

Rocky Mountain

In the records of geologic time, the Rocky Mountains are young and, in some cases, still rising upward. The forces of erosion have had little time to work upon them and wear them down. On the scale of human time, however, the story is quite different, for in the relatively short time that human beings have looked upon them, they seem ageless and never changing. And this history of human occupation of the land is one of changing allegiances, the meeting and clashing of cultures, and the ever-accelerating pace of events.

The Pageant of the Park

Once the Europeans began to make their march into the continent, that pace began to quicken even more. Cultures became fragmented as Indian and Spaniard encountered French fur traders and then American mountain men, miners, soldiers, and ranchers. Above and beyond the tides of change stood the Rockies, their shining peaks landmarks to those who traveled the long, broken horizons of the West.

After the close of the Civil War, the Rockies themselves became a part of the national pageant. In 1873, the great frontier photographer William H. Jackson awed the American public with a stunning photograph of the long-rumored Mountain of the Holy Cross in central Colorado. Within a few years the great peaks had been climbed and mapped by explorers and scientists of the Federal surveys. In 1876, Colorado became a State. The Rockies, myth and reality, were fast becoming part of mainstream America.

In their turn, four cultures bid for this land. Today, the Rocky Mountains and the National Park System areas within them perpetuate the contributions of these diverse peoples and the wilderness heritage that is so much a part of America.

The Face of the Land

The ancestral Rockies had their beginning about 300 million years ago when this area was uplifted from shallow inland seas. Cycles of invasion by the seas and renewed uplift of the land followed until the last sea withdrew, about 70 million years ago, never to return. Alternating periods of uplift, volcanic activity, and erosion came next. About 5 to 7 million years ago, forces within the earth initiated a final broad uplift of the Rocky Mountain region. In the park, the overall effect was to raise the mountains to their present altitudes above 3,600 meters (nearly 12,000 feet). Deep erosion followed. Shallow valleys eventually became winding V-shaped canyons 200 to 450 meters (about 600 to 1,500 feet) deep.

Signs of several periods of glacial activity are evident throughout the park. The quarrying action of glaciers has left sheer rock faces like those on Longs Peak. Broad, U-shaped valleys denote the passing of giant glaciers through the V-shaped stream-cut valleys. The glacier-deposited ridges, heaps, and scattered masses of unsorted rock debris known as moraines can be clearly seen in Moraine Park. Chains of lakes linked by streams, such as the Gorge Lakes (visible from Trail Ridge Road), now fill depressions that were scoured out by glaciers.

Plantlife to Match the Heights

As you travel from the valleys to the high peaks, you will notice changes in plantlife, due largely to increasing wetness, exposure, and coolness.

At lower elevations, where the climate is relatively warm and dry, open stands of ponderosa pine and juniper grow on the slopes facing the sun; on cooler north slopes Douglas-fir is mixed with them. The lovely blue spruce graces streambanks, and dense stands of lodgepole pine grow in some places. Here and there appear groves of aspen, which turn a golden yellow in autumn. Delighting the eye at ground level such wildflowers as American pasqueflower, Rocky Mountain iris, plains erysimum (known locally as "western wallflower"), and penstemon dot meadows and glades.

Above 2,700 meters (9,000 feet) or so, forests of Englemann spruce, subalpine fir, and limber pine take over. Openings in these cool, dark forests produce wildflower gardens of rare beauty and

luxuriance. Here the blue Colorado columbine — the State flower — seems to reach its best development. At the upper edges of this zone, where cold winds constantly blow, the trees are twisted and grotesque, often squat and ground-hugging.

Then the trees disappear and you are in alpine tundra — open expanses of dwarf vegetation like that in arctic regions. Here plants hug the ground closely, an adaptation to the desiccating winds, and produce seeds quickly, an adaptation to the brief summers. Grasses, mosses, lichens, and many bright-blossoming plants create patterns of endless variety and surprise. Trail Ridge Road snakes for 18 kilometers (11 miles) through this Lilliputian plant world above treeline. Respect the fragile life here. Even a footprint can cause great damage.

A Varied Wildlife

As you explore this magnificent setting of valleys and high mountain peaks, forests, and tundra, occasional glimpses of wildlife will add moments of excitement.

Many small mammals seem always to be around, but larger animals such as wapiti ("elk") and deer are generally seen only just after dawn or in late evening. If you startle a mule deer as you hike the trails, it will bound off characteristically touching all four feet at once.



In the early 1900s many people urged that the high mountain peaks around Estes Park, first seen by Joel Estes and his son Milton in October 1859, be made a national park. Enos Mills, (above left), naturalist, writer, conservationist, and philosopher, was the major force behind this move. With Mills on September 4, 1915, at the park's dedication, when this picture was taken, were F. O. Stanley, Rep. Edward Taylor who shepherded the park bill over and around congressional hurdles, Mary King Sherman of the General Federation of Women's Clubs, and Colorado Gov. George Carlson.

Bighorn — the living symbol of Rocky Mountain National Park — venture out into Horseshoe Park near Sheep Lake where there is a mineral lick. Please observe them from the parking lot. Specimen Mountain, a prime lambing ground and grazing area for the bighorn, has been closed to entry above the Crater. This protects the sheep from harassment, and gives you a better chance of seeing them.

Above treeline in the tundra area, the yellowbelly marmot, similar to the woodchuck in appearance, suns itself on the rocks. Another common but inconspicuous animal of the tundra is the tiny pika. The wild, eerie, yipping song of the coyote is familiar on autumn and winter evenings at Moraine Park and Horseshoe Park. Beaver, which are abundant in almost every stream, are easy to observe. All you need to do is spend a little time in the evening around their ponds and lodges. They begin working around sunset and continue long after darkness. As they go about their business, they probably won't pay attention to you.

For numbers of species and individuals seen, bird watching is the most rewarding of wildlife-observation activities in the park. Of the more than 150 kinds regularly encountered, the most common are the familiar robin, bluebird, chickadee, and junco. A good field guide, some understanding of the distribution and habits of birds, and good habits of observation on your part should lead to such exciting finds as the golden or bald eagles, white-tailed ptarmigan, Steller's jay, and dipper.

Certain rules have been established to assure your safety and that of the wild animals, and to protect park values. It is unlawful to feed or molest any animal. Feeding rodents and birds increases their population to abnormal, unhealthy levels and tends to make them other than the wild animals they are. Think before you feed. Let them remain wild. You can enhance your chances of viewing wildlife by not trying to stalk them—it only frightens them and ruins the opportunity for others. Hunting is not allowed; in fact, possession of any device designed to discharge missiles and capable of injuring or destroying animal life is prohibited. All natural features—plants, animals, even the rocks—are protected by law. There are no poisonous snakes in the park; other animals will not harm you if you do not approach them.

Regulations

National park regulations are strictly enforced to protect you and the park you came to enjoy.

The following regulations are the more commonly ignored or misunderstood. If you are in doubt about any of the park regulations, please contact a park ranger.

Dogs, cats, and other pets must be under physical restrictive control at all times. They are not allowed on trails or in areas not accessible to autos.

Camping is permitted only in designated areas and at designated sites.

A written permit is required for all back country overnight stays and for technical climbs. These free permits, limited in number, can be gotten at park headquarters or the West Unit Office all year and at Wild Basin and Longs Peak ranger stations in the summer. The permits are given out on a "first come" basis, unless reserved in writing well ahead of time.

Wood fires are permitted in established firegrates in designated roadside campgrounds and picnic areas only. Wood gathering is prohibited. A written permit is required for all fires outside of these designated areas.

Vehicles must remain on roads or in parking areas. Parking any vehicle or leaving unattended property for longer than 24 hours without prior permission is prohibited.

Hitchhiking or soliciting transportation is prohibited.

All wildlife is protected from hunting or harassment. Please do not feed or attempt to touch any wild creature. It is not good for them and they may inflict injury or transmit disease.

Firearms or any other devices capable of destroying animal life are prohibited unless unloaded and cased or broken down.

Do not pick wildflowers or damage plants. Law prohibits the destruction, injury, disturbance, or removal of public property or natural features — including twisted treeline wood or rock specimens.

Use artificial lures or flies only; children 12 years of age and under may fish with bait in all waters open to fishing.

Administration

Rocky Mountain National Park is administered by the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior. The superintendent's address is Estes Park, CO 80517.

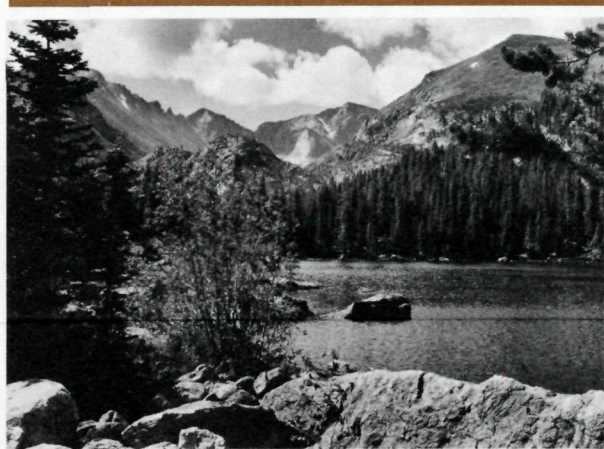
As the Nation's principal conservation agency, the Department of the Interior has responsibility for most of our nationally owned public land and natural resources. This includes fostering the wisest use of our land and water resources, protecting our fish and wildlife, preserving the environmental and cultural values of our national parks and historical places, and providing for the enjoyment of life through outdoor recreation. The Department assesses our energy and mineral resources and works to assure that their development is in the best interests of all our people. The Department also has a major responsibility for American Indian reservation communities and for people who live in Island Territories under U.S. administration.

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

To Enjoy the Park

... utilize its interpretive programs

The National Park Service encourages you to become acquainted with the park through its guided walks, campfire programs, and other activities. These programs begin in early June and extend into September. Pick up a schedule at one of the information centers. Be sure to see the orientation film at headquarters (open all year), and the exhibits at Alpine Visitor Center (June-October) and Moraine Park Visitor Center (May-October). Roadside exhibits and selfguiding trails also help to interpret the park.



A leisurely trip to Bear Lake will be rewarding in various ways. Along the way you should see some of the park's abundant wildlife, including birds, of which more than 200 species have been sighted within the park. The road goes through glaciated meadows and has marvelous views of Longs Peak. At the end of the drive lies Bear Lake, one of only a few high mountain lakes in the country accessible by car. Get out of your car and enjoy one of the short trails here.

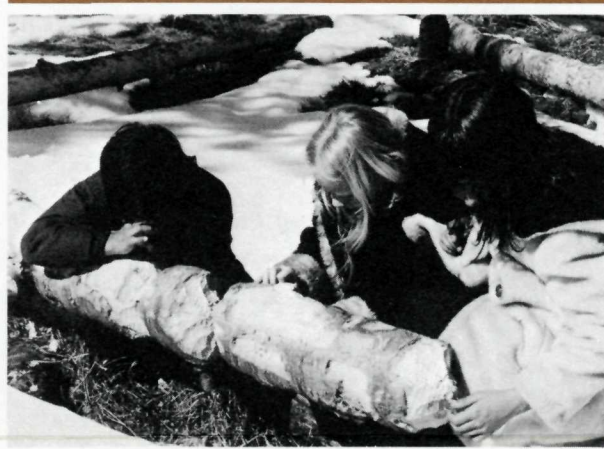
When you leave Rocky Mountain National Park we hope your experience here will go with you as a happy memory. You should also carry away an enhanced appreciation for nature, a sharpened awareness of the inter-dependence of animals (including man), plants, soils, air, and water, and an understanding that man is inescapably a part of this precariously balanced system.

... drive its roads

From the east, Trail Ridge Road (closed in winter) takes a winding course, reaches 3,713 meters (12,183 feet), and then descends to Grand Lake. Take three or four hours for this 80-kilometer (50-mile) scenic drive, stopping at the overlooks to absorb far-spreading views of Rocky Mountain's peaks and valleys. As you travel along Trail Ridge itself, above tree line, you are on the "roof of the world" with superlative vistas of glacier-carved peaks on every side. For a closer look at the alpine world, walk to Forest Canyon Overlook or take the 1/2-hour round trip Tundra Trail. Remember the alpine tundra ecosystem is extremely fragile; use it lightly by staying on the paths where they are provided. Stop at Fall River Pass (3,595 meters, or 11,796 feet) to visit the Alpine Visitor Center. The exhibits will help you understand some of the things you have seen and felt along Trail Ridge Road.

Fall River Road (closed in winter), the original road crossing the mountains, is open from Horse-shoe Park Junction to Fall River Pass. West of Endovalley Picnic Area, the road is one-way uphill. The gravel road switchbacks up a narrow mountain valley, offering an early-day motoring experience. Because of the sharp switchbacks, trailers and motorized vans are prohibited. A guide booklet explains the history and natural history of this old road.

Take Bear Lake Road if you have the time — an extra hour or so will do it. This is one of the few paved roads in the Rockies that leads to the heart of a high mountain basin. The area is heavily used and is often congested. Parking here and at Glacier Gorge Junction may not be available. For these reasons, a free shuttlebus system has been initiated between the shuttle parking area near Glacier Basin campground and Bear Lake. The system operates from late June through Labor Day.



Beavers, which felled this tree, are part of the story of the mountains. The beaver dams back up ponds, drowning trees which in time fall, creating an open space in the forest. After a number of years the food supply becomes exhausted and the beaver colony moves on. The dam, unattended, eventually ruptures, the pond drains, and a meadow develops on the rich soil of the pond bottom. In time the forest will come back and another beaver colony may be attracted to the site.

Don't forget: Rocky Mountain's roads are not high-speed highways, but are instead designed for maximum enjoyment of the scenery. Speed limits and traffic laws are enforced. Please obey signs. Report all accidents to the nearest park ranger station. There are no service stations within the park. Check your gas and other needs. Cars tuned for lower elevations often overheat and may vapor lock. If your car acts as if it isn't getting gas, pull off the road at the nearest pullout, stop your engine and allow it to cool. If snow or cold water is available, put it on your fuel pump and the line leading to the carburetor.

... stay in its campgrounds

Five roadside campgrounds—Moraine Park, Glacier Basin, Aspenglen, Longs Peak, and Timber Creek—provide an enjoyable way to become acquainted with Rocky Mountain. Camping is limited to three days at Longs Peak and seven days at the other sites. In summer, campgrounds usually have been filled to capacity early each day. Organized group campsites at Glacier Basin Campground can be reserved. Longs Peak is restricted to tent camping. There are no electrical, water, or sewer connections in any of the campgrounds. Sewer dump stations are at Moraine Park, Glacier Basin, and Timber Creek Campgrounds. One campground is kept open all year. A reservation system may be in use at some campgrounds at the time of your visit.

Wood fires are permitted in fire grates at campgrounds and picnic areas. A written permit is required for all fires outside those areas. Wood gathering is prohibited except when authorized at back country campsites.

... take its trails and climb its mountains

Day use More than 480 kilometers (300 miles) of trails provide access to remote sections of the park. Short trails lead to many scenic features. Easy strolls start from the Cub Lake and Fern Lake trail heads.

Overnight trips The back country of the park includes all of the park outside of developed and road-accessible areas: it can be reached only by trail or across country. A Backcountry Use Permit is required for:

1. All overnight trips into the back country, summer or winter.
2. Technical climbs. All ascents involving the use of technical climbing equipment (ropes, pitons, etc.). This permit must be obtained before entering the back country, and is available at park headquarters or the West Unit Office all year and at Wild Basin and Longs Peak ranger stations in the summer. These free permits, limited in number, are issued on a "first come" basis unless reserved in writing well ahead of time. For detailed information on elevations, lakes, hiking trails, purchase a U.S. Geological Survey topographic map at visitor centers. For specific information, write or visit the Backcountry Office near park headquarters or at the West Unit Office.



If you are lucky you may be able to see some bighorn sheep, the elusive symbol of Rocky Mountain National Park, during your visit. The bighorns have poor senses of hearing and of smell, but they can see objects up to a kilometer or two away. And they are exceptionally surefooted. The bottom of each hoof is slightly concave and the edge is sharp, giving it a somewhat suction-cuplike character — an adaptation to the precarious terrain. The animals also possess a superb sense of balance and are very agile.

... fish in its streams

In the mountain streams and lakes are four species of trout: German brown, brook, rainbow, and cutthroat. These cold waters may not produce large fish, but the superb mountain scenery will enhance your experience. Trout populations are maintained by natural reproduction.

Remember, you must have a Colorado license. Use of live bait is prohibited except under certain special conditions. You should review special fishing regulations at park headquarters or at the nearest park ranger station before you fish!

... go horseback riding

Horses with guides can be hired at two locations inside the park on the east side, or from a number of liverys outside both the east and west park boundaries during the summer season.

... see it in winter

Winter means snow in the Rockies; and snow means skiing — cross-country skiing in the lower valleys, winter mountaineering in the high country, and downhill skiing at Hidden Valley. Each type of activity has its special thrills; but you must be properly equipped.

The Hidden Valley Winter Use Area is 11 kilometers (7 miles) from the Fall River Entrance and almost 10 kilometers (6 miles) from the Beaver Meadows Entrance. Access roads to Hidden Valley from the east are kept open, and provide the traveler a panorama of the high mountains.

Things You Should Know

How to Reach Rocky Mountain

The nearest major rail, air, and busline terminals are at Denver, 105 kilometers (65 miles) from Estes Park, and at Cheyenne, Wyo., 146 kilometers (91 miles) distant.

Gray Line Tours makes connections with transcontinental airlines, railroads, and buslines at Denver. You can obtain further information from this company at P.O. Box 1977, Denver, CO 80202, or by telephoning 303-289-2841.

Accommodations

There are no overnight accommodations under Government supervision in the park. A few privately owned accommodations are available.

For information about facilities adjacent to the park, write to the chamber of commerce at either Estes Park, CO 80517, or Grand Lake, CO 80447.

Forest Fire Management Program

Be careful with fire. Fires caused by man present a major threat to the park's vegetation. Lightning-caused forest fires, however, are a natural and necessary part of forest life. Areas subject to natural cycles of burning and regrowth contain mixed stands of both young and old trees. Rocky Mountain National Park was established in part to preserve the beautiful mixed forest of aspens, pines, spruce, and firs which characterize the area.

Recycling

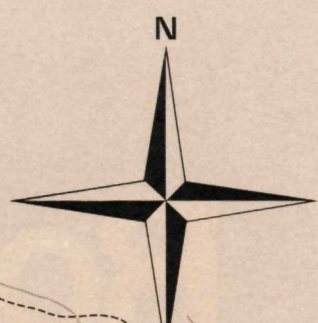
Aspenglen, Moraine Park, and Glacier Basin campgrounds and Sprague Lake picnic area are set up to collect recyclable aluminum and tin and steel cans. Please join the program.

Drop boxes for recycling this brochure are available at major entrances and at other selected locations.

Overuse

Because many people are now visiting the park, the wear and tear is becoming more evident. Signs usually indicate the areas where particular care and attention is warranted. Elsewhere you can help protect the park by staying on the trails, especially on the tundra, by not shortcutting trail switchbacks, and by following marked routes over lingering snowfields which cover some trails early in the summer. Most problems result from trampling vegetation, followed by soil erosion. Plant communities are especially subject to damage when soil is wet, so pay particular attention at these times.

ROCKY MOUNTAIN NATIONAL PARK



**SAFETY IS EVERYBODY'S BUSINESS
SEE SAFETY MESSAGE ON OTHER SIDE**

- Trail Head T
- Comfort Station
- Scenic Overlook
- Paved Road
- Light-Duty Road
- Dirt Road
- Trail (Interpretive)
- Environmental Study Area
- Campground
- Ranger Station
- Launching Ramp
- Visitor Center
- Livery
- Picnic Area

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MILES

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FEET METERS

COLORADO

GRANBY

Trail Distances
If you are going to backpack, obtain a topographical map. Do not use this map for hiking in the back country.
(distances based on nearest half mile):

From	Kilometers	Miles
From Bear Lake to		
Dream Lake	1.6	1
Emerald Lake	2.4	1.5
Lake Haiyaha	3.2	2
Flattop Mountain	7.2	4.5
Grand Lake (Jct. Trail & W. Portal Rd.) via N. Inlet	31.2	19.5
Grand Lake (Jct. Trail & W. Portal Rd.) via Big Meadows	29.6	18.5
Bierstadt Lake	3.2	2
Odessa Lake	6.4	4
Fern Lake	8	5
From Phantom Valley Parking Area to		
Lulu City site	5	3
La Poudre Pass	11	7
Thunder Pass	9.6	6
From Grand Lake to		
Shadow Mountain (East Shore Trail head)	8	5
Cascade Falls (Jct. N. Inlet Trail with W. Portal Rd.)	7.2	4.5
Lake Nokoni (Jct. N. Inlet Trail with W. Portal Rd.)	20	12.5
Lake Nanita (Jct. N. Inlet Trail with W. Portal Rd.)	20.8	13
Adams Falls (East Inlet Trail head)	1	0.5
Lone Pine Lake (East Inlet Trail head)	9	5.5
Lake Verna (East Inlet Trail head)	11	7
From Wild Basin to		
Calypso Cascades	3.2	2
Ouzel Falls	5	3
Bluebird Lake	10.4	6.5
Finch Lake	8	5
Pear Lake	11	7
Thunder Lake	11	7
Sandbeach Lake (from Copeland Lake)	6.4	4
From Horseshoe Park to		
Lawn Lake	9.6	6
Crystal Lake	12	7.5
Odessa Lake	7.2	4.5
Deer Mountain (from Deer Ridge)	5	3
From Fern Lake Trail Jct. (Moraine Park) to		
The Pool	3.2	2
Fern Lake	6.4	4
Odessa Lake	8	5
Cub Lake (from Moraine Park Rd.)	4	2.5
From Glacier Gorge Jct. to		
The Loch	4	2.5
Mills Lake	4	2.5
From Estes Park to		
Gem Lake (from Devils Gulch Rd.)	3.2	2
From Longs Peak Campground to		
Chasm Lake	7.2	4.5
Longs Peak	13	8
Twin Sisters (from Colo. 7)	5.6	3.5

GUIDES AVAILABLE	WHERE OBTAINABLE
Trail Ridge Road guide	At visitor centers
USGS topographic maps	At visitor centers
Free Activity Guide newspaper	At visitor centers
Kodak picture-taking brochure and map	At visitor centers
Estes Park-Bear Lake-Horseshoe Park vicinity map	At visitor centers
Bear Lake Shuttle Bus guide and map	At shuttle parking area
Old Fall River Road guide	At start of Old Fall River Road, Alpine Visitor Center, or Park Headquarters
Nature Trail guides (for Wild Basin, Bear Lake, Moraine Park, Lulu City, and Holzwarth Homestead)	At visitor centers and respective trailheads