

TRACKING WILDLIFE IN ROCKY: SIGNS OF CREATURES BIG & SMALL

MAY 8, 2020

COURSE LEVEL: III COURSE #: S3055
FEE: \$80 PER ADULT AGES 16 AND OLDER



**Rocky
Mountain
Conservancy**
FIELD INSTITUTE

INSTRUCTOR: JEFF CONNOR

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LOCATION: Rocky Mountain Conservancy - Field Institute & Conference Center
1895 Fall River Road, Estes Park, Colorado

TIME: 8:00 AM - 4:30 PM

COURSE DESCRIPTION: A story exists all around us as we walk through the woods. Animals use the same area we do but often go unnoticed since much of their activity occurs off trails, at night, or early or late in the day. Do you know how to read the signs they leave behind? If not, this class is for you. Enjoy walking through the woods, along streams, and in meadows as we look for animals and their signs and develop our scat and track identification skills. We will visit den sites used by bobcats, fox, coyote, and other animals as well as nests used by birds. From a distance (if Trail Ridge road is open to Rainbow Curve), we will look at the habitat black bears use to select their dens. Participants will be surprised by the abundance of signs left behind by our furred and feathered friends. The class will also provide a better understanding of community ecology and dynamics relative to hierarchical structure and trophic cascades.

COURSE LEVEL: III

Moderate hikes that are up to two miles long in lodgepole pine, Douglas fir, aspen, ponderosa pine and meadow habitats in the lower elevations of the east side of the park.

BRIEF INSTRUCTOR BIOGRAPHY (additional information available at www.RMConservancy.org):

Jeff is a retired natural resources specialist working for 35 years in the federal government, four years with the Bureau of Land Management as a nongame 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 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 – 9:30 AM	PowerPoint presentation about predators and prey and the concept of commonality
9:30 AM – 4:00PM	Field Session (Visit lodgepole pine, Douglas fir, aspen and ponderosa pine forests, willow, streams, and open meadows)
4:00 PM – 4:30PM	Wrap-up discussion at the Field Institute with an emphasis on the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What signs did we see?• What species would you call common, uncommon, rare?
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.

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

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. 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.