

WELCOME

This visitor guide, combined with your park map, has the essential info you need for a fun, safe, and successful visit to Rocky Mountain National Park.

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Safety Is Our Number One Priority

Rocky is modifying access and visitor services to help prevent the spread of infectious diseases. Some facilities and events will be closed or canceled.

Check locally and on the park website for current information, and continue to follow CDC guidelines. Thank you for your patience and cooperation.

Come prepared. Visitor services are limited. A reduced number of visitors will be allowed in facilities at a given time.

Face masks are required inside all visitor facilities, and when in areas where social distancing cannot be maintained. This includes narrow or busy trails, parking lots, pull-offs, and overlooks.

Maintain social distancing of six feet whenever possible, especially in busy areas.

Follow current local, state, and national health guidance:

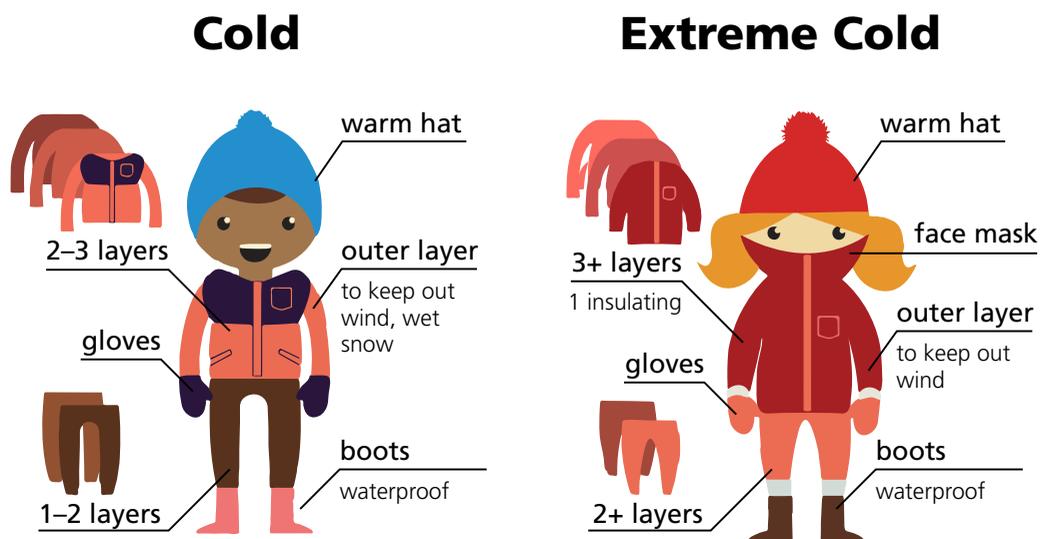
- **If you're sick, don't visit the park.**
- Wash your hands with soap and water or use hand sanitizer.
- Avoid touching your face.
- Sneeze or cough into a tissue or the inside of your elbow.

Dress for Success

With the right clothing and gear, the mountains are an incredible place for winter adventures. Without them, winter in the mountains is extremely dangerous.

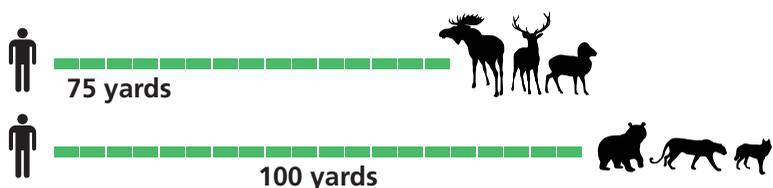
Hypothermia is a serious risk. Watch for sleepiness, impaired judgment, lots of shivering, and slurred speech.

Get a grip! Traction devices are always recommended when walking on ice and packed snow.



Never Approach Wildlife

Keep a safe distance from wildlife—it's the law.



Never feed wildlife, including birds and chipmunks. It's illegal. It makes the animals unhealthy. You could be bitten, scratched, kicked, thrown, or trampled.

If you see a bear or mountain lion, stop, stay calm, and back away. Never turn your back or run away. Stand tall and raise your arms to look large. Pick up small children.

Weather and Altitude

Winters at Rocky are extreme, with very cold temperatures, howling winds, feet of snow, and conditions that can change suddenly.

Avalanches can be easily triggered when traveling in the wilderness. The park doesn't do any avalanche control. For current conditions, check locally or visit colorado.gov/avalanche

Altitude sickness affects many visitors every year. Symptoms include headache, nausea, fatigue, dizziness, vomiting, and even unconsciousness. Altitude can also aggravate preexisting conditions like heart and lung disease. Take your time, drink water, eat, and rest. The only cure for altitude sickness is to go down to a lower altitude.

Food, Water, Restrooms, and Roads

There are no food services in the park at this time of year. Food is available in the park's gateway communities.

Safe-to-drink water is available at some facilities. Don't assume water will be available at your destination. Water from lakes and streams isn't safe to drink unless you treat or filter it first.

Limited trailhead and facility restrooms that meet public health guidance will be open. If you have to go but aren't near a restroom, you must step well away from the trail and water sources, bury your waste at least six inches deep or pack it out in a bag, and carry out your toilet paper.

Smaller park roads, Old Fall River Road, and most of Trail Ridge Road are closed. Winter driving conditions are possible at any time—be prepared. Bear Lake Road and other major paved roads remain open (weather permitting).

Driving between Estes Park and Grand Lake requires a significant detour.

CONTACT

Hidden Valley
Snowplay Status
970 586-1333

Park Information
970 586-1206

Emergencies
Call or text 911

Website
nps.gov/romo

Social Media
[@RockyNPS](https://twitter.com/RockyNPS)

Visitor Centers

Park rangers may be available at the following visitor centers:

- Beaver Meadows
- Kawuneeche

A reduced number of visitors will be allowed in facilities at a given time. Call the Information Office for the latest info: 970-586-1206

Rocky Mountain Conservancy nature stores are open at the following visitor centers:

- Beaver Meadows
- Fall River
- Kawuneeche

Rocky-themed merchandise can also be purchased online: rmconservancy.org.



Great Horned Owlets

Rocky Pocket Ranger

No ranger-led programs are being offered this winter.

As an alternative, we've created a Rocky Pocket Ranger, a collection of fun activities for all ages to help you learn about and explore the park. Go to the next page to begin your adventure.

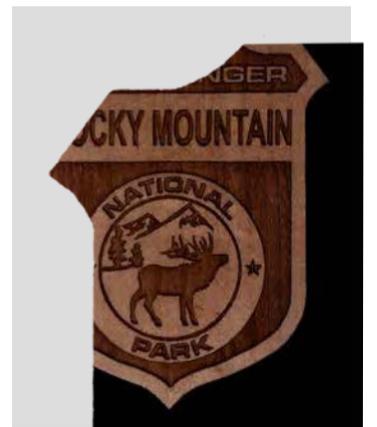


Spruce tree cones

Become a Junior Ranger

Junior Rangers at Rocky have fun discovering the natural world and learning why we need to protect our national parks. We need the help of all our rangers to keep Rocky protected for many years to come!

There are activity books for kids ages 5 and under, 6-8, and 9+. Learn more at go.nps.gov/RockyJr.



Watch Wildlife

All animals at Rocky are wild and unpredictable. They are not pets. Never feed or approach wildlife: you could be hurt or issued a fine (learn more on front page).

If stopping a vehicle to view wildlife, pull all the way off the road, with all four wheels past the white line. Do not park on vegetation.

Visit go.nps.gov/RockyWildlife for more info.



Elk



Bighorn Sheep



Mule Deer



Black Bear



Coyote

And More...

Bicycling

Bicycles are allowed on all roads open to motor vehicles unless otherwise posted. You must ride single file. They aren't allowed on trails except the East Shore Trail near Grand Lake. Learn more: go.nps.gov/RockyBicycling.

Camping

Overnight stays must be in a campground or designated wilderness site. A portion of Moraine Campground is open first-come, first-served in winter. Learn more about summer 2021 camping: go.nps.gov/RockyCamping.

Fishing

A Colorado state fishing license is required. Trout in the park include brown, brook, rainbow, and cutthroat. Not all park lakes have reproducing populations. Learn more: go.nps.gov/RockyFishing.

Holzwarth Historic Site

Once a lodge, this historic site on the park's west side is now preserved for your enjoyment. Explore the grounds and read educational signage on a short walk. Learn more: go.nps.gov/Holzwarth.

Horseback Riding

Horses have been part of Rocky's tradition since its designation in 1915. Horses, mules, ponies, llamas, and burros are allowed on park trails. No goats are allowed on park trails. Learn more: go.nps.gov/RockyHorses.

Wilderness Camping

Overnight wilderness stays in winter are a serious endeavor, requiring significant skill and planning. To learn more, visit the Beaver Meadows Wilderness Office or visit go.nps.gov/RockyWildernessCamping.

ACTIVITY TIPS

When you head outdoors, you leave behind established food, water, and restroom facilities; shelter from sun, wind, and weather; and easy access to emergency services.

Before heading to the park:

- ✓ **Be prepared.** Bring the right gear: layers of clothing, warm outer layers, sunglasses and sunscreen, and lots of water and snacks.
- ✓ **Don't rely on cell phones.** Many areas have no service.
- ✓ **Carry a map and compass (or GPS) and know how to use them.**
- ✓ **Leave pets at home.** Pets are prohibited on all park trails.
- ✓ **Discuss your plans with family, friends, and park staff at visitor centers.**

Navigating in winter can be hard. Use these tips for a safe trip:

- ✓ **Snowshoes and traction devices are recommended during winter and spring.**
- ✓ **Park trails are not marked or maintained for winter use. Route-finding skills are important. Don't rely on other's tracks which can lead you astray.**
- ✓ **Snow-covered landscapes look very different than in summer. Snow can be deep once you are off-trail.**
- ✓ **Streams and lakes can have thin ice and be very dangerous.**
- ✓ **Be avalanche aware. Visit colorado.gov/avalanche for the latest forecast.**
- ✓ **Weather and trail conditions can change quickly as snow falls and melts. Always be willing to turn around.**

Recommended Routes

TRAILHEAD	DESTINATION	DISTANCE (ONE WAY)	DIFFICULTY	FEATURES
Bear Lake	Bierstadt Lake	1.6 mi	Moderate	Dense spruce-fir forest; ends at a lake surrounded by spruce and fir trees.
	Emerald Lake	1.8 mi	Strenuous	Landscape views of the iconic Longs Peak; Two named lakes along the way - Nymph and Dream.
Deer Mountain	Deer Mountain	3.0 mi	Strenuous	Switchbacks through trees with a great view of the park.
Wild Basin <i>Distances are from winter recreation parking</i>	Copeland Falls	1.5 mi	Easy	Follow a winding river through pine and aspen forests to a waterfall.
	Calypso Cascade	3 mi	Moderate	Follow a winding river through pine and aspen forests to a waterfall. Copeland Falls is on the way.
	Ouzel Falls	3.9 mi	Moderate	Follow a winding river through pine and aspen forests to a waterfall. Copeland Falls and Calypso Cascade are along the way.
Fall River Road	Picnic Area	~1 mi	Easy / Flat	Snowshoe along a road through thick aspen trees and a densely wooded forest to a picnic area.
East Inlet	Meadow Overlook	0.5 mi	Easy	Snowshoe past the frozen and snow covered Adams Falls to a meadow with views of Mount Craig and surrounding peaks.
Green Mountain	Big Meadows	1.8 mi	Moderate	Snowshoe through the lodgepole pine forest to scenic Big Meadows.
Coyote Valley	Kawuneeche Valley	0.5 mi	Easy	Snowshoe through the forest and across the Colorado River to explore the Kawuneeche Valley with views of the Never Summer Mountains.
Holzwarth Historic Site	Historic Homestead	0.5 mi	Easy	Snowshoe across the Kawuneeche Valley to explore the historic homestead and 1920's era dude ranch.
Colorado River	Lulu City Site	3.7 mi	Moderate	Snowshoe along the Colorado River, through forests and meadows, to the site of Lulu City. Route traverses avalanche terrain.

The Keyhole Route to the summit of Longs Peak is NOT a hike. It's a climb that crosses huge vertical rock faces and requires scrambling where an unroped fall would likely be fatal. Do not take this climb lightly—especially in winter.

The terrain requires a high level of fitness and route-finding skills. Visitors have been injured and even died on this route. Injuries requiring rescue are very dangerous and take hours, if not days, to evacuate.

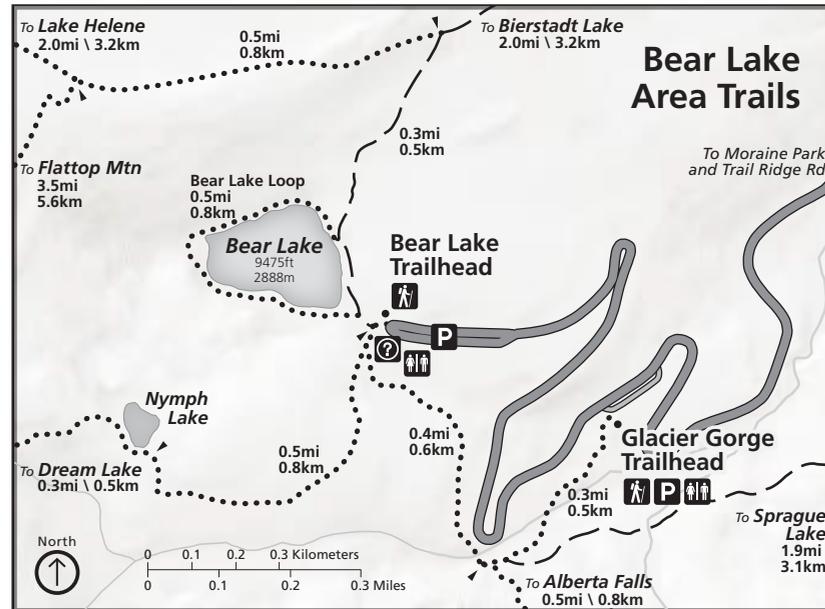
Detailed info is available at go.nps.gov/LongsPeak.



Longs Peak

Bear Lake Corridor Trails

Rocky can be busy on winter weekends. Congestion on roads, in parking areas, and along popular trails is possible. Parking areas can fill by mid-morning. Consider carpooling to the trailhead.



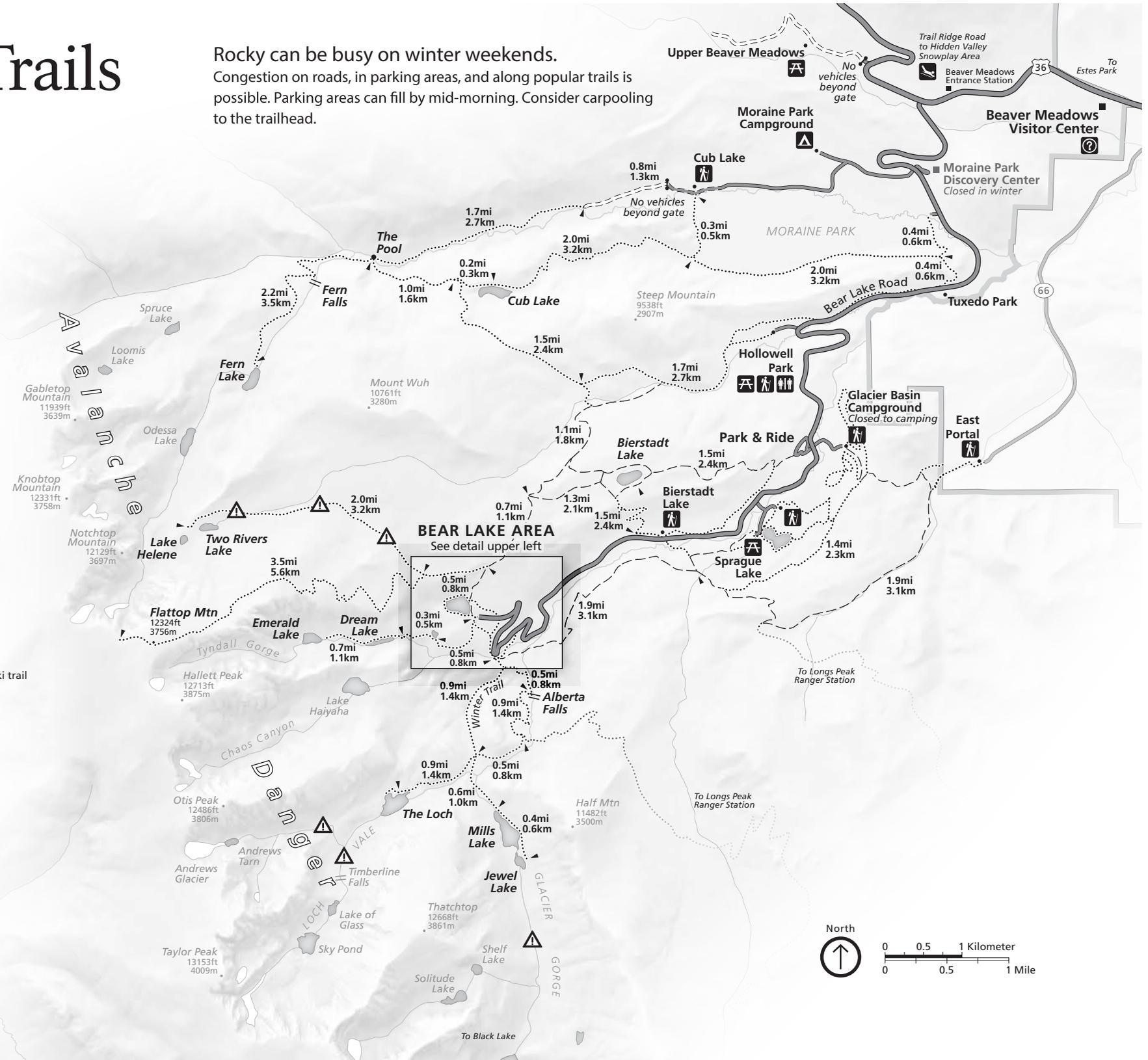
DESTINATION	DISTANCE		ELEVATION GAIN	
	mi	km	ft	m
one way from nearest TH				
Alberta Falls	0.8	1.3	160	49
Bear Lake Loop	0.5	0.8	20	6
Bierstadt Lake <small>from Bear Lake Trailhead</small>	2.3	3.7	-34	-10
Cub Lake	2.3	3.7	540	165
Dream Lake	0.8	1.3	425	130
Emerald Lake	1.5	2.4	605	184
Fern Lake	3.8	6.1	1,375	419
Lake Helene	2.9	4.7	1,215	370
Mills Lake	1.8	2.9	750	229
Nymph Lake	0.5	0.8	225	69
Sprague Lake Loop	0.5	0.8	20	6
The Loch	2.1	3.4	990	302
The Pool	2.5	4.0	245	75

All Glacier Gorge trails can be accessed from Bear Lake. Add 0.1 miles to trail distance.

Shuttle buses do not operate in winter.

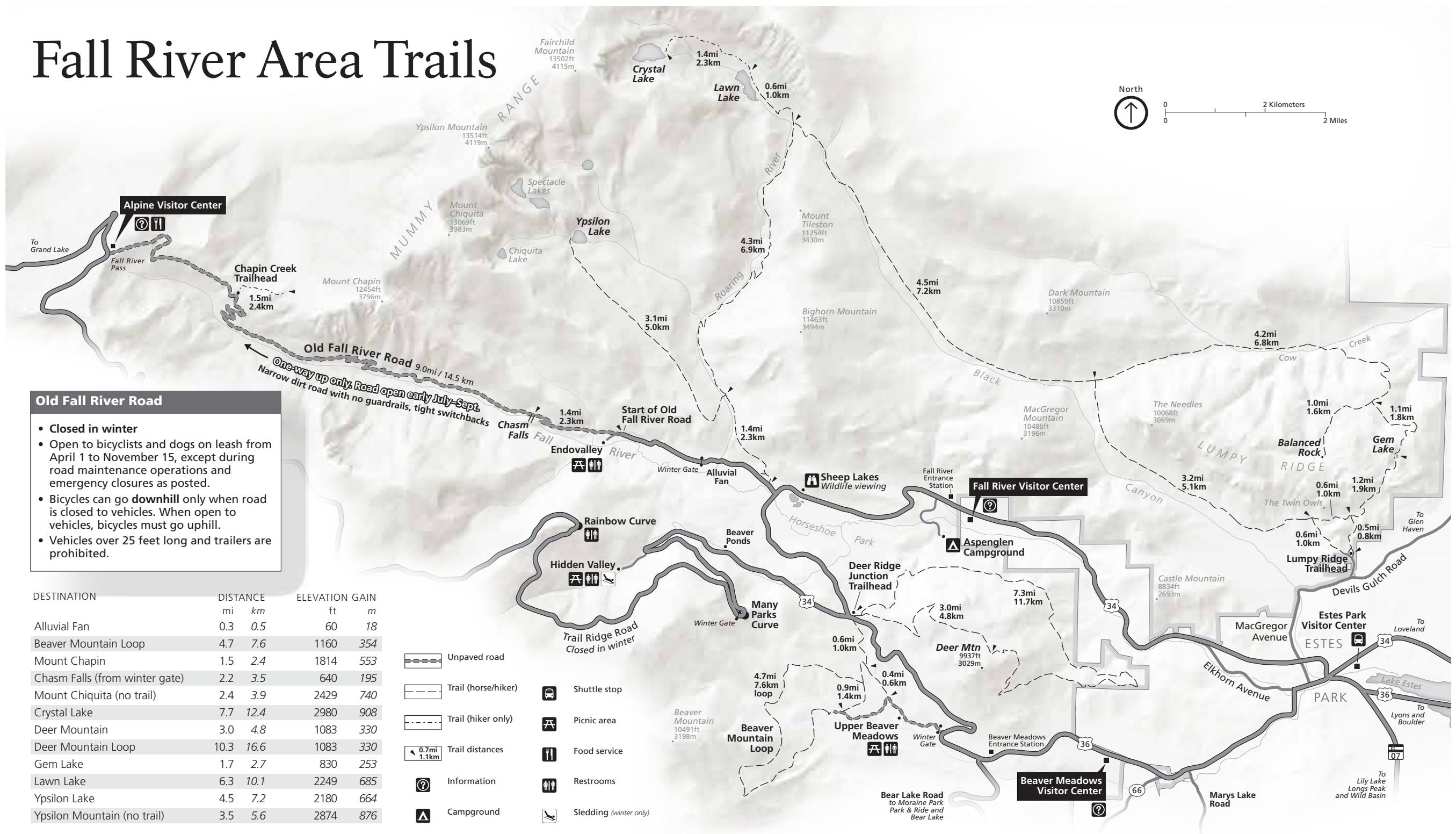
High risk avalanche areas are marked, but avalanches can happen almost anywhere in this area.

- Unpaved road
- Closed road
- Trail
- Marked crosscountry ski trail
MARKERS NOT MAINTAINED
- Trail distances
0.7mi 1.1km
- High avalanche risk
- Trailhead
- Information
- Picnic area
- Campground
- Parking
- Restrooms



Route Guide

Fall River Area Trails



Old Fall River Road

- Closed in winter
- Open to bicyclists and dogs on leash from April 1 to November 15, except during road maintenance operations and emergency closures as posted.
- Bicycles can go downhill only when road is closed to vehicles. When open to vehicles, bicycles must go uphill.
- Vehicles over 25 feet long and trailers are prohibited.

DESTINATION	DISTANCE		ELEVATION GAIN	
	mi	km	ft	m
Alluvial Fan	0.3	0.5	60	18
Beaver Mountain Loop	4.7	7.6	1160	354
Mount Chapin	1.5	2.4	1814	553
Chasm Falls (from winter gate)	2.2	3.5	640	195
Mount Chiquita (no trail)	2.4	3.9	2429	740
Crystal Lake	7.7	12.4	2980	908
Deer Mountain	3.0	4.8	1083	330
Deer Mountain Loop	10.3	16.6	1083	330
Gem Lake	1.7	2.7	830	253
Lawn Lake	6.3	10.1	2249	685
Ypsilon Lake	4.5	7.2	2180	664
Ypsilon Mountain (no trail)	3.5	5.6	2874	876

- Unpaved road
- Trail (horse/hiker)
- Trail (hiker only)
- Trail distances
- Information
- Campground
- Shuttle stop
- Picnic area
- Food service
- Restrooms
- Sledding (winter only)

All distances are one way from nearest trailhead.

View Wildlife

Seeing wildlife in winter is a thrill. Bring your field guides, binoculars, and cameras.

- ✓ Elk and mule deer are most active at dawn and dusk and are usually seen in meadows like Horseshoe Park, Moraine Park and Harbison Meadow.
- ✓ Moose are best found along the Colorado River on the park's west side.
- ✓ Bighorn sheep may be seen along the Highway 34/Fall River corridor on the park's east side.
- ✓ Coyotes may be seen any time of day.
- ✓ Black-billed magpies, Steller's jays, and Clark's nutcrackers are some of our year-round birds.

Sled

Want to sled? Go to the only place in the park it's allowed: Hidden Valley! No tows are provided up this fairly gentle hill, so you'll get a workout as you walk your sled, saucer, or tube up the slope and then enjoy a breather on the fun ride down.

Restrooms are available by the parking lot. Stay alert: skiers, snowboarders, and snowshoers may pass through. Park rangers and volunteers aren't always on duty; sled at your own risk. For status call 970-586-1333.

Cross-country Ski

Picture yourself gliding through a silent forest full of fresh, white snow. Cross-country skiing is a rejuvenating sport that pairs exercise with the beauty of nature.

In general, cross-country skiing is easier on the west side of the park (gentler terrain and deeper snow). However, you're welcome to strap on your skis throughout the park. Skis and poles with large baskets are required. Waterproof pants or gaiters help keep you warm and dry. Skiers must be in control at all times and give notice when approaching others on the trail.

Hike

Believe it or not, it's still possible to hike in winter. Lower-elevation trails on the park's east side are often free of deep snow.

While skis or snowshoes aren't required, packed snow and ice can be extremely slippery. Stabilizer devices and poles are highly recommended to prevent dangerous falls and make your hike safe and enjoyable. Stay away from dangerous slopes and snowfields. When in doubt, turn around.

Snowshoe

Ever thought: I'd like to hike in the winter and see the park's beautiful backcountry, but there's all that snow? Consider snowshoeing!

Snowshoes, waterproof boots, and layers of clothing are essential. While optional, poles help maintain balance, and waterproof pants or gaiters help keep you warm and dry. Park trails are not marked or maintained in winter. Route finding skills are important. Don't rely on other's tracks which can lead you astray.

Backcountry Ski/Ride

For the experienced and well-prepared, Rocky's steep terrain provides many opportunities for backcountry skiers and snowboarders. (Skiing and snowboarding are not allowed in the Hidden Valley snowplay area. You may pass through, but slow down and yield the right of way to sledgers.)

Be prepared for variable snow conditions and harsh weather. Much of the park is in avalanche terrain. Check the avalanche forecast at avalanche.state.co.us. At a minimum, carry an avalanche beacon, probe, and shovel, and know how to use them. Be self-reliant. Your safety is your responsibility.

Notes and Tips

Dress for Success

See the front page for clothing recommendations. Even though it might be cold, the sun is still intense at elevation, especially when reflecting off snow. Don't forget sunglasses and sunscreen when you venture out.

Know Where You Are

Navigating in winter can be extremely difficult. Park trails are not marked for winter use, and you can't depend on others' tracks. Have and know how to use a topographic map and compass. When used correctly, GPS units can be very helpful. Don't rely on cell phones; service is unreliable.

What If I Don't Have My Own Equipment?

You can rent or purchase equipment in Estes Park and Grand Lake, including snowshoes, cross-country skis, poles, boots, sleds, tubes, saucers, gaiters, and stabilizers.



Snowshoeing is always an adventure!

 **Avalanches can be easily triggered by backcountry travelers. Educate yourself and stay alert.** 

“Spring” in Rocky May Surprise You

When you think of spring what comes to mind? Feet of snow, ice, howling winds, and winter storm warnings? No? Then spring in Rocky might surprise you!

As elevation increases, average annual temperature decreases. With even the lowest parts of the park sitting above 7,000 feet (2,130 m), this means that sub-freezing temperatures often extend into June (and in the high mountains, year-round).

This also means that, even though there may be little or no snow and somewhat warm temps near park entrances, conditions will quickly change as you drive farther into the park.

Still, while spring here might be different than what you’re used to, it still shows its beautiful signs. And with the proper planning, it’s a great season to visit. Read on to learn more about how to have a safe, memorable visit.



Sprague Lake in April

The Right Stuff

Spring is a time of change. Weather shifts rapidly. Trails are different from mile to mile and day to day. When hiking in spring, bring the right gear so that you’ll be safe and comfortable in whatever conditions greet you during your visit. Bring:

- ✓ Multiple warm layers. Adjust to ever-changing conditions by shedding and donning layers as needed.
- ✓ A warm hat and gloves. You’ll be glad you have them!
- ✓ Warm waterproof shoes. Snow, slush, and mud are common in spring—often all on the same trail.

- ✓ Wind- and waterproof outer layers. Strong, bitterly-cold wind is common in Rocky. Heavy, wet snow—whether falling from the sky or melting off of trees—and rain are always a possibility.
- ✓ A thick coat. When the weather shifts and the going gets tough, being able to throw on a big, warm coat during rest stops can be a lifesaver.
- ✓ Traction devices (see photo at right). Packed snow and ice are common throughout the park and can cause dangerous slips and falls. Traction devices give you piece of mind and can help you reach your hiking objectives.



An example traction device.

Signs of the Season



Spring runoff under snow.



Pasqueflowers, the first flowers to bloom in spring.



Mountain bluebirds, one of the first migratory birds to return.



Fresh May snow dusts ponderosa pine needles.

Safety and Regulations

It is your responsibility to be safe and to know and obey park rules. You can find park safety information, rules, and regulations at visitor centers, entrance stations, trailhead bulletin boards, and the park website at nps.gov/romo.

 **Campfires are permitted only in campgrounds and picnic areas with fire grates.** During high fire danger, campfires may be prohibited. Collecting vegetation, dead or alive, is prohibited. Extinguish and dispose of charcoal and ash.

Cell service is unavailable in much of the park. Don't depend on a cell phone for emergency help.

Drones are not allowed anywhere in Rocky Mountain National Park. This includes launching, landing, and operating drones.

 **Falling trees are an ever-present hazard and can fall without warning.** Be extra careful around dead trees when it's windy or following a snowstorm.

 **Firearm possession** in the park is permitted for those legally authorized to possess firearms under federal, Colorado, or local laws. However, hunting, recreational shooting, and target practice are illegal. Federal law prohibits firearms in park buildings and facilities. Those legally allowed to carry firearms must comply with all applicable state and federal firearm laws.

 **Marijuana possession and use is illegal in Rocky Mountain National Park and all federal lands,** even though small amounts of recreational marijuana are legal in Colorado.

 **Pets are prohibited on ALL park trails, tundra, and meadow areas.** Leashed pets are only allowed in picnic areas, parking lots, campgrounds, and along roadsides. Never leave pets in vehicles if it puts them in danger or they become a public nuisance. When outside vehicles, pets must be on leashes no longer than six feet. Pets may not be left tied to vehicles, trees, or other objects. Service animals that have been individually trained to perform specific tasks for the benefit of persons with disabilities are allowed in the park.

Emotional support (“therapy animals”) and service-animals-in-training are not service animals under the Americans with Disabilities Act and may not access trails or other non-motorized areas.

 **Rivers and streams can be deadly.** Park waters are frigid. Powerful currents can knock you over and pull you downstream or underwater, where you may become trapped. Streamside rocks are often slippery, and nearby water may be deep. Always closely supervise children around all water but especially near rivers and streams.

 **Take only pictures.** It is illegal to take any natural features including pinecones, rocks, antlers, and artifacts or to disturb soil, rocks, or vegetation (including flowers). Metal detector use is prohibited.

 **Wilderness travel** should be done in a group, not alone. Leave a detailed trip itinerary with a friend—this helps park authorities if you fail to return. Mountain weather changes quickly. If conditions are more difficult than anticipated, turn around. Camping is only allowed in designated sites with a permit.



An on-snow hike to Dream and Emerald lakes using poles and traction devices.

Snowy Adventures!

Animals in Winter

When the weather becomes cold, snowy, and windy during Rocky's winter months animals need to adjust their behavior.

Some, like the elk, **migrate**. They move down to lower elevations where the weather is warmer and food is more abundant.

Others, like black bears and marmots, **hibernate**. They spend the winter in a dormant state, remaining inactive to conserve energy.

Animals like coyotes, deer mice, and snowshoe hares endure the winter. These critters are **tolerators** who adapt to survive harsh winter conditions.

Think: would you rather be a migrator, hibernator, or tolerator? Why?

Whose Footprints?

Rocky's winter tolerators leave clues for us by creating distinct patterns of footprints in the snow. Following these tracks can help us learn more about their behavior and daily activities.

Hopper	Loper	Walker
● ●	● ●	●
● ●	● ●	●
● ●	● ●	●
● ●	● ●	●
● ●	● ●	●
		
Snowshoe Hare	Mule Deer	Coyote

Hike a trail and see how many critters' tracks you can find in the snow. Are they a walker, loper, or hopper? What kind of animal made these tracks?

Life Beneath the Snow

We can discover evidence of tolerators above the snow by finding their tracks or searching for caches of food. But some tolerators, like deer mice, retreat below for protection from harsh winds, bitter cold, and hungry predators.

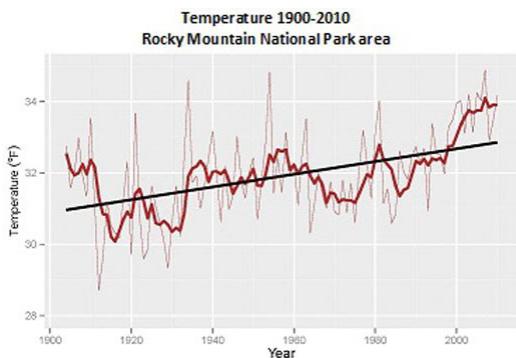
The **subnivean** zone describes the area between the ground and the bottom of the snowpack. This area is well-insulated. The snow acts like a heavy blanket, keeping the creatures warm and hidden.



Snowy alpine

Play in the snow! Do you feel warmer out in the open, or covered up under by a blanket of snow?

Changing Times



Animals in Rocky are adapted to winter conditions. How might warming temperatures impact their lives?

Have you been here before? What changes have you seen? Write your own predictions about how life in Rocky may change over the next 20-50 years.

Half the Park is After Dark

The Sky Tells a Story

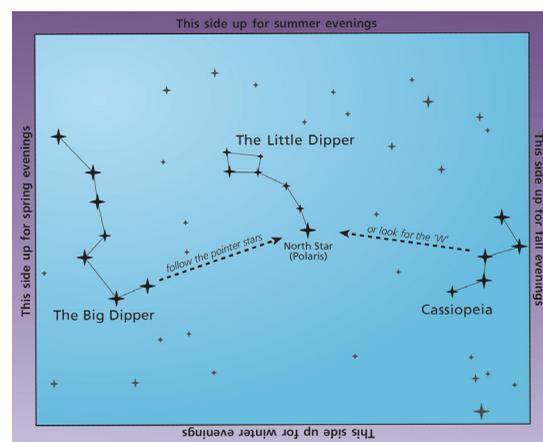
The moon and stars have inspired humans for thousands of years. People told stories about the shapes they saw in the stars—stories about things that were important to them and lessons about how to behave and treat others.

What do you wonder when you stare at a sky littered with thousands of stars?

If you could draw your own constellation, what story would you write in the night sky?

Find the North Star

The North Star, also known as Polaris, is very near the celestial pole (if you were standing at the North Pole, it would appear directly overhead). Though you might expect it to be one of the brighter stars in the sky, it's actually dim enough to be tricky to find. Luckily, if you can spot the Big Dipper, you can use it to navigate to the north star using the "pointer stars" at the bottom of the dipper.



Noticing Winter

Find a quiet place to sit—beside your car, at a picnic table—during dawn or dusk. Take notice of your senses to get a whole new picture of the world around you.

How does snow form?

Snow forms when droplets of water in clouds freeze into ice crystals. This happens when clouds are colder than 15°F! As the ice crystals stick together, they become too heavy for the cloud and fall to the ground.

As they fall, they may pass through warmer air causing a slight melting affect. If they melt too much, this causes sleet. If the air is cooler, the crystals will bond together forming large fluffy flakes. Temperature, air currents, and humidity influence the shape of the ice crystals, so each snowflake is unique.

If you can, catch a snowflake or pick some up from the ground.

- What does it look like? Can you see the different flakes?
- Why do you think it looks that way?
- Does it look like it will snow more today? What observations are making you determine that answer?
- Does snow feel or act differently under trees and in meadows? Why do you think that is?



Snow-covered Ponderosa pine tree

Practice Intentional Curiosity

Record your thoughts at right:

“I notice...”

Look closely. Are there animal tracks in the snow? Is steam coming off the nearby stream? What are the clouds doing? What patterns do you see in the trees?

“I wonder...”

Ask questions about what you’ve noticed. Say them out loud to yourself or a friend. What do you want to know more about?

“It reminds me of...”

What associations come to mind? An event? An object? A memory? Tying what you know with what you experience may help you retain this moment...and help you share it with others.

Sensory Overload

Vision

Your eyes have two kinds of light receptors: rods and cones. Cones work best in strong light and pick up colors. Rods work better in dim light but don’t pick up colors.

As the light changes in shadows, look at your clothing or the clothing of your friends. Can you tell what color it is?

If you had to pick, would you want only rods or only cones for your eyes? What kind of sight would you want?

Smell

Smells are really just a combination of chemicals. When the chemicals join up in different ways, we smell different things. Moisture created by dogs’ noses helps them capture different chemicals in the air and smell better.

Close your eyes and take a deep breath through your nose. What do you smell? Water? Dirt? Pine? Where is the smell coming from? Is it cool or warm?

Hearing

Think about the ears of an elk or a mountain lion. How are they shaped? Do they swivel? Why might good hearing help these animals?

Sit quietly and listen. Count five things you can hear.

Now cup your hands around the back of your ears with palms facing forward. Listen again. Can you hear anything more? Would you be able to rely on your hearing for survival at night?



Hidden Valley in winter



Young deer in snow

Rocky by the Numbers

Everyone wants to know Rocky's vital statistics.

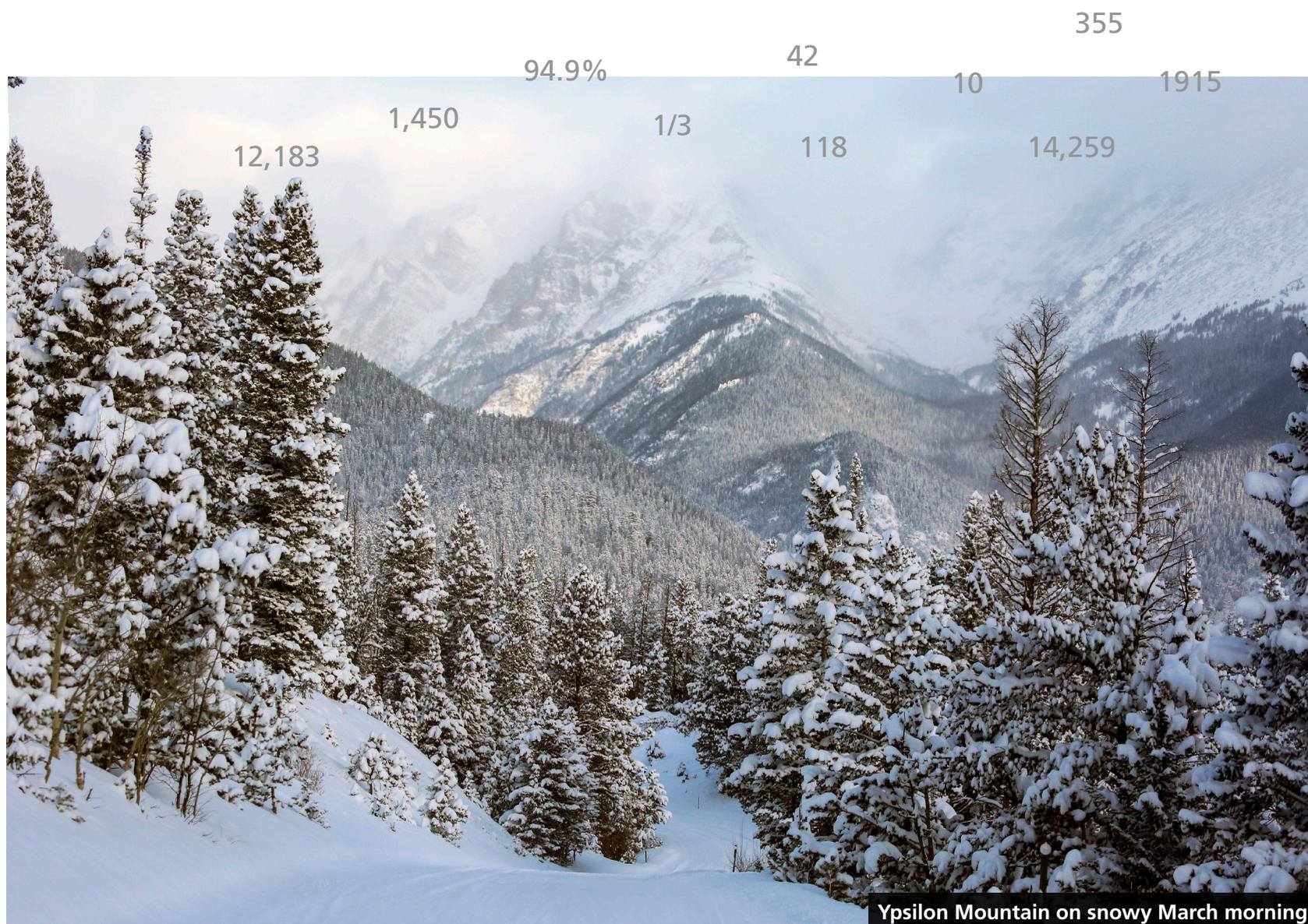
Each blank needs a number. Find the answers in your park map and this information guide, or ask park staff.

What's more, we've given you the answers: the numbers at bottom.

- Rocky Mountain National Park was established in _____.
- Fragile alpine tundra encompasses _____ of Rocky Mountain National Park, one of the largest examples of alpine tundra ecosystems protected in the contiguous United States.
- The dramatic elevation range within the park boundary, which spans from 7,600 feet to _____ feet and straddles the Continental Divide, allows for diverse terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems, varied plant and animal communities, and a variety of ecological processes.
- On March 30, 2009, _____ of the park was designated as Wilderness—which means it is managed with the highest level of Federal protection afforded to public lands.
- Rocky Mountain National Park has _____ peaks higher than 10,000 feet.
- The mighty Colorado River starts its _____-mile length in RMNP. It drains seven U.S. and two Mexican states on its way to the Gulf of California, and passes through six more National Park Service areas: Arches National Park (UT), Canyonlands National Park (UT), Glen Canyon National Recreation Area (AZ/UT), Rainbow Bridge National Monument (UT), Grand Canyon National Park (AZ), and Lake Mead National Recreation Area (AZ/NV).
- The Continental Divide angles through RMNP for _____ miles northwest to south-central from the Never Summer Mountains' ridge tops, south at La Poudre Pass, across Trail Ridge Road at Milner Pass, elevation 10,758 ft/3,548 m, through the park's core, and exits at Ogallala Peak on the park's southern boundary.
- Approximately _____ miles of hiking trails explore the park.
- Trail Ridge Road is the highest continuous paved highway in North America with its high point at _____ feet.
- The _____ Essentials are the things you need to take with you whenever you are hiking.

Fill in your own statistics!

- Year of your first visit to Rocky Mountain National Park: _____
- Miles of trail hiked on this trip (And how many total over time?): _____
- Number of animal species seen on this trip: _____
- Number of flower species seen on this trip: _____
- Highest elevation visited on this trip (Driven? Hiked?): _____



Ypsilon Mountain on snowy March morning

Wild at Heart

Wilderness...

the word has different meanings to different people, but here in Rocky Mountain National Park, wilderness is something special. On April 9, 2009, nearly 250,000 acres of the park were permanently protected as the Rocky Mountain National Park Wilderness Area.

Before the act, of the park's approximately 265,000 acres, only 2,917 acres had been officially designated by Congress as Wilderness. The Omnibus Public Lands Management Act of 2009 was the culmination of efforts begun in 1974 by wilderness advocates (see illustration at top-right of your park map).

Wilderness, according to the Wilderness Act, "...in contrast with those areas where man and his own works dominate the landscape, is hereby recognized as an area where the earth and its community

of life are untrammelled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain." The Wilderness Act goes on to describe wilderness as a place "retaining its primeval character and influence" where there are "outstanding opportunities for solitude."

Wilderness holds different value to different people. Think about the questions below and discuss them with friends or family.

- **What does "wild" mean to you?** Write your definition below:

- **Is Rocky Mountain National Park a "wild" place?** Why or why not?
- **Is there value to something being "wild"?** Why or why not?
- **What makes an animal "wild"?** Do we treat wild animals differently?
- **Of the following animals found in Rocky Mountain National Park, which ones do you consider "wild"?** Why?
 - Chipmunk
 - Marmot
 - Deer
 - Moose
 - Bear
 - Mountain Lion

Remember: treat all animals in Rocky with respect. Don't feed any animals and maintain a safe distance (see front page).

Take the Rocky Pledge

The Rocky Pledge

"To preserve unimpaired for this and future generations the beauty, history, and wildness therein, I pledge to protect Rocky Mountain National Park."

- I pledge to never build a fire outside of a campground or picnic area fire ring.
- I pledge to park only on designated asphalt or gravel parking areas.
- If I need to go but am not near a restroom, I pledge to leave no trace by stepping at least 70 steps from the trail and water sources, burying my waste at least six inches deep or packing it out in a waste bag, and carrying out my toilet paper.
- I pledge to watch wildlife from a distance that doesn't disturb them in any way. I will never feed wildlife—doing so causes them harm.



PLEDGE
to
PROTECT

Rocky Mountain National Park
#rockypledge

- I pledge to remove nothing from the park except my own and others' trash. I will leave no trace of my visit so that the next person can experience the same beauty as I did.
- I pledge to keep my leashed pet only on roads, in campgrounds, and in picnic and parking areas. I will never take my dog on Rocky's trails, meadows, or tundra areas.
- I pledge to honor, respect, and protect all our national parks and public lands.

Take a photo of yourself protecting Rocky and post it to social media tagged #rockypledge!

File a Trail Report

On _____, I hiked the _____ Trail at ____ am/pm. My thoughts about the hike: _____

- I carried the right gear (see front page and page 11).
- I stepped at least 70 steps off the trail if I had to use the bathroom.
- I didn't feed wildlife and watched them from a safe distance.

- I removed nothing from the park except trash.
- I followed social distancing guidelines.

Send us an image of your visit!
romo_information@nps.gov