



# VISTAS

## Colorado's Gift to the Nation

Rocky Mountain National Park celebrates its 95th birthday this year. On January 26, 1915, President Woodrow Wilson signed the act establishing Rocky Mountain National Park. This culminated an effort by many in Colorado and elsewhere to set aside a scenic portion of the southern Rockies for the enjoyment of present and future generations.

In establishing the park, Congress directed that the park be “dedicated and set apart as a public park for the benefit and enjoyment of the people of the United States.” Further, Congress directed that the park be managed for “the freest use. . .for recreation purposes by the public and for the preservation of the natural conditions and scenic beauties. . .”

In 2009, President Obama signed legislation providing additional protection to the park by designating most of the park’s backcountry as wilderness.

Over time, Rocky Mountain National park has evolved into one of Colorado’s major tourist destinations with people from all over the United States and the world coming to explore this scenic wonderland. Whether driving over Trail Ridge Road or hiking a trail in the park’s wilderness, people come to partake of what the park has to offer. Mountain scenery, alpine tundra, wildlife, clean air and water, recreation and solitude are all things that people seek when they visit the park.

As we approach a new century for Rocky Mountain National Park, we will face many challenges ranging from the aftermath of the mountain pine beetle outbreak, nitrogen deposition in the high alpine lakes, an aging infrastructure, and the prospect of some 4 to 5 million people on our front door step.

The National Park Service is committed to preserving this gem of the Rockies so that our grandchildren and their grandchildren may experience the park much as we do today. By doing this, we honor the foresight of those early Coloradoans who persuaded the Congress to act in 1915 and the efforts of those who persuaded Congress to again act in 2009 to preserve this special place for future generations.

I invite you to come and explore your backyard national park and wilderness area.

Vaughn Baker  
Superintendent

# Trail Ridge Road Resurfacing

During the summers of 2010 and possibly 2011, a major resurfacing project is taking place on a 19 mile section of Trail Ridge Road from the Colorado River Trailhead to Rainbow Curve (the switchbacks and the alpine section). This project will also involve resurfacing of all major overlook parking areas, pull offs and the parking lot at Alpine Visitor Center. The \$17.2 million project is funded by the Federal Lands Highway Program.

Park visitors can expect 20 to 30 minute delays through the construction area on Trail Ridge Road. There may be multiple areas of construction occurring concurrently, and in that case the combined delay time will not exceed 60 minutes. There may be some temporary night closures as well, which will likely occur sometime after mid-July. Work will not take place on weekends or holidays. Cyclists and motorcyclists should expect extremely rough road conditions throughout the summer.



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# Sixth Park Biennial Research Conference Largest to Date

The park held its biennial research conference on March 30 and 31. Around 300 scientists, historians, citizens and park staff attended the event. Fifty speakers presented twenty-minute talks on their research in the park.

The event also included a poster session, which highlighted an additional eighteen projects. Favorite talks included University of North Texas professor Dr. Aaron Roberts' entertaining presentation on copepods (which are a type of zooplankton). Dr. Roberts is trying to discover the biological or environmental mechanism that drives copepods to change color from red to blue to red again.

A crowd of almost 100 people packed the forest health sessions, which included talks from entomologists, foresters, and geographers.

The park was delighted to host international visitors including Dr. Tobias Riede of the University of Utah, who is comparing the

Rocky Mountain elk (with its high pitched bugle) and the European red deer (with its low pitched roaring). He is studying the habitat, anatomy, and physiology of the closely-related cervid species to see what influenced the evolution of the distinctive vocalizations. Also presenting were colleagues Peter Fleischer and Slavomir Celer from our sister park in Slovakia. They discussed their research on forest windfall and its influence on zoning within the Tatra National Park.

This was the sixth biennial research conference held at the park and the largest to date. Many people commented that the speakers were excellent—communicating not only their methods, but the practical application of their results. Abstracts from the event are available on the park's website ([www.nps.gov/romo](http://www.nps.gov/romo)), then click on "research") or to receive a bound copy, call Cheri Yost at 970-586-1394.

## Salazar Appoints Grand Lake Mayor Judy Burke to the National Park Service Advisory Board

Grand Lake Mayor Judy Burke is among 12 new members of the National Park System Advisory Board appointed by the Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar. The Board, first authorized in 1935, advises the Secretary and the Director of the National Park Service (NPS) on matters relating to the Service's work.

"The members of the Board are highly accomplished men and women whose creativity and wisdom will help us prepare for the challenges of the National Park Service's second hundred years," said Secretary Salazar.

"The mission of the NPS is more vital than ever as we work to fulfill the promise of President Obama's America's Great Outdoors Initiative," added Secretary Salazar. "The issues we face today such as the economy, climate change, connecting Americans to the great outdoors, obesity, and the loss of cultural literacy are all areas that the Board can help us address."



# Colorado Division of Wildlife Receives Stewardship Award From Rocky Mountain National Park

Rocky Mountain National Park Superintendent Vaughn Baker announced that the Colorado Division of Wildlife (CDOW) is the recipient of the 2009 Rocky Mountain National Park Stewardship Award. The National Park Service proudly presents the Stewardship Award to outstanding individuals and organizations that contribute significantly to the stewardship of the park and the surrounding environment. CDOW was selected for this award in recognition of their cooperative efforts advancing the long term protection of Rocky Mountain National Park.

The National Park Service and Colorado Division of Wildlife have worked collaboratively over the years to address a variety of issues facing the park. This successful collaboration has produced numerous benefits for park wildlife and habitat. The issues include elk and vegetation management, management of chronic wasting disease (CWD) in deer and elk populations, boreal toad reintroduction, and education of school children about wildlife and the outdoors. In addition, regular consultation and cooperation at the field level have helped to manage a variety of other species including greenback cutthroat trout, Colorado River cutthroat trout, lynx, wolverine, bear, moose, bighorn sheep and pika.

The award was presented April 7, to Tom Remington, Director, Steve Yamashita, Regional Manager, and Larry Rogstad, Area Wildlife Manager at Rocky Mountain National Park and the following day at a Wildlife Commission Meeting in Pueblo.



Ben Bobowski, Chief of Resource Stewardship and Vaughn Baker, Park Superintendent present the 2009 Rocky Mountain National Park Stewardship Award to the Colorado Division of Wildlife. Accepting the award are Tom Remington, Director, CDOW, Steve Yamashita, Regional Manager, CDOW, Larry Rogstad, Area Wildlife Manager, CDOW.

# Artist-in-Residence (AIR) Program

Each summer the park hosts six artists at the William Allen White Cabin in Moraine Park for a two week residency. Having begun in 1984, Rocky Mountain's program is the longest running Artist-in-Residence program operated by the National Park Service.

In the fine tradition of connecting artists with the park, during their residency they create a work of art inspired by their stay. Within a year, each artist is asked to submit a piece of work that is either accepted into the park's permanent collection or put on display in the park for sale. Each artist presents at least two public programs while in residency. Last winter we experimented with an electronic jury panel to select the six lucky artists for the summer of 2010. Besides being greener and more efficient, this will allow more former Artists-In-Residents to serve on the jury panel without living close to the park. If this goes well, we would also like to experiment with a paperless AIR application process for 2011 where applicants submit their Statement of Purpose, other paperwork, and art samples on a CD. This should also make for a more efficient and greener AIR processing.

The Estes Park Museum partnered with Rocky Mountain National Park to present an AIR II exhibition, which began in January and will run throughout July 2010.



*Brent Langley 2009*

# Nature Association's Million Mile Challenge warms up for a summer sprint

Rocky Mountain Nature Association, (RMNA) the official “friends group” for Rocky Mountain National Park, is getting ready for an intense summer of fun and fundraising. An anonymous donor has challenged the association to match a gift of \$1Million by the end of 2010. The gift and its match will support the Next Generation Fund, a donor-based pool of funds that will help create the conservationists of tomorrow.

The Million Mile Challenge kickoff in January, 2010 invited those who want to help connect today's youth to nature to make a pledge contribution of one dollar for each mile they might hike, run, swim, bike, snowshoe, etc. this year. Turning human-powered miles into matching dollars is the goal of the challenge, which has received pledges nearing \$57,000 so far.

Nearly three million visitors enjoy the scenery and especially the outstanding trails of Rocky Mountain National Park each year. Most arrive between June and September, and the Million Mile Challenge will be ready to show them how easy it is to support the youth education programs at one of their favorite National Parks.

Curt Buchholtz, the Rocky Mountain Nature Association's Executive Director, notes that “Our youth must have the quality outdoor experiences that we had as kids to become the caretakers of our special places tomorrow.” The Next Generation Fund provides over one-half million dollars each year to support youth programs such as Junior Ranger, the Heart of the Rockies environmental education program, American Conservation Corps, Youth Field Seminars and others. The future stewardship of our national treasures is at stake and depends on instilling these values in tomorrow's citizens and leaders.

The Million Mile Challenge, or MMC, is a beneficiary of this year's Estes Valley Marathon. Nearly one thousand runners participate in this exciting annual fundraiser, supported in part by RMNA volunteers. Get Outdoors Day and Get Involved events in Denver, Colorado provide another connection to nature and visibility for MMC. Donations received at national park visitor centers this year are doubled by the challenge match as will those made as pledges on forms to be available at many park trailheads. Business sponsorships of MMC are available and allow local and regional businesses to show their support.

Progress toward meeting the challenge will be tracked on RMNA's website, [www.rmna.org](http://www.rmna.org) and on its facebook page. Watching as each mile and dollar is doubled in support of stewardship for our public lands will make 2010 an exciting year. You might say RMNA is “in training” as it prepares for three million possible donors this summer.

You too can be part of the Million Mile Challenge. Just make a pledge on the website and watch the dollars grow.

***Nature. Pass It On.***

# Campgrounds

After two years of hazard tree mitigation work, the entire Glacier Basin campground (148 sites) will be open for the 2010 season. Roughly half of these campsites, Loops C & D, will be available through the National Reservation System. Loops A & B will be first-come, first-served. While many sites are no longer nestled among a dense stand of lodgepole pines, crews have worked hard to mitigate the impacts of removing thousands of beetle-impacted trees.

This summer three park campgrounds, Moraine Park, Glacier Basin (including group sites) and Aspenglen, accept peak-season reservations (May 26 through the summer). Call (877) 444-6777 to make national park camping reservations up to 6 months prior to your visit. Internet reservations can be made at [www.recreation.gov](http://www.recreation.gov). Longs Peak, Timber Creek and loops A & B in Glacier Basin are first-come, first-served.

The recent mountain pine beetle outbreak has resulted in the removal of most trees in Glacier Basin and Timber Creek so there is little or no shade in these campgrounds. Camping is a very popular activity in Rocky Mountain National Park; in 2009, there were nearly 130,000 camper nights.

Both Timber Creek and Glacier Basin Campground roads were resurfaced using economic stimulus funds last August and September.

The picnic tables at both campgrounds are also being replaced with sustainable concrete tables.

## Camping 2010

	Fee per night ◊	Reservations?	Dump Stations	Elevation (feet)	Public Phones	Firewood, ice
◊ When the water is turned on for the summer.						
<b>Aspenglen</b> 54 campsites Open May 26 through Sept 25	\$20	yes	no	8,220	yes	yes
<b>Glacier Basin</b> 150 campsites Open May 26 through Sept 6 13 group campsites 	\$20	Loops C & D & Group Loops	yes	8,500	yes	yes
<b>Longs Peak</b> 26 campsites Open all year—tents only	\$20	no	no	9,500	no	yes
<b>Moraine Park</b> 245 campsites Open all year 	\$20	yes	yes	8,160	yes	yes
<b>Timber Creek</b> 98 campsites Open year-round starting May 28 	\$20	no	yes	8,900	yes	wood



A multi-year project, funded by fee dollars, is ongoing to completely renovate restroom facilities throughout park campgrounds. This year the work will be focused in Glacier Basin Campground. The renovated and redesigned facilities will better address visitor needs. These accessible facilities have integrated sustainable practices and design in their construction.

# Grand Lake Entrance Station Reconstruction

The construction of the new Grand Lake Entrance Station began in October. The new facilities are scheduled to be up and running by early June. An automatic gate with a card reader will be installed, which will assist annual pass holders.

Other additional features include a proper ventilation system, correct lane widths for vehicles and snow removal, and a modern security system for employee and public safety.



*Grand Lake Entrance Station*

# Checkout our newest webcam on the west side!

We have added a new webcam to the west side looking up the Kawuneeche (Colorado River) Valley. Also check out our current webcams pointed at the Continental Divide from Glacier Basin Campground and one pointed at Longs Peak from the Beaver Meadows Visitor Center. To view, go to <http://www.nps.gov/romo> and open the Photos and Multimedia tab, then click Webcams.



*Kawuneeche (Colorado River) Valley*



*Longs Peak from the Beaver Meadows Visitor Center*



*Continental Divide from Glacier Basin Campground*

# Rocky Mountain National Park Offers Public Meetings on the Grand Ditch Breach Restoration Project

Rocky Mountain National Park will conduct two public meetings on the Grand Ditch Breach Restoration Project the first week of June, 2010. The first meeting will be held in Grand Lake at the Grand Arts Center, 913 Park Avenue on Tuesday, June 1, from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. The second meeting will be held in Fort Collins at the Harmony Library, 4616 South Shields Street on Thursday, June 3, from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

On May 30, 2003, the Grand Ditch, a trans-basin, water-diversion canal in the northwest corner of Rocky Mountain National Park breached its bank. The breach saturated an adjacent hillslope which gave way, sending a massive mud- and rock-slide down into Lulu Creek and the headwaters of the Colorado River damaging upland, stream, riparian and wetland habitat over a 1.5-mile distance and 22-acre area. The breach sent an estimated 100 cubic feet per second flow of the ditch down a steep hillside, creating a flood that sent an estimated 47,600 cubic yards of boulders, trees and sediment cascading down into Lulu Creek. Over 20,000 trees were destroyed and approximately 50 different plant species were impacted.

Rocky Mountain National Park is beginning a multi-year process to complete an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to guide the restoration of the breach-impacted area. We will be gathering input from park staff, other agencies and the public to develop a set of alternatives for restoration of the breach-impacted area. The purpose of the restoration project will be to restore the hydrological processes, ecological services and wilderness character impacted by the 2003 Grand Ditch Breach.



# New Firearms Regulations

As of February 22, 2010, a new federal law allows people who can legally possess firearms under federal, state, and local laws, to possess firearms in National Parks. It is the visitor's responsibility to understand and comply with all applicable state and federal firearms laws.

Hunting, recreational shooting, and target practice are not allowed in Rocky Mountain National Park.

Federal law prohibits firearms in certain facilities in the park; those buildings are posted with signs at public entrances.

## American Recovery and Reinvestment Act Programs at RMNP

From coast to coast the National Park Service is undertaking more than 750 projects at parks across the country to create jobs, restore and protect our nation's parks, and preserve our history and heritage for future generations.

The projects reflect an investment of \$750 million in our national park system under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009. According to Secretary of the Interior, Ken Salazar, "From the Civil War to the Great Depression, America's best ideas for protecting our national parks and open spaces have often come when our nation has faced its greatest challenges. By investing \$750 million to restore and protect America's most special places, we are creating a new legacy of stewardship for our national park system while helping our economy stand up again."



Many Parks Curve boardwalk project

Rocky Mountain National Park, has received over \$2.5 million in ARRA funding for a variety of important projects. Some of the projects you may see include eliminating hazardous trees killed by mountain pine beetles in high use areas; realigning segments of the Continental Divide Trail; replacing numerous footbridges on trails throughout the park; rehabilitating the Alpine Visitor Center Trail; replacing the deteriorated boardwalk at Many Parks Curve; replacing failing sewer lines and resurfacing roads in Glacier Basin and Timber Creek campgrounds. Whether you are hiking on a trail, looking at the beautiful view from Many Parks Curve or staying in a campground, we hope these projects will improve your overall experience at Rocky Mountain National Park.

**Hazard Tree Mitigation** – Mitigation efforts in the park have been focused on where visitors sit, stay or stand. However, beetle killed trees along Trail Ridge Road on the west side of the park continue to progress and will be falling on the road. This spring and again this fall a contractor is working along the 12.5 mile section of Trail Ridge Road, from the Grand Lake Entrance to the Colorado River Trailhead, to remove hazardous trees that are expected to fall on the road.

# American Recovery and Reinvestment Act Programs at RMNP (continued)

**Many Parks Curve Boardwalk Rehabilitation.** Work started the second week of April and is scheduled to be completed by May 28, 2010. The purpose of this project was to rehabilitate the existing boardwalk which was 35 years old.

**Glacier Basin Campground and Timber Creek campground roads and parking areas** were repaved in the fall of 2009. Work consisted of milling the old surface and replacing the asphalt drive and parking areas.

The 3100 mile **Continental Divide National Scenic Trail (CDNST)** traverses the spine of the country from Canada to Mexico. The goal of the CDNST is to construct, manage and preserve a non-motorized public backcountry trail along the full length of the Continental Divide. The CDT original route entered the park on a motorized route using the North Supply Road. In 2007, the Forest Service and Park Service agreed to re-route the trail further north to meet the CDNST mission of being located on non-motorized trails. Park staff were able to use approximately 1 mile of existing trail on the new alignment. However, it does require constructing 1.2 miles of new trail and crossing Onahu Creek with a bridge. Approximately 0.7 miles of the new alignment has been completed with volunteers. The remaining 0.5 miles of trail will require felling trees, cutting tread and installing a section of raised turnpike through low lying areas. The bridge is a major undertaking requiring 5 foot high rock abutments, rock approaches, setting steel I-beam stringers, a treated plank deck and a log handrail. Volunteers will again assist park staff with this trail construction.

**10 footbridges and 15 footlogs** in numerous locations throughout the park including: Lily Lake, Aspenglen, Alluvial Fan, Fern Lake, Boulder Brook, Timber Lake, Black Lake, Lost Lake, North Inlet, Lion Lakes and Endo Valley will be constructed or replaced. Work will be performed by trail crews during the summer of 2010.

The **AVC trail** is an extremely popular trail that affords those willing to ‘huff’ up to the top an intimate look at the alpine tundra and a birds-eye view of the Alpine Visitor Center and the surrounding mountains including the Continental Divide. The existing trail is approximately 1675 feet long and climbs over 200’ straight up a steep hill with grades up to 30%. Excessively high steps and poor trail conditions have led to numerous slips, trips, and falls and some injuries. In addition, some visitors are walking alongside the trail which has led to impacts to the tundra. This project will replace the gravel/dirt trail surface and insufficient log retainer and water bars with a sustainable bio-based cold-patch asphalt tread material and pre-cast concrete steps. Additionally, the trail will be shortened to end at the summit and approximately 350 feet will be restored past the new terminus. The trail will be closed to the public this summer while crews are working.

**Headquarters Area Sewer Rehabilitation** - Problems at five sewer areas within the east side maintenance and housing area were addressed with ARRA funding last fall.

**Beaver Meadows Reroof Project** - The BMVC 12,000 square foot roof is being replaced. A unique aspect of this project is that the original lava rock is to be reused. The rock was vacuumed off of the existing roof at the project start and is to be reapplied to the new roof, saving both material and cost.

# Twitter!

We are now Tweeting Longs Peak from the Beaver Meadows Visitor Center at <http://twitter.com> Search for RMNPOfficial.

Become a follower and stay in touch with what is happening in the park.

Check out the following podcasts on the park's website, photos and multimedia section:  
<http://www.nps.gov/romo/photosmultimedia/index.htm>

- Climbing Longs Peak
- Introduction to Snowshoeing
- Opening Trail Ridge Road
- The Ten Essentials
- Lightning Safety
- Wilderness Celebration
- Hydration
- Winter Recreation



***Rocky Mountain National Park was named the #2 Outdoor & Adventure Destination in the World on Trip Advisor!***

## Visitor Survey



This summer in cooperation with the University of Idaho National Park Service Studies Unit, a survey of park visitors will be conducted the week of July 18. Around 1000 surveys will be handed out randomly to visitors at three major entrances. This is the first major visitor survey in the park since 1995 and will hopefully show current use, trends, concerns, and demographics. Economic impact information will be collected as well.



# The Passing of Park Friends & Coworkers

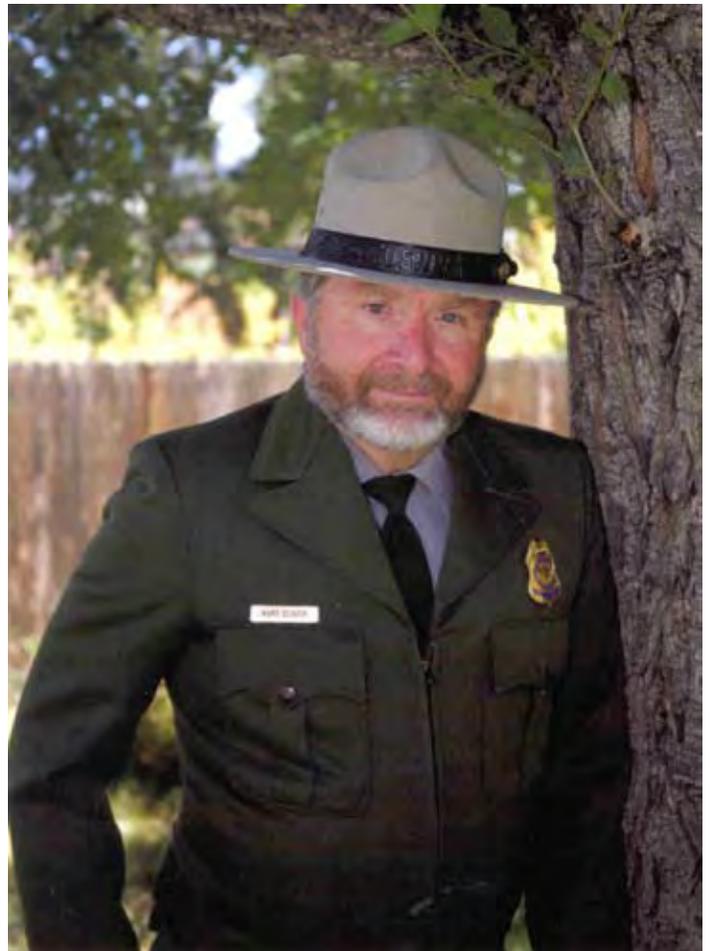
## Kurt Noah Oliver

Kurt Noah Oliver, 61 of Estes Park, Colo., lost his courageous battle with cancer in February. As a young man, Kurt spent his summers as a seasonal ranger for Rocky Mountain National Park. In the winters, he worked as a ski instructor at Beaver Mountain, Utah, Steamboat Springs, Colo., where he met his wife, Laurie of 37 years, and as assistant ski school director at Hidden Valley Ski Resort in Estes Park.

In 1970, Kurt began his wonderful career with the National Park Service as a park aide assigned to the Alpine Visitor Center. In 1972, Kurt began his first season in law enforcement at Wild Basin; he continued to work seasonally through the late '70s. He also worked at Bighorn National Recreation Area and Valley Forge National Historic Park. In 1980, Kurt was hired as a permanent ranger to oversee the backcountry office at Rocky Mountain National Park. In the mid-'80s, he worked as the Thompson Area ranger and the Wild Basin Area ranger. In 1993, Kurt moved to the Big Thompson subdistrict of Rocky Mountain National Park. In 2004, he was promoted to the East District ranger. Kurt retired in 2005 and remained in Estes Park with his wife.

Kurt's career with the National Park Service spanned decades of adventures and memories, crucial protection and preservation of incredible resources, lifesaving search and rescue operations, and other services to countless visitors and colleagues. After retirement, he enjoyed skiing in the winter and the summers working for the Rocky Mountain Transit Management in Estes Park. While at the Rocky Mountain Transit, Kurt worked as a supervisor and drove shuttle buses. He enjoyed meeting all the people and offering his words of wisdom to help them enjoy their visit to the area.

Kurt was a strong and loving husband, father and friend who had a way of bringing out the best in a person. He loved Estes Park, Rocky Mountain National Park and his life in the mountains.



**Blaine B. Gillingham, Sr.**



**Blaine B. Gillingham, Sr. passed away on April 3, 2010, in Casper, Wyoming. He was 63. In 1992, he married the love of his life, Patti Hamilton, with whom he enjoyed the last 18 years.**

**Blaine joined the Wyoming National Guard and the US Army in 1967. He served his nation for 34 years and received many awards throughout his career. He retired from the US Army in 2001, and in retirement he became property management specialist at Rocky Mountain National Park. How fortunate we are that he made the decision to join the National Park Service and that we had the chance to work side by side with Blaine for nine years.**

**Blaine was a very special and unique man. He was a positive individual and always tried to do his best. He was very generous and his heart was huge. If anyone needed something Blaine would be there. Blaine was loving, caring and careful. His salutation was always “Well how the heck are ya!” In his position at the park he had the opportunity to connect with most fellow park employees. He is fondly remembered as the “heart of the park,” and we will miss him terribly.**

# Continued Implementation of the Elk and Vegetation Management Plan - Rocky Mountain National Park

As part of this year's implementation of the Elk and Vegetation Management Plan, this winter the park culled 50 female elk (26 in support of a research project related to Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) and multi-year fertility control and 24 as part of park culling operations) to maintain the population at the low end of its range as called for in the plan. Park staff will continue to monitor the population to determine what management actions will be needed for next winter. The plan relies on a variety of conservation tools including fencing, elk redistribution, vegetation restoration and culling. Qualified volunteers as well as Colorado Division of Wildlife staff are members of NPS lead teams engaged in culling activities.

Over the course of the next several years additional fencing will be constructed on the east side of the park. This year seven fences are proposed to restore approximately 78 acres of aspen and willow communities. The fences are temporary and will come down when restoration goals are met; each site will be evaluated every 5 years.



Elk Enclosure Fence in Horseshoe Park