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Autumn | 2023



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QUARTERLY

Looking after the First Responders that Look After Us

By Jay Shields, RMNP Chief Ranger for
Law Enforcement and Emergency Services



*We put our park rangers and staff
in extraordinary circumstances that
involve intense physical, emotional,
and psychological trauma. With
professionalism and compassion,
Rocky's SAR teams and first
responders rise to challenges most
people can only imagine.*

Behind every Rocky Mountain National Park (RMNP) Search & Rescue (SAR) or emergency response you might read about or follow on the scanner are people—a lot of people. We put our park rangers and staff in extraordinary circumstances that involve intense physical, emotional, and psychological trauma. With professionalism and compassion, Rocky's SAR teams and first responders rise to challenges most people can only imagine.

At the end of the day, however, our rescuers are human. We share a responsibility to look after these selfless men and women just as fiercely as they look after others. Our first responders may require special care of their own from

cumulative effects that crisis situations can have on their personal well-being and relationships.

I'm proud of the comprehensive programs we have in place at RMNP to support our emergency responders—one of the top programs in the National Park Service (NPS)—recognizing that our people are our most important resource. The NPS and RMNP have had peer support, family support, and Critical Incident Stress Debriefing/Management processes in place for some time. Rocky Mountain Conservancy provides support for these programs as well as critical training, equipment, and supplies. This year, with additional support from

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Spectacular rainbows
were the silver lining
to a particularly rainy
spring and summer.



A Message from our Executive Director



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Dear Friends,

As the seasons change and the days get shorter, I've been thinking about change and resiliency.

This September, Estes Park and Colorado's Front Range commemorated the 10th anniversary of the historic and devastating floods of 2013. While thankfully only a few lives were lost, the physical and economic destruction to Rocky, the Estes Valley, and our highways to the Front Range was extensive.

Looking around now, most of the visible damage has been repaired, and some might say the infrastructure is even better than before. After months of closures, Highways 34 and 36 were repaired, new bridges built, and sections relocated to bedrock. In the park, with the support of the Conservancy, the Alluvial Fan area was reconstructed around the new course of the Roaring River with an improved and fully accessible trail system. Partnerships and teamwork among federal, state, local, and nonprofit agencies made this possible. That's resiliency.

As I write this, Rocky and our gateway communities face, again, the continuing prospect of a potential federal government shutdown with severe economic impacts and personal hardship for park and local employees and businesses. I hope this can be avoided, but I trust in our communities' ability to respond with compassion and ingenuity to work through a potential shutdown just as they've successfully overcome significant challenges in the past, and I hope our members of Congress will value and adequately fund our beloved public lands.

One key to resiliency is strong leadership. It's been a pleasure to welcome new RMNP Superintendent Gary Ingram to continue to build on the successes of his predecessors. Through the good times and challenges ahead, we look forward to working together with him to continue to protect and enhance the park for future generations.

Warmly,



Estee Rivera Murdock

Estee Rivera Murdock
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Ask the Conservancy

Quarterly reporters unearth answers to any questions asked by Conservancy members and park visitors. If you are curious about something in or about the park, email Communications@RMConservancy.org or write: Ask the Conservancy, Rocky Mountain Conservancy, PO Box 3100, Estes Park, CO 80517.

What's the process for saving Rocky's boreal toad population?

Colorado and Rocky Mountain National Park's (RMNP) boreal toad population has drastically declined over the past 30 years due to the deadly chytrid fungus (*Batrachochytrium dendrobatidis*). Efforts to save the boreal toad population are a partnership. In the spring, RMNP, US Geological Survey, and Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) amphibian crews collect a portion of eggs from active breeding populations inside and nearby RMNP. The eggs are transported and grown into tadpoles at CPW's State Fish Hatchery Research Center near Bellvue. Just before the tadpoles begin metamorphosis they are bagged and transferred to RMNP for reintroduction into carefully screened locations to attempt to establish new breeding populations. At the release site, staff, volunteers, and interns equalize the temperature between the transfer bags full of tadpoles and new habitat, and then catalog the developmental stage and quantity of tadpoles released. Post reintroduction surveys are conducted in the later summer to confirm tadpoles successfully metamorph and enter their final developmental stage of terrestrial life. In 2023, the park released 13,789 tadpoles. Next spring, researchers will return to track the success of reintroductions by looking for emerging toads to confirm over winter survival and test for chytrid fungus. After this stage, the toads live most of their lives on land and focus on growing. They can range wide distances as they mature into adults capable of breeding—which from tadpole stage can take five years. The boreal toad, one of four amphibian species native to RMNP, lives between 8,500 and 11,000 feet and is iconic to the high country, living on the edge—and worth every bit of effort to save. *Jonathan Lewis, Amphibian Programs Lead, Resource Stewardship Div, RMNP.*



CPW staff collect boreal toad tadpoles for reintroduction in RMNP. The transfer bags are pumped full of oxygen before being sealed. | NPS Photo

[Editor's note: the Conservancy has supported the boreal toad reintroduction program since 2019 and funded \$38,000 in 2023.]

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2024 SCENIC RMNP CALENDAR
This 12-month calendar features 12 stunning photographs of Rocky Mountain National Park. Each month includes descriptive text about the photo and has large grids for daily notes. Includes holidays and moon phases. Measures 12" x 9". Item# 012242. Price: \$9.99. **Member Price: \$8.49**



PIKA AND FLOWERS NECK GAITER
This multi-wear tube scarf can be used for all your favorite activities. The soft and lightweight material helps keep you cool and dry. Features UPF 50+ sun protection and is infused with antimicrobial copper and silver to help prevent odor. 100% polyester. Made in the USA. Item# 012846. Price: \$26.99. **Member Price: \$22.94**



EMBROIDERED ELK HAT
This navy-blue hat features an embroidered mountain scene within an iconic bugling elk. The trucker style is finished off with a white mesh backing and a "Rocky Mountain National Park" leather patch on the side. Adjustable snap back closure. Designed in Colorado. Made with recycled materials. 60% cotton, 40% polyester. Item# 011813. Price: \$28.99. **Member Price: \$24.64**



ELK DRAWSTRING BACKPACK
This blue drawstring backpack features a bugling elk scene patch with the words 'Rocky Mountain National Park' on the front. The bag itself is 100% cotton. Measures roughly 13" x 16.5". Item# 012166. Price: \$18.99. **Member Price: \$16.14**



NATIONAL PARK BUCKET LIST WATER BOTTLE
Which parks have you been to? This Parks of the USA Bucket List Water Bottle keeps track of all your adventures and helps you stay hydrated. Features laser-engraved depictions of your favorite parks along with vibrant corresponding stickers that will be sure to strike up a conversation on the trail, at work, or in the classroom. Commemorate your journeys in style! Dishwasher Safe. Item# 012645. Price: \$58.00. **Member Price: \$49.30**

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Gary Ingram (center) meets a volunteer at the east side Volunteers-in-Parks meet-and-greet on Sept. 21 along with Volunteer Program Specialist Jordan Downie.



Rocky Welcomes New Superintendent Gary Ingram

"It's an absolute honor to serve as the superintendent of Rocky Mountain National Park and also a great responsibility. I'm excited to work with park staff, partners, stakeholders, and affiliated Tribes to protect this special place as we balance preservation of Rocky's natural and cultural resources with ensuring people can visit, enjoy, learn from, and be inspired by this special place."

—Supt. Gary Ingram



Gary Ingram assumed his new responsibilities as superintendent of Rocky Mountain National Park in late August. Since then, he has been busy meeting staff, volunteers, and community members on both sides of the park, while also studying up on the natural wonders and challenges of one of America's "crown jewel" national parks.

Ingram and his wife, Athena, come to Estes Park from Georgia where he served as superintendent of the Cumberland Island National Seashore and Fort Frederica National Monument since 2014.

"My family and I are grateful for the very warm welcome we've received in Colorado," Ingram said. "And Rocky Mountain National Park has taken our breath away by its beauty, but also its altitude—we're still working on acclimating from sea level," he joked.

Ingram is very serious, however, as he looks to the future.

"It's an absolute honor to serve as the superintendent of Rocky Mountain National Park and also a great responsibility. I'm excited to work with park staff, partners, stakeholders, and affiliated Tribes to protect this special place as we balance preservation of Rocky's natural and cultural resources with ensuring people can visit, enjoy, learn from, and be inspired by this special place."

At Rocky, Ingram oversees 150 permanent staff and approximately 250 seasonal staff. He will continue to address Rocky's complex challenges including wildland fire, ecosystem restoration, and managing day use visitation.

"The issues facing all of our national parks are real, so I've been especially excited to learn how the Rocky Mountain Conservancy and



Ingram with east side park volunteers.

its members and donors support our mission," said Ingram. "From helping to restore the Kawuneeche Valley, the Conservancy building trails, financial support for the Junior Ranger program, and environmental education outreach, the Conservancy helps makes that and so much more happen. It's such an advantage for a new superintendent to come in, having such a strong partnership and trusted relationship."

Ingram outlined some of his priorities in the months ahead, which begin with people.

"I look forward to working with the Conservancy to address critical housing issues which have a direct impact on how we take care of park resources and its millions of visitors. Our employees are my number one priority. Without them, we would not have active restoration work on our meadows and wetlands, plowed and maintained roads, children being taught about this remarkable place, or visitors being professionally assisted, and the list goes on. The amount of incredible work that is done by our employees every day is staggering!" he said.

Ingram continued, "Fire management is also a top priority.

As I learn more about fire behavior in and around Rocky Mountain National Park, I have directed our Fire Management Officer to proceed with proactive steps to make our gateway communities safer."

"There are many more issues, but no matter what, we must be courageous as we lead with integrity and honor," Ingram said.

Ingram began his career in Yosemite, where he served in a variety of positions including law enforcement, horse patrol, emergency medical services, firefighter, shift supervisor, chief liaison officer, and management

assistant. He also served as superintendent at Jimmy Carter National Historic Site prior to his assignment to Cumberland Island National Seashore.

In announcing Ingram's appointment earlier this year, Regional Director Kate Hammond said, "Gary is a seasoned leader who comes to Rocky with a wealth of knowledge and experience gained during his 30 years with the NPS. His energy, enthusiasm, and optimism will elevate an already high-functioning, high-performing team."

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RMConservancy.org/plate

Participants from RMNP's Diversity Internship Cohort after a day of sampling at Holzwarth Ranch Pond. Back row, left to right: Luis Avalos, Dylan Stoltzfus, Amy Cook, Simon Aceto, Grace Schebler, Andrew Townsend, Nick Friedkin. Front row, left to right: Jackson Maldonado, Marissa Stadelhofer.



By
Marissa Stadelhofer,
Continental Divide
Research Learning
Center, RMNP

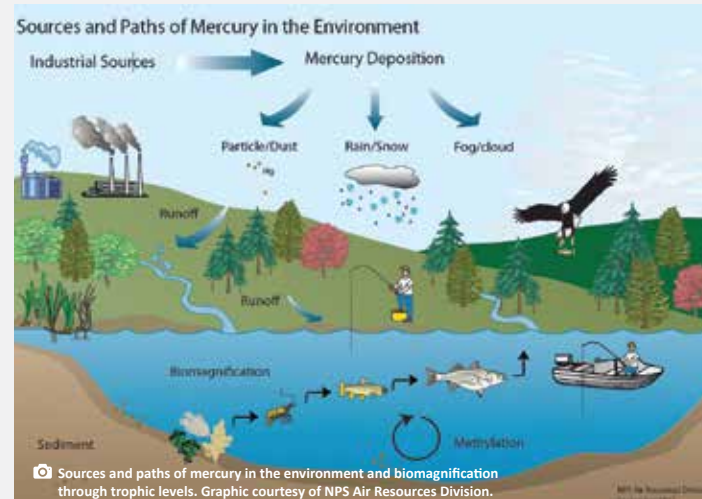
Rocky Mountain Conservancy Supports Dragonfly Mercury Community Science Project

Dragonflies are the ideal indicator species for assessing mercury pollution in aquatic ecosystems based on their unique life history.

The Dragonfly Mercury Project is a collaborative community science project between the National Park Service, the United States Geological Survey (USGS), and the University of Maine. The Dragonfly Mercury Project engages community members in hands-on science and education while promoting and facilitating personal connections as park stewards. The project began in national parks in 2011 with Rocky Mountain National Park (RMNP) participating since 2014.

Over the past 12 years, the project has grown to over 450 sampling sites throughout the US and includes over 100 participating national parks. RMNP is pleased to be one of those parks thanks to the continued support of the Rocky Mountain Conservancy.

What is this project all about? In broad terms, the Dragonfly Mercury Project assesses the health of aquatic ecosystems by tracking levels of mercury within a waterbody. Mercury is harmful to ecosystems, wildlife, and



humans. Though there are natural forms of mercury found in the Earth's crust and emitted from volcanoes, mercury pollution mainly comes from human-made sources, such as coal-fired power plants, cement and chlorine production, metal production, and gold mining.

The beautiful and natural landscape of Rocky Mountain National Park is not immune to mercury deposition or its effects. When mercury is released as a gas into the atmosphere, wind can carry it thousands of miles from the original source. The gaseous mercury then falls back to land with rain and snow, where it can enter bodies of

water and aquatic ecosystems. Once deposited into aquatic ecosystems, mercury can change into the highly toxic methylmercury and build up in the tissues of organisms. The accumulation of methylmercury then transfers up the food chain from prey to predator.

Mercury levels in bodies of water are measured by collecting and processing the dragonflies that live within them. Dragonflies are the ideal indicator species for assessing mercury pollution in aquatic ecosystems based on their unique life history. Many visitors don't realize that before they watched beautifully colored dragonflies perform precise acrobatics in the air, dragonflies lived a very different life underwater. Dragonflies lay their eggs in water, usually attaching them to aquatic vegetation.

When dragonfly larvae hatch, they can spend up to nine years in the water before pulling themselves up on land to reach their adult stage. Juvenile dragonflies, also called nymphs, are usually higher up on the food chain than other macroinvertebrates and are even known to eat other dragonfly larvae. They aren't picky eaters!

Because of the amount of time spent in aquatic ecosystems paired with their diet, they make an excellent species for studying the amount of

mercury in a waterbody. Dragonflies are also well-suited to community science participation because they are easy to collect and identify. Dragonflies are also abundant in many different types of waterbodies - from streams, lakes, ponds, swamps, and wetlands - allowing scientists to study mercury across a variety of settings.

Data collected from dragonfly samples allows park managers to track and identify trends in mercury levels. Data from 2014 - 2021 show mercury concentrations have decreased at four of five locations. In 2021, the average mercury concentration in the park was below the multiyear nation-wide average. To better illustrate mercury risk at individual sites, Dragonfly Mercury Project partners at the USGS have developed a mercury "impairment index" with categories that range from sub-impairment to severe impairment. All sites in Rocky report mercury concentrations below severe impairment, the category in which fish consumption advisories may be issued.

In 2023, staff from the Continental Divide Research Learning Center (CDRLC) spent three days in the field sampling for and identifying dragonfly larvae. Twenty-four community scientists participated this year and contributed 108



RMNP interns viewing and identifying dragonfly larvae.

hours towards the Dragonfly Mercury Project. Two of the sampling days were comprised of community scientists from nearby colleges and universities. Another sampling day was set aside for seasonal interns that were currently working on various projects inside Rocky Mountain National Park. The participants included interns ranging from Scientists in Parks, Teacher-in-Residence, Fish and Feathers, and the Rocky Mountain Conservancy. The CDRLC was excited to host another year of Dragonfly Mercury Project and appreciates the Conservancy's continued support of community engagement and high-quality data collection that helps protect and preserve Rocky Mountain National Park.

Data collected in Rocky Mountain National Park and from across the country can be accessed at



Community scientists from Colorado State University sampling at Sprague Lake. | NPS Photo



RMNP's corral | Conservancy Photo



Horse Sebastian and mule Mojito | Conservancy Photo



Trail Crew MVPs: Rocky's "Most Valuable Packers"



Glacier Gorge Trail | Susan Paquette Photo

With 350 miles of hiking trails and a short weather window, Rocky Mountain National Park's (RMNP) Trails Program relies on summer seasonal employees and a corral of horses and mules to complete critical trail maintenance and construction projects. The Rocky Mountain Conservancy supports this teamwork by purchasing stock animals for the park, but it's the horses and mules and the human animal packer team that get down and dirty to help the trail crews get the job done.

Rocky's Trails Division animal packer team consists of Lead Animal Packer Delaney Garvin, four summer seasonal animal packers, and around 6 horses and 18 mules.



Emily Boor and mule Cheddar | Conservancy Photo

The horses and mules primarily support the Trails Division but may also support ranger patrol, Search & Rescue, project administration, communication tower maintenance, revegetation projects, and research by RMNP and other government and academic scientists. Garvin says they work hard to meet every request for support.

Garvin is the sole full time staff member and she's as busy in the off-season as she is in summer. She travels to Wyoming every few weeks to personally check in on the horses and mules wintering over at Fort Laramie National Historic Site in Wyoming. The rest of the time she is hiring her summer animal packers, arranging veterinary care and exams for the stock, looking for good homes for animals approaching retirement, inspecting and maintaining each animal's individual tack, and repairing the leather and canvas panniers used to carry cargo, among many other administrative responsibilities.

Garvin brings more than 20 years of experience to her role as Rocky's equine expert. Growing up in the suburbs of Chicago, she mucked stalls at a local barn in exchange for riding time and lessons. That early

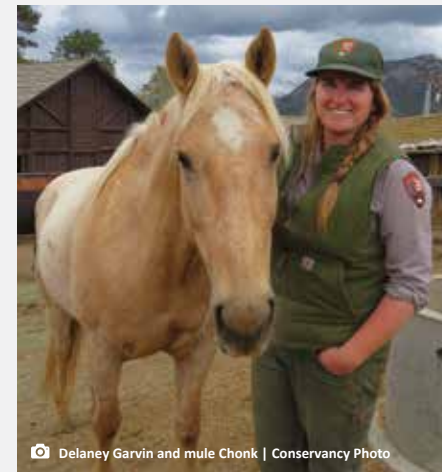


Ty Roberts, mule Ghost, and Clara Logue | Conservancy Photo

experience also included playing polo. It was through several seasons as a member in the Rocky Mountain Conservancy – Conservation Corps after she graduated from Auburn University, however, that Garvin realized she could combine her love of animals and the outdoors with service in the National Park Service as an animal packer.

Trails Program lead Doug Parker says Garvin's background is typical of the park's expert animal packers who come with extensive experience ranging from university equine studies and equestrian competitions to rodeo and 4-H programs.

Rocky's seasonal animal packer members include Tyler Roberts who grew up around his family's saddle business in Oregon and who usually works as an animal packer in California's mountains (but this past summer was too wet).



Delaney Garvin and mule Chonk | Conservancy Photo

Animal Packer Clara Logue says she began riding in her home state of Georgia at around the age of three. Makenzie McRobert's experience is rooted much closer to RMNP. Her family has a strong connection to the YMCA of the Rockies where she says she also began riding about the same time as learning to walk. With a passion for horses, McRoberts has purchased former racing thoroughbreds and trained them in jumping. A fourth seasonal animal packer, Emily Boor, works on the park's west side.



Makenzie McRoberts loading panniers | Conservancy Photo

Long before the summer seasonals report for duty and the stock animals are returned to RMNP from their winter range in May, the upcoming summer's work schedule is planned in January. Parker and his trails staff prioritize and lay out all the summer work projects and Garvin plans and schedules the animal packer team support.

Finding and acquiring the right animals to join the team is one of Garvin's important jobs over the winter. She looks for strong, smart animals, with a steady temperament suited for work in a busy national park environment. The Conservancy's support is especially important in acquiring stock as sellers are sometimes reluctant to go through all the paperwork and steps required to do business

with the federal government for the sale of an individual animal. Conservancy funding streamlines the purchase.

This past winter and spring, Garvin was able to purchase four new horses to add to the team: Coconut, Scooby, Sebastian, and Kevin. Before any animals lead a string or begin carrying cargo, Garvin works with each one to ensure they are ready for their new responsibilities. The animal packers will ride the horses and lead the mules carrying the equipment or supplies.

Mules, bred from horses and donkeys, are large, strong, and smart and can safely carry about 150-160 lbs of gear or supplies on Rocky's backcountry trails. Rocky's barn is full of mules that

Continued on page 15

Horses and mules are the MVPs of the Trails Division but not the only animals on RMNP's all-star team. Llamas also play an important role in backcountry and facility management operations by packing in equipment and supplies to maintain backcountry campsites, remove hazards, conduct wildfire restoration, and support fish, toad and herbivory studies. Llamas have been used to service composting toilets. As with the horses and mules, the Rocky Mountain Conservancy has funded the leasing and purchase of llamas for the park.

Rocky Terraces rendering created by Colorado-based architect Steve Lane of BAS1S Architecture.



From Vision to Reality: New Workforce Housing

“Attracting the best and brightest talent to conduct research and educational programs in RMNP is core to the mission of the Rocky Mountain Conservancy.”

– Charles Cofas
CONSERVANCY BOARD MEMBER

Construction by
Estes Valley general
contractor Kinley Built.



The Rocky Mountain Conservancy, with the longstanding and generous support of our donors, has broken new ground—literally and figuratively—with the ongoing construction of new dedicated workforce housing.

When completed in the spring of 2024, the two duplex buildings on Highway 66 near the YMCA will provide 16 bedrooms of housing for Rocky Mountain National Park and Conservancy staff, researchers, and fellows. The new housing is tentatively named “Rocky Terraces

Cottages” after earlier guest cabins located on the property.

“Attracting the best and brightest talent to conduct research and educational programs in RMNP is core to the mission of the Rocky Mountain Conservancy,” said Charles Cofas, Conservancy board member and chairman of the facilities committee. “And to do that, we must be able to offer safe and affordable housing. The board approached this project with both a sense of urgency to get these units built and a sense of optimism for how much the housing will enhance the Conservancy’s direct support to the park.”

Conservancy Executive Director Estee Rivera echoed the optimism. “I look forward to next year when talented and passionate candidates can accept much needed jobs and fellowships and no one has to withdraw from a life-changing opportunity because they can’t find housing.”

Stay tuned for more information on the Conservancy’s workforce housing initiative and opportunities to support this innovative and much-needed project.



Rocky Mountain Conservancy Park Puzzler

Across

2. A nickname for the magpies picking up ticks and other tasty insects while riding around on elk during the summer months. Rangers first noticed this behavior as early as 1931.

7. According to the Summer Quarterly Nature Notes, this animal was seen roaming around near the Conservancy headquarters.

10. The showiest bloomer in the alpine tundra, also known as Old Man of the Mountain. Takes years to mature, blooms once, and then dies.

13. Each year, National Audubon Society volunteers head to Rocky for this bird count. The event began in 1900 and is one of the longest-running citizen science events in the world.

14. In the last Quarterly, current Berthoud Town Trustee Sean Murphy wrote about what number of life-changing seasons he spent working with the Conservation Corps?

16. These alpine flowers are a favorite food of pikas. They have bright yellow saucer-shaped flowers and compound dark green leaves.

17. Mammals that eat human handouts during summer are less likely to survive what seasonal period?

18. In which canyon did climbers on June 28, 2022, capture a major rockslide on video, as mentioned in the Summer Quarterly?

19. This lake is often called the most photographed place in RMNP due to its great view of Hallett Peak and the alpenglow that occurs there.

Down

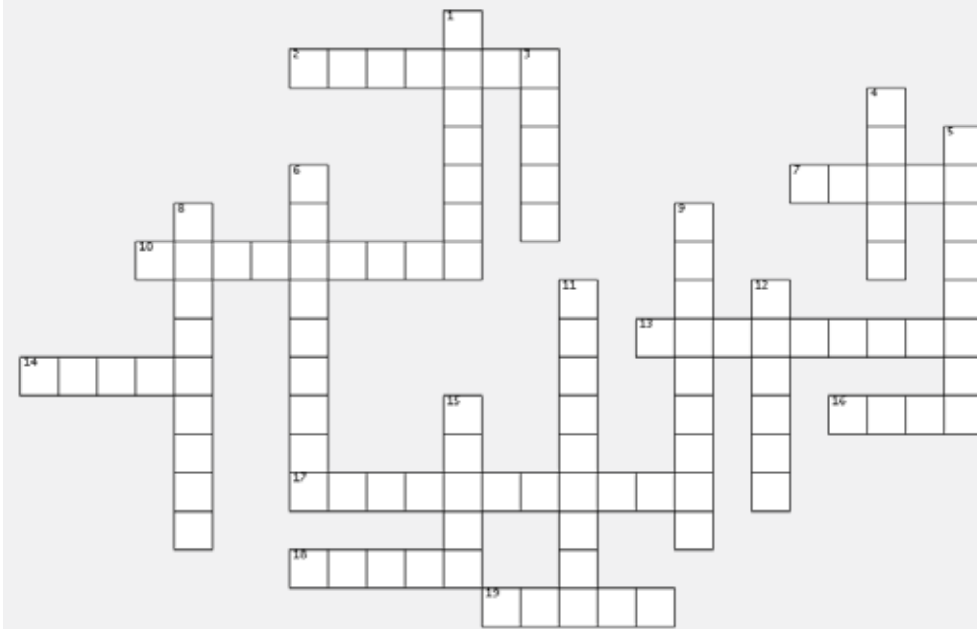
1. By redirecting atmospheric air masses, mountains can make their own what? As a result, snowstorms can occur any time of the year.

3. This number of peaks over 12,000 feet make Rocky Mountain National Park one of the highest in the nation.

4. The Young-Pierce families finalized this property donation in the summer of 2022, to be preserved and protected in perpetuity.

5. These sisters, after arriving in the area in 1896, had a famous dairy farm in the Kawuneeche Valley, near where the visitors center is located today.

6. This family built a one-room cabin, barn, sawmill, and guest cabins near Grand Lake, becoming one of the first dude ranch destinations.



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Betty J. Luttkus, Aurora, CO: In memory of George Luttkus
Martha Melcher, Shoreview, MN: In memory of Philip R. Melcher
Mickey Michel, Denver, CO: In memory of Sandra Kielsmeier
Kerry Morimoto, Denver, CO: In memory of Gordon Goff
Karen Myers, Las Vegas, NV: In memory of The Honorable William Jay Riley
Martha Noe, Greeley, CO: In memory of Norman Noe
Moureen Noonan, Sun City West, AZ: In memory of Linda Austin
Mary O’Farrell, Camano Island, WA: In memory of William and Pattie Hyde Barclay
Mike Oline, Estes Park, CO: In memory of Scott Webermeier
Patricia Olson, Denver, CO: In memory of the beaver in Lily Lake that died of tularemia
Bethany Paul, Drake, CO: In memory of Erika Seitz’s late husband
Andrew and Karla Perry, Seven Hills, OH: In honor of Dave and Sharon Smith

Andrew and Karla Perry, Seven Hills, OH: In honor of Mike and Michele Scheetz
Caitlin Province, Orlando, FL: In honor of Freda Cooper
Steven Putney, Minneapolis, MN: In honor of Arlin Bartels and Kim Schlegel
Judith Richardson, Shawnee, KS: In honor of Mary Kay Hasz
Eric Robel, Conifer, CO: In memory of Lily Brodbeck
Sarah Rossing, Deephaven, MN: In memory of David Cooke
Peter and Kay Sanders, Tucker, GA: In memory of Dr. Geoffrey B. Sanders
Sara Schimpf, Westminster, CO: In memory of Greg Householter
John Schreck, Mead, CO: In memory of Beverly Schreck
DeAnn and Clayton Schuler, Loveland, CO: In honor of Clayton and DeAnn Schuler
Lynne Schwartz, Eugene, OR: In memory of Eugene and Leila
Marlys Seibert, Clive, IA: In memory of Garland Seibert
Joyce Squires, Leawood, KS: In memory of Scot A. Squires
Ned, Ben, and Jack Steele, Sunnyside, NY: In memory of Judy Steele
Victoria L. Stokke, Ponca City, OK: In memory of Olaf M. Stokke
Wilbur W. Stutheit, Fort Collins, CO: In memory of Geri Stutheit
Marie Taylor, Lawrence, KS: In honor of Maure Weigel
Patricia Terry, Green Bay, WI: In memory of Pat Terry
Robert Thelen, Des Moines, IA: In memory of Carol Dalton
Ellen Troutman, Breckenridge, CO: In memory of Judy Girvin
Helen Trujillo, Aztec, NM: In memory of Linda Austin

Robert Turner, Norman, OK: In memory of Dr. Jeff McCormick
Robert Turner, Norman, OK: In memory of Jo Ann Turner
Marguerite Underhill, Topeka, KS: In memory of Craig Underhill
Mark and Jodi Voyles, Luther, OK: In honor of our wedding anniversary
Brad Walker, Aurora, CO: In memory of Gary Downing
Amy and Jim Warner, Grand Lake, CO: In memory of Hayes Veeneman
Carol Warner, Fort Collins, CO: In memory of James Warner
Allen Weber, Waco, TX: In memory of Lynn Hayner
Mariruth Wittkamp, Albuquerque, NM: In honor of Rebecca Brooks-Fournier
Ellen Woodbury, Loveland, CO: In memory of Wayne R. Larsen
Suzanne and William Wuerthele, Denver, CO: In memory of Dr. Paul A. Opler
Suzanne and William Wuerthele, Denver, CO: In memory of Tom Hornbein

ALL IN MEMORY OF ROBERT BURNHAM

Michael Berryhill, Estes Park, CO
Jane Bush and Mike Brooks, Estes Park, CO
Amy and Todd Plummer, Estes Park, CO
Arapaho Estates POA, Estes Park, CO
Terri Portal, Gurnee, IL
Melissa Rosen, Gurnee, IL
Iris Sterling, Wheeling, IL

ALL IN MEMORY OF WILLIAM “BILL” PARKER FITZGERALD

Greg and Linda Bohn, Bennington, NE
Darin and Kristina Boysen, Lincoln, NE
Kevin and Pamela Brennan, Omaha, NE
Gretchen and Gary Dietzel, Plattsmouth, NE
Roxann Hamblin, Minnetonka, MN
Maxine Hild, Plattsmouth, NE
Steven Joekel, Omaha, NE
Melissa Kozak- Freed and Enrique Freed, Bennington, NE
Thomas and Linda Lannin, Lincoln, NE
Michael and Sophie Purdy, Bellevue, NE
Michael Zimmerman, Springfield, NE

ALL IN MEMORY OF JASON EDWIN FRASER

The Abeyta Family, KS
The Collings Family, England
The Fraser Family, Greene and Lewiston, ME
The Jutras Family, Greene, ME
The Lumgair Family, England

ALL IN MEMORY OF BRUCE GOETTING

Sara Goetting, Temecula, CA
Richard and Lillian Ryer, Westminster, CO

ALL IN MEMORY OF CHARLIE KERR

Brian and Louise Desmond, Warrenton, VA
Sarah Morehead, Berthoud, CO
Jean Van Otterloo, Broomfield, CO

ALL IN MEMORY OF JON OLSEN

Randy Hamilton, Atlanta, GA
Susan K. Harris, Estes Park, CO
Carol T. Linnig, Estes Park, CO
Loraine Neuberger, Longmont, CO

ALL IN MEMORY OF CHRIS SIBILIA

Lisa Biederman & Family, Denver, CO
Natalie Buike, Denver, CO
Jeff Carney, Centennial, CO
Peter Chiu, Englewood, CO
Graham Coddington, Highlands Ranch, CO
Ginny Crise, Denver, CO
Michele Dillard, Aurora, CO
Mike and Jean Duggan, Parker, CO
Kristine Dunham, Lakewood, CO
Neil Fletcher, Alma, CO
Dan Green, Aurora, CO
Melissa Harkins, Poolesville, MD
Pamela Hulme, Aurora, CO
Barbara Johnson, Thornton, CO
Kathy Johnson, Englewood, CO
Dan Kester, Denver, CO
Carrie Markle, Englewood, CO
Deb Mastin, Englewood, CO
Russett Meyer, Broomfield, CO
Sheila Olson, Rapid City, SD
Andrew Paterson, Englewood, CO
Jorn Petersen, Dallas, TX
Barbara Pitney, Bernardsville, NJ
Sue Reilly, Denver, CO
Terri and Steve Richardson, Englewood, CO
Jennifer Rothschild, Englewood, CO
Anna Schmidt, Denver, CO
Maureen Schmitz, Englewood, CO
Jack Smith, Denver, CO
Matt and Taylor Spalding
Erica Toren, Lakewood, CO
Mike Wichmann, Mariposa, CA
Scott Yeates, Steamboat Springs, CO

ALL IN MEMORY OF MIKE TOMASI

Steve Tomasi, Derry, NH
Tim Tomasi, Dalton, MA
Tom Tomasi, Springfield, MO



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In addition to existing programs, our people now have 24/7 access to the services of Dr. Teresa Richards, a Front Range licensed clinician who not only brings education and experience to the table, but who also works extensively in emergency services. Dr. Richards understands what our emergency responders do and the trauma to which they are exposed. Our team members can seek these services when they're ready and on their own terms. To remove barriers, the private counseling is provided at no-cost and on an anonymous basis.

The next step in looking after our people is an emphasis on training. When a mission arises, we teach members to assess their individual readiness by asking themselves, “Am I physically, mentally, and emotionally prepared?” And just as importantly, to recognize when they are “not on their ‘A’ game.” The team also has ongoing daily conversations about their team readiness and evaluating how the team prepares for these missions. A member can opt out at any time when they believe they won’t be able to perform at the level of professionalism required by the team. We encourage and expect that. In the short-term, we may be down one team member that day. In the long run, we are supporting our people so they can sustainability serve in these challenging roles for months or years to come.

The missions themselves can involve anything from a blown-out knee or serious accident where a patient's survival may be in doubt to fatalities. There are also often other people involved: the reporting party, perhaps other visitors who witnessed the accident, or friends and family on-scene. Managing the situation effectively and compassionately can be every bit as professionally and emotionally demanding as the medical emergency and technical evacuation at hand, and it is park staff that respond to manage all of the aspects of these incidents. People come to these traumas and events in a different headspace—all of us do.

After every SAR operation, we debrief. We focus on the event and any immediate safety or operational processes that could be improved, but also do a round-robin where we ask how everyone is doing. After every major incident involving a fatality or other serious accident, we specifically follow up with team members using the 3-3-3 strategy, checking in with our team members at the interval of three days, three weeks, and three months following the event.

Just as every SAR incident is unique, so are the mental health and wellness needs of our team members. At RMNP, our multifaceted approach is like having roots of a tree going out in every direction. In addition to actively looking out for one another, we want to ensure we have tools and resources available when and where our team members need them. I cannot overstate the importance of looking after the men and women who look after us.

as well as our law enforcement rangers. Our law enforcement staff are tasked not only as professional law enforcement but also are trained as SAR, Fire and Emergency Medical Service professionals; no other group in our agency is tasked with this level of emergency service to our public. Because of this dedication and exposure to critical incidents, RMNP is dedicated to ensuring our emergency response staff have the tools and support to seek out help when they feel it's needed.



Continued from page 9

Hikers in the backcountry will usually hear a string of pack animals before they see them. When encountering an animal pack string,

It's quickly apparent on a walk through RMNP's barns how important the horses and mules are to the packers and the park. One wall is laden with plaques honoring former horses and mules. Each of the barn stalls has a mounted wooden plaque with an animal's name. Garvin purchases a new saddle for each of Rocky's new

Garvin said that most animals will retire at around 20 years old, but every animal is tended to individually. "Some will tell you they need to retire earlier," she said. When their pack career ends, Garvin finds good retirement homes for the beloved animals. For one horse, moving to the Hearts & Horses riding therapy center in Loveland was a good fit. Other animals have been adopted by a former park ranger with a ranch on the western slope.

A crossword puzzle grid with the following words filled in:

- Across:**
 - 1: JOCKEYS
 - 10: SUNFLOWER
 - 13: THREERFLY
 - 15: ZWARTRT
 - 17: HIBERNATION
 - 19: CHAOS
 - 21: DREAM
 - 23: CHRISTMAS
 - 25: BOBCAT
 - 27: AVENS
- Down:**
 - 4: HONEY
 - 6: T
 - 8: B
 - 12: T
 - 14: W
 - 16: A
 - 18: I
 - 20: B
 - 22: I
 - 24: C
 - 26: A
 - 28: H
 - 30: I
 - 32: N
 - 34: B
 - 36: I
 - 38: O
 - 40: D
 - 42: E
 - 44: N
 - 46: G
 - 48: O
 - 50: N

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Rocky Mountain Conservancy

Estee Rivera Murdock, executive director
Anne Morris, *Quarterly* editor
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2038 Conservation Corps Member: Young Texan Jackson Greening exploring a trail at Rocky under his own power for the first time.

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Nature Notes

• **Bill Morris**, who is 96 years young, let us know that he saw his first bobcat back in August around High Drive. • **Kent and Carolyn Carlson** observed this intriguing bat at dusk during a visit to Moraine Park. They believe it is a long-eared myotis enjoying a feast of insects around a large Ponderosa pine. The bat eventually landed and “posed” for this unique photograph. • **David and Susan King** saw a short-tailed weasel hunting voles on the Forest Canyon Pass Trail. • **Ashley Greening** was delighted to see her three-year-old son walk the Adams Falls Trail himself for the first time. • **Devan Livesay** saw Rocky resource stewards removing the tracking collar from a moose. • **Linda Metzler** was appreciative of the hard-working park staff and Conservation Corps members she saw improving the Longs Peak Trail below the Chasm Lake junction. • **Marian Kroll** witnessed the most beautiful evening sky with the Milky Way at Lake Irene. • **Derk Osenberg** glimpsed a snowshoe hare munching his breakfast at

the edge of Sprague Lake. • **Gina McAfee** saw an abundance of alpine forget-me-nots on the Mt Ida Trail. • **Melissa Miller** captured an impressive thunderstorm in the distance from Trail Ridge Road. • **Deb Miller** spotted a young brown-headed cowbird on the ground begging for food and waited to see who showed up. It was a green-tailed towhee to the rescue. • **Jill Beck** also enjoyed bird watching, in her case, watching the dippers in Fall River disappear under the water and then pop up—over and over again. • **Erin Link** saw her first pine marten near The Loch. • **Sundee Pietsch** enjoyed a trail run in Upper Beaver Meadows but made sure to pay attention to her surroundings after coming across a large pile of bear scat. • **Paul Latina’s** Rocky’s experience was not what he saw but what he felt. He recalled his late mother passed her love of nature and the mountains on to him. “While on Old Fall River Road, I was looking across the gorge and I had the most powerful feeling of her presence. Rocky will forever feel like home.”



Moraine Park Bat Aug 2023 | Carolyn Carlson Photo



Snowshoe hare | Derk Osenberg Photo



Melissa Miller Photo