

SPRING MUSHROOMS & FUNGI OF RMNP

JUNE 7, 2020

COURSE LEVEL: II COURSE #: 3020
FEE: \$80 PER ADULT AGES 16 AND OLDER



Rocky
Mountain
Conservancy

FIELD INSTITUTE

INSTRUCTOR: JON SOMMER

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

TIME: 8:30 AM - 5:00 PM

COURSE DESCRIPTION: Come learn the basics for identifying fleshy fungi (including mushrooms), their important role in the ecosystem and a brief overview of the fungal kingdom. Rocky Mountain National Park has some unique and pristine ecosystems that we will explore, including the areas near snowbanks. We will spend a good part of the day in the field, identifying mushrooms and other fungi, and gaining a first-hand appreciation of these interesting and important organisms. There will be emphasis on the Cup Fungi (ascomycetes), including Morels and their allies.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

1. Be able to distinguish the major groups of fleshy fungi in the field
2. To understand the role of fungi in the Rocky Mountain National Park ecosystems
3. Understand the principal macroscopic characteristics (features) used in the identification of higher fungi (Basidiomycetes and Ascomycetes)

COURSE LEVEL: II

Medium-distance walks throughout the day on level to moderately steep terrain.

BRIEF INSTRUCTOR BIOGRAPHY (additional information available at www.RMConservancy.org): Jon received a bachelor's degree in botany from Humboldt State University and master's degrees in botany and plant pathology from the University of California, Davis. He has studied mushroom identification with notable mycologists including Drs. David Largent, Orson Miller, Harry D. Thiers, and Daniel Stuntz. He has led mushroom forays, nature walks, and taught classes on mushroom identification across the U.S. for more than 40 years. As a resident of Colorado for 25+ years, Jon has in-depth knowledge of Colorado fungi as well as our diverse flora and the interactions of fungi in the environment. He has been a member of the Colorado Mycological society since 1993 and currently serves as its membership chair and secretary.

EXPECTATIONS: Professional conduct will be expected from participants at all times. Individual ideas will be respected. 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.

GENERAL COURSE SCHEDULE:

8:30 AM – 9:00 AM	Welcome/ Introduction Meet participants; Review class objectives; Discuss ethics; Explain schedule for the day
9:00 AM – 9:15 AM	Introduction to the fungus kingdom (essential vocabulary and comparison to the plant and animal kingdoms)
9:15 AM – 9:45 AM	Fungus diversity in Colorado and RMNP; Environmental impact of fungi
9:45 AM – 10:30 AM	Overview of fungus groups in RMNP (descriptions and habitats) Critical features used in the identification of mushrooms
10:30 AM – 10:45 AM	Break; Arrange car-pooling if necessary
10:45 AM – 12:00 PM	Depart for field session (find and identify fungi)
12:00 PM – 12:40PM	Lunch
12:40 PM – 3:30 PM	Resume fungus search and identification
3:30 PM – 4:00 PM	End field session
4:00 PM – 5: 00 PM	Review day's activities according to stated course objectives
5:00 PM	Course concludes

USEFUL EQUIPMENT:

- A mushroom collecting basket, or small box with straps to take into the field for collecting specimens
- A small hand lens to assist in seeing small features of the fungi we examine
- A small ruler with both inches and centimeters-millimeters (The 6-inch ruler that comes standard in small dissecting kits is perfect.)
- A clipboard or sturdy three-ring notebook to organize your papers, field notes, etc.
- Pen/pencil and a notepad/paper for taking notes

RECOMMENDED BOOKS:

Mushrooms of Colorado and the Southern Rocky Mountains; Vera Stucky Evenson; Denver Botanic Gardens and Denver Museum of Natural History (2015).

- This is one of the few mushroom field guides oriented specifically to Colorado. This is a definite *must-have* if you intend to collect mushrooms in Colorado. Highly recommended if you anticipate collecting mushrooms on your own.

Mushrooms Demystified; David Aurora; Ten Speed Press (2nd edition 1986).

- This is one of the most thorough field guides on the market that covers the western portion of the US. Highly recommended.

Mycelium Running: How Mushrooms Can Help Save the World; Paul Stamets, Ten Speed Press (2005).

- A very interesting look at some of the ecological impacts and possibilities for fungi. Fascinating reading, not required.

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 | ▪ Extra layers of clothing |
| ▪ Sack lunch, snacks, water | | |

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 course are eligible for teacher recertification credit through the Centennial Board of Cooperative Education Services (BOCES). The fee is \$25 per class (.5 units) or \$25 per series of threaded courses (1.0 - 3.0 units). A list of threaded courses can be found in the Field Institute catalog or 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.