

# RMNP

## Rocky Mountain National Park

Spring 2018  
March 18–June 16

National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior

The official newspaper of  
Rocky Mountain National Park



Calypso orchids (*Calypso bulbosa*) provide small but intense patches of color during spring in Rocky Mountain National Park. NPS PHOTO / ANN SCHONLAU

## Welcome to Spring

SPRING IS STUNNING AT ROCKY MOUNTAIN National Park. Migrant bird species return, their songs filling the air. Animals like elk and sheep give birth and begin moving toward their summer ranges. Streams swell with melting snow and new rain. Exciting changes are happening every day!

But spring here is also different than you might expect. While a warm, sunny day can create the illusion that summer has arrived, the next day can turn cold and bring heavy snowfall. Lower elevations can be snow-free with hints of wildflowers while higher elevations are still covered in many feet of snow (Bear Lake, for example, usually has snow well into June).

What does this mean for you? Be prepared for any and all weather. Be willing to adapt your plans to current conditions. Don't assume spring here will be like spring at home. And have fun experiencing this thrilling time at Rocky!

### Helpful tips for enjoying spring in Rocky:

- **Spring is Rocky's snowiest season!** On average, some of the biggest snowstorms of the year happen in March, April, and even May. Be prepared.
- **Spring weather is unpredictable.** It can be warm and sunny one day, cold and overcast the next. Bring layers of clothes for a range of temperatures and conditions—you'll be more comfortable and have more fun.
- **Visitor center hours and program schedules change throughout the season.** Please check times carefully, and when in doubt, contact the park.
- **Expect a wide variety of trail conditions.** You may find snow-free trails near park entrances and deep snow on higher-elevation trails in the same day. Snow is soft and wet, often with ice underneath, making for difficult conditions whether hiking, skiing, or snowshoeing. For more detailed trail information, see page 2.

### Visitor Centers

#### EAST SIDE Near Estes Park

**Beaver Meadows Visitor Center**  
Through May 5: 9a–4:30p daily  
Starting May 6: 8a–4:30p daily  
Near Beaver Meadows Entrance. Information, bookstore, park movie (see left). For wilderness camping permits, follow trail east of visitor center to Wilderness Office.

**Fall River Visitor Center**  
Through May 13: Fri, Sat, Sun 9a–4p  
Starting May 18: 9a–4p daily  
Near Fall River Entrance. Life-sized wildlife displays, bookstore.

**Moraine Park Discovery Center**  
Starting May 26: 9a–4:30p daily  
On Bear Lake Road. Interactive exhibits, nature trail with great views of Moraine Park, bookstore.

**Sheep Lakes Information Station**  
Starting May 12: Open daily (weather permitting). In Horseshoe Park on US Hwy 34 west of Estes Park. Information and ranger programs. Good wildlife viewing.

#### TRAIL RIDGE ROAD

**Alpine Visitor Center**  
Starting May 25: 10:30a–4:30p daily (weather permitting). Highest visitor center in the National Park Service at 11,796 feet. Extraordinary alpine views, displays, information, a bookstore, an adjacent gift shop and cafe.

#### WEST SIDE Near Grand Lake

**Kawuneeche Visitor Center**  
Through April 30: 8a–4:30p daily  
Starting May 1: 8a–5p daily  
On US Hwy 34 north of Grand Lake. Information, maps, free park movie, exhibits, bookstore, wilderness camping permits.

### Road Conditions

**Trail Ridge Road is scheduled to open May 25.** Due to weather, opening may be delayed, and temporary closures may be reinstated. **Call 970 586-1222 for the most up-to-date status of Trail Ridge Road.**

**Old Fall River Road is scheduled to open to motorized travel in early July.**

### Hiking and Camping

**For tips on hiking and a list of spring trails, see Page 2.**

**Overnight stays in Rocky must be in a campground or designated wilderness site and require a permit. Staying overnight in a car or RV along roads or at trailheads is not allowed.**

**Rocky has five campgrounds.** Most close for the season in September. For details, visit [go.nps.gov/RockyCamping](http://go.nps.gov/RockyCamping) or stop by a visitor center. **For wilderness camping,** visit [go.nps.gov/RockyWildernessCamping](http://go.nps.gov/RockyWildernessCamping) or stop at the Wilderness Office (east side near Beaver Meadows Visitor Center) or the Kawuneeche Visitor Center (west side).

### Free Park Movie

See the stunning 23-minute park movie *Spirit of the Mountains* in the Beaver Meadows and Kawuneeche visitor centers. (At the Kawuneeche Visitor Center, showings will be intermittent June 4-8 and 11-15. Call 970 627-3471 for times.)

Beaver Meadows has assisted listening devices for audio description and amplification and induction loops for those 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.

website [nps.gov/romo/](http://nps.gov/romo/)  
instagram [#RockyNPS](https://www.instagram.com/RockyNPS) [#RMNP](https://www.instagram.com/RMNP)  
facebook.com/RockyNPS  
twitter [@RockyNPS](https://twitter.com/RockyNPS)  
youtube.com/user/RockyNPS

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

 To report emergencies **911**

 Trail Ridge Rd Status **970 586-1222**  
Hidden Valley Status **970 586-1333**  
Park Information **970 586-1206**

# 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](https://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 wilderness 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](https://avalanche.state.co.us).

 **Wilderness 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 (see page 5).

 **Bicycles** are prohibited on trails. They are permitted on all roads open to motor vehicles, paved and dirt, unless otherwise posted. There are no designated

bicycle lanes in the park. Roads are narrow with few or no shoulders—ride with care. By law, you must ride single file. Shuttle buses do not accept bicycles. Visit [go.nps.gov/RockyBicycling](https://go.nps.gov/RockyBicycling).

 **Campfires** are permitted only in campgrounds and picnic areas with fire grates. During high fire danger, campfires may be prohibited. You can purchase firewood at campgrounds in summer. Collecting vegetation, dead or alive, is prohibited.

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

 **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. Trout in the park include brown, brook, rainbow, and cutthroat (including the protected Colorado River and greenback). Not all park lakes have reproducing fish populations. For more information, visit [go.nps.gov/RockyFishing](https://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 and drone use are prohibited.

 **Ticks are out in spring.** In areas with plants, regularly check yourself for ticks. Wear long sleeves, pants, and repellent with DEET. If you find an embedded tick, slowly pull it straight out with tweezers. Ticks can carry disease, including Colorado Tick Fever.

### 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.

Bears are active as early as March. Properly store all food, trash, and other scented items to avoid property damage and unwanted encounters.

## Hiking in Spring

WANT A CHANCE TO HIKE ALL FOUR SEASONS in a day? Try hiking in spring!

### Weather

- **Be prepared for a wide range of temperatures.** Some days are warm and sunny. Others are cold and snowy. Others still switch back and forth between both!
- **In Rocky, spring means SNOW!** March and April are the snowiest months of the year, and new snow isn't uncommon in May or even early June.

### Trails

- **Trail conditions vary from day to day.** Before going on a hike, check recent trail conditions at [go.nps.gov/RockyTrailConditions](https://go.nps.gov/RockyTrailConditions) or visit a visitor center and check with a ranger.

### 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

**Interested in a longer hike?** Ask for a hiking brochure at entrance stations, visitor centers, or at staffed trailheads.

EAST SIDE	ROUND TRIP	
<b>Bear Lake</b>   End of Bear Lake Road	0.5 mi 0.8 km	Follow a self-guiding nature trail around beautiful Bear Lake. Trail has snow well into June.
<b>Lily Lake</b>   Lily Lake Trailhead	0.8 mi 1.3 km	A level walk around Lily Lake featuring wildflowers, waterfowl, and mountain views.
<b>Moraine Park Discovery Center Nature Trail</b>	0.5 mi 0.8 km	Winds up and down hillside behind Discovery Center (open May 26). Self-guiding trail book available.
<b>Sprague Lake</b>   Bear Lake Road	0.5 mi 0.8 km	Packed gravel, level-grade trail around lovely lake.
<b>Tundra Communities Trail</b>  Rock Cut on Trail Ridge Road <i>(open May 25, weather permitting)</i>	0.6 1.0 km	View the miniature world of the alpine tundra and enjoy sweeping views of the park. <i>Trail often has snow well into the summer season.</i>
WEST SIDE	ROUND TRIP	
<b>Adams Falls</b> East Inlet Trailhead	0.6 mi 1 km	Beautiful short hike near Grand Lake. Trail continues beyond falls to lush meadows with mountain views.
<b>Coyote Valley Trail</b>   Coyote Valley Trailhead	1 mi 1.6 km	Follows bank of the Colorado River. Look for wildlife. Packed gravel, level grade. <i>Open in May, weather permitting.</i>
<b>Holzwarth Historic Site</b>  US Hwy 34	1 mi 1.6 km	Explore a historic homestead cabin and 1920s dude ranch. Brochures, interpretive signs. <i>Buildings closed and unstaffed in off-season, but you are welcome to tour the grounds.</i>

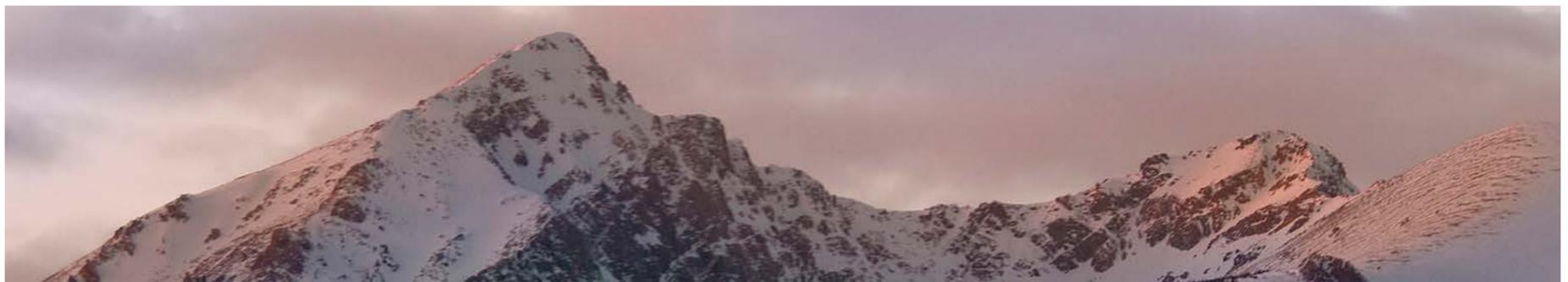
# Ranger-Led Programs

## East Side

WALKS, HIKES, AND ACTIVITIES	LENGTH	LOCATION	SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
<b>Bear Necessities</b>  Join a ranger to learn about the amazing lives of Rocky's bears and how you can help save them. <b>Starts 4/29</b>	20 to 30 minute talk	Beaver Meadows Visitor Center	10:30 am						10:30 am
<b>Beaver Meadows Evening Programs</b>  Enjoy a variety of special evening programs at Beaver Meadows Visitor Center.	45 minute program	Beaver Meadows Visitor Center Auditorium						7 pm <b>5/18 only</b>	7 pm <b>5/26, 6/2, 6/9, 6/16</b>
<b>Bighorn Basics</b>  Sheep Lakes is a popular place to view bighorn sheep. Learn about this majestic symbol of Rocky. (May be canceled due to weather.) <b>Starts 5/12</b>	30 minute talk	Sheep Lakes Information Station (see front page)	10:30 am	10:30 am					
<b>Spring Bird Walk</b> Go birding with a local expert at one of the best times of the year. Bring binoculars and a field guide. Be prepared for a frosty, damp morning. <b>Starts 4/22</b>	1.5 hour walk	Cub Lake Trailhead in Moraine Park			8 am	8 am	8 am	8 am	
<b>Springing to Life</b>  Join a ranger to discover what springtime means to the many animals that call Rocky home. <b>Ends 4/28</b>	Drop in 10-11 am	Beaver Meadows Visitor Center	10-11 am						10-11 am

## West Side

PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES	LENGTH	LOCATION	SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
<b>Saturday Night in the Park</b>  Enjoy an evening program in the auditorium. For topic, inquire at Kawuneeche Visitor Center. <b>5/26 only</b>	1 hour program	Kawuneeche Visitor Center							7 pm <b>5/26 only</b>



Alpenglow softly falls on Bowen Mountain, a prominent peak on the west side of the park. NPS PHOTO / RUSSELL SMITH

## Special Programs and Events (East and West)



Complete your Junior Ranger booklet and earn a badge!



Star trails at Moraine Park

NPS PHOTO / ANN SCHONLAU



Pine Siskin

NPS PHOTO / ANN SCHONLAU

### Become a Junior Ranger

Get started at any visitor contact station  
Start and finish on your own schedule  
Year-round

Pick up a free Junior Ranger Activity Booklet at any visitor contact station, discover the park, and earn your badge! There are activity books for ages 5 and under, 6 to 8, and 9 and up.

### Party with the Stars

Upper Beaver Meadows Trailhead  
Starts at 8:30 pm  
Friday, June 15

Watch as night descends on Rocky Mountain National Park. Volunteers will be available with telescopes to help you experience the magic of the night sky.

### World Migratory Bird Day

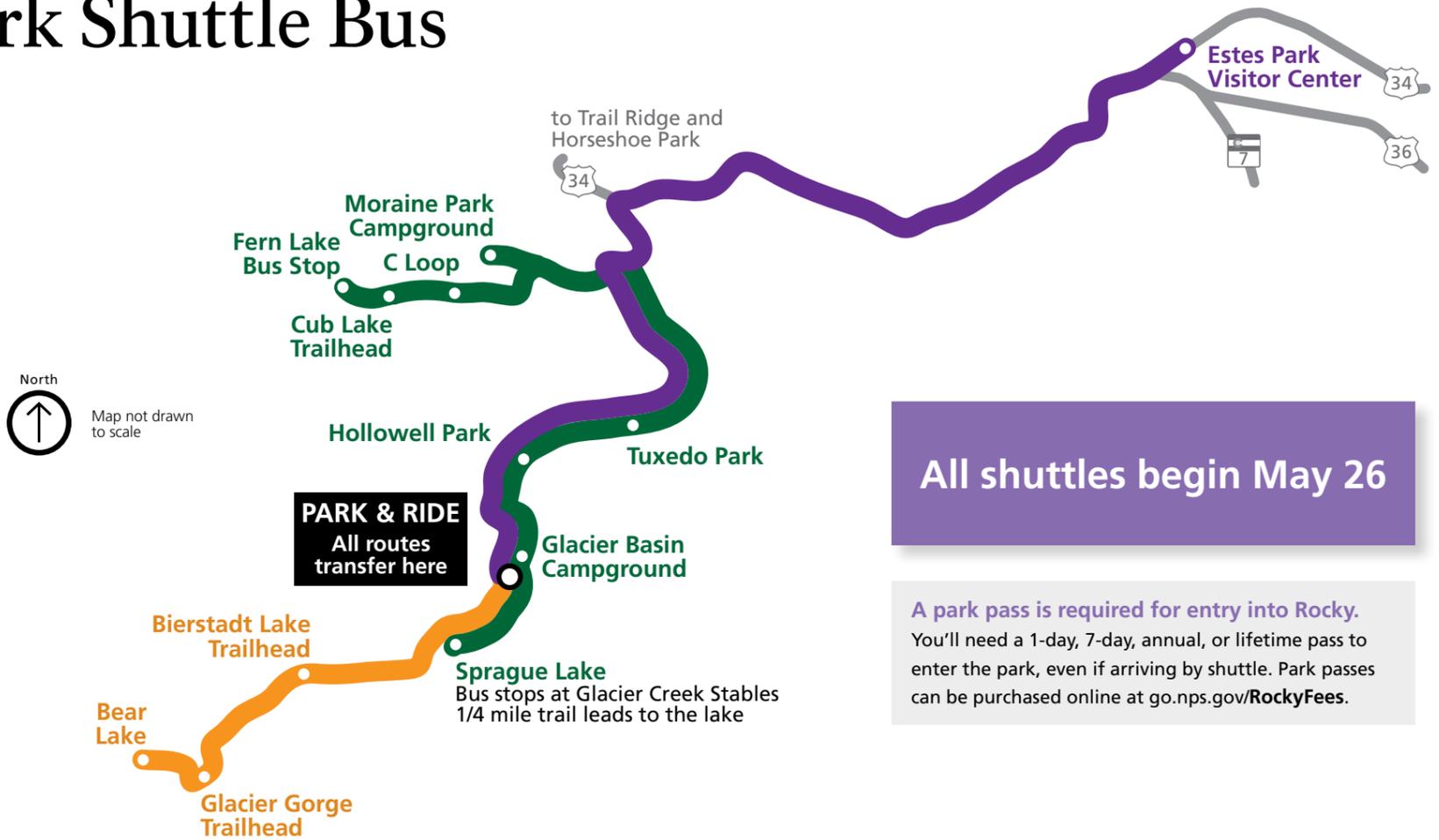
Meet at Beaver Meadows Visitor Center  
8 am to 12 pm  
Saturday, June 9

Bring binoculars and a field guide for a ranger-led birding excursion. Come for part or all of this multi-location event. Call 970 586-1206 for more information.

### Notes and Tips

- All children must be accompanied by an adult.
- Programs may be canceled due to weather.
- Accessible programs are marked with a blue icon. 
- Programs and hours vary. Please double-check the schedule, including specific days listed, before heading out.
- For outdoor programs, be sure to bring the essentials to wear and carry (see left).
- Our calendar is now online! Visit [go.nps.gov/RockyCal](http://go.nps.gov/RockyCal) for a full list of all upcoming events, including ranger programs.

# Park Shuttle Bus



All shuttles begin May 26

A park pass is required for entry into Rocky. You'll need a 1-day, 7-day, annual, or lifetime pass to enter the park, even if arriving by shuttle. Park passes can be purchased online at [go.nps.gov/RockyFees](http://go.nps.gov/RockyFees).

## Shuttle Service at a Glance

ROUTE	SCHEDULE	DATES
<b>Hiker Shuttle Express</b>	Hourly 7:30 am to 10 am 30 min 10 am to 6 pm Hourly 6 pm to 8 pm	Daily May 26–Sep 9 Weekends Only Sep 15–Oct 8
<b>Bear Lake Route</b>	10–15 min 7 am to 7:30 pm	Daily May 26–Oct 8
<b>Moraine Park Route</b>	30 min 7 am to 7:30 pm	Daily May 26–Oct 8

There are no shuttle bus services on the west side of the park or across Trail Ridge Road. There are several commercial shuttle tours in the Estes area. Contact the Estes Park Visitor Center for information.

800 443-7837 or [visitestespark.com](http://visitestespark.com)

There are no bike racks on shuttle buses.

Most shuttle buses are accessible and can accommodate wheelchairs. Contact shuttle staff or rangers if accommodation is needed.

Dogs are not allowed on shuttle buses. Except service animals that have been individually trained to perform specific tasks for the benefit of persons with disabilities (see page 2 for more).

**At Rocky Mountain Conservancy Nature Stores, YOUR PURCHASE MAKES A DIFFERENCE**

The best Rocky Mountain National Park t-shirts, games, toys, books, maps and other interesting items are here, at any of the Rocky Mountain Conservancy Nature Stores located in park visitor centers. When you make a purchase from our nonprofit organization, proceeds are returned to the park, supporting important educational and research programs. Drop by today.

**Visit Conservancy Nature Stores at:**  
 Alpine Visitor Center Beaver Meadows Visitor Center  
 Fall River Visitor Center Kawuneeche Visitor Center  
 Moraine Park Visitor Center

[www.RMConservancy.org](http://www.RMConservancy.org)



## ROCKY MOUNTAIN FIELD INSTITUTE EDUCATIONAL BUS TOURS IN ROCKY!

- Grand Lake Safari Adventure**  
Tuesdays, June 9 - August 25
- Journey to the Top! Trail Ridge Rd Adventure**  
Wednesdays & Thursdays, June 10 - Sept. 3
- Trail Ridge Sunset Safari Adventure**  
Fridays, June 13 - September 5
- Elk Expeditions** Thursdays, Fridays, Saturdays & Mondays Sept. 10 - October 17

Call 970-586-3262 or register at park visitor centers!

[www.RMConservancy.org](http://www.RMConservancy.org)

**Want one?**

The Rocky Mountain National Park license plate from the Rocky Mountain Conservancy. Proceeds benefit Rocky Mountain National Park!

[www.RMConservancy.org](http://www.RMConservancy.org)