



VISTAS



ROCKY MOUNTAIN NATIONAL PARK

NPS Photo

This fall has been busy with international visitors. We hosted a delegation from Monteverde, Costa Rica which is Estes Park's sister city. We continue to learn more about the connections we have with the nature reserves in Monteverde, especially through bird migration.

We also hosted a delegation from the Republic of Georgia. We consummated a sister park relationship with Tusheti National Park. Like our Tatra sister parks in Poland and Slovakia, we look forward to sharing technical and professional knowledge, training and experience. As an emerging democracy, Georgia and its system of protected areas are anxious to learn from established systems of protected areas. The Tusheti Protected Areas are located in the beautiful Caucasus Mountains in the northeast corner of Georgia, bordered on two sides by Russia. Consisting of a National Park, Strict Nature Reserve and Protected Landscape, this is the largest protected area in Europe.

In this issue of Vistas, we remember with great fondness, Ferrel Atkins, who spent over 50 years educating and entertaining visitors here at Rocky. The Alpine Hotshot Crew, one of the nation's elite wildland firefighting crews, celebrates its 30th anniversary. We continue to invest in the park's infrastructure with the second phase of work on Bear Lake Road. Since 1997, we have invested over \$110 million in improvements to the park's infrastructure. That's one way we can help to "provide for the enjoyment.....of future generations." We hope you'll have the chance to experience Rocky in the winter.

Vaughn Baker
Superintendent

Visitation

Year to date for 2011 (through October 2011), Rocky Mountain National Park visitation has already reached 3 million visitors with a total of 3,175,132, a 6.5% increase over visitation last year at the same time!



The Top 10 Days in 2011:

| | | | |
|-----|---------|--------|----------------|
| 1. | Sep. 24 | 30,931 | *fee free day* |
| 2. | July 3 | 28,063 | |
| 3. | Sep. 4 | 27,415 | |
| 4. | Aug 13 | 26,778 | |
| 5. | July 31 | 24,788 | |
| 6. | July 23 | 24,642 | |
| 7. | July 30 | 24,443 | |
| 8. | Sep. 25 | 24,340 | |
| 9. | July 2 | 23,881 | |
| 10. | July 24 | 23,670 | |

Visitor Survey

In July 2010 and February 2011, in cooperation with the University of Idaho, a survey of park visitors was conducted. Almost 1100 surveys were handed out randomly to summer visitors and nearly 800 to winter visitors at three entrance stations. This is the first major visitor survey in the park since 1995. The final report for the summer survey is now posted on the University of Idaho website under VSP Document Downloads at: www.psu.uidaho.edu.

The preliminary results of the winter survey have been reviewed by the park and the final report is forthcoming. In addition, a Money Generation Model is being prepared to look at economic benefits of the park to local communities. A final report is expected this winter.

Fee Free Days:

Our last remaining Fee Free dates this year will be:
November 11-13 (Veterans Day weekend)

Mark Your Calendars for 2012's Fee Free Days:

January 14 to 16 (Martin Luther King, Jr. weekend)
April 21 to 29 (National Park Week)
June 9 (Get Outdoors Day)
September 29 (National Public Lands Day)
and November 10 to 12 (Veterans Day weekend)

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Beaver Meadows Visitor Center Undergoing Construction



The lobby at the Beaver Meadows Visitor Center in Rocky Mountain National Park will be closed through the winter for a major remodeling project. Park rangers will still provide information to visitors from a temporary office trailer in the front parking lot of the visitor center. The park film will be shown from this location and items from the Rocky Mountain Nature Association bookstore will be available. Hours are 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

The major remodeling project will include the construction of an accessible lift between floors to accommodate people with disabilities so they may easily access the visitor center

auditorium. Other improvements include reconstructing the lower floor restrooms and connecting the exterior balcony to the visitor center entrance plaza.

In 2001, Beaver Meadows Visitor Center was designated a National Historic Landmark, the nation's highest designation for historic properties. The visitor center was dedicated in 1967. The building that the visitor center is housed in was designed by Taliesen Associated Architects, Ltd. It reflects design principles typical both of the National Park Service Modern style developed by the "Mission 66" program which began in 1966, and Wrightian principles of design advocated by the apprentices who began Taliesen Associated Architects after Frank Lloyd Wright's death in 1959. The building is a unique example of Wrightian design in a national park setting.



Due to this major project, there will be no evening programs in the auditorium throughout the winter.

DUTY. RESPECT. INTEGRITY.



30TH ANNIVERSARY



Alpine Hotshots Plan for 30-Year Anniversary

The Alpine Interagency Hotshot Crew (IHC), based in Rocky Mountain National Park, is celebrating its 30-year anniversary. A reunion will be held November 11 through November 12. The event will be comprised of an informal gathering, a National Park Service IHC history review, a dinner, and a question-and-answer/lessons learned segment.

The two-day event begins on Friday, November 11, at a local Estes Park restaurant, to raise funds for the Wildland Firefighter Foundation, whose main focus is to help families of firefighters killed in the line of duty and to assist injured firefighters and their families. On Saturday, November 12, the event will be held at the YMCA of the Rockies.

The primary intent of the 30-year reunion is to reunite with current and former colleagues, to interview a panel of past and present Alpine IHC Superintendents, to create an open forum for operational leadership discourse and information exchange, and to capture historically significant events and lessons learned throughout the past 30 years of interagency fire suppression and incident management.

Reunion organizers have designed the event as a workshop where crew members and crew leaders, past and present, not only interact face to face, but where lessons learned can be recorded by a videographer and utilized, indefinitely, as invaluable tools intrinsic to fireline leadership and fire management, as well as to IHC crew training development, recruitment, and retention.

The official Alpine IHC 30-year reunion website is: www.wix.com/alpineihc/30yearreunion.

For specific questions about the reunion please contact Mike Perryman, Lead/Senior Crewmember, Alpine Interagency Hotshots, by email at alpine30year@gmail.com, or by phone at 913-709-6215.

First Ever Young Artist Selected for Park Program



Rocky Mountain National Park has one of the oldest Artist-in-Residence programs in the National Park Service. As part of this program, artists are provided with a creative, contemplative environment in which to generate artistic works and share their works with the public. One of the seven artists selected this year, was a very special selection, Leah Kegerreis, an eight-year-old visual artist from Texas.

Jean Muenchrath, the coordinator for the park's Artist-In-Residence program met Leah in the summer of 2010 on a ranger-led program. "Leah talked not only about nature but she talked about art, she was

passionate about both. I asked her family to send me some images of her artwork and I was impressed." These images gave Jean the idea to see if Leah would be interested in being involved in the park's artist-in-residence program. Leah would be the youngest artist selected since the program began years ago. By encouraging Leah and highlighting her interest in nature and art, Jean felt it would be a positive connection between children and national parks.

Leah and her family stayed at the William Allen White cabin for a week in July. At age six, Leah's painting of the Eiffel Tower was featured on the cover of a magazine. As a young, budding and enthusiastic artist, Leah enjoys exploring the creative process using a variety of visual artistic mediums. While she primarily paints with acrylic on canvas, in her artwork she has also created scenes by mixing watercolor with charcoal pencil, by carving and painting woodblocks, and of course, like all children, creating instant art on an etch-a-sketch pad.

Leah's family invited her art teacher from her elementary school in Plano, Texas to join them in Colorado for this once-in-a-lifetime experience. All artists selected for this program are required to give a presentation about their experience as an artist and Leah was no different. Leah and her teacher spoke during an evening program about Leah's interest in art. Another special activity took place in Hidden Valley with Leah and her art teacher encouraging other young people to connect with nature through art. Children sat at picnic tables with paintbrushes in hand, experimenting with watercolors and different techniques – but mostly just having fun! There were many young aspiring artists attending this special program as well. One Michigan family extended their trip to the park by a day when they heard about this program, because two of their children are talented painters.

Artists have had a long-standing impact on the formation, expansion and direction of our country's national parks. Musicians, composers, painters, writers, sculptors and other performing artists also draw upon the multifaceted quality of parks for inspiration. All of these artists translate the national park's purpose, as a place of pleasure and preservation, into images which bring others enjoyment and a deeper understanding of the parks some may never visit. Rocky Mountain National Park's Artist-In-Residence program provides artists the opportunity to become a part of a long established tradition of artists in our national parks.

Rocky Mountain Nature Association Executive Director, Curt Buchholtz, Departs



The Rocky Mountain Nature Association's (RMNA) Executive Director, Curt Buchholtz, left the organization at the end of September to pursue new challenges.

Buchholtz's departure ends an impressive 26-year career with the organization. During his tenure, RMNA completed nearly 50 major philanthropic projects with a value of almost \$20 million benefitting Rocky Mountain National Park. These include the construction of the Fall River Visitor Center, five handicapped-accessible trails, as well as an addition to the Kawuneeche Visitor Center, the restoration of McGraw Ranch cabins, Holzwarth Historic Site cabins and the Wigwam Tea Room, the construction and restoration of many miles of trails, and the acquisition of many

acres of land within and abutting the park. When he joined the organization in 1985, there were only two employees. Today, RMNA employs dozens of staff, including full-time, part-time and seasonal workers.

Buchholtz is most proud of the organization's creation of the American Conservation Corps, which provides 24 college-age youth the opportunity to work and learn in Rocky Mountain National Park and nearby national forests. Over the last nine summers these youth have worked on trails, removed hazard trees, brush and exotic plants and more. The experience is designed to introduce young people to careers in conservation, build leadership skills and create the public lands stewards of the future.

"Even more than all our construction projects," Buchholtz said, "our Next Generation Fund and the Corps are building for the future. Philanthropy made these projects happen. And I am proud to have played a role in making some positive changes to benefit our public parks and forests."

Frank Kugeler, RMNA Board President said, "We have experienced many successes under Curt's skilled leadership. We are very grateful for his numerous valuable contributions and vision and wish him well in his new ventures." Vaughn Baker, park superintendent said, "Curt and the Rocky Mountain Nature Association have accomplished so much for park protection and visitors over the last 26 years."

The RMNA Board of Directors has appointed a Search Committee for a new Executive Director. Dave Mohr, RMNA's General Manager from 2002 to 2008, has been appointed as Interim Executive Director and will serve in this position until the permanent Executive Director is hired.



BioBlitz Comes to RMNP in 2012

On October 20-22, BioBlitz 2011 took place in Saguaro National Park in Tucson, Arizona. Hundreds of scientists, students, teachers, and volunteers gathered to find and identify as many organisms as they could in a 24-hour period. This event is fifth in the series of National Park Service-National Geographic Society BioBlitzes, which will be held each year leading up



to the NPS centennial in 2016. This event included a two day festival open to the public, including information booths, lectures, art and poetry sessions, and numerous field trips and scientific demonstrations. Students were encouraged to participate in the "Biodiversity University" to get " course credits."

The National Geographic web site: www.nationalgeographic.com/bioblitz will continue to update species lists, post photos from the event and blog the findings.

The next Bioblitz will be held in Rocky Mountain National Park and is scheduled for late summer of 2012. At the Saguaro Bioblitz a delegation of park staff toured the various venues to get ideas and formulate plans for the next major NPS-National Geographic (NGS) Bioblitz scheduled for Rocky. The team included Ben Bobowski, RMNP Chief of Resource Stewardship; Paul McLaughlin, Continental Divide Research Learning Center; and Larry Frederick, RMNP Chief of Interpretation and Education. At the close of the Saguaro Bioblitz, Ben Bobowski accepted the "Biodiversity" banner, indicating the next site in the series of ten bioblitzes.

An Update on Your Trails

The Alpine Ridge Trail at the Alpine Visitor Center (also known as Huffer's Hill) had the installation of a sustainable step system and a hybrid asphalt tread in 2011. This work will continue in 2012 and the trail will reopen in 2013.

Work on the Lake Haiyaha loop trail continued in 2011, with an anticipated completion date of fall 2012. A 400 foot re-alignment has been completed and is now open to the public. Work on the Alberta Falls Trail will continue this fall. This project is being funded by the Rocky Mountain Nature Association.

Bruce Rosenlund Recognized for His Leadership in Protecting Park Resources

Rocky Mountain National Park Superintendent Vaughn Baker announced that Bruce Rosenlund, Fish and Wildlife Biologist, with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, (USFWS) is the recipient of the 2010 Rocky Mountain National Park Stewardship Award. The National Park Service proudly presents the Stewardship Award to outstanding individuals and organizations that contribute significantly to the stewardship of the park and the surrounding environment. Bruce Rosenlund was selected for this award in recognition of his cooperative efforts advancing the long term protection of Rocky Mountain National Park.

The National Park Service and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service have worked collaboratively over the years to address a variety of issues facing the park; however, Bruce's dedication to fisheries management and particularly the restoration of greenback cutthroat trout, sets him apart from the pack.

In 1937, greenback cutthroat trout were thought to be extinct. But in the 1960s recovery began after the discovery of a remnant population found just south of Rocky Mountain National Park. Shortly thereafter, Bruce began his efforts to reestablish populations of the greenback cutthroat trout for nearly three decades. Bruce's long-term successful collaboration has produced numerous benefits for park fisheries restoration as he has worked closely with many state and federal partners as well as the public, including volunteers, to restore depleted fish populations. He has been a leader in the development of fisheries management techniques and reintroduction strategies as it relates to fish and wildlife management and species recovery. He has advanced numerous methodologies to improve restoration of fish.

Restoration of a species takes years of dedication, hard work, and as Bruce has so aptly demonstrated – an ability to build and maintain long-term relationships. All of his efforts are rewarded periodically and can

be captured in this quote by Bruce, “The thrill of being there and releasing greenbacks into their new home, as I did at Dream Lake in the park, is indescribable.”



We are fortunate that the ‘stage’ in which Bruce has performed such exemplary work has been Rocky Mountain National Park. He has become an icon to the greenback cutthroat trout’s recovery and an inspiration to those who are passionate about species recovery.

Bruce Rosenlund has demonstrated his commitment to assist with protecting park resources and values, and provide for their enjoyment by current and future generations. A strong sense of stewardship and strong technical and scientific support are increasingly important. With changing demographics and landscapes, and the need to build awareness of parks and conservation values, Bruce Rosenlund is commended for his commitment to advancing the long-term protection of Rocky Mountain National Park for the benefit and enjoyment of all Coloradoans and all Americans.

Bear Lake Road Phase II

Funding has been secured for the second phase of Bear Lake Road reconstruction. The work will take place from the Park & Ride – Glacier Basin Campground intersection to the junction with Trail Ridge Road, 5.1 miles. The work will be similar in scope and impacts as the first phase of Bear Lake Road which was completed in 2004 and took place on the upper 4.3 mile section of road. This major project will involve significant retaining wall work in order to accommodate much-needed safety and drainage improvements.

In addition on this phase, a 0.9 mile section will be rerouted away from Glacier Creek in order to prevent impacts to wetlands and riparian habitat and minimize costs.



We recognize that work in the narrow road corridor will be difficult and have been cooperating closely with the Federal Highway Administration to minimize disruptions to visitors during the busy summer season. Two years will be allowed for the completion of the work. Specific information on closures and vehicle access to the Bear Lake area will be announced as details become known.

Visitors can expect up to 40 minute delays through the project. Night closures will be allowed for construction of retaining walls. Weekend work will be allowed except on holiday weekends. During winter and early spring months, full day road closures may occur above Big Thompson River bridge on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays (no road access to Bear Lake on those 3 weekdays during the winter and early spring). Due to the night closures, the **Glacier Basin Campground will be closed for the summer of 2012.**

Bear Lake Road was completed in 1928 and until 2003, no significant improvements were made for 75 years. The project will improve the road surface and widen the road to accommodate park shuttle buses. The project also will correct structural deficiencies in the roadway. The road is normally open year-round, so the wider road will help make snow removal operations safer.

The ability to accomplish as much work as possible during the slower off-season months may help lessen disruptions during the peak season. When this project is complete, it will conclude over 47 miles of critical improvements on Bear Lake Road and Trail Ridge Road since 2003.

New Park And Ride in Town on Highway 36

This summer the Town of Estes Park constructed a new Park and Ride on Highway 36 at the Stanley Park Fairgrounds. The new lot was built by the Town in order to reduce congestion and lower greenhouse gas emissions. This summer the park conducted a pilot Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) project with the Town of Estes Park, Colorado Department of Transportation, and the Federal Highway Administration. The project used both variable message signs and highway advisory radio to encourage visitors to both the park and to the town to utilize the town's new satellite parking facility. Shuttle bus service was provided from the new lot so visitors could access both downtown and RMNP destinations. The park is planning on continuing the ITS project again in 2012.



RMNP Announces Winter Pile Burning Operations

Fire managers from Rocky Mountain National Park are taking advantage of winter weather conditions to burn piles of slash from several forest thinning and hazard tree mitigation projects. Exclusion of fire for the past century has resulted in unnatural forest conditions in some areas, with significant accumulations of forest fuels and an increased risk of a wildfire. In addition, park crews have been cutting hazard trees caused by beetle killed trees.

There is an estimated 8,000 to 10,000 piles park wide. If these are all burned, it will be roughly three times the amount of piles that are normally burned in a year.

Slash from these projects has been cut and piled by park fire crews and contractors during the last two years. Pile burning operations will continue through March as weather permits. The piles, which are now dry enough to burn, are located in a variety of locations on both the east and west sides of the park. Locations include but are not limited to: Bear Lake Road Corridor, Glacier Basin Campground, Sprague Lake, Moraine Park Campground, Deer Mountain, Highway 34 near Deer Ridge Junction, some areas along Trail Ridge Road, Lily Lake area, Wild Basin Road, along US Highway 34 from the park boundary to the Colorado River Trailhead, on the southern boundary of the park (north of the town of Grand Lake), Shadow Mountain, and other areas along Trail Ridge Road on the west side.

Safety factors, weather conditions, air quality and environmental regulations are continually monitored as a part of any fire management operation.



Updated Administrative Boundary Map Delivered to Rocky Mountain National Park

Recently, Roger Johnson, Chief Cartographer of the Land Resources Division (LRD), along with Daniel Konzek, Cartographer, and other staff from the Technical Center came to Rocky Mountain National Park to personally deliver the updated Administrative Boundary of Rocky Mountain National Park. Also presented were copies of the updated tract maps which symbolize NPS ownership and interests within and adjoining the park. To meet evolving expectations of map products in the digital world the LRD is converting their paper segment maps to GIS data. To do this for Rocky Mountain National Park they used an extensive process involving the park's enabling legislation, deeds, legal descriptions and other documents that define the park's land holdings. Communication and collaboration were critical components to complete the successful digital data conversion of the park. Beyond a new highly accurate set of Land Status maps, GIS data and metadata are publically available on the IRMA Data Store (<https://irma.nps.gov/App/Portal/Home>).

After a short presentation meeting and hand off of the data at the Beaver Meadows Visitor Center, the park's GIS Specialist Ron Thomas took the group into the park to show them how their maps and data are used in the management of the park. As Roger said, "Often we are so focused on mapping activities that it is nice to be reminded of the resources we are working to protect and have a chance to speak with other individuals that work on this same goal from a much different perspective."



RMNP's New Fire Management Plan

Rocky Mountain National Park staff are preparing a new Fire Management Plan for the park. The current Fire Management Plan is currently based on a 1992 plan which underwent minor revisions in 2004. This new plan will more fully address the challenges the park now faces with the bark beetle epidemic, other forest health issues, and community wildland fire protection. Public meetings were held in September and comments on the plan were due on October 30. Park staff are currently reviewing the comments.

What Everyone Should Know Before Attempting the Keyhole Route on Longs Peak in Rocky Mountain National Park

Rocky Mountain National Park rangers want those who attempt the Keyhole Route on Longs Peak to have realistic expectations of the challenges they will face to summit the 14,259 foot mountain. New informative materials, to help people plan and prepare for their climb, were posted on the park's website in July. The updated information includes a brochure with photographs of the different sections on the route, twelve frequently asked questions and weekly conditions of the route from late spring through early fall.

When visitors access www.nps.gov/romo/planyourvisit/longspeak.htm they will find a downloadable brochure showing the main sections of the route – starting at the Boulder Field and ending at the summit with brief text and photos. The brochure also includes numerous safety tips and essentials to wear and carry. In the Frequently Asked Questions section twelve of the most common questions are answered such as “How have people been injured or killed on the Keyhole Route?” “How many people should I expect to see on the route during the summer?” and “Do I really need to start at the trailhead before sunrise?” For the last few years, rangers have been posting the Longs Peak Conditions Report weekly during the peak season. The report illustrates conditions along the route with photographs. Visitors are encouraged to use the report only as a guideline since conditions can change rapidly.

The Keyhole Route to the summit of Longs Peak, one of the most popular routes in Colorado, is an extraordinary climbing experience. This is not a hike. It is a climb, a classic mountaineering route that should not be underestimated. The route crosses enormous vertical rock faces, is exposed to falling rock, and requires scrambling on all fours. The route has narrow ledges, loose rock, and steep cliffs. Depending upon conditions snow and ice might be encountered any time of year. The terrain requires route finding skills and the ability to assess and adjust to unexpected or changing weather conditions. A slip, trip or fall could be fatal.

Safety is ultimately each visitor's personal responsibility. The most important part of any adventure in Rocky Mountain National Park is to plan and prepare for a safe return.



Scholarship Named After Former RMNP Seasonal, Glenn Harrington

Glenn Harrington, long time member and Past President of the Grand Lake Rotary Club, was recently honored by the Grand Lake club with the creation of a scholarship in his name. An annual \$1000 scholarship will be awarded to a deserving student in the National Park Service Seasonal Law Enforcement Training Program at Colorado Northwestern Community College in Rangely, CO. The inaugural presentation of this annual scholarship was presented on Friday, November 4, to Kelsey Armour from Englewood, CO.



Harrington worked for eleven summer seasons as a Seasonal Park Ranger Naturalist in park interpretation. Six of those seasons were at Rocky Mountain National Park. Colorado Northwestern Community College is one of only nine colleges in the nation with an accredited program in this field.

Jim Herdman, from the Department of Conservation in New Zealand, Works In Rocky for Three Months

Jim Herdman is Program Manager of Historic and Visitor Assets for the Department of Conservation in New Zealand at the South Marlborough Area Office. He came to Rocky on a three month working visit to gain knowledge of how the park operates and to share his experience with park staff.

While here, Jim was exposed to many facets of the National Park Service, focusing primarily on facilities management due to his position in New Zealand as an asset manager. However, he also had the opportunity to see many other facets as he worked for a week with the Alpine Hotshot Crew, spent overnights in the backcountry with rangers, assisted on trail maintenance, worked with the historic rock wall crew, was exposed to revegetation projects, spent a week with the forestry crew working with the pine beetle epidemic, and worked with Rocky's historic preservation team. Jim also spent a week at the Regional Office in Denver with the Intermountain Maintenance Advisory Committee that provides guidance and assistance with program managers across the region. He shared with them asset management approaches used in New Zealand parks which many found to be very 'eye opening.'

Jim also gave numerous presentations to Rocky employees and the public on New Zealand National Park approaches to conservation.

Jim has worked for the Department of Conservation, New Zealand since it was formed in 1987. He began his career in 1979 with the New Zealand Forest Service. In Jim's current role as the Program Manager Historic and Visitor Assets, he manages a group of campgrounds, picnic areas, roads, trails, cabins/huts and historic assets. He also fills a role as a Rural Fire Officer and is part of a Regional Incident Management Team.

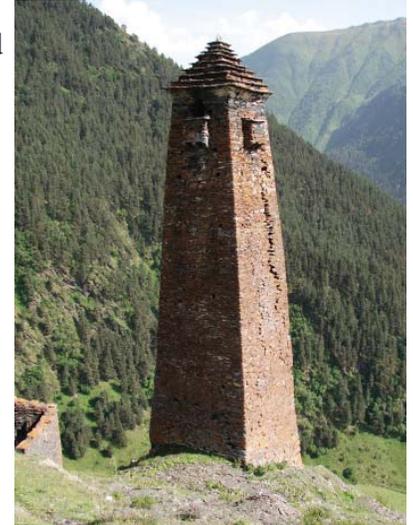
A New Sister Park Agreement Signed with Tusheti National Park in the Republic of Georgia



A delegation from Tusheti National Park in Georgia was at Rocky Mountain National Park in mid-October as part of an International Technical Assistance Program (ITAP) study trip through the Department of Interior. Based on discussions that had begun over a decade ago on previous trips, a sister park agreement was signed between Tusheti National Park and Rocky. In addition to learning more about park operations, they were very interested in community relations. A district Governor was part of the delegation. They were able to spend some time

with Bill Pinkham, Mayor of Estes Park, which was very helpful.

Tusheti Protected Areas are located in the beautiful eastern Caucasus Mountains in the northeast corner of Georgia, bordered on two sides by Russia. This is the largest protected area in Europe, which includes a National Park, Strict Nature Reserve and a Protected Landscape. The National Park is the largest, covering a territory of 113,660 hectares (280,859 acres) in area. Tusheti's landscape is rich with snow-capped and glacial mountains, unique pine forests, deep river gorges, old villages and castles, vast pastures, crystal clear streams and rivers. There are several well preserved towers dating back to the Middle Ages. This great diversity of elevation and life zones are home to endangered and rare flora and fauna including 230 native species. In addition to the spectacular natural values, the national park was created to maintain traditional folkways, the mountain villages, and protect historical and cultural landscapes and promote tourism without causing environmental damage.



Georgia has one of the largest proportions of land dedicated to national parks and protected areas in the world with 7 percent of the total land area in 40 national parks and protected areas. Their goal is to reach 20 to 25 percent. The country has long maintained its red list of endangered species and its flora and fauna are exceptionally rich by international standards.



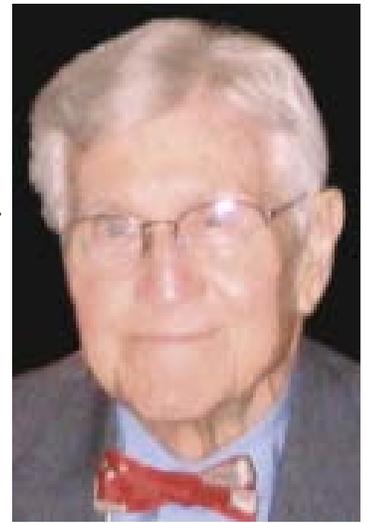
The main goal of creating the Tusheti Protected Areas is conservation of biodiversity through the harmonization of ancient historical and cultural traditions with new management needs. To achieve this aim, different activities are carried out: protection of rare and endemic species; rehabilitation of degraded landscapes; promotion of ecotourism by building modern infrastructure; and development of cooperation between local community and protected area managers.

Ferrel Atkins ~

February, 1924 - September, 2011

Dr. D. Ferrel Atkins, age 87 of Charleston, passed away on September 16, 2011. Ferrel was born in Orange Township in Clark County, Illinois on February 15, 1924. He is survived by Jan, his wife of fifty-six years, two children, and six grandchildren.

Dr. Atkins received his B.S. in Education from Eastern Illinois University in 1945 graduating with High Honors. He received his Masters from the University of Illinois in 1946, his Ph.D. from the University of Kentucky in 1950 and a Pd.D Honorary Degree from E.I.U. Dr. Atkins also received a Postdoctoral NSF Fellowship in Computer Science from Stanford University during 1964-65.



He accepted a position at the University of Richmond in Virginia from 1952 until 1958 where he served as an Assistant Professor, Associate Professor and Department Chairman. In 1958 he returned home to Illinois and to his Alma Mater of E.I.U. where he was Professor of Mathematics and Computer Sciences, retiring in 1988 with the title of Professor Emeritus.

During the summers of 1952 through 1984, Ferrel was a Ranger Naturalist at Rocky Mountain National Park in Estes Park, where he became the Park Historian. From 1986 until the year 2009 he continued there as a volunteer. He was an expert in his field and his thirst for knowledge and his desire to teach others never diminished.

He got his start with the NPS in 1952 when another seasonal naturalist quit just before the start of the summer season at Rocky Mountain National Park. In a bit of a hiring bind, the Park Naturalist looked through the applicants. Ferrel stood out for two reasons: he was available, and he had earned his PhD degree in mathematics which, according to the Park Naturalist, would give "class" to the division of interpretation!



Barry Brubaker ~

February, 1948 - August, 2011

Barry Brubaker passed away on August 28. Starting in 1996, Barry served at Rocky in a variety of roles including custodial supervisor and asset management lead in facility management and more recently as an accounting technician in administration. Barry is survived by his wife of 41 years, Sharon, who is the administrative assistant for the Resource Stewardship division. They have four children and eight grandchildren.

Ed Nelson, who worked closely with Barry for three years in Facility Management, had this to say, "Barry was an extremely interesting person, his children and grandchildren were the highlight of his life. While working with Barry for a number of years I learned how important his faith was, he would never push it on anybody but it was evident that it was an important part of his life. He was a very giving person both to his church and friends. He loved to work on complex data base problems, creating elaborate programs to help simplify the process for himself and the rest of us who struggled with maneuvering through the data base. He documented what and how he did things in order for methodology. Barry enjoyed working on cars with Nick and doing home remodeling projects at home and for his girls, he could always find a project to do. It should be noted too that Barry could make a killer Shoo Fly Pie. He loved to listen to NPR radio and discuss the stock market and our impending retirements. I guess it goes without saying that Barry was very talented and could and did anything he put his mind to whether it was remodeling, auto mechanics, programing, cooking or cleaning restrooms and offices for the visitor center."