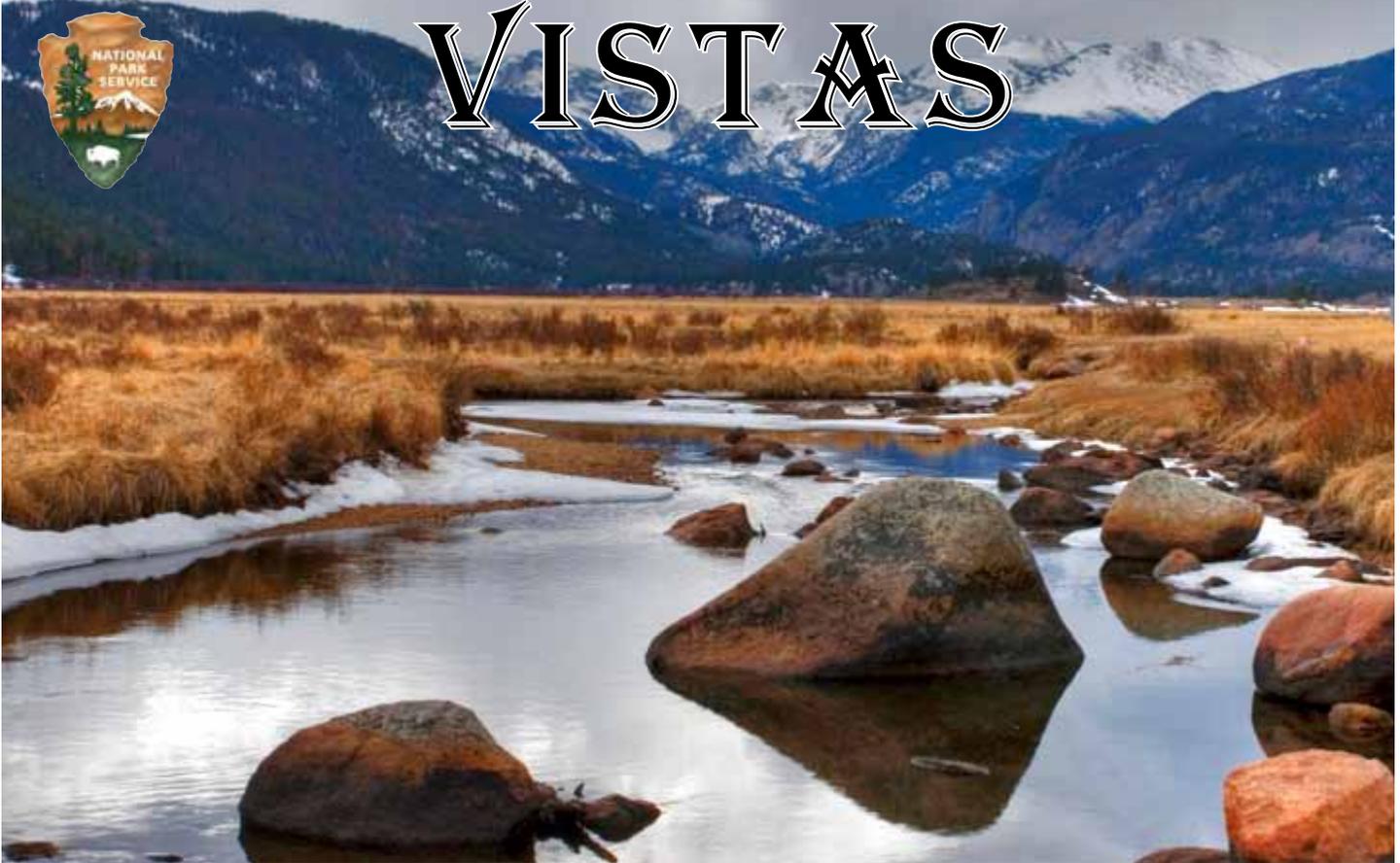




VISTAS



ROCKY MOUNTAIN NATIONAL PARK

Photo Courtesy of Ann Schonlau

96 Years Old and Counting

We're starting the countdown to the park's centennial in 2015. We'd like to hear your ideas on ways to celebrate the establishment of the park. It seems like it's taken a long time for spring to arrive in the high country this year. As I write this on May 18, I'm watching it snow outside my window. Our crews encountered some of the most snow they've seen in a while during this year's opening of Trail Ridge Road. As you'll see, it provided for some great photos. Speaking of Trail Ridge Road, we are looking forward to a construction free season. The repaving of the alpine section was completed last fall ahead of schedule. Of course, as is typical anywhere in Colorado's high country, you might encounter some chip sealing activity with short delays. Over the last 10 years, we have been able to reconstruct or repave 45 miles of the park's 59 miles of major paved roads. The remaining 5 miles of Bear Lake Road are scheduled for 2012-13.

I invite you to come visit and see what's new and what hasn't changed—sweeping vistas, fields of wildflowers, pristine mountain lakes, night skies and more.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Vaughn".

Vaughn Baker
Superintendent

Coming in 2012 ...

Bear Lake Road Reconstruction Phase II

Road construction on the remaining 5.1 miles of Bear Lake Road could start as early as November, 2011, but no later than April, 2012. Two years will be allowed for the completion of the work. Visitors can expect delays. Night closures will be allowed for construction of retaining walls. Weekend work will be allowed except on holiday weekends. Due to the night closures, the Glacier Basin Campground will be closed for the summer of 2012. The length of the initial project is 2.6 miles and the work will take place from the Park and Ride to the Big Thompson River bridge. An additional 2.5 miles from the bridge to the intersection with Trail Ridge Road may also be accomplished if funding is available.

Beaver Meadows Visitor Center Improvements

Beginning this fall, the park will begin phase two of the Beaver Meadows Visitor Center/Headquarters remodel, located on Highway 36 near Estes Park. During this phase efforts will focus on improving accessibility to the public portion of the building. These improvements will include a remodel of the restrooms and installation of an indoor lift between the upper and lower levels of the building which in turn will provide handicap access to the auditorium. In addition other improvements include enhanced visitor displays and reception desks.

During the renovations, a temporary building will be placed in the parking lot to serve as a reception area and information station. The Rocky Mountain Nature Association will maintain their retail outlet in the temporary facilities during construction.

Renovations are expected to be completed and the lobby reopened to the public by May 1, 2012.



Photo Courtesy of Ann Schonlau

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Trail Ridge Road 2011 Spring Opening Challenges

Trail Ridge Road in Rocky Mountain National Park did not open for the Memorial Day Weekend. The amount of winter snowpack that faced park snowplow operators when plowing began, combined with storms throughout May, hampered park snowplowing efforts. The snowstorm that hit the week before Memorial Day produced 17 foot drifts above Rainbow Curve on the east side of the park. Park plow operators on the west side of the park have dealt with significant snow accumulation, drifting and rockslides. Longtime park snowplow operators indicate this is the most snow they have encountered, this late in the season, in almost 30 years.



Rock Cut with 23' snow drifts

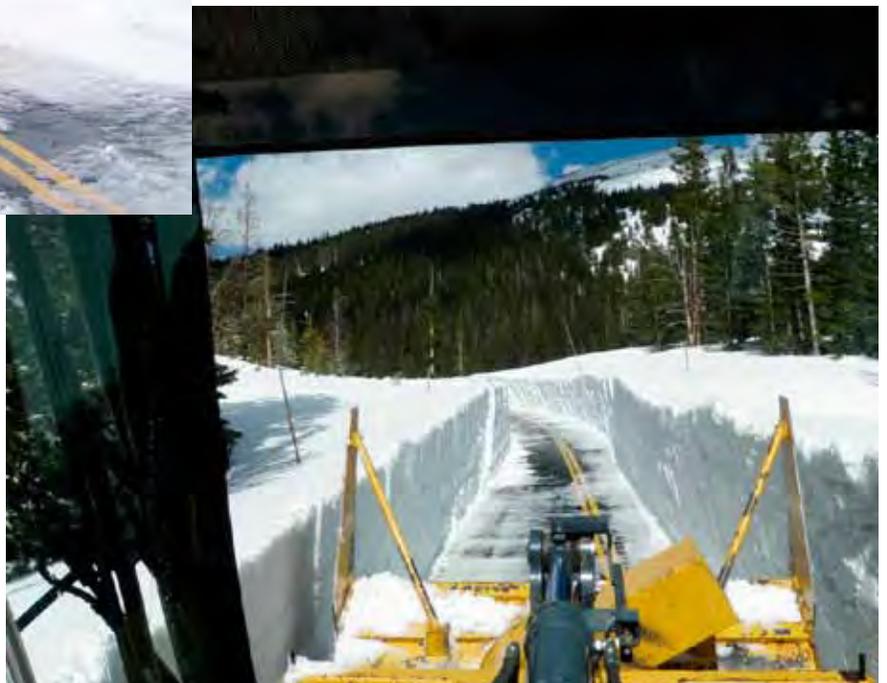
Drifts:

- East of Forest Canyon Overlook 22'
- Before Rockcut 21'
- Rockcut 23'
- Little Rockcut 19'
- Lava Cliffs 15'
- Gore Range 16'
- Longs Peak (between Ute Crossing & Forest Canyon Overlook) 22'
- Bus Terminus 20'



West Side of Rock Cut

Snowplow drivers on the west side have seen at least twice the amount of snow than normal. As one driver put it, "It is full! In most places, nine to ten feet deep across the road."



Approaching Mile Marker 2 on the West Side of the park

Rocky Mountain National Park to Celebrate 100 Years in 2015

What would you do if your organization or business was turning 100 years old? Staff at Rocky Mountain National Park have begun asking ourselves that question.

The park turns 100 years old in January 2015. It was President Woodrow Wilson who signed the legislation creating the park that “is dedicated and set apart as a public park for the benefit and enjoyment of the people of the United States.”

In preparation for planning for this important occasion, last fall the park invited Kass Hardy to Estes Park. She had just finished with a two year assignment at Glacier National Park in Montana serving as their Centennial Coordinator. She spoke to over 60 park staff, partners and stakeholders about the celebration that Glacier held with over 100 different events, only a handful organized by park staff and held in the park. Many of the special events were put on by others in locations throughout the region. Everything from special art shows, to university workshops, to citizens compiling a book of essays on the park with book signings, to hosting the Governor’s Tourism Conference marked the year long celebration.

While our park staff are starting to think about how we might host a centennial celebration, we hope that others will as well. We hope that tourism organizations, businesses, vendors, artists, writers, photographers, and others will think about what they might do or organize since we have plenty of time in the next couple of years to assemble an impressive list of events and products associated with the anniversary.

We too expect a year long celebration. While the legislation was signed in January 1915 to create the park, the dedication took place on September 4, 1915 in Horseshoe Park. Using that date as the finale to the anniversary, would allow us to kick off the centennial year on September 4, 2014 and make the whole year available for events and activities. After all you only turn 100 once!

Rocky Mountain National Park is one of the states premier attractions. It makes sense that the 100th anniversary engages the public region-wide and that wherever someone lives, they can take part in a centennial event.

So, what would you do to help celebrate 100 years at Rocky Mountain National Park?

Junior Ranger



This summer, there is a place just for kids – the Junior Ranger Headquarters located at Hidden Valley along Trail Ridge Road. Join a program and get started on or complete your Junior Ranger Book. The Rocky Junior Ranger programs are offered for kids ages 6 to 12, from June 20 – August 15, several times a day, 7 days a week! The activities are created and presented with a young person’s level of learning and interest in mind. The programs are free. Parents and adults, please remember - you must be present for your children to participate. Headquarters is open 10 a.m. - 2:30 p.m. daily. Jr. Ranger Programs are at 10,11, 12:30 & 1:30 daily.

Bears & Food Storage Reminders

Photo Courtesy of John Marino

When bears become habituated to human food and garbage, they can become aggressive, dangerous, and may break into cars, RVs, and tents. If something has a scent, odor, or looks like a food container, a bear will investigate.

Park regulations require all food items including garbage be properly stored. "Food items" are defined as food, garbage, drinks, toiletries, cosmetics, and pet food and bowls. In addition, coolers, dirty stoves, grills, utensils, and cookware must be washed, stored, and treated like food. These items must be stored by one of the following methods when not in use:

- In park-provided food storage lockers when available, or
- In the trunk of a vehicle, or
- If your vehicle does not have a trunk:
Place food items as low as possible in the passenger compartment, covered up and out of sight.
- In all vehicles close and lock doors and windows.

In addition, bird feeders and pet food attract bears. Bird feeders are prohibited in the park. Pet food must be stored, and treated as food. Improperly stored or unattended food items will likely result in confiscation of and/or issuance of a Violation Notice.



Additional Recommendation for CAMPERS:

- Keep a clean camp.
- Inspect campsites for bear signs and for careless campers nearby. Please notify a park ranger of any potential problems.
- Avoid leaving pets unrestrained or unattended and tied to an object because they may incite, interest, or attract bears.

Photo Courtesy of Ann Schonlau



Joe Arnold, Park Engineer, "Graduates" After 30+ years



Meeting the National Park Service Mission through Engineering

By Leanne Benton from an interview with Joe Arnold, Park Engineer

The core of the National Park Service (NPS) mission is, “to conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations.” This dual mandate to conserve park resources and provide for visitor enjoyment brings to mind occupations such as resource managers, law enforcement rangers, and interpretive rangers. But engineers?

Park engineer, Joe Arnold, is quick to point out that his profession is key to meeting the NPS mission. Every project the park undertakes – constructing new buildings, designing water and wastewater systems, building new trails, reconstructing roads, and removing structures – are all carefully designed to protect or restore park resources while enhancing visitor safety and enjoyment. During his tenure at Rocky, Joe has been instrumental in designing, engineering, and overseeing numerous projects which have blended the human landscape with the natural. After 36 years with the NPS (30 of them at Rocky), Joe will be retiring in July, leaving a legacy of projects that will benefit the park and visitors for decades to come.

Career Beginnings

Joe came into the NPS rather serendipitously. He grew up in Maryland where he met Al Maxey, the father of one of his best friends, who worked at the NPS Mather Training Center in Harpers Ferry. In 1973, the year Joe graduated from high school, the Maxey family moved to Lakewood when Al transferred to the Regional Office. Joe came to Colorado that summer, lived in Granby and worked on a crew that built a dam above Tabernash. Joe then returned to Maryland, attended college but didn’t yet know what he wanted to do for a career.

Within two years, Joe was back in Colorado. His mom said that “the East was too tame for Joe,” and in early 1975 he returned and lived with the Maxey family for a short time. He transferred to CU Boulder in Engineering and Al Maxey helped him get into the Coop program, a program similar to today’s Student Career Employment Program (SCEP), which provided him with NPS experience and an avenue toward a permanent job. Al Maxey later joked that out of his five kids, it was his “adopted” son, Joe, who followed in his footsteps into the NPS.

In 1975, there was a lot of excitement surrounding environmental issues. New laws such as the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), and the Clean Air and Clean Water Acts had recently been passed. Joe was advised that there would be jobs in the environmental field, especially in water and wastewater, which was good advice. Water and sewer plants were being built to replace earlier surface water systems and septic systems. Within the national parks, septic systems had been used in geothermal areas in Yellowstone, and surface sand filter systems were used at Rocky (where above ground arms sprayed effluent over a field) near the Facility Management building and in Moraine Park.

Joe’s first NPS assignment was at Grand Teton National Park during the summer of 1975. He worked a variety of facility management jobs such as in the auto shop, on litter patrol, and operating the “honey wagon” removing and transporting effluent. He was only 20 years old and loved the job.

In 1976, Joe worked at Yellowstone as an engineering technician with water systems. He took water samples and tested them for fecal and total coliform bacteria, and chlorine. The tests were pretty rudimentary compared with today’s standards. Joe really got to see the park since he drove to its various corners to collect water samples three days per week. For the next few years he occasionally took semesters off from school to work seasonally in Yellowstone. After he graduated from college in 1979, Joe got his first permanent job at Yellowstone as an engineer working with surveying, road chip seal projects, designing facilities and overseeing contracts.

Joe enjoyed his Yellowstone years immensely. As the “mother park”, Yellowstone offered incredible wildlife viewing and skiing opportunities. One autumn night, Joe remembers camping under a full moon and listening to bison and elk rutting. Joe went on a memorable ski trip around Yellowstone Lake one winter, which took eight days. Joe lived in Mammoth which offered other opportunities. He played guitar and mandolin in a local bluegrass band, the Mammoth Hot Strings, along with other park-affiliated employees. For a young man in his 20s it was a great life.



Early Years at Rocky

In 1981, Joe transferred to Rocky Mountain National Park as an engineering technician where he was the sole employee in the engineering department. He remembers many park departments and divisions had small staffs then. The Water Lab consisted of one subject-to-furlough person and Joe was the fill-in when that person was on leave. The Resources Management division in those days consisted of only a chief, a biologist, and a five-person summer crew! He notes that staffing levels in Visitor Protection, Interpretation, and Facility Management have remained about the same, though Facility Management now has branched into Project Administration. Joe notes seeing a dramatic increase in the

use of volunteers. In the early 1980s, volunteer groups such as the Road Hogs, Elk Bugle Corps, and Bighorn Brigade had not yet been created.

Joe has also seen other notable improvements, such as in addressing environmental issues. In the 1980s, environmental laws were still new, and the NPS was still learning how to apply the National Environmental Policy Act. The park was doing environmental assessments (EAs), but through the years EAs have become more routine and thorough in addressing environmental impacts for park projects. By 1981, the park had just connected to the new Upper Thompson Sanitation District on the east side for sewage removal and was removing the surface sand filter and septic systems. Joe oversaw connecting the park's housing area near Grand Lake with the public sewer system.

Engineering for the NPS Mission

Joe developed a passion for creating facilities that provided for visitor needs and also inspired visitors to care about the park. During his 30 years at Rocky, Joe's philosophy was manifested in numerous projects. He designed, engineered and oversaw large road projects (Trail Ridge Road and Bear Lake Road), new employee housing near the west side headquarters, rehabs of visitor centers including the major rehab of Beaver Meadows Visitor Center, rehabs of amphitheaters (Moraine Park and Timber Creek) and entrance stations (Beaver Meadows, Wild Basin, and Grand Lake), and offices in the park utility area. He designed and oversaw construction of new bus shelters and bus stops and several accessible facilities such as fishing platforms, trails, and picnic areas. Joe also engineered several trail reroutes and new trail bridges. High on the list of facilities which enhanced visitor enjoyment, was Joe's design of new vault toilets. Joe also developed the solar toilets on Longs Peak and Gem Lake which have served to keep waste out of these rocky environments.

Joe recently collaborated with Bryce Lloyd, Park Landscape Architect, to create design guidelines for park structures including a rustic architectural theme and accessibility standards. He summed up his philosophy by saying, "If we make sustainable facilities and take care of them, it will communicate to the public that they are in a special place. They will hopefully carry a sense of stewardship elsewhere in the park. If roads are in good shape you tend not to notice the facility but rather the resource."

"Paying Back his Karmic Debt"

One of Joe's career highlights involved oversight for the removal of several historic backcountry dams within the park after the Lawn Lake dam failed in 1982. Concerned that other turn-of-the-century dams in the high country posed similar hazards to human safety and resource protection, park management purchased the dams and targeted them for removal. In 1985, the Lost Lake dam, a small 5' – 8' high dam, was removed rock by rock. In 1988, crews removed two earthen-rock dams at Sandbeach Lake and Pear Lake and buried the material on-site.



The Bluebird Lake dam, which was made of concrete, required more planning and effort for its removal. The State Historic Preservation Officer didn't want the dam removed because it was one of the first of its kind built in Colorado. However, human safety and resource restoration outweighed the historic significance and the project proceeded. During 1989 and 1990, a helicopter flew in a bulldozer and a walking excavator with articulated wheels and legs good for rough terrain. Trails Foreman, George Havens, oversaw crews that used a hydraulic hammer to break apart the dam and a helicopter flew the rubble out of the backcountry. Park biologist, Jeff Connor, monitored stream quality to insure there was no pollution during the deconstruction. Joe managed the helicopter and logistics. This project set a precedent since the concrete dam was in a national park and in proposed wilderness.



The dam project was completed in the early 2000s with the removal of the remains of the Lawn Lake dam. This project took longer to complete because the ruined dam no longer posed a safety hazard. Noting that his first summer job in Colorado required him to build a dam near Tabernash, Joe was pleased he was “later able to pay back his karmic debt by removing five dams in Rocky Mountain National Park.”

Through the years, Joe kept records of the number of acres impacted through construction projects and the number of acres restored. During the past three decades, he is pleased to note that the park has a net gain of over 100 acres restored to natural conditions. Projects such as the dam removal, restoration of Hidden Valley Ski Area, and the Moraine Park golf course all contributed to this gain.

Highlights

Joe developed a love of photography and purchased a large format 4X5 camera in the mid-1980s. On several occasions he was able to contribute his photography to the park. On one memorable assignment, Joe was asked to photograph Alpine Visitor Center in winter and summer. On a windless April day, Joe, Michael Smithson, and Judy Rosen flew by helicopter to Alpine Visitor Center so that Joe could photograph the visitor center buried in snow. The snow was so deep that Joe used three frisbies to support the tripod legs, and he and Judy were able to climb easily up onto the visitor center roof. Joe later took a summer photograph from a similar vantage point and the two images were used for a popular postcard and also enlarged into a photo exhibit that was displayed in the Alpine Visitor Center and Beaver Meadows Visitor Center for nearly twenty years.

A couple of backcountry ski trips also stand out. One winter, he skied from where the road was closed at Timber Lake trailhead, up Trail Ridge Road and down the Old Fall River Road to Endovalley in 7 ½ hours! On January 1 of another year, he skied up to Lion Lakes on a clear and windless day. The weather was so good he continued up Chiefs Head Mountain and from the top he could see individual buildings in Denver, while the mountain itself presented foot-long hoarfrost crystals and a sighting of three full-curl bighorn rams.

What’s Next for Joe

Joe says he is “graduating” from the NPS on July 29, rather than retiring and is planning to go into a new arena involving art and travel. He is already well underway designing and building a 36’ tall art installation titled the Tower of Transformation which he will exhibit at the annual Burning Man Festival in the Nevada desert in August. Joe’s previous art installations at the Burning Man Festival helped earn him a grant toward funding this year’s project. Joe also has plans to travel, perhaps complete an around-the-world trip that he started many years ago.

We may see Joe back in the park in a year or two to help part-time with the next phase of the Bear Lake road project.

Fast Pass Lanes Available on Both Sides of the Park

There are now fast pass lanes on both sides of the park. A fast pass lane was recently added to the west side to aid in the quick entry for visitors who have park passes. All hard plastic passes purchased from Rocky, such as the interagency, annual, Rocky, senior & access passes are already coded to work in the new fast pass lane. If your pass was purchased from somewhere other than Rocky, just bring it in to have it coded for use in the new lane.

Hazard Tree Mitigation Projects Continue

Bark beetles continue to be active within Rocky Mountain National Park, impacting large numbers of conifer trees. The park's priorities for mitigation of the effects of beetles are focused on removing hazard trees and hazard fuels related to the protection of life and property. For several years, Rocky Mountain National Park has had a proactive bark beetle management program. As of fall 2010, bark beetles were considered at outbreak levels throughout the park. In 2011, park staff continue our mitigation efforts, including spraying, removing hazard trees, prescribed burns, utilizing an air curtain burner, pheromone treatments and implementing temporary closures in a variety of park locations.

Starting in early April the park began applying a Carbaryl based insecticide to up to 5,000 high-value trees to protect them from bark beetles. Treatment is occurring in the following developed areas of the park: Beaver Meadows Visitor Center and Headquarters, Moraine Park Visitor Center, Kawuneeche Visitor Center, Aspenglen, Moraine Park, and Glacier Basin Campgrounds, Sprague Lake Picnic Area, Bighorn Ranger Station, McGraw Ranch, Holzwarth Historic Site, Leiffer Cabin, Kaley Cottages, Lumpy Ridge Trailhead, and the east and west side park service housing areas. Wet spring conditions have delayed the spraying in some areas.

Last year, almost 5,000 trees were treated and nearly all of these trees were not attacked by bark beetles. The total number of treated trees will be between 4,000 and 5,000, depending on site conditions. Insecticide will be applied to individual trees to repel beetle attacks. The Longs Peak Campground will remain chemical free for this year.

The park is also treating up to 300 high value limber pine trees with verbenone pheromone packets to minimize infestation from bark beetles. Limber pine trees in the park are currently at risk of mountain pine beetle infestation and infection from white pine blister rust. Research is being conducted to identify if any limber pine trees within the park are resistant to white pine blister rust.

Park staff and contracted resources will conduct hazard tree mitigation through tree removal throughout the year. Planned project sites include: Sprague Lake Trail, the Wild Basin Area, Old Fall River Road, Coyote Valley Trail and Trailhead, Shadow Mountain Lookout, Holzwarth Historic Site, and Timber Lake Trailhead. Smaller scale, selective hazard tree removals should be anticipated at trailheads, parking areas, picnic areas, roadside pullouts, campgrounds and visitor centers. Temporary site closures can be expected at smaller sites to facilitate safe and efficient project completion. More detailed information will be provided on upcoming tree removal contracts along Trail Ridge and Bear Lake Roads on the east side of the park and possible temporary delays. Material disposal will involve piles for future burning and consolidation at designated sites for future use including firewood collection permits. More information on utilization will be available in the summer of 2011.



Sprague Lake Hazard Tree Removal

For more information about Rocky Mountain National Park please contact the park's Information Office at (970) 586-1206 or visit the park's website section on forest health at http://www.nps.gov/romo/naturescience/forest_health.htm

What's Invasive! Smartphone App



You can help map invasive exotic plants and animals in the Rocky Mountain National Park using a new What's Invasive! app for smartphones. The What's Invasive! app is available to download for free on iPhone and Android smartphones and contains a list of exotic species to choose from. Should you come across any while out in the park, the app allows you to easily upload a photo and location (using the built-in global positioning system or GPS) directly to the website <http://whatsinvasive.com> where your observations will be recorded and available to the public on a map of the park. No cellular service is required to the app to work so you can take photos and locations in most areas of the park with a GPS signal. Simply upload your saved observations when you have cellular service again. Your efforts will help park biologists better understand the extent of exotic species in the park that may help to inform future control strategies. Currently, the park actively controls priority invasive exotic plants

using manual, chemical, and biological methods. Please contact Jim Cheatham, park biologist, at 970-586-1301 or jim_cheatham@nps.gov for more information.

Trails Status for Summer 2011

East Shore Trailhead: The National Park Service has provided additional funding to the U.S. Forest Service toward completion of the East Shore Trailhead in Grand Lake. The funding will be used to complete an information kiosk at the trailhead (which will include maps and other information) and a trailhead entrance sign.

Continental Divide Trail: In the fall of 2010 a new one mile segment of trail was completed within the park to connect the Bowen-Baker area to the Onahu Trail. This included the construction of a 31 foot multi-use trail bridge. The new Continental Divide Trail route is now available for public use within the National Forest and the National Park.

Alpine Ridge Trail at Alpine Visitor Center: The installation of rock lining and an asphalt surface and extensive re-vegetation of a closed section of the trail was completed on the upper third of the trail in the summer of 2010. A sustainable step system will be installed during the 2011 work season; therefore, the trail will remain closed for the 2011 summer. The trail will reopen in late 2012. This project is being funded by American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funds.

Lake Haiyaha: The rehab of the Lake Haiyaha loop trail continues in 2011 with an anticipated completion date of fall 2012. This project is being funded by the Rocky Mountain Nature Association.

Longs Peak Trail: The rehab of the upper section of the Longs Peak trail continued in 2010. This work has been ongoing since 2008 with the anticipated completion in the fall of 2011. This project is funded by entrance fees.

East Inlet Trail: The rehabilitation of the East Inlet trail began in 2010. This work will be completed in 2011 with repairs to the upper section of the trail in the vicinity of Lone Pine Lake.

Crater Trail: Preliminary surveys will be completed for a proposed re-alignment of this trail during the summer of 2011. Work is anticipated to begin on this project in the summer of 2012.

Rocky Mountain Building the Next Generation of NPS Employees Through Summer Internships

Over the past several years Rocky Mountain National Park has been developing collaborative partnerships and programs to provide opportunities for youth to personally connect to the NPS, create viable career paths for youth from underrepresented groups and address the lack of diversity in the park. Several new internship programs have been started to focus bridging the critical years between high school and college when students are making decisions that will influence their career and educational choices. Interns receive hands-on experience, connections to the existing workforce, and active mentoring as they begin their working relationship. Rocky receives enthusiastic and hard-working young employees that bring their energy and passion to become the next generation of NPS employees.

The Eagle Rock Internship Program is a partnership with Eagle Rock School and Professional Development Center, an initiative of the American Honda Education Corporation, a 501(c)3, a nonprofit subsidiary of the American Honda Motor Company. Eagle Rock School (ERS) is a year-round, residential, full-scholarship high school for students ages 15-20, located in Estes Park, Colorado. ERS works with students who have not been successful in traditional academic environments. The student body is purposefully diverse with students from around the country; many from urban areas.



Now entering its fourth year, the Eagle Rock Internship Program continues to bring new interns to the park and many of those former interns are now returning as seasonal employees during their summer break from college. In 2010, six interns volunteered and worked in the park. They worked on a variety of jobs including; recycling, visitor services at Bear Lake, trails and vegetation restoration. This summer four of those interns will return as seasonal employees.

Groundwork Denver Internship Program is a National Park Service Youth Internship Program partnership with Groundwork Denver. Groundwork Denver, a trust of Groundwork USA, is a community and environmentally focused nonprofit that works in Denver's low income communities. They are focused on "Community Action Environmental Results." The mission of Groundwork Denver is to bring about the sustained improvement of the physical environment and promote health and well-being through community-based partnerships and action.

The Groundwork Denver Internship program is now in its second year and this summer they will be spending a month, working and camping in the park. The NPS provides funding, projects, supervision and various training and interpretative programs. Groundwork Denver recruits, hires, trains, supervises, and mentors ten lower income urban youth aged 18-24 to work in the park. Many of the interns have spent most of their lives in the inner city and they are out of their comfort zone. To address this challenge and help them feel comfortable in the outdoors, the interns also receive training on camping, outdoor cooking, teamwork and how to be safe. Once the interns were acclimated, they spent time with NPS staff learning about the park, the NPS, and potential career paths.

Rocky will continue to focus on creating opportunities for youth to personally connect to nature and parks. One intern said it best, "Working and living at RMNP was an experience that will last a lifetime. I am very grateful."

Heart of the Rockies Brings Diversity to RMNP

For almost twenty years, Rocky Mountain National Park's Heart of the Rockies Education Program has been engaging youth groups, with an emphasis on connecting with ethnically diverse youth and adult groups. In 2010, the Education and Outreach staff worked with over 1000 youth and adults from nineteen minority groups, conducting almost fifty summer programs. Part of our mission is to conduct hands-on, minds-on field activities to help youth in groups such as Groundwork Denver understand the resources they are working with in their service projects, and to develop a personal connection to the significance of Rocky Mountain National Park. This summer is shaping up to be just as busy.

A number of long-term partnerships, such as with the Sierra Club Inner City Outings and CU's Science Discovery Program, have been developed to serve diverse youth. The most enduring of these is with Environmental Learning for Kids (ELK), who started working with RMNP's education staff in the 1990s. Originally a program of the Colorado Department of Natural Resources, ELK became a non-profit organization in 2001. ELK works to connect African American and Latino youth to the outdoors and encourage them to enter natural resource careers. Participants visit many state and federal protected areas. Rocky's education staff provides opportunities such as snowshoe winter ecology studies, and alpine tundra explorations, while assisting them with camp skills in the park. In 2010, Heart of the Rockies secured a \$10,000 National Park Foundation grant to expand our partnership with ELK. This summer, ELK will again conduct a multi-day camping trip to Rocky to team up with the education program staff.

Another partnership, now entering its fourth year, is with Greeley Parks and Recreation's summer Science Camp. Approximately twenty Latino teens spend most of a week camping at the park, and, facilitated by the education staff, study watershed science from the headwaters in the alpine tundra to their home city of Greeley. The goal of the camp is not only to help the teens understand how water quality in RMNP affects their own drinking water, but to show how this park belongs to them, and to encourage their exploration of careers in the National Park Service.



A recent partnership was forged with Alpino Mountain Sports Foundation to support their Camp Moreno project. Camp Moreno began as a living history exhibit showing how a Latino family in California discovered the national parks by camping in Yosemite Valley in the 1950s. Coincidentally, Heart of the Rockies was looking to start a "Camping With A Ranger" program for Latino Families. Over lunch with the founder of Alpino, a plan was hatched for inviting Latino families from Denver for a camping weekend at Rocky. Successful beyond expectation, about sixty multi-generational family members discovered RMNP for the first time. One grandfather told us that even though he had lived in Denver for 70 years he'd never been to the park because he never had a car or anyone to take him. During casual conversations throughout the weekend, many confided not coming to the park because they didn't know if they would be welcomed. Perhaps the highlight of the weekend was when the education staff invited all the children to sleep out with them under the stars after the campfire began to die at Moraine Park Campground. None of those children had ever seen a dark sky ablaze with stars before.

Whether its youth or adult groups, school students or teachers, the park's Heart of the Rockies program is dedicated to building a new generation of park lovers and hopefully, advocates.

Join the Million Dollar Challenge

to raise \$1,000,000 for Educational

Programs for Kids in Rocky
Mountain National Park!

Learn more at
www.rmna.org



**GIVE TODAY, AND YOUR
DONATION WILL BE MATCHED!**

Thanks to a generous donor, every gift will be
matched, dollar for dollar, up to \$1,000,000, in 2011.

Information
available at any
RMNP visitor
center bookstore -
just ask!

**Help us raise \$1,000,000 for
the Next Generation of conservationists!**



A fundraising campaign of the Rocky Mountain Nature Association

Visitor Transportation

The park shuttle system continued to see increased ridership last year. The Hiker Shuttle, which originates at the Estes Park Visitor Center, was up 14 percent last year, while the Bear Lake Route showed an increase of 17 percent over 2009. In response to heavy weekend visitation occurring during the fall season, shuttle bus services again were extended into fall 2010, on an as-needed and weather-permitting basis. In 2011, the park intends to participate in a pilot Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) project with the Town of Estes Park. The project will encourage both park and town visitors to utilize the town's new satellite parking facility along Highway 36, the Fairgrounds Park-N-Ride, to board a shuttle as an alternative form of transportation.

2011 Shuttle Schedule for Bear Lake and Moraine Park Routes

The buses run weekends starting Memorial Day Weekend (May 28, 29, 30) through June 5. Daily service begins June 11 and runs through October 2. There are two routes: The Bear Lake Route and the Moraine Park Route. Both routes are based at the Park & Ride shuttle bus parking area across from the Glacier Basin Campground. The first bus departs from Park & Ride at 7:00 a.m. and the last bus leaves at 7:00 p.m. The last bus of the day leaves Bear Lake and Fern Lake Trailheads at 7:30 p.m.

The Bear Lake Route shuttle makes the round trip between the Park & Ride and Bear Lake. These buses run every 10 to 15 minutes.

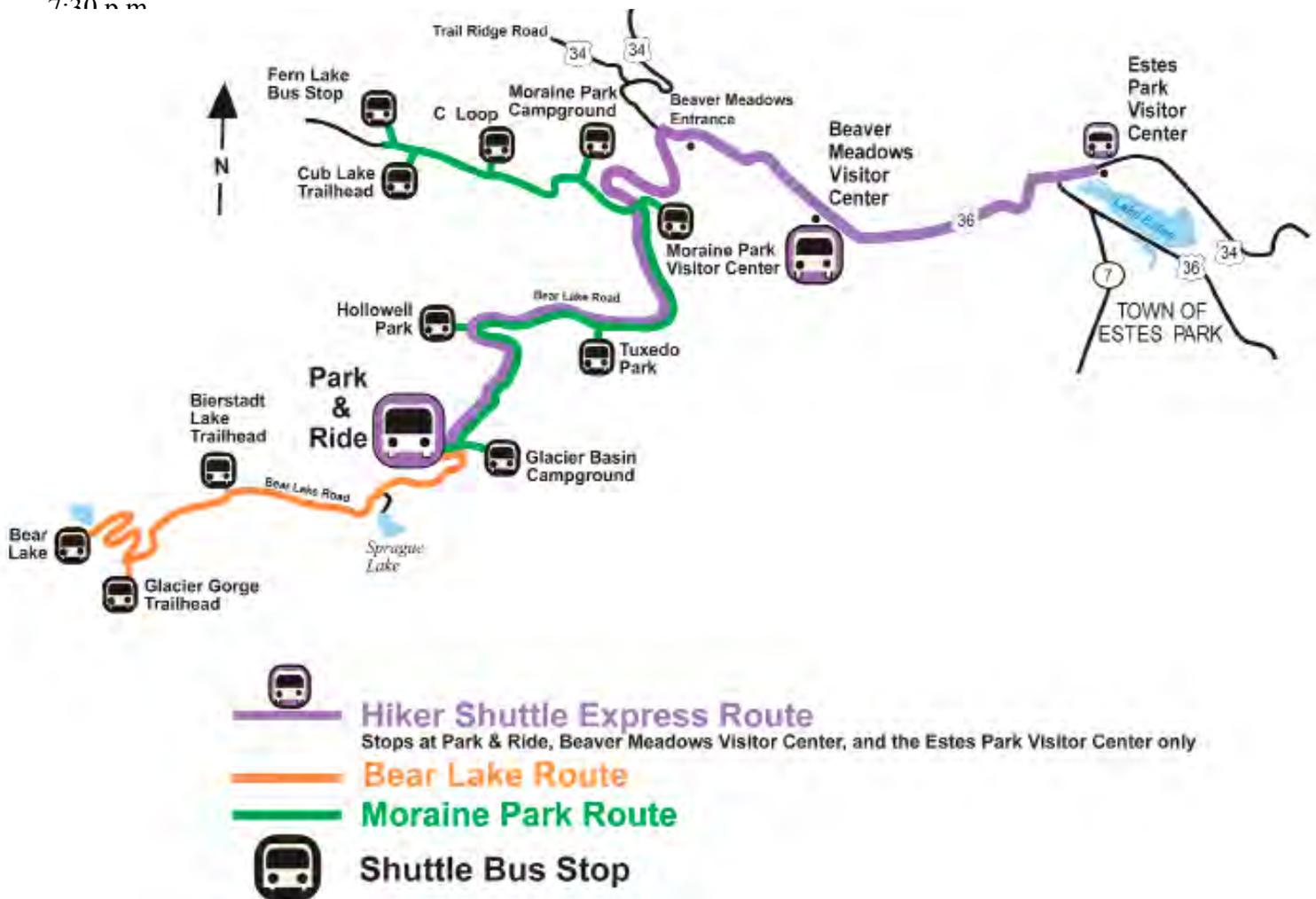
The Moraine Park Route shuttle makes the round trip between the Park & Ride and the Fern Lake Trailhead bus stop. These buses run every 30 minutes.

Hiker Shuttle Between Town of Estes Park and Rocky Mountain National Park

The Rocky Mountain National Park and Town of Estes Park express route known as the “Hiker Shuttle” will run from the Town of Estes Park Visitor Center to the park’s Beaver Meadows Visitor Center and continue to the Park & Ride on the Bear Lake Road. The Hiker Shuttle will operate daily from June 25 through September 5. The Hiker Shuttle will operate on weekends only during the remainder of September through October 2. The first bus will leave the Town of Estes Park Visitors Center at 6:30 a.m. and the last bus will leave the Park & Ride bound for Estes Park at 8:00 p.m. on all scheduled days. The hiker shuttle will run on an hourly schedule early and late in the day; switching to a half hour schedule during the peak of the day (10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.). A park pass will be required to board the bus. Passes can be purchased at automated fee machines located at the Estes Park Visitor Center and the park’s



Beaver Meadows Visitor Center. Campers who are staying at Moraine Park Campground and Glacier Basin Campground can also utilize this route to go to Estes Park, leaving their cars and/or RVs behind in these two park campgrounds. The last bus of the day that returns to the park will leave the Estes Park Visitors Center at 7:30 p.m.



The Loss of Two Friends



The park and community had some sad news this spring, Volunteer **George Gibbs** died on Sunday, April 3 after a long illness. According to his wife, Dorothy, he died peacefully.

George began volunteering in 1998 and over the years donated 2,561.5 hours to the park!

He worked for every division at one time or another; for Administration (Special Projects), Facilities Management (Special Projects), Interpretation (Elk Bugle Corps, Volunteer Office and Visitor Centers), Resource Stewardship (Elk Counts), and Visitor Protection (Bear Lake).

Ted Stuart passed away in February at 81 years of age. For 51 seasons, his pipe-smoking image, entertaining humor, and passionate dedication endeared him to countless visitors and coworkers. Ted served in many park functions -- entrance stations, dispatch, road patrol, campgrounds, and the Bear Lake Shuttle. Along the way Ted picked up a few stories and made many of his own. He knew when to have fun and when to be serious, while always serving the park and its visitors with professionalism. In 2005, Ted received his 50 year plaque.



RMNP Fire Management Plan

Rocky Mountain National Park is in the process of updating its fire management plan and accompanying environmental assessment (EA). The current documents are out of date and do not fully address program needs. The new planning will increase the ability to treat hazardous fuels around communities and other values, and allow for more flexibility in responding to wildfires. A draft EA is expected to be released for public comment later this summer.

Aircraft Arrival and Departure Procedures for Denver Area Airports

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) is preparing an Environmental Assessment (EA) to evaluate the potential impacts of new air traffic procedures for three metro Denver airports, including Denver International Airport (DIA). A major air traffic route crosses over the park and accommodates over 80 aircraft per day on approach to Denver from the west and northwest. Current air traffic procedures create noise impacts as pilots deploy speed brakes mounted on the wings and adjust throttle settings to match required altitude and airspeed on the approach over the park. The new procedures would use satellite-based navigation and a Flight Management System (FMS) onboard all modern aircraft to fly a narrow designated route and to descend on an optimal vertical path to the runway. This Optimized Profile Descent (OPD), managed by the onboard FMS, would eliminate the use of speed brakes, which will reduce noise and conserve fuel. Park staff and the NPS Natural Sounds Program staff have been participating in public scoping for the EA. As a result, the study area for the EA has been expanded to include the entire park, the park has an opportunity to define the appropriate location for the Denver approach flight path over the park, and baseline noise data will be collected and noise modeling will be performed for the preferred flight path.

Elk Fences in Rocky Mountain National Park

Research has shown that the elk herd in Rocky Mountain National Park and the Estes Valley, is larger, less migratory and more concentrated than it would be under natural conditions. As a result, willow and aspen stands are declining, depriving other wildlife of the important habitat they need.

Fences are one of the many tools we are already using in the implementation of the park's Elk and Vegetation Management Plan. Fences will help protect and restore key vegetation, like aspen and willow, which will in turn help the wildlife that depend on aspen and willow for habitat.

Each fall since 2008, we have installed enclosure fences on elk winter range in the Moraine Park, Beaver Meadows, and Horseshoe Park areas. In 2010, we installed three enclosures primarily along the east end of Moraine Park and one enclosure east of the Cub Lake trailhead. One additional enclosure is located in upper Beaver Meadows, southeast of the helispot. These enclosures will protect important riparian willow habitat from elk browsing. Two relatively small net-fence enclosures (totaling 4 acres) are planned to protect aspen stands in the Horseshoe Park area. In 2011, we are proposing to fence approximately 16 acres in the Kawuneeche Valley area.

Elk winter range totals approximately 3,400 acres and we have protected approximately 144 acres of willow habitat and 48 acres of aspen. This represents a little more than 5% of the elk winter range and just over half of up to 365 acres of willow and aspen that could be protected as part of the management plan.

The enclosures are approximately 76 inches tall (a little more than 6 feet), enough to keep elk out while also allowing smaller animals to enter under the 16 inch gap at the bottom. Gates are built into these enclosures, allowing visitors to enter and recreate within the enclosures.

These fences are temporary and will be assessed every 5 years to determine if our management actions are achieving the objectives called for in the plan.

While we understand that enclosures can detract from a natural setting and scenic views in some areas, we believe they also provide several beneficial outcomes such as improving degraded riparian habitat and providing for a diversity of other species dependent on willow and aspen such as beaver, Wilson's warbler, Lincoln's sparrow, and fox sparrows, and butterflies. Because the enclosures protect aspen and willow in high elk-use areas, we are able to manage for a larger elk population (600-800), we can reduce the overall number of elk that need to be culled to maintain that population, and we can still provide visitors with ample opportunities to see elk throughout their range.



Elk Enclosure Fence in Horseshoe Park

Dzień Dobry From Poland

Dzień dobry is the common greeting in Poland meaning good morning or good day. Park staff recently had the opportunity to use it often! As part of the ongoing sister park relationship between Rocky Mountain National Park (RMNP), the Tatra National Park, Slovakia (TANAP) and the Tatra National Park, Poland (TPN), Superintendent Vaughn Baker, Chief of Resource Stewardship Ben Bobowski, and Public Information Officer Kyle Patterson presented at the 4th annual park management conference in April in Poland. In conjunction with the U.S. Consulate in Krakow and Polish national parks, RMNP co-hosted the park management/research conference held around Earth Day at Babia Gora National Park in southwestern Poland with a Conference theme: “Building Bridges to Society: Winning public acceptance for protected areas.” Additionally, we collaborated in a conference which was co-sponsored by Slovakia's Tatras National Park (TANAP), the U.S. Embassy Bratislava, and the Polish Embassy. It focused on the subject of the effects of air pollution on protected mountain areas with presentations from Slovak, Polish, and Czech experts.

In September 2007, RMNP signed a sister park agreement with the Tatra National Parks in Poland and Slovakia. This trip is a direct result of the sister park relationship and U.S. public diplomacy efforts expected with this designation. Over the years, several U. S. National Park Service sites have established sister park relationships with national parks in other countries. These partnerships increase information sharing and direct park-to-park contacts, primarily through the use of improved telecommunications technologies.

The three sister parks share mutual issues and concerns involving the conservation, preservation, and management of national parks, including natural and cultural resources, recreation, and public education. All three parks are mountain parks and international Biosphere Reserves.



The purpose of this trip was for staff to expand relations and collaborate on management issues of mutual concern to include visitor use management, natural resource management (forest health, air quality, wildlife management), interpretation and education including youth programs, volunteer programs, commercial visitor services, and global climate change.