. We mortals enjoy our days and spend little time pondering our inevitable demise. When death appears in casual conversations, we revert to jokes about the Pearly Gates.

The story of Ole and Lena is simply silly. The story of Carol Braun is sad, but it is also a reminder that leaving a legacy is something serious for all of us to think about, even if all we have to leave is a boat.

Through the years, the Rocky Mountain Nature Association (together with the former Rocky Mountain National Park Associates) has been the recipient of many planned gifts. Each of them makes a statement about how deeply our national parks—and Rocky Mountain National Park in particular—have touched the lives of average citizens. Just two years ago I wrote the story about John and Edith London, immigrants from Europe, and how the park served to remind them of the Alps of Switzerland. Their legacy gift launched our Next Generation Endowment Fund.

Another story I’ve been telling now for sixteen years is about the gift from Leslie Fidel Bailey. In a wheelchair, he came to see me one day, claiming to have “escaped” from a retirement home in Boulder. He’d been a research scientist all of his life. He loved the national parks. He was suffering from his third (and final)

about with prostate cancer and was getting his final affairs in order. Mr. Bailey said to me, rather bluntly, “I want to give you some money,” adding for humor, “I am not a crook.”

“Money for what?” I asked. “What do you need?” he asked. “Well,” I paused, seeing he was confined to a wheelchair, “we’re building a wheelchair accessible trail around Lily Lake right now.” Considering he came to the park for this “escape” (escorted by a nurse), I thought that the Lily Lake Trail was a great suggestion. But I added, “You’re the donor, you tell me what you want to do.” It turned out that Mr. Bailey had plenty to say.

He wanted people to promote conservation with the zeal of John Muir. But he also wanted those same zealots to be experts in what they were talking about. Mr. Bailey wanted captivating speakers and writers. He wanted to introduce serious young scholars to our national parks. He hoped to engage them in research work and share those studies with the public. The resulting Justine and Leslie Fidel Bailey Fellowship became the first endowed research fellowship program in the National Park System.

Over time, planned gifts have also helped the Rocky Mountain Nature Association acquire precious land in and around the park. Such donations have been instrumental in fixing trails, restoring historic structures, conducting educational programs, and creating visitor centers. For example, the Fall River Visitor Center lead donation was a \$1 million planned gift from the late Shirley Scrogin.

I could make a list of Friends of



*Carol Braun was an avid hiker and park aficionado. Her estate planning included a generous gift to RMNA’s Next Generation Fund.*

Rocky Mountain National Park who’ve left us a legacy gift by naming the Rocky Mountain Nature Association in their will or as a beneficiary of an insurance policy. But there is simply not enough space to recognize them all. Braun, Bailey, London, Scrogin, Gerstley, Emery...the list could go on and on. I can assure you that someday the name Buchholtz will also appear.

Today the Rocky Mountain Nature Association continues to thank donors from the past while thinking ahead, creating a legacy today to ensure that the mission of helping Rocky Mountain National Park continues for generations to come.

*Curt Buchholtz is the Executive Director of the Rocky Mountain Nature Association.*



*The Braun Haus was Carol Brauns gift to the Rocky Mountain Nature Association. It now houses educational interns and fellows.*



*Paul Gerstley’s planned gift helped purchase the 20-acre Fahy Tract on the park’s west side.*



*The Fall River Visitor Center is the lasting legacy of the Shirley Scrogin trust which provided half the funds needed for construction.*



## Take A Journey to Poland with RMNA!

### Explore the Natural and Cultural History of Rocky's Sister Park, Poland's Tatra Mountains National Park!

**Dates:** September 13-24

**Tentative trip cost:** \$2,739 per person (airfare not included)

**Deposit:** \$500 due by June 3, refundable until July 27

**Instructor:** Bill Bertschy

This unique eco-tour adventure will introduce participants to a European national park and its surrounding cultural and natural landscapes. Explore the Polish Tatrzański National Park, beginning in Prague; then travel by motorcoach to Zakopane, a town nestled within the Tatra Mountains just outside the national park. Learn about the flora, fauna and geologic history of the region on guided hiking, rafting and caving adventures. What a trip! Don't miss this amazing experience!

**Call Rachel at 970-586-3262 to learn more!**

### Cover photo credits

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

“**Bear Lake Winter**,” by RMNA Member Cynthia Brady, Oklahoma City, OK; “**Northern Saw-whet Owl**,” by RMNA Member Dick Orleans, Estes Park, CO; “**Backcountry Patrol**,” by RMNA Member Becky Swearingen, Springfield, MO. Please send high resolution images to [nancy.wilson@rmna.org](mailto:nancy.wilson@rmna.org) by June 1 for publication in the Summer 2011 *Quarterly*.

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

## Ask Nancy

*[RMNA Quarterly Editor Nancy Wilson will attempt to unearth answers to any questions asked by RMNA members and park visitors. If you are curious about something in or about the park, write: Nancy Wilson, RMNA, PO Box 3100, Estes Park, CO 80517. Or email her at [nancy.wilson@rmna.org](mailto:nancy.wilson@rmna.org) ]*

### Do female ptarmigan leave RMNP to congregate somewhere else for the winter?

Well....they *used* to take winter trips, but they're very modest creatures, and with the new scanning and patdown procedures.....Seriously - the park's white-tailed ptarmigan are fairly sedentary. They make localized movements, sometimes even moving from the tundra to lower elevations, but rarely more than 5 miles or so in distance. The ptarmigan at Rocky Mountain National Park were studied pretty intensively in the late 60's and 70's by Division of Wildlife researchers, and movements out of the park and/or sexual segregation weren't particularly noted. They did note some congregating of birds in late summer and early autumn, at times reaching densities of about one per acre. In arctic regions where willow and rock ptarmigan are more prevalent, large-scale movements (flocks of hundreds of birds moving perhaps 100+ miles) and sexual segregation in wintering areas takes place. Male and female grouse have different nutritional needs and expenditures, even in winter, so it's a fair bet that the segregation is an adaptation to efficiently exploit scarce winter resources and optimize winter survival and subsequent reproductive efforts.—  
*Gary C. Miller, RMNP Wildlife Biologist*

**Why does Estes Park get so much wind?** A foehn wind or föhn wind, also known as a chinook, is a type of dry, down-slope wind that occurs in the lee (downwind side) of a mountain range. Here, in Rocky, this kind of wind often occurs on the east side when storms come from the west, dumping most of the snow west of the Continental Divide. The east side experiences a rain/snow shadow wind that results from the subsequent warming of air that has dropped most of its moisture on windward slopes. As a consequence of the different lapse rates of moist and dry air, the air on the leeward slopes becomes warmer than equivalent elevations on the windward slopes, and a föhn wind can raise temperatures by as much as 54°F in just a matter of hours. Winds of this type are called “snow-eaters” for their ability to make snow melt, or sublimate rapidly. Increased snowfall on the east side of the Divide will often occur during an upslope storm (*Continued on page 15*)

### What is the prognosis for moose survival for those that have migrated over the Divide to Estes Park - can a population of moose be sustained in this environment?

Individual moose that find their way to the east slope certainly can survive. For whatever reason, however, those that wander in may not stick around. Reported observations are spotty, and seem often to be young males, although the occasional female is sighted. Sometimes natural pioneering into a new area by a species just takes time, with enough founder individuals remaining in the area to establish a viable population. The park doesn't survey for moose on the east side, but my opinion is that eventually there will be at least a small sustaining population in and around the vicinity.—  
*Gary C. Miller, RMNP Wildlife Biologist*



# PINE BEETLE AFTERMATH: AS THE FOREST BECOMES YOUNG AGAIN

by Suzanne Silverthorn

For Michele Simmons, there couldn't be a better time to engage visitors in a conversation about the forest and the changes that are occurring on the park's west side. As she fields questions from visitors at the Kawuneeche Visitor Center in her role as interpreter for the Colorado River District, she encourages visitors to look beyond the dead and dying lodgepole tree stands that have succumbed to the mountain pine beetle and instead look for signs of new life. "We like to tell people, 'the trees are dying, but the forest is becoming young again.'" She explained that once the needles from the dead trees fall to the ground, sunlight can reach the forest floor for the first time in decades.

Last summer, at the Onahu Trailhead, not far from her office, Michele showed how the regeneration already is underway as she pointed to new wildflowers that were flourishing where they hadn't grown before. She explained that the guided wildflower tours were extended by two weeks in 2010 to explore the profusion of flowers. Up ahead at the Timber Creek Campground, even more wildflowers, grasses and new vegetation had replaced the dead tree stands removed in 2008. When the campground was fully reopened last summer, some of the returning campers were saddened by what they saw, but the campground hosts were eager to redirect the visitors' attention to the colorful sunsets and the spectacular views of the Never Summer Range which until now had been shielded by the dense forest. The campers were safer, too, they stressed, from falling trees.

The pine beetle outbreak is a process that isn't necessarily unnatural



Photo: John Marino

*Huge swathes of limber pine in the Kawuneeche Valley have died, leaving behind these characteristic red needled trees which eventually turn gray as the needles drop.*



*Colorado River District Interpreter Michele Simmons is optimistic about the potential of new growth in forest areas that have been decimated by the mountain pine beetle during the last 10 years.*

or unhealthy, Michele tells visitors as she begins her sixth year at RMNP. And with the additional sunlight, "the good stuff is yet to come."

Her outlook is supported by researchers at Colorado State University. Among them is Bill Romme, professor of fire ecology, who, with Professor Monique Rocca and three graduate students, has documented the mortality and survival rates of the west side trees as the beetles begin to impact the trees on the east side of the park. The field work, conducted in 2008, identified a

surprising number of surviving trees within the stands. The survivors are predominately lodgepole pine, up to about six inches in diameter and anywhere from 30 to 100 years old. "It means the forest won't have to be regrown from scratch and that there will be an accelerated growth period of the survivors," he said.

Following a mountain pine beetle outbreak in the Yellowstone area some thirty years ago, there was a two- to fourfold increase in the growth rate of the surviving trees. This is the kind of growth rate that could happen here, too, Romme said. Based on that assessment,

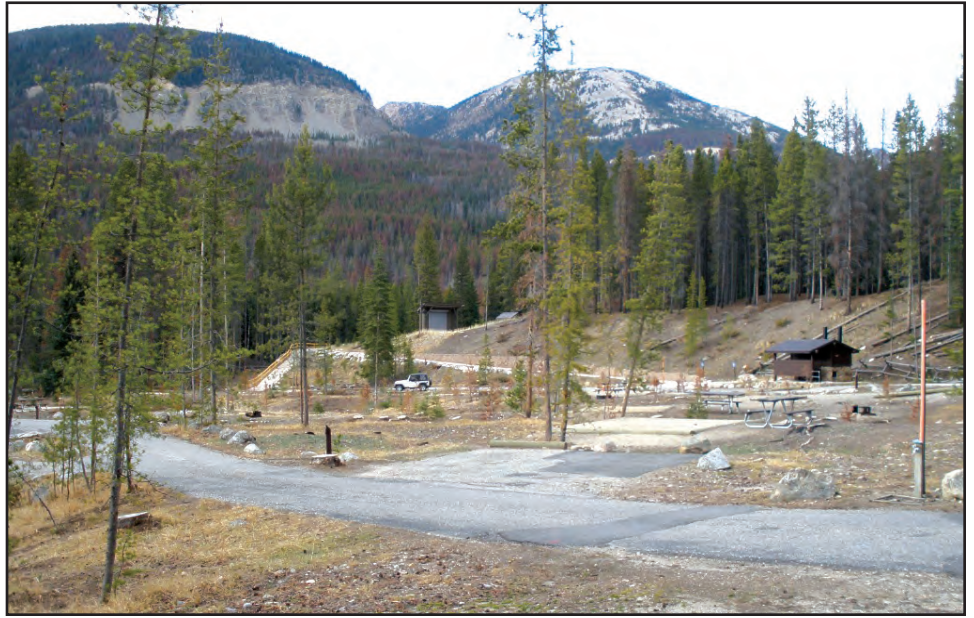
**Following a mountain pine beetle outbreak in the Yellowstone area some thirty years ago, there was a two- to four-fold increase in the growth rate of the surviving trees.**



people could be admiring green forests again at RMNP within twenty years. He speaks cautiously, noting that the prediction is based on historic trends. Climate change could alter the outcome.

For Jason Sibold, an assistant professor of geography at Colorado State University, a focus on the past is providing significant clues to the forest's future ecological legacy. After using tree rings to meticulously document evidence of twenty-two fires on the park's west side dating back to 1654, Sibold has concluded that severe drought has been the primary cause of these historic fires rather than beetle-kill as others had theorized. His studies have also documented the site-specific pattern of regrowth on the west side of the park following a 1970s pine beetle outbreak and what is likely to happen in the future.

Based on species changes associated with the 1970s pine beetle outbreak, Sibold suggests that lodgepole pine stands that regenerated following fires in the 1851 to 1915 period will be experiencing new establishment of mostly lodgepole pines, while older stands that regenerated following fires in the 1650 to 1800 period will be more prone to a mix of lodgepole pine and spruce and fir. In addition, north-facing sites and sites close to water will likely see a transition from lodgepole to more spruce and fir because these species thrive in cooler, wetter areas. Interestingly, and unexplainably, the



*Timber Creek Campground (and Glacier Creek Campground on the east side of the park) may look barren, but new growth will soon fill in the gaps. Beetle-killed trees are extremely susceptible to falling in high winds. Since visitor safety is a high priority in the park, it was necessary to remove all potentially dangerous trees.*

pine beetle outbreak has not created an opportunity for new aspen establishment; however, the good news for aspen is that it appears to be regenerating well following the Cow Creek fire on the park's east side. Additionally, Sibold is studying a stand of ponderosas which has experienced a dramatically higher mortality rate as compared to lodgepole

**Interestingly, and unexplainably, the pine beetle outbreak has not created an opportunity for new aspen establishment...**

pine during the most recent pine beetle outbreak. It isn't clear yet how this stand will respond to the outbreak.

Future fire events and drought conditions will be contributing factors to the overall health of the forest, says Sibold, as will be the impact from wildlife. Sibold hopes to continue his research by evaluating how the outbreak will shape forests on the east side of RMNP. Colleagues Bill Romme and Monique Rocca, meanwhile, will return to the park to continue an analysis of the patterns of seed crops in the canopies to further predict regeneration and fire impacts.

As the park prepares to welcome visitors to a new summer season, the west and east sides of the park will begin to offer a glimpse of what's to come for visitors who prefer to look beyond the gray and focus on the green.

*Suzanne Silverthorn is an RMNA Member and a regular contributor to the Quarterly. She serves as the Community Information Officer for the Town of Vail, Colorado.*



*The forest floor is crowded with new growth now possible with increased sunlight.*





by Heidi Buchholtz

Better than a Coming Attraction, Interpretive Park Ranger Cynthia Langguth will brighten your day with her cheery countenance. Truly. Just go up to the Alpine Visitor Center this summer and see for yourself.

Cynthia didn't stumble into this career by accident. Oh no. By age 12 she knew she was going to be a ranger – the direct result of family vacations that always ended up in western parks. It was only natural to get a degree in Parks, Recreation and Tourism Management from the University of Missouri-Columbia, with a summer internship in Rocky Mountain National Park during college.

Along the way, Cynthia spent several winters in Death Valley opposite her Rocky summers. Another summer she spent at Olympic National Park. She scored her first full-time park service job at Point Reyes National Seashore in 2005, then spent another 1½ years at Joshua Tree National Park. Full



*Cynthia and park visitors on a snowshoeing break overlooking Bear Lake.*

## Cynthia Langguth: Coming Soon to the Alpine Visitor Center!

time in Rocky happened in 2009. Slam dunk. To her estimation, deserts and mountains suited her best.

Much of Cynthia's seasonal experience at Rocky was at the Alpine Visitor Center which she really enjoyed. "I'm happy anywhere near or above treeline," she said. This coming summer Cynthia will be working at the Alpine Visitor Center again, managing the entire interpretive operations and staff – a perfect fit for her.

As an aside, for Cynthia, it's important to note that even though she and her peers are known as Interpretive Park Rangers, most visitors are more familiar with the title "park ranger," which she uses to introduce herself, or "naturalist." "Interpreters" were previously known as "naturalists" but she explained that interpreter is a more encompassing word since so many national parks are now cultural sites. "Naturalist" just didn't fit what those rangers were doing. Lest there be any misunderstanding, here, they are not, necessarily, foreign language experts.

Cynthia is busying hiring staff for the upcoming season, as well as supervising about fifty volunteers. She especially enjoys mentoring and coaching the new employees and interns. "I love to see the spark of interest grow" she said, as they assume their park roles. She likes to keep track of these people through the NPS "extended family," the Park Service network of current and former employees. During the course of a summer season, they get close. It's inevitable, under the circumstances.

With regard to the park's interest in protecting the fragile tundra ecosystem above treeline, Cynthia is leading a new volunteer group called the Tundra Guardians that will work along Trail Ridge Road, helping with visitor questions and issues related to the tundra. Keep your eyes peeled for them

as you drive above treeline this summer. She also oversees the hugely popular "Night Sky" programs held in Upper Beaver Meadows and at the Moraine Park Visitor Center. About 140 visitors attend each Upper Beavers Meadow astronomy program, complete with telescopes. The programs at Moraine Park VC are especially popular with families and include storytelling and activities. "These programs are great because people can take what they've learned about the night sky home with them and continue exploring on their own," she said.

Cynthia also helps plan new programs, collaborates with her peers on operations and training, and helps with the park's web site, a skill she acquired at Point Reyes. "But I really enjoy giving programs and meeting the public," she said.

When not on the job, Cynthia likes to hike, snowshoe and rock climb. She and her husband Ben (who also works for the park) also spend a lot of time remodeling the home they recently purchased. A happy life for Cynthia, indeed.

But, looking ahead, she does see some challenges on the horizon. "Staying relevant in today's world is a big one," she said, "although this isn't a problem unique to parks," she added. Reaching new and younger audiences, and enticing kids away from their digital gadgets are top on the list, even as federal budget issues make that harder. But she's hopeful things will work out, with a little creativity. Despite the rough spots, she's happy. "I love my job and can't imagine doing anything else," she said.

*It's soon to be summer, so....*

**Mark Your Calendars!**

**RMNA Membership Picnic**

**July 30, 2011 11 a.m. - 2 p.m.**

**Stanley Park Pavilion.**

*(more information forthcoming)*

Spring  
Field Seminars to  
Jump Start Your  
Summer!



### Spring Ecology, April 16th

with instructor Dr. Tim Kittel, Ecology professor from CU, Boulder. Dr. Kittel explores the physical and biological processes of the plants and animals of the Rocky Mountains as the seasons shift from winter to summer. Explore the ecology of the montane and subalpine regions to learn how the spring transition period provides important clues that factor into conservation and management of the natural resources of this area.

## RMNA Partners with the Rocky Mountain Park Inn

Partnerships and the relationships formed within a community are essential components for nonprofit success. Each one is uniquely created to benefit the partners involved. RMNA has recently engaged in an exciting new partnership venture with the Rocky Mountain Park Inn, formerly the Holiday Inn of Estes Park, which has potential to increase membership, enhance philanthropy, boost seminar sales and spread the word about the mission of RMNA.

With this new arrangement, guests at the Rocky Mountain Park Inn will be invited to donate \$1, or a portion of their room charge, to the Next Generation Fund, the RMNA campaign raising funds for programs for youth in Rocky Mountain National Park.

Winter is fading fast and signs of spring are already appearing in the High Country. What a great time to explore Rocky Mountain National Park! Rocky Mountain Field Seminars has seminars scheduled in April and May to wake up that sluggish winter brain with all of the amazing things happening in Rocky. Sign up today!

To register for any of the Rocky Mountain Field Seminars classes, visit us online at [www.rmna.org](http://www.rmna.org), or call 970-586-3262.

### Behind the Scenes at RMNP, May 13th

This seminar offers participants a unique perspective on what it takes to run a place like Rocky Mountain National Park. Discover the backcountry office, ranger operations station, fire management office, volunteer office, park greenhouse, and museum storage facility. Talk with rangers about their role in preserving resources and educating the public. Participants will end their tour at the RMNA building for lunch and a chance to chat with Curt Buchholtz, the RMNA executive director.



Guests will also have the option to purchase a room package which includes a Field Seminar experience. What an ideal opportunity to introduce people from all over the country to the Rocky Mountain Nature Association, and to offer an educational opportunity exploring the wonders of Rocky Mountain National Park!

This partnership was created in response to a green initiative launched by the Forever Resorts company (owner of the Rocky Mountain Inn) to incorporate environmental sustainability and sound eco-friendly practices within their hotels. Other ways in which the Rocky Mountain Park Inn will meet

### Life Signs: Tracking the Invisible, May 18

with popular instructor Kevin J. Cook. This skills seminar teaches participants how to locate wildlife signs using observation as the primary tool. A swelling on a twig or a hole in a stem, a stray feather or a piece of eggshell, an abandoned nest or a mound of soil: so many different things reveal the comings and goings of secretive creatures that otherwise remain invisible. Become a wildlife detective!



*RMNA Field Seminars Manager Rachel Balduzzi with Rocky Mountain Inn Sales Manager Rebecca Pena*

their mission include a comprehensive recycling program available to guests, eco-products such as shampoos and other convenience items, and new energy saving fixtures and appliances. Whether you are traveling to visit Rocky Mountain National Park from across the country, or up for the weekend from the Front Range, check out this unique partnership — a collaboration that really can make a difference!



## PARK GREENHOUSE UPDATE: A GREEN AND GROWING OPERATION

by Lindsay Springer, RMNP Lead Biological Technician

Although a blanket of snow is common in the park this time of year, inside the RMNP greenhouse already it is turning green with grasses, forbs, shrubs and tree species that were grown from seeds collected within the park. The greenhouse and adjacent nursery support the park's vegetation program by producing native plants for many restoration projects throughout RMNP. Lindsay Springer manages the greenhouse with the help of several seasonal employees and numerous dedicated volunteers.

And no small task this is. Wetland sedges demand long periods of seed treatment prior to germination, several alpine plants require cooler temperatures, and trees insist on extended daylight (or artificial lighting) and a special inoculation for their germination and healthy growth. Seeds for each species were collected adjacent to disturbed sites and will be grown to adequate size, then returned to the site for restoring the disturbed area.

In an ongoing effort to make the greenhouse more efficient and more productive, a recent switch from pots to smaller "conetainers" increased the greenhouse plant capacity and annual production from 12,000 to 33,000



Outside plant nursery beds in late June, 2010.



plants. The outdoor nursery facility continues to hold more than 40,000 plants. Current plants that are growing in the greenhouse will be transplanted to restore the following areas:

- Bear Lake Road Phase II Reconstruction
- Reforestation projects from beetle-killed hazard tree removal
- Alpine Visitor Center trail and utilities
- Grand Lake Entrance Station replacement
- Trail Ridge Road Overlay Phase III reconstruction

With sustainability in mind, plans for a nursery redesign and updates inside the greenhouse are being developed to meet the park's future plant production needs. Meanwhile, energy efficient heaters were installed in March 2010, and the greenhouse outer panels will be replaced in August 2011. Both updates should decrease heating costs and energy usage while the new panels will increase solar penetration and insulation. A proposed nursery redesign aims to utilize all available ground space for plant beds. A seed bank is also being considered for viability and proper storage of collected and produced seed.

Rocky Mountain National Park's

greenhouse was built in 1995 through an endowed gift from Janet Hagen, a generous donor to the Rocky Mountain Nature Association, and expanded in 2005 through donated funds.

To learn more about the RMNP greenhouse and restoration program, please come to the greenhouse public open house on Earth Day: Friday, April 22, 2011, from 8:00 a.m. – noon. Contact Lindsay Springer, Greenhouse Manager, by e-mail: [Lindsay\\_Springer@nps.gov](mailto:Lindsay_Springer@nps.gov) or phone: (970) 586-1252, for more information. Volunteer opportunities are available through the park's Volunteer Office: [ROMO\\_Volunteers\\_In\\_Parks@nps.gov](mailto:ROMO_Volunteers_In_Parks@nps.gov) or (970) 586-1330.



Inside greenhouse nursery plants, April, 2010.



# Million Dollar Challenge Continues Dollar For Dollar Gift Match — No Exercise Required!

Thanks to all you great supporters who walked, rode bikes, trotted, snowshoed, and even danced (yes, danced!) hundreds—even thousands—of miles. The total raised to date is just over \$350,000 toward the MILLION MILE CHALLENGE.

Our most generous anonymous donor, who is still excited and committed to matching every gift up to \$1 million, is willing to extend the deadline through the end of 2011 to support the NEXT GENERATION FUND.

To make the Challenge easier and less complicated in 2011, exercise is not required to accompany a donation, although if you care to waltz while contemplating a gift, feel free! Just indicate “MMC” with your gift to the Next Generation Fund and it will be matched 100%.

This special anonymous donor urged us to ask everyone to help us succeed with the Next Generation Fund Campaign. Any gift marked with “MMC” will be included in the goal prior to January 1, 2012.

P.S. It’s probably a good idea to exercise regardless. So take a hike. And please contribute.



## Spring Member Hikes!

Join Membership Manager Curtis Carman and special park guests for spring guided hikes in Rocky Mountain National Park!

Limited to 15 people per hike, outings explore a different spot in the park each month and discuss current RMNA projects, park management issues and natural history.

### Spring Hike Schedule:

**April 22 - Mill Creek - Bierstadt Lake**

**May 27 - Bridal Veil Falls**

**June 24 - Sand Beach Lake**

To sign up for a hike, call Curtis Carman at (970) 586-0108 or email him at [curtis.carman@rmna.org](mailto:curtis.carman@rmna.org).

## Park Puzzler

by RMNA Member Joel Kaplow

### ACROSS

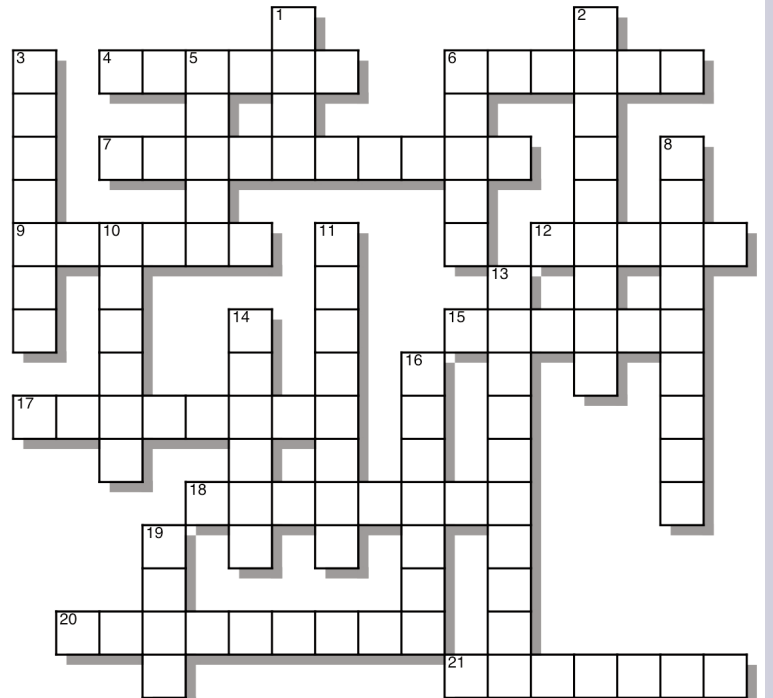
4. \_\_\_ Mountain is found at the extreme northeast corner of RMNP.
6. The Park is home to only one snake, the western terrestrial \_\_\_.
7. Longs Peak and Mt. Meeker rank numbers one and two in RMNP, but can you name \_\_\_ Peak, the third-tallest? (2 wds.)
9. There are no bristlecone pines in the Park. Those very old, twisted trees that may be mistaken for bristlecones at treeline are likely \_\_\_ pines.
12. The \_\_\_ Range dominates the skyline in the northern part of RMNP.
15. \_\_\_ Peak, (of 12 Across) is the fourth-highest mountain in the Park.
17. \_\_\_ Mountain, southwest of Mt. Wuh, was named for Enos’ brother. (2 wds.)
18. One subspecies of trout, the \_\_\_ River cutthroat, can be found hanging out in its namesake waters on the west side of RMNP.
20. Despite the fact that it varies in color, including cinnamon and brown, *Ursus americanus* is called the \_\_\_, a few dozen of which call the Park home. (2 wds.)
21. If you are standing at the low point between Mt. Lady Washington and Battle Mountain, then you are on \_\_\_ Pass.

### DOWN

1. The glaciers that carved Glacier Gorge also sliced away what may have been 50% of a mountain at the gorge’s northern end, and \_\_\_ Mountain was formed.
2. To make sure folks know what they’re getting into beforehand, RMNA field seminars are ranked Easy, Moderate, Active and \_\_\_, with the last one including hikes of over five miles and 1,000 feet of vertical gain.
3. \_\_\_ Mountain, the Park’s fifth-highest peak, is named for the resemblance of the gully system on its east face to the letter “Y” - Greek style.
5. After more than twenty years, RMNA’s “\_\_\_ to Trail Ridge Road” was given an extreme makeover, and now contains 24 pages of goodies.
6. \_\_\_ Lake, on the west side of RMNP, is Colorado’s largest natural body of water, with a town of the same name on its northern shore.
8. \_\_\_ Ridge is a subridge within Trail Ridge that sounds like it would be a

good hike to do on Halloween.

10. The Continental Divide and Trail Ridge Road cross each other at \_\_\_ Pass, southwest of the Alpine Visitor Center.
11. Big feet can come in handy in winter, as the Park’s \_\_\_ hare would no doubt attest.
13. The gray jay has a well-earned nickname, as it is notorious for aggressively mooching morsels of food from picnic tables and backpacks. (2 wds.)
14. Rocky Mountain National Park was signed into existence on January 26, 1915, during the \_\_\_ administration.
16. If you’ve spotted a bird with a bright yellow belly, black wings and back, and a red head, you are likely looking at a male western \_\_\_.
19. \_\_\_ Lake in Wild Basin is shaped like a certain fleshy fruit.







Broad-tailed hummingbird



Mountain bluebird



Northern flicker



Hooded warbler

Photos: Richard Hahn

## RMNP OFFERS DAILY SPRING BIRD WALKS, APRIL—MID-JUNE

Join us in the park to celebrate the warmer temperatures of spring and welcome returning birds to their nesting grounds in Rocky Mountain National Park.

Starting April 1, 2011, and running through mid-June, daily Bird Walks along the Cub Lake Trail will be conducted by experienced rangers, longtime birders and park volunteers. With occasional snow on the ground, Cub Lake Trail conditions also offer some of the best animal tracking opportunities of the year, as well as the chance to find early blooming wildflowers such as the sublime and

delicate Pasque flower. Don't miss this opportunity!

Some of the birds you might expect to see in early spring include ruby-crowned kinglets, juncos, white-breasted pygmy and red-breasted nuthatches, mountain and western bluebirds, mountain and black-capped chickadees, Stellers jays, cedar waxwings, hairy and Downy woodpeckers, northern flicker, black-billed magpie, red-tailed hawks, Goshawks, Coopers and sharp-shinned hawks.

As spring progresses into May, other species return, such as the yellow, Wilsons and McGillary

warblers, western tanagers, red-naped and Williamson sapsuckers, pine siskin, dipper and kingfisher. Approximately 280 species have been identified in the park.

Bird Walks will begin at 8:00 a.m. and meet at the Cub Lake Trailhead. Plan for 1.5 – 2 hours looking for late winter wanderers and early spring birds. In mid-June, summer walks will start in Upper Beaver Meadows at the Ute Trailhead. Bring your eyes, binoculars, spotting scopes and bird books for an enjoyable time on the trail!

*(Check park newspaper schedules to confirm, or call 970-586-1223.)*



### Olson Family Fellowship Opportunity: TUNING IN TO NONPROFITS

Meet Geoff King, RMNA's spring Olson Family Fellow, who comes to Estes Park

from Corvallis, Oregon, where he spent the larger part of his 22 years supporting the Oregon State Beavers. He most recently hails from Carleton College in Northfield, MN, where he studied Political Science and Political Economy.

Geoff is making the most of his opportunity in Estes Park, exploring Rocky Mountain National Park and learning how nonprofit organizations function. He's been helping out with the Estes Park Elementary After School Program, creating and coordinating environmental education oriented games, like the tag game *Hibernate* and a winter survival board game, and arranging visits from the National Park, fire department,

and the Estes Park police department. "I'm reminded every week how much energy goes into a 7-year old!" he said.

Geoff has also been leading a winter snowshoe series at Wild Basin. The hike focuses on winter ecology in Rocky Mountain National Park. "While we have yet to see a bobcat chasing a snowshoe hare, I remain hopeful," Geoff said. Fresh snow and brilliant blue skies have helped make these events successful.

Trying his hand at desktop publishing has also expanded his skills. Geoff took the lead in developing a trifold brochure promoting the Rocky Mountain Field Seminars program that will be distributed to guests at the Rocky Mountain Inn in 2011. "This experience has been valuable and has given me a greater appreciation for the amount of work publications actually take," Geoff commented.



*Geoff leads a winter snowshoe hike in the park.*

Geoff is pleased with the first few months on the job – winter has been an interesting time to explore the park. And with spring on the horizon, he's looking forward to what the next three months will bring.

The Olson Family Fellowship is funded by Carol and Alan Olson of Boulder, Colorado. The Olson family began funding this fellowship in 2006 to enable students and recent graduates to serve in a national park while exploring career options in environmental education and the nonprofit sectors.



## Catching Up with the Kids – American Conservation Corps Kids, That Is...

Sometimes time goes by as fast as a stick in the spring swell of the Big Thompson River. The American Conservation Corps is now gearing up for its 9th season, and since its beginning in 2003, the American Conservation Corps has given 97 young adults a summer internship of conservation work and education in Rocky Mountain National Park and the Arapaho-Roosevelt National Forest. What an adventure this has been!

RMNA is currently surveying past ACC members about their experience with the program as part of an ongoing evaluation of program impact and success. RMNA caught up with Anna Lindstedt, now 31 years old and the Development Director of Friends of the Teton River (FTR), a nonprofit conservation organization based in Driggs, ID. Not only did Anna develop the first ACC program in 2003, she also was the first crew leader of the American Conservation Corps.

**How have your life or career goals been affected by your time on the ACC crew?** Ever since I worked with the Rocky Mountain Nature Association as the “Publications Intern,” I have been in the nonprofit field. I landed my job with Friends of the Teton River in 2004, initially as their first full-time Education and Outreach Director, most likely due to starting up what was then known as the Daniels Youth Conservation Corps. I wrote a watershed education curriculum for FTR and developed a K-12 and adult education program. I made my transition to Development Director in 2007.

**What work-related skill(s) that you were exposed to on the ACC crew is (are) still relevant in your daily life?** Developing the concept and initial programming for the ACC required me to be very organized, yet flexible. It was also my first exposure to collaborating with many diverse entities: federal government, non-government organization’s, university professors, students, etc. I collaborate with these and

more in my current job. Collaboration definitely is the name of the game to get our conservation work funded and accomplished!

**What life lesson(s) that you were exposed to on the ACC crew is (are) still relevant in your daily life?**

Being the leader of a “pilot program” certainly taught me patience in group dynamics, how to lead by example, admit when I didn’t know the answer, cooperation, humility, and the simple joys of working with my hands to accomplish a project that can be appreciated by many for a long time.

**How has your perspective on public lands and/or natural areas changed since your time spent on the ACC crew?** I wouldn’t say my perspective changed, [but] any in-depth experiences I had during that time (be it service-oriented or educational) truly deepened my appreciation and stewardship for our precious natural resources.

**What is the most important thing you took away from ACC?** The knowledge that I was a part of shaping someone else’s experience about the importance of conservation and stewardship of the natural world...and the fact that this somehow changed their worldview and perhaps their life and career. It makes me smile to think that this experience could have such a profound impact on someone—and that the wonder of nature was really playing the leading role—I was simply a supporting actor.

**What suggestion(s) could you provide for improving the ACC experience for future crew members or leaders?**

There have been many changes to the program since I’ve been a part of it [and] it has been refined way beyond what we did in the first two years. I’m so proud of what it’s become. Who knew it would still be around?

Thanks for sharing your thoughts with us, Anna! RMNA also especially thanks the donors and other individuals who have given of their gifts, their time



*Anna Lindstedt experiencing the joys of flyfishing in Yellowstone National Park.*

and their talents to make the American Conservation Corps what it is today, giving many more individuals like Anna a valuable experience in our public lands.

### *Thinking Ahead: The Sequel* Estate Planning 101

Most people dive into estate planning only once or twice in their lives. But it’s never too soon to make plans. Start thinking ahead, and please consider a legacy gift for the Rocky Mountain Nature Association. It’s easy!

- 1) Consult with your estate planner or attorney – they will get you started
- 2) Usually, all that is needed to name the Rocky Mountain Nature Association as a beneficiary in your will (or life insurance) is to include the Name (Rocky Mountain Nature Association, Inc.) and Address (P.O. Box 3100, Estes Park, CO 80517).
- 3) If you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact Curt Buchholtz at 970-586-0108, or email: Curt.Buchholtz@rmna.org.

*P.S. For long-time members and donors who named the “Rocky Mountain National Park Associates,” as the beneficiary when RMNA was split into two organizations, no name change is required to update your will. The Rocky Mountain Nature Association is the legally combined successor organization.*



# NEXT GENERATION FUND 2010 PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Making the most of Next Generation Fund gifts is believed to be of utmost importance to everyone involved in Next Generation Fund programming. Included here is a brief summary of NGF program accomplishments for 2010 that both Rocky Mountain National Park and RMNA plan to expand upon in 2011.

The **American Conservation Corps** completed 8,200 hours of conservation work, primarily in Rocky Mountain National Park and the Arapaho-Roosevelt National Forest. They maintained 124 miles of trail on more than 35 trails, removed 1,529 fallen or hazard trees and built or repaired 1,347 trail drainage structures, among many other projects!

The **Junior Ranger** program launched its headquarters at Hidden Valley in 2010, providing information and activities to 3,247 children. Rangers or interns gave 224 Junior Ranger programs, and 30,840 children received a Junior Ranger booklet, available now for ages 4-12 in both English and Spanish.

**Rocky Mountain Field Seminars** welcomed 226 participants in youth-oriented programs, including students from Estes Park Schools, who explored cultural and natural history topics on their daily outings. An additional 435 thirty-five adults also participated in a variety of Field Seminars.

The **Internships and Fellowships** program included eight summer interns with the RMNP Interpretation division, two Olson Family Fellows (Paul Peterson and Kris Kagan) and one Bailey Fellow (Greg Wann). Interns and fellows assisted park operations through visitor information services, environmental education and research.

The **Heart of the Rockies** environmental education program benefitted nearly 14,000 schoolchildren in 2010. Target populations included ethnically diverse and socio-economically disadvantaged audiences. Nine school bus trips funded by NGF brought 467 students to the park for educational services that otherwise would not have been able to participate.



*The Adventures of Two Raindrops Running Wild* was published in 2010 with Next Generation funding. It received the 2011 Honorable Mention award for children's publications from the Association for Partners of Public Lands. And, it has been a retail success!

The RMNA **Publications** department developed and published the children's book *The Adventure of Two Raindrops Running Wild*. This beautifully illustrated book follows the path of water from the eastern and western slopes of the Continental Divide to the Gulf of Mexico and the Pacific Ocean. Also published through NGF funding was the reprinting of *Bob Flame: Rocky Mountain Ranger*, a classic novel written in 1935 for youthful audiences.



Kind Coffee, an Estes Park coffee shop and organic roastery, is once again collaborating with RMNA to support the Next Generation Fund to support eight areas of youth education in Rocky

## WHEN COFFEE LOVERS AND CONSERVATION MEET

Mountain National Park. Now, RMNA Members can benefit the Next Generation Fund and all the exciting new programs for youth when they order coffee online at [www.kindcoffee.com](http://www.kindcoffee.com). Kind Coffee Owner Amy Hamrick pledges to donate 10% of online orders placed by RMNA to the Next Generation Fund. Just enter the coupon code "**RMNA**" at checkout.

If you live in Estes Park, or are just visiting, be sure to stop in at the Kind Coffee shop where RMNA Members can also enjoy a **10% discount**. Located at



470 East Elkhorn Avenue by the Riverwalk, this is one of the most cozy and welcoming places in town. Our most sincere thanks to Kind Coffee and to all you coffee lovers for helping to create the conservationists of tomorrow...one sip at a time!





# The Rocky Mountain National Park Fund

*expresses special thanks to the following  
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*(Estes Park winds continued from p. 3)*  
when storms move down out of the north from Wyoming or up from the south with Gulf of Mexico moisture moving up along the eastside of the Divide, dumping snow. In contrast, these events usually are not accompanied by strong winds. —  
*Jeff Connor, RMNP Resources Management Specialist.*

## Quick Fix Science

### Fire Prehistoric Archeology and the Fire and Climate Change Connection

What can the fire and vegetation history of Rocky Mountain National Park tell us about Holocene (the last ten thousand years) climate and climate change? Scientists know that fire frequency and intensity are related to ambient climatic conditions such as air temperature and humidity. However, do prehistoric archeological records show a relationship between fire occurrences, vegetative cover, and climate conditions over time?

**The Project:** Using cores taken from the sediments of Bear Lake, scientists compared the fire and vegetative history of the area with radiocarbon dates of the various strata.

Because prehistoric climate data aren't available, scientists depend on "proxy" indicators of weather to document past climatic conditions. In this study, Dr. Jim Doerner of the University of Northern Colorado collected sediment cores from Bear Lake and analyzed the various strata, or layers, for radiocarbon age and the two climate indicators: (1) pollen, and (2) charcoal size and abundance.

Radiocarbon analysis reveals the age of the various strata and provides the chronological background to compare pollen and charcoal data from the same strata. Microscopic examination of pollen samples reveals the dominant vegetation present at a particular time. Climatological conditions of that time can be inferred from reconstructing vegetation composition.

Although charcoal is deposited throughout the core, scientists can differentiate increased local deposition from recent, nearby fires by measuring charcoal particles and statistically analyzing the particle size distribution and correlating these with the radiocarbon dates. Bigger and more numerous charcoal particles indicate a fire that was closer to Bear Lake.

**The Results:** Climate plays a significant role in the area's vegetation, and the frequency and intensity of fire reflects the changing climate regimes.

The longest core was 255 cm (100 inches) long. Radiocarbon aging of the core layers revealed an age of approximately 6,100 Before Present (BP) for the lowermost layers. Twenty-eight kinds of plant pollen were found in the core. Tree pollen was dominant, averaging 75% and increased with depth or age of the core. Pine was the dominant tree species present (averaging 61% of the total tree pollen) followed by lesser amounts of spruce (8%). Pine pollen remained fairly constant throughout the core but spruce increased with depth. Oak pollen composed about 4% of tree pollen during 2,000 to 500 BP. Sagebrush pollen averaged 12% of the total pollen and decreased with depth. The pollen data indicates that climate was warmer than the present between 6,100 and 3,200 BP. Conditions cooled between 3,200 and 1,900 BP before warming conditions returned.

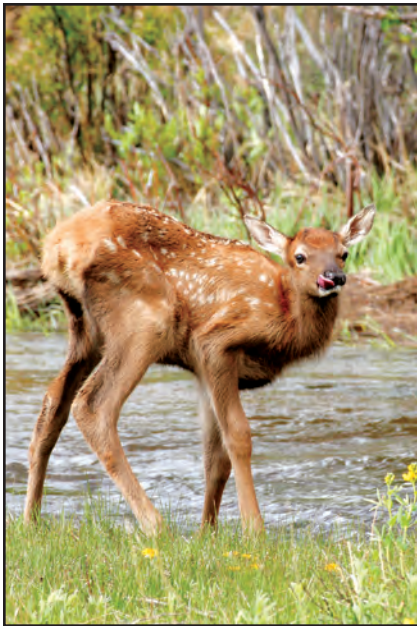
The charcoal analyses showed that fires have occurred in the Bear Lake area at a rate of about two to five fires every 1,000 years over the past 6,100 years BP. Three main trends are shown by the charcoal records: (1) moderate to high fire activity in the last 1,900 years, (2) low to moderate fire activity in the period between 3,200 and 1,900 BP, and (3) increased fire activity during the early-middle Holocene (6,100-5,700 BP).

In summary, the Bear Lake pollen studies show that fires were more frequent during the warmer middle Holocene. Cooler, drier conditions and decreased fire activity characterized the transition from the middle to the late Holocene, with temperatures likely warmer than they are now. The climate cooled into the late Holocene, but later returned to a warming trend and increased fire activity. These findings provide new information about the natural processes that have shaped the landscape we see today and can help infer ecosystem response to climate change. Obviously, climate plays a significant role in the long-term fire history of the park, with increased fire activity during warmer periods and less fire activity during cooler periods.

*For more information on the park's research program, see [www.nps.gov/romo](http://www.nps.gov/romo).  
Written by Bert Cushing.*



*Core sampling through the ice and into the sediments of Bear Lake.*



*A taste of spring... Photo: Steve Nelson*



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## Nature Association Notes...

Spring is in the air—the winds have a balminess to them that is unmistakable. Birds are returning to park nesting sites and their songs can be heard between gusts of wind. Aspen are budding with catkins and elk are sprouting new antler growth. March has yet to bring heavy snows, but April is the real test. With changing weather patterns throughout the country, it will be interesting to see what happens this year.....west side Facilities Management Systems Specialist **Debbie Mason**, watched a Steller's jay pecking at a last year's robin's nest outside the Kawuneeche Visitor Center. She couldn't tell what the jay was after, so she went out to look, stomping a trail through 3 feet of hardened snow thinking there might be something interesting inside. But to no avail — nothing visible was lurking in the nest, and it can only be surmised that there were old insects or other irresistible remnants that enticed. Debbie observed 3 baby robins in the nest last spring that all successfully fledged....RMNA Member **Pamela Sartori** was in the park in late January and observed 4 coyotes sunning themselves on a boulder in Moraine Park. As she watched, they one-by-one got up and trotted away.....RMNA Member **Richard Hahn** was tracking animals in the fresh powder on Fall River Road in early January when he spotted a lone bobcat track that followed the road for about 300 yards. Richard also reported the presence of a young gray fox coming daily to his yard in Estes Park. He noted that its size, color, shape and behavior is very different from the more common red foxes that are in the area. The gray fox is often confused with the red fox. The gray fox has rusty-red fur on its ears, ruffs and neck. Overall coloration is a grizzled gray, with the darkest color extending in a stripe along the top of the back down to the tip of the tail. The belly, throat and chest areas are whitish in color.....Two healthy looking coyotes were observed around the RMNA office in early March. Despite their seemingly aimless wandering, their arrival brought a host of magpies to the ground and trees around them. According to RMNP Wildlife Biologist **Gary Miller**, coyotes, magpies and ravens all are tuned into each other as indicators of dead things



*Snow-faced moose on the west side. Photo: Debbie Mason*

that could be good to eat — regardless of who finds it first, the other members of that scavenger guild typically are not far behind.....This winter, RMNA Members **Sandra Peacock** and **Tom Africa** watched a young male elk approach a much older elk with an impressive rack of antlers. The young elk gently rubbed his small spikes briefly on the older elk's antlers. The

elder elk did not appear to respond, and the youngster wandered away....

RMNA Member and photo-grapher **Gene Putney** spent the day photographing wildlife in the park in mid-February. On his way out of town he stopped to see what was happening on Lake Estes. It was a beautiful day with most of the ducks he saw clustered at the west end of the lake. Suddenly, several new ducks started flying in from the east end of the lake, as if in a panic. A bald eagle had landed on the ice at the east end, near where the lake was not frozen, so Gene drove to the other end of the parking lot to get a closer look. It turns out there was a Canada goose carcass partially frozen in the ice. At first, the eagle was sitting about 10 yards away, allowing the ravens to take advantage of the frozen delicacy. Then it flew to the carcass, scattering the ravens to a safe watching distance as the eagle satisfied its appetite. After about 10 minutes the eagle took off and flew out of sight, leaving the remains of the carcass to the drooling ravens nearby. But not for long. The eagle came back about every 20 minutes, several times, to feed on the carcass. Just a few days later Gene saw a duck carcass at the edge of the ice, with ravens, a golden and bald eagles all taking turns feasting on it. It would appear that the waterfowl on Lake Estes have become an enticing fine dining experience for some of the bigger raptors in the area. Lake Estes has long been favored by local birders for sightings of large numbers of regular and transient birds.....RMNA Member **Dick Coe**, an avid birder, suggests some other great birding locations in the park, including Upper Beaver Meadows, the west Alluvial Fan parking lot, in the trees, the meadow around the Holzwarth Trout Lodge on the park's west side, as well as the Onahu-Green Mountain Trail.....Earth Day is April 22, marking the anniversary of what many consider the birth of the modern environmental movement in 1970. Although mainstream America remained oblivious to environmental concerns at the time, the stage had been set for change by the publication of Rachel Carson's New York Times bestseller *Silent Spring* in 1962. More than any other person up to that point, Ms. Carson raised public awareness and concern for living organisms, the environment and public health. RMNA invites you to recognize Earth Day and commit to making one small change this year to benefit this beautiful planet!



*Bald eagle on Lake Estes. Photo: Gene Putney (See Nature Note story, left.)*