

# Rocky Mountain National Park

## HIGH COUNTRY HEADLINES



Summer 2006

June 18 – August 19



# High Altitude Adventures



alpine avens

Nearly one-third of Rocky Mountain National Park is alpine tundra, the rich and compact ecosystem that results from average temperatures far too low for trees or humans to survive. Forests stop and tundra begins where the average temperature of the warmest month is about 49 degrees Fahrenheit. In Colorado, this occurs at between 11,000 and 11,500 feet above sea level.

The roads through Rocky Mountain National Park were among the first to permit anyone but the most intrepid to experience this wild Rocky Mountain ecosystem. Today, there are countless opportunities in the park for you to discover the treasures tucked into the nooks and crannies of this breathtaking landscape.

### Drive

Two roads in the park lead you into the "land above the trees." Trail Ridge Road is the highest continuous paved highway in America. Eleven miles of the road stretch out above treeline, topping out at 12,183 feet above sea level.



Old Fall River Road

Old Fall River Road, the predecessor to Trail Ridge Road, is a nine-mile, steeply winding, one-way dirt road that intersects Trail Ridge at Fall River Pass, site of the Alpine Visitor Center.

Both roads offer stunning views and sweeping vistas of the Rocky Mountains. Be warned, however. A quick trip up to the tundra from low altitude will leave you breathless. Plan on taking it slow and easy and don't be surprised when you get winded by walking across a parking lot.

### An interesting fact to ponder:

The temperature drops about 3.5 degrees Fahrenheit for every 1,000 feet you travel up or 600 miles you travel north. So, as you move from 7,500 feet in town to 11,796 feet at the Alpine Visitor Center, it is much like driving to the Arctic Circle in an hour!

### Walk

Driving above treeline gives you a good feel for the vastness of the mountains. However, if you truly want to experience this alpine environment, you must walk through it. Designated trails begin at Rock Cut and the Alpine Visitor Center but, with care, you can travel across this community of diminutive but hearty plants and animals in all but a few protected areas. Heavily used portions of tundra are closed around Forest Canyon Overlook, Rock Cut, Gore Range Overlook, and the Alpine Visitor Center. Please respect closures and the tiny plants struggling to reestablish themselves in these areas.



walk carefully across tundra

When you venture out across these open landscapes, notice the carpet of tiny plants filling the spaces between the rocks. Since the growing season on the tundra is only about 40 days, many of these plants can only grow fractions of an inch every year. Keep in mind that a single step into a seemingly sturdy group of flowers might destroy decades of growth. Stepping from rock to rock spares these plants the damage caused by the hiking boots of over a million visitors per year.



### Tundra Treasures

What you find on the tundra depends largely on how much effort you put forth. A quick drive will reward you with amazing landscapes, fields of alpine flowers and perhaps a yellow-bellied marmot or two. A walk on one of the tundra trails will reveal a huge variety of small but vibrant wildflowers and maybe a hamster-sized pika or perfectly camouflaged ptarmigan. Sharp eyes may spot the elusive big-rooted springbeauty or the blur of a long-tailed weasel darting among the rocks.



yellow-bellied marmot

The tundra is a frigid, forbidding, windswept land most of the year. This summer, take the fleeting opportunity to discover the tiny treasures that thrive in this extreme climate. You can see things that most people will never see. You can see what lives in the land above the trees.

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# You Need to Know

## Visitor Centers



Park visitor centers are the places to find out what you need to know. All have knowledgeable staff, printed information on many topics, and great bookstores stocked with the best books for finding that perfect trail and learning what makes Rocky Mountain such an outstanding national park. Each visitor center has its own special features.

### Grand Lake Area Kawuneeche Visitor Center

Open daily 8-6.  
Features free orientation film, exhibits on what to see and do in the park, bookstore, backcountry permits.



### Holzwarth Historic Site

1920's dude ranch buildings are open daily 10-4. Educational trail guide and staff available.



### Estes Park Area Beaver Meadows Visitor Center

Open 8-8 M, Tu, W, 8-9 Th-Su. Features free orientation film, bookstore, large 3-D park map, backcountry permits in adjacent building.



### Fall River Visitor Center

Open Daily 9-5  
Features life-sized wildlife displays, a bookstore, and a discovery room where kids can touch objects and dress up as rangers, Native Americans, and pioneers.



### Alpine Visitor Center

Open daily 9-5 (weather permitting).  
Features extraordinary views of alpine tundra, tundra displays, bookstore, adjacent gift shop and snack bar. Call 586-1206 for road information.



### Moraine Park Museum

Open daily 9-5.  
Interactive exhibits on the past and present landscape, bookstore, nature trail with brochure, historic building.



### Sheep Lakes Information Station

Open daily 8:30-4.  
Good wildlife viewing area in Horseshoe Park.



© Jack Dinsmoor

## Stay Together!

Avoid travelling alone in the backcountry and always stay together as a group. Detailed information regarding your trip itinerary should be left with a responsible person so park authorities can be notified if you fail to return. Safety is your responsibility!

## Park Phone Numbers

 Call Park Information (970) 586-1206 with your questions. We are available to assist you from 8 to 4:30 daily.

 Dial 911 or (970) 586-1203 for emergencies.

 Hearing impaired persons may call the TTY at (970) 586-1319 from 8 to 5 daily.

## Park Roads

The main park road is the highest in any national park, and park roads suffer greatly from prolonged winters. Please ask at entrance stations or visitor centers if there is any major road repair taking place, as this could occur at any time during the brief summer work season.

## Keep Wildlife Wild

Never feed wildlife. A fine may be issued to violators. Animals can kick, bite or gore you. They can become dependent on human food and lose the ability to feed naturally. Wildlife also carry diseases which can be transmitted to humans, like rabies and plague. Photograph animals from the roadside.



## Lost and Found

Please turn found items in at any park visitor center. To ask about lost items, call the Backcountry Office at (970) 586-1242.

**Pets**  Pets are not allowed on park trails or in the backcountry. They are allowed in campgrounds, picnic areas and along roadsides. Pets must be on a leash (6' or less) and attended at all times. Never leave pets unattended in your vehicle.

## Fishing

 Obtain specific park regulations at visitor centers or park entrance stations. To fish in Rocky Mountain National Park, you must have a valid Colorado state fishing license.

## No Firearms or Hunting

Hunting and weapons are not allowed in Rocky Mountain National Park.

## Web Sites

[nps.gov/romo/index.html](https://nps.gov/romo/index.html)

The official Rocky Mountain National Park website - over 800 pages of detailed information.

[rmna.org](https://rmna.org)

Rocky Mountain Nature Association - the best source for books, maps, and videos of the park.

## This Park Paper

*High Country Headlines* is produced by the staff of Rocky Mountain National Park in cooperation with—and with funding provided by—the Rocky Mountain Nature Association.

Designed and edited by Peter Allen

# High Country Survival



## Mountain Lions and Bears

Mountain lions and black bears are powerful and potentially dangerous. Some general guidelines for traveling in backcountry areas of Rocky Mountain which may contain these animals:

- 1) **Travel in Groups** and make noise as you hike. Keep your group, especially children, close together.
- 2) **Do Not Approach** a mountain lion or bear.
- 3) **Stay Calm** when you see a mountain lion or bear.
- 4) **Stop**; back away slowly. Never turn your back and run.
- 5) **Stand Tall and Look Large**. Raise your arms. Protect small children by picking them up.
- 6) If attacked by a mountain lion or bear, **Fight Back!**

## Black Bear Country

Never approach a bear. Keep children beside you. There is more safety in numbers; it is best to travel in a close group. If a bear approaches you, stand up tall, and make loud noises: shout, clap hands, or clang pots and pans. If attacked, fight back!



© Phillippe Henry

In campgrounds and picnic areas, if there is a food storage locker provided, use it. Avoid storing food and coolers in your vehicle. If you must, store food in airtight containers in the trunk or out of sight. Close vehicle windows completely. Do not store food in tents or pop-up campers in campgrounds, or in vehicles at trailheads. Food, coolers and dirty cookware left unattended are subject to confiscation by Park Rangers; citations may be issued. Dispose of garbage in bear-resistant dumpsters and trash cans. Human-fed bears usually end up as chronic problems and need to be removed - "A fed bear is a dead bear."

In the backcountry, store food, scented items and garbage in commercially available bear-resistant portable canisters, or carefully hang food 10 feet up and 4 feet out from a tree. Pack out all garbage. Never try to retrieve anything from a bear.



## High Elevation

Nearly half of visitors to Rocky Mountain National Park experience some symptoms of altitude sickness. These range from headache and dizziness to nausea and unconsciousness. Rocky Mountain has the highest average elevations of any national park; even the main road climbs higher than most U.S. mountains, to 12,183'! High altitude can also aggravate medical conditions such as heart and lung diseases. The only cure for altitude sickness is to **go down** in elevation.

## Lightning

People are killed by lightning every year in Colorado. Afternoon storms are frequent and can bring an unhappy end to a hike. Watch for approaching storms and be well below treeline or back to your car before the storm hits.

## Dehydration

High altitude and the dry climate are both working to dry out your body right now. Carry and drink plenty of water as you hike or travel through the park. Avoid drinking untreated water from streams and lakes as it may be contaminated with giardia. Giardia can cause diarrhea, cramps, bloating, and weight loss. This microscopic organism enters surface water when animals or humans defecate in or near water. To prevent giardiasis when backcountry camping, bring water to a full rolling boil for at least 5 minutes, or use a water filtration system that eliminates the organism.

# Camping

	Fee per night	Reservations?	Dump Stations	Elevation (feet)	Stay Limit (nights)	Public Phones	Summer firewood, ice, water
Aspenglen 54 campsites	\$20	no	no	8,230	7	yes	yes
Glacier Basin 150 campsites 	\$20	yes	yes	8,600	7	yes	yes
Glacier Basin Group Camping 15 sites No RVs	special fees	yes	n/a	8,600	7	yes	yes
Longs Peak 26 campsites Tents only	\$20	no	n/a	9,400	7	no	yes
Moraine Park 247 campsites 	\$20	yes	yes	8,150	7	yes	yes
Timber Creek 98 campsites	\$20	no	yes	8,900	7	yes	wood, water

## Campgrounds/Reservations

Two park campgrounds, Moraine Park and Glacier Basin, accept peak-season reservations (May 25 through mid-September). Call (800) 365-2267 to make national park camping reservations up to 5 months prior to your visit. Internet reservations can be made at [reservations.nps.gov](http://reservations.nps.gov). Camping at the park's other campgrounds —Aspenglen, Longs Peak, and Timber Creek— is first come, first served.



## Backcountry Camping Permits

Permits are required for all backcountry overnight camping. Camping is allowed only in designated sites and areas. Summer permits require a \$20 administrative fee. Permits may be obtained at the Beaver Meadows Backcountry Office or Kawuneeche Visitor Center. For further information write to: Backcountry Office, Rocky Mountain National Park, Estes Park, Colorado 80517 or phone (970) 586-1242.

## Sprague Lake Accessible Backcountry Campsite

Reservations and information are available through the Backcountry Office at (970) 586-1242. This site accommodates 12 campers with a maximum of 5 wheelchair users at the camp. The administrative permit fee is \$20 from May 1 to October 31.



# Ranger Led Programs - Alpine, East

June 18 – August 19



Wheelchair  
Accessible  
Programs

All children must be accompanied by an adult

## Alpine

Program & Time	Days Offered							Description
	Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa	
<b>Tundra to Trees</b> 9 AM 4 hour hike starts July 2	•				•			Hike an ancient Ute trail that leads from alpine heights down through old growth forest. Meet at Milner Pass parking area to carpool for this moderate 4-mile hike. Bring warm clothing, rain gear, water, and snacks.
<b>High Country Geology</b> 9 AM 3 hour hike starts July 5				•				The park's spectacular scenery represents a chapter in a long history of geologic events. Join us on this hike over the tundra and experience the effects of these processes. Meet at the Alpine Visitor Center flagpole.
<b>Tundra Nature Walk</b> 10 AM 1.5-2 hour walk	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	Exhilarate your senses with sweeping alpine views and miniature wildflower gardens. Dress warmly and meet at the Alpine Visitor Center, ready to caravan to the location.
<b>All About Lightning</b> 2 PM 30 minute talk 	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	Learn why lightning can be a hair-raising experience and find out how to minimize your risk of being struck by lightning. Meet at the Alpine Visitor Center.

## History

<b>Native Lifestyles</b> 10 AM 1.5 hour walk		•		•				Learn what drew prehistoric peoples, and later Ute and Arapaho, to the high country. Meet at the Upper Beaver Meadows Trailhead.
<b>Stories of Fall River Road</b> 2 PM 30 minute talk 					•			Hear stories of this route into the park's high country, from the challenges of mountain road building to past inns and lodges. Meet at the Fall River Visitor Center.

## Plants

<b>Lily Lake Wildflower Walk</b> 12:30 PM 1.5 hour walk 			•	•			•	Take time to stop and smell the roses, and enjoy learning about the variety of flowers blooming this season. Meet at the Lily Lake parking lot for this easy walk.
<b>Wild Basin Wildflowers</b> 9 AM 2 hour walk				•	•			Abundant flowers can be found on this easy walk through a lush forest. Meet at the Wild Basin trailhead.

## Special Program

<b>Art in Paradise</b> 2:30 PM 45-60 minutes					•			Glimpse this beautiful place through the eyes and creative works of an Artist-in-Residence – a painter, musician, writer, or photographer. Meet at the Moraine Park Museum.
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## Wildlife

Program & Time	Days Offered							Description
	Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa	
<b>Hummingbirds to Eagles</b> 7 AM 1.5-2 hour walk					•			Cub Lake Trail offers outstanding birding with 20-30 species possible on any summer day. Birders of all levels will find this a rewarding walk. Bring binoculars and field guide. Meet at Cub Lake Trailhead.
<b>Birds of Lumpy Ridge</b> 7 AM 2 hour walk			•			•		Join a ranger to seek birds of prey, songbirds, and woodpeckers. Bring binoculars and a field guide. Meet at the Twin Owls Trailhead.
<b>Birds of Upper Beaver Meadows</b> 7 AM 1.5-2 hour walk		•			•		•	Join a ranger to seek bluebirds, woodpeckers, wrens, and flycatchers in a rich mixture of aspen and pine woodlands. Bring binoculars and field guide. Meet at the end of the Upper Beaver Meadows Road.
<b>Ballad of the Bighorn Sheep</b> 10:30 AM ----- 2 PM ----- 30 minute talk 	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	Sheep Lakes is a popular viewing area for bighorn sheep. Meet at the Sheep Lakes kiosk, Horseshoe Park, to learn about this majestic symbol of Rocky.
<b>Skins and Skulls</b> 2 PM 20-30 minute talk 				•	•			Want to pet an elk? Cuddle up to a bear? Are you crazy? That's not safe! Come to Beaver Meadows Visitor Center to <b>safely</b> feel skins and skulls while hearing about park wildlife.
<b>The Importance of Being a Beaver</b> 10:30 AM ----- 3 PM ----- 1 hour walk	•		•		•	•	•	Beavers drastically change their environment, and they have wonderful adaptations to do so. To see their work first hand, meet at Sprague Lake parking lot.
<b>Lions and Bears, Oh My!</b> 2 PM 30 minute talk	•	•				•		Worried about meeting a bear or mountain lion in the park? Find out what to do and what these animals are up to. Meet at the Beaver Meadows Visitor Center.
<b>Little Critters of Rocky</b> 2:30 PM 30 minute talk 		•	•			•		Squirrels, rabbits and bats— Oh my! Find out about the lives of Rocky's smaller animals and the critical roles they play. Meet at Moraine Park Museum.

## Children's Programs

<b>Tales for Tots &amp; Big People Too</b> 10 AM 30-45 minute program 	•						•	Puppets, stories, games and fun! Nature comes alive in a different program each day. Meet at the Fall River Visitor Center. For children big and small.
<b>Kid's Adventure</b> 2 PM 1-1.5 hour program 			•		•	•		Join us for a nature adventure! Kids 6-10 (and their parents) should meet at the Sprague Lake parking lot for this fun program.

# Ranger Led Programs - East

June 18 – August 19



Wheelchair Accessible Programs

All children must be accompanied by an adult

## General Interest

Program & Time	Days Offered							Description
	Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa	
<b>Dream Lake Hike</b> 9 AM 2-2.5 hours				•		•		Explore the breathtaking glacial landscape and lush subalpine forests near Dream Lake on this moderate 2 mile hike. Meet at the Bear Lake parking lot.
<b>Exploring with Map and Compass</b> 9:30 AM 2 hour activity			•		•			Learn map and compass skills-make your trips into the wilderness safer and more fun. Meet at the end of the Upper Beaver Meadows Road. Maps and compasses provided.
<b>Bear Lake Stroll</b> 9 AM ----- 3 PM ----- 1-1.5 hours	•		•	•	•		•	Enjoy an easy walk around a lovely subalpine lake and learn about the natural and human forces that have shaped this landscape. Meet at Bear Lake.
<b>Moraine Park Nature Walk</b> 10 AM 1 hour	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	Enjoy an easy 3/4 mile stroll through the Moraine Park landscape. Encounter the dynamic forces that created this valley and discover what lives here today. Meet at the Moraine Park Museum.
<b>Hidden Valley Revealed</b> 10 AM ----- 1:30 PM ---- 1-1.5 hour stroll			•	•		•	•	Treasures of thriving old-growth forests, wildlife and history await you in this lush subalpine valley. Meet at the Hidden Valley parking lot.
<b>Geology Rocks!</b> 2:30 PM 30 minutes 	•							Love the scenic views in the park? Come take a closer look at what is rocking at Rocky and the forces behind the park. Meet at the Moraine Park Museum.
	Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa	

## Junior Rangers



Free junior ranger books are available at park visitor centers. A successfully completed book earns a badge!



## Evening Programs

Program & Time	Days Offered							Description
	Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa	
<b>Beaver Meadows Evening Program</b> 7:30 PM 45 minutes 	•					•	•	Enjoy a wide variety of informative and entertaining programs. Meet at the Beaver Meadows Visitor Center.  Science Thursday: Bears, glaciers, butterflies: researchers are out learning more each day about this park. Join a different researcher each Thursday.
<b>Glacier Basin Evening Program</b> 7:30 PM 			•		•		•	Enjoy a wide variety of informative and entertaining programs. Meet at the Glacier Basin Campground outdoor amphitheater, warmly dressed.
<b>9 PM (6/18-7/22)</b> <b>8:30 PM (7/23-8/19)</b> 45 minutes	•		•	•		•		
<b>Moraine Park Evening Program</b> 7:30 PM	•		•					Enjoy a wide variety of informative and entertaining programs. Meet at the Moraine Park Campground outdoor amphitheater, warmly dressed.
<b>9 PM (6/18-7/22)</b> <b>8:30 PM (7/23-8/19)</b> 		•		•	•	•	•	
	Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa	

## Astronomy



Join a Park Ranger and expert volunteer astronomers on Friday nights throughout the summer to observe the night sky in Rocky Mountain National Park. In many places, the night sky is not as dark as it once was due to light pollution. National Parks in more remote areas help preserve this special resource.

Look for posters at Visitor Centers, campgrounds and entrance stations for times and locations.

## 100 Paintings celebrating our National Parks

June 17 through July 9  
Estes Park Intermediate School  
Tuesday - Sunday 10 AM to 5 PM



Admission:  
\$5 per person,  
children 12 and  
under free

Cultural Arts Council of Estes Park 970 586-9203 EstesArts.com

## At RMNA Bookstores, Your Purchase Makes A Difference



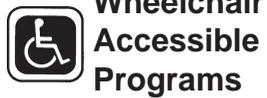
The best Rocky Mountain National Park books, maps and other interesting items are right here, at one of the Rocky Mountain Nature Association (RMNA) bookstores located around the park. And when you make a purchase from our non-profit organization, proceeds are returned to the park, supporting important educational, interpretive and research programs. Drop by today.

Visit the Rocky Mountain Nature Association bookstores at:  
Beaver Meadows Visitor Center • Alpine Visitor Center  
Moraine Park Museum • Fall River Visitor Center  
Kawuneeche Visitor Center

Rocky Mountain Nature Association • P.O. Box 3100, Estes Park, CO 80517 • (970) 586-0108 • rmna.org

# Ranger Led Programs - West

June 18 – August 19



All children must be accompanied by an adult

## Walks and Hikes

Program & Time	Days Offered							Description
	Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa	
<b>High Country Birding</b> 7:30 AM 1-1.5 hours ends 7/29			•				•	Enjoy a 1 mile bird walk across meadow and woodland habitats. Bring a bird guide and binoculars. Meet at the Holzwarth Historic Site parking area.
<b>Hike through History</b> 9 AM 3 hour hike, 3 miles			•				•	Walk a section of the old wagon road in Kawuneeche Valley. Learn about mining, homesteading, and early dude ranching. Meet at Colorado River Trailhead.
<b>Cross-Country to Chickaree</b> 9 AM 3-4 hour hike starts 7/3		•					•	View this seldom-seen lake on a strenuous, half-day, off-trail hike. Bring snacks, water, hiking boots and raingear. Meet at Onahu Creek Trailhead.
<b>Mountain Wildflowers</b> 10 AM ----- 2:30 PM ----- 2 hour walk ends 7/29		•		•			•	Lovely montane flowers have unusual modes of adaptation. Meet at the Kawuneeche Visitor Center flagpole for directions to this week's flowers. Location varies.
<b>Coyote Valley River Walk</b> 10 AM ----- 2 PM ----- 1 hour walk		•				•		Explore the valley ecology and history on this easy walk along the Colorado River. Meet at Coyote Valley Trailhead.
<b>The Birds, the Bees, the Beetles</b> 2:30 PM ----- 3:30 PM ----- 1 hour walk	•				•		•	Walk through a lodgepole forest and learn the ecological role of pine beetles in park forests. Meet at the Harbison Meadow parking area.
<b>Rocky Mountain Heritage Walk</b> 2:30 PM 2 hours, 1 mile walk	•						•	Learn about prehistoric Indian people, miners and valley settlers while revisiting the Old West at an historic guest ranch. Meet at the Holzwarth Historic Site parking area.
<b>The Colorado: Life at the Source</b> 2:30 PM 1.5 hours, 1 mile walk				•		•	•	Join a ranger just miles from the source of the Colorado River. See how river and forest provide a rich habitat for plants and wildlife. Meet at Colorado River Trailhead.
<b>A Glimpse of Paradise</b> 2:30 PM 2.5 hour walk			•				•	This easy 3 mile hike passes Adams Falls and leads to spectacular views of mountains surrounding the meadows of the East Inlet. Meet at East Inlet Trailhead.

## Children's Programs

<b>A Walk Backwards</b> 9:45 AM 2 hour activity Registration required at Kawuneeche V.C.							•	Step back in time and experience life on a 1920's dude ranch—chores, games, period costumes. For children 6-12. Meet at the Holzwarth Historic Site parking lot.
<b>Come Bug a Ranger</b> 10 AM 1 hour activity				•				Learn fun facts about insects. Puppets, stories and activities for children 4-10 years old. Meet at the Holzwarth Historic Site parking lot.
<b>Web Walkers</b> 10 AM 1 hour activity			•		•			Explore a section of the Colorado River. Activities are designed for children 6-12 years old. Meet at the Coyote Valley Trailhead.

## Talks and Activities

Program & Time	Days Offered							Description
	Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa	
<b>Ranger's Flyfishing School</b> 8:30 AM 3 hour activity			•				•	Learn about the park's fish management program, stream ecology, and flycasting. Bring your flyfishing gear or borrow the ranger's. Meet at Holzwarth Historic Site parking area.
<b>Holzwarth Historic Site</b> 10 AM - 4 PM Drop-in tour	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	Buildings are open 10 AM–4 PM daily. Discuss early settlement with staff. This is a great family activity!
<b>Never Summer, Ever Summer</b> 10 AM 45-60 minutes							•	View the sun through a telescope and learn of potential effects of climate change on this park. Meet at Coyote Valley Picnic Area.
<b>Skins and Things</b> 2:30 PM 40 minute activity	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	Examine the skins, skulls, antlers, teeth and bones of many park mammals. Drop in anytime during the program. Meet at Kawuneeche Visitor Center.
<b>Exploring with a Camera</b> 3 PM 1-1.5 hour activity ends 7/31			•					Join a ranger for a photography walk. Focus on the fundamentals of composition, light, and basic tips on improving your pictures. Meet at the Timber Lake Trailhead.

## Evening Programs

<b>Beaver: Super Mammal!</b> 5:30 PM 2.5 hour walk			•					The beaver can, and does, dramatically change its landscape. Learn about this forester, engineer, architect, landscape planner. Meet at Colorado River Trailhead.
<b>Old Ranch Campfire Stories</b> 7 PM 2 hours, 1 mile walk							•	Roasting marshmallows (you bring 'em), tall tales (we tell 'em) and campfire songs (we'll all sing 'em), bring back the old days. Dress warmly and meet the old wrangler at Holzwarth Historic Site parking area.
<b>An Evening in the Park</b> 7 PM 1 hour presentation	•				•		•	Enjoy an indoor evening program in the auditorium at the Kawuneeche Visitor Center. For topics, inquire at the front desk.
<b>Walk Into Twilight</b> 8 PM through 7/28; then 7:30 PM 2 hour walk	•		•				•	Enjoy a leisurely stroll as darkness, night sounds and wildlife fill the valley. Bring warm clothes, good hiking shoes, and a flashlight. Meet at Onahu Creek Trailhead.
<b>Sunset Chat at Fleshut's</b> 7 PM 1 hour presentation					•			Enjoy an outdoor program (on various topics) at Fleshut's Cabin. Bring a lawn chair or blanket and meet at Holzwarth Historic Site parking area.
<b>Celestial Wilderness</b> 9:15 PM 6/22,6/29 9 PM thru July 8:45 PM in August 1-1.5 hour activity					•			Explore the universe and the astronomy of Rocky's night sky. Meet at Harbison Meadow parking area.

Su M Tu W Th F Sa

Su M Tu W Th F Sa

# Family-Friendly Trails and Tours

While many visitors enjoy a longer and more adventuresome hike, others prefer a different experience. The following list includes short walks and scenic drives in Rocky Mountain National Park. Many of these have an interpretive brochure, available at visitor center bookstores, and interpretive signs. Some are accessible by wheelchair. Pets are not permitted on any park trail.

## West Side

Coyote Valley Trail — level, gravel trail, interpretive signs, 1 mile round-trip, accessible, strollers permitted.

Lulu City Colorado River Trail — fairly level hiking trail, brochure (\$1.00), 7.4 miles round-trip.

Holzwarth Historic Site — level gravel trail, interpretive signs, historic buildings, brochure (\$2.00) at trailhead, 1 mile round-trip, accessible, strollers permitted.

## East Side

Sprague Lake — level, hardened trail around the lake, 0.5 miles, accessible, interpretive signs, strollers permitted.

Moraine Park Museum Nature Trail — signs and brochure (\$2.00), 0.6 miles dirt trail.

Bear Lake Nature Trail — trail around the lake, 0.6 miles, brochure (\$2.00), accessible to those able to climb short, steep grades, strollers permitted.



Lily Lake in April

Peter Allen

Lily Lake — level, gravel, 0.7 miles, accessible trail around the lake, strollers permitted, fishing pier.

Alluvial Fan — paved steep trail on both east and west sides, interpretive signs, approximately 0.2 miles from either side, strollers permitted.

Old Fall River Road — scenic, dirt road, 9 miles, one-way uphill motor nature drive, exits at Alpine Visitor Center, brochure \$2.00. Road opens in early July.

Trail Ridge Road — scenic, high-elevation paved road approximately 40 miles, self-guiding brochure Trail Ridge Road Guide (50¢) and booklet Rocky Mountain National Park Road Guide (\$8.95) available. The best access of any national park to treeless alpine tundra.

## Your Fees Improve the Park



New restrooms, refurbished campsites, rebuilt trails, educational displays, bus shelters, and many other improvements have been made to this park through use of your entrance and camping fees. A far-sighted program authorized by the U.S. Congress allows National Parks to keep the majority of entrance fees (80%) collected at their sites, and to use these fees to address huge repair, rehabilitation, and renovation needs.

Since the beginning of this program, over \$23 million dollars has been spent to make repairs, renovations and improvements throughout Rocky Mountain National Park. Examples include:

### Restrooms:

All 33 roadside vault toilets have been replaced, using a modern, well-vented, solar-assisted design.



### Campgrounds:

300 campsites in park campgrounds have new tables, grills, restrooms, graded tent platforms, graded parking, and graded walks. Much bare earth has been revegetated with native plants.

### Trails:

Degraded trail sections have been rebuilt in all parts of the park, to a standard that will last a lifetime.



### Free Shuttle Buses:

As part of free summer shuttle buses in the Bear Lake Road area, bus shelters, restrooms, and a parking lot were constructed at Park & Ride.

### Films and Displays:

A spectacular new orientation movie can now be enjoyed at Beaver Meadows and Kawuneeche Visitor Centers. 72 new roadside panels provide information on the park's natural and cultural highlights, as well as important tips on recreation and use.

## Working Together to Improve Air Quality



Air quality monitoring site

The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and the National Park Service are working together to improve the air you see and breathe in Rocky Mountain National Park (RMNP). Three concerns are primary:

**Nitrogen deposition** occurs mainly through rain or snow. Park precipitation can contain pollutants including *nitrites*, *ammonium*, and *sulfites*. Based on 23 years of scientific research, the park is experiencing elevated nitrogen levels (about 18-20 times natural background levels). If this trend continues the park could see negative effects on such natural resources as fish and beloved alpine tundra flower species.

**Ozone** comes in good and bad forms. “Good” ozone in the upper atmosphere shields the earth from damaging ultraviolet rays of the sun. “Bad” ground level ozone is formed through reactions between emissions of Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs) & Oxides of Nitrogen (NOX) combining in the presence of sunlight. At times, ozone has been measured at unhealthy levels in park air, with the potential to cause respiratory health problems in people and physical damage to plant tissue in trees such as aspen and ponderosa.

**Visibility** has been degraded through air pollutants. Without the effects of pollution, a natural visibility range in the park is 140 miles. The current average visual range for the park is 33 to 90 miles.

The future looks promising for air quality at RMNP. Through interagency collaboration, the park and its partners are developing air management policies and programs to reverse the trend of increasing nitrogen impacts to the park's natural systems. In working to keep RMNP's air safe, we are protecting a natural treasure for the delight of all that lives and breathes. 7

# Elk and Vegetation

Research has shown that the elk herd in Rocky Mountain National Park and the Estes Valley, which is estimated at between 2200 and 3000 animals, is larger, less migratory and more concentrated than it would be under natural conditions. As a result, willow and aspen stands are declining, depriving other wildlife of the important habitat they need.



Elk were abundant when the area was settled in 1860, but, through hunting, were eliminated by 1875. In 1913 and 1914, before the park was established, 28 elk from the Yellowstone National Park area were reintroduced here. By that time, the gray wolf and grizzly bear no longer occurred in the area and elk flourished in the absence of its major predator, the wolf. Concern about the size of the population first arose in the early 1930s because vegetation conditions on the elk winter range appeared to be deteriorating. From 1944 through 1968, park elk populations were controlled. Since that time, elk in the park and the surrounding Estes Valley have increased, particularly during winters.

There are three primary elk winter range areas: Moraine Park, Horseshoe Park, and the Estes Park area. To our knowledge, Moraine Park has the highest density of elk ever reported in the absence of artificial feeding (> 100 elk/km<sup>2</sup>). Similar densities have been observed in the Estes Park area. Research has demonstrated negative impacts of elk on winter vegetation, especially aspen and willow.

Elk eat all of the young aspen trees on their primary winter range. This results in overmature aspen stands with no young trees. If these effects continue, aspen on the winter range will eventually disappear or exist only in a shrub form. It is important to note that

elk effects on aspen are a localized problem specific to a few areas. Aspen throughout the majority (> 95%) of the park are not affected by elk.

Willows are large shrubs found near streams or in wetland areas. Willow distribution in Moraine Park and Horseshoe Park has declined by 20% over the last 50-60 years. The declines in these areas are correlated with a decline in beaver, loss of wetlands and an unnatural flood that destroyed many willows in Horseshoe Park. Elk currently suppress the growth and reproduction of willow on the winter range.

In April the park released a Draft Elk and Vegetation Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement. The plan assesses various management alternatives and related environmental impacts relative to managing elk and their habitat in the park. The plan will guide park management for the next 20 years. To view the 600-page plan, or for more information, please ask at park visitor centers. There have been no decisions made yet as to what alternative the park will choose to implement in managing elk and vegetation. These decisions will not be made until the results of written public comments and public meetings have been compiled and incorporated into our plan.



## Rocky Mountain Field Seminars

Educational adventures in Rocky Mountain National Park

Ask at any visitor center for a free brochure featuring descriptions, fees and registration information for more than 50 seminars this year!

### Just for Kids!

#### Nature Sketchbooks: ages 8-16

- 🐾 Fridays from June 23 - July 28 (except June 30) (9AM - 11:45AM)
- 🐾 \$15 per session (all materials *except* basic sketchbooks provided!)
- 🐾 Pre-registration recommended but not required
- 🐾 Classes meet at the Moraine Park Museum Amphitheater

#### Wild Discoveries: Fun nature classes for kids ages 8-12 (pre-registration recommended but not required.)

- 🐾 Wednesdays from July 5 - August 9 (9AM - 12:30 PM)
- 🐾 \$20 per session

#### Wild Discoveries class locations:

- July 5 - Moraine Park Museum
- July 12 - Fern Lake Trailhead
- July 19 - Hollowell Park
- July 26 - Moraine Park Museum
- August 2 - Alluvial Fan - East Parking Area
- August 9 - Upper Beaver Meadows Parking Area

### A sampling of our adult seminars

- June 20-23 Rocky Mountain Birds
- June 24 Painting the Park on Silk
- July 23 Colorado Hummingbirds
- July 30 Exploring Life on the Tundra
- Aug. 12-14 Digital Photography Highlights
- Aug. 15-16 Backcountry GPS Navigation
- Aug. 26 Trail Ridge Road Geology

Rocky Mountain Field Seminars  
Estes Park, Colorado  
(970) 586-3262

Online registration - [www.rmna.org](http://www.rmna.org)



*Emerald Lake ©Peter Allen*

# Hiking Trails



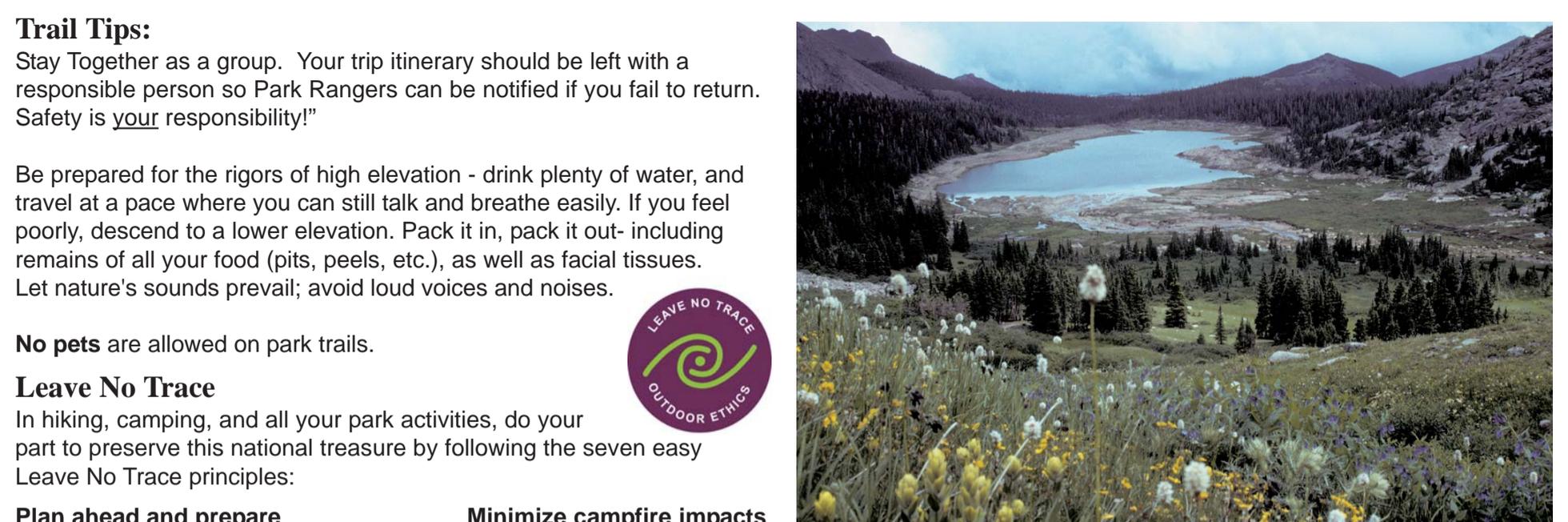
©Chris Kennedy

With over 350 miles of trails, the park offers a vast array of choices. A small selection of trails is described below. When properly equipped, hiking at Rocky Mountain National Park is often inspiring and invigorating. Trails are typically less crowded on the west side of the park (Grand Lake entrance) than on the eastern slope. Even for short day trips, be sure to pack gear for all types of weather (sun, rain, wind). Windproof/waterproof clothing is essential gear to wear or carry. Snow may remain on some trails; check at a visitor center for current conditions.



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Trail	Trailhead Location	Round Trip Distance	Elevation Gain	Cool Stuff
<b>West-side Trailheads</b>				
<b>Adams Falls</b>	<b>East Inlet</b> , located on the far east end of Grand Lake.	.6 miles	80 feet	A beautiful short hike near Grand Lake. The trail continues beyond the falls to lush meadows.
<b>Onahu Creek/Green Mountain Loop</b>	<b>Onahu Creek Trailhead</b> or <b>Green Mt. Trailhead</b> in Kawuneeche Valley	7.6 miles	1100 feet	Excellent loop trail through quiet forest and meadow, along flowing mountain creeks.
<b>Granite Falls</b>	<b>Green Mountain Trailhead</b> in Kawuneeche Valley	10.4 miles	1046 feet	Quiet forest and flowing mountain waters await. A longer loop (13.6 miles) is possible, coming out on the Onahu Creek Trail.
<b>Coyote Valley Trail</b>	<b>Coyote Valley</b> in Kawuneeche Valley	1 mile 	10 feet	Follows the bank of the Colorado River, with views of the Never Summer Mountains. Look for moose, songbirds, and wildflowers.
<b>Timber Lake</b>	<b>Timber Lake Trailhead</b> in Kawuneeche Valley	10.6 miles	2060 feet	Strenuous hike to a beautiful backcountry lake.
<b>Lulu City</b>	<b>Colorado River Trailhead</b> , north of Timber Creek Campground	7.4 miles	350 feet	A gentle trail to an historic site. A longer return loop is via the Grand Ditch to Red Mountain Trail.
<b>Little Yellowstone Canyon</b>	<b>Colorado River Trailhead</b> , north of Timber Creek Campground	9 miles	990 feet	An extension of the Lulu City hike, deeper into park wilderness
<b>Red Mountain</b>	<b>Colorado River Trailhead</b> , north of Timber Creek Campground	11 miles	2565 feet	A steep trail featuring some great views of mountains and valleys in the park.
<b>Lone Pine Lake</b>	<b>East Inlet</b> , on the far east end of Grand Lake.	11 miles	1494 feet	A longer hike near Grand Lake to a high lake. The trail continues beyond to other lakes.
<b>Cascade Falls</b>	<b>North Inlet Trail</b> off Tunnel Road in Grand Lake	6.8 miles	300 feet	A relatively level walk to Cascade Falls.
<b>Shadow Mountain Lookout</b>	East side of <b>Shadow Mountain Lake</b> , just south of Grand Lake	9.4 miles	1533 feet	Strenuous hike to an historic fire lookout with spectacular views.
<b>East Shore Trail</b>	East side of <b>Shadow Mountain Lake</b> , just south of Grand Lake	5.2 miles	100 feet	2.6 miles to Green Ridge CG; a side loop trail to Ranger Meadows reconnects with main trail, adding 1.4 miles.
<b>Trail Ridge Road Trailheads</b>				
<b>Poudre River Trail</b>	<b>Poudre River Trailhead</b> just northeast of Poudre Lake and Milner Pass on Trail Ridge Road	1-16 miles	up to 1000 feet	Gentle downstream walk through open meadows along the headwaters of a major river. Return walk is uphill.
<b>Ute Trail</b>	Across the road from <b>Alpine Visitor Center</b> , as well as other access points	1-8 miles	up to 1038 feet	Tremendous, open views above treeline; start and finish early before lightning and thunderstorms!
<b>Toll Memorial</b>	<b>Rock Cut</b> high on Trail Ridge Road	1 mile	260 feet	Beautiful displays of tundra flowers during mid-summer. Walk slowly, as this trail starts at 12,110' elevation!



©Chris Kennedy

**Trail Tips:**

Stay Together as a group. Your trip itinerary should be left with a responsible person so Park Rangers can be notified if you fail to return. Safety is your responsibility!"

Be prepared for the rigors of high elevation - drink plenty of water, and travel at a pace where you can still talk and breathe easily. If you feel poorly, descend to a lower elevation. Pack it in, pack it out- including remains of all your food (pits, peels, etc.), as well as facial tissues. Let nature's sounds prevail; avoid loud voices and noises.

**No pets** are allowed on park trails.



**Leave No Trace**

In hiking, camping, and all your park activities, do your part to preserve this national treasure by following the seven easy Leave No Trace principles:

- Plan ahead and prepare**
- Minimize campfire impacts**
- Travel and camp on durable surfaces**
- Respect Wildlife**
- Dispose of waste properly**
- Be considerate of other visitors**
- Leave what you find**

Trail	Location	Round Trip Distance	Elevation Gain	Cool Stuff
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**East-side Trailheads**

<b>Deer Mountain</b>	<b>Aspenglen Campground</b>	9 miles	1700 feet	Great views of beautiful peaks and deep valleys as you hike to the top of a peak.
<b>Deer Mountain #2</b>	<b>Deer Ridge Junction</b>	6 miles	1083 feet	A busier trailhead; also offers great views of beautiful peaks and deep valleys.
<b>Lawn Lake</b>	<b>Lawn Lake Trailhead</b>	12.4 miles	2249 feet	A challenging hike to a beautiful lake; site of a failed dam, and a restored area.
<b>Ypsilon Lake</b>	<b>Lawn Lake Trailhead</b>	9 miles	2180 feet	A steep hike to a beautiful lake.
<b>Cub Lake</b>	<b>Cub Lake</b> on Cub Lake Road near Moraine Park Campground.	4.6 miles	540 feet	Meadows, aspen groves, ponds and conifer forests highlight this walk.
<b>The Pool</b>	<b>Fern Lake Trailhead</b>	3.4 miles	245 feet	An easy, shaded hike along a stream. Continues up to Fern and Odessa Lakes.
<b>Nymph Lake</b>	<b>Bear Lake Trailhead</b>	1 mile	225 feet	Beautiful views abound on an easy hike to a small lake.
<b>Dream Lake</b>	<b>Bear Lake Trailhead</b>	2.2 miles	425 feet	Excellent short hike to a very scenic backcountry lake.
<b>Alberta Falls</b>	<b>Glacier Gorge Trailhead</b>	1.6 miles	210 feet	Easy hike to a waterfall.
<b>Mills Lake</b>	<b>Glacier Gorge Trailhead</b>	5.6 miles	750 feet	Classic day hike to a lake rimmed by mountains.
<b>The Loch</b>	<b>Glacier Gorge Trailhead</b>	6.8 miles	990 feet	A beautiful lake surrounded by tall peaks.
<b>Lily Lake</b>	<b>Lily Lake</b> on Highway 7 south of Estes Park	.8 miles	20 feet	Wildflowers, waterfowl, and greenback trout may be seen on a level walk around the lake.
<b>Estes Cone</b>	<b>Lily Lake Trailhead</b>	7.4 miles	2369 feet	Great views are a reward of this strenuous hike to the top of a peak.
<b>Twin Sisters</b>	<b>Lily Lake Trailhead</b>	7.4 miles	2338 feet	A wonderful hike to a mountain top, for those seeking a vertical challenge.
<b>Sandbeach Lake</b>	<b>Wild Basin</b> Ranger Station off Highway 7, south of Estes Park.	8.4 miles	1971 feet	A good early-summer hike, as the first part is south-facing.
<b>East Portal Loop</b>	<b>East Portal Trailhead</b> at the end of CO Rt. 66	4.5 miles	500 feet	Park only at turn-around or in picnic area, both at end of the road. Several connecting trails along the way; read trail signs carefully.
<b>Chasm Lake</b>	<b>Longs Peak Trailhead</b>	8.4 miles	2390 feet	A steep hike to a spectacular lake beneath the diamond of Longs Peak.
<b>Longs Peak</b>	<b>Longs Peak Trailhead</b>	16 miles	4855 feet	A difficult climb to the top of the park's tallest mountain. Best in mid-to-late summer. Start by 3 AM!
<b>Eugenia Mine</b>	<b>Longs Peak Trailhead</b>	2.8 miles	508 feet	An uphill hike to an abandoned mine site.



# Rocky Mountain National Park

## Free Shuttle Bus



The popular hiking trails along Bear Lake Road are served by free shuttle bus service through the summer. Park your car at Park & Ride and hop onto a free bus to the trailhead of your choice. From June 16 through October 1, shuttle buses will operate every day.

Buses will operate on the Bear Lake loop (Park & Ride to Bear Lake) every 10-15 minutes from 7 AM through 7:30 PM. During this same time period, buses will run on the Moraine Park Loop from Park & Ride to Fern Lake Trailhead every 30 minutes from 7:30 AM to 7:30 PM.

From July 1 through September 4, a shuttle will travel from the Estes Park Visitor Center to Park & Ride, with one stop at the park's Beaver Meadows Visitor Center. This bus leaves hourly from Estes Park from 9 AM until 7 PM, arriving at Park & Ride near each half-hour.

Even though your hike may be breathtaking, make sure you make it back in time for the last bus! The last bus leaves Bear Lake and Fern Lake bus stops at 7:30 PM. The last bus back to Estes Park leaves Park & Ride at 8 PM.

