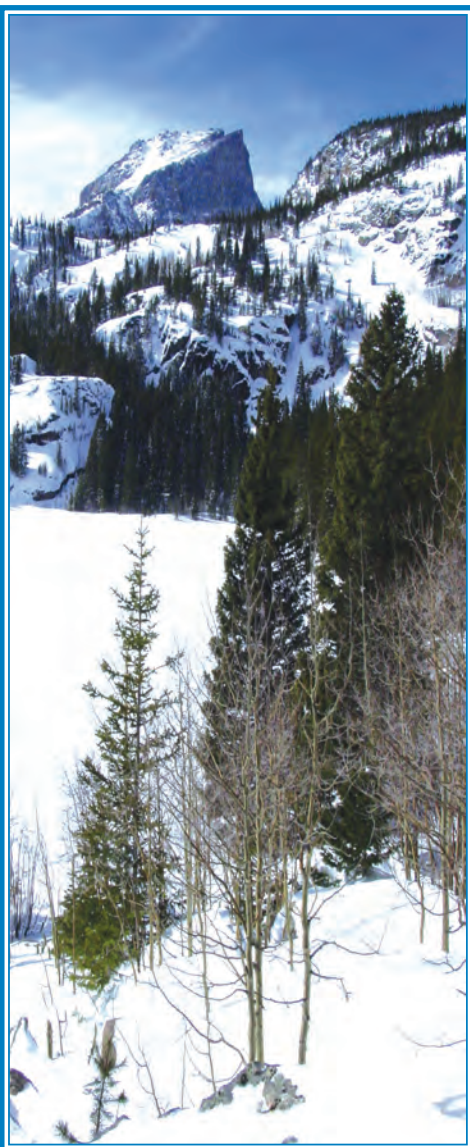


ROCKY MOUNTAIN NATURE ASSOCIATION

Winter 2012

\$4.00

QUARTERLY



AFTER ALL THESE YEARS

by Don Pearson

Several years ago, my youngest son and I were hiking in the park and stopped to visit with an older couple we met on the trail. In the course of our conversation we discovered that they were local, that they came to the park whenever the weather allowed and that both were in their 80's. They said they didn't hike, per se, but ambled, with no particular destination. They just wanted to be out there, to enjoy every- and anything the park had to offer.

They said they didn't consider themselves old – people 10 years older than them were “old.” With shared smiles they admitted, however, that there weren't very many people anymore that would fit the definition of “old”. They did have a friend, they said, who climbed to the summit of Longs Peak every year on his birthday. He was 85. She smiled and said “It makes you wonder how someone that dumb has managed to live so long.” But it was obvious that they both admired him for his spirit and determination.

I was personally reminded of the relativity of age several years ago. I

hiked up to Timberline Falls to get some reference pictures for the artwork I do. It's four miles up, but what the heck, I said to myself. You're out here to enjoy the park, not set any speed records or meet important deadlines. I like to allow time to visit with other hikers, take pictures to relive the day later, take a snack break or just plunk myself down on a log or a rock and soak up the scenery and all that goes with it. I try to start early because the light is good, I'm more apt to see wildlife, less apt to be crowded, it's cool and I can get back home before the afternoon thunderstorms hit.

Well, this day I finally puffed up to Timberline Falls and, just as I was about to start taking pictures, a young couple appeared and started climbing around the rocks by the falls, wading in the water and obviously having a great time. I still could have photographed the falls. If the people showed up in the pictures, I could easily edit them out, but I decided to wait and took a seat on a nearby rock.

They saw me and came over to apologize for “getting in the way.” They were on their honeymoon and had never been to the park before – had I? Where were the best hikes? She

(Years, continued on page 2)



Timberline Falls

photo: NPS

(Years, continued)

was 20 and he was 22 and we had a nice visit. During the course of our conversation she asked, out of curiosity, how old I was. When I told her that I was 73 (at the time) she looked totally shocked. She glanced at her husband and then sort of leaned toward me like I was going to tell her some big secret and asked me, in all seriousness, “How did you get up here?”

Since then I’ve thought of a hundred clever responses, but I don’t remember what I told her at the time. Going down from the falls later on, I admit I was a little puzzled. Then I thought back to when I was 20 years old when I believed that anybody over 40 or 50 should act their age, put on their Hush Puppies and head for the nearest rocking chair.

I recently had my 84th birthday (that’s a lot of cake!). For the past 50 years or so, Rocky Mountain National Park has been my vacation of choice, starting with the camping trips with my wife and kids, followed by many summer stays at the “Y” and ending in 2007 with my second stint as an RMNP Artist-in-Residence at the William Allen White cabin. Age has never been important to me – mine, or anybody else’s. But every time I’m confronted by it, it startles me. 84 years! OMG! Sleeping 8 hours every night — that’s

28 years asleep! Move over Rip Van Winkle!

But then I think of a boulder near the shore of Mills Lake that was probably left there when the ice retreated thousands of years ago. It will still be there when – and if – the glaciers come back. Now, that gives some comfort to us old coots looking for proof that age is irrelevant!

So remember, I say to myself, it’s not the number of years, but how you use them. Seize the day!

Don Pearson is a colored pencil artist living in Tulsa, Oklahoma. He is a celebrated former seminar instructor for the RMNA Field Seminars program.

*Ruth Hess:
a Role
Model We
Love*



Meet Ruth Hess, RMNA Member, Donor and Field Seminars Volunteer. Ruth is one of our most active Members. She assists with RMNA events, is a master fudge-server at the RMNA picnic and hikes a blue streak with Curtis on the Member hikes each month. She turns 85 on February 27. Happy Birthday, Ruth!



Photo: Anne Duncan



Longtime Park Friend and Historian, Ferrel Atkins, Dies

Dr. D. Ferrel Atkins, age 87 of Charleston, passed away on September 16, 2011.

*Ferrel Atkins ~
February, 1924 -
September, 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. Ferrel was a highly skilled public speaker as well as an authority on the history of Moraine Park. Perhaps his most memorable lecture, delivered dozens of times, dealt with the story of the well-known author William Allen White and his affection for the park. From 1986 until the year 2009 Ferrel continued with the park 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!

Cover photo credits

Cover photos (clockwise from lower left to upper right):
"Bear Lake Winter," by RMNA Member Cynthia McKee Brady, Tulsa, OK; "Winter Bunny" by RMNA Member Gene Putney, Longmont, CO; "Avian Standoff" by RMNA Member Dick Orleans, Estes Park, CO. Please send photos or high resolution scans to nancy.wilson@rmna.org by March 1 for publication in the Spring, 2012 *Quarterly*.

Photos are always appreciated! Scenery, wildlife and wildflowers greatly enhance this publication so take a hike and carry your camera with you! Think simple and high contrast for best reproduction results. Thank You!

Ask Nancy

[RMNA Quarterly Editor Nancy Wilson will attempt to unearth answers to any questions asked by RMNA members, donors and park visitors. If you are curious about something in or about the park, write: Nancy Wilson, RMNA, PO Box 3100, Estes Park, CO 80517. Or email her at nancy.wilson@rmna.org]

To what extent does the park use noninvasive research models in the resource management programs? With the assumption that this question refers to wildlife projects, and to vertebrate (animals with backbones) projects in particular, I did a quick review of the 110 projects currently permitted by Rocky Mountain National Park. There are 14 projects focused on vertebrate species including 8 bird, 2 ungulate, 2 small mammal, 1 fish, and 1 amphibian. Of these 14 projects, 4 involved handling the animals to some degree. Two of the four "invasive" projects are bird banding projects. Two others are an elk collaring study of chronic wasting disease and a small mammal survey in which the animals are trapped and released. The fish project entails capturing fish in various ways and the amphibian study includes taking skin samples for disease testing from frogs. To summarize, 6 of 14 wildlife projects involve invasive methods.

All invasive projects proposed for the park go through extra scrutiny to ensure that the *(Research continued on page 15)*

I've been seeing lots of tips of pine tree branches littered all over the ground under pine trees this fall. What's eating them? It's the chickarees, a.k.a. red squirrels, that are eating the cones from the trees - they clip the tips of the branches to make it easier to get at the cones, be they green cones or ripe. They eat the green ones to reduce competition from other squirrels, but I've seen them eating the tender bud tips as well. — *RMNP Wildlife Biologist, Gary Miller.*

How do nonhibernating animals' stay warm during the chilliest parts of the winter? Warm coats and fuzzy feet are all well and good, but at sub-zero temperatures, how do they do it? Warm-blooded animals (mammals and birds) must maintain their body temperatures in winter and the primary way of doing this is by preventing heat loss. Animals increase insulation by adding fur, feathers or fat. Elk, foxes and coyotes grow longer and thicker fur. Ptarmigan grow thicker feathers. Foxes and porcupines add more underfur in winter. Thicker fur and feathers trap more insulating air against the body. Additionally, some animals have hollow (filled with air) guard hairs. Mammals and birds will also fluff up their fur and feathers to increase the trapped air layer. Counter intuitively, snow is full of air, so small animals such as mice and voles will stay warmer underneath the insulating snow during the winter. Mice also huddle together to conserve heat. Above-snow animals will seek out areas that are exposed to the sun but sheltered from the wind: deer like to rest on south-facing slopes, rabbits in "forms" under bushes, and bobcats on sunny ledges. Long-tailed foxes, coyotes and squirrels will curl up and use their tails like a blanket to protect faces, necks or backs. At night, birds like to roost in dense vegetation and sheltered cavities. Songbirds also have a heat exchange system in their skinny little feet that constricts the surface veins to reduce heat loss while shunting heat towards the deeper arteries flowing to the foot to prevent freezing. Bighorn sheep also have a vascular heat exchange in their legs. Lastly, birds will frequently shiver - the contracting muscles will provide heat. Shivering is more of a last resort for mammals. — *Park Naturalist Leanne Benton*

Wish You Were Here...

Postcard Messages Describe Beauty, Enjoyment of Rocky Mountain National Park Through the Decades



Estes Park and mailed in 1909 to a friend in Chicago expresses the anticipated excitement of a pending visit. "Will spend the next six days here and am anxious to start as it is the finest trip they say in Colorado way up in the mountains. Am having a delightful time."

Fast-forward another 60 years and a colorful postcard showing Grand Lake Village, the western gateway to Rocky Mountain National Park, is sent to a couple in Ohio. The sentiments remain the same, "Having a wonderful time. There are no words to describe the beauty of these mountains."

Others tried their best to find words to describe the sights, including the often repeated "God's country." In 1914, a writer attending one of the early YMCA Conferences near Estes Park selected a postcard of Bear Lake to share his spiritual inspiration with a brother living in Washington state, "Of course this scenery is ordinary to you, but it is to me magnificent. But higher than the peaks is my soul born toward God in these days of conference with men who do things. I am slowly coming to see the size of the work to be done."

No less inspired were the many visitors who simply came to relax and enjoy the peaceful serenity of the mountains. In 1959, while staying at Fall River Lodge and Ranch within the park, a writer describes her return to "this lovely spot" to an acquaintance in Michigan following a visit 10 years earlier. "The altitude bothers me some this time," she writes, "so I've been sitting, but to sit and look is perfect."

An altitude of 11,800 feet is noted in a postcard mailed in 1932 to a woman in Pennsylvania by a guest on the famous Circle Tour route which once traversed Fall River Road and was then using the newly opened Trail Ridge Road



Tent at Bear Lake

which connected Estes Park and Grand Lake. In a postcard showing a hand-colored scene of Grand Lake, site of the largest natural body of water in Colorado, the writer describes a trip that included a stop on top and an overnight stay at Grand Lake Lodge, all of which "nearly equaled the Alps."

While sight-seeing has taken many forms through the years, F.O. Stanley's arrival in 1903 with his famous steam-powered automobile began a rubber-tire evolution in tourism as adventurers began exploring the countryside in a fashionable new way. In 1916 a postcard sent from the Lewiston Hotel in Estes Park to a gentleman in Illinois boasts, "The 'Little Old Ford' goes right along. We are having a fine trip and seeing all we can with both eyes. We have just come through forty miles of the most beautiful scenery I have ever seen."

An undated postcard likely sent in the 1920s or 1930s pictures the interior of Grand Lake Lodge, then located within Rocky Mountain National Park, where its guest describes a similar journey. "We drove forty miles in four hours. Can you imagine the steepness? I am on the top of the world now. It is much beyond my expectations."

The driving experience hadn't changed much by September 1952 when the author of a postcard showing the town of Estes Park describes his trip over the Rockies. "It was a near thing for the old Ford, but she finally made it. We are 2,100 miles and seven days out of town, after 95 degrees across all Kansas and no really cool days anywhere."

by Suzanne Silverthorn

They weren't schooled as writers or poets or naturalists or scholars. Yet the words they left behind are remarkable in their simplicity and wonder.

Their messages can be found on thousands of postcards that have been used by travelers to share descriptions of their journeys through Rocky Mountain National Park. Whether they were touring on horseback a century ago or with all the modern conveniences of today, postmarks spanning nearly 100 years tell the story of a timeless admiration of a special place.

Take, for example, the black and white image of Longs Peak dated August 6, 1905, in which the writer describes what he sees in a way that has been frequently retold. "Isn't this beautiful? I can't imagine a more delightful place." Ten years later, the federal government was also convinced of its beauty and Rocky Mountain National Park was established as the country's tenth national park, spanning 229,062 acres.

Before the area became a national park, Colorado had already developed a reputation for its spectacular beauty, beckoning visitors from across the country. A postcard picturing Hanging Rock near



Grand Lake Lodge lobby

That would soon change for many RMNP visitors who would often comment about the sudden changes in the weather and their delight in taking part in a friendly snowball fight in the middle of summer. A postcard sent in June 1957 shows a snow-covered Fall River Museum and Store at the top of Trail Ridge Road at 11,797 feet above sea level. Writing to an acquaintance in Kansas City, the author shares her experience, "This is the way this looked yesterday while we were there. The road was plowed open again Thursday."

Some travelers used postcards as journals to describe their adventures in the Rockies. One such card written around 1920 is the third in a vacationers' postcard series. It pictures the Elkhorn Lodge in Estes Park and contains Xs marked on the card to show where they stayed. "The five marks show our windows. Two in each room and the middle one for our bathroom. We pay \$18 a week and things are in some ways quite primitive. As to bell service, we carry up our own ice water. But we can easily do that. We have good, hot running water, and electric light, and everything is clean. Charming people are here, but few in number. We had a wonderful auto ride yesterday over the new Fall River or Grand Lake Road. We are so happy to be here."

Many visitors could hardly wait to return each summer to enjoy the scenery and renew old friendships in and around the park. In July, 1922, a postcard depicting the North St. Vrain Canyon near Estes Park was sent to a young lady in Wichita detailing the writer's discoveries at the YMCA. "The many improvements we find on our return here only makes a visit to the Y camp more enjoyable. Otherwise, same sunshine, same breezes, same mountains. Our cottage has on a new brown dress. They built a new front porch for it which extends past our bedroom window. Also real windows. Can't really say if the same squirrels play under the bed. The dining hall is fully equipped up to the minute, and the eats can't be improved upon. So life in Estes Park is all joy. We drove Ben all the way to the top to Bear Lake - J.A. caught one fish which to date has cost him \$9 besides gas, sunburn and his wife's 'I told you so.'"

Then there is a 1937 postcard picturing Meeker Park Lodge on the South St. Vrain

Highway which was mailed to a woman in Boulder complimenting the lodge's owner, Crete Dever, and likely creating another loyal customer because of her hospitality. "Found a very nice new cabin when we arrived with fireplace so had our worry for nothing. Crete said she knew about what kind one would like. Everything is full up and quite a number at the lodge."

Most lodges advertised their accommodations as "rustic" to help set realistic expectations for their guests. In 1923, a postcard of Grand Lake and the surrounding



Horses at Holzwarth Ranch



Stead's Hotel in Moraine Park

mountains was sent to a woman in Aspen by a guest staying at Grand Lake Lodge who may have been surprised by what he found. "There is a wonderful view from this lodge. Everything is so primitive. Had to start a fire in the iron stove this a.m. to get some hot water."

Guests, it seemed, could be as active or inactive as they chose. A 1959 postcard from a guest staying at the Holzwarth Guest Ranch on the west side of the park mailed to recipients in Pennsylvania itemized a busy schedule: "Up - 7:30. Breakfast - 8:00. To Stables - 9:00. Started 8 mile ride up Baker Gulch - 9:30. Returned to Ranch - 3:30. Bath and Walk till 6:30. Dinner - 6:30 to 7:30. Writing cards - 8:00."

As would be expected, most of the guests took time to fish and to sample fresh trout for dinner. In a postcard sent to a Kansas town in 1916 picturing boat races in Grand Lake, this writer admitted to a slight distraction. "I am sorry Ruth that I haven't taken time to at least drop you a postal

sooner, but I have been so busy every minute. I go fishing most every day, leaving the hotel in the morning and getting back early evening for the festivities that always takes place after supper. And when I get tired, I just sit down and watch the mountains and the little mountain showers that occur most every day. There are a lot of lovely people here and some very, very nice girls that I hardly know whether to fish or go around with them."

Families who have visited the park in the past often encourage other family members to make the same trip to keep the family tradition alive. On a postcard showing the exterior of Steads Hotel in Moraine Park, a grandma writes to her grandson, "A great many years ago, your mother stayed at the hotel shown in this

picture and it was then Sprague's. Mrs. Sprague is still living and tends the post office near there. She is aged but seems bright and interesting. There are many cottages about the main building in which the guests live and board at the hotel. They keep an auto and come to town every day and take people out there who have engaged rooms with them."

For many, a Colorado mountain trip remains a vivid experience for visitors returning home. The memories

are shared with family and friends and postcard mementos are used to encourage other tourists to visit the area as suggested on a Kansas-bound postcard sent in 1926 when the writer says, "I want you to see this next year."

While seeing and documenting the Rockies may be easier than ever in today's technologically-advanced world, the emotions within our hearts aren't likely to change when it comes to expressing our words and thoughts about such a favorite place. And so it goes: Wish you were here!

Suzanne Silverthorn has been collecting postcards of Rocky Mountain National Park and the surrounding area for more than a decade. Many more experiences from the park's early visitors are retold in Shared Moments: Rocky Mountain National Park and Estes Park Remembered in Postcards. The 410-page book features more than 1,000 postcards from the collection of Rocky Mountain Nature Association member Bobbie Heisterkamp with accompanying text by Estes Park Historian Laureate Jim Pickering.

by RMNP Information Office Manager
Katy Sykes

Following the original intent of the Beaver Meadows Visitor Center (BMVC) design by noted Taliesin Associated Architects, Ltd. - that it is a flexible space that evolves over time - the upstairs and downstairs lobbies are undergoing a transformation this winter. Four major remodeling projects are underway: installation of a lift between floors, reconstruction of lower level restrooms, a new visitor center front desk, and connection of the outside balcony to the front plaza. During this project, the visitor center is temporarily quartered in a well-equipped trailer located in the visitor center parking lot, complete with park rangers and volunteers to help visitors, the beautiful park film on a small screen, and the Rocky Mountain Nature Association bookstore.

Park employee Mike Vogel is the Contracting Officer's Representative for the project. He explained that improving accessibility to the auditorium – installing the lift - was the driving force behind initiation of the project. A lift is smaller than an elevator, with room for only a wheelchair and attendant. It will be utilized strictly for accessibility with operating assistance from front desk staff. Larry Frederick, the park's Chief of Interpretation and Education said, "This is an exciting opportunity to make the building more accessible for both visitors and staff so that all are better served."

At the park's invitation, the original building architect, Tom Casey, identified the lift location based on structural integrity. Concurrence by the State Historic Preservation Office was achieved. Placement of the lift necessitates rearrangement of both lobbies. Upstairs, a new front desk will be moved further into the lobby. The relief map will be moved to the downstairs lobby. To make way for the lift, and because new restrooms were built in 2002 in a new building outside on the plaza, the downstairs restrooms will be rebuilt as two smaller, unisex family restrooms.

The new front desk will be about 21-feet long with an accessible desktop and three

Historic Beaver Meadows Visitor Center Undergoes Change



identical workstations. Larry Frederick designed the desk with input from Interpretation Division staff. Taking cues from the designs of airport ticket counters and bank teller lines, and based on experience from designing front desks at other national parks, the desk was designed to tie in with the historical integrity of the building, for efficiency and comfort for park staff, and for helpfulness and visibility for visitors. This is likely the fourth generation of desk to occupy the BMVC lobby. The original desk was a simple, sleek design with built-in tiers to display sales books. At that time, there was no bookstore in the lobby, and the current bookstore area was a seating area with cushioned benches, a fireplace, and a coffee table with a large wooden brochure spinner rack. In 1982, the RMNA Bookcorner was created in the seating area. The fireplace has been covered to provide additional display space.

The original terrazzo floors will be repaired within the construction area. This terrazzo is composed of 70 percent marble bits and 30 percent concrete. In the bookstore area, the carpet will be replaced.

Outdoors, a walkway surrounds the perimeter of the auditorium. Originally it was intended to be a complete loop, exiting the lobby on the south side, circling the building end, entering the auditorium upstairs, and then reentering the lobby. Placement of the projection booth interfered with completion of the loop. Now an addition will be added to the walkway to connect with the plaza in front of the building. Along this walkway, three massive columns were built with insets for dioramas. To this day, they have never been used. This project includes adding interpretive panels on these columns as originally intended.

BMVC shares its building with park headquarters, and the combination is properly called the Administration Building. The building was dedicated in 1967, a time when the National Park

Service was celebrating its first 50 years through a rejuvenation program called Mission 66. At that time, the NPS sought to build modern facilities to improve visitor services. The Administration Building was designed to incorporate Wrightian principles of design advocated by the apprentices who began Taliesin Associated Architects after Frank Lloyd Wright's death in 1959, and is the only such visitor center in the National Park system. In 2001, the Administration Building was designated a National Historic Landmark, the nation's highest designation for historic properties.

The project is funded by Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (FLREA) funds, a far-sighted program established by Congress in 1996 to allow National Park Service units to keep the majority of entrance and camping fees (80%) collected at their sites to assist with repair, rehabilitation and renovation needs to sites with a direct benefit to visitor service or need. Kirsten Hardin, Facility Manager for Projects, noted that Beaver Meadows Visitor Center Rehabilitation Project is what FLREA is all about – using visitor use fees to improve visitor services.



To Be or Not To Be...

SPEAKING OF RMNA MEMBERSHIP....

To be a member is to be a part of a whole, a part of something bigger. The word itself evokes a sense of community and camaraderie.

At RMNA, the meaning of the word has never rung more true. Our mission to preserve and protect Rocky Mountain National Park and our public lands partners is not an individual effort, but truly a team effort. Our Members have always been the backbone of the organization. Their annual support has enabled RMNA to accomplish its mission and to be prepared for future challenges. Together we have done many great things, from building visitor centers and fixing trails, to providing educational programs and exciting and useful new publications. And let us not forget our latest effort to create the next generation of conservationists.

This team spirit is never more evident than during a Member hike. Started more than one year ago, RMNA has been leading monthly hikes to blustery peaks, cascading

waterfalls and frozen lakes, all in the pursuit of friendship and a deeper understanding of a park well loved.

The hiking series was initiated to show members what their support has given the park. Whether it's hiking the trails they helped fix, exploring a visitor center they helped build, or attending a program given by an intern they helped fund, members are getting up-close and personal with Rocky Mountain National Park. Our Member community has grown stronger as a result – friendships have been forged, laughs have been shared and connections have been made.

The wholeness of RMNA depends on the sum of its parts. Each of you is integral to making RMNA whole. Please renew your membership for another year, or become a Member for the first time. Consider signing up a friend! Keep our Member community growing and supporting the Rocky Mountain Nature Association. Our work depends on you! (For membership information, visit our website at www.rmna.org.)



Winter Member Hikes!

Join Membership Manager Curtis Carman for RMNA Member hikes in Rocky Mountain National Park throughout the year!

Outings explore a different site in the park each month and participants discuss current RMNA projects, park management issues and park natural history. This free hiking series is limited to 15 people per hike.

Winter Hike Schedule

January 20 - Ouzel Falls

February 17 - Old Fall River Road

March 9 - Gem Lake

To sign up for a hike, call Curtis Carman at (970) 586-0108 or email him at curtis.carman@rmna.org.

Park Puzzler

by RMNA Member Joel Kaplow

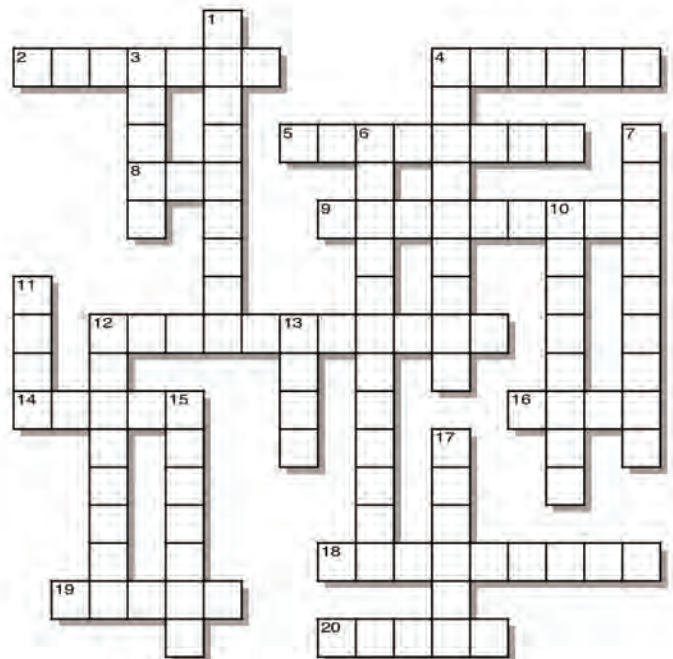
ACROSS

2. In recent years, RMNP has been host to about three ___ visitors annually.
4. The only area in the park where sledding and tubing are allowed is ___ Valley, the site of an old ski resort.
5. For anglers sixteen years old and up who want to fish in RMNP, a valid ___ fishing license is required, even for out-of-staters.
8. Field seminar participants are now enjoying the use of RMNA's new ___ that can shlep up to fourteen people at a time, and helps cut down on car caravanning.
9. The name of the RMNA executive director pro tem who is filling Curt's extra-large shoes?
12. The park's ___ camping permits are \$20 from May 1 through October 31, and are free the rest of the year. Campers can choose designated sites, or cross-country zones.
14. When bark beetles tunnel into pine trees, there is a telltale ring of sap around the entry hole (pitch tube), and boring dust (actually, it's pretty interesting!) around the base of the infested tree. What's the technical term for this boring dust?
16. A park visitor survey was conducted during one week in July of 2010. Of those responding, only ___ percent were from foreign countries.
18. When hiking in the wilds of RMNP, always tell someone else your trip plans. In case of trouble, your ___ may not have coverage so far from civilization! (2 wds.)
19. The American pika is coprophagous, which means that it has an inefficient digestive system and eats its own ___ to get the most nutritional benefit. Yum!
20. Abner Sprague was the first person to pay an entrance fee to get into RMNP. His exorbitant outlay was ___ dollars.

DOWN

1. The park's ___ Campground is usually open all year, but this winter it is closed for hazard tree removal. (2 wds.)
3. The ___ at the Beaver Meadows Visitor Center is currently being remodeled, so there will be a temporary center in the parking lot until May.
4. The park's yellow-bellied marmot eats flowers, leaves, stems, seeds, grasses and shrubs with just an occasional insect thrown in for spice, so it is considered a ___.
6. To lessen the impact of human activity in the park's backcountry, it is essential for us to adopt the "___" policy to keep the land looking as if we were never there. (3 wds.)
7. A park mountain lion will dine on deer, elk, birds, small rodents and other creatures. This meat eater is an example of a ___.
10. RMNP's rarely spotted black bear eats "almost anything," including grass, leaves,

- bark, berries, fish, insect larvae, large and small mammals, and will sometimes raid your pic-a-nic basket. It is an ___.
11. If a baby goose is called a *gosling*, what do you call a baby moose?
12. Unlike Trail Ridge Road, which is closed at the higher elevations in the winter, ___ Road is plowed to its end and kept open all year. (2 wds.)
13. A group of ravens is called a *congress*. Interestingly, a group of ___ is called a *parliament*, even on this side of "the pond."
15. The Agnes Vaillie Memorial ___, located just below The Keyhole on Longs Peak, is named for a lady climber who froze to death after falling on the way down from the summit in January of 1925.
17. RMNP boasts seventy two mountains that rise over ___ thousand feet. Anyone want to sing "Rocky Mountain High"?



Rocky Mountain Field Seminars

Celebrating 50 Years!

2012 marks the historic 50th anniversary for the Rocky Mountain Field Seminars program. Founded by Bettie Willard in 1962, thus began the first of its kind in the National Park Service. Originally available in weeklong format, seminars were offered to encourage visitors to extend and expand their experience in Rocky Mountain National Park. Bettie was one of the primary instructors, leading seminars exploring the alpine tundra, her particular field of research. Bettie's vision has expanded and evolved through the Field Seminars Program, now reaching a myriad of audiences through diverse educational seminars for all ages. To celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Rocky Mountain Field Seminars, a host of new seminars are scheduled and we'll be bringing in some honored past instructors to teach.



50 Years, 50 Flowers, July 1. Leanne Benton, ranger-naturalist in Rocky Mountain National Park, has been leading wildflower walks in the park for 16 years. She will lead participants through the montane, subalpine and alpine ecosystems where more than 1,000 different species of wildflowers exist. Leanne will focus on wildflower identification and interpreting the “stories” behind the wildflowers during this unique seminar.

Mountain Ecology, July 13-15

John Emerick, former seminar instructor and former ecologist with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, former faculty member of environmental sciences with Colorado School of Mines and published author will be leading a multi-day seminar. He will be exploring the interactions of plant and wildlife species throughout Rocky Mountain National Park ecosystems. John also will be instructing a “Westside Wonders” seminar on July 28, 2012, taking a closer look at the ecology along the Green Mountain Trail on the west side of Rocky Mountain National Park.

Tundra Pioneer: The Life & Legacy of Bettie Willard, July 15 Join author Jan Robertson and ranger-naturalist Leanne Benton in a seminar that will illuminate the important contributions of Bettie Willard through time. Participants will visit one of Bettie's research sites to examine the actual alpine plants she studied and discuss the contribution of her research to alpine tundra protection. An illustrated lecture will be given highlighting Willard's remarkable career and the professional obstacles women faced in the 1950s and 1960s.

World of Wapiti: Rocky Mountain Elk, September 23 Former seminar instructor Mel Cundiff, long-time professor of environmental, population and organismic biology at CU-Boulder, has also participated in elk classification studies with the Colorado Division of Wildlife. In his seminar he will explore the natural history of elk, emphasizing the fall rut and mating behaviors.

Journey to the Top! A Trail Ridge Road Adventure!

Thanks to a generous gift from the Emery Family, as well as other significant donors, the Field Seminars program expanded its offerings in 2011 to include a comfortable 14-passenger bus, now enabling educational seminars to take place on-the-go. Twelve “Elk Expedition” interpretive bus tours were offered during the fall elk mating season in 2011, which were very popular. Six out of twelve of these seminars were filled to capacity, and 80% of seats were filled for all twelve bus tours offered. Educational adventures by bus will be expanding in 2012 to offer a new Trail Ridge Road Adventure — **“Journey to the Top!”** will take visitors up Trail Ridge Road to the Alpine Visitor Center with stops along the way to discuss park history, flora and fauna and geology. “Journey to the Top” will be held on twenty-six different occasions throughout June, July, August and September. It will be a busy year for the new bus!



Photo: Julie Klett



Photo: Nancy Wilson

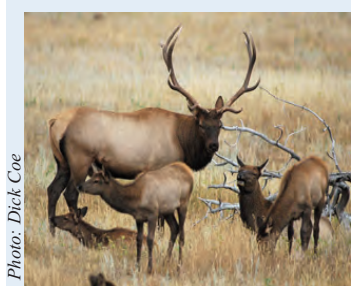


Photo: Dick Coe



Photo: Dean Martinson

WILDLIFE WINTER SURVIVAL STRATEGIES

by Dick Coe

Like all seasons, winter has a beauty all its own. In the Rocky Mountains, winter evokes images of swirling snow accumulating in drifts and glistening patterns on the ground...in anticipation of the next gust of wind to assume another endless design.

With the added wind chill at higher elevations, cold temperatures can be even more extreme, which can be very challenging for wildlife, both young and old. Some species pack up and travel south to warmer climates for the winter – including many humans! Neotropical birds, such as warblers, bluebirds and sparrows, leave seeking more available food.

For those animals that remain, such as moose, deer, elk, bighorn sheep, mountain lion bobcat and rabbits (among many others), it's a constant battle to consume enough food (energy) to meet the energy requirements of keeping warm and avoiding predators. The severity of the season – snow depth, duration and amount of moisture-sucking wind – will determine, to a large extent, the animals' survival rates.

It is believed that many animals, including moose, exist on a starvation diet throughout the winter, when food is scarce and not as nutritious as summer fare. It is estimated by park biologists that during a particularly long and severe winter as many as 50-60% of elk calves could die.

Several animals have adaptations that help them maintain a stable internal body temperature, or homeostasis, during the winter months. One technique is the ability to constrict the surface blood vessels and capillaries in the feet upon contact with cold surfaces. This reduces heat loss without the loss of sensory and motor control, which explains why geese, moose, fox, coyote and wolves can stand in snow all winter without freezing.

Insulation is a key player in wildlife winter adaptations. Most mammals grow longer and thicker hair during late fall as they adjust to cooling temperatures. For example, the winter coat of an elk is 5 times heavier than the summer coat. Chickadees actually double the number of feathers which they fluff to trap warmed air next to their bodies. Some animals sport long dorsal guard hairs that are comprised of many cellular cavities called medulla. These air-filled cavities hold air next to the skin and slow heat loss. Erecting these hairs provides added space for insulating warmth to be trapped.

Largely unseen, shivering is another method birds use to increase body heat for short periods of time. Torpidity is another, achieved by lowering internal body temperatures and slowing the metabolism to conserve energy. For small animals, such as mice, voles and shrews, the insulating qualities of snow play an important role in survival. A constant temperature occurs at ground level which rarely goes below freezing. Air space in snow pack traps this warmth that radiates from the earth where smaller animals take refuge from the elements as well as roaming predators. Many insects become dormant for the duration, burrowing into the soil, snow,

plants and trees.

Snow accumulation in RMNP can be more than 200 inches thick, with drifts up to 35 feet deep along Trail Ridge Road. It's not uncommon to have 72 inches on the ground at Bear Lake before spring arrives. Make no mistake – the life of any animal is rife with challenges and stressors that challenge survival. Keep this in mind if you're lucky enough to spot some wildlife this winter – it's a great time for catching sight of some elusive creatures!

*"I heard a bird sing in the dark of December. A magical thing and sweet to remember."
Oliver Herford*



RMNP FUND NEWS

Questions? Concerns?
Comments?

As I am still fairly new at RMNA, getting to know as many of our Members and Donors as possible is high on my priority list. Please contact me anytime to share ideas, ask questions, or even just to chat. I look forward to meeting you.

Julie Klett, 970-586-0108 x11
julie.klett@rmna.org



The Perfect Valentine's Day
Gift for Your Sweetheart!

Haiku To-Go Bag as Donor Gift

Haiku, by Sharon Eisenhauer, Inc., gave RMNA 30 of their beautiful, eco-friendly To-Go Bags for women. Crafted from recycled water bottles, these stylish and useful shoulder bags are outfitted with five external pockets, and another zippered pocket inside the main pouch. Big enough to hold water bottles, a book and even a small umbrella, yet small enough to stay out of the way.

Beginning in January of 2012, donors may request one of these eco-friendly bags with any gift of \$100 or more. Three different designs are available — specific requests will be honored while supplies last. Be sure to list a second choice, just in case! Proceeds will be directed to the Next Generation Fund, supporting programs for youth in Rocky Mountain National Park.

Haiku philosophy: We do our best to be thoughtful of our environment, to be good partners in all of our relationships and to make decisions that are socially and environmentally informed. We take the time to connect to others, to contribute and to be of service where we can. We are committed to creating awareness and positive change. Very cool.

Visit them at www.haikubags.com/

The Giving Tree

by Julie Klett, Development Associate

Perhaps because I am a naturalist and ecologist at heart, I view the world in terms of interconnected, living systems. When I consider philanthropy here at RMNA, I often envision a sturdy old tree, perhaps a huge, ancient oak or even a ponderosa pine. (Humor me here!) The tree has deep roots tapering down to individual rootlets — these are our donors and members. The roots provide sustenance and stability to the strong, flourishing tree above that represents RMNA's efforts to support the national park and foster the land stewards of tomorrow.

RMNA is like any organism that thrives and grows only when its neighbors on the web of life are healthy and work together. Likewise, we can only do our work when you, our trusty roots and benefactors, provide the support we need for our mission. A single rootlet is not enough to support the giant oak, but many roots (members, donors, volunteers, staff, and you) working together can cultivate a strong and fruitful organization. Thank you for being a part of our Giving Tree!

Alberta Falls— Lake Haiyaha Loop Trail Restoration Project Fully Funded!



While not glamorous, creating water bars is essential trail work needed to prevent erosion on the trail.

As of December 22, 2011,
the Alberta Falls-Lake Haiyaha

Loop Trails Restoration Project is fully funded! Through the generosity of our donors, we have raised the \$66,000 needed to qualify for the Gates Family Foundation's Challenge Grant of \$60,000, so the remaining funding needs have been met. Nearly 1,200 individuals contributed to this four-year project, which has a total cost of \$619,290. Final trail work will be completed in 2012. Nature Association fundraisers included Ann Marie Bliley, Andrea Schneider, Curt Buchholtz and Julie Klett.

Thanks to all who contributed to this project, and congratulations! There is no better, more satisfying feeling than hiking a beautiful, well-built trail system knowing that you helped create it. Now you can think of this trail as just a *little* bit your own.



Before and after: clearing the trail and providing rock base (by breaking apart rocks and boulders) for the trail helps prevent erosion.

Colorado Gives Day 2011: \$53,000 Raised for NGF

A hearty “thank you” to all who made our first year participating in Colorado Gives Day (December 6) a rousing success!

This fundraising event, sponsored and organized by Community First, generates awareness of and support for Colorado’s many charities.

Results are still being tallied, but nearly 200 generous people gave more than \$17,000 to the Rocky Mountain Nature Association. As a special bonus for the day, RMNA’s Board of Directors posted a \$10,500 Board Challenge, for which we more than qualified, thanks to your help. As part of the Colorado Gives Day promotion, we’ll also receive a boosting gift from the First Bank Incentive Fund. And wait – there’s more! The combined total of

approximately \$27,500 directed to our Next Generation Fund will be matched dollar-for-dollar by an anonymous donor.

All together approximately \$53,000 was raised for the Next Generation Fund to support youth education programs in Rocky Mountain National Park and nurture the public land stewards of tomorrow. Programs include the park’s Junior Ranger Program, environmental education, the American Conservation Corps, park internships, publications, Field Seminars and more! (Additional information at www.rmna.org)

A number of you made gifts to RMNA for the very first time – thank you so much for being part of the team! We welcome you with open arms! This was a perfect example of many

individuals coming together to make a huge difference.

To those of you who had difficulty making a donation that day, we apologize. The Community First web site was bombarded by philanthropic visitors which caused their servers to crash throughout the day. Community First processed \$12-million in gifts to Colorado charities on December 6 – no small task! We appreciate everyone’s patience, and trust that the 2012 Colorado Gives Day will run much more smoothly.

Thanks again to all for helping to instill a love for nature in today’s young people – a love that that will help protect our public lands forever.



Annual Appeal Update

This year’s annual appeal letters arrived in mailboxes in November of 2011. RMNA Membership Manger Curtis Carman and Development Associate Julie Klett have been busily processing the gifts coming in. At this time, we have received more than \$152,000 from 462 people (including Colorado Gives Day donations). Thank you so much!

If you have walked the Lily Lake Trail, used the Fall River Visitor Center, taken a Field Seminar, or introduced a child to nature through the park’s Junior Ranger Program, you know the tremendous value of the work accomplished at RMNA. We can only do this work with your support. Please consider making a contribution today. No gift is too small —just \$10 can help put a Junior Ranger Book in the hands of 30 eager, curious children.

You can make a donation online at www.rmna.org, or by sending checks to:

RMNA – RMNP Fund Annual Appeal
PO Box 3100
Estes Park, CO 80517

Your Personal Information is Safe with Us

A few of you have written notes requesting we not sell or transfer your personal information to other organizations or businesses. You can rest easy. RMNA will never betray your trust by giving or selling your private information to anyone. We promise!

A Forethoughtful Gift

In September, the Rocky Mountain Nature Association was contacted by the estate of Naomi Kuhlman, who passed away in 2010. It was a delightful surprise to learn that Naomi had named RMNA as a beneficiary of her estate.

RMNA will receive approximately \$250,000 in two installments, a breathtakingly significant and unexpected gift to us all. The gift was undesignated and at this time, the RMNA Board is currently determining where the funds will be directed. This is a tremendous legacy to leave behind, one that will go far to help improve the park and educate young people.

We at RMNA are deeply touched by Naomi’s generosity and foresight. Subsequent sleuthing revealed that she had loved world travel and adventure, skiing, the mountains, wildflowers and ikebana floral arranging, birds, the outdoors, and the color purple. She relished music, especially the opera, and even piloted small airplanes. Naomi was obviously a vibrant and fascinating person and very engaged in her world.

The more I learned, the more I felt I knew Naomi, if only just a little. She had lived her life with zest and through careful, advance planning continues to make a positive difference in the world, and to all of us, even after her death. I only wish I had had the opportunity to meet her and to say “thank you” in person. (Naomi, if I could, I would give you a hug!)

If you would like to know more about planned giving opportunities, please contact me, Julie Klett at 970-586-0108 x11.





The Rocky Mountain National Park Fund

expresses special thanks to the following people for their donations to RMNP projects:

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(Ask Nancy: Research continued from page 3) methods are appropriate and the information gained is significant and can't be obtained in another way. Bird

banders undergo rigorous training

and must be licensed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Projects that handle other types of vertebrates (except fish) are reviewed by an independent panel at either a recognized research institution (such as a university) and/or by the National Park Service. The panels of experts, called Animal Care and Use Committees, provide outside review of procedures and practices. Rocky Mountain National Park always has the right to refuse to permit a project that is inappropriate in a park setting - so park reviews may be more strict than that provided by a university panel.

The park always is on the look-out for research methods that can be utilized without handling animals. For example, the park is completing a pilot project to examine population numbers that used bighorn DNA from sheep pellets. This approach will allow us to get accurate population numbers without marking any animals. A pellet study can determine if the population is stable, increasing or declining. However, only a study using collared animals can help identify patterns of mortality because it allows biologists to know just how and when an animal died — information one can't get from a pellet. The current elk collaring study is designed to provide that type of data for animals affected by chronic wasting disease.—RMNP Resources Management Specialist Judy Visty.

RMNP Greenhouse Update

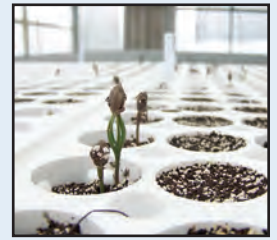
The Rocky Mountain National Park (RMNP) greenhouse and adjacent nursery support the park's vegetation program each year by growing more than 30,000 native plants for many restoration projects throughout the park. Seed treatment begins in November, followed by germination and propagation in January. During 2012, the greenhouse will grow plants to support native plant restoration of the following projects:

- Bear Lake Road Phase II Reconstruction
- Alpine Visitor Center Trail and Utilities
- Grand Lake Entrance Station Replacement
- Campgrounds: Aspenglen, Moraine Park, and Glacier Basin Utility Replacement Projects

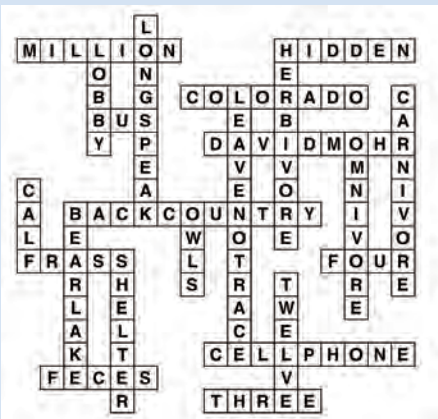
RMNP's greenhouse was built in 1995 through a partnership with the Rocky Mountain Nature Association (RMNA). Park employee Lindsay Colegrove manages the greenhouse with the help of a winter volunteer intern, several seasonal employees during the summer months, and numerous dedicated volunteers throughout the year who contributed more than 900 volunteer hours in 2011. From February through April 2012, Alix Jensen will work as the 2012 Winter Greenhouse Volunteer Intern, during which she will learn to propagate, transplant and care for many native grasses, forbs and shrubs found throughout the park. Alix will be in charge of daily transplanting, irrigation and volunteer coordination efforts.

With sustainability in mind, the greenhouse has undergone some recent updates. The greenhouse outer panels were replaced in September of 2011 and a thermal curtain will be installed inside the greenhouse during January of 2012. Both updates will decrease heating costs and energy usage during the winter months by allowing greater solar penetration and providing better insulation. With financial support from RMNA, a new seed bank was installed adjacent to the greenhouse in December of 2011. The seed bank works to maintain seed viability through proper storage (adequate temperature and moisture, as well as protection from pests) of collected and produced seed.

To learn more about the RMNP greenhouse and restoration program, plan to visit the facility during the annual Greenhouse Earth Day Open House on Friday, April 20, 2012. Contact Lindsay Colegrove, Greenhouse Manager, by e-mail at Lindsay_Colegrove@nps.gov, or by phone at (970) 586-1252 for more information. Volunteer opportunities are available through the park's Volunteer Office at ROMO_Volunteers_In_Parks@nps.gov, or at (970) 586-1330.



PARK PUZZLE ANSWERS





Saw-whet owl (Photo: Scott Rashid)



For comments or questions contact:

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 Estes Park, Colorado 80517
 (970) 586-0108
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NATURE ASSOCIATION NOTES...

Early snows in October set the stage for a snowy early winter, but warmer temperatures of late make hiking to backcountry areas more feasible this season. Trails are well-packed but getting icy....RMNA Retail Manager **Megan Matzen** has a bobcat and two yearling kittens hanging out under her deck at her home in Estes Park. She's seen their tracks, and neighbors have seen them tramping from the shed nearby to under the deck....Park afficianado **Madeline Wilson** observed a bobcat on the road late one evening in the Carriage Hills area....Resources Management Specialist **Jeff Connor** reported that four trumpeter swans recently visited Lake Estes and three tundra swans stopped by for a few days. A beautiful sight, indeed. He also noted that mountain lions have been active recently. People should always be aware of possible encounters especially this time of year when out walking and running before sunrise and after sunset. CRD Systems Specialist **Debbie Mason**: November closed out with an impromptu horse round-up. Three wandering horses strolled through the Kawuneeche Visitor Center parking lot, then on up Trail Ridge Road. Like many winter visitors, they were disappointed the road was closed. However, unlike most visitors, they got an escort back down to the KVC area. Rangers, Fire, Interpretation and Maintenance divisions joined forces to make sure they headed west rather than down to Grand Lake. When it became clear they didn't want to go to Winding River Resort, (and no one claiming ownership could be reached) they were "offered" a night's lodging in the park corral. At this writing the owners are still being sought....Debbie also reported that a fox has been getting bold and approaching her dog that is on a trolley leash in her yard in Grand Lake. The dog was barking furiously one evening and she saw that the fox was within 10 feet of the dog. The fox was standing sideways to the dog, presenting its largest "presence", tauntingly, as if the fox knew the dog couldn't get it....RMNA Field Seminars Manager **Rachel Balduzzi** observed a full-curl male bighorn sheep mating with a ewe behind the Field Seminar Center. There were 6-7 ewes around, as well as 6-7 yearlings and some lambs. It was only a week past the usual mating period, but the ewe did not seem happy as the ram repeatedly attempted to mate....RMNP Information Office Volunteer **Forrest McVicar** reported that a visitor called the park information office about camping at Moraine Park Campground in January. One of the questions regarded bringing bear canisters. When told the bears are hibernating — all sleeping, the visitor asked, "oh, where do they sleep?" Another visitor to Beaver Meadows Visitor Center asked "Is altitude sickness contagious?" Park Volunteer Naturalist **Richard Hahn** reported that the unusually wet spring and early summer in 2011 were partially a result of La Nina. He noted that while unusual animal and bird sightings occurred in many regions because of the resulting weather extremes, Rocky Mountain National Park certainly had its share. Bird walks along both the Cub Lake Trail and Upper Beaver Meadows generated sightings of bird species

normally seen at Front Range elevations. Cassin's kingbird was seen in Moraine Park; Red-headed woodpecker was seen at the West Alluvial Fan. At least two Wilson's phalarope sightings occurred along the Cub Lake Trail. Other species not normally seen in the Moraine Park area included: Great blue heron, White-faced ibis, Canada geese, Bald eagle, kestrel and Marsh harrier. Perching birds that were unusual included Blue jay, catbird, mockingbird, Brown thrasher, Common grackle and Bullock's oriole. While these species are sometimes seen nearby, such as near Lake Estes in some cases, sightings of these species in various Moraine Park locations were unusual, even rare, because of the elevation difference. Two other examples of bird species abnormalities include larger numbers than normal of Brown-capped rosy finches along Trail Ridge Road and Sage thrasher at two Trail Ridge Road locations this summer. A pair of gray foxes has been seen now for eight months in Richard's Estes Park backyard, a species considerably more common at lower elevations. Climatologists are now predicting a second phase of La Nina which may cause colder but not as wet conditions as were had earlier this year. With yet another unusual year weather-wise, observers should be on the alert for unusual animal and bird species as well....RMNP Wildlife Biologist **Ryan Monello** observed that elk have been hard to spot recently because the animals in the park have been hanging in the trees. Ryan suggested that with their beuffed up winter coats, elk are probably uncomfortable standing around in open, sunny meadows when temperatures are at or approaching 50 degrees....Director of the Coloado Avian Reseach and Rehabilitaion Foundation **Scott Rashid** noted that often, when you find a dead rabbit with its head missing (!), this is a telltale sign that a Great-horned owl has killed the rabbit. Several years ago in Central Park in New York City, several headless rabbits were found. It was thought that some cult was killing these poor animals. They put up cameras and found that Great-horned owls were killing the rabbits and just eating the brains, because the brain is much more nutritious than the rest of the rabbit. The owls were so full that they only ate the best part of the rabbit....ah, such decadence. May 2012 be as rich and plentiful for you ~ Happy New Year!



Another kind of wildlife....impromptu horse round-up on Trail Ridge Road on the park's west side early this winter brought out the park troops. Photo: Debbie Mason