

WILD MUSHROOMS & FUNGI OF RMNP

AUGUST 8, 2020

COURSE LEVEL: II COURSE #: S3029
FEE: \$80 PER ADULT AGES 16 AND OLDER



**Rocky
Mountain
Conservancy**

FIELD INSTITUTE

INSTRUCTOR: JON SOMMER PAGE 1 OF 3

LOCATION: Trail River Ranch- Trail River Ranch is located on a small unmarked gravel road on HWY 34. It is located between the Coyote Valley Trailhead to the north and the Onahu Creek Trailhead to the south, approximately two miles inside Rocky Mountain National Park from the west entrance (Kuwaneche Visitor Center). The unmarked gravel road is made visible by two pedestrian crossing signs. Trail River Ranch is reached by following this road to a small parking lot. At the small parking lot, turn left and go through the gate. Trail River Ranch is at the end of this one-way road.

TIME: 8:30 AM-4:30 PM

COURSE DESCRIPTION: Often thought of as something to be avoided, fungi (including mushrooms) represent a vast and diverse group of organisms that play a critical role in virtually every terrestrial environment on the planet. Formerly thought of as plants, it is now known that fungi represent their own kingdom, along with plants and animals. Exemplified by prevalent, and often colorful, mushrooms, Rocky Mountain National Park has a bountiful and diverse fungal flora. Learn the basics of mushroom identification, their important role in the ecosystem, and a brief overview of the fungal kingdom. We will spend most of the day in the field, identifying mushrooms and other fungi, and gaining a first-hand appreciation of these interesting and important organisms.

COURSE LEVEL: II

Short-distance walks throughout the day primarily on level to moderately steep terrain.

BRIEF INSTRUCTOR BIOGRAPHY (additional information available at www.RMConservancy.org): Jon received a bachelor's degree in botany from Humboldt State University and master's degrees in botany and plant pathology from the University of California, Davis. He has studied mushroom identification with notable mycologists including Drs. David Largent, Orson Miller, Harry D. Thiers, and Daniel Stuntz. He has led mushroom forays and nature walks and taught classes on mushroom identification across the U.S. for more than 40 years. As a resident of Colorado for 25+ years, Jon has in-depth knowledge of Colorado fungi as well as our diverse flora and the interactions of fungi in the environment. He has been a member of the Colorado Mycological society since 1993 and currently serves as its membership chair and secretary.

EXPECTATIONS: Professional conduct will be expected from participants at all times. Individual ideas will be respected. Except during course breaks, cellular phones, pagers, and personal entertainment devices are strictly prohibited in the classroom and during field sessions.

CAR-POOLING: Rocky Mountain Conservancy - Field Institute courses utilize car-pooling to limit vehicles traveling into the park. Car-pooling makes it easier to keep the group together, reduces transit time, and allows courses greater access because fewer parking spaces are required at destinations. In addition, it provides an opportunity for participants to discuss course material in small groups during transit. Typically, a few participants from each course volunteer the use of their vehicles for car-pooling to course locations.

TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE:

8:30 AM	Welcome/Introductions Review class objectives; Discuss ethics; Explain schedule for the day
9:00 AM	Introduction to the fungus kingdom (vocabulary and comparison to the plant and animal kingdoms)
9:15 AM	Fungus diversity in Colorado and RMNP; Environmental impact of fungi
9:45 AM	Overview of fungus groups in RMNP (descriptions and habitats) Critical features used in the identification of mushrooms
10:30 AM	Break; Arrange car-pooling
10:45 AM	Depart for fungi field identification
12:00 Noon	Lunch
12:40 PM	Resume fungus search and identification
3:30 PM	End field session
4:00 PM	Review day's activities according to stated course objectives
4:30 PM	Depart

USEFUL EQUIPMENT:

- A mushroom collecting basket, or small box with straps to take into the field for collecting specimens
- A small hand lens to assist in seeing small features of the fungi that we examine
- A small ruler with both inches and centimeters-millimeters (The 6-inch ruler that comes standard in small dissecting kits is perfect)
- A clipboard or sturdy three-ring notebook to organize your papers, field notes, etc.
- Pen/pencil and notepad/paper for taking notes

RECOMMENDED BOOKS:

Mushrooms of Colorado and the Southern Rocky Mountains; Vera Stucky Evenson; Denver Botanic Gardens and Denver Museum of Natural History (2015).

- This is one of the few mushroom field guides oriented specifically to Colorado. This is a definite *must-have* if you intend to collect mushrooms in Colorado. Highly recommended if you anticipate collecting mushrooms on your own.

Mushrooms Demystified; David Aurora; Ten Speed Press (2nd edition 1986).

- This is one of the most thorough field guides on the market that covers the western portion of the US. Highly recommended.

Mycelium Running: How Mushrooms Can Help Save the World; Paul Stamets, Ten Speed Press (2005)

- A very interesting look at some of the ecological impacts and possibilities for fungi. Fascinating reading but not required.

REMEMBER TO BRING THE 10 ESSENTIALS:

Rocky Mountain National Park recommends that hikers always carry the 10 essentials in their daypacks.

- Raingear
- Map and compass
- Flashlight or headlamp
- Sunglasses and sunscreen
- Candles
- Matches or other fire starter
- Pocketknife
- First-aid kit
- Extra layers of clothing
- Sack lunch, snacks, water

Note: Rocky Mountain Conservancy - Field Institute recommends that participants for all courses dress in layers and wear comfortable, sturdy hiking boots/shoes. Participants should be prepared for sudden changes in temperature and weather conditions.

REFUND POLICY:

Cancellations received at least 14 days prior to the start of a class will qualify for a refund minus a cancellation fee of \$25 per participant for a one-day class, \$50 for a multi-day class, \$5 per kid's class and \$15 per half-day class or bus tour seat. Registration money transferred to another class will be subject to a \$10 switch fee. Cancellations received less than 14 days prior to the start of a class or bus tour will not generate a refund. If the Field Institute cancels a class, every effort will be made to place the participant in another class; otherwise, a full refund will be given.

TEACHER RECERTIFICATION CREDIT:

Most course are eligible for teacher recertification credit through the Centennial Board of Cooperative Education Services (BOCES). The fee is \$25 per class (.5 units) or \$25 per series of threaded courses (1.0 - 3.0 units). A list of threaded courses can be found in the Field Institute catalog or online at www.RMConservancy.org. Participants must enroll in all courses of a threaded series in order to qualify for the \$25 multi-unit fee. Please be prepared to pay for this credit with a check, made payable to BOCES, on the first day of a class or on the final day of a threaded series of courses.