

# THE HISTORY OF MOOSE IN RMNP

AUGUST 15, 2020

COURSE LEVEL: III COURSE #: S3053

FEE: \$80 PER ADULT AGES 16 AND OLDER

INSTRUCTOR: JEFF CONNOR



Rocky  
Mountain  
Conservancy

FIELD INSTITUTE

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**LOCATION: TRAIL RIVER RANCH** – Trail River Ranch is located on a small unmarked gravel road on HWY 34. It is located between the Coyote Valley Trailhead to the north and the Onahu Creek Trailhead to the south, approximately two miles inside Rocky Mountain National Park from the west entrance (Kuwaneche Visitor Center). The unmarked gravel road is made visible by two pedestrian crossing signs. Trail River Ranch is reached by following this road to a small parking lot. At the small parking lot, turn left and go through the gate. Trail River Ranch is at the end of this one-way road.

**TIME: 8:00 AM - 4:30 PM**

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:** The present-day story of moose in Rocky Mountain National Park started in 1978. Before 1978, there is some debate if moose were considered residents of the park. We will discuss the debate and learn where the present population came from. We will spend our day exploring various topics such as moose diet, seasonal behavior, predation, impact on willow communities, and radio collaring. We will also discuss the moose's relationship to other wildlife (such as elk and birds) and why willow communities are dramatically declining. The cause may be a surprise when we discuss the relationship between avian sapsuckers, a fungus, beaver, wildfire, and elk. What does all that have to do with moose? We will discover the answer to this question and discuss the present and future park management of this charismatic species.

**COURSE LEVEL: III**

Minor to moderate hikes up to one mile long in willow and wetland habitat in the lower elevations of the Kawuneeche Valley.

**BRIEF INSTRUCTOR BIOGRAPHY (additional information available at [www.RMConservancy.org](http://www.RMConservancy.org)):**

Jeff is a retired natural resources specialist after working for 35 years in the federal government, four years with the Bureau of Land Management as a non-game specialist in New Mexico, and 31 years with the National Park Service in five national parks. Jeff worked for 25 years in Rocky Mountain National Park where he was involved with wildlife and vegetation management among the many other jobs that he had. He knows the history of Rocky Mountain National Park and, throughout the day, will tell many stories.

**EXPECTATIONS:** Professional conduct will be expected from participants at all times. Respect for individual ideas will be observed. Except during course breaks, cellular phones, pagers, and personal entertainment devices are strictly prohibited in the classroom and during field sessions.

**CAR-POOLING:** Rocky Mountain Conservancy - Field Institute courses utilize car-pooling to limit vehicles traveling into the park. Car-pooling makes it easier to keep the group together, reduces transit time, and allows courses greater access because fewer parking spaces are required at destinations. In addition, it provides an opportunity for participants to discuss course material in small groups during transit. Typically, a few participants from each course volunteer the use of their vehicles for car-pooling to course locations.

## TENTATIVE SCHEDULE:

- 8:00 AM – 8:30 AM** Welcome/Introductions  
**8:30 AM – 9:30AM** PowerPoint presentation about moose  
**9:30 AM – 4:00PM** Visit willow and wetland habitat in Kawuneeche Valley including a visit to the Holzwarth Historic Site
- 4:00 PM – 4:30PM** Wrap-up discussion at the Trail River Ranch with an emphasis on the following:
- What is the principal take home message?
  - How can the park improve willow habitat in Kawuneeche Valley?
- 4:30 PM** Depart

## WHAT TO BRING:

- Sack lunch, snacks, energy bars, **WATER**
- Your favorite mammal guide that includes information on tracks and scat
- Binocular
- Camera

## REMEMBER TO BRING THE 10 ESSENTIALS:

Rocky Mountain National Park recommends that hikers always carry the 10 essentials in their daypacks.

- Raingear
- Sunglasses and sunscreen
- Pocketknife
- Sack lunch, snacks, water
- Map and compass
- Candles
- First-aid kit
- Extra layers of clothing
- Flashlight or headlamp
- Matches or other fire starter

*Note: Rocky Mountain Conservancy – Field Institute recommends that participants for all courses dress in layers and wear comfortable, sturdy hiking boots/shoes. Participants should be prepared for sudden changes in temperature and weather conditions.*

## REFUND POLICY:

Cancellations received at least 14 days prior to the start of a class will qualify for a refund minus a cancellation fee of \$25 per participant for a one-day class, \$50 for a multi-day class, \$5 per kid's class and \$15 per half-day class or bus tour seat. Registration money transferred to another class will be subject to a \$10 switch fee. Cancellations received less than 14 days prior to the start of a class or bus tour will not generate a refund. If the Field Institute cancels a class, every effort will be made to place the participant in another class; otherwise, a full refund will be given.

## TEACHER RECERTIFICATION CREDIT:

Most courses are eligible for teacher recertification credit through the Centennial Board of Cooperative Education Services (BOCES). The fee is \$25 per class (.5 unit) or \$25 per series of threaded courses (1.0 - 3.0 units). A list of threaded courses can be found online at [www.RMConservancy.org](http://www.RMConservancy.org). Participants must enroll in all courses of a threaded series in order to qualify for the \$25 multi-unit fee. Please be prepared to pay for this credit with a check, made payable to BOCES, on the first day of a class or on the final day of a threaded series of courses.