



ROCKY MOUNTAIN NATURE ASSOCIATION

Autumn 2012

\$4.00

QUARTERLY



A GIFT OF PERSPECTIVE

by Nancy Wilson

It was a perfect morning for a hike in Glacier Gorge. Not a cloud in the sky and ours was one of only a handful of cars parked at the trailhead. We'd beaten the masses. We knew where we were going and headed with purpose up the trail, moving quickly to reach the "real" backcountry, beyond the sounds of the road and the glut of tourists poised to erupt from the next park shuttle. To the place where true wilderness begins.

Despite our familiarity with the routine, this was not a frequent occurrence these days. We'd done a lot less hiking with each passing year as the demands of family and work took precedence. Appalling, really, considering our proximity to the park and how easy it is for us to access, a mere 10 miles from home. And, sad to realize that carving out the time to hike into some of the most achingly beautiful regions of Colorado had become, well, burdensome, yet another thing to feel guilty about not doing.

In the cool light of dawn, the sun not yet risen, and keeping chatting to a minimum, we rushed blindly past

wild roses, lavender harebell and a cottontail rabbit that turned tail and scampered off at our approach. Our breathing grew labored as we pushed ourselves toward our goal, trying to escape the park's front country. Lake of Glass and Sky Pond awaited.

Despite my attempts to focus, intruding into my thoughts were sharp jabs of the anxieties I was hoping to escape. My world was in transition in so many ways; our only child was leaving for college and work was challenging as all that was familiar was excised from my life, bit by bit. My head was spinning and my limbic system was threatening mutiny. The more I tried to close my mind, the more visceral the results. My gut was a mess. Sleep had become daunting and my perspective had narrowed and cramped. At this point, escape to the backcountry of Rocky Mountain National Park seemed as good an option as any other.

Crossing the streams on the trail I was drawn to the flow of the water around the rocks on which we were hopping. My eyes hooked on the silken flow of liquid over the submerged stones and the soft reflection of the sky in the morning light. We kept moving.

Higher we climbed, over

(A Gift, continued on page 2)

(A Gift, continued)

humongous boulders around which the rough trail was built, sweat dampening my t-shirt despite the morning chill. At a rocky but level stopping point, I noticed the rays of the early sun angling through the trees. Here, the rocky overhang was surrounded by the greenish-white trunks of a grove of dwarfed aspen trees. We paused to feel the breeze that carried the sound of the clattering leaves through the still air, more distinct as our heart rates slowed. We held our breath to sharpen our hearing and my brain paused to absorb these sights and sounds.

As our eyes were pulled by the view of distant mountain summits, our drive to continue was renewed. Onward we went, but it appeared that no amount of distraction was going to subdue the angst I carried with me. Thoughts and worries kept interjecting their heft into my consciousness and despite the more level terrain, my heart sped up and my throat tightened. This was not looking good.

We approached the Loch and my stomach flipped in anticipation as the trail traveled through wetland grasses over artistically placed rocks, signaling our arrival in my most favorite of ecosystems, the subalpine. Here, subalpine forests grow densely, hiding lush meadows filled with vibrant wildflowers and cascading streams crowded by periwinkle chiming bells and fuchsia Parry primrose, among others. The subalpine region is also concentrated with liquid gems like the Loch. I could feel my shoulders relax in an immediate biofeedback response as my emotional associations with this landscape took hold. I took a deep breath. This, this is what mattered; this landscape, these fundamental and intricate elements of nature that are so

much bigger and so much more enduring than the complications of everyday life.

The cool breeze blowing off the lake gusted in my face shocking a gasp out of me. Goosebumps rose on my skin and tears threatened to spill. As my tension eased and my perspective expanded, I felt a palpable release from the confines



Sky Pond

Photo: Lisa Thompson

of an endless cerebral loop of dread. What a relief! How grateful I felt to have such a place, a place where my senses take precedence over my head. A place that can exert a physical effect on me, healing my heart and centering my mind.

A wave of appreciation washed over me as my brain flashed on other potent sense-based memories of the park: the Loch shrouded in low-lying clouds, the water still, a soft mist on my face, the landscape gradually emerging from the fog around me as I hike along the trail. Or: the smell of pine sap and soil after a good rain, something spicy and sweet perfuming the refreshed mountain air. My steps slowed as these sensations permeated my thoughts. My goal of the alpine lakes beyond the Loch dimmed, as did my anxieties about a future I cannot control.

A shout from ahead pulled me out of my daze and I picked up my pace to rejoin my friend. Beyond the Loch in the shade of the trees we dipped our

swollen hands in gurgling Andrews Creek. We continued on up Timberline Falls and above where the winds from Lake of Glass buffeted us fiercely, encouraging our momentum toward Sky Pond. As always, the path through the stunted willows confounded us but eventually led to the cirque of Sky Pond, the cerulean blue water encircled by rocky spires and imposing gray peaks.

As we munched our sandwiches on the shores of Sky Pond (though it was still mid-morning) I was surprised to realize that despite my normal destination orientation, reaching Sky Pond wasn't the pinnacle of the day after all, although certainly this jewel of a lake was no small carrot. My new-found sense of well-being that morning sparked a rush of appreciation for such places as this, Sky Pond, Rocky Mountain National Park, and public lands throughout the

country, that are set aside and protected for us all. What a gift. The enduring nature of this wilderness landscape grounded me like nothing else could.

Hiking down the trail on the return trip my eyes viewed the scenery around me with a clarity that was elusive on the climb up. The other hikers we encountered I now regarded with patience and perspective gained from my experience that morning and I had to assume that this place, this park, was potentially as meaningful to everyone, each in their own way, as it was for me.

In fact, these were the very people who believe and value, for whatever reason, that places like this are worth preserving for us all, forever.

Nancy Wilson is the publications manager for the Rocky Mountain Nature Association, and the editor of the RMNA Quarterly newsletter.



Be a Part of Colorado Gives Day!

Tuesday, December 4, 2012

Last year, Coloradans (and generous people throughout the country) made an astounding demonstration of support for local nonprofits by donating \$12.4 million for Colorado Gives Day. The FirstBank Incentive Fund and prizes increased the total amount distributed to \$12.8 million.

RMNA donors helped us to raise \$34,000 (including generous matching funds from our Board of Directors and a wonderful anonymous donor) for our Next Generation Fund. We have a goal to raise \$38,000 this year and with your help, we will get there!

Please consider making a gift to RMNA on Colorado Gives Day, Tuesday, December 4. The value of your gift through the GivingFirst web site will be boosted by the FirstBank Incentive Fund. And you'll help us to be eligible for a number of cash prizes. All donations will again be directed to our Next Generation Fund, which supports youth education.

All third-party processing fees will be underwritten by Community First Foundation and FirstBank and other sponsors on Colorado Gives Day. So, rest assured that 100% of your donations scheduled for that day will go to RMNA!

Last year, GivingFirst's web site server was overwhelmed by generous people trying to make gifts. While getting so many donations is a very good problem to have, the online giving experience was less than pleasant for some of you. We have been reassured that will not happen this year. They are ready at their end, and the giving process should be easy and seamless.

Colorado Gives Day always makes for an exciting and rewarding 24 hours of enthusiastic generosity. To make a donation, no matter where you live, please visit our web site (www.rmna.org) on December 4 and click on the Colorado Gives Day logo. If you are unable to make a donation specifically on that date you can make a pledge as early as November 15—just be sure to enter the gift date December 4 so that we'll be eligible for any incentives. Thanks, as always, for your support!

Cover photo credits

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

“**Stunning in Red**” by RMNA Member Lisa Thompson, Loveland, CO; “**Behind the Scenes**” by Ann Schonlau, Fort Collins, CO; “**Sea of Clouds**” by Dick Orleans, Estes Park, CO. Please send photos or high resolution scans to nancy.wilson@rmna.org by December 1 for publication in the 2013 Winter 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]

Is it true that despite the drought the moose population increased in the park this year? Actually, the Colorado Division of Parks and Wildlife conducts aerial surveys each year during the winter, but they do not survey the park, so actual moose population numbers in the park are not well known. The most recent research estimated about 65 resident moose (using the park year round) on the west side of the park, with an additional approximately 40 moose passing through on the west side during summer months, for a total of just over 100 moose on the west side of the park during summer. With regard to the drought, about 80% of a moose summer diet is willow, so despite the drought, willow are still prevalent. Mild winters with low snowpack also can improve the chances of moose survival.—*Wildlife Biologist Gary C. Miller.*

Do I need permission to have my wedding ceremony in Rocky Mountain National Park? Is there a fee for this? Can we hire a ranger to take my party on a hike to view sunset afterward?

Ceremonies in Rocky Mountain National Park are authorized through a Special Use Permit that requires a non-refundable administrative fee of \$150. The permit includes specific conditions about locations, public building use and group size that protect the park's resources. Visit www.nps.gov/romo/planyourvisit/permits.htm to learn more. Normal park entrance fees apply for all vehicles associated with the ceremony and carpooling or shuttling is strongly encouraged, and may be required, as parking space is limited in some areas of the park. Unfortunately, it is not possible to hire a ranger as a guide, and paying for a service inside the park requires that the provider of the service have a Commercial Use Authorization, of which there are a number that could provide the service. (*Editor's note: the RMNA Field Seminars program offers custom hikes that can meet this need!*) —*RMNP Chief Ranger Mark Magnuson.*

Did the fire in Estes Park this summer change any park fire management policies? Was any useful new information gleaned from this event? We did not change our policy due to the Woodland Heights Fire. What that fire did was confirm that the new Fire Management Plan goals and objectives are sound. For all fires we follow three bullets as our main goals and objectives, collectively called the Fire Decision Framework: 1. Provide for the safety of employees and the public 2. Protect communities, infrastructure, natural and cultural resources 3. Restore and maintain fire adapted ecosystems.

This fire was unique. I have never seen a fire burn 24 homes in 27 acres. Even so, that did not change park priorities. Technically, this fire was not “ours” as it was all in Estes Fire District response zone, but our priorities in helping were still the same. If the fire had moved onto park land, the first concern was park employee safety. At first, we backed off because of exploding propane tanks. Then, we look for risks to the public which resulted in evacuation orders. We then look at risks to structures, infrastructure, and even natural and cultural resources. If this fire had moved into the park, we would have prioritized which flank of the fire had the most values at risk. With limited resources, we would have put them all on achieving the objectives of saving life and property which, in this case, would probably have been in the developed areas outside the park. We would give up acres of park land that are no threat to life and property until we had the resources to stop the fire from moving further into the park.—*RMNP Fire Management Officer Mike Lewelling*

THE NATIONAL ECOLOGICAL OBSERVATORY NETWORK IN ROCKY



The NEON field crew departing an area after small mammal sample collection.

Photo: David Durden, NEON

by Jennifer Walton and Tracey Baldwin

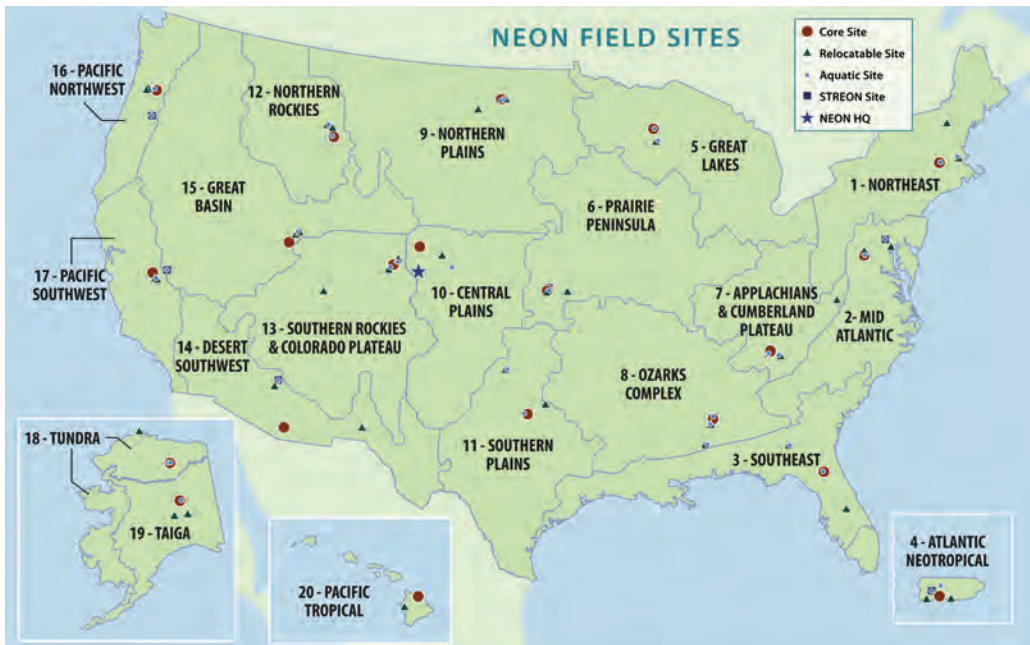
The world is now experiencing an era of rapid biological change as a result of human development. Ecosystems are increasingly stressed by climate, movement of invasive species over long distances, transport of pollution in the atmosphere, and human land use decisions. Ecologists must collect the vast amounts of global data needed to understand, forecast, and ultimately manage the changing biosphere and the services it provides.

The answer to this charge is the National Ecological Observatory Network (NEON), a continental-scale ecological user facility funded by the National Science Foundation that will

operate for 30 years to gather and provide data on ecological drivers of and responses to environmental change (climate change, land use change, and invasive species). NEON is comprised of 60 sites systematically located throughout the United States (including Alaska, Hawaii and Puerto Rico), and

subdivided into 20 eco-climatic domain areas (roughly three sites per domain). Three of those 60 sites are located in national parks, described below. NEON will combine its site-based data with remotely sensed data and existing continental-scale data sets (such as satellite data) to provide a range of

scaled data products that can be used to describe changes in the nation's ecosystem through space and time. The data collected will be cleaned, synthesized, and made freely available to anyone wanting to use it. NEON data and resources are designed to enable a virtual network of researchers and environmental managers to collaborate,



A current map of planned site locations, which includes the three parks mentioned in the document. Credit: NEON

coordinate research, and address ecological challenges at regional, national and continental scales by providing comparable information across sites and regions.

NEON has successfully completed the required planning and design phases and began

construction of its sites in Summer 2012. The first three sites it is currently building are located in Massachusetts, Florida and Colorado's Front Range. Constructing the entire NEON network will take approximately five years, so NEON expects to be in full operation by approximately 2017.

NEON and the National Parks

Three specific national parks were chosen to host NEON sites because they are all experiencing issues that can best be understood by studying both cause and effect simultaneously. NEON sites will be located in Yellowstone National Park (focusing on long-term changes in Northern Rockies ecosystems due to urban and exurban development), Great Smoky Mountains National Park (focusing on air pollution effects), and Rocky Mountain National Park (focusing on dust transport, which impacts snowmelt). We hope that the advantage of locating NEON sites in these national parks will be twofold; it will (1) advance the understanding of continental-scale ecology, and (2) provide information useful to park leaders as they struggle to make management decisions in the face of a changing environment.

NEON's relationship with the National Park Service (NPS) began early as it planned site locations and studied existing NPS programs for models of

success for future NEON programs.

Today, NEON and the National Park Service enjoy a synergistic relationship; the NPS's Inventory and Monitoring Program (I&M) has served as a template for NEON's development of standard and robust research

protocols, and Yellowstone, Great Smokies and Rocky Mountain National Parks are planning to use NEON data to augment their own I&M efforts.

NEON and Rocky Mountain National Park

Although construction has not yet begun on the NEON site in Rocky Mountain National Park (RMNP), NEON has already identified a location for the site

and begun some prototype sampling activities that will help guide scientists in finding the most efficient and useful methods for collecting data in national parks. Park visitors may see NEON staff coming and going from the site location at times during the summer season. Most recently, NEON staff have been experimenting with plans for collecting data on small mammal

populations and testing them for infectious

diseases such as hantavirus. Methods for collecting data on bird populations are also occurring, which include conducting basic observation and acoustic surveys. NEON staff are also learning what is required to monitor and maintain a NEON site in a busy national park, which includes understanding logistical and other constraints.



NEON field crew preparing to deploy traps in May 2012, at Deer Ridge Junction in RMNP.

Photo: Sean Hauser, NEON



NEON bird monitoring acoustic box in a tree at RMNP.

Photo: Tracey Baldwin, NEON



BECOME A CITIZEN SCIENTIST IN THE PARK!

Join researchers in learning about the changing environment in Rocky Mountain National Park by participating in BudBurst at the Parks!

The National Park Service and NEON's flagship citizen science program Project BudBurst have teamed up to develop BudBurst in the Parks -- to help you experience National Parks through the lives of plants. Participants in BudBurst at the Parks help monitor the life cycles of plants while visiting, volunteering, or working at National Parks. When you become a part of our growing community, you provide plant observations that help further a better understanding about how park plant communities are responding to changing climates and environments.

Participants of Project BudBurst and BudBurst in the Parks submit observations on the timing of plant phases, such as when flowers and leaves first appear – and scientists and educators can use that information to better understand how that timing can be affected by changing climates. Participating in Project BudBurst only requires that one head outdoors, adopt a plant to watch, make observations as the plant grows through the seasons, and share findings with others online.

For more information, please go to www.neoninc.org/budburst/parks

Jennifer Walton is the Public Affairs Manager at NEON, where she has led the creation and implementation of a comprehensive communication program. She specializes in communicating scientific and environmental information.

Tracey Baldwin is the Field Operations Manager for NEON's Domain 10, which includes Rocky Mountain National Park. She holds multiple degrees in Biology and prior to her time at NEON, supervised the Crary Science and Engineering center at McMurdo Station, Antarctica, where she facilitated the scientific research of some 200 National Science Foundation-funded research projects.

Meet Debbie Mason: West Side Systems Manager With a Naturalist's Eye



by Suzanne Silverthorn

She's been known to play a trick on RMNP visitors from time to time. But it isn't intentional, she explains. As she's driving through the park, she'll see something that interests her. So, she'll pull over, grab her camera...and before you know it, other drivers have instinctively stopped too, hoping to get in on the action.

What those visitors don't know is that Debbie Mason can find beauty and interest in most everything she sees. Her stops don't necessarily produce award-winning wildlife shots. Oftentimes she'll pull over to photograph the park's beauty in more abstractly aesthetic ways, such as an unusual tree, a cloud, or even animal scat, sending disappointed followers back to their cars to try again. "I try not to be part of an animal jam," she said. Luckily, Debbie has plenty of other venues to view the park's wildlife, mostly from her office window at the Kawuneeche Visitor Center on the park's west side or from her home just a few miles away along the park's boundary.

You may already sort of be "acquaintances" with Debbie from the many animal sightings she's shared with the *Quarterly* over the years as well as some of her favorite images that have been included in the newsletter over the years. She enjoys watching ground squirrels, pine martens, weasels, fox, elk and moose from her office. It's an environment she relishes after abandoning city life years ago.

As a Facility Management Systems Specialist for RMNP, Debbie manages an intricate technology system that tracks work orders, maintenance schedules and other critical behind the scenes activities. Her expertise is currently being called upon to

train other specialists in the field using a new business software system that is being implemented throughout the Department of the Interior. "Working with a system that documents the park's facilities and what is done to take care of everything keeps the job interesting" Debbie said. And while her technology proficiency is well known by her colleagues, so too, is her photography.

By default, Debbie has become the unofficial park photographer for the west side, taking on official assignments and anything else of interest. She figures she logs more than 10,000 photos a year for work and play. Debbie takes her camera most everywhere she goes and stores her photos on three sets of backup files, one of which is kept in a safe deposit box. She's teased by her family and co-workers for her obsession, but she doesn't mind. "At least everyone knows who's taking the pictures at our family reunion."

The park's public information office has called upon Debbie to assist in numerous ways over the years. Her documentation has ranged from the dismantling

experiences. By the time she returned to the U.S. for her senior year, she was hooked, adding a minor in art to accompany her degree in Spanish from Sacramento State in California. Photography has since become her addiction.

Debbie's instincts have produced some wonderful results through the years. One of her favorites is a colorful *Amanita* mushroom photographed recently outside her office, less than thirty feet away. "Sometimes you just never know what will turn out to be a great photo until you try," she said, showing another example she spotted from her office window. This one is a pair of golden-mantled ground squirrels that appear to be telling secrets.

Debbie thoroughly enjoys her work at RMNP and wouldn't have it any other way. She'll be celebrating her 20th year with the park in April. Having grown up in California, she remembers taking her first vacation as an adult to Yosemite Valley and thinking, "Why do I live in a city and vacation here? I ought to work *and* live in places like this." A career change led her to a job with Prairie Creek Redwoods State Park in California, where she met her husband, Tom.

After stints at Sequoia National Park and Death Valley, the Masons relocated to RMNP where Tom has worked as the west side automotive mechanic since 1992.

While Debbie will be eligible for the Senior Pass next year, she's not ready for retirement just yet. There's too much work to be done in managing the transition to the park's new computer software system. Along the way, she promises to continue to take time to share her wildlife observations and to forward her favorite images to RMNA for inclusion in the *Quarterly*. Many of Debbie's creations can also be found on the photo sharing website Flickr under the name "mooseduds."

On this particular day, Debbie was eager to download her latest treasures. She was planning to send the file to a photo lab in Denver where she was making arrangements to pick up her prints. "What's 100 miles after living in Death Valley," she said with a grin.

Suzanne Silverthorn volunteers as a regular contributor to the Quarterly. While serving as the Community Information Officer for the Town of Vail, she enjoys views of the front side of Vail Mountain from her office window.



Amanita muscaria or Fly Agaric.

of an old Conservation Corp kitchen several years ago to the removal of hazardous trees, or more routine projects such as the chip sealing of Trail Ridge Road or remodeling the restrooms. "If no one asks, I might do it anyway. Otherwise it's lost forever," she said.

Debbie became interested in photography during her junior year of college when she spent a year in Bogota, Columbia, and set out to record her

AUTUMN MEMBER HIKES NOT TO MISS!

Breathe in that crisp mountain air, wallow in the golden-orange patches of aspen along the trail, and keep an ear peeled for the sound of bull elk bugling their superiority in the park! Just a few of the memorable events you may experience on an autumn hike with other RMNA Members this year.

Join Membership Manager Curtis Carman, and special park guests, for monthly hikes in Rocky Mountain National Park throughout the year!

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

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

Autumn Schedule: October 19 - Holowell Park to Cub Lake
November 16 - Eugenia Mines
December 14 - Balanced Rock

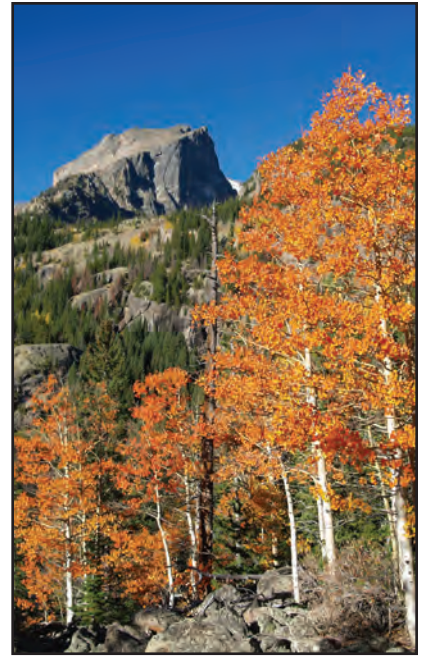


Photo: RMNA Member Lisa Thompson

Park Puzzler

provided by RMNA Member Joel Kaplow

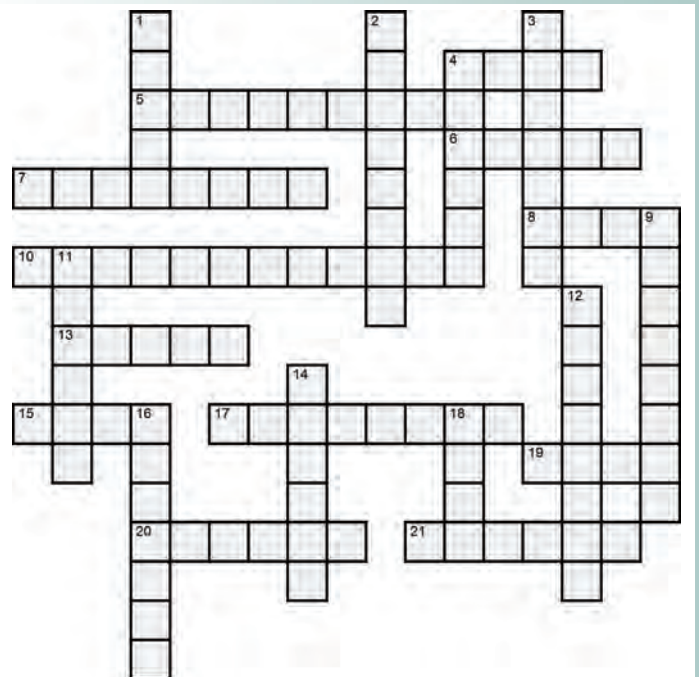
ACROSS

4. The last time an RMNP black ___ was put down was in 2003, after two backcountry campers were injured near Fern Lake.
5. After a long absence, ___ falcons, which can dive faster than 200 mph and are the fastest animals on the planet, have been spotted nesting in the park the last three years.
6. Usually found high up in a tree or on the side of a cliff, what's the term for a bird of prey's nest?
7. ___ Pass, located between McHenry's and Chiefs Head peaks, is named so for the forty-foot-tall rock there which resembles a human. (2 wds)
8. This double-summitted mountain north of Grand Lake is named ___ Mountain, the Arapaho word for "twins."
10. Who is the new executive director of RMNA?
13. The first recorded human fatality caused by a 4-Across in Colorado happened in 1971, near ___ Lake.
15. If you see a rabbit minus its ___, chances are it was the victim of a great horned owl. They savor the delicious, nutritious brain.
17. Starting in 2007, National Geographic has been sponsoring a ___, where volunteers scour a different national park each year, taking inventory of living things in a 24-hour period. The first one was in Rock Creek Park in Wash., D.C., and it was RMNP's turn this last August.
19. The park's *Ochotona princeps*, aka whistling hare, cony, rock rabbit, and American ___, is the smallest member of the rabbit family.
20. Trail Ridge Road and the Continental Divide cross each other at ___ Pass, named for a Colorado railroad man.
21. The largest of the tundra flowers, *Rydbergia grandiflora*, grows for several years without blooming, then blooms once and dies. It's also called alpine sunflower and ___-of-the-mountain.

DOWN

1. In addition to willows, elk and moose like to munch on ___ tree bark.
2. Tiny ___ Lake, east of Mt. Chiquita, is named for a rodent sometimes mistaken for a ground squirrel. The stripes on its cheeks and down its spine will tell you it's not a squirrel.
3. River otters use the same spot to "go" that is visited several times by all in the group. What is the term for this communal commode?
4. The tundra's appropriately named big-rooted spring ___ has roots that can grow as long as ten feet below the surface!

9. An ___ fan is like a river delta, but is formed by a stream washing detritus onto flat land instead of into a body of water. The one in Horseshoe Park was formed in 1982 after the Lawn Lake flood.
11. At 13,560', ___ Peak is the tallest in the Mummy Range.
12. This year, the ___ Conservation Corps consisted of four groups of six collegians who helped improve trails in and around RMNP by removing fallen trees, felling standing hazard trees and performing various other heroic — and appreciated — feats.
14. RMNP's elk, bighorn sheep, moose and deer are all ungulates; they have ___.
16. Due to its shape, the smooth, sheer upper part of the east face of Longs Peak is called the ___, and is strictly for technical climbers.
18. At Rock Cut on Trail Ridge Road, visitors can take a half-mile stroll to the ___ Memorial. It's a rock outcrop with a metal plaque and mountain locator placed there in 1941 dedicated to the park's superintendent from 1921 to 1929.



ROCKY MOUNTAIN NATIONAL PARK FUND FUNDRAISING PROJECT PRIORITIES IDENTIFIED FOR 2013



Photo:NPS

Johnson Property

This project is our highest priority. Rocky Mountain National Park has asked for our assistance in acquiring this 3.89 acre parcel on the west side. The Johnson Property is a private inholding that has been made available to us by a willing seller. This is significant land preservation parcel because it is an island completely surrounded by park land. In addition, the historic Continental Divide Trail travels through it. The cabin and several small outbuildings, as well as the long driveway will be removed, and the land restored to its natural state. Part of the ongoing effort to create a contiguous natural landscape in the Kawuneeche Valley, this project also will remove impediments to wildlife movement. We now have until February 2013 to raise \$400,000. Fundraising started in August and we have already raised approximately \$118,000. Help add land to Rocky Mountain National Park!



Photo:NPS John Marino

Next Generation Fund

Each year, we need to raise over \$500,000 to support ongoing youth education initiatives such as:

- The Junior Ranger Program
- The American Conservation Corps
- Park Internships (did you know we funded 18 internships annually?)
- Park Environmental Education programs
- Field Seminars for youth and families
- Youth oriented exhibits and facilities within the park
- Publications for youth
- Fellowships

You make these programs possible. Help us to connect youth with nature and create the conservationists of tomorrow.



Chasm Falls Accessible Viewing Platform

Rocky Mountain National Park has asked RMNA for assistance in raising needed funds for an exciting and meaningful new trail project. An ADA compliant, handicapped accessible viewing platform (with a short access trail) to the popular and spectacular Chasm Falls off of Old Fall River Road is the goal. This would be the FIRST waterfall accessible to disabled visitors in the park. It also will provide necessary resource protection for a much-loved viewing site. The project is slated for construction and completion next summer, with an estimated cost of \$150,000.



Legacy Endowment

National parks were established for purposes of long-term preservation as well as public enjoyment. The Legacy Fund supports projects and programs of long-term significance in perpetuity for Rocky Mountain National Park, such as new visitor centers, historic preservation projects, exhibits, trail work and more. The Fund encourages stewardship through philanthropic gifts given by public spirited donors dedicated to helping the park invest in long range sustainability and preservation. National parks are promises we make to the future. An endowment conveys a legacy of stewardship from one generation to the next.

** Only the income on this fund may be used for projects; the principal remains untapped.*



ROCKY MOUNTAIN NATURE ASSOCIATION

ROCKY MOUNTAIN NATIONAL PARK FUND

Dear Friends,

Thanks to you, we have had another tremendously successful year at the Rocky Mountain Nature Association (RMNA). The organization has many exciting initiatives in the works and we're pleased to share these opportunities for continued growth with you!

This year, our highest priority is to raise \$400,000 for the Johnson Property Acquisition Fund. We need your help to purchase this 3.89 acre private parcel on the west side so it can be transferred to the park for permanent protection and restored to its natural state. As of today, we have raised approximately \$121,000.

Critical ongoing youth education initiatives, such as the Junior Ranger Program, the American Conservation Corps, Field Seminars for kids, park internships (did you know we funded 18 Rocky Mountain National Park internships in 2012?) and others, will require more than \$500,000 next year. Your gift to the Next Generation Fund helps support these programs to build strong connections to nature in the kids of today, cultivating the conservationists of tomorrow.

The RMNA Field Seminars Program continues to grow. This year, we provided quality educational opportunities to more than 2000 youth and adults. In addition, our Olson Family Fellow reached approximately 450 more children through programs such as the Estes Park After School Program, the RMNP Environmental Education Program, and Estes Valley Library programs. Next year, we hope to continue these partnerships and build more lasting connections with folks here in Colorado and beyond.

It is impossible to accurately measure the impact of a summer of living, working, and learning in our public lands. But, thanks to your support, this program does change lives. Once again, our American Conservation Corps program provided 24 energetic young people with that opportunity.

As of this fall, the four-year effort to rehabilitate and construct three miles of trails, from Alberta Falls to Lake Haiyaha, has been completed. More than 1,000 donors contributed over \$400,000 to this project. Thank you for helping to protect this vital resource for the future. We hope you will be hiking the improved trails soon!

We are thrilled to assist the park with the building of a handicapped-accessible viewing platform to be placed at the top of the spectacular Chasm Falls. Significantly, this will be the park's very first accessible waterfall and the work is anticipated to be finished in 2013.

Additionally, we continue to build the Legacy Endowment Fund, which supports projects of long-term significance, such as capital improvements and historic preservation, for years to come.

Thank you for your past support, and we hope you'll help us again this year with a gift to the RMNA fund of your choice. If you have any questions, feel free to contact me anytime. On behalf of everyone at RMNA—thank you.

Warmest regards,

Charles A. Money
Executive Director

◆ ◆ ◆ ◆ ◆
PO Box 3100
Estes Park, CO 80517
Tel: 970-586-0108
Fax: 970-586-0130
www.rmna.org

Meet Charley Money RMNA's New Executive Director



The Rocky Mountain Nature Association has hired Charles A. Money as its Executive Director.

Charley has spent the last 14 years as the Executive Director of Alaska Geographic, a nonprofit organization serving nearly forty distinct public lands under the jurisdiction of the National Park Service, U.S.D.A. Forest Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Geological Survey and Alaska State Parks.

He has also been Chief of Operations and Chief Financial Officer of Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy and Finance Director at Southwest Parks and Monuments Association (now known as Western National Parks Association).

He also has served on various industry boards, including as Board President of the Association of Partners for Public Lands (APPL). We are collectively excited to have him!

RMNP Handbook Project Seeks Donors for 2nd Edition Reprint!!



RMNA's Publications Department still seeks \$15,000 to update, rebuild and reprint the highly regarded *Rocky Mountain National Park: A Natural History Handbook*, by the preeminent ecologist John C. Emerick of Boulder, CO.

Considered the bible of park natural history for park managers, naturalists and researchers, this is the most comprehensive guide to RMNP's flora, fauna, geology and ecology ever written. It has been in continuous demand by park visitors seeking in-depth information and a greater understanding of the ecosystems of Rocky Mountain National Park. Yet it has been out of print since 2005.

Help us make this highly sought-after resource available to visitors and park managers once again. With current park science and updated information throughout, this book will be a park classic for years to come.

For more information, please contact Julie Klett at 970-586-0108 x 11.



The Big Rock....



...blasted into (somewhat) smaller pieces...



...that became a trail!

Thanks to You:

Alberta Falls – Lake Haiyaha Trail Work Completed!

by Kevin Dowell

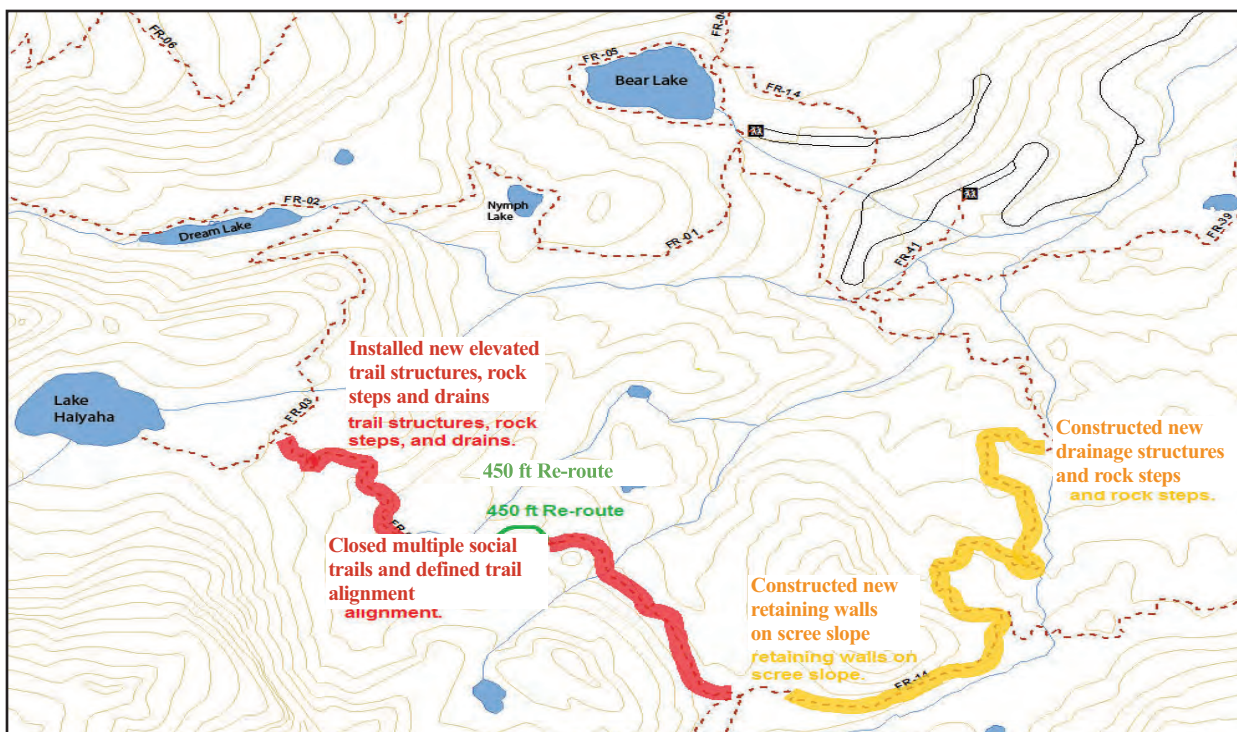
Increasingly in recent years, the Haiyaha Loop trail has become a very popular hike with park visitors. In 2008, the park partnered with the Rocky Mountain Nature Association to fund and complete some much needed upgrades and repairs to three of the trail segments that make up this loop. Work began in the summer of 2009 and is coming to a close this fall.

Approximately 70% of the work accomplished on this project occurred on the trail that was formerly known as

the “Unimproved” trail from Lake Haiyaha to the Loch-Mills Junction. This section has since been re-named the “Haiyaha Connector” trail. This part of the trail was never formally designed or constructed but developed through use, and as a consequence of the increased use and unclear trail boundaries it was showing significantly deteriorating trail tread and resource damage in areas. It

was a challenge presented to the trail crew to construct a sustainable trail in a difficult location that would be durable, easy to follow and protect park resources yet still retain its rustic, wilderness character.

One of the biggest challenges on this project, and also the biggest success, was a 450-foot section of trail approximately halfway along this connector trail where visitors were frequently getting lost. The crew was



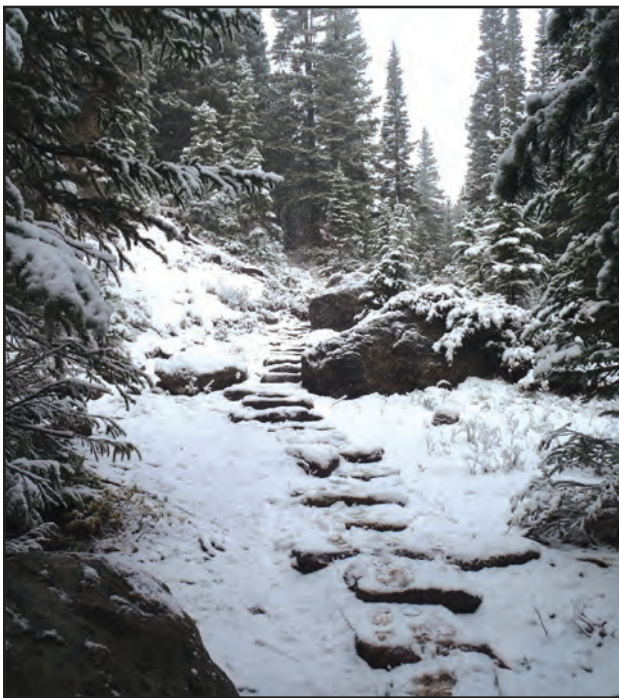
Map showing the Lake Haiyaha Trail area and the sites of the different repairs completed.

able to re-route the trail to a very scenic overlook and eliminate the confusing trail braiding and resource damage that was occurring. To undertake this work the crew called in trail crew alumnus Danny Basch to blast a large boulder that was in the way. They then used the resulting smaller rocks to construct a causeway across a seasonally wet area.

The alignment of this re-route was adjusted to protect a rare and sensitive species of plant that was identified during the planning stage of this project. The plant's common name is Rattlesnake plantain - there are both rare and common species found in the park - and both are sensitive and do not transplant well. However, the exact species was never determined for certain because we never saw it flower. But the crew played it safe and shifted the trail alignment to avoid the area.

This project benefitted from the support of a number of different trail crews. Throughout the project the American Conservation Corps (ACC) crew, funded through the Rocky Mountain Nature Association's Next Generation Fund, worked alongside the NPS crew to accomplish project goals. Project crew leader Doug Parker said recently "the youthful ACC crew with their exuberance for life and trails was always good to keep spirits high for the "old" ROMO crew members."

In 2011, the Texas Trail Tamers volunteer trail crew worked on the project for several weeks. In 2011, and again in 2012, the Southeast Utah Group NPS Trail Crew based in Moab contributed their stone-work expertise for a month as part of a work exchange program that gets them out of the hot



desert in the summer and provides an opportunity for Rocky staff to work down in the warm desert in the winter. One of the benefits of this exchange was the introduction of the "Micro-Blaster" to the Rocky program - a new tool for the toolbox. The Micro-Blaster is a tool that uses a battery-powered drill and a cartridge the approximate size of a 22g shell to split medium sized rocks into smaller pieces for building stone structures. It is much safer and quieter than traditional blasting technology.

Visitors hiking the loop beyond Alberta Falls this fall will see the crew completing some final repairs to rough, rocky and eroded sections. If they continue up towards Lake Haiyaha, even as winter begins to roll in, they will still be able to follow a sustainable, easy to follow, yet rustic connector trail back to their starting point.

Kevin Dowell is the Trail Foreman in RMNP.



RMNP Holds Naturalization Ceremony in Moraine Park



They've waited years to hear these words: "Raise your right hand for the oath of citizenship." And for some, they speak the oath in some of America's most special places — its national parks. Imagine committing yourself to your new country under the towering cliffs of Yosemite or the watchful gaze of the Statue of Liberty.

Or, with a backdrop of Longs Peak. On August 2, 2012, at 10:30 in the morning, 19 new citizens from 13 different countries were naturalized during a one-hour ceremony in Moraine Park Campground Amphitheater.

This is the fifth ceremony conducted in the last six years. The National Park Service and the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services have an official partnership that encourages both agencies to co-host naturalization ceremonies in these special places set aside for public enjoyment and historical commemoration.

This ceremony in Rocky Mountain National Park was sponsored by Senator Bennet and conducted by the U.S. Customs and Immigration Service. Speakers included Park Superintendent Vaughn Baker, NPS Intermountain Regional Director, John Wessels, and representatives from Senator Bennet's and Senator Udall's office.

The ceremony lasted about 1 hour, during which each person was sworn in as a new citizen. About 60 people attended the ceremony, including family, friends and supporters of the new citizens. As a finale, most of the participants had their photo taken in front of the American flag that is positioned with Longs Peak in the background.

In 2011, more than 30 national parks held ceremonies for nearly 1,000 new Americans. Celebration sites included presidential homes, the Washington Monument, the Statue of Liberty, the Civil War battlefield at Vicksburg, the St. Louis Arch, and Yosemite National Park.



The Rocky Mountain National Park Fund

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

June 4 - September 21, 2012

242 Gifts - Total Donations: \$369,864

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In Memory of Robert Mydans

PARK PUZZLE ANSWERS



**RMNP Chief of Interpretation Larry
 Frederick to Retire After 40 Years of Service**

After 11 years in Rocky and 40 years in the National Park Service, on January 3, 2013, Chief of Interpretation Larry Frederick will be retiring.

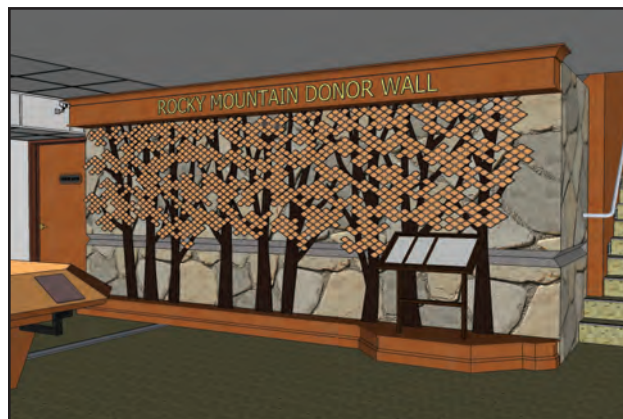
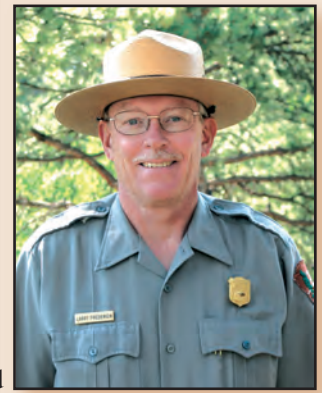
While attending Colorado State University during my senior year, 1971-1972, I learned about the volunteer program at Rocky Mountain National Park (RMNP). I was studying Park and Recreation Management in the College of Forestry and had met several park employees. Not only was I impressed with the quality of the staff but also the mission of the National Park Service. I thought it would be a good fit for me so I applied to be a volunteer.

After volunteering and working in RMNP, I landed a seasonal position at Wind Cave National Park, and then moved on to work in four other parks, including Grand Canyon, Olympic, Canyonlands and Glacier – a good mix of desert and mountainous parks. The thought of returning to Rocky was always on my mind, however. Little did I know at the start of my career that I would return to Rocky near the end of my 40-year career.

Being here again has been one of my greatest joys. Working with RMNA as the cooperating association liaison has kept me busy and involved with such things as keeping RMNA staff and the board informed about park issues, approving retail items for sale in RMNA bookstores, participating in the publications and seminars program development, attending board and Operations Committee meetings, working on agreements and supporting special projects, like the Next Generation Fund and the American Conservation Corps. I thank the RMNA staff, board and membership for your support of the park, especially the interpretation and education program.

I look forward to seeing you on the trail!

Congratulations, Larry!



This is a concept drawing of the proposed donor wall – there may still be changes.

**New Concept for RMNA-
 RMNP Donor Wall in Beaver
 Meadows Visitor Center in
 Planning Stages**

If you have visited the Beaver Meadows Visitor Center in the last year, you may have wondered, “What happened to the Donor Recognition Wall?” The wall, with its many engraved, leaf-shaped, metal plaques, was removed from the lower lobby for safe keeping last fall while the park worked to renovate the upper lobby and install an elevator for improved handicapped access.

When the renovations at the Visitor Center were complete and the time came to put the wall back up in its new location on the north moss rock wall of the lower lobby, there were several concerns. The rock wall is an architecturally significant feature of the building and the donor wall in its original form would have obscured it. Additionally, there was no way to secure the donor wall panels to the rock wall without damaging the rocks. Suddenly, a significant redesign of the Donor Recognition Wall was needed.

The new design is on its way to completion. Tree silhouettes will be laser cut from plate aluminum and painted to match the historic, rusted Cor-Ten™ steel of the building and mounted in front of the rock to resemble a grove of trees. It will incorporate the very same metal leaf plaques used on the original wall, mounted on clear museum grade acrylic panels. The entire display will be “floated” several inches in front of the moss rock so that the stones will still be visible. And there will be no damage to the rock feature at all. We believe it will be a lovely and creative integration of form and function.

The new and improved Donor Recognition Wall is expected to be constructed and installed over the next couple of months. We believe it will be a stunning and fitting tribute to our many donors and supporters. Meanwhile, the park will continue to keep the original in safe storage. We’ll keep you posted! Please contact Julie Klett if you have any concerns or questions at julie.klett@rmna.org; 970-586-0108, ext. 11.

Shop with RMNA This Holiday Season

and Support Rocky Mountain National Park
and our Public Lands Partners!

Members receive a
15% discount.
Our thanks to you!

RMNA profits support
programs in RMNP!



Wildlife Flipbooks!

by Flipworkz

Great fun for kids (and adults are secretly enthralled - we admit it!) and an educational tool to boot! Observe a bounding mountain lion in motion, skull crashing bighorn sheep in action and catch a moose browsing through the brush. There's another story for each animal flipped in reverse. Fun facts and wildlife information illuminate the natural history of these dramatic animals. These are SO cool! Great stocking stuffers! ("4" x 2.5")

Moose Flipbook

Item #8653.....\$4.99

(RMNA Member price: \$4.24)

Mountain Lion Flipbook

Item #8651.....\$4.99

Bighorn Sheep Flipbook

Item #8652.....\$4.99



The Adventures of Two Raindrops Running Wild

by John Gunn

Illustrated by Ben Brown

This charming book invites kids along on the adventures of two raindrops that land on the Continental Divide in Rocky Mountain National Park. Beautifully illustrated by Allenspark, CO., artist Ben Brown, the full-color book takes the raindrops on a series of adventures as they travel toward the Pacific and Atlantic oceans down the Colorado, Cache la Poudre, Platte, Missouri and Mississippi rivers. *Softcover; 36 pp. Ages 3-12.*

Item #7663.....\$9.95

(RMNA Member price: \$8.46)



North American Wildlife 100-Piece Travel Size Memory Game

Just as the temperature and terrain vary throughout the continent, so does the diversity of its wildlife. Beautiful full-color photographs of North America's wildlife makes this a challenging game that everyone will enjoy in a convenient travel size. Ages 3 and up. Boxed 4 1/2" x 2".

Item #8697.....\$5.99

(RMNA Member price: \$5.09)



The Rocky Mountains Jigsaw Puzzle

Charley Harper (American, 1922 – 2007) posters have been published by more than fifty nature- and conservation-oriented organizations. The Rocky Mountains poster was one of ten posters Harper was commissioned to create for the National Park Service. This 1000-piece interlocking jigsaw puzzle combines superb color reproduction and sturdy construction to delight generations of novice and veteran puzzlers. Puzzle size: 20" x 29".

Item #8286.....\$18.95

(RMNA Member price: \$16.11)



Rocky Mountain National Park Enamelled Pin & Embroidered Patch Combo

The majestic bighorn sheep is a living symbol of Rocky Mountain National Park. Longs Peak is the highest peak in the park, rising to 14,259 feet above sea level.

Enjoy this beautiful enamelled pin and extremely detailed embroidered patch as the perfect memento of your trip to Colorado, your climb of Longs Peak or of your love of the park!

Item #8707.....\$8.99

(RMNA Member price: \$7.64)

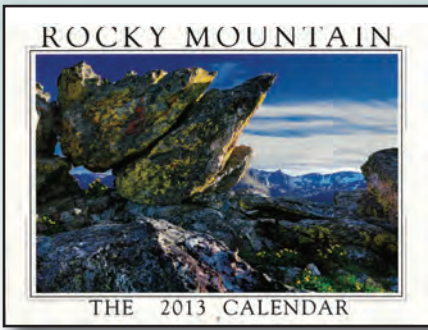
2012 RMNP Holiday Ornament

Longs Peak rises in the distance of a winter wonderland scene in Rocky Mountain National Park painted on this glass ornament. Capture the memory of a trip to the park or just add this Rocky Mountain National Park ornament to your holiday collection!

Item #8451.....\$13.95

(RMNA Member price: \$11.86)



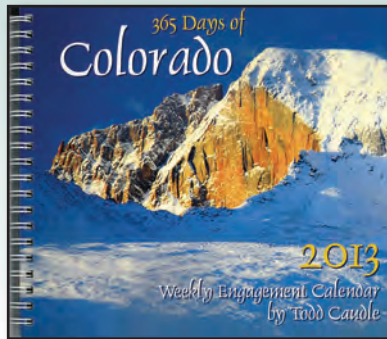


2013 Rocky Mountain Calendar

Photography by Larry Burton

Experience Rocky Mountain National Park through the seasons with this beautifully photographed 2013 calendar. Each page will transport you to favorite memories and wished-for adventures in the park!

Item #8501.....\$11.99
(RMNA Member price: \$10.19)

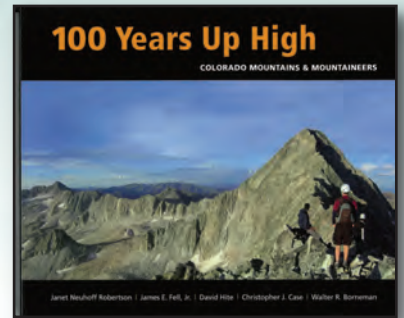


**365 Days of Colorado
 Weekly Engagement Calendar**

Photography by Todd Caudle

Features 58 stunning photographs by acclaimed photographer Todd Caudle representing Colorado's national parks and monuments, and a wide assortment of the state's many mountain ranges, wilderness areas and scenic attractions. 7" x 8"

Item #8551.....\$13.95
(RMNA Member price: \$11.86)

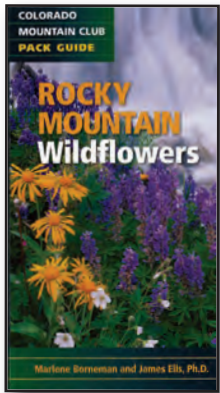


**100 Years Up High:
 Colorado Mountains &
 Mountaineers**

by RMNA Member Janet Neuhoff Robertson, James E. Fell, Jr., David Hite, Christopher J. Case & RMNA Member Walter Borneman

An engagingly circumspect book celebrating the 20th century in the Colorado mountains with images and essays on climbing, skiing, conservation, mountain art works, and Rocky Mountain National Park — written to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the Colorado Mountain Club and the role it has played in mountain recreation, education and conservation in Colorado. Don't miss this one - it's an amazing book! *Softcover, 176 pages.*

Item #8445.....\$24.95
(RMNA Member price: \$21.21)



**Rocky Mountain Wildflowers
 A Colorado Mountain Club Pack Guide**

by RMNA Member Marlene Borneman (Photographer) and James Ells, Ph.D. (Horticulturist)

The Rocky Mountains, from northern New Mexico through southern Alberta, Canada, are collectively referred to as the "spine of the continent" where you can find an amazing array of stunningly beautiful wildflowers in the life zones from the foothills at 5,000 feet to alpine zone at 11,000 feet. *Rocky Mountain Wildflowers* is the authors' selection of the 150 most "showy," colorful and striking wildflowers based on years of observation. An easy-to-use reference organized by color in which each plant is described by its common name, its scientific name and then by the appearance of the stem, leaves and flower and the most likely plant life zones where the flower may be found. *Softcover, 176 pp.*

Item #8862.....\$12.95
(RMNA Member price: \$11.01)



**Bighorn Sheep
 Embroidered Ball Cap**

A great hat to add to your collection! Poly/cotton fabric with detailed bighorn sheep beautifully embroidered on front panel. *Rocky Mountain National Park 1915* surrounds image. Sturdy bill and adjustable strap.

Item #8598.....\$13.95
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Elk: A Falcon Field Guide

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Backyard badger

Photo: RMNA Donor Dick Orleans



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NATURE ASSOCIATION NOTES...

Early and late summer drought conditions and other climatic stressors in Estes Park seem to have affected the lower elevation aspen trees which began changing color in late August in certain locations this year....RMNA Sales Clerk **Amy Miller** was walking around Lake Estes where she observed two large bull elk sparring - in the lake! Their sweeping thrusts and thrashings must have had added drama with water splashing everywhere....Former west-side RMNP employee **Dola Berg** reported a cow elk sporting a green collar in Timber Creek Campground stomped an empty tent flat in early June, remarkably causing very little damage to the tent — just a broken tent pole. Another day in mid-July, the same elk sniffed a tent in its bag, picked it up by the handle and tried to walk away. Luckily, visitors and hosts were able to get her to drop it. Not a week later, she approached a camper as he was packing to leave, took his backpack (no food in it) and headed for the trees. Four people tried to get her to stop. A park maintenance employee passing on the road stopped his vehicle, walked toward the elk while clapping his hands and she finally dropped the backpack....Park visitor **Becky Suomala** from New Hampshire and RMNA Development Manager **Julie Klett** watched a golden eagle soaring and kiting below the Alpine Visitor Center in the Fall River cirque as it hunted for marmots. They noticed that it was approaching above and behind its intended targets, and they watched with baited breath as a young marmot scrambled out of reach just in the nick of time....Estes Park resident **Dean Martinson** observed a tourist in Bond Park in mid-September that was approaching a huge elk with massive antlers that was browsing the grass in the open area. The man's camera was poised for a picture when the elk turned and started to charge him. Luckily, the man dashed behind a tree which narrowly saved him from a quick goring by some impressive antlers.....A greenback cutthroat genetics study, conducted by researchers at CU-Boulder, was recently published online that reports exciting new discoveries about Colorado's native cutthroat trout. It combined an exhaustive survey of trout propagation and stocking records with DNA analysis of 19th century museum specimens to establish the native diversity and distribution of cutthroat trout in Colorado. CU-Boulder's research has identified a single population in the Arkansas Basin (Bear Creek near Colorado Springs) as the aboriginal South Platte Basin trout. Since the native range of the greenback cutthroat trout (Colorado's state fish) was originally described as the South Platte



Photographer Dick Orleans captured this cool sighting of what is thought by RMNP Wildlife Biologist Gary C. Miller to be a dwarf shrew (*Sorex nanus*). Dick was photographing pika on the tundra in late September when he saw it — its body is about 1-inch long and it was very shy.

basin, this Bear Creek population appears to most likely represent the true greenback cutthroat trout. Park visitor **Keith Baker** was enjoying a family drive in Estes Park in mid-July when they came across two badgers lounging in the middle of the road near the YMCA on a sunny afternoon....As reported in the Estes Park News, a reward is being offered for information that leads to the arrest of the person(s) who killed a baby black bear along Fish Creek Road in Estes Park in early August. The cub was crossing the road with its mother when it was shot. Colorado Parks and Wildlife Manager **Rick Spowart** responded to a report of an injured bear. The cub had tumbled into the creek, where Spowart was able to pull it to safety, but the cub died of its wound not long after. Sadly, there were reports that the sow stayed in the area calling for her cub for the next two weeks....At the end of August, Colorado River District Systems Specialist **Debbie Mason** spotted a bull elk along Trail Ridge Road that had clearly been annoying himself with love potion — an “enticing” mixture of mud and urine. His legs and belly were black and wet from his wallow. Watch out, Ladies!..... Debbie also observed a young fox in the East Inlet parking area. As she pulled in, instead of running away, it came a bit closer to her car until Debbie's dog started barking at it. Even so, it didn't go far — just above the parking area where it imperiously sat and watched what was going on below. After a few minutes it came back down into the parking lot. Only as traffic picked up with a few more people walking around and a couple more vehicles entering the area did it move off, leading Debbie to surmise that the fox was looking for handouts. At one point it did seem to make a statement: it came down into the ditch along the north side of the parking area and either urinated or defecated while watching the people in the lot....Bear Management Technician **Cole Caldwell** spotted an albino turkey at Sprague Lake in August and a long-tailed weasel at the Lawn Lake trailhead that was chasing ground squirrels and ran across the road toward the willows and open meadow. He also has been seeing grosbeaks in the riparian areas, as well as Western tanager in the ponderosa pine ecotones and a peregrine falcon at AVC in early September....The **Rocky Mountain National Park Trail Crew** planned a fun day for volunteers for the 2012 National Public Lands Day on September 29. They invited volunteers to join the park's trail crew in making improvements on the Tonahutu Trail portion of the Continental Divide Scenic Trail, from the Town of Grand Lake north toward the Kawuneeche Visitor Center. The project included tread stabilization with the construction of log checks and drains as well as the construction of turnpikes to elevate the tread in poor drainage locations. In addition, heavily worn segments were filled with new tread material. Thanks to all these amazing volunteers for their help in restoring this much-loved trail!!



Bull moose hanging around employee housing in the Kawuneeche Valley.

Photo: RMNA Donor Helen Anderson