

ROCKY MOUNTAIN CONSERVANCY

PRESS RELEASE

ROCKY MOUNTAIN CONSERVANCY WELCOMES ESTHER RIVERA MURDOCK AS NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Estes Park, CO: The Rocky Mountain Conservancy's Board of Directors is pleased to announce the appointment of Esther "Estee" Rivera Murdock as its new Executive Director. She replaces Charles "Charley" Money who is retiring.

Estee Rivera Murdock comes to the Conservancy from Washington, D.C. after working for the National Park Service (NPS) for more than eight years. Most recently, she has served as Program Manager for "Every Kid in a Park," the federal land and water management agencies' highly-praised outreach program that provides the opportunity for every fourth grade student in the nation to cultivate his or her own unique connection to our national parks and other public lands. She also recently simultaneously served for six months as the Acting NPS Program Manager, where, in addition to recruiting, hiring, and supervising office staff and contractors, she has been co-developing the NPS Teacher Corps in partnership with the National Park Learning Alliance.

Prior to this experience, Estee worked as a Partnerships Specialist in the NPS Centennial Office, developing new and existing partnerships with non-governmental conservation and recreation organizations, assisting with coordination of philanthropic and corporate sponsorships, implementing new diversity and youth engagement initiatives, and improving internal and external communications, including bilingual programming and new media. Through these efforts she contributed to modernizing the agency's policies and best practices in partnerships and communications to help connect the agency with the next generation of park supporters

Estee also served for more than six years as the Community Engagement Coordinator at Saguaro National Park in Arizona, where she developed and implemented a variety of new strategies to engage and connect the residents of gateway communities, particularly new audiences, with public lands. Earlier in her career, she worked as a consulting archaeologist in the southwest for cultural resource management firms and the U.S. Forest Service. She holds B.A. and M.A. degrees from the University of Arizona.

In the course of her career, Estee has worked extensively with local and national media. She has been published and quoted in *Time Magazine*, the *Huffington Post*, and *US News and World Report*, and has presented and keynoted at national conferences, including this month's Public Lands Alliance annual meeting held in Arlington, Virginia. She currently serves on the Board of Directors of *High Country News*, an independent nonprofit media organization whose mission is to inform and inspire people through in-depth professional journalism to act on behalf of the West's diverse natural and human communities. She also serves on the Editorial Board of the *Public Historian*, a journal which publishes the latest scholarly research and case studies in the field of public history.

In conducting its nationwide search, the Conservancy's Search Committee, chaired by Vice President Jim Pickering, worked with the executive nonprofit search firm Kittleman & Associates, which contacted more than 160 potential candidates or referring sources. Some 60 applicants eventually expressed interest in the position. "Kittleman laid the groundwork well," Pickering said, "and Estee Murdock emerged as the unanimous choice of the Search Committee. We were immediately struck by her competencies and past work experience as well as by her personal passion for connecting the public to their lands."

"We are excited to have Estee joining us," Board President Don Cheley stated. "Her experience aligns perfectly with the Conservancy's on-going commitment to find new ways to engage the next generation of the park visitors and make them supporters and stewards."

"At the same time, we owe Charley Money a tremendous debt of gratitude for his years of service to the Conservancy. Not only did he lead the organization through a successful rebranding exercise that changed our name from the Rocky Mountain Nature Association to the Rocky Mountain Conservancy, but he oversaw the fund-raising campaign, involving gifts from more than 600 individuals, that allowed us to purchase and gift to the park the 42-acre Cascade Cottages property at the entrance of Horseshoe Park, the last major parcel of private commercial land within Rocky Mountain National Park. Thanks to Charley and his staff, in its 86-year history, the Conservancy has never been stronger, financially and otherwise."

"Still there is much to do," Cheley noted. "Promoting the stewardship of Rocky Mountain National Park and other public lands through education and philanthropy will remain an on-going challenge. Our work will never end. But we are convinced that in Estee Murdock we have found exactly the right person to lead the Conservancy forward, and we are delighted to welcome Estee and her family to the Estes Park community. I also look forward to introducing her to our members."