



Volunteer News - Winter 2012



Winter Volunteering

It's the most wonderful time of the year... Indeed it is, if you're a volunteer at Rocky Mountain National Park. While many of our park volunteers flee the cold, for parts warmer (see *On the Road with Rocky VIPs*), a hearty group of locals continue to offer their services during the quietest, but perhaps most beautiful time of the year.

Starting in the southern part of the park at Wild Basin, a cadre of volunteers staff the Wild Basin Warming Hut during weekends throughout the winter. Staffing the hut is no easy feat, as you must collect and purify water, possess excellent fire-building skills in a very temperamental woodstove, and greet visitors. And the commute to work is no easy task, as the Wild Basin group has to park by the entrance gate and then either nordic ski or snowshoe the one mile into the Warming Hut before proceeding with the above duties. But all duties are completed with smiles to go around.

Bear Lake is the destination for many tourists during summer, but the winter beauty draws its own cadre of visitors to enjoy the variety of snowy pursuits available during winter. For people like Dave Chambers and Jon Olsen, who staff the Bear Lake kiosk, it's all in a day's work to stay warm, give out maps to snowshoers

and skiers, and answer for the 100th time, "What are those tee-pee piles along the side of the road?" But all this and more are handled with good nature and patience.

Bear Lake is also the place you might find volunteers like Marti DeYoung, providing assistance on the ranger-led Snowshoe Walks. Snowshoe volunteers can be found on both sides of the park, both at Bear Lake and the Colorado River District. Whether it be helping a novice into their snowshoes for the first time, or escorting weary snowshoers back to the parking area, the Snowshoe Assistant volunteers are a great asset to the park rangers during these programs. Marti, however, confesses she can also be found on her days off not next to Bear Lake, but on Bear Lake. She is on a mission to skate on as many of the park's lakes during winter as possible. Recently, she completed the "quad-fecta", skating on Emerald, Dream, Nymph and Bear all in the course of one day!

However, in terms of surviving the greatest of challenges during winter months, the award has to go to the Sled Dawgz. Sled Dawgz volunteers staff the Hidden Valley sledding area during weekends and holiday weeks. They can be seen attending the hill on the worst of days, when the temperatures are plummeting,

and the wind is howling. Despite the adverse conditions, you can find them day in, day out helping up children, and sharing in their joy of wintertime at Rocky Mountain National Park.

Of course, we cherish our volunteers who continue their commitment in year-round positions, tirelessly providing services to visitors and to giving back to the park in various roles such as Road Hogs, visitor center staff, and the Information Office staff. No matter what a volunteer's role is during winter, their contributions, service and spirit are greatly appreciated by National Park Service staff and visitors alike.



Volunteer, Marti DeYoung and NPS Ranger, Chelsea Hernandez

Rich Bray Receives Hartzog Award

During this past October, 2011, Rocky Mountain National Park volunteer, Rich Bray was awarded the Intermountain Region George Hartzog Award for Outstanding Volunteer Service by an Individual. The Hartzog Awards were created in honor of George Hartzog, NPS Director from 1964 - 1972, who initiated the Volunteer-in-Parks Program in the NPS. The award honors volunteers who give of their skills, talents, and time beyond the normal call of duty, by engaging in innovative volunteer projects.

Rich Bray is a citizen scientist/amateur lepidopterist (butterfly researcher). During the summer of 1995, he began locating survey transects in Rocky Mountain National Park. The following 16 years, he has coordinated over 50 volunteers, who participated in various elements of his butterfly inventory and monitoring project. The project totals over 38,000 volunteer hours. Individually, he has amassed over 17,000 volunteer hours.

This project is exceptional because it represents a full 15-year effort to inventory and monitor park species. Following scientific protocols and with oversight from park staff and local university lepidopterists, this scientific effort has been completed at little or no cost to the park. To date 50 volunteers have surveyed over 3,000 routes, entered more than 10,000 lines of data, and donated over 38,000 hours to the park. At a November 2007 climate change workshop, a group of 50 scientists cited this project as the model which other citizen science long-term monitoring projects should follow.

The park truly appreciates the tremendous commitment, effort, and knowledge that has gone into Rich's work, and will be presenting Rich the Hartzog award plaque on February 8, 2012 at the annual Research Day.



Photo, Kevin Maloney, New York Times

Moving On



Liz Campbell, Asst. VIP Coordinator, CRD

The times they are changing.... The Colorado River District has been blessed for many years to have two very special people who tirelessly contributed their time and efforts in support of the Volunteers-in-Parks Program. Liz Campbell and Sharon Teal were the dynamic duo who volunteers over the years came to know and trust would take care of their every need. After many years of service, Liz Campbell retired in October from her position as Assistant Volunteer Program Coordinator. And after 21 years of NPS service, Sharon Teal retired as of December 31, 2011 in her position as Public Information Assistant.

Sharon Teal has been an outstanding and highly-regarded employee of Rocky Mountain National Park since 1991. During her career with the park, she has been a central and valued employee in the Colorado River District. In her role as Public Information Assistant, she has been the glue that holds the operation together. Sharon performed many visitor service and administrative duties for the Colorado River District interpretive program, including serving as the primary contact for volunteers whenever Liz was unavailable. As such, she was an integral part of the volunteer program, cheerfully assisting any volunteer with any need. She tracked and tallied volunteer hours, prepared volunteer



Sharon Teal, Public Information Assistant

forms, and ensured that reimbursements were submitted promptly and accurately.

As volunteer coordinator for the CRD, Liz Campbell exemplified all the best traits of being a MVV, Most Valuable Volunteer. Liz coordinated recruiting, interviewing, hiring, training, and scheduling for over 100 volunteers on the west side of Rocky Mountain National Park. She ensured that required paperwork was completed and that uniforms were available for every volunteer. She lovingly planned and presented successful volunteer appreciation events twice a year for winter and summer VIPs. Liz had a very special way of morale building, which was second nature to her with her cheerful, southern charm, that proved truly infectious to the rest of the volunteer staff. In short, Liz always went the "extra mile" on behalf of the park, volunteers, and visitors during her 12 years (and over 8,000 hours) with Rocky Mountain NP.

Both Liz and Sharon have been an enormous asset to the VIP program and will be greatly missed by volunteers and staff alike. They will both continue to spend time in the Grand Lake area and Liz will volunteer part-time this spring to assist with the transition to the new staff coordinating VIP activities in the Colorado River District.

VIP Holiday Open House

And a good time was had by all.... The Volunteer Office played host again for the 3rd annual VIP Holiday Open House. The Open House provided a chance for volunteers and NPS staff to enjoy and get to know each other. It also provided an opportunity for volunteers to meet the new face in the VIP Office, Leslie Brodhead, who is currently serving as Acting VIP Program Coordinator.

Volunteers near and far came to enjoy some home-made soup, baked goodies and holiday cheer at the VIP Office on Wednesday, December 7. It was also a chance for volunteers to check out the new improvements made to the office during the last three months. New windows, shades and carpeting were installed -- it still has that new "office smell." The bathroom was also spruced up including installation of an energy-saving hot water heater. And thanks to the maintenance staff and volunteers, Gordon Appel and Jas White, a new paint job topped it all off. Add in a few new



Newly renovated VIP Office

furnishings as well as a new Volunteer Bulletin Board, and things were definitely looking merry and bright!

All in all, it was a great event where both volunteers and National Park Service staff enjoyed the opportunity to get to know each other better and appreciate all the ways that volunteers continue to serve our park.

Park News & Notes

Beaver Meadows Visitor Center Update: The infrastructure work on the visitor center is progressing nicely and is on schedule. Stay tuned for more information on the re-opening date, which should occur late winter.

Bear Lake Road Construction Update: The contract has been awarded and construction on the lower 5.1 miles of Bear Lake Road will begin in February will take up to two years to complete. Visitors can expect delays of up to 40 minutes both east bound and west bound. The road is expected to be close from 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. to private vehicles during the summer season. Due to night closures, Glacier Basin Campground will be closed for the summer. The last hiker shuttle stop along Bear Lake Road that is available to visitors will be at Moraine Park Visitor Center. Please see park website for more details.

VIP News & Notes

VIP Annual Report - In October, 2011, we compiled all the VIP stats into the year-end report. During the course of the fiscal year, almost 1700 volunteers contributed over 105,000 hours worth \$2,236,926.00. KUDOS to all of you for making Rocky the 9th largest VIP program in the NPS in terms of hours contributed!!

VIP Agreements -- if you received an e-mail or snail mail informing you that a new agreement was needed, please turn them in as soon as possible. This is your legal contract with the park, and covers VIPs for Workman's Compensation. Call Leslie at 586-1330 with any questions.

Country Magazine - Rocky VIPs were featured in Country Magazine in an article featured in the September, 2011 of Country Magazine. The article is currently posted on the bulletin board in the VIP Office.

New Faces, New Places

A big welcome to our newest Volunteer Supervisor, Michael Rupp, who will be supervising the Bear Lake Summer volunteers! Michael grew up in San Jose, California and received a degree in geology from Humboldt State University in Arcata, California. Upon graduating, Michael found work in the California State Parks in northern California before landing his first NPS position at Pinnacles National Monument in 2005. It was at Pinnacles that his love and devotion to the cause of preservation became clear and he became committed to following a career path in the NPS. Michael then moved on to Zion National Park in 2010, working as a Visitor Use Assistant for 1.5 years before arriving at Rocky Mountain in September of 2011.

Michael credits summer road trips with his family to the National Parks as his inspiration for a career in the NPS. His career has led to both professional and personal fulfillment. It was at Zion where Michael met fellow ranger, Jodi DeCard and they recently wed on December 10, 2011 in Fort Collins, CO. The happy couple is currently residing in the park and hopes to enjoy a lifetime of love, adventure, and happiness while exploring the

Rocky Mountains.

Upon arriving at Rocky, Michael was amazed by the sheer numbers and devotion of the volunteer staff. His initial thoughts on the Bear Lake "Trail Masters": "I have not seen an operation more dependent on volunteers than Bear Lake, and this operation could not attain such a high caliber of visitor service if not for the dedication, commitment, and altruism of these volunteers." Michael hopes to sustain that tradition of tried and true volunteerism as he works with the Bear Lake Volunteer staff in his new position.





National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

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EXPERIENCE YOUR AMERICA™

Winter Road Hogs Wanted

Do you love working outdoors? Do you enjoy physical labor in a beautiful alpine environment? We have a volunteer opportunity for you!

The Road Hogs Volunteer group is currently recruiting new volunteers. Road Hogs work on Mondays only, from 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. Carpool opportunities may be available from valley locations. Wintertime duties include hazard tree removal, cutting and limbing trees, bucking logs, cutting brush. Heavy lifting is required as material is then consolidated into burn piles or onto trucks for removal. Volunteers may be using axes, hand saws, rakes and brooms in the course of the day. Volunteers who are certified as a sawyer, may be using chainsaw. Interested applicants may apply in person at the VIP office or online through <http://www.volunteer.gov/qov>.

In Memoriam - Walter Tishma

Long-time Longs Peak volunteer, Walter Tishma, passed away on December 27, 2011. Walter was a legend at Rocky, and in particular at Longs Peak. Like many, Walter first became acquainted with the park and the famous fourteener while on vacation here in 1974. It was during that summer, that he made his first successful summit of Longs Peak.

Later in 1988, he retired and moved to Estes Park full-time and began volunteering at Rocky Mountain NP. Of course, he became a fixture at Longs Peak, staffing the ranger station on occasion, but mostly spending time out on the trails. He could be seen frequently talking with visitors, giving advice and encouraging them on their own ascent to the summit.

Walter became fascinated with summiting Longs Peak, logging an astonishing 113 successful summits. When asked what kept him coming back to this particular peak, he said, "The Keyhole, the Ledges, the Homestretch, it just drew me back every time." Volunteer Rich Ryer shared Walter's tip for logging so many miles -- the "Walter Shuffle" -- toe to instep, then repeat. Walter said it wasn't the destination, but the journey that mattered. With his volunteer efforts and his love of hiking, Walter definitely left a legacy here at Rocky that won't soon be forgotten.

A memorial service for Walter is being held on Thursday, January 12 at 3 p.m. at the Good Samaritan Society in Estes Park.