

# Rocky Mountain

National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
Rocky Mountain National Park



## Volunteer Newsletter Spring 2010

### From the Volunteer Office:

Hello Everyone,

Well, spring is upon us so it's snowing, of course. Actually, those big fluffy snowflakes are very pretty, and since they do not blow away before they melt we get to keep the moisture.

As we start getting ready for summer, many of your supervisors will be contacting you about returning. Just like last year, you only need to fill out the volunteer agreement once for Fiscal Year 2010. If you have already filled out a 2010 agreement (FY2010 started on October 1, 2009), you do not need to fill out another one, however, you will need to fill out and sign a job description (position contract) for each job you are hired to do. To me, the difference between the two documents is this, the agreement is a general understanding between you and the park, the job description is a contract between you and your supervisor. If you have any questions please call the volunteer office, we will be happy to help you with your paperwork.

We will have some new staff this summer. Our office intern will be Judy Tumulo from Milford, Ohio. She is a retired educator and has volunteered in several places over the past four years. She was a campground host at Yosemite National Park, led junior ranger programs at Coronado National Forest, studied endangered species for Earthwatch in Oregon, organized special events at the Cincinnati Nature Center, and, most recently, volunteered at the Arizona Sonoran Desert Museum, just to name a few. She will arrive during the last week of May. Rocky volunteers, but new to the volunteer office, will be Kelly Lester and Rich Gilliland. In addition, Bud Lester and Lois Sumey will be working on our new database. It will be more powerful and more secure so your records will be even safer.

Returning to the volunteer office will be Flo Bielat and Don Seedle. Actually, since Flo is now a year-round resident of Estes Park (whoopee!) she has been here all winter helping out (double whoopee!).

Thank you to everyone who responded to our informal survey in the last newsletter. We got some great suggestions to name our new vehicle, but the overwhelming support was for (drum roll, please), "The Marshmallow." Actually, the name really fits; when it snows I have a hard time finding it. We also received quite a bit of input regarding this year's gift, and we're already working on it. Since it is a gift, it will hopefully remain a surprise until the appreciation events.

Please be aware that this year, as usual, there will be some changes. As many of you know there was a change to the firearms regulations for national parks. If you have questions, go to the park's website at [nps.gov/romo/planyourvisit/firearms\\_regulations\\_rmnp.htm](http://nps.gov/romo/planyourvisit/firearms_regulations_rmnp.htm) or call the Information Office at 970-586-1206. There were also changes regarding reimbursements to volunteers following an IRS audit. The results were published in the last newsletter, but I have included them again. Lastly, the uniform committee has been meeting this winter to update the park's uniform standards. Volunteer uniform standards will now be included in the park's official office order pertaining to uniform standards. When the office order is complete I will publish the pertinent details. These will be topics addressed at seasonal orientations and trainings this spring so you will probably hear more about them.

Hope everyone is well and thawing out!

Cheers, Kathleen

## Volunteer Appreciation Events

Mark your calendars...

### East Side:

When: Wednesday, August 11 at 5 p.m.

Where: Estes Park High School

### West Side:

When: To Be Determined

Where: Grand Lake Fire Station

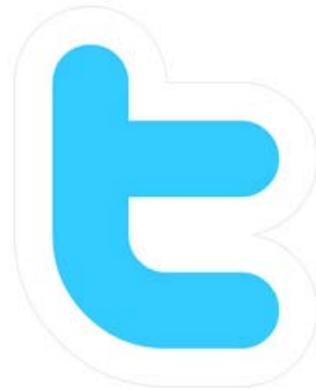
Please come to either, or both, event(s).



Park Biologist Mary Kay Watry and her daughter, Abby, welcome volunteers to last year's event at Estes Park High School.  
Photo by John Marino

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## Rocky's on Twitter



Twitter is a social networking service that enables its users to send and read messages known as *tweets*.

Rocky's Twitter site, RMNPOfficial, posts park updates such as road conditions, campground status, Bear Lake conditions, evening program information, wildlife sightings, prescribed burns announcements, etc.

To become a RMNPOfficial "follower" or just check our latest entry go to <http://twitter.com/RMNPOfficial>.

If you're out in the park and see something that might make a good tweet, contact the Information Office at 970-586-1206 or [romo\\_information@nps.gov](mailto:romo_information@nps.gov).

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## Lyceum Series 2010

The theme of the 2010 Lyceum Series is "Wilderness: Of What Avail Are Forty Freedoms Without A Blank Spot On The Map?" the famous quote from Aldo Leopold. This year's series focuses on how wilderness influences what we do as stewards of this incredible national park. Speakers highlight what wilderness means spiritually, physically, as part of naturally functioning systems, as part of our psyche as a nation, and how it guides our decisions on management decisions at Rocky Mountain National Park.

The Lyceum schedule runs through May. Financial support for the Lyceum Series is provided by the park's nonprofit partner, the Rocky Mountain Nature Association. Programs are free and open to the public. They are held on Saturdays at 7 p.m. in the Beaver Meadows Visitor Center auditorium.

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## Rocky Mountain National Park Biennial Research Conference

When: Tuesday, March 30 and Wednesday, March 31

Where: Estes Park Municipal Building (170 MacGregor Avenue)

We are delighted to have 47 presenters and 18 posters. No registration is required. All sessions are free and open to the public.

A brief schedule is listed below. For a complete schedule, internet users may click on the link at [nps.gov/romo/supportyourpark/volunteer\\_newsletter.htm](http://nps.gov/romo/supportyourpark/volunteer_newsletter.htm), non-internet users may call the volunteer office and a copy can be mailed to you.

Room A:      Tuesday Morning-Social Science  
                  Tuesday Afternoon-Water & Air  
                  Wednesday All Day-Wildlife  
                  (except 11:20 a.m.-2 p.m.-Poster Session)

Room B:      Tuesday Morning-Forest Health  
                  Wednesday Morning-Vegetation  
                  Wednesday Afternoon-Transportation

## Help Wanted

### Looking For a Few Good Volunteers *Bighorn Brigade* Recruitment

Beginning in mid May, a dedicated group of volunteers known as the *Bighorn Brigade* will be back on duty.

This volunteer group helps staff the Sheep Lakes Information Station in Horseshoe Park, one of the premier wildlife viewing areas in Rocky Mountain National Park. Volunteers furnish information to park visitors about bighorn sheep and other park resources, protect the migration of bighorn sheep across Hwy 34, and educate visitors on ethical wildlife viewing.

Rocky Mountain National Park is currently recruiting new volunteers for the *Bighorn Brigade* to work on Saturday or Sunday from May 15 through August 14. Shifts are either 8:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. or 10 a.m.-4 p.m.

New volunteers for the *Bighorn Brigade* are required to attend an afternoon and evening training session on Friday, May 14.

If you are interested in volunteering for the *Bighorn Brigade* or would like more information, please contact Cynthia Langguth, Bighorn Brigade supervisor, at 970-586-1224 or [Cynthia\\_Langguth@nps.gov](mailto:Cynthia_Langguth@nps.gov).

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### Attention Blitzers

There will be two parkwide water blitzes this year. Though both dates are to be determined, the first will be the week of May 24, May 31, or June 14. The other will be sometime between August 9 and August 20. You will need to attend blitz and backcountry training. If you want to help out with hiking or logistics for either blitz (or both!), contact Cheri at 970-586-1394 or [Cheri\\_Yost@nps.gov](mailto:Cheri_Yost@nps.gov).

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### English Language Learners Program

Rocky Mountain Nature Association (RMNA) is sponsoring a program for students for whom English is a second language. They are looking for volunteers, preferably, with backgrounds working with kids, educators and/or, who are bilingual in Spanish and English. However, just an interest to help out is the only requirement. The programs will be in English. Programs have been scheduled for the Estes Park Middle School students on April 2 and for the Elementary School students on May 7. The high school students' program will soon be scheduled. For more information contact Paul at RMNA at 970-586-3262.

Please Note: You would be volunteering for RMNA, not Rocky Mountain National Park.

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### Old Winter Gear Needed

The Environmental Education staff is looking for a few old things, namely waterproof outer pants, gloves, hats, neck gaiters, shoe gaiters, warm socks, and waterproof jackets/outer layers. Many of our students come from urban areas and show up without proper clothing for the snow. Our kids come in all sizes - we serve K-12, so any donation will help. Contact Rainey Kreis at 970-586-1338 or [Rainey\\_Kreis@nps.gov](mailto:Rainey_Kreis@nps.gov).

### Alpine Visitor Center-*Alpineers*

We are looking for a couple of energetic volunteers to help staff the Alpine Visitor Center. A day at AVC can be exciting and varied.

On most days, the duties include staffing the visitor center, responding to visitor questions, patrolling the Fall River Pass area, and assisting with RMNA book sales. On other days you may assist with medical or other emergencies by taking reports and contacting rangers, covering the visitor center while rangers are responding to emergencies, and assisting ranger-EMTs during medical emergencies with note taking.

You must be able to stand and work at 12,000', and work long days. Generally AVC *Alpineers* commit to one day per week from late May to either early September or mid-October. We also need a couple of substitute *Alpineers*.

Contact AVC Supervisor, Leanne Benton, at 970-586-1226 or [Leanne\\_Benton@nps.gov](mailto:Leanne_Benton@nps.gov).

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### Estes Park Middle School Science Mentors

The Estes Park Middle School Science Olympians need your help! The state competition is April 24. The students need mentors in Meteorology, Dynamic Planet, Ecology, the Solar System, and Fossils. They seek weekly 30-minute to hour long training session with subject matter experts. If you can help out or know someone who has the expertise, please contact [melindamerrill161@hotmail.com](mailto:melindamerrill161@hotmail.com) or Cheri Yost at 970-586-1394 or [Cheri\\_Yost@nps.gov](mailto:Cheri_Yost@nps.gov).

Please Note: You would be volunteering for the middle school, not Rocky Mountain National Park.

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## **Volunteers needed!**

### **The 2010 Estes Park Marathon will benefit RMNA's Million Mile Challenge**

The Estes Park Marathon, June 12th & 13th, will continue its tradition as an exciting community event and an important fundraiser for Estes Valley youth recreation programs. This year, it will also benefit Rocky Mountain Nature Association's Next Generation Fund. RMNA is now a beneficiary of the marathon and will dedicate its share of donations to the Million Mile Challenge. The Challenge seeks to match an anonymous challenge gift of \$1 Million for the youth education programs in Rocky Mountain National Park and Roosevelt-Arapaho National Forest.

As a beneficiary of the Estes Park Marathon, RMNA has agreed to provide volunteers for June 12th to help with course set-up, race participant registration, and KIDS FUN RUN! On Sunday, June 13th, volunteers are needed to assist with registration, race course marshal roles, aid-station teams, delivering volunteer lunches, finish line area support, and post-race food distribution. Tasks will be assigned based on volunteers' interest, time availability, and physical capability (don't worry, you won't have to run, but we do love smiles and a good cheer!). Please note that volunteers for this event would be working for RMNA and not in their capacity as volunteers for the park. RMNA NEEDS YOUR HELP!

The EPM provides superior, fun, and challenging running events, which encourage healthy lifestyles that benefit youth, family, and community in a spectacular mountain location. EPM values the health of our environment and precious ecosystems. It is committed to becoming a green, zero-waste event, and has implemented steps to be successful. Also, the KIDS FUN RUN!, provides a pre-race "festival" for kids and is designed as an environmental education opportunity with fun booths (How to make a WORM FARM!).

If you have questions or would like to volunteer to help a fun-filled community event that will provide lasting benefit to our next generation of conservationists, please call Steve Coles at RMNA at 970-586-3262. You can email him at [steve.coles@rmna.org](mailto:steve.coles@rmna.org). Future Junior Rangers, Education Interns, and summer Conservation Corps Trail Crews depend on your support of the Next Generation Fund today.

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## **New Volunteer Reimbursement Policies for NPS:**

The IRS audited past and current reimbursement practices of the National Park Service and found that many of those practices created "taxable events" for volunteers. In the spirit of volunteerism and to avoid a taxation of payments made to you, the Washington Office issued new guidance for what the National Park Service is allowed to reimburse volunteers.

Beginning immediately:

- Mileage reimbursement rate is \$.14/mile for use of a private vehicle while on-duty (the park can no longer pay a higher rate).
- No per diem, predetermined amounts, or flat rate reimbursements (we cannot offer \$7 per day for meals or a lump sum at the end of the season).
- Receipts are required for all reimbursements -- no exceptions.
- Meals are only reimbursed if the volunteer is away from home overnight and/or if food is not readily available (meal reimbursement for overnight backcountry travel or invitational travel is allowed, with receipts).
- Non-monetary award value is no more than \$50 (applies to gifts given by the volunteer office or any employee to a volunteer) -- this does not effect the *America the Beautiful Volunteer Pass*, eligible to volunteers who have donated a cumulative 500 hours to federal natural resources agencies since January 1, 2007.

What is allowed:

- Offer of "free" park housing or trailer site, which is then paid for with government funds, to a volunteer who donates at least 32-40 hours per week; as always, this is contingent on housing, trailer sites, and/or funds being available.
- Use of volunteer uniforms (including safety equipment) provided at park expense (either volunteer office or supervisor provided)
- Reimbursement of up to \$20 each for two pairs of brown pants to be worn as part of the volunteer uniform; this is an increase from \$15 previously.
- Overnight backcountry "per diem" for actual groceries used on the trip, up to \$20 per day -- receipts required
- Invitational travel for volunteers who travel away from the park overnight for training or work purposes (volunteer is put into official travel status)

Questions? Call the volunteer office at 970-586-1330.