

Rocky
Mountain
Conservancy

QUARTERLY

Summer 2018

IT'S A WONDERFUL PARK

by Frank Lancaster

There's something special about a spring day in the mountains. The sun just feels different than at other times of the year. Maybe because it's higher in the sky or because it's quietly hinting that the cold days are behind us, but it feels more comforting and warm. It's spring fever. Recently I was hiking with my family around Dream Lake on one of these soft spring days, and we stopped for lunch along the shore. I closed my eyes to listen to the sounds around me and it wasn't long before I was lulled into sleep.

Suddenly, a large man in uniform was roughly shaking my shoulders. "Get up!" he barked. "You're not supposed to be here. This is private property." I looked at him, bewildered. He wasn't wearing a Park Service uniform, and he looked like some type of security guard. "Get up!" he ordered again.

"What do you mean, this is 'private property'?" I said. "I don't understand ..."

"Get up! This property is owned by the Moraine Resort and Golf Club and is open exclusively to members and their guests. You can't be here."

Still confused, I got to my feet and started to follow him down the paved trail back to Bear Lake.

"I still don't understand — this is a national park! I have the right to be here!"

"National park? This is the Moraine Resort and Golf Club, and it's been here for over 60 years. I don't know what you've been smokin'! Now shut up and walk."

We got down the trail to the Bear Lake parking lot. On the east side of the

lake sat a large log building with a lighted sign over the door: HALLETT BISTRO AND RESTAURANT. Beyond it on the horizon was a string of radio and microwave towers dotting the summit of Flattop Mountain. My truck was still in the lot, but the parking lot was about twice the size I remembered. The guard escorted me to my vehicle and directed me to leave. Still confused, I started for home.

Driving back toward town, I passed numerous roads that shouldn't have been there. Each had a stone wall and wrought-iron gates at the entrance. Behind the rock walls, on both sides of the road, were large houses, I guessed to be at least 6,000 square feet or more, with three-car garages and large decks. Streetlights lined the road as "Bear Lake Boulevard" wound down the hill.

Crossing the Big Thompson River into Moraine Park I became more confused. Where there once were willows, alders and timothy grass, I now found myself driving between the tee boxes of the 17th and 15th fairways. As far as I could see to the west was a carpet of green Kentucky bluegrass, variegated by cart paths, with beige sand traps and bent grass greens with hole-marker flags waving in the breeze. Golf carts buzzed across the landscape and at the far end of the moraine stood the huge resort, at least eight stories high, with a fountain like a geyser in front of an entrance porte-cochere, framed with parking for at least 300 vehicles. Next to the hotel was a swimming pool, complete with a cabana bar and multiple tables with red-and-white umbrellas. Off to the

(Wonderful Park continued on page 9)



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Dear Friends,

When I moved to Estes Park last year, the local couple we purchased our home from welcomed my kindergarten daughter, Rose, with a gift of a book. It was *High as a Hawk: A Brave Girl's Historic Climb*, by T.A. Barron. The book is a fictionalized account of the true story of a little girl climbing Longs Peak with Enos Mills. We read it that first week several times at bedtime, and, inspired by the story at the ripe age of five, my daughter immediately began planning her own future ascent of Longs Peak. I'm sure she'll be "in training" for many years to come, though her summit of Estes Cone in May shows me that her passion for peak-bagging isn't dwindling a year later.

It's so important for all of us (not just the kids!) to have stories that inspire us to push our limits, and persevere in the face of adversity. So, when I learned that the book had gone out of print a few years back, I wanted to see how we could help make sure that story stayed alive so that it could continue to inspire future mountaineers and lovers of public lands. Nancy Wilson (the editor of this Quarterly) and I met with Tom Barron to chat about buying the book rights to get it back in print, and he shared his tale of inspiration with us. When he was working on a book about Enos Mills years ago, he was looking through some archives of Enos' letters. While most were from important figures of his era, names we still recognize today for their impact on our world, such as Teddy Roosevelt, Helen Keller, and Booker T. Washington, Enos had also saved a letter from a little girl from Arkansas – eight-year old Harriet Peters, whom he guided to the summit at a time when his vision of a national park was starting to look like an impossibility. Was he inspired by Harriet to keep pushing for his dream of Rocky Mountain National Park? We like to think so.

I hope that in reading this story you'll find your own inspiration in this tale of intergenerational perseverance in the face of physical and emotional challenges. Not surprisingly, here at the Conservancy, we have our own setbacks and moments of frustration. Case in point:

- Two of our National Park Service partners and fellow Conservancy advocates have taken new positions supporting public lands in different roles. Rocky Mountain National Park's Chief of Interpretation, Rich Fedorchak, has taken another position with the Park Service, a position in which he will be helping organizations like ours nationwide. Michelle Wheatley, superintendent of Florissant Fossil Beds National Monument and one of the public lands areas that the Conservancy supports, has moved on to serve as Superintendent of Jewel Cave National Monument. We congratulate them on their successes, and hope that their positions will be filled with strong leaders, like them, who value the power of our unique public-private partnerships.

- We have outgrown our annual membership picnic venue in Rocky Mountain NP at Hidden Valley, and we will be taking a hiatus from hosting this event to reassess and implement different kinds of smaller gatherings and events across the Front Range.

- Wildfires in our region limit access to the public lands we serve, and endanger the communities we love. Please be extra safe this dry season, and share your fire-wise tips with your friends and neighbors.

Despite these, and many other, challenges, we remain steadfast in our commitment to the mission of this organization, in service of the park and its visitors that Enos' envisioned more than 100 years ago. I'm reinvigorated every time I walk through a visitor center and see a child raise their hand to earnestly begin reciting the Junior Ranger pledge. And, like eight-year old Harriet Peters, I hope that you'll look to experiences in nature when it's time to recharge your spirit, whether it's pushing yourself to summit Longs Peak or just enjoying a cup of coffee along a river somewhere. We appreciate all that you, as members and donors, do to support Rocky Mountain National Park! Happy summer!

Estee Rivera Murdock

Estee Rivera Murdock
Executive Director



Mount Alice in Wild Basin, Rocky Mountain National Park

Photo: Forrest Shafer

Hooray for Summer!

Fun Conservancy products to feed your love for Rocky!



2019 RMNP Calendar

by Erik Stensland
Enjoy 12 months of scenic beauty in the heart of Rocky Mountain National Park through these rarely seen views of the park. **\$14.95; Members: \$12.71**



2019 RMNP Calendar

by James Frank
This scenic 12-month calendar features stunning photographs of Rocky Mountain Park, including descriptive text for every month. Also features large day grids and moon phases. Made in USA. Measures 12" x 11" **\$14.95; Members: \$12.71**



Ann Strange Owl:

A Northern Cheyenne Memoir

by Ann Strange Owl-Raben & Sharon L. Arms
Journey back to the Depression-era world of Ann's birthplace, Birney Village, Montana where she was one of only the second generation to be born on the Northern Cheyenne Indian Reservation. It is a cultural odyssey into a unique period of the American West. Softcover, 9" x 6", 146 pages. **\$22.95; Members: \$18.70**



Sun Hat for Kids

Kids will think it's fun to wear a hat to protect their heads from the hot sun with this playful and colorful floppy hat. Toddler size. **\$14.95; Members: \$12.71**



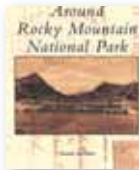
RMNP Trail Map Pint Glass

Enjoy your favorite beverage in this delightful RMNP trail map pint glass. Designed and printed in Estes Park, this sturdy glass is topographically true. Have fun finding your favorite spot in the park! **\$12.95; Members: \$11.01**

Around Rocky Mountain National Park

Postcard History Series

by Suzanne Silverthorn
Following the establishment of Rocky Mountain National Park in 1915, postcards were circulated proclaiming the park as the "Playground of the World." More than 200 postcards are used in this book to provide a chronology of the early hotels, ranches, and other settings that have shaped the park's history. Softcover, 6½" x 9½", 127 pages. **\$21.99; Members: \$18.69**



Wild Basin RMNP Arctic Blue Wicking T-shirt for Women

This long-sleeved moisture-wicking T-shirt is perfect for a hike in the park, with built-in anti-microbial and anti-stain features and colorful art of Wild Basin wildflowers on the front. Sizes: S, M, L, XL, XXL **\$36.95; Members: \$31.41**

RMNP Deneen Elk Mug

This nicely weighted pottery mug will be a longtime favorite. **\$19.95; Members: \$16.96**



RMNP Caps

Keep your cool on the trail with these high-quality caps. Adjustable. Please specify:
Green (Trail Ridge Road) **\$18.95; Members: \$16.11**
Blue (RMNP Est. 1915) **\$16.95; Members: \$14.41**

Call 970-586-0121, or visit our website at RMConservancy.org

Cover photo credits

(Upper) "Bighorn Peek-a-boo" by Conservancy Member Putney Nature Images, Longmont, CO; (Lower) "Andrews Tarn Respite" by Madeline Wilson, Salt Lake City, UT

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

Please send high-resolution images to:
nancy.wilson@RMConservancy.org
by September 1 for publication in the 2018 Autumn Quarterly.

Thank You!

Ask Nancy

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

With the danger of windblown trees so high in the park, why doesn't the park just remove all the dead trees along highly used trails? Rocky Mountain National Park, like other national parks, has very proactive hazardous tree mitigation protocols. Priority number one is to provide for life and safety in designated and highly used recreation areas. These include campgrounds, picnic areas, parking lots, and infrastructure such as buildings where people have a high residence. Because these sites are places where we not only welcome people to spend time, but in some cases where we mandate that they reside (e.g., a designated tent pad at a camp site), it is our duty to provide for their safety at those locations. Hence, the National Park proactively mitigates dead trees and other hazards near such facilities. But what about areas where we do not mandate use? As we all know, nothing is ever quite so black-and-white or cut-and-dry. After all, the Park Service encourages people to walk on trails, and we have designated paths for travel; so why, then, would we not mitigate all of those potential hazard areas, too? Here is where we must introduce our duty to uphold other aspects of the National Park mission statement which begins: "The National Park Service preserves unimpaired the natural and cultural resources ..." "Unimpaired" means undamaged, unaltered, and in its natural state; this includes natural forest processes such as falling bark beetle-killed trees, mountains where snow may slough in avalanches, or rock may fall from cliff faces. We cannot provide for safety of all persons in all places at all times, nor should we, but to be sure, this is a compromise. It is the duty of Park Service managers to provide for visitor safety in appropriate places; it is also our duty to allow people to experience wild places unimpaired. As Joseph Sax (author of *Mountains Without Handrails*) says, "there are certain kinds of activity that give participants a sense of discovery, exploration, and problem solving, a feeling of novelty and challenge, of opportunity to explore and expand the limits of their ability, that open the way to feelings of profound satisfaction." And, not incidentally, dead trees are good for wildlife, too. — *RMNP Forest Ecologist Brian Verhulst*

With hiking season approaching, can you please clarify the distinction about what kind of walking on the tundra is legal and what is highly recommended for the well-being of this fragile ecosystem? If you are in one of the four Tundra Protection Zones identified by the park, please always stay on the trails. These are established in areas of high visitor-use/impact to protect the tundra. In other areas, stay on the trail if there is one. If not, walk "gently," e.g., stepping on rocks when possible, not grinding your boot into flowers/soil as you step, and spreading your group out so that you don't create a trail or trample one area too much. — *Supervisory Park Ranger Kathy Brazelton*

For what purpose is the William Allen White cabin used by the park? Is it possible to rent this cabin? This historic cabin is used to house professional artists who have been selected to participate in the park's Artist-in-Residence Program. Currently, the cabin is closed (and the artist program on hold) until the park can get some much-needed repair work done. It will be closed during all of 2018. And, unfortunately, the cabin is never available for rent. The history of William Allen White is fascinating — learn more about him at nps.gov/romo/william_allen_white. — *Park Ranger, Interpretation, Jean Muenchrath*



Tribal representatives and NPS staff at a meeting



Ute children learning about native plants in Rocky

Weaving Native American Histories Into the Interpretive Messages of Rocky Mountain National Park

by Kathy Brazelton

All photos: NPS

I have a friend who is a weaver. She uses a huge, traditional loom, and yarns dyed with strong colors from plants. She creates incredible weavings and tapes-tries. I walked into her workroom one day and was shocked to see her ripping at a gorgeous weaving with a fork-like tool, muttering angrily under her breath. When I asked her what on earth she was doing, she explained that she had left out an important color of thick, ropey yarn, and was now making a place for it in the pattern. To tell the truth, her product looked fine to me as it was, but she knew it was missing something that should have been there.

The staff of Rocky Mountain National Park has realized for some time that we were sadly lacking in the telling of the histories of the tribes that are associated with this land, and lacking both in the past and in the present. Recognizing the importance of this missing thread, we want to open the door to communicate with our affiliated tribes, and provide opportunities to integrate their perspectives into interpre-

tive materials throughout the park. We would love to see shared responsibility for communicating — with accuracy, respect and the voice of multiple viewpoints — the history of native peoples in Rocky.

Some groundwork exists. With the Conservancy’s support, for almost a de-

ditional dress, or drum in Bond Park. With the help of their elders, the young people learn of their history on this land, and walk the actual sites of many important stories. While this program is a wonderful start, we know we need to expand our efforts.

... Rocky Mountain National Park has realized for some time that [it was] sadly lacking in the telling of the histories of the tribes that are associated with this land, and lacking both in the past and in the present. Recognizing the importance of this missing thread, [the park wants] to open the door to communicate with our affiliated tribes, and provide opportunities to integrate their perspectives into interpretive materials throughout the park.

An opportunity recently arose to collaborate with the University of Colorado, the Center for the American West and the Center for Native American and Indigenous Studies and the Rocky Mountain Conservancy to embark on an interdisciplinary project assessing how Rocky Mountain National Park can expand and deepen the ways it interprets American Indian histories. Our primary goals for the project are: 1) to apply current academic scholarship of American Indian histories to the practical activities of the National Park Service, and 2) to encourage inclusive and rigorous history interpretation related to the traditional land use, displacement, and ongoing survival of American Indians.

Sometimes National Park Service employees will be telling the stories and history, other times American Indians from various tribes will present the information. The potential exists for live programs, written materials, visitor center exhibits and video interviews to be produced and shared with park visitors.

cade, the park has hosted youth and elders from the Ute and Northern Arapaho tribes for a week in the summer. Thanks to the hard work and planning of ranger Sue Langdon, in conjunction with many tribal consultants, they hike the trails, learn about native plants and their traditional and current uses for them, and sometimes march in town parades in tra-

All potential products will be developed in concert with tribal members and reviewed by the appropriate tribal representatives for submitted to the appropriate tribal representatives for accuracy, relevancy and appropriateness.

To get this project rolling, we held two meetings, gathering together as many tribal representatives as possible each time, from the Arapaho Tribe of the Wind River Reservation in Wyoming, the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes in Oklahoma, the Northern Cheyenne Tribe in Montana, the Southern Ute Indian Tribe in Colorado, the Ute Indian Tribe of Uintah and Ouray in Utah, and the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe in Colorado. We met from September 26–28, 2017, at the YMCA of the Rockies, and January 30, 2018, at the National Park Service Intermountain Regional Offices in

Denver. Our questions included:

- ▶ What stories would each tribe like to share with park visitors about their history, culture, contemporary life and ongoing connection to the lands in and around Rocky Mountain National Park?
- ▶ How would each tribe like to participate in the educational programs at the park?
- ▶ How can all partners best share existing and future resources and documents? How can the University of Colorado support existing efforts at Tribal Historic Preservation Officer centers? How does the park plan to proceed with the information gathered from the workshop?

Meetings, phone calls, planned park visits by tribal members, and a wonderful exchange of ideas are continuing. Through the work of many hands, our park “weaving” is beginning to take on

true vibrancy as we add the colors that have been missing for so long. Stay tuned for more information on the developments of this exciting and essential project in the Division of Interpretation of Rocky Mountain National Park.



Ute students and elders explore Forest Canyon

Annual Picnic News, and More

We have outgrown our venue at Hidden Valley for your annual member picnic! As such, we are taking a sabbatical to decide on our next steps, and planning even more volunteer opportunities and other events this year so our members and donors can still meet the Conservation Corps crews and spend time with fellow members and Conservancy staff. Check out the list of upcoming volunteer events on

this page, and save the date for our Annual Holiday Party on December 1st. For more on the brighter side, this year we have increased the member discount on Field Institute classes from 5% to 10%, so an adventure in the park may be another fun activity to connect to with your fellow park-lovers this summer and fall. Thanks for your patience and understanding as we continue to grow!



2018 Conservancy Volunteer Event Calendar

Please Note: *All dates and projects are subject to change. See individual event announcements for details at RMConservancy.org*

July – Westside Vegetation Project

Project: Habitat Restoration
Time: 9 a.m. – 1 p.m.

August 5 – Poudre Wilderness Volunteers Collaborative Project

Project: Trails
Time: 9 a.m. – 4 p.m.

August 25 – Founders Day

Project: Rocky Mountain Rendezvous (Climbing area project with Colorado Mountain School)
Time: TBD

September 11 – Day of Service and Remembrance

Project: Fire Fuels Reduction
Time: 9 a.m. – 1 p.m.

September 22 – National Public Lands Day

Project: Litter Cleanup
Time: 10 a.m. – 12 p.m.

October 2 – National Trails Act 50th Anniversary

Project: Trails
Time: 8 a.m. – 12 p.m.

Contact Geoff Elliot, director of conservation, at geoff.elliott@rmconservancy.org for more information, or to register.



Conservancy Field Institute Partners With CityWILD to Bring Denver Kids to Rocky

by Rosemary Truman,
2017 Olson Family Fellow

CityWILD is a Denver-based organization founded twenty years ago as a response to the gang violence occurring in the city at that time. CityWILD supports the growth of middle school and high school youth who face significant challenges, striving to bring outdoor experiential education to a broad, inclusive audience.

A primary goal of the programs is to enable these disadvantaged youth to reach their full potential in all settings of their life: school, home and their communities. They run several different programs, including an after-school program which focuses on life skills, service learning, outdoor education, and outdoor activity. They also offer weekend, spring-break, and summer outdoor expeditions ranging

from one day to one week.

Another major program of theirs is the “Teen Workforce Readiness Program” which allows teens to serve as outdoor educators, leaders and guides, and gain paid work experience. CityWILD programs are free.

In April, the Rocky Mountain Conservancy-Field Institute’s Olson Family Fellow, Rosemary Truman, coordinated a hike in Rocky Mountain National Park for students who

participate in cityWILD’s expeditions. None of the participants had ever been in Rocky before. They hiked in Wild Basin, taking time along the way to explore the surroundings, discover the ecology of the park, and discuss questions that came up. Along the way, the young people quite literally ran into a moose, an experience the students won’t soon forget, as none of them had ever seen a moose before. “They were an incredible group of students,” said Rosemary. “They were really excited to explore and learn more about the park.”

A week after the hike, the executive director of cityWILD, who attended and helped coordinate the hike, informed the Conservancy that the students who came were still talking about everything they experienced on the hike, from the moose encounter to the nature facts. One student had led a game he learned on the hike for the whole after-school program in Denver. This is encouraging news.

In the future, the Conservancy is hopeful that we will be able to continue working with cityWILD and help more youth experience the wonders of Rocky Mountain National Park.



Featured Field Institute Programs

Here are some program highlights for the next few months — visit our website to learn more about these outdoor adventures in the park!

- Kids’ Art in the Park** — July 18 (ages 6-10)
- Kids’ Flyfishing & Stream Ecology** — July 20 (ages 7-15)
- Hummingbirds West of the Divide** — July 19
- Painting the Kawuneeche (Intermediate)** — July 21-22
- Engaging Nature Through All the Senses** — July 28
- Wild Mushroom Expedition** — August 3
- The Ghost of Fall River Road** — August 12
- Residents of the High Country** — August 13
- Mountain Lion: RMNP’s Top Predator** — August 18-19
- Become an RMNP Citizen Scientist** — September 8
- Peak to Peak Bus Adventure** — September 2
- Elk Expeditions Bus Adventure** — throughout September
- Photographing Wildlife** — September 14-16
- From Elk to Aspen Bus Adventure** — October dates in catalog

Learn more at: RMConservancy.org
Or, call 970-586-3262 for more information

Support Field Institute programs by donating to the Conservancy’s Next Generation Fund at RMConservancy.org, or call 970-586-0108

Conservancy Publications Brings Much-loved Book Back in Print

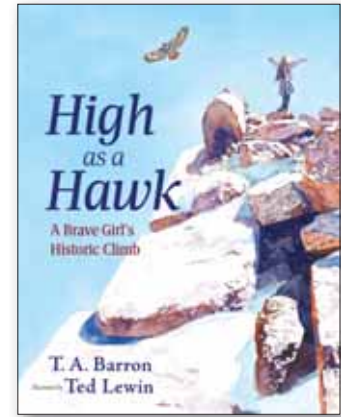
The Conservancy is delighted to report that a collaboration with Boulder author Thomas A. Barron, author of, *High as a Hawk: A Brave Girl's Historic Climb*, and artist Ted Lewin, has resulted in a partnership to bring this lovely childrens' book back into print.

Originally published in 2004 through Philomel Books, the publication had sold out and was essentially retired. When the Conservancy approached Barron about a possible reprint, he was very pleased, and made the generous donation to the project that made the reproduction of this book, with the Conservancy as its new publisher, possible.

High as a Hawk was inspired by a letter

that Enos Mills had received from a young girl named Harriet Peters, from Little Rock, Arkansas. Armed with additional photo-documentation of Harriet and Enos on the summit of Longs Peak, and the knowledge that in 1905, Harriet had become the youngest person ever to reach the summit, Barron became intrigued with the actual details of the event that might have occurred. Curiosity piqued, Barron created *High As A Hawk* as one possible story of the way this amazing climb with Enos Mills and Harriet Peters unfolded.

This is a wonderful story of a young girl's bravery and strength that captures



the thrill of climbing Longs Peak a long time ago — which isn't so very different today. Minus the high-profile historic personage, of course. Look for it on our website this fall.

RMConservancy.org

Park Puzzler

by RM Conservancy Member Joel Kaplow

Across

- 3** In Rocky, pets and bicycles are allowed in campgrounds, picnic areas, roads and parking lots, but are not allowed on hiking _____. (Old Fall River Road has variably defined restrictions based on the season, just FYI.)
- 4** A 23-minute informative movie titled *The _____ of the Mountains* can be viewed at the Kawuneeche and Beaver Meadows visitor centers.
- 6** In which season does RMNP receive the most snow: autumn, winter or spring?
- 7** The Moraine Park Discovery Center is found on _____ Lake Road.
- 8** This is probably hard to pull off, but if you're ever buried in a snow avalanche, you are supposed to stay _____.
- 10** _____ Basin Campground is one of three reservable campgrounds in the park.
- 12** RMNP is home to five trout species: Colorado River cutthroat, green-back cutthroat, rainbow, brook and _____.
- 13** The _____ Park Campground is the largest campground in Rocky.
- 16** If you're ever lost above treeline, and your compass is sitting on your nightstand, the flower mentioned at 4-Down can be of help. It almost always faces which direction?
- 17** _____ is the smallest reservable campground in RMNP.
- 19** Regulations have to keep up with the times. Metal detectors have been a no-no in Rocky for decades, and now remote-controlled _____, along with other airborne-controlled devices, have been added to the list.
- 20** The Wilderness Act of 1964 was enacted to provide an "enduring resource of wilderness" for future generations. Which president signed it into law?

Down

- 1** "National _____ are the best idea we ever had" – Pulitzer Prize-winning author Wallace Stegner.
- 2** If you are enjoying the high country, but your partner gets a headache, or feels dizzy, nauseous or fatigued, or loses consciousness, or vomits, or any combination of the above, your buddy likely has _____ sickness. Get them down to a lower elevation pronto!
- 4** The Rocky Mountain National Park license plate features a bull elk under the stars standing next to a *Hymenoxys grandiflora* aka *Rydbergia grandiflora* aka old man of the mountains aka alpine _____.

5 Along with the regular license plate tax through the MVD, a donation of at least _____ to the Rocky Mountain Conservancy's License Plate Fund will snag you a pair of the attractive RMNP plates.

8 The Kawuneeche Valley on the park's west side is the birthplace of the mighty Colorado River. "Kawuneeche" is derived from the Arapaho term for _____.

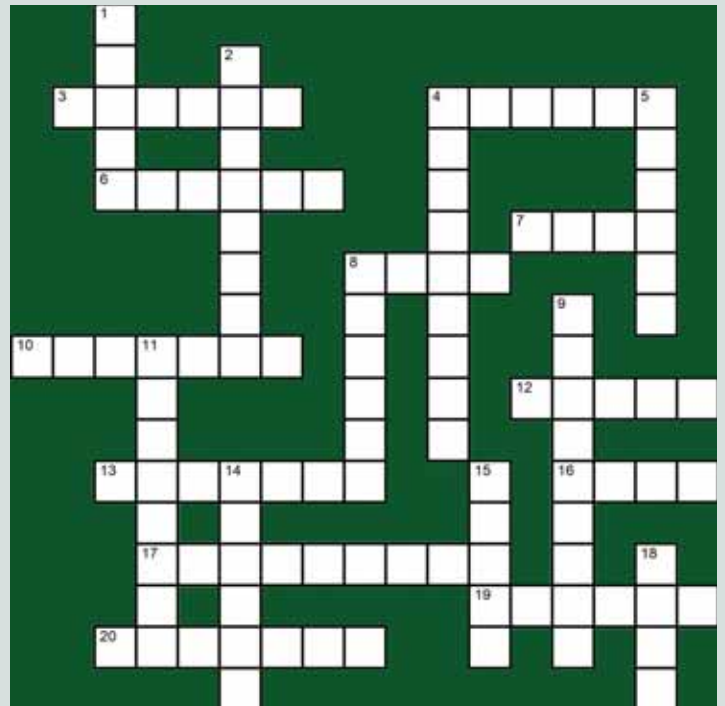
9 Sheep Lakes and namesake information station are found along Route 34 in Rocky's _____ Park.

11 To be eligible for Rocky Mountain National Park license plates, your vehicle must be registered in which state?

14 At 11,796 feet above sea level, the _____ Visitor Center on Trail Ridge Road is the highest in the National Park System.

15 In 2009, about 250,000 acres within Rocky achieved permanently protected wilderness status through the Omnibus Public _____ Management Act.

18 One common, effective ingredient in insect repellent is diethyltoluamide. Its trademarked name is much easier to pronounce. What is it?



Inspiring Future Stewards of Rocky Mountain National Park

RMNP's Education and Outreach Program Expanding Its Reach Through Distance Learning



Rocky Mountain National Park's Education and Outreach program was created for K–12 and youth in 1992. Since then, it has provided opportunities for students and youth to access Rocky Mountain National Park as an extended classroom of their school and community. The program historically provides access to Rocky Mountain National Park for students from our gateway communities of Estes Park and Granby, as well as students who otherwise would not have the opportunity to visit the park from farther-flung Front Range and west side communities. Since its inception, the program has grown by adding outreach programming to Boys and Girls Clubs, Boy and Girl Scout Troops, public libraries, and by offering traveling classroom programs at schools. To date, the program reaches more than 12,000 learners from throughout Colorado and the United States each year. With the exciting recent addition of a distance-learning program, the goal is for that number to continue to grow!

Last fall, Kathryn Ferguson was hired as a term Distance Learning Education Technician to specifically support this new effort. Kathryn started her park service career as an intern with the Education and Outreach programs at Grand Canyon and Rocky Mountain national parks. She then served as an education technician at Grand Canyon National Park



*By Katie Phillips,
Education Specialist
and Kathryn Ferguson,
Distance Learning
Education Specialist*

*Kathryn Ferguson in her
previous position in the
Grand Canyon*

where she gained valuable experience delivering distance-learning programs to schools across the country. She is delighted with the opportunity to continue developing this programming at Rocky Mountain National Park in a long-term capacity.

With a new distance-learning technician on board, Rocky Mountain National Park's Education and Outreach team is beginning to connect with students in a brand new way. Utilizing basic video conferencing platforms such as Google, Zoom and Skype, students across the country (and the world!) get a chance to sit down with a ranger to explore various topics relevant to Rocky Mountain National Park. For the first time, distance and bus transportation funding shortages no longer keep schools from "visiting" their National Park. These curriculum-based programs include topics that challenge students to investigate the

four ecosystems of Rocky, research ranger career opportunities, and delve into the more nuanced but fascinating world of winter. All that's required of a school is access to a webcam, projector, and a computer with a good internet connection. Since June of 2017, these distance-learning programs have already reached over 200 learners in Vermont, Pennsylvania, Colorado, California and China!

Rocky's Education program is proud to have developed this new opportunity to connect with students that otherwise may never have had the opportunity to visit this beautiful park. We look forward to expanding the reach of these programs even further to inspire even more students, our future park stewards.

To support the park's education programs, please donate to the Next Generation Fund at RMConservancy.org



(Wonderful Park *continued from page 1*)

south, several outdoor tennis courts sat empty next to what looked like a large inflated marshmallow structure, which I assumed were indoor courts.

The entrance avenue off Bear Lake Boulevard was wide, with two separate lanes going each way, divided by a lushly landscaped median, which, at its head by the intersection, boasted an elaborate stone sign: MORAINE RESORT AND GOLF CLUB, MEMBERS ONLY.

The security guard followed me down the road to the intersection at U.S. 36, where I came upon a guarded entrance station shack with barrier arm gates to control traffic. My escort followed me until I passed the gate and he saw the arm fall behind me. I watched in my rear-view mirror as he made a U-turn and disappeared.

Instead of turning right and heading into town, I decided to head up to Deer Ridge Junction to get back home through the Fall River Entrance. At the Deer Ridge junction, I stopped at the traffic light and turned right, and passed a combination Shell Station/Taco Bell as I headed down the hill toward Horseshoe Park and Sheep Lakes. As the road curved to the left, I passed under a small bridge and noticed little carts racing on tracks overhead. A sign on the side of the bridge read "Estes Park Mountain Coaster." At the bottom of the hill, I again was greeted by an expanse of bright green bluegrass, and I drove past another grouping of buildings. Restaurants, a golf shop and retail stores were surrounded by what looked like townhomes and condos. "WELCOME TO SHEEP LAKES VILLAGE A Moraine Resort Development," was the sign at the bend.

I had to get home. Something was terribly wrong. I headed down Fall River Road toward Estes Park, but it was eerily devoid of any activity. No lodges, no homes, and strangely, no trees either. There were a few run-down cabins, mostly with dilapidated outbuildings and the obligatory supply of inoperable rusted-out vehicles sitting in front of corrugated-roofed storage buildings.

I entered town. Downtown Estes Park. The sidewalks were empty and the chipped

concrete ran past two old gas stations, three liquor stores and a bar. Each had seen better days, and certainly hadn't seen a paintbrush in decades. Okay, it had to be something I ate, or a reaction to a bee sting. This was a dead, little mountain town with no character, falling apart at the seams. Finally, I came across a familiar location — Bond Park — and parked my truck. A grassy oasis at the end of town, except the grass was brown and dry, and the solitary picnic table had enough splinters sticking up on the benches to look more like a porcupine than a place for a picnic. In the corner of the park I found a bronze plaque, with an embossed picture of something I recognized — the Stanley Hotel.

"Northeast of this spot stood the Stanley Hotel, one of the finest mountain hotels in Colorado. Built in 1909, F.O. Stanley built the hotel to serve the needs of visitors to the area. In 1915, an ill-conceived plan to make the surrounding area a national park failed after the main proponent of the park, Enos Mills, was killed in a wagon accident. The hotel fell into disarray and was abandoned by F.O. Stanley in 1924 when he moved back to Maine. The hotel was destroyed in a suspicious fire in 1931. The site was converted to a landfill in 1950 and has served the town in that capacity since that time."

Across the street from Bond Park stood a small diner, the Ever-Open Cafe. Maybe some food would help. I walked through the door of the diner with its black-and-white linoleum floor. The counter was lined with matching chrome stools mounted permanently to the floor on pedestals, with red plastic seat cushions, most of which were cracked, exposing the crusty honey-colored foam inside. I sat down, ordered a Coke and started to visit with the grizzled older fellow next to me who was nursing a cup of coffee.

He said his name was Jack Moomaw, and he had lived here his whole life. He told me there were plans, once upon a time, to make the area a national park, but it never happened. Logging and hunting were the major industries in the area for decades, but the elk and deer herds were eventually depleted and the timber

View from Ypsilon Mountain Photo: Forrest Shafer

was too small to be commercially viable. As other communities developed their tourist economies, Estes Park, void of any major transportation corridor, struggled to survive.

According to Moomaw, in the early 1960s a developer purchased the old logged-out areas west of town and started development of the Moraine Resort and Golf Club. The locals were hopeful that this would finally put Estes Park on the map and bring good-paying jobs to town, but the resort was pretty much self-contained, and they brought in their workers from elsewhere. The people at the resort avoid coming to town and just stay there in their houses and condos, playing golf. Other than a few gas stations and other businesses to serve the elite at the golf club, there's not much there anymore. "If only that wagon hadn't have tipped over on poor Enos a hundred years ago," he said. "If only more people put their time, effort, sweat and wallets toward protecting this special area. If only more people cared."

"Wake up! Dad, wake up! It's time to go!"

I sat up, looked around, and I was back on the shore of Dream Lake. Hallett Peak was smiling (or laughing) at me from above. Next to me was my wife, my daughter and her husband loading our new granddaughter, Hope, into her backpack. Driving home through the park, all I could think about were the words of the old geezer at the diner. "If only more people cared ..." How thankful I am for the people one hundred years ago who *did* care, and for the people today who still care and work hard to protect this special place, and all our national parks. As I looked in the rearview mirror at Hope in her car seat, I saw her looking out the window and smiling, and I swear I heard the voice of old Jack Moomaw say, "That's right Frank. Every time a child smiles at the wonders of a national park, an angel gets her Junior Ranger badge."

**With my apologies to Frank Capra.*

Frank Lancaster is the Estes Park town administrator.

Next Generation Program Youth: Where are they now?

The Rocky Mountain Conservancy hosts a number of internship and professional development programs that provide young adults with opportunities to learn about the different careers associated with public land management and conservation work. Among these opportunities, the Conservancy hosts a Conservation Corps program, the Olson Family Fellowships, the Bailey Research Fellow and the Bailey Education Fellow, and a number of other Next Generation Fund internships. Within each of these programs, the young participants work closely with the Rocky Mountain Conservancy and its public land partners to complete on-the-ground conservation projects, provide programming for youth, and support the agencies' missions. All of these opportunities exist in an effort to develop the next generation of public land stewards. Over the years, the Conservancy has been fortunate enough to see many of the interns, fellows, and corps members move on to seasonal or professional-level positions with the National Park Service, US Forest Service, other conservation-based nonprofits, and even within the Conservancy itself. Below, you will find brief bios of several recent alumni of the Conservancy's programs, and where their lives have taken them since their experience with Rocky Mountain Conservancy.



Morgan Lawrence Update: 2017 Olson Family Education Fellow

What is your current job title?

Science Educator for Alaska Geographic in Denali National Park. Alaska Geographic is the official education and fundraising partner to Alaska's National Parks, National Wildlife Refuges, National Forests, and BLM lands.

What do you do in your job?

As a science educator, I deliver interpretive presentations to tour groups visiting Denali, including bus excursions, dinner presentations, interpretive talks, youth bus excursions, and other custom education programs. I also work as a naturalist guide on multiday specialized field courses in the park. Additionally, I work side by side with the Park Service at the Denali Visitor Center to provide information to visitors, and also have the opportunity to develop programs and improve current programs for Alaska Geographic in Denali.

When did you serve as a fellow?

I was the summer 2017 Olson Family Fellow.

What are the primary skills you gained from your experiences with the Rocky Mountain Conservancy?

I feel it safe to say I learned or improved most of the skills I use on a daily basis at Alaska

Geographic working as the Olson Fellow at Rocky Mountain Conservancy. The fellowship allowed me the opportunity to vastly improve my presentation and social skills through a plethora of opportunities to educate — including bus tours throughout the park, youth education in the local school district, with the park service, and on the Conservancy's own youth programs, speaking to large groups of people at member gatherings, and attending field courses. I learned an indescribable amount of information about flora and fauna, which has greatly increased my knowledge of the environment continent-wide. I also learned about the delicate and important relationship between the National Park Service and its nonprofit partners, and ways in which we can work together to preserve those relationships. Most importantly, I learned how to love and excel at the work I did every day through excellent supervision and guidance provided by the supervision at the Field Institute. I could not be more grateful.

How did your experience at Rocky contribute to your current position?

Again, it's safe to say that I would not have this job if it weren't for my experience with Rocky Mountain Conservancy. In working with environmental nonprofits, there is nothing more valuable than experience, which can be very difficult to obtain. Rocky Mountain Conservancy gave me the chance to prove I could educate youth and adults about the environment in a national park, the knowledge base I needed to work in environmental education,

and the experience I needed to be taken seriously in this field.

What are your future plans?

I hope to continue working with Alaska Geographic for the coming summer seasons. I will be attending graduate school in the fall of 2019 to study environmental humanities in hopes of writing about how national parks impact the people who interact with them. I hope to spend my life working in environmental education and environmental writing simultaneously.

Describe your most memorable experience working for the Rocky Mountain Conservancy.

I spent most of the summer portion of the fellowship leading youth programs in the park, so I felt quite unsure of myself when I transitioned to the fall Elk & Aspen buses, excursions that catered to an adult audience. On my favorite Elk & Aspen tour, the bus had a mechanical issue with the radiator — thankfully, the group and I looked on it as an opportunity instead of a setback. We had the chance to spend another hour in the park, and I had the glorious pleasure of educating the group about the Native American history of Rocky Mountain National Park. I felt a close bond with them, and felt that I made a difference in how they viewed their environment. I could see Rocky become a special place to them as they learned more about its natural and cultural history. Through understanding, comes love. What more could an environmental educator want than to tie a stranger's heart to a landscape so dearly loved?



Tommy Egland Update: 2014-2015 Conservation Corps Member – Leader

schoolers during the High School Leadership Corps. This program brings 10 students from the Front Range to RMNP, and gives them the opportunity to live and work around the park and with other volunteer groups in the region.

When did you serve as a corps member or leader?

I served as a crew member during the summer of 2014, and as a crew leader during the summer of 2015.

What are the primary skills you gained from your experiences with the Rocky Mountain Conservancy?

Through my time with the Conservancy I have learned extensive leadership skills that I feel will help me when I further my career in conservation. I have also learned or improved greatly upon my management skills, specifically time and people management.

How did your experience with the Rocky Mountain Conservancy contribute to your current position?

that was protecting the work of those who came before me, but that was also allowing me to be a part of the larger story and history of Rocky Mountain National Park.

How did your experience with the Rocky Mountain Conservancy contribute to your current position?

More than anything else, my experience with the Conservancy gave me a much larger awareness for the need to protect our nation's natural areas and parks, and particularly to inspire the public to be engaged in this protection. In reflecting on how I could contribute to this sentiment, I decided that I wanted to pursue a career in the education and interpretation of these areas, with the dream of inspiring other people to be protectors of the land. Much like my conservation and historical preservation work connected me to the land and history of Rocky Mountain National Park, as an interpretive park ranger, I now seek to foster a connection between visitors and the park.

What are your future plans?

When I think about the future, there is honestly a lot of uncertainty. While I would eventually love to be a permanent staff member here in the park, for now I am very happy to have a seasonal position and to spend a third summer in such a beautiful place. As far as my long-term plans go, I am hoping to attend graduate school in the next few years to continue building my skills and knowledge about public communication and environmental education.

Thanks to my time working as a crew member and leader, I have earned the opportunity to come back in a role as a staff member helping to start the High School Leadership corps last summer, and this summer as a Field Coordinator.

What are your future plans?

My most immediate plans are to work this summer with the Conservancy, and then in the fall I am entering graduate school at Colorado State University to earn a degree in Conservation Leadership. I hope to use this degree to continue to work for conservation-based organizations, and attempt to make a difference in the world.

Describe your most memorable experience working for the Rocky Mountain Conservancy.

My most memorable experience with the Conservancy was during my summer as a crew leader when 28 crew members and leaders hiked up Longs Peak. Everyone who attempted it made it safely to the top and back down and I feel that that was the best way to cap off my two amazing summers.



Rachel Echert Update: 2016 Conservation Corps Crew Member

What is your current job title?

I am currently working as an interpretive park ranger in Rocky Mountain National Park.

What do you do in your job?

As an interpretive park ranger, I communicate with visitors about the park through hosting educational programs, staffing visitor centers and information stations, and field-based excursions. Essentially, my job entails teaching people about the ecology of the Rocky Mountains, the local history of the region, and the regulations and management of the park, all in hopes of engaging the public in a heightened appreciation and stewardship of Rocky Mountain National Park.

When did you serve as a corps member?

I served as an intern/member of the Conservation Corps during the summer of 2016.

What are the primary skills you gained from your experiences with the Rocky Mountain Conservancy?

When I served with the Conservation Corps, I was a part of the Kawuneeche Crew, which focused on historical preservation in the park. During my time, I learned not only a great deal about the techniques and hard work that go into historical preservation, but perhaps more significantly, I learned a lot about what it means to be a part of a place and how to take care of a place. Every time my crew went to a new work location, my love for the park increased and I felt honored to be doing work

Describe your most memorable experience working for the Rocky Mountain Conservancy.

My favorite memory working with the Conservation Corps was on a beautiful June morning at the Little Buckaroo Barn in the Kawuneeche Valley. One of my crew's projects for that week was replacing the windows in the barn. When we first arrived, I remember how green the grass was and how blue the sky was. As we approached the barn on foot, I tried to imagine what it would have been like to live in the area a couple of hundred years ago. We explored the area for a bit, including inside the barn, where there was a window that perfectly framed the peaks of the Never Summer mountain range. It was a breathtaking view, and I loved the idea that I was bearing witness to a moment that someone else had previously borne witness to, and that someone else would eventually also bear witness to. In those moments, I felt so connected to the place, and incredibly lucky to be a part of the place's preservation.

Conservancy-Funded RMNP Interns Share Program Experiences

RMNP Greenhouse Intern Sage Ragland

by Sage Ragland,
2017 RMNP Greenhouse Intern

From the time I learned about the National Park Service's greenhouse program when I was volunteering in Grand Canyon National Park, it had been a dream of mine to one day work for a national park's greenhouse. Thanks to the funding of the Rocky Mountain Conservancy, I had the opportunity to be the 2017 greenhouse intern. It was validating to achieve that dream and to apply the skills I'd learned during my time with the Florida and Utah Conservation Corps. I also quickly discovered that the 75-degree humid greenhouse is exactly the place for a Texas transplant to be during the Rocky Mountain's windy season.

Through this internship, I developed a deeper understanding of restoration and vegetation management programs as

well as volunteer coordination. During the three months as the greenhouse intern, I was able to research and propagate 30 different native plant species (one of which I was the very first to grow!) resulting in more than 10,000 individual plants transplanted for four different restoration projects within the park. Of course, I was not alone in my transplanting efforts. I was welcomed into the greenhouse by a wonderful group of volunteers who put in 550 combined hours to help me and the plants out.

Personal highlights from the experience include: getting to know Rocky's Resource Stewardship staff and volunteers; showing off the greenhouse to 52 visitors during Earth Day; assisting with moose collaring operations, and observing the park's transition from winter to early spring. I also was excited to grow some of



the unique plant species found in the park — my favorite species to grow was limber pine (*Pinus flexilis*). Though the internship was brief and (when you read this) I'm already off to work for another park service unit, the experience I've gained from this internship is invaluable. I hope that my path winds through Rocky Mountain National Park again.



by Matthew Juneau,
2016–2017 RMNP Education/
Outreach Intern

Searching amidst the lodgepole pines for evidence of pine squirrels, a second-grade child exclaimed, "This is so cool; I'm going to tell my family that we have to come back so we can keep exploring!" From a student that has never been to Rocky Mountain National Park before, this is high praise. Experiencing these moments of wonder and excitement that the kids have for the wildlife and wild places that the students are learning about is what makes working in environmental education such a rewarding experience.

A Rewarding Experience As an Intern With RMNP Environmental Education

During the summer of 2016, I was fortunate to start an internship with Rocky Mountain National Park's Education and Outreach program that was funded through the Rocky Mountain Conservancy. While at Colorado State University, I found that I had a passion for the natural world, especially for the wildlife therein. I also discovered a real joy for helping other people find that passion.

I spent one full year with the program, having had the opportunity to experience all four of the seasons, discovering how RMNP changes with each one. These experiences helped me to grow as an educator so much, giving me the skills to not only present a successful program, but to develop programs that are more engaging than just a presentation of facts. Throughout my internship, I was able to give these educational programs for students from pre-K through AP high school, including college classes and adult-focused programs.

This internship was invaluable with not only the amount of material I took away, both in lessons learned but also in the physical material that will serve as references for years to come. The experience confirmed that environmental education is not only something that I am getting good at but is also something I am passionate about.

The people at Rocky Mountain National Park have been some of the most sincere, considerate and passionate people I have ever met. That passion that I discovered in college for wildlife shines brighter now than ever before. My ability to guide others and let them find that passion for themselves is what was nurtured in me during this internship, and it will be used not only in my future as an educator but also in my daily life. This experience as an environmental education intern shaped me a great deal and I'm glad that I was able to find Rocky Mountain National Park as my park.

A public service message from Rocky ...

In RMNP, Help Your Friends Behave Better To Protect Rocky!

by Kyle Patterson,
RMNP Public Information Officer

For the last few years, Rocky Mountain National Park has been one of the most visited national parks in the U.S., topping more than 4.5 million visitors in 2016. So far, 2018 is proving to be another blockbuster year. During the last 100 years, the reasons people visit national parks are the same: to experience nature, to seek solitude, to enjoy scenic grandeur, to watch wildlife, and to partake in outstanding recreational activities. National parks are special places for all of us and for future generations too!

Most visitors know how to behave while enjoying their national parks. Some do not, and park staff continue to see a large increase in behaviors that do not protect the park or visitor experiences. Planning to visit Rocky Mountain National Park with friends who might need some tips? Here are a few of ours!

➤ **When your friends suggest a visit to the park between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m.,** propose instead the importance of planning ahead. Coming to Rocky between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. during the summer and fall can mean full parking lots, congested roads, busy trails, and long lines and wait times at entrance stations. This year, the park has, on numerous occasions, needed to restrict vehicle access in the Bear Lake Road Corridor and Wild Basin Corridor due to congestion and full parking lots. Instead, recommend hiking early or late. If possible, avoid weekends. Check the weather forecast before you arrive at the park to better plan your day and destinations. If you plan to hike later in the day, it is critical that you know the weather forecast for the elevation of your destination.

➤ **When your friends say, "Let's have a campfire,"** please let them know that Rocky always has fire restrictions in place: campfires are prohibited except within designated campfire rings in picnic areas and front country campgrounds. During the last few years the park has seen a significant increase in illegal escaped campfires. In the

fall of 2012, the Fern Lake Fire started from an illegal campfire. That fire burned over 3,000 acres, caused the evacuation of a portion of Estes Park, and cost more than 6 million dollars to suppress.

Do your friends create parking spaces where there are none? If their next door neighbor were having a garage sale would they accept folks parking in their front yard? On their prized rose bushes? Highly unlikely, we think! For the park's long term well-being, encourage your friends to park in designated parking spaces in Rocky Mountain National Park. These include durable surfaces like asphalt and gravel, not on grass, meadows, bushes, or on the alpine tundra.

➤ **When your very close friend indicates that they need a bathroom,** first and foremost, suggest an established restroom facility. If you are on a trail and a restroom facility is not nearby, please leave no trace of your activity or "business." Do not step off the trail and leave your "business" for others to see, and that includes the park's trail and wilderness crews as well as other visitors. If peeing, recommend to your friend to "drip-dry," or, if toilet paper is necessary, then take the toilet paper out in a baggy, backpack or pocket. If your friend is a frequent pooper, suggest taking care of that before hiking. If nature calls, plan ahead – bring a waste bag, and do some research on how to poop in the woods. Friends don't let friends go to the bathroom near water sources in Rocky – just think, you could be drinking from that water source the next day!

➤ **When your friends ask, "How close can I get to that elk, deer, bobcat, coyote, badger, bear, marmot ...?"** suggest they ask a different question, such as "How far should I stay back?" Let wildlife be wild and observe from a distance. Sometimes people inch closer to wildlife, until the wildlife reacts to their presence. When that happens, it's too late. The wildlife might leave the area which affects wildlife viewing opportunities for others. Alternately, you can inform your friends that approaching wildlife is illegal in Rocky Mountain National Park, no matter if



Photo: Lee Kline

they are doing it for a photograph. There are no exceptions. You could try recommending that they invest in a good telephoto lens.

➤ **When your friends ask, "Can we take our dog, cat, bunny... on park trails?"** let them know that pets are prohibited on ALL park trails, alpine tundra and meadows. Their leashed pet can only accompany them on established roads, parking areas and established campground and picnic areas – basically anyplace that cars can go. When they express that their dog is small and can be carried, that their dog is huge and can fend for itself, or that their dog is better behaved than your child, remind them that Rocky is wilderness. Dogs are predators that can chase, scare, and transmit diseases to wildlife. Their dog could also become prey for wildlife like coyotes, mountain lions, bobcats and great horned owls. Additionally, park visitors should be able to enjoy native wildlife in their natural environment at Rocky Mountain National Park without disruption from other visitors' pets.

➤ **When your friends want to take a rock, antler, bouquet of wildflowers, chipmunk or anything else from Rocky Mountain National Park,** suggest they take a photo instead and leave what they find. What if, in 2015 for example, 4.1 million visitors took an object from the park with them?

Bonus tips

- Camping in Rocky Mountain National Park requires a permit
- It is illegal to feed wildlife in the park
- Stay on existing established trails
- Leave no trace, this includes packing out apple cores, orange peels



Photo: NPS/Bonnie Beach



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Rocky Mountain Conservancy

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A coral mushroom spotted on the Sandbeach Lake trail in Wild Basin

Photo: Conservancy Member Marlene Borneman

Nature Notes

It's summertime! As one of the most inviting yet most brief seasons of the high country, the sense of living for the moment is almost palpable. While snow in early May was made tolerable by the extreme need for moisture, the muted tension of resident humans was duly noted. ☺ While hosting a volunteer project with students from the National Ocean Sciences Bowl, Conservancy Conservation Director **Geoff Elliot** and high school students from across the country spotted a tiger salamander at Lily Lake. ☺ In early spring, when fishing below the Olympus Dam in Estes Park, **Geoff** noticed a large predatory fish stalking the small trout feeding on the surface. After a closer look, he recognized the fish as a tiger muskie. ☺ In late May, RMNP Planning and Project Manager **Sheri Fedorchak** reported the first chorus frog chirps in a snowmelt wetland area below Deer Ridge Junction toward Fall River. The sound was amazing...until she got too close and every frog suddenly became mute. ☺ Around noon in early February, in Horseshoe Park, park visitors **Dave and Pat Basch** were thrilled to see three huge moose foraging close together. Two of them had smaller antler paddles and one had a larger, full set, although they were all dark in color and, by their size, most likely junior males. ☺ In mid-April, retired RMNP Park Ranger **Leanne Benton** caught sight of a male wild turkey standing in the snow by the Glacier Gorge parking lot with his tail fanned out in full courtship regalia. While it seemed a bit early for courtship, she wondered if, perhaps, it was some kind of response to the snow? ☺ Conservancy member **Marlene Borneman** was dismayed to see that the pond lilies on Cub Lake appeared to have taken a beating, presumably by the moose that have been hanging out in the area that are prone to indulging in the delicacy to its detriment. Luckily, through photo-evidence taken by retired Wildlife Biologist Gary Miller, the lily pads are a live and well! ☺ In mid-June, **Marlene** took great pleasure in finding the attractive smallflower woodland star (*Lithophragma parviflorum*), just where she found it last year in Rocky. This is a bright white flower with showy petals cut into three points. According to her field guidebook, this is an uncommon bloom, so she felt lucky to have spotted it for a second year. ☺ RMNP Education and Outreach Intern **Collette Wilfong** reported seeing lots of spring flowers this year, including pasque flowers around Lily Lake and in Upper Beaver Meadows, and some buttercups in Upper Beaver Meadows ☺ Conservancy Finance Director **Sarah Rhode** observed a vigorous fluttering whirlwind of two blu-ish birds, tussling as they flew in her driveway in Estes Park in early spring. While easy to assume that they were mountain bluebirds, they appeared paler, with longer beaks, making identification not quite so obvious ☺ RMNP Landscape Ecologist **Hanem Abouelezz** offered this moose update: The park now has eight moose collared on the east side

of the park as part of the new Moose Research Project. All of the moose are doing well post-collaring. After work one day, Hanem hiked up to Beirstadt Lake and saw one of the collared cows eating aquatic vegetation for about an hour before the moose slipped back into the forest. She noted that the park will have much more to share on the moose and their habits in the park after they obtain several years of data from these collared animals. ☺ Colorful paper flowers hanging in a Conservancy office window drew the interest of a broad-tailed hummingbird seeking nectar, such that its beak was almost touching the glass. The disappointment in its face was most evident. ☺ In mid-May, RMNP Woodcrafter **Cory** and **Victoria Johnson** reported the first sighting of "the marmot on Trail Ridge Road," near Rock Cut, that hangs out in a hole in the middle of the road. Really. There's actually a hole in the tar, smack in the middle of the road, out of which a marmot can occasionally be seen poking its head out, groundhog style, checking the immediate surroundings. ☺ In early June, while out walking her dog (on leash) in her Carriage Hills neighborhood in Estes Park, Conservancy member and volunteer **Jane Bush** has twice been chased and kicked at by a female mule deer. And another couple in the same neighborhood was chased on three separate occasions. One of Jane's encounters was particularly scary because the deer actually pursued her for about 200 yards. Aware of the possibility that the deer was protecting a fawn, the next time, as soon as she saw a deer, she turned and went the other way, but in two instances this was too late. Soon thereafter, as she left her house for her walk, she spotted a tiny fawn tucked up next to her house, this time with no doe in sight. She immediately went indoors and took her (oblivious) dog with her. ☺ Conservancy Executive Director **Estee Murdock** reported that, at a ribbon-cutting for the Lily Lake Trail project that was funded by the Conservancy which was held in late May, she and all the other attendees were treated to a plethora of wildlife sightings, including a beaver, a muskrat, a moose and a snake. ☺ Wishing you all the pleasures of the season — **Happy Trails!**



Estes Park resident Nan Ryan photographed this black bear sow and her two cubs, practicing the art of tree-climbing, just past the Beaver Meadows entrance in early May.