

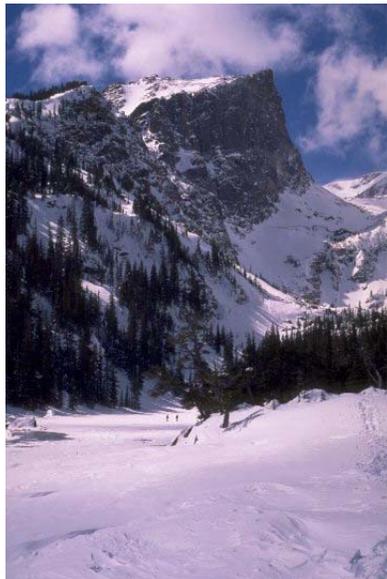


Rocky Mountain National Park

Resources Rendezvous



December 2004



*Winter, a lingering season, is a time
to gather golden moments,
embark upon a sentimental journey,
and enjoy every idle hour.*

-John Boswell

*Thank you for helping to protect this great national park.
We wish you a beautiful and joyful Holiday Season
and a Happy New Year!*

- The Staff of Rocky Mountain National Park

Welcome to winter at Rocky Mountain National Park. Although we have fewer visitors in the wintertime, staff are very busy with many important projects, some of which are highlighted here. Also, we have some exciting things to tell you about, including Volunteer accomplishments for 2004, AEDs in the park, a Unit Citation Award from the Secretary of the Interior, and much more.

Enjoy an update on what's happening at Rocky Mountain National Park and enjoy your Holiday Season. All the best to you in the New Year.

Vaughn

Vaughn Baker
Superintendent



Bear Lake Road Reconstruction Project is Completed – On Time and On Budget

By Kyle Patterson, Management Specialist – Public Affairs

On Friday, October 8, 2004, the 4.3 miles of Bear Lake Road in Rocky Mountain National Park that had been under reconstruction, reopened to private vehicles. Bear Lake Road is one of the most popular scenic roads in Rocky Mountain National Park and provides year-round visitor access to a variety of wonderful recreational opportunities. The Bear Lake Road Reconstruction project began in 2003.

Bear Lake Road was completed in 1928 and no significant improvements were made for 75 years. The project improved the road surface and widened the road two feet to accommodate park shuttle buses. The project also corrected structural deficiencies in the roadway and improved inadequate parking and pullout design. The road is open year-round, so the wider road will help make snow removal operations safer.

Trailhead parking areas for the Bierstadt Lake Trail and Glacier Gorge Junction have been relocated to the sides of the road where the actual trails begin.

The slope work along the upper corridor will take time. Furrows of topsoil combined with scattered logs and boulders create micro-habitats for native plants by preventing erosion. In five to ten years, roadside slopes should be revegetated.

According to Superintendent Vaughn Baker, “We appreciate people’s patience through this major project. The project went relatively smoothly considering the logistics and magnitude of the reconstruction. Visitors, shuttle bus drivers, park staff and volunteers were extremely flexible in dealing with this road reconstruction. We are pleased with the end result and are proud of our partnership with the Federal Highway Administration, contractor Kiewit Western and our shuttle bus contractor Rocky Mountain Transit Management Inc.”

Road construction along the corridor cost approximately \$8.2 million. The project was funded by the Federal Lands Highway Program, which is administered by the Federal Highway Administration. Entrance fees retained by the park also funded some aspects of the project. An additional \$800,000 of National Park Service funds financed other projects along the road including the building of shuttle bus shelters, vault toilets and replacing the buildings at Bear Lake that were destroyed in an arson fire on January 1, 2002.

Hidden Valley Area Reopens

By Kyle Patterson, Management Specialist – Public Affairs

The rehabilitation of Hidden Valley is essentially complete! On Friday, December 3, at 10:30 a.m. a ribbon cutting event will take place to celebrate the completion of a two year restoration project in the Hidden Valley Area at Rocky Mountain National Park. The open house will take place from 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.



Hidden Valley Ski Area in 1979



A ribbon cutting ceremony was held on October 22. Left to Right: RMNP Engineer Joe Arnold, Superintendent Vaughn Baker, U. S. Senator Wayne Allard, Estes Park Mayor John Baudek, Larry Smith from Federal Highways Administration, Chris Krumwiede from Kiewit Western, and Ranger Jan Pauley



The new Hidden Valley Area warming house/restroom/ranger office facility

New visitor use facilities include a building for public restrooms, warming hut and ranger office, a smaller (122 space) paved parking area, and a picnic pavilion. The winter snow play area has been made safer with new berms to direct sleds. The facilities are also a good staging area for visitors who are interested in snowshoeing, backcountry skiing and snowboarding in the undeveloped areas in and around Hidden Valley.

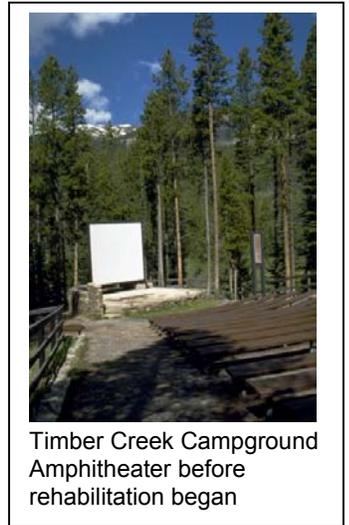
All of the former Hidden Valley Ski Area buildings and the large parking lot have been removed. Some building materials from the original Hidden Valley lodge were reused in construction of the new facilities. A section of Hidden Valley Creek, which was hidden in a culvert for about 50 years, was turned into the new stream channel in mid-November. Work has begun to restore wetlands. The natural resource restoration elements of the project will enhance wildlife habitat, particularly for the threatened greenback cutthroat trout, improve water quality, and reduce sedimentation.

The Hidden Valley Ski Area began operation in 1949 and was closed in 1992 due to poor snow conditions and lack of response from private bidders to operate the ski area. The project cost approximately \$2.8 million. Approximately \$2,440,000 from Line Item Construction funded a new water system (including tank and well), new power lines, new septic system, reclaiming old parking area, building smaller parking area, building accessible trails and picnic areas, building bridges, daylighting stream and restoring wetlands. Approximately \$400,000 from park user fees (Fee Demonstration Program) funded the Restoration Project which included deconstructing buildings, removing ski towers/bases and slope restoration work.

Rocky Mountain National Park Associates

By Katy Sykes, Assistant to the Superintendent

Over the last two decades, Park Friends Groups have been created to assist National Park Service areas in supporting needed park programs and projects that have been beyond the reach of limited appropriated dollars. In contrast to Cooperating Associations, which originated in Yosemite National Park in 1924 and are primarily focused on assisting parks with their interpretive, educational and scientific activities (in Rocky Mountain National Park, this is the Rocky Mountain Nature Association), most Park Friends Groups are established to help meet park needs through fundraising, membership programs, awareness building, and occasionally construction of capital projects. Today there are several hundred organizations with "Friends of ..." in their name linked to a single park or a cluster of related parks. Not all groups use the term "Friends of..." in their corporate name, e.g. The Yosemite Fund, The Statue of Liberty-Ellis Island Foundation, Rosie the Riveter Trust, Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy. We are fortunate to have the Rocky Mountain National Park Associates (RMNPA) as our Friends Group.



This year RMNPA's fundraising efforts will assist with visitor safety and resource protection through the acquisition of Automatic External Defibrillators (AEDs), rehabilitation of the Timber Creek Campground Amphitheater, and the Lake Irene trail improvement project.

According to the American College of Emergency Physicians, nearly 700 people die from cardiac arrest every day. An AED is a small, portable automatic device used to restore normal heart rhythm to people in cardiac arrest. An AED is a life-saving device because cardiac arrest is a sudden condition that is fatal if not treated within a few minutes. When a person experiences cardiac arrest, CPR will help keep oxygen flowing to the brain, but the electric shock of an AED vastly improves the chances of restarting the heart. Rocky Mountain National Park currently has a few AEDs, and so far, at least one visitor's life has been saved in the park by staff using an AED. Recently, four additional AEDs were presented to the park by RMNPA. We hope to have AEDs more available at key locations such as ranger patrol vehicles and visitor centers.



The rehabilitated Timber Creek Amphitheater facility will be a wheelchair accessible outdoor amphitheater, complete with new audio-visual equipment. Timber Creek Campground serves visitors on the west side of Rocky Mountain National Park. The campground lies beside the Colorado River at the northern edge of a beautiful valley. The campground's amphitheater rehabilitation project was identified as the park's highest priority for educational improvements. Evening programs provided by park rangers remain the long-standing highlight and a focal point for the park's educational programs.

Tradition has it that the national park idea was furthered around a campfire in Yellowstone National Park. Since the creation of Rocky Mountain National Park in 1915, evening campfire programs continue to enchant thousands of visitors, offering lessons about the wonders of our national parks.

The Lake Irene area provides visitors access to a scenic picnic and recreation area as they traverse Trail Ridge Road. Picnic sites will be improved, and the trail will be repaired and rehabilitated to both protect the natural environment and the safety of our visitors.

Rocky's Awesome Volunteers

By Katy Sykes, Assistant to the Superintendent



Rocky Mountain National Park is privileged to have an outstanding Volunteer program. In Fiscal Year 2004 (October through September), a record 2,114 Volunteers in the Park (VIPs) worked a total of 101,136 hours. This equates to 48.5 full time employees! In Fiscal Year 2003, there were 97,000 volunteer hours logged.

Volunteers work in groups, such as church, school, or scouts, or they may work as individuals. Volunteers do an amazing array of activities in the park. For example, the Elk Bugle Corps assists visitors who come to see and hear the elk rut in the fall. Sled Dawgs help visitors have a safe and fun sledding experience at Hidden Valley. The Road Hawgs help the park's road crews clean ditches and culverts, and direct traffic. The Chow Busters work up and down Trail Ridge Road in the summer to advise visitors on why feeding wildlife is unhealthy and unsafe. Other VIPs help eradicate exotic plants, participate in hazardous fuels reduction projects, assist researchers, maintain backcountry trails, serve as campground hosts, lead interpretive programs, work in visitor centers, and help with special projects. As Vaughn Baker said, "We couldn't run this place without them." Kudos to Jane Lopez and everyone else who recruits, supervises, and works with VIPs. And a big thanks to the volunteers! For more information on the VIP program or to inquire about volunteering, call Jane Lopez at (970)586-1330 or email Jane_Lopez@nps.gov.



The Mission of the National Park Service



The National Park Service preserves unimpaired the natural and cultural resources and values of the national park system for the enjoyment, education and inspiration of this and future generations. The Park Service cooperates with partners to extend the benefits of natural and cultural resource conservation and outdoor recreation throughout this country and the world.

RARE AND UNUSUAL CRITTER SIGHTINGS IN RMNP

By Park Ranger Leanne Benton from interviews with Resources Management Specialist Jeff Connor & Science Officer Terry Terrell.

This year brought some first-time and interesting animal sightings in the park. Animals from the Arctic, the plains, the foothills, and the East Coast all showed up! Perhaps the cool, wet summer brought some of these animals our way, or perhaps it was because more researchers were out in the park conducting inventories of park species.



❖ **Ruby-throated Hummingbird.** In September a young male was captured by researchers in a mist net in Moraine Park. The Ruby-throat is the most common hummingbird along the east coast but rarely ranges beyond eastern Kansas and Oklahoma. This was the first sighting of the bird in the park and may be only the second sighting in Colorado. Likely this accidental hummingbird was migrating south and was blown into Colorado by a storm.

❖ **Spotted Skunk.** Spotted skunks are native to the foothills but have only been documented in the park twice – once in 1990 when one waddled across the road in Horseshoe Park, and this year when one was photographed by a researcher doing a study using motion detector cameras. The park is on the edge of their upper range. More skunks probably occur in the park but because of their secretive nocturnal habits are rarely seen.



❖ **Uhler's Arctic Butterfly.** This small brown butterfly was spotted near Shadow Mountain Dam in June. It had been seen once before, but this sighting was the first confirmed sighting in the park. This butterfly ranges from northern Alaska and Canada south through the Rocky Mountains into New Mexico.



❖ **White-tailed Deer.** On November 10, the Chronic Wasting Disease Crew sighted a female white-tailed deer socializing with a group of mule deer on Deer Mountain. The doe's flashy white tail and larger size made her stand out from the muleys. Though this wasn't the first sighting of a white-tail in the park, they are rare. A white-tailed deer was first spotted in the park in 1984 and park records show another sighting in 1990. White-tail deer are widespread, occurring from Canada throughout most of the United States and into South America. However, they were rare in Colorado until the 1950s, when they began increasing in the eastern plains and then the foothills.



❖ **Flammulated Owl.** This year two breeding pairs of flammulated owls were documented for the first time in the park. Individual owls have been seen before, but finding the nests of these small secretive owls was significant.

❖ Other Rare and Surprising Animal Sightings in Recent Years

◆ **Dwarf Shrew.** A dead dwarf shrew was found near Lake Husted by a researcher in 1997. She collected the shrew and documented it and the sighting was confirmed. This was the first sighting of this shrew in the park.



◆ **White-eyed Vireo.** Another first sighting for the park, this bird was documented by Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory staff who caught one in a mist net in Endovalley in 1994 during spring migration. Typically, white-eyed vireos are found in the southeastern United States.

◆ **Sabine's Gull.** A dead Sabine's gull was found on the road near the park entrance in the early 1990s. This bird breeds in northern Canada and Alaska and migrates along the west coast to the south. It was likely blown off course by a storm. This was the first sighting for the park and for Larimer County.



◆ **Texas Rat Snake.** In 2002, an unusual snake was reported in a campsite in Moraine Park Campground. It turned out to be a Texas rat snake, an animal that was about 1,000 miles north of its range! Park staff believed it was a tame snake that had escaped from a vehicle. One of the park rangers kept it and discovered it was a pregnant female. What would have happened if it had laid its eggs in the

wild?!

◆ **Box Turtle.** The skeleton of a box turtle was once found on the side of Twin Sisters. It too was likely an escaped or released species from a vehicle.

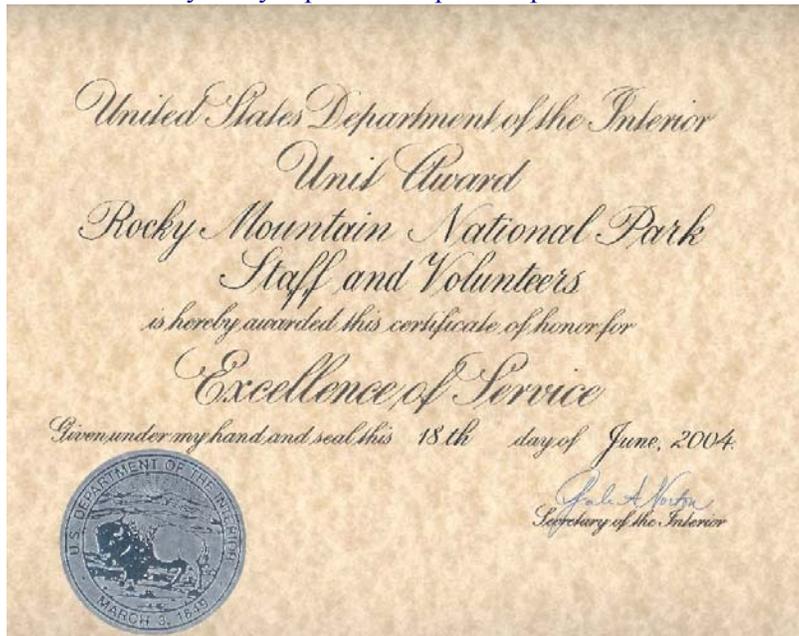


This spotted skunk was photographed in October near the junction of the Cow Creek and Black Canyon trails

RMNP Receives Unit Award for Excellence of Service

Recently, Rocky Mountain National Park Staff and Volunteers received a **United States Department of the Interior Unit Award for Excellence of Service** from Secretary of the Interior Gale Norton. This award was given in recognition of a high degree of exceptional quantity and quality of work performed by the park staff and volunteers. The letter states:

The staff of Rocky Mountain National Park is made up of 400 employees, both permanent and seasonal, and some 2,400 volunteers. They have consistently performed an exceptional quantity and quality of work over the last five years. Due to their efforts, millions of dollars of projects have been completed with high quality results. Rocky Mountain is consistently recognized as a well managed park by both regular and first-time visitors. With the advent of the fee demonstration program in 1996, park staff have been responsible for planning and implementing over \$17 million in fee projects. These projects, many of which are highly visible to the public, include rehabilitation of 32 vault toilets, 250 campsites, the Moraine Park Amphitheater, the Beaver Meadows Entrance Station, and 30 miles of trails. Fee demonstration dollars have corrected accessibility deficiencies at three park visitor centers, produced a new park orientation film and funded key research to address management issues. Under the Natural Resource Challenge, the park's research capabilities have been significantly expended, and some 400 researchers conducted research in the park during 2002. The park partnered successfully with the National Trust for Historic Preservation to restore the historic McGraw Guest Ranch for use as a research facility. Rocky Mountain has one of the largest volunteer programs in the National Park System. In 2002, some 2,400 volunteers contributed approximately 94,000 hours valued at over \$1.5 million. These volunteers contributed to virtually every aspect of the park's operation. The fact that the quality of services provided to park visitors has not



diminished during this time of intense activity is a tribute to the dedication and professionalism of the staff and volunteers. Their work is consistently performed with awareness of visitor needs while at the same time recognizing the need to protect park resources. They have balanced the daily operational demands with the need to accomplish special projects with professionalism and courtesy. For their exceptional quantity and quality of work performance over the last five years, the staff and volunteers of Rocky Mountain National Park are granted the Unit Award for Excellence of Service of the Department of the Interior.

Gale A. Norton
Secretary of the Interior

May all your trails be crooked, winding, lonesome, dangerous, leading to the most amazing view, where something strange and more beautiful and more full of wonder than your deepest dreams waits for you.

—Edward Abbey



New Science Summaries.

By Dr. Terry Terrell, Science Officer

Slowly but surely, the staff of Rocky Mountain National Park's Continental Divide Research Learning Center work to provide information about the research program at the park. Our efforts include providing a web accessible listing of the research going on in the park and contact information if you want to contact the researcher directly. We often write articles for the Weekly Tidbit (on the park's internet site) about research findings pertinent to the park. We have described how anyone with an internet connection can search the National Park Service's Research Permits Database. We sponsor Science Conferences for scientists, park staff, and interested publics; Research and Resources Days for the public; and individual topic oriented public meetings for a variety of audiences.



A researcher studies plant genetics in Rocky Mountain National Park.

There are many different audiences for information about the park's research program. Our primary audience is people who make decisions about park management or who influence those decisions. Of course that includes park staff, but it also includes "community officials" (town, county, state, and national because we are a part of each of those communities), "opinion leaders" (members of the general public who care about Rocky Mountain National Park and who influence others around them), and last but not least, members of the public because National Parks belong to everyone.

Our mission is not to advocate for a specific agenda. It is to provide unbiased factual information to ensure that decisions made about the park are informed by high quality scientific information. The park has made a number of changes in its management practices as a result of research that has occurred in the park, and we continue to foster and encourage high quality science.

As another step toward that goal, we are posting Science Summaries- short synopses of completed or nearly completed research written for the lay audience- on our website. Please consider stopping by and finding out a bit more about the research going on in the park. We haven't managed to summarize the hundreds of studies that have been completed in the park, but we are on our way!

Subtle But Important

By Judy Visty, Natural Resource Management Specialist

The National Park Service's mission to protect parks for future generations is taken very seriously. Park managers worry about the subtle changes that over time become very significant. Changes in lake organisms and soil chemistry as a result of air pollution are examples of how things can go slowly awry. At first, changes can be so subtle that only an expert looking closely would notice. However, over time, alterations in lake organisms can result in the loss of fish species, and alterations in soil chemistry can lead to the loss of tundra plant species.

Nitrogen deposition appears to be triggering these types of subtle, but ecologically important changes, at Rocky Mountain National Park. Nitrogen is a pollutant that is carried to the park on the wind, primarily from the Front Range area. Nitrogen sources are many and include automobiles, feedlots, petroleum wells, and industry. Upslope storms, the same weather events that bring the east side of the park much of its moisture, deposit significant amounts of nitrogen. Researchers have been studying this pollutant and its movement through park soils and streams for more than twenty years. They have published their work in more than a 100 publications in peer-reviewed journals, providing a "reality check" on their methods and findings.



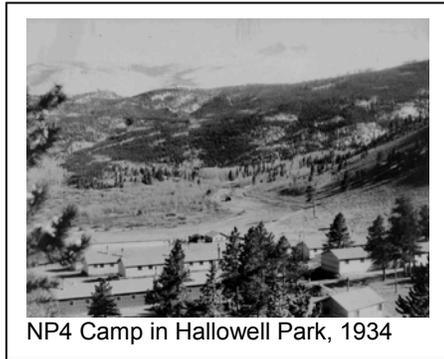
Research on nitrogen deposition has been conducted at Loch Vale and in other park locations for more than twenty years

None of us will wake up tomorrow, or come for a vacation next year, and notice that Rocky Mountain National Park is dramatically different due to this pollutant. However, evidence is convincing that subtle but important changes are already occurring. If unchecked, these changes will become increasingly dramatic in the future, altering the resources we are responsible for handing to the next generation undiminished.

THE CIVILIAN CONSERVATION CORPS IN RMNP

By Park Ranger Leanne Benton from an interview with Julia Brock, RMNA McCormick Fellow

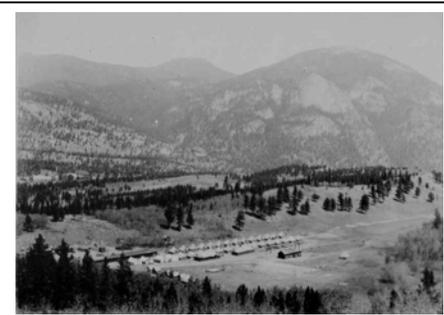
Here and there, a few pieces of debris and rusty metal are all that remain of the six Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) camps that used to exist in the park. The meadows are quiet now, but during the 1930s they were home to over a thousand men who labored to improve the trails and facilities in the park. Each morning the men woke from their tents and barracks to reveille. They piled into the mess halls for breakfast and then began their 8-hour workdays - building, digging, chopping, and hauling. From 1933 to 1942 the CCC built amphitheaters, improved trails, dug reservoirs, removed weeds, and did numerous other projects which benefited Rocky Mountain National Park. In 1942, the CCC disbanded and the camp records were scattered across the country.



Julia Brock, who is working on her Master's Degree in Public History at Florida State University and was the 2004 Rocky Mountain Nature Association (RMNA) McCormick Fellow, was charged with gathering and compiling information from every repository that has information about the park's CCC. Last summer, Julia's search took her to the National Archives in Kansas City and Washington, D.C., as well as several repositories in Denver and local towns. This project is in response to a desire to better understand the role of the CCC in Rocky Mountain National Park. Currently, Julia is organizing the data that she has collected. She has learned a lot about CCC activities in the park with more knowledge yet to come.

Who was the CCC?

The CCC was a New Deal program created by President Franklin Roosevelt in 1933 to aid people who were affected by the Depression. Other programs of the New Deal included the Public Works Administration, Civil Works Administration, Works Progress Administration, and the Tennessee Valley Authority. These programs were aimed at getting the country back on its feet economically by putting people to work.



The CCC men were from "relief families" who were registered with the government as needing assistance. The men averaged 18 to 23 years old. They were paid \$30 a month, with \$25 a month being sent home to their families as an allotment. As economic conditions improved the allotment sent home was reduced to \$10 a month. The men also received housing, food, and a uniform.

The CCC men were enrolled by the U.S. Department of Labor and then supervised by the U.S. Army. In the park they were also supervised by a NPS project supervisor and NPS foremen. They were fed well and given all basic necessities. Most of the men enjoyed their CCC time.

In 1942, the CCC was phased out due to World War II and improving economic conditions.

Where were the CCC camps?

There were six numbered camps, each made up of about 200 men, located in four locations:

- ❖ **Hallowell Park** had two camps. The first camp was called NP4. It was a temporary tent camp during the summer of 1933 but by 1934 became a permanent camp with wood buildings. A second camp, NP11, came later. Several of the buildings were salvaged from these camps and moved to Ptarmigan Drive in the park utility area where they are now used for employee housing.
- ❖ **Little Horseshoe Park** was the site of the NP1 camp. Occupied from 1933 – 1942, NP1 was a tent camp, used in the summers only. A few wood buildings were built and used to house the bath house, mess hall, and administration.
- ❖ **Kawuneeche Valley**, southwest of the Timber Lake Trailhead at Beaver Creek, was the site of the NP3 camp. This temporary summer camp was established in 1933. In 1934 the camp name was changed to NP7. The mess hall, which was a wooden frame with a tent covering, was removed around 1940.
- ❖ **Shadow Mountain Lake** area had camp NP12 that was occupied from 1940-1942 and was jointly managed by the NPS and Bureau of Reclamation. The men from NP7 helped build it. This camp had pre-fab buildings and barracks. The NP12 buildings were removed in 1953.

What did the CCC do in Rocky Mountain National Park?

The CCC men did a variety of projects in the park - trail work, amphitheater construction, landscaping, revegetation, and other projects.

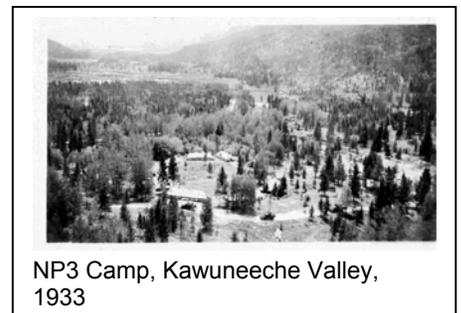
- ❖ **Trail Work:** The CCC improved and rerouted several trails - Cub Lake and Fern Lake trails, Wild Basin trail, Colorado River trail, Red Mountain trail and North Inlet trail. The CCC also worked on trails leading from Estes Park into the park. Trail work included building bridges and culverts.
- ❖ **Amphitheater Construction:** The CCC built the amphitheaters at Aspenglen Campground, Timber Creek Campground, Glacier Basin Campground, and Moraine Park Museum. They also did other work in the campgrounds.
- ❖ **Landscaping and Revegetation:** The men did considerable landscaping work, especially around the Headquarters/Utility area. They removed non-native plants and revegetated road cuts along Trail Ridge Road. The CCC also did some pine beetle control by cutting infested trees and thinning stands.
- ❖ **Reservoir Construction:** The men from the Shadow Mountain Lake camp NP12 cleared and dug Shadow Mountain Reservoir and Granby Reservoir. They also did work in the park.
- ❖ **Other Projects:** The CCC built some structures such as residence #8 in the Headquarters employee housing area and a powder cache for dynamite. They built the overlook at Many Parks Curve and did rockwork around some of the parking lots. In addition they helped with park interpretation. The men built an Indian exhibit with a teepee and dog travois at Moraine Park Museum and helped staff the building. They also helped set up exhibits at the Fall River Pass Museum (where AVC is today) and helped staff the interpretive desk there.

Other New Deal programs also contributed to Rocky Mountain National Park. The Public Works Administration (1933 to late 1930s) was made up of local men. They built the machine shop and graveled the park utility area. The Civil Works Administration (1930s), also made up of local men, did similar work in the park as the CCC. The Works Progress Administration may have also done work in the park.

What evidence is left of the CCC camps?

The camps have all been removed and today all that remains are a few pieces of weathered debris. In Hallowell Park, there is a plaque on a rock honoring Robert Fechner who was the head of the CCC. Each year the CCC held a celebration party and invited the public. The 1940 party placed the plaque on the rock to memorialize their leader. It is still there today.

More tangible evidence, though, is found in the numerous trails, amphitheaters, reservoirs, and buildings that the CCC built. The contributions of the CCC men remain throughout Rocky Mountain National Park.



Be a WebRanger!

Take a few minutes and pretend that you are 7 years old again and play Rocky Mountain National Park's new interactive WebRanger Challenge Game! You can help with an elk survey, help a lost hiker, patrol a campground, and take visitors on a tour of the alpine tundra. Complete all three games and get your own WebRanger Certificate and an autographed photo of the park's own Ranger Maria Sebastian.



Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore with Stone Soup Communications created the innovative WebRanger Challenge Game, for which they won a first place National Association of Interpreters Media Award in 2003. With their assistance we have created a challenge game specific to our park. This project was funded by an NPS Parks As Classrooms grant.

The website for Rocky's WebRanger Challenge Game can be found at: www.nps.gov/romo/education/rockies.html