

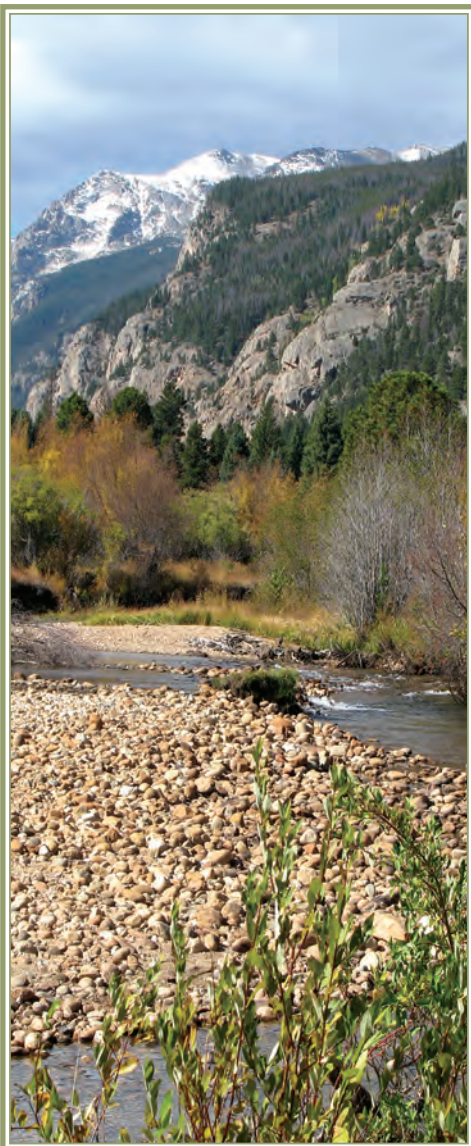


ROCKY MOUNTAIN NATURE ASSOCIATION

Autumn 2013

\$4.00

QUARTERLY



A PLACE OF PEOPLE

by Don Irwin

As we approach the 2015 centennial anniversary of the establishment of Rocky Mountain National Park, it is certain that many of us will be reflecting on historical highlights of the past 100 years, the continued impact that Rocky has on our individual lives, and on what the next 100 years will bring. Some of us long nostalgically for the earlier eras when there were fewer people here. Others decry the multitudes that now come to experience the readily accessible wilderness that is Rocky Mountain National Park to seek the increasingly harder to find solitude of that wilderness. Still others wonder whether Rocky is being loved to death and how park managers will deal with the impact of increasing numbers of visitors in the years ahead.

For me, Rocky has always been a place of people. After 22 years as a volunteer and seasonal Interpretive Ranger, I have come to realize that people need the park and the experiences that they have here. The park also needs the people that come here to sustain its future. The common denominator is that such a beautiful scenic place as Rocky

Mountain National Park has the power to change people's lives, and in doing so, those people bring commitment to conserving and sustaining the park for future generations.

Pause for a moment and consider why you first joined the Rocky Mountain Nature Association, or donated to RMNA for a special park project. Was it because of the impact that this place had on your life?

Consider for a moment a couple of individuals from Rocky's earlier history for whom their first visits to the area changed their lives forever. Abner Sprague was born in Illinois in 1850 and by age 14 had accompanied his family to a cattle ranch west of Loveland. His first visit to the area that was to become Rocky Mountain National Park occurred in 1868. In his memoirs he wrote "I can see it as I saw it then, but cannot describe it or my feelings. . . The surprise of it made us speechless. . . If I live to be 100, I have a feeling that I will have to grow very feeble-minded if I forget that trip."

That trip when he was 18 years old proved to be a pivotal experience in the young man's life. By 1898, he and his wife were running the Sprague Ranch and Hotel in Moraine Park where they entertained a guest who later would become a resort owner herself, Imogene

(People, continued on page 2)



Blue Lake Photo by John Conroy

(People, continued)

Greene McPherson. In a short span of 12 years, Imogene went from visitor to homesteader, to resort owner. She opened the Moraine Lodge in 1910 when she was 66 years old. However, she recognized immediately the charm of this scenic place. In her diary entry for August 9, 1898, she wrote, “Arrived here 6:30 p.m. Very tired. THE GRANDEST PLACE YET.”

For Abner and Imogene, their first experiences in this special place changed their lives forever. Their commitment to the stewardship of the area was part of the effort that resulted in the formation of Rocky Mountain National Park in 1915.

Not all of us have had life changing experiences as the result of our first visit to Rocky Mountain National Park. Perhaps you have had experiences similar to my own. My first visit to Rocky was in 1962 with my parents and my older brother and sister when I was at the impressionable age of 16. At that time, the park failed to make much of an impression on me. I remember having car trouble on Trail Ridge Road and the plums Mom bought at Brodie’s Market while Dad was having the car looked at by a mechanic across the street. I have searched my memory countless times for an image of Longs Peak, a recollection of a hike around Bear Lake, an emotional reaction to one of the grand vistas along Trail Ridge Road. Sadly, little remains from that visit and certainly no grand impact happened to change my life.

My second and subsequent visits, however, did change my life forever. My wife and I made our first visit together to the park in 1979 and I was awestruck. Since that second visit, I

have been one of the many people that when they are not hiking the trails in Rocky they are anticipating the details of their next visit. Since 2001, I have been fortunate to live here full-time. I still am awestruck by the in-your-face grandeur and accessibility of this remarkable place.

And I am still awestruck when other people share with me their stories of the impact that Rocky Mountain National Park has had on their lives. When I am tempted to grumble about the hordes of people along Trail Ridge Road or accompanying me as I hike a trail, I invariably recall an incident from many years before.

We were hurrying to get to the Bear Lake parking lot because we were later than we wanted to be in beginning a hike on the Fern/Odessa Trail. As luck would have it, when we rounded the curve into Moraine Park, we found ourselves behind a much slower moving vehicle. By the time we reached the curve by Hallowell Park, I’m sure I was muttering unflattering remarks about the driver. As tempting as it may have been with few other cars on the road, I could not bring myself to pass on the double yellow, so I remained behind the car all the way to Bear Lake. We pulled into a parking space and began gathering our gear when we noticed, what appeared to be at the time to me, an elderly couple exit their car and begin walking towards Bear Lake.

With our backpacks secured and our boots tightly laced, we too headed towards the lake and our intended trailhead. As we approached Bear Lake, we again saw the couple taking in the amazing view of the lake in the

foreground with Hallett Peak towering in the background. As we passed them, the older man turned and asked us to take their picture. He explained that he had first been to Bear Lake nearly 50 years before and on this, his second trip after so many years, he had brought his wife so that she could know for herself what he had been trying to describe to her for so long.

Of course, we complied with their simple request and were soon on our way. As we left them immersed in the beauty of Bear Lake, I silently vowed that I would never again be so annoyed by other visitors who were slowing down to give the Rocky Mountain experience more opportunities to impact their lives.

As the years have past, I have become more and more aware that Rocky is and always will be a place of people. I have also come to realize that the continued stewardship of this very special place is not just in the hands of park managers but requires the commitment of the great many of us for whom the experiences in Rocky Mountain National Park have changed our lives. With that commitment we will be able assure that not only our grandchildren but our grandchildren’s grandchildren and beyond will have the opportunity for their own Rocky Mountain experiences that will change their lives forever.

Don Irwin has been a volunteer and seasonal interpretive ranger in Rocky Mountain National Park for 22 years. He lives in Estes Park.

Celebrate Rocky Mountain National Park
Support Our Custom
Colorado License Plate
(Registered Colorado vehicles only)



The Rocky Mountain Nature Association, in partnership with Rocky Mountain National Park, will introduce this special license plate that will be available to Colorado registered vehicle owners. Featuring a magnificent bull elk and alpine flowers under a starry sky, this license plate will be available by 2015 to coincide with Rocky Mountain National Park's Centennial celebration.

We will bring a bill for this plate to the Colorado legislature in January, 2014, but we need your help! **We need 3,000 Colorado registered vehicle owner signatures in support of this initiative** in order to bring a bill to a vote in the Colorado legislature in January 2014.

Signatures also will be considered a pledge to purchase a plate (if the bill is approved by the Colorado House of Representatives). Once approved, a minimum of 3,000 plate sets will need to be purchased annually or the plate will be retired. In addition to the regular vehicle registration fees, a small donation to RMNA will be required to obtain this special plate (amount TBD) to support Rocky Mountain National Park.

A petition to gather the 3000 signatures will be made available through the RMNA website - stay tuned! At press time, we are working out the details on our legislative sponsors. Watch your mailbox, email and the RMNA Facebook page - we'll let you know when the petition is ready.

Show your support for Rocky Mountain National Park by signing the license plate petition and help celebrate the park's Centennial - show the world your love for this spectacular and beloved place!

Cover photo credits

Cover photos (clockwise from lower left to upper right): "Autumn Layers" by Nancy Wilson, Estes Park; "Bighorn Majesty," by RMNA Member Dick Orleans, Estes Park, CO; "Autumn Delights" by RMNA Member Ann Duncan, Boulder, CO. Please send photos or high resolution scans to nancy.wilson@rmna.org by December 1 for publication in the 2014 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]

On a recent visit to the Beaver Meadows Visitor Center, there was a park ranger giving a nature talk. Separately, there was also a table full of literature and a person who was proselytizing the Bible. What does this have to do with Rocky Mountain National Park? Doesn't the Constitution (more particularly the Bill of Rights) disallow this? Actually, it is just the opposite: the Bill of Rights, First Amendment, specifically allows this. It reads in part, "Congress shall make no law...prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble..." Because the visitor center is a federal building, the park is required by law to have a "Freedom of Speech" area allotted. Most federal government buildings are required to have these areas, and at most parks they position them near the visitor centers. While these "Freedom of Speech" folks are allowed to stand behind their tables and have people approach them of their own will, the primary requirement of this right is that they cannot interfere with park visitors or operations in any way. In addition, the groups are required to check-in with park administration upon their arrival. — *Chief of Interpretation, Rich Fedorchak.*

What is the park's philosophy behind having a sister park? In September 2007, and again in April 2012, Rocky Mountain National Park signed a sister park agreement with the Tatra National Parks in Poland and Slovakia. All 3 parks are mountain parks, International Biosphere Reserves and share mutual issues and concerns involving the conservation, preservation and management of national parks and protected areas. As similar mountain areas we share similar environments, similar species and a similar ecology. Air quality, climate, (*Sister Park cont. on p.15*)

With one death and another fall soon thereafter on Longs Peak this summer, how does the park decide to close or not to close the trail due to unsafe conditions? How does the park walk the fine line of over-regulating versus under-regulating Longs Peak traffic? To clarify, the two accidents were on separate sides of the peak. The first was on the Keyhole Route along the Narrows, and the second was on the lower east face in the North Chimney, just below Broadway Ledge. The person on the Narrows was not roped up when he fell (which is typical for the Keyhole Route) while the person in the North Chimney was climbing roped. We don't close the routes. Instead, we try to provide accurate information (generally referred to as PSAR...preventative search and rescue) regarding hazards, risks, and current conditions. It's up to the visitor (hiker, climber, angler, skier, horseback rider, etc.) to ultimately make decisions based upon their planning, skill and preparedness, route and conditions assessment, current weather, judgment, etc.. In the case of the recent accident on the Keyhole route, there was a short-term temporary closure in place due to active SAR/recovery operations which was done to ensure safety for the aviation operation as well as visitors crossing the Narrows while the recovery was in progress. This type of closure is administrative and done for short term operations and/or investigatory needs, not due to general "unsafe conditions" that might come from weather, etc. What is sometimes considered "unsafe" for one person may be perfectly acceptable for another person with a different set of skills and experience.—*Chief Ranger Mark Magnuson*



Moraine Park, spring of 2013 after the Fern Lake Fire.

Photo by Debbie Biddle

After the Fire Storm

Willow Restoration Research in Moraine Park Finds New Ground

by Karina Puikkonen

In recent years, park managers and researchers have unearthed many factors in Rocky Mountain National Park’s willow decline, but one disturbance surprised both groups the night of December 1, 2012.

It happened in a blink. Under the power of 70 mph winds, fire swept across Moraine Park in half an hour, leaving behind blackened earth, shrubs and trees. Hardest hit was the valley’s struggling willow population, which suddenly lost hundreds of members in this perfect storm.

Willow restoration was already a high priority for ecologists and resource managers, but the Fern Lake Fire sparked a deeper commitment. The National Park Service and Colorado State University

(CSU) have now joined forces in a quest to determine how Moraine Park willows can rise again from the ashes.

As a natural disturbance, fire helps renew life over time. It’s hard to see something amiss if you look at Moraine Park today. Within a few months after that fiery night, the spring sun had dawned new life. The Big Thompson River runs clear again and animals enjoy abundant grasses and flowers.

Some scars, however, remain. Charred willow stumps remind us that everything can’t recover that quickly.

River banks in the valley, now bare, lack the foundation for its own riparian ecosystem. From the top of 10 foot willow branches to the tip of their roots, these water loving shrubs transform the very essence of river habitats. Thick branches provide shelter and sustenance to many terrestrial and aquatic creatures, while fibrous roots stabilize the soil’s physical and chemical structure for understory vegetation. Moraine Park is at risk of losing this anchoring system in the storm of decline.

Park managers strive to replenish these functions through research-based management

decisions. Large groups of elk continually over-browse willows in Moraine Park leaving little chance for new growth. To protect stunted willows, park staff built elk exclosures in critical areas outlined by the Elk and Vegetation Management Plan. Fenced-in areas will allow shrubs to recover, that is, unless something else disturbs them.

Without many existing willows to study in Moraine Park, the whole restoration process began with just four seeds. That’s the total number Kaczynski collected from 30 seed traps scattered around Moraine Park this summer.

In the past few years, ecologists noticed that some willow shrubs still struggled inside the exclosures. Dr. Kristen Kaczynski of Colorado State University (CSU) determined that the culprit was a native fungus, *Cytospora Chrysosperma*, which also plagues aspen trees in the western United States. It clogs nutrient channels and hinders willow growth by killing mature stems.

Getting willows to a seed producing state was already an issue when the fire unleashed.

The Fern Lake Fire ignored exclosure boundaries altogether and burned many mature willows in Moraine Park. It will be years before the winds that blew the fire eastward across the valley carry willow seeds again. Mother Nature may need a helping hand from human nature to reestablish this important plant community.



Charred Willow: The Fern Lake Fire reduced mature willows to burned stumps, but green willow re-sprouts show promise for willow restoration.

Photo: Karina Puikkonen

Willow rebirth is the focus of a two year project titled Restoration of Riparian Willows in Rocky Mountain National Park, Colorado. With more than 25 years of research experience in the park, CSU Senior Research Scientist David Cooper helped lay the guiding groundwork for this project.

“A lot of little pieces fit into some gigantic synthesis of how this should work,” Cooper said. “We need to kickstart the system and build up a willow population to have all components of the ecosystem back functioning again.” Taking on the multifaceted nature of this task requires people with familiarity and passion for Rocky’s river areas.

Through RMNA’s RMNP Research Fellowship opportunity in 2009, Dr. Kaczynski conducted part of her doctoral research on the willows in Rocky Mountain National Park. She returns to Rocky as the project’s leading investigator. She dreamed of researching riparian fire because it’s a new branch in a deeply rooted field of science. “There’s not a lot of research done on fires in riparian areas because they’re few and far between, especially in a riparian area this large,” she said. She doesn’t call herself a pioneer, but the baseline data she collects lays new groundwork for future research on this topic.

This project started from the ground up. Without many existing willows to study in Moraine Park, the whole restoration process began with just four seeds. That’s the total number Kaczynski and her field assistant, Amy Goodrich, collected from 30 seed traps scattered around Moraine Park this summer. “It’s

not surprising since the area burned,” Kaczynski admits. In contrast, during a weekly visit to Horseshoe Park, she counted 250 seeds on one of 20 traps also placed there. Counting seeds in both locations gives Kaczynski an idea about what willow seed production is and could be.

Luckily, willows have the adaptive ability to grow from seeds or stems. Without a current seed source, Moraine Park may need a willow transplant. Inside a protected enclosure, Kaczynski and Goodrich planted seeds from Horseshoe Park, and nearly 1,000 willow stems with the help of Fort Collins Wildland Restoration Volunteers. Half of the seeding plots and many stems have sprouted in the burned soil.

It’s an early success, but these willows now rely on their own strength to grow. If they survive it will take up to four growing seasons for these small sprouts to fully establish a shrub.

A willow’s own resiliency may be the greatest hope and surprise in this restoration project. January was the first time

Kaczynski saw Moraine Park after the fire. “I walked around and everything was black and charred,” she remembered. “But then I came out in May and saw there were some resprouts on the willow.”

To protect these new shoots from browsing, Kaczynski placed 22 small chicken wire cages around areas of new growth. The protected willows are growing very well so far. “Hopefully this area will become the future seed source for willows throughout the valley,” Kaczynski said. Perhaps these

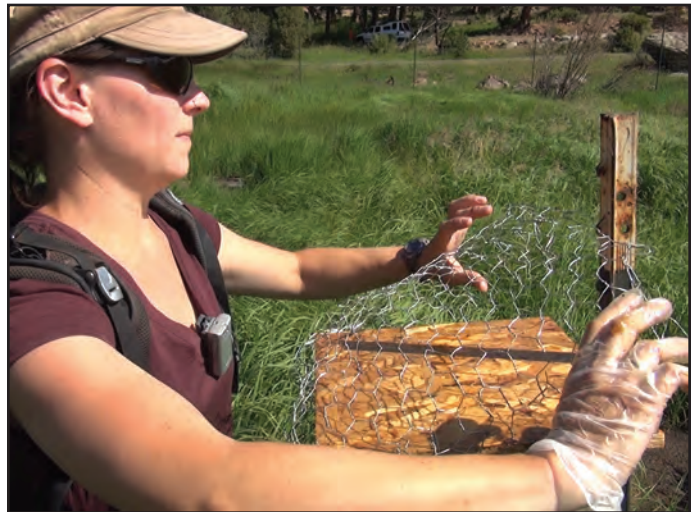
22 protected willows will be able to overcome the willow decline.

Riparian willow research that began decades ago began a new chapter with fire. As altering as that December night was in Moraine Park, the Fern Lake Fire provided new ground in which researchers and willows can grow. After all, the sun always shines after the storm.

Karina Puikkonen is from Utah and has three seasons working in Rocky (eight seasons total in the NPS). She has a degree in zoology and is currently working on a degree in journalism.



Dr. David Cooper of Colorado State University laid the groundwork for much of the willow research in Rocky Mountain National Park over the last 25 years.
Photo: Karina Puikkonen



Dr. Kristen Kaczynski places chicken wire back on a seed trap after checking for willow seeds. A sticky substance called Tanglefoot catches seeds on the boards, while the chicken wire discourages birds from landing on the traps.

Photo: Karina Puikkonen



Willow re-sprouts from burned stumps already grew a few feet tall over the summer.

Photo: Karina Puikkonen



Mark Your Calendars!

Rocky Mountain Field Seminars Announces New Seminars for 2014

It's been a busy summer but RMNA's Rocky Mountain Field Seminars are already preparing for another year of educational adventures in the park. Announcing just a few of the many new course offerings for 2014 — stay tuned for these exciting additions and more to come in January with the complete Field Seminars catalog.

Call 970-586-3262 to make sure you're on the list to receive one of these gems!!

New Bus Tour in the Park

Escape to Bear Lake: An Educational Adventure by Bus will showcase the Bear Lake corridor of Rocky Mountain National Park, providing visitors with an overview of the geology and natural history of the area, and a spectacular opportunity to see wildlife in the park. Offered Fridays in 2014 from June 13 to September 5, the tour includes a short walk along the shores of Sprague Lake – now a favorite habitat for moose!

New Classes for Kids

Flowers and their Friends (for ages 4-6) explores Mrs. Walsh's Native Plant Garden in Estes Park to learn about the relationship between flowers and pollinators and build their very own flower. Offered July 3, 17, 31.

Bugs, Beetles and Butterflies: Tiny But Amazing Creatures of Rocky will be held at Lily Lake on June 26, July 24 and August 7. Using hand lenses, kids will get up close and personal with some native insects, discuss their amazing abilities and create homemade bugs to take home.

New West Side Seminars

New seminars for adults will be featured on the west side of the park, including **Birds of the Kawuneeche Valley** on June 14 with naturalist Jeff Maugans. **Edible and Medicinal Plants of the Rockies: Plants for Hunger and Health** will be offered on June 20, **Historical Plant Use: Aspen for Sunscreen?** on July 10, and **Exploring the Colorful World of Lichens** August 9-10.

Centennial Celebration

Rocky's Centennial celebration is kicking off in September of 2014, and the Field Seminars program will be offering seminars highlighting the history of RMNP. Jeff Maugans will lead a **Hike with a Naturalist** along the Ute Trail on September 5. Estes Park Historian Jim Pickering will lead **Historic People and Places** in September that will highlight areas of historical significance in RMNP and those areas connected to the park in the Estes Valley. More details coming soon!

Shadowcliff Collaboration Continues!

RMNA is pleased to announce a continued and expanding collaboration with Shadowcliff Lodge in 2014. RMNA and Shadowcliff offerings include a 3-night **west side photography seminar with Glenn Randall** August 22-24, a multi-day **water-ecology seminar** and a second year of the **Rocky Mountain Family Eco-Vacation: An Intergenerational Experience** June 21-26.

And, They're Back!

Back in 2014 are some long-standing favorites, including **Secret Places in RMNP** (with new secret places!) on June 28, July 12 and August 16, and **Plant and Wildflower Identification** on Wednesday mornings June 26 — August 14 with all-new flower families.

John Fielder will be back for another weekend photography adventure in September - stay tuned for more information!

BE BRAVE! BE BOLD!

ROCKY'S WINTER SEASON INVITES HIKERS

Winter. Ah, yes. Those brisk and unpredictable weather days when hiking is a real adventure. Beautifully clear and cool with big blue skies, or wild and windy with drama in the air. Take your pick — it's sure to be an interesting experience!

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

Join a group of like-minded individuals and learn more about RMNA, RMNP, and each other. This free hiking series is limited to 15 people per hike. Outings explore a different area in Rocky Mountain National Park each month. Come with your questions about current RMNA projects, park management issues and natural history stories.

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

Winter Schedule: Note: Member hike destinations may change as we learn more about trail conditions following the flood. Stay tuned!

October 18 - Cub Lake November 22 - Mills Lake December 13- Bridal Veil Falls



Chasm Falls Hike
Photo: RMNA Member Lisa Thompson

Park Puzzler
by RMNA Member Joel Kaplow

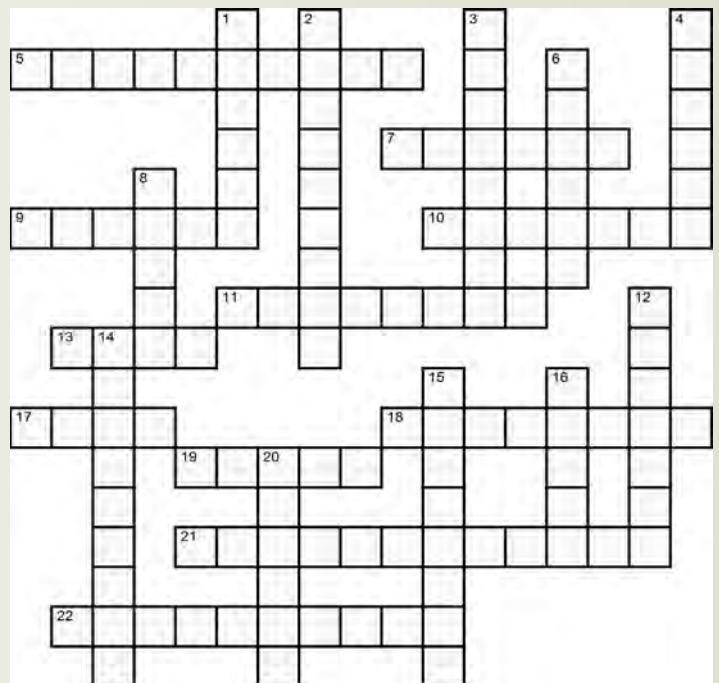
ACROSS

- 5 The ___ Fire was started by lightning last June, and burned through 600+ RMNP acres before it was contained. (2 wds)
- 7 Walter ___ ascended Longs Peak in January 1925 with Agnes Vaille, who met her demise on the descent. He pioneered his namesake technical route, just off the Diamond, in 1924.
- 9 To get supplies up to 19-Across, horses and ___ were loaded in Tahosa Valley below for the six-mile trek.
- 10 In RMNP, anglers age ___ and up are required to have a Colorado state fishing license, or face the consequences.
- 11 Due to air pollution and warming, rising ___ levels in the park's soil and waters are affecting its ecosystem.
- 13 Elkanah ___ opened his Longs Peak Lodge in 1878, and began guiding guests up the mountain. He sold it to Enos Mills in 1902, who continued with the business.
- 17 The ___ Lake Fire started in October last year and burned 3,500 acres of the park. It was very potent, even under snow, because that area had not seen a forest fire in 800 years; there was plenty of fuel to burn.
- 18 5-Across impacted ___ Creek, which now has extra ash and silt washing into it, which will in turn impact Grand Lake.
- 19 From 1927 to 1937, the Boulderfield Shelter ___ served as an inn for paying guests, many of whom rode up on horseback, stayed the night and climbed Longs Peak the next day. It had beds for 12.
- 21 ___ Campground has been closed all year. It was being used as a staging area for the equipment used on the Bear Lake Road construction. (2 wds)
- 22 Firefighters dread working a "___" forest. This is when there are many dead trees (either from beetle kill or a previous fire) that are leaning on other trees, increasing the chances of one falling on them.

DOWN

- 1 In 1925, two ___ were installed going up Longs Peak's face north of the Diamond, not far from where Agnes Vaille died, making it much safer for climbers. They were removed in 1973 when RMNP "went natural," though some eye bolts remain today and are used as anchors for technical climbers.
- 2 Just southwest of Timber Creek Campground you will find the ___ Historic Site. Its structures date from the 1920s.
- 3 The 5-Across fire burned less than 1 square mile of forest, and 17-Across burned about 5.5 square miles. California's Rim Fire, which was started on August 17, blackened 402 square miles by September 24, and invaded part of ___ National Park. (For some perspective, all of RMNP is 415 square miles!)
- 4 Rocky Mountain National Park was established in 1915 with the signature of President ___.

- 6 RMNP boasts 72 mountains that are over 12,000 feet tall. Of those, how many are over 13,000 feet?
- 8 Beautiful ___ Lake may not seem to be manmade, but it was formed when tree stumps were blasted and cleared out with a tractor.
- 12 Fall River Road is not paved, and has plenty of hairpin turns. The posted speed limit is ___ mph.
- 14 If you look at a topo map of RMNP, it's easy to see how this arête on the northeast side of McHenry's Peak got its name. What is it?
- 15 If you tour 2-Down, you will learn that they enjoyed ice all year long, even without electricity. There was an ice shed, generously insulated with bales of hay, that kept things cold. Ice gathered from the ___ River in the winter would stay frozen throughout the summer and fall months until the next freeze.
- 16 Situated west of Lake Haiyaha is ___ Canyon, named such for all the topsyturvy jumbles of boulders torn loose by glaciers.
- 20 This rodent is known to store its winter meals by anchoring aspen branches to the bottom of a pond. Otherwise, floating branches would become inaccessible if locked in the ice on the frozen surface. Which critter is it?



ROCKY MOUNTAIN NATIONAL PARK FUND FUNDRAISING PROJECT PRIORITIES IDENTIFIED FOR 2014



Trail Restoration

RMNP trails sustained significant damage in the flood this fall. Your gift will help make these beloved resources accessible and safe again. Help repair and restore:

- The Ouzel Falls Bridge in Wild Basin
- A large landslide across Calypso cascades trail
- A landslide on Boulder brook across the North Longs Peak Trail
- Debris by Arch Rocks on the Fern Lake Trail
- Lawn Lake Trail damage
- The Alluvial Fan trail network, bridge, and wayside and interpretive signs
- Damaged bridges and trails in the path of landslides in the Macgregor Ranch area, at McGraw Ranch and on the Cow Creek Trail



Next Generation Fund

Each year, RMNA needs to raise more than \$500,000 to support ongoing youth education initiatives such as:

- The Junior Ranger Program
- The American Conservation Corps
- Park Internships (RMNA funds 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

This year, due to budget cuts at the federal level and the impact of the flood on our own ability to raise funds, your help is needed more than ever. Help us to connect youth with nature and create the conservationists of tomorrow.



American Conservation Corps

Each summer, the American Conservation Corps provides a unique experience for college students interested in natural resource conservation. For ten weeks, four crews of six youth work side by side with park and forest service teams in Rocky Mountain National Park and in National Forests building and maintaining trails, restoring historic buildings, and learning from expert RMNP researchers. Park and National Forest officials have already requested the crews' help with flood damage next summer. Your gift will help get the job done.



ROCKY MOUNTAIN NATURE ASSOCIATION

ROCKY MOUNTAIN NATIONAL PARK FUND

Dear Friends,

As you know, in mid-September, we were hit with an unprecedented flood that impacted much of Colorado's Front Range, as well as the Estes Park community and Rocky Mountain National Park. We immediately offered an opportunity through our website and park nature stores for you to help with some of the immediate needs of the park and you responded. Thank you!

For the coming year, park officials have requested our assistance with several high priority projects – all related to this natural disaster. We know we can continue to count on you!

First, they need extra help for the park's trails. Your gift to our Trail Restoration Fund will be used to repair dozens of trails and footbridges badly damaged or destroyed by the flood. You can help make these beloved resources safe and accessible again.

Second, we need your assistance to keep our Next Generation Fund-supported projects operating, such as the Junior Ranger Program, Environmental Education, and Park Internships. Budget cuts at the federal level have limited funding for these critical programs. Additionally, RMNA's ability to generate money for NGF has been impacted by this natural disaster. Proceeds from our retail outlets provide vital aid to the park. Several of these stores closed temporarily due to flood; one for the season. And, due to the road closures, fewer visitors have been able to come to the park. This has dramatically reduced our revenue and our ability to provide the support dollars that fund NGF. Your gift to NGF will help keep these programs going.

Finally, our hard-working American Conservation Corps needs extra assistance. Officials have already requested additional assistance next summer to help restore trails and access in RMNP and in the Arapahoe-Roosevelt National Forests. There is a tremendous amount of work to be done – more than our usual number of crews can take on. With your help, we'll put even more deserving youth to work and introduce them to resource conservation and related careers.

We also want to take a moment to recognize the year's tremendous successes—all made possible by you:

- ◆ Our American Conservation Corps inspected, repaired, or built 71 miles of hiking trails, 955 drains, 417 water bars and 106 rock or log check dams
- ◆ We provided funding for 17 internships, and to educate some 14,000 children
- ◆ We produced the new children's book, *Cimarron the Bighorn Sheep*
- ◆ We purchased the 3.89 acre Johnson Property, which will soon be transferred to the park for permanent protection

Thank you, again, for your ongoing support and friendship. Remember, this year we most need your help with trails, Next Generation Fund projects, and our American Conservation Corps. Please give generously to the project that means the most to you. Your gift this year will truly make all the difference for your favorite park!

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



RMNA Kids' Camp Assists During Flood

The massive flood that displaced and disrupted many Estes Park residents this past September forced Estes Park Schools to close for more than a week, due to extensive damage to their sewage system. While the schools were being repaired, the Rocky Mountain Nature Association organized the Rocky Mountain Kids' Camp to provide school-aged children with educational, nature-based activities.

For the latter part of the week, the Field Seminars Center held day-long camps from 8:30 A.M to 3:30 P.M to promote environmental learning and leadership while assisting parents with their daycare challenges.

The kids, ranging from kindergarten to 7th grade, learned how to identify trees, use GPS devices, identify the area's various ecosystems, and protect public lands by becoming Junior Rangers at Rocky Mountain National Park. By the end of the week, the Rocky Mountain Kid's Camp served 26 different children, most of whom attended everyday.





Research Connections...A story

by Ben Bobowski

Photo: Julie Klett

A storm brews across the Never Summer range. Lightning reaches out and touches a mountain top drawing my eyes to its flash. Recovering from the bright light, my eyes catch a glimpse of a mound of rocks, seemingly out of place along the skyline. I quickly hurry off the hillside and back to the lab, avoiding the storm.

Days later I have returned to the area. I'm sampling vegetation as part of a long-term global research and monitoring effort. The Global Observation Research Initiative in Alpine environments (GLORIA) connects Rocky Mountain National Park's alpine ecosystem to other alpine protected areas around the planet.

I've got mere hours until the clouds build up and chase me off the mountain again. Busily, I organize my equipment, careful to not disturb the area I am about to sample. The winds pick up, gently moving my survey flags back and forth... cool breezes with wisps of warmer currents. The flowers are beginning to shimmer. I begin sampling.

Crouched down to look across my sampling plot I see such amazing diversity. While I'm not surprised by this, as it was quite expected based upon my prep work, the complex micro environment gives me pause, and I imagine what it would be like to be a pika working its way through such obstacles. My mind wanders for just a moment. I have work to do.

Plot by plot I move across the tundra. The clouds continue to build and I can see rain (perhaps hail?) off in the distance. I pause to observe the path the storm is tracking. Thankfully (I have many more plots to read), the storm is moving slowly to the south and I am not in its path. I scan the horizon to the west and north to see if any storms are approaching. It's cloudy but quiet. In fact, a ray of sunshine is coming through the clouds. The sun pierces the sky illuminating a nearby mountain top and I see a glimpse of a mound of rocks, out of place on the skyline.

I am reminded of what appears to be the same mound of rocks that caught my attention only days ago. It calls to me and I watch as the clouds close the narrows to the heavens and I pack up my gear to investigate.

A steep and rugged outcrop of rocks keeps me from going directly across the saddle and up to the top of the next rise, so I go east to work around the barrier. The carpet of alpine flowers is so thick that I make my way slowly, wandering back and forth, hopping rock to rock. It takes me longer than I thought to get to the saddle and when I do, I stop to calibrate my route.

The willows are just below me, at their highest elevation in the park, and a yellow bird bounces around looking like a nervous wreck, branch to branch, flitting around, chatting ceaselessly.

The black mark on its head must be distinguishing. I make a note in my journal so I can identify it when I get back to the lab.

The weather is cooperating and I begin my ascent to the top of the ridge. As I approach from the east I notice an old, very faded trail and I wander over to it for ease of travel and I make my way to the top.

The rocks that I had seen from the distance are arranged somewhat in a circle. Initially I wonder if this was done by some kids playing around on the tundra, but the evidence doesn't support that. The vegetation growing around the rocks took decades to establish, if not longer. This area has likely not been disturbed for over a hundred years or more.

My eyes search the area for other clues but it is only after I exhaust my search of the ground and look up do I begin to piece the puzzle together. From where I stand there's a 360 degree view—and what a view it is! I can see for miles and miles – rolling fields of flowering tundra; rock cathedrals reaching towards the sky; a deep canyon sinking below with old forests persisting into the abyss.

The circle of rocks must be part of a sacred site. Perhaps a vision quest site? I'm not sure. But what I do know is that I no longer feel alone on this mountain – many have come before me.

Resource Stewardship in Rocky Mountain National Park: Understanding and Making Connections for Preservation

by Ben Bobowski

Rocky Mountain National Park is connected to many landscapes in Colorado and around the world through science; yet the park, like many protected areas, also has a rich human history. Thousands of years before this park was established, people came here to experience the wealth of this area, and for many, to re-create themselves. And it remains so today. How do we protect this special place so that future generations may have the same opportunities?

At first glance it appears that Rocky Mountain National Park is well-protected – it is a national park, a wilderness and a biosphere reserve – all of these designations indicate a land that has significant protection. But are these designations enough? Important and valuable as steps towards protection, yes, but without such management activities as restoration, monitoring, research, education and collaboration, these highly valued designations cannot be supported.

Resource stewardship at Rocky is a park-wide effort that necessarily includes collaboration and coordination with numerous volunteers, park partners, researchers and the public. But there is one workgroup that is specifically dedicated to lead in understanding the ecosystems of the park and to develop options for their protection – the Resource Stewardship Division.

The Resource Stewardship Division has four “branches” that work together to protect Rocky Mountain National Park’s resources for future generations; Fire Management, Natural Resources Management, Planning and Compliance,



Photo: Joan Nesselroad

and the Continental Divide Research Learning Center. It is through the efforts of these program areas that learning and research can expand our knowledge, that science begins to inform management, and that adaptive management strategies are implemented. From diatoms to our largest deer, the moose, each of the more than 3,000 species in the park is connected in ways that can be difficult to understand and protect. The challenges are many but so are the successes. Thanks to the hundreds of research projects in the park over the last decade, we’ve learned more about how our ecosystems function and how we are connected to other landscapes.

For example, many of the park’s species organize into ecological systems that do not end within park boundaries, and, more often than not, we need to work with partners beyond park boundaries to conserve a species or system. More than 150 of Rocky’s bird species, such as the Wilson’s warbler, spend their winters in Central America - more than 2500 miles south along the Continental Divide to areas such as Monteverde, Costa Rica, a sister city to the park’s gateway community of Estes Park.

The stories we are learning through science and history are growing, but there is so much more to learn. Today, human influence of climate change poses the greatest impact yet for Rocky. As we enter into an era of unprecedented change, areas of future work that will assist in the conservation of the park will integrate the concepts of ecology, history and current use to develop novel ways of protecting this special place. And above all else, the protection of Rocky Mountain National Park will take all of our efforts – it always has, and it always will.

To learn more about resource stewardship at Rocky, join park staff at our biennial science conference to be next held in April 2014 in Estes Park. It is free and open to the public. Watch the park’s website for details.

Ben Bobowski is the RMNP Chief of Resource Stewardship.



Wilson's warblers nest in the park's willows from the lowest elevations all the way to the alpine tundra. It winters in Central America.



The Roaring River took on epic proportions as it barrelled down the canyon, shouldering boulders aside, damaging the bridge and ripping out part of Endovalley Road before creating a brand new alluvial fan in the meadow.

Photo: NPS

September 11-13, 2013, Rocky Mountain National Park and surrounding east slope communities received between 2 and 18 inches of rain during a multi-day weather event precipitating catastrophic flooding. Rocky Mountain National Park, containing many of the headwaters of this flood event, received significant damages such as the loss of 2 bridges and whole sections of roads. However, damages in the park were minor in comparison to the catastrophic flooding experienced in downstream communities east of the park – an area often referred to as the “Front Range” of Northern Colorado (including the Denver Metro area).

No staff or visitors were injured in the park. However, neighboring gateway communities of the Front Range were devastated by the extended flashfloods, with the death of multiple people attributed to flood waters or building collapse and at least 1,800 homes destroyed with 18,000 more homes sustaining significant property damage. Early estimates of the damages are at \$2 billion dollars.

Generally, the park’s Colorado River District - located west of the Continental Divide - was largely unaffected by the storm with flooding occurring only east of the Divide.

Amidst the storm on Thursday and Friday, park staff closed the park, safely

evacuating 3,000-5,000 visitors; this included 11 separate search and rescue incidents, each requiring varying degrees of assistance and/or rescue. Approximately 24 staff members were evacuated from park residences threatened by flooding streams/rivers.

By early morning Thursday, park staff learned that all road access to the park from the east, specifically U.S. Highways 34, 36 and State Highway 7 – the park’s primary vehicle access - had been severely damaged and were closed. This left the only remaining access to the park’s east, and most heavily visited areas via Trail Ridge Road. Most of the 3,000-5,000 visitors had to evacuate the park via this 48-mile drive along a narrow, winding mountain road – reaching elevations over 12,200 feet. This required significant traffic control, including temporary closures.

By mid-morning Thursday, all communications, except the park’s VHF radio system and the Estes Park trunked radio system, were severed by the storm and subsequent flooding, which complicated emergency operations. Despite this, the park responded to several mutual-aid rescues outside the park, including a technical rescue of six elderly persons who were stranded in their home by rising flood waters.

Initial emergency operations were managed by the park’s Type III Incident

Rocky’s Official Flood Report:

“Some Damage, But it Could Have Been Worse!”

Management Team. Friday, September 13, an Intermountain Incident Management team was activated to assist the park. This Type II All-Hazard-Incident Management Team with Incident Commander Mark Foust, was delegated authority to manage the incident on Saturday, September 14.

By late afternoon on Sunday, park managers had located and accounted for all park staff. All were safe and uninjured, however, at least 75 staff members were cut-off from access to the park due to the severed road systems throughout Larimer and Boulder counties. At least two staff members lost their homes with exponentially more sustaining varying degrees of damage to their private property.

During the week of September 15-22, the Type II team managed the park’s continued emergency closure and initial damage assessments. Wednesday, September 19, State Highway 7 opened for public use. Subsequently, the park also partially re-opened for public use, allowing through traffic along Trail Ridge Road and limited day-use of trails on the park’s west side. The park’s most popular east side remained closed for public use.

Federal Highway funding, \$750,000 - \$1,000,000, has already been secured for four park locations, and work is scheduled to start before the end of September. These four areas are:

- Aspenglen campground bridge;
- Road sections damaged on the Twin Sisters road within the park boundary;
- Wild Basin Road;
- McGraw Ranch Road, which will include a full bridge replacement.

Coordination and cooperation between the park, Estes Park and southwest Larimer County was - and remains - a significant component of this emergency and recovery.

WILDERNESS ENCOUNTERS!



Photo: John Conroy

The Keyhole on the Longs Peak trail

by Brian Desmond

My mother and father gave up the rigors of retirement a long time ago and now spend much of the year living in Estes Park and working for the Rocky Mountain Nature Association. As a result, I have every reason to visit a park I first fell in love with 25 years ago.

Obviously, I was younger 25 years ago, and though I had more hair on top of my head, there was less knowledge inside it. Back then, I attempted to climb Longs Peak but left too late in the day and had to hike to Chasm Lake instead. Ten years later, I tried Longs again, this time with my father. We were well prepared but had to turn back at the Keyhole because of extreme winds.

In subsequent years, I returned to the park with my wife and sons. As my sons grew older, we took longer hikes: Bluebird Lake, Frozen Lake, Hallet Peak and more. I wouldn't trade those hikes for anything, but it seemed that wherever we went, Longs Peak beckoned. So, this past July, I decided to try Longs for a third time.

My sons and I left at 2:00 A.M. The moon was so bright we didn't need headlamps to guide us along the trail. On the way, we met up with two people hiking, one with a cello on his back. The other, a woman, was a violinist, and they were hoping to play a concert at the Summit. They moved on ahead and we resumed hiking.

When dawn broke we were at the Boulder Field, the early morning rays of the sun bringing out a myriad of colors in the rocks of the Keyhole. The views from the Ledges, the Trough and Narrows were exhilarating. When we finished the Homestretch and reached the summit, we were greeted with music. Live classical music.

It felt great to have finally made it to the top. To experience the trail both in moonshine and in sunshine was wonderful. And to experience a once-in-a-lifetime concert while relaxing on the summit of Longs was an unexpected delight. But the most memorable part of the journey was to have experienced it all with my sons.

Twenty-five years is a long time. But sometimes the mountains seem to know better than we do what we should experience, and when.

Brian Desmond lives in Tacoma, WA, with his wife and two sons.



Gal Faganal and Jenny Shea on the summit of Longs this summer.



*24 Hours to
Give Where
You Live...*

Support RMNA on Colorado Gives Day, December 10, 2013!

Looking for a fun way to donate your annual gift? On December 10, 2013, donors in Colorado and beyond will come together to raise millions of dollars for nonprofits such as RMNA. Last year, participants made an astonishing show of support for local nonprofits by donating \$15.4 million in just 24 hours! A total of \$15.7 million was distributed to the nonprofits, thanks to additional contributions from the FirstBank Incentive Fund and 36 cash prizes. Let's see what we can do on Colorado Gives Day 2013! Join us and other members in helping to raise at least \$15,000 for our Next Generation Fund, which supports youth education in the park.

Presented by Community First Foundation and FirstBank, Colorado Gives Day encourages everyone to learn about and give to Colorado charities (may we humbly suggest RMNA?) through the website GivingFirst.org, an online giving resource that features participating nonprofits. It's another fun and easy way to support us and your favorite place—Rocky Mountain National Park.

Good things to know:

- ♥ 100% of your donation will come to RMNA when you give through GivingFirst.org.
- ♥ When you give online on December 10, the value of your donation will be boosted by the FirstBank Incentive Fund.
- ♥ As part of our ongoing Million Dollar Challenge, your gift will also be matched by a very generous donor! Every dollar given will be worth at least two!
- ♥ Help us win cash prizes! We have a chance to win \$1,000 Bonus Bucks and \$5,000 High Five cash prizes when you remember us on Colorado Gives Day.
- ♥ It's easy! We'll put a convenient link on our home page at www.rmna.org which will take you to the GivingFirst website to make a contribution.
- ♥ Away from your computer or out of town that day? No worries, you can set up a donation ahead of time to post on December 10.

**Donate online at GivingFirst.org
any time over the 24-hour period of December 10
to Give Where You Live!
(the link to this site will be available at
www.rmna.org by November 15)**



The Rocky Mountain National Park Fund

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

June 6, 2013 - September 23, 2013
224 Gifts ~ Total donations: \$89,609

FLOOD RECOVERY FUND

Norma L. Andersen, Fort Collins, CO
Laura Bailey, Medina, OH
Douglas Balok, Loveland, CO
Roger and Elizabeth Banks, Edmond, OK
Steve Barnett, Dallas, TX
Liz and Dwight Carmichael, Lee's Summit, MO
Richard Cross, Boulder, CO
John and Dolores Dolan, Mahwah, NJ
James and Elizabeth Eliassen, Denver, CO
Miriam E. Felsenburg, Winston Salem, NC
Mary Lou Fenili & Karen F. Hansen, Denver, CO
William Gabrenya, Palm Bay, FL
Maryann Gaug, Silverthorne, CO
Laura Gilligan, Northfield, MN
Dena Granof, Austin, TX
Judith Graziano, Poland, OH
Kathy and George Hansen, Brighton, CO
Jane I. Hoel, Fort Collins, CO
Anne and Richard Howland, Bethesda, MD
Don and Rietta Huddle, Houston, TX
Jen Hume, Golden, CO
Althea and Jim Jackson, Fern Park, FL
Dennis and Sara Joseph, Boulder, CO
Robin and Ann Koozer, Hastings, NE
Mary and Mike Kottke, Fountain Hills, AZ
Shane Ledford, Lees Summit, MO
Robert Lundy, Louisville, CO
A. Graig and Janet McHendrie, Palo Alto, CA
Bonnie Mock, Vero Beach, FL
Douglas and Rosemary Moore, Loveland, CO
Nancy and Connor Morris, Leawood, KS
Barbara Niebruegge, Saint Louis, MO
Christine and John O'Brien, Broomfield, CO
Ginny Passoth, Denver, CO
James Pearce, Bothell, WA
James Pyrzynski, Bellevue, NE
Frank and Nancy Reilly, Phillipsburg, NJ
Janice and Kevin Stout, Dillon, CO
Heather and Gregory Thorwald, Westminster, CO
Gary and Diana Wade, Loveland, CO
Barbara L. Walker, Mobile, AL
Karen M. Waller, Saint Joseph, MO
Roger Walton and Helen Anderson, Lakewood, CO
J. Michael and Peggy Wilson, Whitefish Bay, WI
Joan Winstein, Oak Park, IL
Beth Christensen, Rockford, IL:
In Memory of Jim McClary

NEXT GENERATION FUND (RESTRICTED GIFTS)

American Institute of Architects,
Colorado Chapter, Denver, CO
Edwin Austin, Rochester, NY
Deanna Boihem, Metairie, LA
William and Louise Bradley, Boulder, CO
Kenneth and Susan Brunk, Centennial, CO
John and Pat Case, Marquette, MI
John Connor & Irene Connor Family Foundation,
Denver, CO:
In Memory of Robert F. Connor, Sr.
Robert and Nora Copeland, Fort Collins, CO
Connie Dedon, Estes Park, CO
In Honor of Sadie Dedon
Connie Dedon, Estes Park, CO:
In Honor of Emma Dedon
Jeanne Eisenstadt, Loveland, CO
Lloyd Fosdick, Estes Park, CO
Virginia Goldman, Houston, TX
Ronald and Vivian Gordon, Estes Park, CO
William W. and Rhonda Grant, Denver, CO
Roberta Heisterkamp, Denver, CO
Richard K. Johnson, Kenosha, WI
Kathleen Kase and Dan DeBlasio, Estes Park, CO:
In Honor of Robert Kase
Kathleen Kase and Dan DeBlasio, Estes Park, CO:
In Memory of Sarah Ahrens

Steven King, St. Louis, MO
Dave and Corinne Lively, Grand Lake, CO
Catherine Mannix, Andover, MA
Carol Mouch, and Barbara Pollock, Temple, TX
Oliver O'Reilly, Albany, CA
Marlys and Lyle Polson, Estes Park, CO:
In Memory of Jim Nissen
Carlene and Cameron Roberts, LaCrosse, WI
Mary Roberts-Bailey, Athens, GA
Mr. & Mrs. William Robertson, Colorado Springs, CO
Allen and Mary Anne Sanborn, Santa Fe, NM
Richard and Karen Sandberg, Omaha, NE
Peter and Mary Shultz, Westminster, CO
Elizabeth and Gerald Stonecipher, Estes Park, CO
Ann Waterman, Colorado Springs, CO
Carol and Steven Watson, Bozrah, CT
Steve Watson, Bozrah, UT
Sharon K. Welton, Springfield, MO
Cynthia Zarkovsky, Buffalo Grove, IL
Emily Ziniel, Wheat Ridge, CO

NEXT GENERATION FUND (UNRESTRICTED)

Mary and James Alfred, La Grange Park, IL
Anonymous
Virginia Arter, Longmont, CO
AT&T Foundation, Princeton, NJ
J.D. and RoseMarie Benisek, San Angelo, TX
Sigrid Bower, Grosse Pointe Farms, MI:
In Memory of George Bower
Judith and Mark Burke, Omaha, NE
Michael Byrd, Weatherford, TX
Peggy Carr, Denton, TX
Karin and Jess Cassel, Chicago, IL:
In Memory of Chuck Gedge
Debbie Clark, Lake Forest, IL
Patsy Cravens, Houston, TX
Brian and Jerilyn Doherty, Sparta, NJ
Sandra and Thomas Dombkowski, Sagaponack, NY
Dorothy H. Dunn, Augusta, NJ
Lola May D. Ehler, Cheyenne, WY:
In Memory of Aulden Dunn
ExxonMobil Foundation, Princeton, NJ
Alan Folz, Dallas, TX
The Giving Campaign, Norfolk, VA
Sarah Goad, Denver, CO
Phyllis Graves, Fort Collins, CO
Roger Gunlikson, Fort Collins, CO
Carolyn Hackman, Saint Louis, MO
Teresa Himmel, Dave, Jess & C.J., Erie, CO:
In Memory of Lyda McConnell
David Hoekstra, Woodbury, MN
B.J. Hollis, Morrison, CO
Gail Hopkins, Overbrook, KS
Anthony Jones, Riverside, CA
Norm Jones, Andalusia, PA
Virginia and Ray Kinzer, Houston, TX
Nancy Klaus, Houston, TX:
In Memory of Julia Lommen
Barry and Sharon Knapp, Rochester, MN
Teri Lorkowski, Fairbanks, AK
William and Patricia Malina, New Baden, IL
David McLellan, N Andover, MA
Walt and Darst McNairy, Sanibel Island, FL
Margaret Moody, Austin, TX:
In Memory of her father, Lewis S. Fountain
Mary O'Farrell, Camano Island, WA
Orange Tree Productions, Newbury Park, CA
Paul and Donna Payne, Garland, TX
Sondra Perry, Grand Prairie, TX:
In Memory of Jim Perry
Carla Personette, Rockford, IL
Kurt and Alexis Preston, Gladstone, MO
Mary Ann Rasnak, Lawrence, KS
Mr. & Mrs. William Robertson, Colorado Springs, CO
Dean Rockwell and Courtney Scott, Lakewood, CO
The Guests of Rocky Mtn. Park Inn, Estes Park, CO
Steven Rosen, New York, NY
Betsy Rothschild, Franklin, TN
Kathleen Ryan, Albany, CA

Gladys Scheid, Cheyenne, WY:
In Memory of Karen Scheid
John Shacka, Birmingham, AL:
In Memory of Craig Rasnake
Silicon Valley Comm. Foundation, Mountain View, CA
Fred and Lilian Six, Lawrence, KS
Patricia B. Smith, Colleyville, TX
Tara and Gene Smith, Morton, IL:
In Honor of Linda Dilt's 75th Birthday
Beth Sofalri, Curtice, OH
Robert Tobin, San Juan, PR
Vyonne Vacante, Shavertown, PA:
In Memory of Laurie Ivaska
Robert Venable, Pueblo West, CO
Linda Wagner, Shawnee Mission, KS
Tom Wedell, Antioch, IL
Your True Nature, Fort Collins, CO

All in Memory of Homer Hartke:
Diane and Harold Davis, Marysville, OH
BRASH Financial Corporation, Lakeway, TX
Fulton and Linda Moeller, Norton, OH
Jayni Sech, Hudson, OH
Superior Savings Credit Union, Massillon, OH

All in Memory of Jim Nissen:
Deborah Ann Adams, Grove City, OH
James Pyrzynski, Bellevue, NE

All in Memory of Matthew Long:
Kathrin Harris, Grayslake, IL
Geoffrey Long, Littleton, CO
Eric Russell, Rochester, NY

AMERICAN CONSERVATION CORP FUND

Gary and Donna Gisle, Boulder, CO
Walt and Nancy Kaesler, Estes Park, CO
Karen Louis, Boulder, CO
Connor and Nancy Morris, Leawood, KS
David and Linda Morris, Seymour, TN
John Rossie, Ottumwa, IA
Carlen Schenk and Barry Brezan, New Berlin, WI

RMNP CENTENNIAL FUND

Frank and Monty Kugeler, Denver, CO

HISTORIC PRESERVATION FUND

Michael Maharry, Muscatine, IA

LAND PROTECTION FUND

Helga Gaffron, Longmont, CO
Margaret Golden, Brooklyn, NY
Rosemary and Daniel Gruber, Belleville, IL
Irene Healy, Albuquerque, NM
Dr. Donald Hillger, Windsor, CO
Adeline K. Kano, Fort Collins, CO
Rebecca Mies, Topeka, KS
Robert Mullen, Portland, OR
Shirley J. Pine, Little Rock, AR
Dan Smith, Omaha, NE
Joe and Doris Wampler, Lincoln, NE

LEGACY ENDOWMENT FUND

Legacy Endowment Fund
Brandon Caldwell, San Marcos, TX
Kristin Logan, Pearlant, TX

MEMORIAL BENCH

Brian Blankenmeister and Heather Nordquist,
Breckenridge, CO:
In Memory of Brandon Blankenmeister

RMNP SEARCH & RESCUE FUND

All in Memory of Corey Stewart:
William Bernhardt, W. Nyack, NY
Robert and Eileen Clark, Newton, NJ
Michael Rocco, Greensboro, NC
Lynn Bastek, Lafayette, NJ
Lisa Bechtel, Blairstown, NJ
Deborah Berry-Toon, Andover, NJ
Andrea Biasi, Newton, NJ
Kathy Bottoni, Newton, NJ
Kate Castle, Andover, NJ
Richard and Helen Heckman, Newton, NJ
Phyllis Meliota, Nanuet, NY
Sharon Miller, Park Ridge, NJ
National Outdoor Leadership School Southwest,
Tucson, AZ
Jill Rosenthal, West Orange, NJ
Debra Ryker, Blairstown, NJ
Linda and Paul Stewart, Gibsonia, PA
Ed and Fannie Waldron, Newton, NJ

TRAIL IMPROVEMENT FUND

John Blair, Winnebago, MN
Katherine Bruce, Bedford, TX
George C. Casey, Denver, CO
Marianne Gaynor, St. Clair Shores, MI:
In Honor of Gene Stehman's birthday
Dr. Ray R. Nassimbene, Denver, CO
William and Anita Ondr, Centennial, CO
Karen Runquist, Scottsdale, AZ
Gregory E. and Patricia A. Smith, Gainesville, FL
Marc Vogl, San Francisco, CA:
In Honor of Louise Ann Thomas McGoll
Nancy Voiles, Estes Park, CO:
In Honor of the birthdays of Patricia Brand, Jan Hess, Ann Stewart, Joy Mohr, Heidi Thomas and Nancy Voiles
Brian Blankenmeister and Heather Nordquist,
Breckenridge, CO:
In Memory of Brandon Blankenmeister
Robert and Ellen Dern, Fort Collins, CO:
In Memory of James A. Nissen
Sandra Kuhn, Naples, FL:
In Memory of Stephen Kuhn

ROCKY MOUNTAIN FIELD SEMINARS FUND

William and Norma Riley, Omaha, NE

TO BE DETERMINED

William W. and Rhonda Grant, Denver, CO

**CORRECTION
FROM SUMMER QUARTERLY:**
Next Generation Fund (Unrestricted)
Kathryn Hansen, Park Ridge, IL
In Memory of Ann Adams



More details coming soon...

Members and Donors Wine & Cheese Holiday Celebration

When: December 7, 2013

Where: Fall River Visitor Center

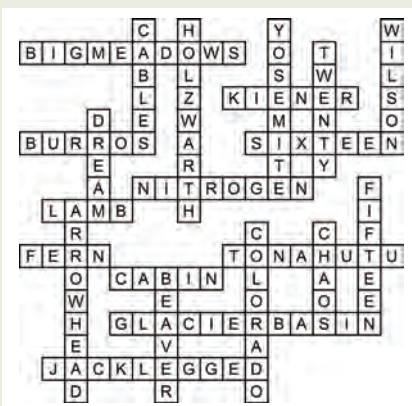
Stay tuned!

(If you are a Member or Donor that lives outside of Colorado, but you would like to attend this event, please give us a call for more details ~ 970-586-0108)

(Ask Nancy, Sister Park, cont from p.3)

history and cultural practices, migratory species, and an ever-increasing human population are but a few issues in common that lend themselves to shared research questions in which the collection of data generally transcends cultures and governments, and provides for shared learning. Issues that once seemed specific to one park or one country are seen through a global lens as issues common to many protected areas. Creativity in problem solving is enhanced and the traditions of our respective agencies questioned as we compare and contrast how each protected area, and each democracy, approaches problems or opportunities. The future of protected areas management is global in nature. 'Diplomacy through science' has evolved to be an area of emphasis for our international program and we believe that the more we, as individuals, as parks and as agencies embrace the sister park concept, the more relevant and protected our parks will be for future generations.

PARK PUZZLE ANSWERS



Quick Fix Science

SLIME MOLDS IN THE LIMELIGHT

THE QUESTION:

What slime molds can be found in the park?

The park is responsible for protecting all resources within its borders, even those bearing an unattractive common name. The eumycetozoans, or slime molds, are a group of

microscopic organisms characterized by an amoeba-like trophic stage and aerial spore-bearing reproductive structures. Eumycetozoans are widespread, common to

even abundant in nature, where they are major predators of other microorganisms such as bacteria, yeasts, cyanobacteria and green algae. This would suggest some degree of ecological significance. However, because of their cryptic life cycle and because the number of scientists studying them is relatively small, eumycetozoans are among the most understudied groups of terrestrial organisms. This project, conducted by the University of Arkansas and funded by two grants from the National Science Foundation, seeks to expand, standardize, systematize, and ultimately summarize the body of information available on the taxonomy, ecology and distribution of all three groups of eumycetozoans (myxomycetes, dictyostelids and protostelids).*

THE PROJECT:

In order to inventory the slime molds of Rocky Mountain National Park, local volunteers learned to identify and culture slime molds. Each year, they search appropriate microclimates in the park for species. With park permission, they collect samples and return to the laboratory for microscopic measurement and description, and occasionally culture. After an initial identification, Dr. Steven Stephenson and Dr. Rod Nelson, both of the University of Arkansas, provide taxonomic expertise.

THE RESULTS:

As of 2009, 84 different slime mold species have been identified for the park. Further identification of species is in progress. Analysis of data from cultures of substrate collections is ongoing at the University of Arkansas. Because new collecting locations account for two thirds of the additional species found each year, the local volunteers will continue to survey more, and especially uncommon habitats. Inventorying slime molds is a challenge because moisture variation and natural decay continually change their habitat. From year to year, species can vary at a given location. Photographs and representative specimens will be preserved in the park's records and museum collection. This study provides a point-in-time assessment of the most common and some of the less common species that can occur in the habitats of the park.

This summary was written in 2010 by Cheri Yost and is based on published, peer-reviewed and/or unpublished reports available at the time of writing.

*Project website: <http://slimemold.uark.edu/index.htm>



Slime molds grow in wet places, like this Arcyria cinerea (above) and Metatrachia floriformis (below) found on rotting conifer logs near a stream.



Some slime molds, like this one above (Didymium dubium) are only found next to melting snowbanks, a feature which is not uncommon in Rocky Mountain National Park.



For comments or questions contact:
Charles Money, Executive Director
Nancy Wilson, Quarterly Editor
Rocky Mountain Nature Association
PO Box 3100
Estes Park, Colorado 80517
(970) 586-0108
www.rmna.org

Non-Profit
 Organization
 US Postage
 PAID
 Permit #184
 Estes Park, CO

Here's a rare glimpse of an albino golden-mantled ground squirrel taken in Estes Park...

Photo by RMNA Member Dick Coe

NATURE ASSOCIATION NOTES...

No shortage of drama on the east side of Rocky Mountain National Park this fall. Yet snow graces the summits of Longs and Mummy Range like nothing ever happened here in Estes Park and aspen leaves are starting to change, right on schedule. Chipmunks are busy gathering the late summer seeds, hawks are prowling the meadows and bears are getting ready for the big winter sleep.....Regarding the possible fate of the Fish Creek beaver lodge, Retired Resources Management Specialist **Jeff Connor** noted that since all the dams and the lodge were washed away, the the beaver could have been washed downstream or they may have climbed to higher ground. There's a reasonable chance that they perished, but, depending on the force of the flow, if they are still there, it's possible that they could quickly rebuild a lodge and dams. However, since winter is closing in it may be tough to rebuild in time. Additionally, if their food supply is gone, such as willow and aspen, if they survived, they would move up or downstream in search of food and try to rebuild in a new location. According to Jeff, the bottom line is that this type of flood is hard on any beaver that lost their dams, lodge and winter cache of food.....RMNA Development Manager **Julie Klett** watched a bunny scamper across the road near the Beaver Meadows Visitor Center — it appeared to be in an unnatural hurry, that is, until she spotted the coyote that was chasing it.....Julie also watched a pair of newly fledged red-tailed hawks near her home in Estes Park. She observed them practicing to fly, screeching as they flapped their wings furiously in an attempt to catch a thermal and badgering their parents for food, all summer.....Park Maintenance Seasonal **Billy Coon** of Estes Park likes to take walks in his neighborhood in the evening. He was doing this in early September and stopped to rest on one of the nearby benches. Soon enough, a big black bear emerged out of the relative darkness and walked past him, just 3 yards away.



While visiting Sprague Lake in late May, Linda Schrag and Darrell Spangler were lucky to spot and photograph this beautiful mink. This first-ever sighting for them was a very special treat as minks are rarely seen in Rocky Mountain National Park.



The bear looked at Billy, and Billy looked at the bear, and the bear went on its way. It jumped into the pond near the condo complex and proceeded to swim into the culvert that led to an adjoining pond.....Colorado River District Systems Specialist

Debbie Mason had a moose jam in front of her house

near the Kawuneeche Visitor Center one evening in early September. Nothing too unusual about that. The moose were across the road and some elk grazed deeper in the woods. Both were drawing the usual crowd that was gawking and snapping photos. Then Debbie heard yelling. When she looked again, she spotted some rather unusual "wildlife" — a guy was "calling" the moose (although he sounded nothing like one), using his hands to mimic antlers. When that didn't get the reaction he wanted, he dropped his pants and mooned the 2 bull moose in front of him. We're betting that didn't get much of a reaction either....In early August, Estes Park resident **Dean Martinson** observed a magpie in his yard that was moving systematically from one bluebird house to another, standing on the slanted roof and peering upside down into the house to see what tasty morsels might be there. As luck would have it, the swallows that had taken up residence had already fledged....Interpretive Ranger **Kathy Brazelton** noted that the elk in the park are alive and well and were heard bugling with gusto in Horseshoe Park in late September.....Hummingbird moths, also known as sphinx moths (*Hyles lineata*), were active in late September. These enormous moths flit from blossom to blossom, seeking nectar as would a hummingbird. In low light, they are sometimes difficult to discern from small hummers... a park employee was helping to dig up a pipe that had been overwhelmed during the flood. Inside, he found a ground squirrel that had sought refuge but was drowning. He was scooped it out and left it on high ground to dry, hoping for the best.....Park visitor **Michael Sisk** observed a good-sized black bear on the lower slopes of Deer Mountain in mid-September as it mowed through the currant bushes cleaning up on the tiny red berries growing in the meadow.....RMNA Staff was excited to see a young male moose wandering around the office below the Beaver Meadows Visitor Center.....10 Mountain bluebirds were spotted on October 6



...and here's a fully-pigmented golden-mantled ground squirrel for comparison. Photo by RMNA Member Dick Coe

.....Nature prevails!