

May 2015

# VISTAS



## ROCKY MOUNTAIN NATIONAL PARK

Courtesy Photos by Ann Schonlau  
& Chelsea Hernandez

### *Wilderness, Wildlife, Wonder*

Rocky officially turned 100 on January 26, the date 100 years ago when President Wilson signed the legislation creating the national park. We've been celebrating since last September with many events yet to come. The celebration will culminate on September 3 and 4 of this year, when we re-dedicate the park for the next 100 years. Please check out our website for details.

As we celebrate the foresight of those Coloradoans who 100 years ago actively worked to get this national park established, we are "Honoring the Past, Celebrating the Present, and Inspiring the Future."

One of our outstanding volunteers (one of many!), Bob Stack, wrote the following letter to his granddaughter that very eloquently summarizes the reason for the celebration:

*When it became a National Park it was protected. That protection meant that there would be no hunting, no building of apartments, stores, or housing developments... that there would be no cutting down of the forests, or digging up plants or polluting the streams... it meant taking care of our environment, even if it was just in one place in the Rocky Mountains...*

*...that protection of Rocky started 100 years ago ... so that 100 years later- now- a young girl might come to the park, look and say "Wow." She could see all kinds of beautiful flowers, of trees that reach to the sky, of snowy mountain peaks, of all kinds of critters that might make her curious, cautious and even chuckle, of little streams that she might sit beside and quietly think or stand on a mountain top and see the wonderful world below her..*

*...and the park is there so that girls and boys or moms and dads or grandparents or people from all over the country and from all over the world could come to this park and just look and be dazzled by its beauty, its strength, its wonder and even to say "Wow."*

*That young girl and many children like her belong to the park and the park belongs to each of them. She and others are now caretakers of the park, so that, 100 years from now, another young girl might come to the park, look and say "Wow."*

Well said!

# Remaining Fee Free Days in the Park for 2015

- \* August 25 National Park Founders' Day
- \* September 26 National Public Lands Day
- \* November 11 Veterans Day

## Top Ten Visitation Days for 2014

1. September 27 13,295 Vehicles  
(National Public Lands Day)
2. September 20 10,289 Vehicles
3. July 6 9,355 Vehicles
4. July 5 9,253 Vehicles
5. July 20 9,139 Vehicles
6. September 28 8,668 Vehicles
7. August 16 8,634 Vehicles
8. July 27 8,492 Vehicles
9. June 2 8,248 Vehicles
10. September 26 8,152 Vehicles



Photo by Peter Biddle

## Visitation Through April

At the end of April RMNP has seen a 20.5% increase in visitation over this time last year and the park is up just over 24% year-to-date. Other park's celebrating milestones, such as centennials, have seen increases in visitation as well. A mild winter has also contributed to this increase.

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## Follow us on Social Media....

@Rockynps

#rmnp



Park Website [www.nps.gov/romo](http://www.nps.gov/romo)

General Park Information 970-586-1206

Trail Ridge Road Recorded Status Line 970-586-1222



# Old Fall River Road is Expected to Open to Vehicles This Fourth of July Weekend

Old Fall River Road suffered extensive damages during the 2013 flood. Repair work was completed last year on Old Fall River Road as well as on the section of road near the Alluvial Fan. The Federal Highways Administration funded this project through the Emergency Relief for Federally Owned Roads (ERFO) program.

Old Fall River Road is a historic dirt road built between 1913 and 1920. Due to the winding, narrow nature of the road, the scenic 9.4-mile route is one-way. It follows the steep slope of Mount Chapin's south face. It expected to open to vehicles by fourth of July weekend.



*Installing gabions on Old Fall River Road. NPS Photo*

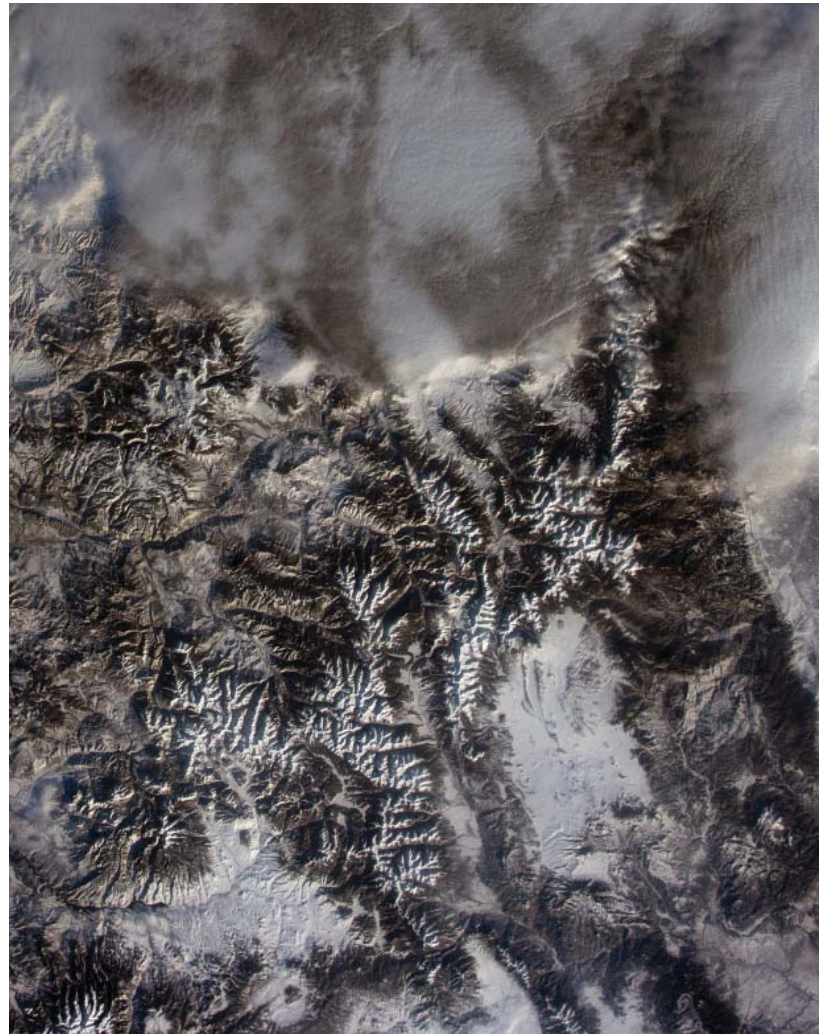


*New pavement at West Alluvial parking lot. NPS Photo*

## Happy Birthday Rocky! From... space!

Marking the 100th anniversary on Jan. 26, 2015, Expedition 42 Flight Engineer Terry Virts posted this photograph, taken from the International Space Station, to Twitter!

Virts wrote, "Majestic peaks and trails! Happy 100th anniversary @RockyNPS So much beauty to behold in our @NatlParkService."



*Photo Credit: NASA/Terry Virts*

# Rocky Mountain National Park's Centennial Year Programs Continue

Wilderness, Wildlife, Wonder. Honor the Past, Celebrate the Present, Inspire the Future.

From September 3, 2014, through September 4, 2015, Rocky Mountain National Park (RMNP), along with local and national communities, is celebrating the park's 100th Anniversary. Speakers, special activities, and community events are being coordinated to commemorate our Centennial.

Whether you're a regular visitor, a national park traveler, or a virtual explorer, RMNP hopes that our 100th Anniversary will inspire you to experience and connect with this park that has inspired 100 years of protection and that will continue to enchant and delight visitors and stewards for another 100 years!

For more details on all the events, programs and activities, pay a visit to RMNP's 2015 Centennial Calendar of Events on the park's website at [www.nps.gov/romo](http://www.nps.gov/romo) and look for the Centennial logo. Don't forget that ranger-led programs and Rocky Mountain Conservancy Field Institute Classes celebrate the park all year long!

Here is a taste of some of the fun events going on this summer:

- We Love Rocky Mountain National Park (through September 4)

This special Centennial exhibit at History Colorado in Denver explores the many ways that people have connected with the landscape of RMNP over time. Come see how your experiences fit into history of people in the park!

- Celebrate with the Colorado Mountain Club (through September 4). The Colorado Mountain Club (CMC) was instrumental in the formation of RMNP 100 years ago. To celebrate, the public is invited to join the CMC in a special 'hikes and climbs of 100 of the 125 named peaks in the park,' wildflower hikes led by Colorado Native Plant Masters, and other special hikes. Visit [www.cmc.org](http://www.cmc.org) for more information.

- Climb On! - an exhibit (through October 4, 2015)

Join the Estes Park Museum (200 Fourth Street, Estes Park) and experience the vertical side of Estes Park, home to some of the nation's most spectacular rock climbing. Granite boulders, sub-alpine crags, and high mountain walls make the Estes Valley and surrounding high peaks a world class training ground for elite and amateur climbers alike. Learn about ascending rocky terrain and how individuals pioneered local routes that pushed the limits of gravity. 10am - 5pm daily. Free admission.

- Across the Divide Geo-Tour, A Centennial Geo-Adventure (Year-round)

Come experience this free family fun GPS treasure hunt! Fifty Geocaches in Estes Park, Grand Lake, and RMNP relating to the Wilderness, Wildlife, Wonder, and RMNP's Centennial history take you from town to town and across the Continental Divide (when Trail Ridge Road is open). In order to follow Leave No Trace principles, traditional caches are not allowed in Rocky. Instead, virtual and Earthcaches bring you to meaningful locations, spots with a great view, or spots with geological significance in the park. Whether you are new to geo-caching or are a geo-caching expert, this tour is a fun and challenging adventure for the whole family. Find out more at the Estes Park and Grand Lake Visitor Centers or visit the Across the Divide GeoTour Facebook page.

- Kauffman House Museum Centennial Exhibit (May 23 – September 4)

This exhibit highlights the history of the development of the west side of RMNP and the related changes in Grand Lake. Come browse historic narratives, memoirs, photographs, and artifacts that will take you back up to 100 years! Kauffman House Museum, 407 Pitkin St., Grand Lake.



- May 30: Centennial Speaker Series: Dr. Jill Baron – “Stories from Loch Vale”

Join us in Beaver Meadows Visitor Center Auditorium in RMNP at 7:30pm for this special presentation. As RMNP celebrates its first 100 years, Dr. Baron will address the importance of long-term ecosystem science in understanding the natural dynamics of mountain catchments, the effects of human activities, and how scientific knowledge will be essential to the protecting of mountain ecosystems for the next 100 years.

- Saturday Night in the Park Centennial Speaker Series (Saturdays June 20 – September 5)

Join a special speaker in the Kawuneeche Visitor Center Auditorium in RMNP every Saturday night to hear a new perspective on the 100th Anniversary of RMNP’s wilderness, wildlife, and wonder.

- July 11: Centennial Speaker Series: Jim Disney

Join us in Beaver Meadows Visitor Center Auditorium in RMNP at 7:30pm for this special presentation. A native Coloradoan, avid mountaineer, and prolific artist, Jim Disney has the perspective of how landscapes inform and inspire art, and in turn, those who view the creativity of artists. He has twice served as the Artist in Residence in RMNP, and has additionally served as the Open Lands visual artists for Larimer County. This presentation will explore the history of art and artists in RMNP.

- August 6: Centennial Speaker Series: Dr. Patty Limerick

Join us for this special presentation at History Colorado at 7pm. Dr. Patty Limerick in the Faculty Director and Chair of the Board of the Center of the American West at the University of Colorado where she is also a Professor of History. Limerick has dedicated her career to bridging the gap between academics and the general public and to demonstrating the benefits of applying historical perspective to contemporary dilemmas and conflicts. In celebration of RMNP’s 100th Anniversary, Dr. Limerick will apply her unique perspective to the celebration of 100 years of history and the implications this history has for the future.

- September 3: Re-Dedication Celebration - 11am to 1pm

Come join us at the Holzwarth Historic Site in RMNP for music and family fun as we ring in the next 100 years of Rocky Mountain National Park! Check the Centennial website for more details as this event gets closer.

- September 4: Centennial Re-Dedication Ceremony - 11am - 1pm

Join us in Glacier Basin Campground in RMNP for spectacular views, special speakers, music, and family activities as we dedicate Rocky Mountain National Park for the next 100 years. Check the Centennial website for more details as this event gets closer.

*1915 Dedication; Enos Mills & F.O. Stanley  
NPS Photo*

Check the park website for details on these and many more exciting Centennial events, and follow us on social media @Rockynps for updates on 100th Anniversary events and programs!



# My Rocky Mountain Experience ~ An Intern's Story

Gazing out the window of my car I watched as the strange “clouds” in the distance slowly transformed into the snow-capped peaks of the Rockies. It was 2009 and this was the first time I had ever seen mountains; it was a transcendent experience. Growing up in southern Wisconsin I was accustomed to a relatively flat landscape and the massive landforms in front of me were a foreign sight.

It wasn't long before I passed through an entrance gate into Rocky Mountain National Park. The two days I spent exploring the park were short lived but memorable. The park's beauty was enchanting and I knew I would be back again to visit this magical place. Five years later and newly graduated from the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point, I accepted a position as an Environmental Education intern with Rocky Mountain National Park.



Samantha Roberts NPS Photo

My last semester of college was fairly intense but extremely worthwhile. I had the unique opportunity to student teach at two amazing places: Schmeckle Reserve in Stevens Point, WI and the Central Wisconsin Environmental Station in Amherst Junction, WI. Both places helped me gain practical teaching experience and prepared me to take on future endeavors, such as teaching in Rocky Mountain National Park.

Being offered an internship in the park was a dream come true, and my experience thus far has been amazing. My internship is funded by the Rocky Mountain Conservancy through the Next Generation Fund, which supports youth programming. As an education intern I've had the opportunity to work with elementary through college aged students, and help guide them in personal discoveries. Programs we offer such as Winter Mountain Safety and Survival allow students to explore the natural environment, think critically, and also have fun.

I've always possessed a deep appreciation of our environment, and as I aged, this appreciation evolved to envelop environmental education as well. Environmental education is an invaluable asset. It exposes people to the wonders of the natural world through direct interactions and fosters lifelong learning experiences. My dream is to continue working in the Environmental Education field, wherever it may take me, so I may inspire others to become environmentally conscious citizens. As Baba Dioum so eloquently put it, “In the end we will only conserve what we love; we will love only what we understand; and we will understand only what we are taught.”

## Protection of High Value Trees and Hazard Mitigation Projects Continue at Rocky

Bark beetles continue to be active in conifer trees within Rocky Mountain National Park. The park's priorities for mitigation of the effects of beetles are focused on removing hazard trees and hazard fuels related to the protection of life and property. For several years, Rocky Mountain National Park has had a proactive bark beetle management program. In recent years, bark beetles have been considered at outbreak levels throughout the park. In 2015, the park will continue its mitigation efforts, including applying insecticide, removing hazard trees, prescribed burns, utilizing an air curtain burner, pheromone treatments and implementing temporary closures in a variety of park locations.

Starting in mid-April and ending by Memorial Day weekend, the park is planning to apply a Carbaryl® based insecticide to up to 2,750 high-value trees to protect them from bark beetles. Treatment will occur in the following developed areas of the park: Beaver Meadows Visitor Center and Headquarters, Moraine Park

(Continued on next page...)



Discovery Center, Aspenglen Campground, Moraine Park Campground, Bighorn Ranger Station, McGraw Ranch, and the east side park service housing areas.

Last year, more than 6,000 trees were treated and nearly all of these trees were protected from attack by bark beetles. Treatment sites have been reduced on the east side of the park as infestation rates decrease in forests adjacent to high value trees. Insecticide will be applied from the ground and sprayed onto individual trees to repel beetle attacks. Temporary closures to the public and employees will be in effect during spraying operations.

The park is also treating up to 300 high value limber pine trees with verbenone pheromone packets to minimize infestation from bark beetles. Limber pine trees in the park are currently at risk of mountain pine beetle infestation and infection from white pine blister rust, a lethal non-native invasive disease. Research is being conducted to identify if any limber pine trees within the park are resistant to white pine blister rust.

Park staff will conduct hazard tree mitigation through tree removal throughout the year. Small scale selective hazard tree removals should be anticipated at trailheads, parking areas, picnic areas, roadside pullouts, road corridors, campgrounds, ranger stations, stables, and visitor centers. Temporary site closures may occur at smaller sites to facilitate safe and efficient operations. More detailed information will be provided on upcoming tree removal projects along Trail Ridge Road. Material disposal will involve piles for future burning and consolidation at designated sites for future use including firewood collection permits. More information on wood utilization will be available in late summer.

## Eagle Rock Students Paint Mural in the Alpine Hotshot Dorm at Rocky Mountain National Park

Continuing our partnership with the Eagle Rock School (ER), students of Cynthia Elkins and Dayan Safferstein's art class spent 5 weeks this past winter painting this mural in the Alpine Interagency Hotshot Dorm at Rocky Mountain National Park (RMNP). Building on the success of the ER Internship and Citizen Science Classes (Fire & Dragonfly), students learned how to work with clients, adopt and expand their vision, work on a team with varied work styles, and finish an original work of art under a deadline. The project was a new way to involve ER students and to connect with new audiences and students that may have never thought about doing anything with the National Parks. The mural provides a way for youth to leave their mark on RMNP and show other students they too can get involved and leave a lasting impression.

The class was the idea of Paul Cerda (Alpine Hotshots), Ben Baldwin (RMNP) and Jon Anderson (ER). "We have worked together on several internships, classes, and opportunities and thought this would be an interesting idea," said Ben Baldwin.



With mural are, from left, students Elias Aguirre, Alysha Dan and Zoe Johansen, Eagle Rock School art teachers Cindy Elkins and Dayna Safferstein and student Barbara Gutierrez (NPS photo)

# 2015 Shuttle Schedule

## Bear Lake and Moraine Routes:

Shuttle Service starts on the Bear Lake and Moraine Park routes on Memorial Day Weekend May 23, 24, and 25, 2015, and runs in 'weekend only' service the next two weekends; May 30 & 31, June 6 & 7.

Daily Service for Bear Lake and Moraine Park routes starts Saturday June 13, 2015, and runs through Monday October 12, 2015.

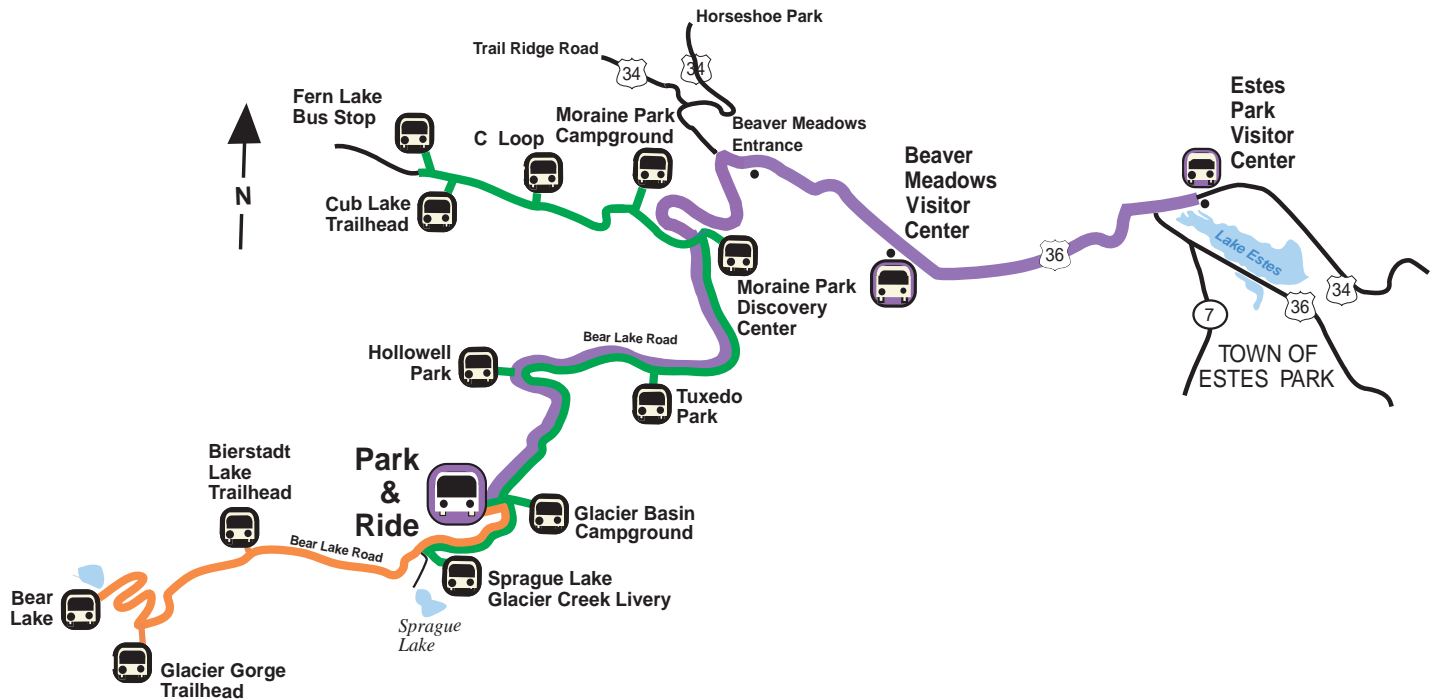
The first buses leave Park and Ride at 7:00 a.m. for both routes, last bus of the day leaves Bear Lake and the Fern Lake trailhead stop at 7:00 p.m. Bear Lake shuttles run every 15 minutes or less and Moraine Park shuttles run every 30 minutes.





The Sprague Lake/Glacier Creek Livery stop is on the Moraine Park route.

## Hiker Shuttle:

Daily Hiker Shuttle service begins Saturday June 27 and runs through Sunday September 13, 2015. Followed by fall weekend service (Saturday and Sunday); September 19 & 20, 26 & 27 and October 3 & 4, 10 & 11.

The first Hiker Shuttle leaves Estes Park Visitor Center at 7:30 a.m. and the last shuttle leaves Park and Ride at 8:00 p.m. bound for Estes Park. Hiker shuttles run on a 30 minute schedule during the peak of the day (11:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.) and on a 60 minute schedule the rest of the day.



-  **Hiker Shuttle Express Route**  
Stops at Park & Ride, Beaver Meadows Visitor Center, and the Estes Park Visitor Center only
-  **Bear Lake Route**
-  **Moraine Park Route**
-  **Shuttle Bus Stop**



# Prestigious National Park Service Valor Award Presented to Current and Former Rocky Employees



Members of the Rocky Mountain National Park Search and Rescue Team, Stephen A. Baxter, Michael L. Lukens, Joshua K. McCoy, Larry V. Roberts, and Kevin A. Sturmer receive Valor Awards presented by DOI Secretary Sally Jewell. DOI photo by Tami Heilemann.

Five members of the Rocky Mountain National Park Search and Rescue Team were honored for acts of bravery for a 2013 technical rescue and life saved on the east face of Longs Peak (14,259 ft.). Stephen Baxter, Michael Lukens, Joshua McCoy, Larry (Van) Roberts, and Kevin Sturmer planned and executed a complex and hazardous rescue mission of a climber who sustained multiple injuries after a 50-foot fall attempting to scale the summit of the peak.

The Rocky employees were 5 out of 15 National Park Service employees honored at the 70th Honor Awards Convocation in Washington, D.C. Thursday, May 7. National Park Service Director Jonathan B. Jarvis was quoted at the ceremony as saying, "On any given day, National Park Service employees set the standard for superior public service. From the maintenance workers to park rangers, we are forever grateful to these individuals for their bravery in the face of incredible danger; even death."

"Please join me as we extend our congratulations to our five colleagues, as well as the entire team of Rocky employees and volunteers who successfully saved another life", Superintendent Vaughn Baker.



# Changes in Backcountry Camping Fees at Rocky

Effective for the 2015 summer season, the cost of obtaining a permit for backcountry camping in Rocky Mountain National Park will increase from \$20 to \$26 per trip. This administrative permit fee, established in 1995 and last increased to \$20 in 2004, is necessary to recover the administrative costs associated with managing the program, including costs of a computerized permit and reservation system.

Permits for backcountry camping are an integral part of a program that rations and distributes use throughout the park's backcountry, intended to minimize impacts to resources, help provide a quality experience, and ensure that sites are available for those able to plan ahead and reserve a permit in advance. While an overnight permit is required for backcountry camping year-round, the fee for obtaining the permit only applies for camping that occurs during the months of May through October when demand typically exceeds availability in many areas of the park's backcountry. The six dollar increase for the non-refundable permit became effective March 1, 2015.

Different from an entrance fee or fee for camping in a developed campground, the backcountry permit is based on cost recovery and all funds are applied directly to the costs of administering the program. This past October, the park proposed a change in its current recreational use fees for entrance and developed campgrounds. A public comment period followed and the proposal is still under review. A decision on those recreational use fees is expected shortly.

According to Superintendent Vaughn Baker, "Rocky Mountain National Park retains one hundred percent of the administrative fees charged for backcountry camping permits. In addition to providing the opportunity to reserve and secure campsites in advance, funds recovered through the permit fee allow for staff to provide trip planning advice and information for a safe and enjoyable trip into the wilderness. Requirements for food storage necessary to protect bears and other wildlife, mountain weather, hazards, and Leave No Trace ethics are among the information received during the permitting process. Fees that we charge enable us to provide these services."



*It's calving season. During this time, female elk and deer become irritable and highly protective of their young calves. Though they may look harmless, they are extremely dangerous during this time. Please use extreme caution and give them extra space.*

*Photo by Walt Kaesler*



# National Park Tourism in Colorado Creates \$552.1 Million in Economic Benefit

A new National Park Service (NPS) report shows that the 6,031,876 visitors to national parks in Colorado in 2014 spent \$374.4 million in the state. That spending supported 5,811 jobs and had a cumulative benefit to the state economy of \$552.1 million. Of that total, 3.4 million visitors came to Rocky Mountain National Park, spent \$217 million, supported 3,382 jobs and had a cumulative benefit to the economy of \$329 million.

“From Dinosaur National Monument to Bent’s Old Fort National Historic Site, the national parks of Colorado draw more than 6 million visitors a year from across the country and around the world,” said Sue Masica, director of the NPS Intermountain Region, which includes Colorado and seven other states. “Whether they are out for an afternoon, on a school field trip or crossing America on a family vacation, park visitors come for a great experience — and they end up spending a little money along the way. This new report confirms that national park tourism is a significant driver in the national economy, returning \$10 for every \$1 America invests in the National Park Service. This reality makes national parks tourism a big factor in Colorado’s economy, too. It’s a result we all can support.”

Colorado’s 12 national parks include: Black Canyon of the Gunnison, Great Sand Dunes, Mesa Verde and Rocky Mountain national parks; Colorado, Dinosaur, Florissant Fossil Beds, Hovenweep and Yucca House national monuments; Bent’s Old Fort and Sand Creek Massacre national historic sites, and Curecanti National Recreation Area.

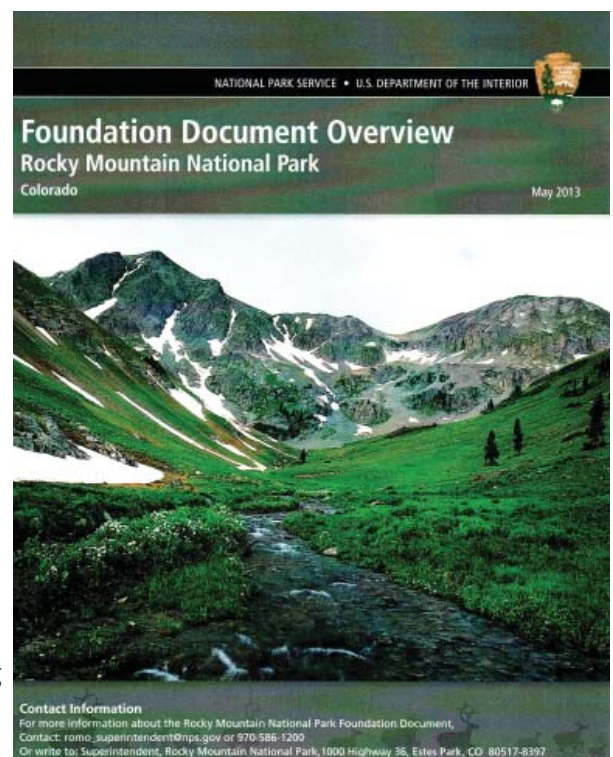
The peer-reviewed visitor spending analysis was conducted by U.S. Geological Survey economists Catherine Cullinane Thomas and Christopher Huber and NPS economist Lynne Koontz. Nationally, the report shows that a record 292.8 million park visitors directly spent \$15.7 billion in communities within 60 miles of a national park. This spending supported 277,000 jobs, 235,600 of them in those “gateway” communities near the parks. The cumulative benefit to the U.S. economy was \$29.7 billion.

## Foundation Document

Every unit of the national park system needs a formal statement of its core mission to provide basic guidance for all planning and management decisions: a foundation for planning and management. It is imperative that stakeholders and park staff understand the park’s purpose, significance, interpretive themes, fundamental resources and values, and special mandates and administrative commitments, as well as legal and policy requirements for administration and resource protection. The document reflects the laws establishing and governing the management of the park including the Establishment Act of 1915, the National Park Service Act of 1916, and the Wilderness Designation Act of 2009.

The foundation document can be used in all aspects of park management to ensure that the most important management objectives are accomplished before addressing other items that are also important but not directly critical to achieving the park purpose and maintaining its significance.

An overview of the Foundation Document is available on line at <http://www.nps.gov/romo/learn/management/management-plans.htm>. A full copy of the document can be requested by contacting the Superintendent’s office at [ROMO\\_Superintendent@nps.gov](mailto:ROMO_Superintendent@nps.gov) or 970-586-1201.





# Two Stewardship Awards and Rocky's First Citizen Science Award Presented for 2014

## **Kathy Tonnessen ~ Stewardship Award**

Kathy began work for the NPS Intermountain Region in 1991 as the first agency liaison to the newly created Rocky Mountains Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit (RM-CESU). In that position, Kathy assumed a leadership role by setting standard practices and procedures and developing a scientific network to provide national park managers with access to science based data and information. This information enabled those managers to preserve and steward natural and cultural resources in the national parks. As a result of her efforts, the RM-CESU became a service model for how Department of Interior CESU liaisons could best connect land and resource managers with the scientific community. During this time, Kathy also served as an Adjunct Professor in the College of Forestry and Conservation at the University of Montana. In this dual role she was able to provide a connection between the Rocky Mountain Region National Parks with the scientific community and students, tomorrow's scientists.

## **David Cooper ~ Stewardship Award**

As Senior Research Scientist at Colorado State University, David has supported the park in some of the most significant restoration projects of the last 20 years including the removal and restoration of Fan Lake and assistance in determining data needs and developing design concepts for the former Glacier Creek Livery and the abandoned Hidden Valley Ski Area. He produced key science products that helped guide park managers during the development of Elk and Vegetation Plan and the Grand Ditch breach court case. He is currently providing support in the restoration of the Lulu City wetlands and other areas impacted by the breach. Dr. Cooper has offered countless personal and professional hours to Rocky Mountain National Park in order to protect its natural resources to ensure they persist for future generations to enjoy.

## **Tena & Fred Engelman ~ Citizen Science Award**

Tena and Fred, volunteer ornithologists, have provided more than 18,000 hours of their time to conduct a 10 year study of hummingbirds at Rocky Mountain National Park. As chief scientists on the project, they successfully developed the skills and knowledge to safely band these birds and document species diversity, movements, timing, demographics, nesting success and plumage characteristics. Through their efforts they have provided an extensive data collection on these avian wonders which has supported numerous presentations and publications. The Engelmans collaborated with other hummingbird scientists throughout Western North America to track the migrations of these tiny dynamos. Tena and Fred also collaborated with USGS scientists to discover more about the genetic diversity of these fascinating birds. To further public involvement, they have also provided popular hummingbird seminars for the Rocky Mountain Conservancy.



*Fred & Tena Engelman, Kathy Tonnessen, David Cooper*

# Reroutes and Repairs to Flood Damaged Trails

The flood recovery work in 2014 focused mostly on the repair of many of the park's backcountry bridges, repairs to the Sprague Lake Picnic Areas, repairs to the tread at Lily Lake, and the replacement of the Ouzel Falls Bridge. This season we will finish up the Ouzel Falls Bridge and Lightning Bridge as helicopter operations are tentatively scheduled for mid June. Trail crews will work to reestablish the trail corridor on the North Longs Peak Trail that was washed away in the Boulder Brook



*Damage to the Twin Sisters Trail from the September 2013 Flood*

*NPS Photo*

location as well as work to repair the damage on that trail above treeline. As soon as the Ouzel Falls Bridge is complete, crews will turn their focus on repairing the trail along the first two miles of the Fern Lake Trail. Crews have also been tasked with repairing flood damage in the Wild Basin District on the main access trail and the Allenspark Trail. Our volunteer program is focused on repairing several of the livery trails including Meeker Park and Cow Creek.

Rocky Mountain National Park is considering reroutes and repairs to several trails that were heavily damaged or lost during the September 2013 flood. Flooding not only washed away the travel surface in some locations, but also structures such as culverts, water bars, and bridges. Saturated soils on hillsides failed, causing landslides that destroyed entire trail segments. Trails that received the most substantial damage require extensive repairs or rerouting.

The purpose of this proposed project is to identify potential travel routes while protecting natural and cultural resources and preserving wilderness character. Damaged trails proposed for reroutes or repairs include: Alluvial Fan, Lawn Lake, Ypsilon Lake, Twin Sisters, and Aspen Brook. All of these trails currently remain open to the public, but portions of the trails and bridges have been washed out by flooding and landslides or are badly damaged. Social trails have developed in some locations around the damaged or missing trail segments, which can lead to soil erosion and vegetation damage over time.

The park is considering several options for each trail, including constructing short detours around damaged or missing trail segments or constructing longer trails. Also under consideration is allowing continued use of social trails and implementing minor improvements. Restoration of existing trails is not always feasible at

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some locations. Complete trail closure is also an option that may be considered for some trails. Trail segments abandoned due to reroutes or closure would be restored to natural conditions through active replanting or natural revegetation.

An environmental assessment is being prepared in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) to provide a decision-making framework that analyzes a reasonable range of alternatives to meet project objectives, evaluates issues and impacts on park resources and values, and identifies mitigation measures to lessen the degree or extent of these impacts. We anticipate that the environmental assessment will be available for public review and comment sometime in 2015. If you have questions about the project, please call the park's Information Office at (970) 586-1206.

## **Update on Multi-Use Trail Projects**

### **East Shore Trail Bicycle Use**

The wilderness legislation for Rocky Mountain National Park set aside the East Shore Trail area on the west side of the park for consideration of whether to allow bicycle use. The East Shore Trail area was not included in designated wilderness. In 2014, Rocky Mountain National Park completed an environmental assessment and gathered public input in order to answer the question of whether to allow bicycle use on a two mile section of the East Shore Trail that extends north from Shadow Mountain Dam to the park boundary just south of Grand Lake. In February 2015, the initial decision was made to allow bike use on the two mile section of trail, with minor modifications to the trail for safety, resource protection, and trail sustainability. A 1/4 –mile section of the trail requires rerouting. Because this section is considered a new trail under the National Park Service Bicycle Rule (36 CFR 4.30), rulemaking, with an additional opportunity for public input, is required before the trail can be modified and before bicycle use can be permitted. We anticipate that the rulemaking process will be completed sometime in 2016.

### **East Side Multiuse Trail**

In 2009, Rocky Mountain National Park completed a feasibility study to determine if a multiuse trail could be developed on the east side of the park that would roughly parallel the existing roadways. The study concluded that it would be feasible to develop up to 15.5 miles of trail that would link the Fall River Entrance and the Beaver Meadows Entrance to a trail along Bear Lake Road and ultimately to Sprague Lake. The proposed trail could tie into trails that are being planned within the Estes Valley, and could provide access to visitor centers, campgrounds, and the shuttle bus system within the park.

With funding provided by the Federal Highway Administration, the park is now working with a consultant to put the finishing touches on an environmental assessment that evaluates the positive and negative consequences of developing the proposed multiuse trail. We anticipate that the environmental assessment will be available for public review and comment sometime this summer. If the plan is approved, no funding has been identified for construction, and the park may choose to build none, some, or all of the potential 15.5 miles of trail.



# “Life in the Cold” A Teacher Workshop held at Rocky Mountain National Park

Where do dragonflies go when the snow falls?  
What keeps wood frogs from croaking in winter?

To answer these questions, Rocky Mountain National Park in partnership with the YMCA of the Rockies, Larimer County Natural Resources, and Colorado Parks and Wildlife hosted a Winter Ecology teacher workshop February 20-22.

Despite the weekend forecast, classroom teachers and nonformal educators donned snowshoes and cold weather gear to explore “Below Zero” an educational curriculum designed to promote understanding of wildlife under winter conditions.



The 22 participants explored the winter world through content sessions, snowshoe hikes, digging snow pits, hands-on activities, and educational games. Guest speakers included Scott Rashid, local bird expert; Steve Johnson, Estes Park Middle School teacher; Paul McLaughlin, Park Ecologist; Kevin Sturmer, Park Climbing Ranger; Heather Young, Larimer County Education Program Coordinator; and Mary McCormac, Northeast Regional Education Coordinator with Colorado Parks and Wildlife.

Formal classroom teachers came away with an arsenal of activities to bring back to their classrooms, while nonformal educators gained confidence and activities for taking students outside in the cold at their own outdoor sites. Participants enjoyed the “knowledgeable instructors,” “variety of experiences,” and “the unique way to experience Colorado winter.”



Mount Lady Washington, Longs Peak, and Storm Peak. Photo taken by Climbing Ranger, Mike Lukens, on Monday, May 11, 2015.

# Grant Supports Alternative Transportation at Rocky

Rocky Mountain National Park staff recently assembled with partners from the Northern Colorado Clean Cities Coalition and the National Renewable Energy Laboratory for a ribbon cutting ceremony marking the substantial completion of a grant funded through the U.S. Department of Energy's Clean Cities National Parks Initiative. This grant was awarded to Rocky Mountain National Park in 2013, for \$167,500.

The National Park Service (NPS) and U.S. Department of Energy Clean Cities National Parks Initiative supports alternative transportation projects aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions and educating park visitors about the environmental benefits of reducing our dependence on petroleum. This initiative complements the NPS Climate Friendly Parks program by demonstrating the environmental benefits of cutting petroleum use and greenhouse gas emissions.

Through this unique partnership opportunity, the park has purchased two electric sedans and one hybrid pickup truck, installed two electric charging stations, launched an idle reduction campaign and enhanced the parks education and outreach efforts toward reducing greenhouse gas emissions and enhancing sustainable operations.

Find out more about Clean Cities and transportation at: [www1.eere.energy.gov/cleancities/index.html](http://www1.eere.energy.gov/cleancities/index.html)

*Photo caption:  
Shebles McConnellogue,  
Executive Director of Northern  
Colorado Clean Cities Coalition,  
and Andrew Hudgins, Project  
Leader, Clean Cities, at the  
National Renewable Energy  
Lab with Danny Basch, Facility  
Manager of Operations at  
Rocky Mountain National Park  
and two of the three vehicles  
purchased through the grant.*



Rocky Mountain National Park proudly recognizes the Rocky Mountain Conservancy as its official charitable partner.



The National Park Service proudly recognizes the National Park Foundation as its official charitable partner.

