

November 2012

VISTAS



ROCKY MOUNTAIN NATIONAL PARK

NPS Photo by Crystal Brindle

Wilderness, Wildlife, Wonder

It's been another busy year. Construction of the final phase of Bear Lake Road began in the spring and is still ongoing. We appreciate everyone's patience as this project has presented some challenges in accessing the Bear Lake corridor. The good news is that the project is on schedule for completion in 2013. So, one more year of inconvenience, then a brand new road to go with the upper section that was completed in 2004. When this project is complete, it will conclude over 47 miles of improvements on Bear Lake Road and Trail Ridge Road. This amounts to over 80% of the park's main road system being rebuilt or repaved since 2003.

In late August, the park hosted a BioBlitz in conjunction with National Geographic. Over the course of two days, some 5,000 people including 2,000 students participated in field inventories with scientists and a biodiversity festival at the Estes Park Fairgrounds.

October saw a late season fire in the lower Forest Canyon area. While the cause is under investigation, we adopted a full suppression/containment strategy given its location near park and community facilities. The steep terrain and beetle-kill trees made it unsafe in most areas to put firefighters on the ground using direct suppression tactics. Indirect tactics of aerial water drops and potential back burning using contingency lines established by trails, rocky ridges, and previous prescribed burns were employed. Mother Nature will need to intervene with the season's first major snow fall to put a damper on things.

We are now just two years away from the park's centennial. A logo will be announced shortly. Expect to see more activity in the months ahead.

Hope you get a chance to enjoy winter in Rocky.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Vaughn".

Vaughn Baker
Superintendent

Visitation

Rocky Mountain National Park passed the three million recreation visits milestone again this October. As of the end of October, year-to-date visitation is about the same as last year at 3,069,128, but almost 28% higher than year-to-date in 2009.

Fall is a time of year when many visitors enjoy beautiful autumn colors and the spectacular elk rut. This year, other factors in fall visitation likely included seasonal road closures, the Bear Lake Road Reconstruction Project, and the Fern Lake Fire. Trail Ridge Road closed for the season on October 11 this year, and last year closed a little later, on October 22, 2011.

Old Fall River Road closed for the season a little earlier this year than last year too, on October 10 rather than the 14th.

Keep Up On the Latest With Rocky....

Park Website www.nps.gov/romo

Like us on Facebook at Rocky Mountain National Park

Twitter <http://twitter.com/rmnpofficial>

Flickr http://flickr.com/photos/rocky_mountain_np

Park Information 970-586-1206

Trail Ridge Road & Bear Lake Road Reconstruction Recorded Status Line 970-586-1222



Photo by Mike Vogel

2013 Fee Free Days:

January 21 (Martin Luther King Jr. Day)

April 22 - 26 (National Park Week)

August 25 (National Park Service Birthday)

September 28 (National Public Lands Day)

November 9 - 11 (Veterans Day Weekend)

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Bear Lake Road Reconstruction Continues at RMNP



This two-year project began this spring and is taking place on Bear Lake Road from the junction of Trail Ridge Road/Highway 36 to the Park & Ride – Glacier Basin Campground intersection, covering 5.1 miles. The work is similar in scope and impacts as the first phase of reconstruction on Bear Lake Road which was completed in 2004, and took place on the upper 4.3 mile section of road. This major project involves construction of significant retaining walls to improve safety and drainage. In addition, a 0.9 mile section is being rerouted away from Glacier Creek, in order to prevent impacts to wetlands and riparian habitat and reduce costs. This summer, repairs were made on the Big Thompson Bridge to improve safety. Structural deficiencies will be corrected in the roadway and inadequate parking and pullout design will be improved. This project will widen the road and improve the road surface to better accommodate park shuttle buses. Safety associated with winter snow removal will be enhanced by the wider road.

On October 10, private vehicles were again allowed throughout the day to travel along Bear Lake Road in Rocky Mountain National Park. Since late May, visitors could only access the Bear Lake area prior to 9:00 a.m. or after 4:00 p.m. and through park shuttles during the day. Road construction will continue through the fall and during the winter, weather permitting. Park visitors should be prepared for the possibility of two thirty-minute delays in both directions. There are no construction delays between Park & Ride and Bear Lake. Evening closures, from the Big Thompson Bridge to the Park & Ride, are currently in place on Tuesday and Thursday nights only. The road is closed from 8:00 p.m. on Tuesday nights to 6:00 a.m. Wednesday mornings and again at 8:00 p.m. Thursday nights through 6:00 a.m. Friday mornings. (Continued....)



One of the new culverts on Bear Lake Road.

NPS Photo

Bear Lake Road Reconstruction Continues at RMNP (cont.)



Curb pour near Big Thompson Bridge on Bear Lake Road NPS Photo

So far this year, asphalt paving has been completed from the Trail Ridge Road intersection to the Big Thompson Bridge. All drainage culverts (2,277 linear feet) have been installed and over 40,000 cubic yards of embankment material has been placed. Three of the six retaining walls are largely complete with work underway on the remaining three. The earthwork and grading on the 0.9 mile realignment section is complete. The first two miles to the Big Thompson River bridge has been completed.

Glacier Basin Campground is scheduled to be closed again next summer. This major road reconstruction project is slated to be completed by the fall of 2013.

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. Rocky is approaching its Centennial anniversary in 2015. Bear Lake Road was completed in 1928 and until 2003, no significant improvements were made. No major road work has taken place on the lower section for more than 80 years. When this project is complete, just prior to the park's hundredth anniversary, it will conclude over 47 miles of critical improvements on park roads since 2003.

The Federal Highway Administration awarded a \$23.4 million contract to American Civil Constructors and is administering this project on behalf of the National Park Service. American Civil Constructors is based in Littleton, Colorado. The overall cost of the project is \$27.7 million.

This project involves 5.1 miles of road and access to another 4.3 miles. Information on the Bear Lake Road Reconstruction Project is available at www.nps.gov/romo, the park's recorded road status line (970) 586-1222 or through the park's Information Office at (970) 586-1206.



Construction of retaining wall number 3 on Bear Lake Road. NPS Photo

Fern Lake Fire

The Fern Lake Fire began on October 9, approximately 2 miles west of Fern Lake Trailhead on the east side of Rocky Mountain National Park. Initially, the Moraine Park Campground was evacuated as well as numerous trails and backcountry sites in the Fern Lake area. All trail closures have been lifted at this time but an area closure is in effect that includes Forest Canyon, north and west of the Fern Lake Trail, and south of the Ute Trail.



Due to persistent dry conditions and winds, the Fern Lake Fire continues to burn in the bottom of Forest Canyon. This area has not burned in more than 800 years, so there is an extreme amount of dead and downed wood, litter and duff that continues to burn even though the area is experiencing very cold temperatures, light snow cover, and less sunlight. Forest Canyon is very steep and rugged and has a heavy fuel load of beetle killed trees which is too hazardous to send firefighters in to directly suppress the fire. The risk of the fire moving to the east is greatly diminished, but park fire crews will continue to monitor the fire for the foreseeable future. At one point there were 143 resources assigned, 9 fire engines, 2 heavy helicopters and one light helicopter.

The Fern Lake Fire continues to be managed with a full suppression strategy. Top priorities of park management and fire officials include the safety of visitors and firefighters and keeping the fire within park boundaries.

The fire will smolder, creep and put up smoke until a significant snow event puts out the fire. Fire managers will continue active monitoring, suppression as needed, and mop-up until the fire is completely out.

The fire size is currently 1132 acres and is 45 percent contained. The cause of the fire is still under investigation.



This KMAX helicopter is a heavy-lift helicopter well suited for dropping up to 400 gallons of water on a fire at a time. It was used briefly on the Fern Lake Fire.

NPS Photo

100th Anniversary Planning Continues

As its 100th anniversary quickly approaches, Rocky Mountain National Park has begun the planning process for the year-long Centennial Celebration. Rocky Mountain National Park staff, park partners, and individuals, businesses, and organizations from surrounding communities have begun brainstorming and planning educational programs, products, and special events to celebrate 100 years of Rocky Mountain National Park history, relationships, and connections.

Over the summer, the 100th Anniversary slogan, Wilderness, Wildlife, Wonder, chosen in May, inspired close to 100 designs for the Rocky Mountain National Park 100th Anniversary Logo Contest. Designs submitted from all over the country depicted aspects of Rocky Mountain National Park's rich cultural and natural history. From Native American imagery, Enos Mills, and modern day tourists to mountain skylines, columbine, and wildlife of all kinds, the designs submitted for the Logo Contest represented the variety of powerful images people through time have associated with Rocky Mountain National Park.

The Logo Contest is currently in its final stages. Once a winner is chosen, the Centennial Logo will be available for interested parties to use to tie their product or event to the Centennial Celebration (special rules will apply). Festivities will kick off on September 4, 2014, the 99th Anniversary of the park's public dedication in Horseshoe Park. The Centennial Celebration will continue until September 4, 2015, providing ample time for communities and organizations to link existing events to the commemoration and celebrate their connection with Rocky Mountain National Park.

Rocky Mountain National Park's 100th Anniversary Celebration will encourage people to rediscover and reconnect with the wilderness, wildlife, and wonder that have inspired and continue to inspire visitors to Rocky Mountain National Park. How would you celebrate Rocky Mountain National Park's Centennial? What kinds of events or programs would you like to see put on by your local organizations? Rocky Mountain National Park encourages you to think about ways your community can connect with the natural and cultural history of the park through activities that engage and appeal to a variety of audiences. Will you host a poetry contest or a centennial concert? A children's play? Maybe a hiking challenge or a bird watching seminar? Details will be released soon as to how to tie your organization or event to the 100th Anniversary.

For information on 100th Anniversary planning, questions, or to be added to our 100th Anniversary mailing list and receive updates on planning and events, please email ROMO_100th_Anniversary@nps.gov.



NPS Photo

2013 Rocky Mountain Nature Association Seminars



ROCKY MOUNTAIN FIELD SEMINARS

Have you had the opportunity to attend one of Rocky Mountain Nature Association's (RMNA) Field Seminar Programs? Most field seminars are field-based, hands-on learning experiences in Rocky Mountain National Park. A wide range of topics are available and include wildflowers, mammals, birds, cultural history, outdoor skills, photography, painting and writing. The 2013 calendar of events, and more information, can be found at www.RMNA.org. To enroll in a seminar please call the Field Seminar Center at (970) 586 -3262.

Many of the seminars fill up, so please register early. We look forward to seeing you in a field seminar this year. RMNA membership discounts are available for full day and multi-day classes.



NPS Photo

Rocky Mountain National Park Prepares Grand Ditch Breach Restoration Environmental Impact Statement

On May 30th, 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 mud and rock slide into Lulu Creek and the headwaters of the Colorado River damaging

upland, stream, riparian, and wetland habitat over a distance of 1.5 miles and 22-acre area. The breach created a flood sending an estimated 47,000 cubic yards of sediment and debris down into Lulu Creek. Over 20,000 trees were lost and approximately 50 different plant species were impacted.

On March 16, 2012, the draft environmental impact statement (DEIS) for the Grand Ditch Breach Restoration was distributed to the public, other agencies and interested organizations, and individuals for review, and a notice of availability was published in the Federal Register by the Environmental Protection Agency to initiate the 60-day public review of the document. Public review closed on May 25, 2012. The National Park Service (NPS) received nearly 100 comments on the draft alternatives presented by the NPS. The NPS is currently preparing responses to comments and making changes to the DEIS in an effort to finalize the EIS in 2013. Once the EIS is finalized the Record of Decision (ROD) will be drafted and sent to the NPS Regional Director's office for approval. Restoration can begin after approval of the ROD.

Rocky Mountain National Park BioBlitz Reaches New Heights

Thousands of Scientists, Students and the General Public Converge on Park For Scientific and Personal Discovery



After two days of exploration and documentation, the Rocky Mountain National Park (RMNP) BioBlitz held on August 24 and 25, 2012, captured a vivid snapshot of the plants and animal diversity in the Rocky Mountains. Led by nearly 200 scientists from around the country, thousands of amateur explorers, families and schoolchildren conducted an inventory of the plants, insects, mammals, birds and other creatures that inhabit the majestic park. A companion festival at the Estes Park Fairgrounds celebrated biodiversity.

The BioBlitz was part scientific endeavor, part festival and part outdoor classroom. Participants combed the park, observing and recording as many plant and animal species as possible in 24 hours. Activities included catching insects, spotting birds, exploring and examining aquatic invertebrates and using technology to better understand the diverse ecosystems of this unique park.

RMNP was the sixth in a series of 10 annual BioBlitzes to be hosted by National Geographic and the National Park Service (NPS), leading up to the park service's centennial in 2016. During closing ceremonies the BioBlitz flag was passed to Carol Clark, superintendent of Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and Preserve and New Orleans Jazz National Historical Park, where the seventh BioBlitz will take place May 17-18, 2013.

A special thanks to all of the staff and volunteers (more than 550 of you!) who helped to make this event a success!! Some of the highlights include:

- More than 5,000 people, including more than 2,000 schoolchildren, participated in BioBlitz and its concurrent Biodiversity Festival.
- The initial scientific species count as of the 4 p.m. closing ceremony Saturday was 489, but a passing bald eagle during the ceremony raised the count to 490. Organizers expect the number to increase significantly over the next few months as state-of-the-art testing of the collected samples continues.
- The two-day, 24-hour count added potential new species to park lists in an already well-documented park. This included a potential new lizard, nine insects and 13 nonvascular plants. The big brown bat species was officially confirmed at BioBlitz 2012.
- In addition to scientific discovery, the 2012 BioBlitz focused on personal discovery and understanding the park in new ways. For a group of 4th-graders from a Denver school, it was the ultimate field trip and the first time in a national park for most of the students.
- NPS Director Jonathan Jarvis participated in the BioBlitz, working side-by-side with students exploring meadow and alpine tundra ecosystems. The BioBlitz coincided with the release of the updated Leopold Report and the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the NPS and Sistema Nacional de Areas de Conservacion (SINAC) of Costa Rica.
- The Biodiversity Festival included a wide variety of music, nature-inspired activities, photography workshops, talks, art, live animal demonstrations and hands-on science activities.



Jill Baron Received 2011 Rocky Mountain National Park Stewardship Award



Dr. Jill Baron

The Rocky Mountain National Park 2011 Stewardship Award was presented to Jill Baron during the spring of 2012 for cooperative efforts advancing the long term protection of Rocky Mountain National Park. Dr. Jill Baron's first paper on work in the Loch Vale Watershed was published in 1983. At that time, the aquatic chemistry of high elevation lakes in the southern Rockies was poorly understood. To place this in context, this was not long after it became apparent that trout were disappearing from the Adirondacks due to a newly described phenomenon known as "acid rain." There was concern that the lakes of Rocky Mountain National Park might also be susceptible to acidification. So, in 1983 Jill, who was working for the National Park Service's Water Resources Division at the time, became the project lead on the installation of monitoring equipment in the Loch Vale drainage.

Although the immediate threat of acidification was proven unlikely, Jill had found her lifetime work in understanding water chemistry, nutrient cycling, and the biologic impacts of nitrogen deposition on nutrient poor, high-elevation environments. This year, the monitoring effort at Loch Vale entered its 30th year, still under Jill's leadership, and she along with many colleagues have made the Loch Vale Watershed one of the most studied subalpine areas on Earth. Jill has been an author of approximately ninety publications and edited two books related to Rocky Mountain National Park.

In recent years, Jill helped introduce the idea of "critical loads" for nitrogen pollution into the United States. Because of her, Rocky Mountain National Park is at the forefront of efforts to control this pollutant's impairment of national parks and other sensitive protected areas. Jill has also filled a leading role in considering climate change impacts on national parks and adapting to the now inevitable change that is already occurring. Jill exemplifies the model of how studying one corner of Rocky Mountain National Park can truly lead to global understanding and achievements.

Volunteer Program Reports Fiscal Year 2012 hours

In fiscal year 2012, Rocky Mountain National Park had 1,670 Volunteers who served 102,201 hours! Thank you!! We appreciate each of you and every hour that you have donated to the park. We look forward to working with you again in fiscal year 2013!

Two Trails Being Considered for Bicycle Use

Rocky Mountain National Park is looking at the possibility of allowing bicycle use on a two mile section of the East Shore Trail, which runs along the east side of Shadow Mountain Lake, and the possibility of developing a new multi-use trail on the east side of the park that would connect with trails in the Estes Valley.

The wilderness legislation for Rocky Mountain National Park, passed by Congress in 2009, set aside the East Shore Trail area for consideration of bicycle use. The legislation does not mandate bicycle use, but does allow the park to consider such use through its normal planning process. Parsons, a consulting firm in Denver, has been retained to prepare an Environmental Assessment (EA), and in August and September the park began gathering public input. It is anticipated that the EA will be available for public review and comment early next summer, and a decision on whether to allow bicycle use on this two mile section of trail will be made sometime next fall. You can learn more about this project by visiting <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/romo> and selecting the “East Shore Trail Environmental Assessment.”

In 2009, Rocky Mountain National Park completed a Multi-Use Trail Feasibility Study that examined the possible development of a multi-use trail in the front country (i.e., not in designated wilderness) on the east side of the park. As envisioned in the feasibility study, the trail would be off road and would roughly parallel U.S. 34, U.S. 36, and Bear Lake Road for a distance of about 13 miles. It would connect the Fall River Entrance, Deer Ridge, and the Beaver Meadows Visitor Center, and would follow Bear Lake Road as far as Sprague Lake. The 2009 study determined that such a trail is feasible.

In fiscal year 2010, the park received funding from the Paul S. Sarbanes Transit in Parks program to undertake additional planning for the trail. Recently, a contract was awarded to Vanasse Hangen Brustlin Inc. to prepare an EA for the multi-use trail. It is anticipated that public scoping (the process of gathering public input) will begin this fall. There will be other opportunities for public input during the planning process, which will take about two years. You can stay informed about this project by visiting <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/romo> and selecting the “Multi-Use Trail Environmental Assessment.”



Connecting With the Student Conservation



NPS Photo

On Saturday, July 28, park staff and Student Conservation Association (SCA) staff hiked up the Fern Lake Trail in Wild Basin to visit with the SCA crew. The park has sponsored numerous national conservation crews over the past decade and expects to continue supporting opportunities for aspiring conservation leaders. In recognition of this past and future commitment, SCA expanded their relationship with the park by sponsoring three summer interns in 2012, two supporting the trail program in the Colorado River District and one supporting the BioBlitz. The crew in July, consisting of six high school students and two crew leaders, had been camped at Fern Lake for three weeks. They had recently completed a two week trail brushing project to Pear Lake and were in the process of installing erosion control structures on a section of trail traversing an area burned in the Ouzel Fire. Despite three weeks of trail food and no showers the crew was in excellent spirits. They were completing a critical service project and were looking forward to their final activity, a three day hike beyond Thunder Lake, across the continental divide and out the East Inlet Trail on the west side of the park.



NPS Photo by Russell Smith

*Happy
Thanksgiving
from the Stewards of
Your Rocky Mountain
National Park!*

New Fire Management Plan and Associated Environmental Assessment In Place

Park staff recently completed a new Fire Management Plan (FMP) and associated Environmental Assessment (EA) that became effective this past June. A new FMP was needed to improve our ability to achieve the following goals of the Rocky Mountain National Park (RMNP) fire management program (in priority order):

1. Provide for the safety of employees and the public.
2. Protect communities, infrastructure, and natural and cultural resources.
3. Restore and maintain fire-adapted ecosystems.

The new FMP differs from our previous plan in three primary areas:

1. The current FMP is consistent with the latest changes in federal wildland fire policy. A new FMP was needed to incorporate several recent changes in federal fire policy. Most notable among the changes included in the 2009 Guidance for Implementation of Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy (authored by the Departments of Agriculture and Interior), was that a wildland fire may be concurrently managed for multiple objectives (e.g. protection and resource benefit). Prior to the 2009 guidance, an individual fire could be managed for either protection objectives or resource benefit objectives, but not both. This is a significant change in that on a single incident we can now aggressively suppress one portion of the fire to protect values at risk while simultaneously allowing another portion of the fire to play its natural role on the landscape. All human-caused wildfires will continue to receive a suppression-oriented response.

2. The current FMP expands management options with respect to wildland fire response. Under the previous FMP the park was divided into 11 discrete Fire Management Units (FMUs). Six of the FMUs allowed the management of naturally ignited wildfires for resource benefit (under appropriate conditions) and the remaining 5 were designated as protection (full suppression) zones. This approach limited the use of fire for ecological benefit as well as the use of naturally occurring fire to reduce hazardous fuels in much of the front country of the park.

The new FMP eliminates the use of FMUs and associated pre-determined wildfire response. All unplanned wildland fires will now receive a management response that takes into consideration a wide range of factors. The strategies and tactics employed will consider firefighter and public health and safety, values to be protected from fire, fire cause, current and predicted weather, current and potential fire behavior, management priorities, resource availability, and cost effectiveness. Therefore, wildland fire response may differ in time as well as place. The response may range from aggressive suppression of a wildfire to the monitoring of a free-burning fire from a distance.

3. The current FMP increases the park's ability to adequately manage fuels adjacent to at-risk communities, park infrastructure, and natural and cultural resources. The previous FMP limited fuels management activities (including prescribed fire) to 4 of the 11 FMUs (total of 12,558 acres in non-contiguous treatment units). The new FMP expands the area where planned fuels treatments are permitted to 27,905 acres, focused primarily along the park's eastern and western boundaries. Fuels treatments will be prioritized by weighing the potential benefits to adjacent values at risk as well as any potential ecological benefits.

The FMP is subject to annual updates and a comprehensive review every 5 years. The current FMP can be found on the ROMO website. For additional information, please contact Mike Lewelling or Nate Williamson.

Rocky Employees Recognized

Franklin G. Smith Award

We are proud to announce that Ben Baldwin of the Continental Divide Research Learning Center, Rocky Mountain National Park (RMNP), is the NPS Intermountain Region's 2012 Franklin G. Smith award winner.

Ben is being recognized for his leadership in workforce development, his ability to work across all park divisions, his ability to integrate professional development opportunities within communities as well as regional and Washington D.C. level programs. Most importantly, Ben is being recognized for his leadership in achieving positive experiences for youth of all walks of life, but particularly of those who are under-represented. Recent contributions of Ben include leadership in Eagle Rock Internship program, George Melendez Wright Climate Change Internship at RMNP, Groundwork Denver Intern Program at RMNP, Intermountain Region's ProRanger Law Enforcement Program and a similar program that is being developed WASO Facilities Management Program. Congratulations Ben Baldwin !!



*Ben Baldwin and National Park Service Intermountain Region, Regional Director, John Wessels
NPS Photo*

Cultural Venues Accessibility Champion of the Year



Barry Sweet NPS Photo

The Colorado Cross-Disability Coalition Celebrated the 22nd Anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act by honoring those who have gone “Above and Beyond!”

On the Anniversary of the signing of the Americans with Disabilities Act, The Colorado Cross-Disability Coalition (CCDC) honored seven organizations and/or individuals for their exemplary “Above and Beyond” efforts in working for, and with the disability community. According to Julie Reiskin, Executive Director of CCDC, “The Above and Beyond Award nominees have gone above and beyond in their efforts to support disabled individuals in their pursuit of the American Dream.”

Rocky Mountain National Park's Backcountry Office Manager, Barry Sweet was awarded the Cultural Venues Accessibility Champion of the Year award. Congratulations Barry!

The Honorees received special recognition at the CCDC Annual Awards Ceremony, held Friday, September 28, 2012, at CEC Middle College in Northwest Denver.

Technical Assistance Visit to Our Sister Park in the Tatra Mountains



Danny Basch (far right) Rocky Mountain's Facility Manager of Operations and Lindsey Prell (far left) Rocky Mountain's Volunteer Program Manager with the Volunteers of the Polish Tatra National Park (TPN) NPS Photo

Since 2007, Rocky Mountain National Park has enjoyed an active and mutually beneficial sister park relationship with Tatra National Park located along the border of Poland and Slovakia (Tatranski Park Narodowy, TPN in Poland, and Tatransky Narodny Park, TANAP Slovakia). In September 2012, two Rocky Mountain staff members traveled to the Polish Tatra National Park on a technical assistance trip. The purpose of this trip was to provide assistance for:

- * The development, management and maintenance of programs related to internships and volunteers. Thus, Lindsey Prell, ROMO's Volunteer in Parks (VIP) Coordinator, and Danny Basch, Facility Manager of Operations (with a trail management background), were selected to support the request. Danny and Lindsey spent two weeks with the staff of the TPN learning about their programs and offering suggestions and expertise where needed.

- * The evaluation of TPN existing trails and offering options for design, rehabilitation and program management.

The TPN is working on a plan to restore a section of trail leading from Kasprowy Wierch to Giewont, which is a heavily traveled and extremely scenic trail on the Polish and Slovakian boarder. The trail was once single-tread but has grown to over 70 feet wide in some places. Danny will continue to offer support and advice from afar as that project unfolds. The TPN is also looking to expand their volunteer program and gain support internally from staff members. The Polish Tatra began their volunteer program in 2007 after their first visit to Rocky Mountain National Park.

Although the purpose of the trip was for Rocky's staff to offer their assistance, they came back to Rocky with many new ideas on how to improve our programs and operations based on what they are doing in Poland. It was a beneficial trip which further solidified our sister park relationship with the TPN.