



Rocky
Mountain
Conservancy

2023 Volunteer Events

End of Year Report





Since 1931, Rocky Mountain Conservancy has supported Rocky Mountain National Park and other public land partners through educational programs and philanthropic donations. Over ninety years, the Conservancy has grown to support its public land partners in a breadth of ways.

Currently, Rocky Mountain Conservancy contains five departments:

- **Retail** – manages nature stores throughout Colorado and Wyoming to provide visitors with educational materials and interpretive products for visitors to learn more about public lands.
- **Publications** – produces nature guides, children’s literature, natural and cultural history books, and more to enrich people’s experience in Rocky Mountain National Park and other public lands.
- **Philanthropy** – connects people to Rocky Mountain National Park and the Conservancy through a membership program and donations supporting RMNP and Conservancy programs.
- **Education** – provides field classes, internships, nature-based activities, and fellowships for people of all ages to further understand and connect with public lands.
- **Stewardship** – hosts the High School Leadership Corps, Conservation Corps, and Volunteer Stewardship programs to engage local high school youth, young adults (ages 18-25), and the public (all ages) in conservation work.

Volunteer Events in 2023

In 2023, the Rocky Mountain Conservancy revived its volunteer stewardship program and hosted a variety of volunteer stewardship events throughout the year. In total, **173 participants contributed over 744 hours of service across 5 events** held throughout the year. From our litter cleanup events, **over 355 pounds of trash were removed** from Rocky Mountain National Park and the town of Estes Park’s public areas. This was a remarkably successful year for the Conservancy Stewardship Department’s Volunteer Programs, and more events are already being planned for 2024 and beyond.

Name of Event	Type of Service Work Completed	Locations	Number of Participants	Service Hours
January 19 th – Martin Luther King Jr. Day	Food Drive	RMNP offices		364 lbs. of food!
June 3 rd - National Trails Day	Litter Cleanup	Hidden Valley RMNP	27	81
June 21 st – All Volunteer Day	Litter Cleanup	Holzworth Historic Site RMNP	20	40
August 10 th – Corporate Volunteer Day	Invasive Species Removal	Horseshoe Park	19	95
September 27 th – Rocky Mountain Facelift, National Public Lands Day	Trail building, Litter cleanup	Bear Lake RMNP, Thumb Open Space, Big Thompson River Corridor	107	528
		Totals	173	744

For more information, please visit <https://rmconservancy.org/volunteer/>
Or contact Ian Stafford, Director of Stewardship and Policy, at Ian.Stafford@RMConservancy.org.

January 19th Martin Luther King Jr. Day Food Drive



From January 1st to January 18th, numerous food drive collection boxes were placed throughout the Rocky Mountain National Park offices and visitor centers. On Tuesday the 19th, RMC staff collected the various boxes and delivered them to the Community Cupboard Food Bank in Allenspark, Colorado.

In total, **364 pounds of food (enough to support 50 families!)** were donated to **Community Cupboard**. The generosity of National Park staff and volunteers was able to make a significant contribution to rural families of Northern Colorado through the cold of winter.

January 2023 was the second year of this food drive, and we contributed over twice the amount of food than in 2022! The Conservancy and Rocky Mountain National Park look forward to the continued success of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Day Food Drive in years to come.

June 3rd National Trails Day: Litter Cleanup at Hidden Valley



The American Hiking Society declares the first Saturday in June as National Trails Day. On June 3rd, 2023, a fleet of 27 volunteers from across Colorado's Front Range arrived in Rocky Mountain National Park's Hidden Valley. The only place in ROMO to allow winter sledding, Hidden Valley sees heavy traffic throughout the year from sledders, skiers, hikers, and families. When the snow melts in spring, massive amounts of microplastic trash from the winter season are revealed.

In just one day of work, **81 hours of service were completed by the 27-person crew as they picked up over 120 pounds of trash** across the area. Experienced National Park volunteers, families, couples, and people of all ages transformed Hidden Valley through beautification and general upkeep of this heavily visited area.

National Trails Day 2024 is on Saturday, June 5th, and the Rocky Mountain Conservancy plans to hold another volunteer litter cleanup in Hidden Valley. Visit the RMC website in spring 2024 for more information!



June 21st Volunteer Trash Cleanup at Holzworth Historic Site



in 1917, John and Sophia Holzworth moved to the Kawuneeche valley to build the Holzworth Trout Lodge, a recreational dude ranch available for local miners and travelers to the newly established Rocky Mountain National Park. In 1974, this property was donated to Rocky for protection and preservation.

On June 21st, 2023, a dedicated team of 20 volunteers traveled to the Kawuneeche Valley to participate in a litter cleanup of the historic Holzworth site.

In total, volunteers removed over 25 pounds of trash from the area throughout the day of service. Through this single day effort, the volunteer team was able to make significant and noticeable improvements to ecosystem health, visitor experience, and overall beauty of Rocky Mountain National Park's most historic areas.

August 10th Great American Outdoors Act Day: Invasive Species Removal



The Great American Outdoors Act (GAOA), enacted on August 4th, 2020, is a massive investment in United States public lands and protected natural areas. Intended to update infrastructure across National Parks Service sites nationwide, the GAOA is proving to be a massive aid to supporting the NPS dual mission: to preserve and protect natural resources while balancing human enjoyment and interaction in these natural areas.

To celebrate the anniversary of the GAOA, RMC and Rocky Mountain National Park's Vegetation and Volunteer departments teamed up to put on a large-scale event in RMNP's Horseshoe Park. Unlike our other volunteer events, this project was available only to RMC's corporate partners. Together, Visit Estes Park, Estes Valley Land Trust, and Greystone Technologies were able to provide **19 volunteers to remove over 150 gallons of seedheads from invasive thistle from Horseshoe Park. Over 95 hours of service were done by this crew in just one day!**

The Great American Outdoors Act is a monumental step in the conservation of American public lands, and the RMC will continue to recognize the importance of federal policy in protecting such important natural areas.



September 23rd Rocky Mountain Facelift: Trail Building on Longs Peak, Thumb Open Space, Litter Cleanups at ROMO Lily Lake, Bear Lake, and Downtown Estes Park

In early 2022, the Rocky Mountain Conservancy and Rocky Mountain National Park were approached by the Yosemite Climbing Association with the idea of hosting a large-scale volunteer event, one like Yosemite National Park's famous 5-day "Facelift" event. And thus, the 2022 Rocky Mountain Facelift: Act Local was a huge success!

In 2023, the Conservancy, the National Park, and the Yosemite Climbing Association decided to go bigger and build a three-day event at several locations across the Estes Valley. Partnering with dozens of local organizations such as Kind Coffee, The Estes Park Mountain Shop, Ed's Cantina, The Access Fund, The Boulder Climbing Community, the YMCA of the Rockies, and many more partners, the 2023 Facelift shaped up to be a huge success.

The main day of volunteer efforts was Saturday, September 23. The morning started off at the Estes Park Mountain Shop, with registration and project personnel allocation. At the Longs Peak Trailhead, a crew of 12 hiked to the alpine treeline: about 11,700 feet in elevation. At the work site, volunteers and NPS Staff cleared 81 drains to keep water runoff from degrading the trail. Also, over 10,000 pounds of rocks were moved and staged for the NPS trails department to continue their multi-year Polish-Paver project on the Longs Peak Trail.



At the Town of Estes Park's Thumb Open Space, a team of 18 volunteers, a 6-person RMC Conservation Corps Crew, and several staff from both the Boulder Climbing Community and Access Fund contributed to the preparation of over 10,000 pounds of rocks for future use in the construction of this historic example of interagency collaboration and conservation. The Thumb Open Space is set to become one of the first climbing areas in the entire country with an approach trail built specifically for handcycles and adaptive athletes.

Across several locations in the Estes Valley, volunteers donned gloves, reflective vests, trash grabbers and bags and headed out to remove Microtrash from the natural environment. At sites like Rocky Mountain National Park's Bear Lake and Lily Lake, a total of 20 volunteers contributed over 100 hours of service and removed over 100 pounds of trash. Within the town of Estes Park, a total of 18 volunteers contributed over 60 hours of service and removed over 110 pounds of pounds of trash from downtown Estes' Big Thompson riverwalk, the trail around Lake Estes, and the roadside of US Highway 34. In total, over 215 pounds of garbage were removed, thanks to the efforts of a massive team of dedicated volunteers.

In total, over 107 volunteers contributed over 528 hours of service to the second ever Rocky Mountain Facelift. Over 3 miles of trail were maintained or constructed, and over 20,000 pounds of rocks were moved and staged for future trail building projects.

A huge thank you is extended to the administrative team who assembled and organized the Facelift event, the project partners who supervised the several service events, and, most importantly, to the volunteers who made it all worthwhile! The Conservancy looks forward to the future of the Facelift event and its success and growth throughout the years.



History, Information, and More

The Rocky Mountain Conservancy's Volunteer Programs are available to all people of all ages and abilities. These public-facing volunteer events serve to assist Rocky Mountain National Park in a variety of ways, from trail maintenance to trash cleanups to invasive species management and more.

The mission of the Rocky Mountain Conservancy is to support Rocky Mountain National Park through education and philanthropy. The close collaboration with Rocky Mountain National Park's Volunteer Department, led by Sarah Corning and Jordan Downie, is a crucial partnership in supporting the needs and goals of both RMC and Rocky Mountain National Park.



For information about volunteering in Rocky Mountain National Park with the Rocky Mountain Conservancy, please visit the RMC website at <https://rmconservancy.org/volunteer/> or contact Director of Stewardship and Policy Ian Stafford at Ian.Stafford@RMConservancy.org.

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Community Cupboard Food Bank, the [Old Gallery at Allenspark](#)

[Greystone Technology](#), [Visit Estes Park](#)

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