

RMNP

Rocky Mountain National Park

Winter 2016/2017
October 11–March 19

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

The official newspaper of
Rocky Mountain National Park



The Continental Divide NPS PHOTO / ANN SCHONLAU

Welcome to Winter

A New Season, A New Park

AS A WINTER VISITOR TO ROCKY, YOU'RE PART of a special group. Most people visit in summer and fall, when temps are warm, roads are clear, and winds are gentle. In winter, temps are frigid, Trail Ridge and Old Fall River roads are closed, snow covers the mountains, and the wind often howls. It can be a challenging time to enjoy the great outdoors.

But with great challenges come great rewards. Explore many beautiful lakes, now covered in sheets of richly-colored wind-warped ice. Watch for wildlife and stand in awe of their ability to survive and even thrive in harsh conditions. Enjoy fun new ways of getting around as you sled, ski, snowboard, or snowshoe to destinations near and far. Feel the power of deep quiet that only winter can bring. And when you need to warm up, stop in at a visitor center to learn more about the park and speak with a ranger.

We hope you enjoy your trip during this magical season. When you get home, keep the party going by helping us celebrate the 100th birthday of the National Park Service. How? Both in person and on social media, share your experience with your family, friends, and community, and encourage them to visit findyourpark.com to learn more about our national parks and to find a park near them.

What's Different in Winter?

Driving can be a challenge

Many roads in the park are closed, including Old Fall River Road and much of Trail Ridge Road. Be prepared for winter driving conditions, including ice and snow.

Wildlife viewing is great

Winter is an excellent time to view wildlife. Look for moose along the Colorado River on the park's west side, elk and mule deer in meadow areas (especially at dawn and dusk), and bighorn sheep along the Highway 34/Fall River corridor.

Trails are more wild

Winter trails are not maintained or marked. Do not follow others' tracks—they can mislead you. Take a map and compass and know how to use them. While lower elevation trails on the east side of the park may remain hikeable with the right gear, most will require the use of snowshoes or skis.

Avalanches are possible

With beautiful snow on dramatic mountains come avalanches. Before entering the backcountry, know how to recognize dangerous snow conditions and check avalanche.state.co.us for current avalanche potential.

Visitor Centers

EAST SIDE Near Estes Park

Beaver Meadows Visitor Center
Open 8 am to 4:30 pm daily (closed Nov 24 and Dec 25). Park information, bookstore, free park movie (see left). Wilderness camping permits available by following trail east of visitor center to Wilderness Office.

Fall River Visitor Center

Open 9 am to 4 pm, Nov 25–27, Dec 3–4, Dec 10–11, Dec 17–18, Dec 19–Jan 1. Life-sized wildlife displays, bookstore, and new Arts Alive Activity Center.

WEST SIDE Near Grand Lake

Kawuneeche Visitor Center

Open 8 am to 4:30 pm (closed Nov 24 and Dec 25). Park information, maps, free park movie (see left), exhibits, bookstore, wilderness camping permits.

Free Park Movie

SEE THE STUNNING 23-MINUTE PARK MOVIE *Spirit of the Mountains*, shown by request in the Beaver Meadows and Kawuneeche visitor centers.

Beaver Meadows has assisted listening devices for audio description and amplification and induction loops for people with hearing aids. Both visitor centers have a captioned version of the park film and a version *en Español*. All park visitor centers are accessible.

Follow @RockyNPS

FIND US ON YOUR FAVORITE SOCIAL MEDIA to connect with Rocky and share your story. To learn more, visit go.nps.gov/RockySocial

-  instagram @RockyNPS #RMNP
-  facebook.com/RockyNPS
-  twitter @RockyNPS
-  youtube.com/user/RockyNPS
-  flickr.com/photos/RockyNPS



Visit our official website for more information
nps.gov/romo

 Trail Ridge Road Status **970 586-1222**
Park Information **970 586-1206**
Mon–Sat 8 am to 4:30 pm

 TTY for deaf, hard of hearing, speech impaired **970 586-1319**

FIND YOUR PARK
FINDYOURPARK.COM

 To report emergencies **911**

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Stay Safe

Be Responsible

IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO BE safe and to know and obey park rules. You can find park safety information, rules, and regulations at visitor centers, entrance stations, trailhead bulletin boards, and the park website at nps.gov/romo.

 **Altitude Sickness affects many visitors every year.** Symptoms include headaches, nausea, fatigue, dizziness, vomiting, and in acute situations, even unconsciousness. Altitude can also aggravate preexisting conditions like heart and lung disease. Take your time, drink plenty of water, eat lightly, and rest. The only cure for altitude sickness is to go down to a lower altitude.

 **Avalanches can be easily triggered by backcountry travelers.** The park does not do any avalanche control. Never assume trails are free of avalanche hazard. Wear an electronic transceiver when traversing avalanche terrain, and avoid skiing or snowshoeing in steep gullies. If caught in an avalanche, make swimming motions and try to stay on top of the snow. For current conditions, check at a visitor center, call 970 586-1206, or visit avalanche.state.co.us.

 **Backcountry Travel** should be done in a group, not alone. Leave a detailed trip itinerary with a friend. This helps park authorities if you fail to return. Mountain weather changes quickly. If conditions are more difficult than anticipated, turn around. Longs Peak, a popular climb, can have treacherous ice and snow any time of year. Camping is only allowed in designated sites and requires a permit. Visit go.nps.gov/RockyBackcountry.

 **Cell Service is unavailable in much of the park.** Don't depend on a cell phone for emergency help.

 **Drones are not allowed anywhere in Rocky Mountain National Park.**

 **Falling Trees are an ever-present hazard** and can fall without warning. Be extra careful around dead trees when it's windy or following a snowstorm.

 **Firearm Possession** in the park is permitted for those legally authorized to possess firearms under federal, Colorado, or local laws. However, hunting, recreational shooting, and target practice are illegal. Federal law prohibits firearms in park buildings and facilities. Those legally allowed to carry firearms must comply with all applicable state and federal firearm laws.

 **Fishing** requires a Colorado state fishing license. Not all park lakes have reproducing fish populations. Ice fishing is allowed except in designated closed waters. All fishing regulations apply. Only use hand augers—no mechanical equipment is allowed in designated wilderness. For more information, visit go.nps.gov/RockyFishing.

 **Hypothermia can happen any time of year.** Watch for drowsiness, impaired judgment, excessive shivering, and slurred speech. To prevent, wear insulated, wind-proof layers and drink plenty of fluids.

 **Marijuana possession and use is illegal in Rocky Mountain National Park and all federal lands,** even though small amounts of recreational marijuana are legal in Colorado.

 **Pets are prohibited on ALL park trails, tundra, and meadow areas.**

Leashed pets are only allowed in picnic areas, parking lots, campgrounds, and along roadsides. Never leave pets in vehicles if it puts them in danger or they become a public nuisance. When outside vehicles, pets must be on leashes no longer than six feet. **Service animals** that have been individually trained to perform specific tasks for the benefit of persons with disabilities are allowed in the park. **Emotional support ("therapy animals") and service-animals-in-training** are not service animals under the Americans with Disabilities Act and may not access trails or other non-motorized areas.

 **Rivers and Streams can be deadly.** Park waters are frigid. Powerful currents can knock you over and pull you downstream or underwater, where you may become trapped. Streamside rocks are often slippery, and nearby water may be deep. Always closely supervise children around all water but especially near rivers and streams.

 **Take only pictures.** It is illegal to take any natural features including pinecones, rocks, antlers, and artifacts or to disturb soil, rocks, or vegetation (including flowers). Metal detector use is prohibited.

 **Purify all water from rivers, lakes, and streams before drinking.** Park waters may contain parasites like giardia and cryptosporidium.

KEEP WILDLIFE WILD Never feed or approach wildlife

Many amazing animals call Rocky home. To keep them and you safe and comfortable:

- Obey wildlife closure areas and "no stopping" traffic zones.
- Use parking areas along the road. If not available, pull your vehicle completely off the road and do not park on vegetation.
- Keep a safe distance. If you cause an animal to move or change behavior, you are too close! Approaching an animal puts you at risk and may cause it stress, leading to disease and illness.
- Never feed wildlife, including birds and chipmunks.

 **Bears and Mountain Lions**
Seeing a bear or mountain lion is rare, and interactions are even more rare. However, keep the following in mind:

- Travel in groups and make noise as you hike closely together. Keep children close! A predator does not distinguish a running child from running prey.
- If you see a bear or mountain lion, stop, stay calm, and back away slowly. Never approach wildlife or turn your back and run. Stand tall and look large. Raise your arms. Protect small children by picking them up.
- If approached, make loud noises, shout, clap hands, bang pots or pans, and fight back if attacked.

Road Conditions

Trail Ridge Road usually closes in mid-October but may temporarily close earlier (see map on back for closure locations). In winter, **Old Fall River Road is closed to motorized travel.** Weather permitting, lower elevation paved roads (including Bear Lake Road) remain open. Expect snow, ice, wind, and cold temperatures at any time. All-wheel drive, four-wheel drive, or snow tires may be recommended during periods of heavy snow.

For current park road and driving conditions:

- Stop at a visitor center
- Call the Trail Ridge Road status line **970 586-1222**
- Call the Information Office Mon–Sat 8 am to 4:30 pm **970 586-1206**

Carry the Essentials

- ✓ Lots of water and high-energy food
- ✓ Layers of clothing including storm gear, hat, gloves
- ✓ Sunglasses with UV protection
- ✓ Sunscreen
- ✓ Sturdy footwear and extra socks
- ✓ First aid kit
- ✓ Topographic map and compass/GPS
- ✓ Flashlight or headlamp
- ✓ Waterproof matches, pocket knife, whistle

Entrance Fees

	Automobile	Bicycle and Pedestrian	Motorcycle
1-day Pass	\$20	\$10	\$20
7-day Pass	\$30	\$15	\$25
RMNP Annual	\$50		

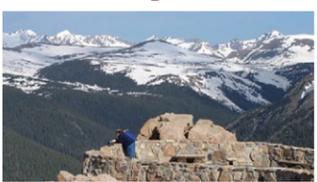
America the Beautiful Interagency Passes

Annual	\$80
Senior	\$10
Access	Free
Annual Military	Free
Every Kid in a Park	Free



Park Partners

Love Rocky Mountain National Park? Help Us Make it Even Better!



If you've **walked the Lily Lake Trail, explored the Fall River Visitor Center,** or introduced a child to nature through the park's **Junior Ranger Program,** you know our work.

Become a Member or Donate Today!

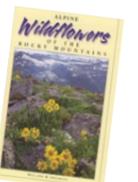


www.RMConservancy.org

At Conservancy Nature Stores, Your Purchase Makes A Difference!



Visit the Conservancy's Nature Store in any park visitor center for the best RMNP t-shirts, games, jewelry, books, maps and other great park items. Proceeds support the park!



Ranger-Led Programs

Wheelchair-accessible

East Side

WALKS AND HIKES	LENGTH	LOCATION	SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
Bear Necessities Come discover what is necessary to the survival of Rocky's black bears. Ends 11/15	20 to 30 minute talk	Beaver Meadows Visitor Center	10:30 am					10:30 am	10:30 am
Wild in Winter! Join a ranger to learn about winter in Rocky and how humans and animals alike adapt to this beautiful but challenging season. Starts 11/16	Drop in 10–11 am	Beaver Meadows Visitor Center	10–11 am						10–11 am
Snowshoe Ecology Walk Come snowshoe with a ranger. Learn techniques to traverse various terrain as you explore the natural world of a subalpine forest. No previous experience needed. Bring your own snowshoes. Ages 8 and up only. No more than six people per reservation. Jan 7–Mar 19	2 hours	Reservations required no more than 7 days in advance. 970 586-1223 8 am to 4 pm	12:30 pm			12:30 pm			12:30 pm

SPECIAL PROGRAMS

Full Moon Walk

1 to 1.5 hour walk. Nov 14, Dec 13, Jan 12, Feb 10, Mar 12. Explore the park by the light of the full moon. Times and locations will vary each month.

Reservations required no more than 7 days in advance. Call 970 586-1223 8 am to 4 pm daily. Maximum six people per reservation. Outdoor clothing and gear appropriate for the conditions are required.



NPS PHOTO / ANN SCHONLAU



NPS PHOTO

Holiday Programming

Join us over the holidays for fun family activities. The park will be offering special programs to celebrate the winter season. Check our website, stop by a visitor center, or call 970 586-1206 for specific topics and times.

Part of an Organized Group?

Park rangers may be available to provide special programs. Call 970 586-3777 to make reservations in advance.

West Side

TALKS AND ACTIVITIES	LENGTH	LOCATION	SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
Ski the Wilderness in Winter Join a park ranger for a mostly-level cross country ski tour. Bring your own skis and poles with large baskets. Ages 8 and up only. Dec 31–Jan 28	1.5 hours	Kawuneeche Visitor Center. Reservations required.							9:30 am
Beginner Snowshoe Join a park ranger for a mostly-level snowshoe hike. Bring your own snowshoes and ski poles with large baskets. Ages 8 and up only. Dec 31–Mar 4	2 hours	Kawuneeche Visitor Center. Reservations required.							1 pm
Intermediate Snowshoe A more rigorous tour with elevation gains of up to 500 feet. Requires ability to maintain a good pace over uneven terrain at high altitude. The final program on March 5 will be the most strenuous of the season. Bring your own snowshoes and ski poles with large baskets. Ages 8 and up only. Jan 1–Mar 5	2 hours	Kawuneeche Visitor Center. Reservations required.	1 pm						

All programs require reservations no more than 7 days in advance. Call 970 627-3471 from 8 am to 4:30 pm daily.

Notes and Tips

- All children must be accompanied by an adult.
- Programs may be canceled due to weather.
- For outdoor programs, be sure to bring the essentials to wear and carry.

Every Kid in a Park

Hey fourth graders! This year, you and your family get free access to hundreds of parks, lands, and waters for an entire year.

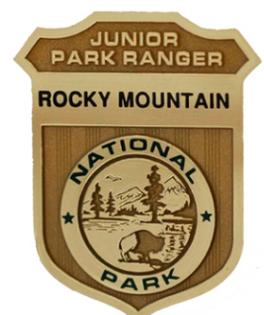
How do you get your free pass? Visit everykidinapark.gov, do a short activity, print your voucher, and bring it with you to the park entrance station. That's it!



Be a Junior Ranger

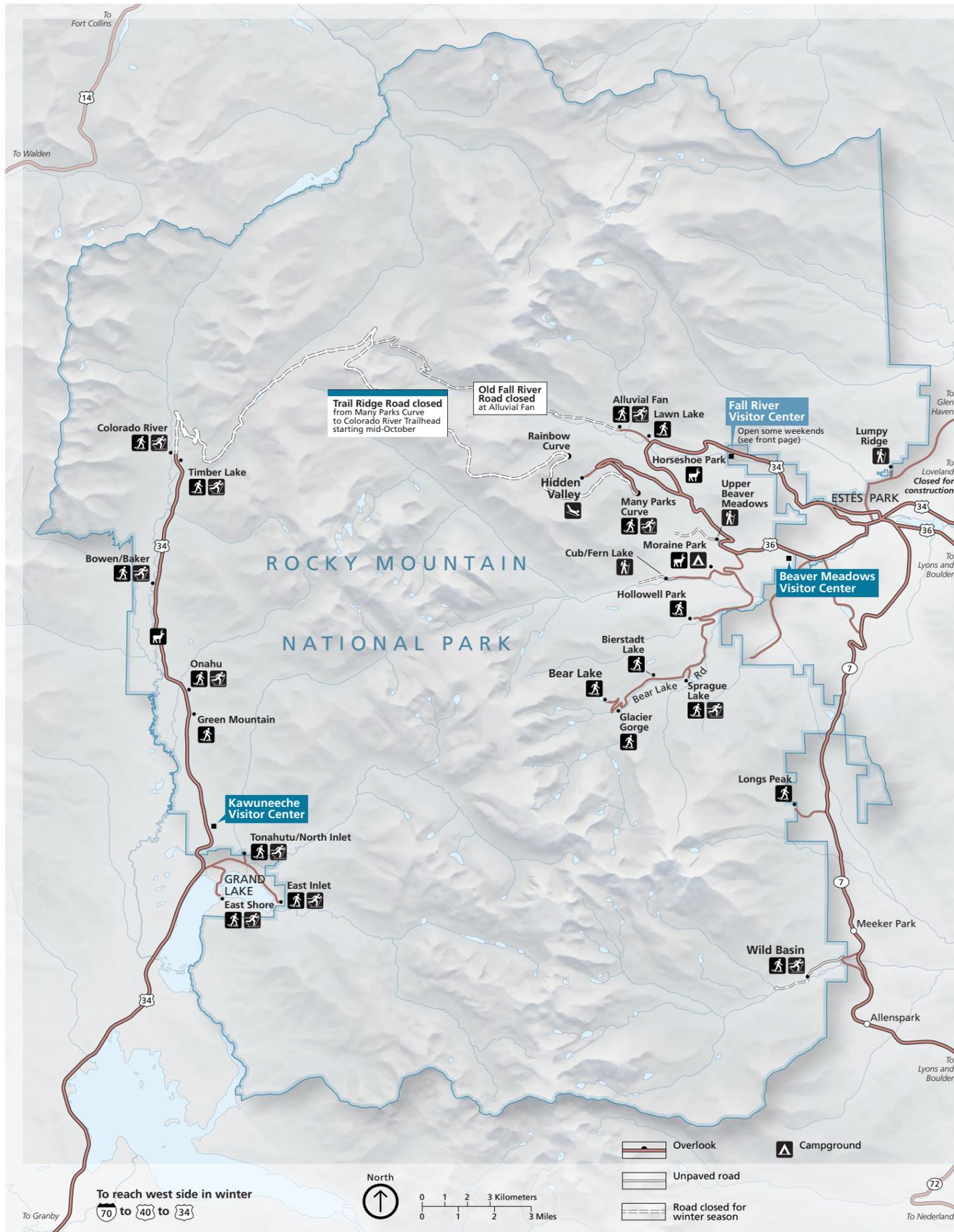
Junior Rangers have fun discovering the natural world and learning about our national parks. We need the help of ALL our rangers to keep Rocky protected for many years to come.

Pick up a free Junior Ranger Activity Booklet at any visitor contact station, discover the park, and earn you badge!



Winter Activity Guide

Use this map and guide to plan winter activities and experience this special season.



View Wildlife

Seeing wildlife in winter is a thrill. Bring your field guides, binoculars, and cameras.

- ✓ Elk and mule deer are most active at dawn and dusk and are usually seen in meadows like Horseshoe Park and Moraine Park.
- ✓ Moose are best found along the Colorado River on the park's west side.
- ✓ Bighorn sheep may be seen along the Highway 34/Fall River corridor on the park's east side.
- ✓ Coyotes may be seen any time of day.
- ✓ Black-billed magpies, Steller's jays, and Clark's nutcrackers are some of our year-round birds.

Snowshoe

Ever thought: I'd like to hike in the winter and see the park's beautiful backcountry, but there's all that snow? Consider snowshoeing!

No training is necessary—if you can hike, you can snowshoe. Most park trails can be explored with snowshoes. Snowshoes and waterproof boots are essential. While optional, poles help maintain balance, and waterproof pants or gaiters help keep you warm and dry.

Hike

Believe it or not, it's still possible to hike in winter. Lower-elevation trails on the park's east side are often free of deep snow.

While skis or snowshoes aren't required, packed snow and ice can be extremely slippery. Stabilizer devices and poles are highly recommended to prevent dangerous falls and make your hike safe and enjoyable. Stay away from dangerous slopes and snowfields. When in doubt, turn around.

Cross-country Ski

Picture yourself gliding through a silent forest full of fresh, white snow. Cross-country skiing is a rejuvenating sport that pairs exercise with the beauty of nature.

In general, cross-country skiing is easier on the west side of the park (gentler terrain and deeper snow). However, you're welcome to strap on your skis throughout the park. Skis and poles with large baskets are required. Waterproof pants or gaiters help keep you warm and dry. Skiers must be in control at all times and give notice when approaching others on the trail.

Sled

Want to sled? Go to the only place in the park it's allowed: Hidden Valley! No tows are provided up this fairly gentle hill, so you'll get a workout as you walk your sled, saucer, or tube up the slope and then enjoy a breather on the fun ride down.

Restrooms are available by the parking lot. A warming room is available when an attendant is present. Stay alert: skiers, snowboarders, and snowshoers may pass through. Park rangers and volunteers aren't always on duty; sled at your own risk.

Backcountry Ski/Ride

For the experienced and well-prepared, Rocky's steep terrain provides many opportunities for backcountry skiers and snowboarders. (Skiing and snowboarding are not allowed in the Hidden Valley snowplay area. You may pass through, but slow down and yield the right of way to sledders.)

Be prepared for variable snow conditions and harsh weather. Much of the park is in avalanche terrain. Check the avalanche forecast at avalanche.state.co.us. At a minimum, carry an avalanche beacon, probe, and shovel, and know how to use them. Be self-reliant. Your safety is your responsibility.

Notes and Tips

Stay Safe

Always be prepared for snow, freezing temperatures, short winter days, cold winds, and changing weather. Layer up with insulated, waterproof clothing, wear sunglasses, and use sunscreen.

Know Where You Are

Navigating in winter can be extremely difficult. Park trails are not marked for winter use, and you can't depend on others' tracks. Have and know how to use a topographic map and compass. When used correctly, GPS units can be very helpful.

Share the Trail

Don't walk or snowshoe in ski tracks: it creates dangerous conditions for skiers that could result in injury. Let others know when you're approaching them and pass with care.

What If I Don't Have My Own Equipment?

You can rent or purchase equipment in Estes Park and Grand Lake, including snowshoes, skis, poles, boots, sleds, tubes, saucers, gaiters, and stabilizers.

Avalanches can be easily triggered by backcountry travelers. Educate yourself and stay alert.