



QUARTERLY

Summer | 2024



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Rocky Terraces Workforce Housing Welcomes First Residents



The Rocky Mountain Conservancy, with the longstanding and generous support of donors, has completed construction of a new workforce housing complex in Estes Park and recently welcomed the first residents. Rocky Mountain National Park leadership and the Conservancy's board of directors and executive director marked the milestone with a ribbon cutting on June 28th.

The two duplexes bordering Rocky Mountain National Park on Highway 66 provide 16 private bedrooms for park and Conservancy staff, researchers, and fellows. The new housing, which cost about \$2.85 million to build and furnish, is named "Rocky Terraces" after rustic guest cabins previously located on the property.

"Affordable housing options for park staff is a top priority for me. We can't take care of this amazing national park without our staff. This critical workforce housing project, funded by Rocky Mountain Conservancy, helps chip away at this need. We are grateful for the Conservancy's ongoing support as we tackle housing challenges together," said Gary Ingram, park superintendent.

The shortage of affordable housing in the Estes Valley has also affected the Conservancy's ability to hire and retain staff as well as research and education fellows.

"Through the Rocky Terraces project, the Rocky Mountain Conservancy has

Park Superintendent Gary Ingram and senior rangers joined Rocky Mountain Conservancy's board of directors and staff and major donors to mark the completion of the Rocky Terraces workforce housing with a ribbon cutting.



A Message from our Executive Director



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Dear Friends,

Beginning with a stunning rainbow over the east side of the park at dawn, June 28th was an amazing day for Rocky Mountain Conservancy. During our seasonal board meeting, Conservancy and park leaders boarded the new Field Institute bus and traveled to locations in the park to exchange updates on numerous mutual projects. Late that afternoon we moved to Rocky Terraces, where several lead donors joined us and we marked the completion of the workforce housing with a ribbon cutting ceremony.

The event wasn't really about the ribbon we held up in the parking lot or the ceremonial scissors that can't actually cut anything (we used sleight of hand and a multitool for that). We gathered to celebrate philanthropy, our shared accomplishment, and the impact we know this will have on park operations and the people who come here to support conservation in one form or another. We recognized board Vice President Charles Cofas for shepherding the project to completion on schedule and under budget. More than just a ceremony, we enjoyed a refreshing dose of joy and optimism in the company of nature- and people-loving friends.

After savoring the moment, our focus is back to getting things done for Rocky. Our Conservation Corps is in full swing with 51 young people from across America tackling critical maintenance and restoration projects. We're watching with deep respect and fascination as collaboration between the park and ancestrally connected Tribal Nations builds meaningful connections today and uncovers the history of Rocky's original stewards. Poudre Wilderness Volunteers are once again supporting the High School Leadership Corps by fearlessly leading "unplugged" teenagers on a backcountry service project adventure. Judy Collins is sharing her passion for Rocky as the Conservancy's inaugural goodwill ambassador. And students and faculty from CU-Denver are re-imagining what a privy in the woods can be.

I hope you are able to visit Rocky soon and enjoy your own dose of joy and optimism in our beautiful public lands!

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.

Shop Conservancy Nature Stores



www.RMConservancy.org/shop



© Shawn Whitney

Visitors to Rocky and places like Gem Lake enjoy hearing the sounds of the backcountry: bird calls, wind, and water.

This past year there seems to have been an increase in small planes circling the park for extended periods. Are flights tracked to help protect Rocky from excessive noise?

The National Parks Air Tour Management Act prohibits commercial air tours over Rocky Mountain

National Park. This does not ban all flights over the park. The park is on the approach route to Denver International Airport (DIA). The park has worked closely with the Federal Aviation Administration to better align high altitude aircraft traffic coming over the park and into DIA with the road corridors of the park, so that traffic noise on the ground and in the air may mask one another to the extent possible. When storms or other issues arise, pilots request deviations from the traditional approach requirements (altitude, speed, location) from air traffic control, who grants the request if it is safe to do so. As an example, a summer storm near DIA stalled planes from landing and the skies above the park became part of the holding pattern. The small planes over the park may be private aircraft or contracted by different entities. For instance, Larimer County recently conducted mapping activities of the entire county, which included Rocky. These aircraft flew at lower altitudes to assure the coverage was complete, and this meant a lot of "back and forth" passes over the park.

How is Rocky's soundscape monitored and protected?

The park partners with National Park Service experts to monitor soundscapes in strategic locations approximately every five years. The park also reviews proposed projects to identify tools or equipment that might generate noise that could disturb visitors or wildlife. When possible, park staff conduct the activity outside nesting season or when there may be less visitors nearby. Natural sounds in wilderness are especially important to protect the quality of solitude.

Dr. Adam Becco, NPS Natural Sounds & Night Skies Division



LOCH VALE T-SHIRT

The front of this heather stone-colored T-shirt features a blue, white, and black stylized drawing of The Loch, one of Rocky's scenic lakes in the Loch Vale Gorge. Underneath the image are the words "Rocky Mountain National Park."

Price: \$22.95 **Member Price: \$19.51**



SUMMER: A SOLSTICE STORY

By Kelsey E. Gross and New York Times bestselling illustrator Renata Liwska. In the peace of a summer morning, the forest seems quiet and asleep. But life is everywhere if you know where--and when--to look. On Solstice, the longest day of the year, friends Squirrel, Raccoon, Bear, Sparrow, Rabbit, Woodpecker, and Deer gather to share the gifts of new light and life that summer brings. Hardcover, 36 pages.

Item #013538 Price: \$18.99 **Member Price: \$16.41**



GREEN CAMPER HAT

This green and cream hat features a repeating mountain and trees scene, with a "Rocky Mountain National Park" patch on the front. Adjustable clip closure. A flat brim with a relaxed and unstructured fit featuring two ventilation

holes on both sides. 100% cotton; made with recycled material; one size fits most.

Item # 013417 Price: \$28.99 **Member Price: \$24.64**



MOD COLLAGE MUG

This 15-oz matte mug features a collage of animals and wildlife in a geometric design and the words "Rocky Mountain National Park." Dishwasher and microwave safe.

Item # 013417 Price: \$14.99 **Member Price: \$12.74**

More memorabilia at
www.RMConservancy.org/shop
970-586-0121

Tribal consultation meeting on the west side of the park in July 2023.



By
Karen Lloyd-D'Onofrio
Development Officer

Indigenous Connections: Acknowledging and Honoring Rocky's First Peoples

"We can have a healthy relationship with nature; we just need to know how. Indigenous Peoples have that knowledge."

— Mikayla Costales, Indigenous Connections coordinator

Shelley Morningsong (N. Cheyenne) and Fabian Fontenelle (Zuni/Omaha) shared dance, songs, and storytelling with visitors last September.



The National Park Service was established in 1916 with the mandate to leave the parks "unimpaired" by human-influence.¹ Over the past 60 years or so, Rocky's previous leadership followed that guidance by removing lodges, gas stations, golf courses, and other vestiges of early tourism to restore park lands to a "natural state." That ambiguous term implies a landscape untouched by humans and overlooks the thousands of years of land stewardship by Indigenous Peoples, resulting in the exclusion of this history. In turn, the presence and history of Indigenous Peoples in Rocky have been lost and excluded. But today, Rocky's Indigenous Connections project is working to correct this erasure.

Since 2016 Rocky and partners from the University of Colorado Boulder have worked with Tribal Nations to document their histories, honor their ancestors, and recover their connection to the land. These first meetings became the foundation of the Indigenous Connections project, which seeks to build meaningful and trusting partnerships and collaborations with Tribes whose connections to Rocky have existed since time immemorial. The goal is to uncover the long presence of

Indigenous Peoples in the park and bring their histories and connections into the light through a collaborative process of knowledge sharing. It takes time and a variety of approaches to build trust and establish strong partnerships.

The Indigenous Connections project has led to the development of interpretative programs and staff training that include Indigenous histories and an awareness of contemporary Indigenous cultures through the creation of materials for publication, exhibit upgrades, and new cultural programs with Tribal members. The Indigenous Connections program will continue to build on this momentum but is only viable with the consistent collaborative partnerships between park staff and Tribal representatives and sustained financial support. The Conservancy has helped fund the Indigenous Connections project and looks forward to providing continuing support in 2025.

Historical Perspective

Old trails and game drives along with the remains of pottery and stone tools have been found throughout Rocky Mountain National Park. These physical materials provide insight into the daily lives of Rocky's First Peoples and enable archeologists to acknowledge the park's long human history. But this was not

always so. Although evidence for late Pleistocene-age humans existed in Europe (more than 12,000 years ago), early American archeologists continued to reject the possibility of finding such evidence, believing human presence in America was no older than four thousand years. It was an idea they clung to well into the 1920s despite mounting evidence that suggested otherwise.

In the early 1900s, George McJunkin, a Black cowhand in Folsom, New Mexico, discovered projectile points embedded in the skeletons of Pleistocene-age bison. Though the find went largely unacknowledged until the 1920s, it fundamentally changed the course of American archeology. Archeologists refocused their gaze on searching for more evidence of earlier inhabitants in the American West, and subsequent discoveries at Clovis, New Mexico, finally convinced the most reticent of archeologists that humans had in fact hunted animals and gathered plants on the North American continent for thousands of years, long before the arrival of settlers to the West.² Today, debate still continues over when humans first inhabited America.

As the American frontier pushed westward, a fascination with “vanishing cultures” began to emerge as archeologists headed West with expedition parties to survey newly acquired territories following the US-Mexican War of 1846-1848.³ As they traveled through the desert landscapes and Southern Plains, archeologists soon “discovered” abandoned cliff dwellings perched high on canyon walls and deserted pueblos along high flat mesas. Soon, news of their findings spread eastward, along with plundered ceremonial and sacred materials, cultural property, and the remains of Indigenous Ancestors. Private collectors and museum curators studied the materials before most of the materials and sacred remains were warehoused far away from their homelands.



Arapaho Elders Sherman Sage and Gun Griswold shared Indigenous history and place names during a 1914 expedition documented by Oliver Toll.

The era of collecting the American West was underway. Archeologists scrutinized and analyzed every unearthed fragment, seeking to unveil the stories of past civilizations – peoples they considered long vanished from the landscape before the arrival of Europeans in the Americas. Paradoxically, those stories already existed, passed down through generations of cultural memory sharing and storytelling. Intertwined with the contemporary experiences of Indigenous Peoples, these stories preserve connections to ancestors and homelands despite their removal to reservations. Today, culturally significant materials remain in the collections of museums and private collectors, and descendant communities continue to fight to repatriate their stolen cultural heritage and ancestors. Few cultural materials remain in place on the land, where they should remain in perpetuity.

Indigenous Connections at Rocky

The Estes Valley and Grand Lake areas are the ancestral lands of at least ten known Tribes, including the Hinono’ei (Arapaho), Tsistsistas (Cheyenne), and Nuu-ciu (Ute) Peoples, who have stewarded this land since time immemorial.⁴ Their ancestors traveled throughout the region following the cyclic rhythms of the seasons, moving higher in the summer and heading

down to the plains in winter where they hunted and gathered plants for food, medicinal purposes, and cultural practices. Their footprints are still visible to their descendants. Evidence of the importance of the Estes Valley and Grand Lake areas to Indigenous communities exists in names we use today, such as Kawuneeche, Onahu, or the Ute Trail, but other physical evidence, such as tipi rings, now lie drowned under Mary’s Lake in Estes Park and Lake Granby.

The forced and violent removal from and dispossession of their lands and final relocation to much smaller reservations hundreds of miles away removed freedoms of Indigenous Peoples to travel unhindered through the Estes Valley and mountains. Despite the distance between the reservations and their ancestral

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Scan this QR code
for NPS article:
“What if I Find an Artifact?”



Crew members and PWV mentors on the completed bridge. Crew members used materials from the site to build the bridge.



© Crew members and PWV Mentors on the completed bridge | Poudre Wilderness Volunteers Photo



Building Bridges to the Outdoors: Rocky Mountain Conservancy and Poudre Wilderness Volunteers Connect High School Students to Public Lands

*"Being outside
with kids can
change their
lives forever."*

— Sasha Godsil
HSLC Coordinator

HSLC coordinator Sasha Godsil wears sandals as her boots dry after working in Fish Creek.



© Poudre Wilderness Volunteers Photo

"The whole is greater than the sum of its parts" when it comes to the Rocky Mountain Conservancy and the Poudre Wilderness Volunteers (PWV) partnering to make the High School Leadership Corps, a positive, life-changing experience for some 14- to 17-year-old Colorado students.

The Conservancy's High School Leadership Corps (HSLC) is an 11-day immersive summer outdoor experience combining adventure, service, education, and personal growth. One of the highlights for the students—or one of their greatest challenges—is venturing into the backcountry with the Poudre Wilderness Volunteers on a multi-day backcountry work hitch.

The first cadre of the HSLC in June hiked into the Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forests on the Fish Creek Trail to establish camp and then worked several days constructing a bridge across the creek. The seasoned PWV mentors guided the students from sourcing the rocks and trees, sizing and milling the wood with hand tools, moving rocks and milled logs to form foundations, and bringing all the elements together to construct a safe and sturdy bridge for hikers.

"This is a totally new experience for the students," said Sasha Godsil, the Conservancy's HSLC field coordinator. "They were all out of their comfort zone, and for some, this was really their first time out in the mountains. On top of that, there was no cell service up there, no 'screens,' so they had to be with themselves and each other."

PWV's Mike Corbin supervised the Fish Creek bridge project and praised his young trail crew. "Everyone followed directions and were always cooperative," he reported. "I think everyone had a good time and the bridge came out great!"

Corbin's enthusiasm for working with volunteers and stewarding public lands is a reflection of the small, but highly effective PWV organization, a 501(c)3 nonprofit established in 1996.

"The driving factor in the creation of PWV was the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) slashing the number of ranger positions in 1995," said Jeff Randa, a member of the PWV's board of directors. "PWV began with about 25 people serving as volunteer rangers." The focus of PWV has expanded from patrolling trails and promoting education and safety



© Poudre Wilderness Volunteers Photo

All of the materials for the bridge were sourced from the immediate area. Here the crew moves the second log, weighing about 600 lbs, in place across the creek.

in the backcountry to assisting the Canyon Lakes Ranger District with trail maintenance and construction. PWV was critical to wildfire recovery following the High Park fire in 2012 and continues to restore trails following the 2020 Cameron Peak Fire, to date the largest wildfire in Colorado history.

“PWV is the largest all-volunteer organization by headcount serving the USFS and we’re generally not interested in significantly growing the organization,” said Randa. Instead, PWV seeks to maintain a natural ebb and flow of wilderness-loving volunteers who want to give back to the outdoors, as well as a core of highly experienced members with forestry or backcountry skill sets. PWV is proud that their volunteers, who range in age from 18 to 80, come from diverse backgrounds and walks of life.

Like the Conservancy, PWV also works to connect children and young people with nature and foster environmental awareness and respect through fun programs and direct experience. This shared goal of inspiring the next generation of land stewards makes collaboration with the HSLC program a natural fit.

By design, there are very few requirements for high school students to apply to the HSLC other than interest in getting out into nature. Participants receive full uniforms from the hats on their heads to the boots on their feet, \$400 stipends upon completion, use of gear, and the experience of backpacking and living in a tent in Rocky. By providing gear and uniforms, the Conservancy removes a major financial barrier to young people in getting outdoors and developing their love and knowledge of natural places.

The High School Leadership Corps is funded by donations, sales of the Rocky Mountain National Park Colorado license plate, and grants from the National Park Foundation and the WoodNext Foundation. To

support the HSLC and other educational programs for young people, visit RMConservancy.org and donate to the Best Use or Conservation Corps Funds. To learn more about or to support the PWV, visit www.pwv.org.

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RMConservancy.org/plate



By Walt Borneman, President,
Rocky Mountain Conservancy
Board of Directors

Perspectives on Planned Giving



Walt and Marlene Borneman

Marlene and I recently returned home from an out-of-state trip well past midnight. No matter the hour or where we have been, coming down the hill into Estes Park always evokes the same emotions: this is a wonderful place to call home. Marlene came to Estes Park in 1974 to work at the YMCA camp. I first climbed Longs Peak in 1977. Sometimes, we feel we can never give back enough for all that Rocky Mountain National Park and the surrounding communities have meant to us.

Over the years, Marlene and I have tried to make a difference and pay that debt by volunteering on service projects, teaching field institute courses, being a VIP (Volunteer in the Park) for Junior Rangers, Sled Dogs and Weed Warriors, and serving on the board of the Rocky Mountain Conservancy. Of course, we have also been long-time members and annual donors to the Conservancy.

Giving for us is a personal and private experience. I, for one, sometimes bristle at the term “planned giving.” While traditionally associated with estate gifts, all of us who support non-profit causes do some form of planned giving routinely through annual gifts, volunteer activities, and advocacy.

The Rocky Mountain Conservancy is low-key about asking for planned estate gifts. This is certainly not because they are not important to

fulfilling our mission. The Rocky Terraces workforce housing, for example, would not have been possible without several critical planned gifts, including one that totally surprised us.

We do not have a planned giving society that asks members to acknowledge they have made provisions for the Conservancy in their estate plans. We not only respect that this is a very personal decision, but also realize that the success of our many programs and projects is the best advertising

"All our donors make a difference. Whether you are a long-time or first-time donor, whether your contributions are large or small, sporadic, or annual, we could not fulfill our mission to protect and preserve Rocky Mountain National Park without you."

— Walt Borneman

possible to encourage support for our mission now and in the future.

There are so many needs among critically important causes that we all sometimes feel compelled to support many different organizations. As Marlene and I have planned our giving in recent years, we have tried to maximize our generosity by giving larger donations to fewer organizations. Obviously in our case, the Rocky Mountain Conservancy is at the top of the list, but we have prioritized our donations among our areas of interest and become a larger donor

to the top three or four choices.

Consolidated and focused, your dollars are likely to have a greater impact than smaller donations spread out. The Conservancy truly could not do many projects without the generosity of lead donors, and those donors who take a special interest in a particular program, such as the Conservation Corps, the park greenhouse, or accessible trails and boardwalks. How much more satisfying is it to you to know that something really could not be accomplished without your help to make it happen?

Planned giving sometimes conjures up the time-consuming—and let’s face it, the emotional burdens—of changing one’s will and estate plan. This certainly need not be the case. Planned giving is as simple as changing a beneficiary on a retirement account, adding a Paid-on-Death designation (POD) to a Certificate of Deposit (CD) or savings account, or giving instructions to the trustee of an existing donor-advised fund. I readily admit to being old enough where Required Minimum Distributions (RMDs) are a fact of financial life. The good news is that Qualified Charitable Distributions (QCDs) from Individual Retirement Accounts (IRAs) can be made directly to qualified charities and avoid taxes. If this is something you’re interested in pursuing, please consult your tax advisor for specifics.

The philanthropic gifts we choose to leave behind reflect the people, places, and values that hold the most meaning for us. Indeed, that’s why the Conservancy is so conscientious about directing donations to park needs that align with the donor’s interests.

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Judy Collins Serves as Rocky Mountain Conservancy Goodwill Ambassador



Legendary vocalist Judy Collins is teaming up with the Rocky Mountain Conservancy to celebrate Rocky Mountain National Park and highlight the need to protect and support this beloved landscape. As an honorary goodwill ambassador, Collins is lending her unique perspective and beautiful voice to the Conservancy's wide-ranging efforts to preserve Rocky and promote education on the park's many ecological and cultural wonders.

Judy wrote the following letter to thank the Conservancy donors.

I'm writing to thank you for your support of Rocky Mountain Conservancy. Rocky Mountain National Park is at the heart of my dreams and memories. A paradise, it is one of the most glorious places in the world, and a place where the wild and the beautiful live and stay. Here is my Rocky Mountain journey.

I'm a Colorado girl, raised in Denver. I've hiked Rocky's trails and walked those miles and experienced that beauty. For all of us—visitors and caretakers, nature, and animals—Rocky Mountain National Park is a refuge and a solace. The park has and will be there for you as well. We are all lucky to have walked there, dreamed there, slept there, and experienced the magnificence of dawn there.

When I was 18, Jim Bishop hired my husband, Peter, and me to run the Fern Lake Lodge. Jim held the concession agreement from the National Park Service. He showed us the ropes, and in July 1958, after the snow had melted from the trails, we put on 50-pound backpacks and hiked five miles to the lodge with its nine small cabins. There was no electricity or running water, but the kitchen had three wood-burning stoves.

For decades, tourists had climbed that same trail with their steamer trunks on mule-back and stayed—often a month at a time—through the winter cold and the summer heat. They wore wool and cotton; there were no puffy jackets and electric boot warmers back then. When Peter and I arrived, we were thrilled to be there, a once-in-a-lifetime experience I will never forget. By then, the era of rustic lodges within Rocky was nearing its end.

We had the lodge for three months, all to ourselves except for serving lunch to the dozens of hikers who rested on our porch, gazing over Fern Lake, and eating the homemade pies and sandwiches I prepared with a wood-burning stove. By the end of the summer, I would tell you that the best food in the world is made on a wood-burning stove—forget electricity!

We did fine by firelight and candlelight. Peter chopped the wood and carried the water down from the streams while I baked bread and pies. We slept in one of the little cabins with its featherbed and coal-burning stove. I was sleeping like a baby. It was heaven.

My family, parents and brothers

and sister, hiked up that summer. My father, Chuck, who was blind, made it admirably with only a long stick and my mother's guidance. After we served pies and sandwiches to our hikers, I would sit down with the guitar and sing, "This Land is Your Land."

What a gift that summer was: the friends we met and the lifetime of memories!

We tried to buy the lodge when that summer was over. We were the last keepers (of the human kind) to run Fern Lake Lodge; it was soon torn down as part of the effort to remove man-made structures in the park. For a commercial structure, the Fern Lake Lodge was heaven, unlike any other I've ever seen. I loved it. Many people had loved it. You would have loved it.

I hiked in the park and came back to Fern Lake many times over the years. Everything around the former lodge is still there—growing for the birds, for the red marten who came down to the lake to drink, for the wildlife everywhere, for the wild dreams every night.

Do yourself a favor and visit Rocky Mountain National Park every time you get the chance. You can dream as I do, and you will make memories as I have to treasure forever. Create your Rocky journey as I created mine. Thank you again for helping Rocky Mountain Conservancy protect and defend this incredible place so special to all of us.

— Judy Collins

Donate in honor of Judy, and we'll send her your personal note.





Answering “the call of nature” with Gem Lake Trail’s New Privy

“Beautiful” is not normally a word associated with “privy,” but visitors are certain to appreciate the new bathroom being installed on the popular Gem Lake trail on Lumpy Ridge.

The project, led by Rocky’s Facilities team with financial support from the Conservancy and donated time and expertise from students and faculty from the University of Colorado Denver’s Colorado Building Workshop (CBW), was to design, fabricate, and install a replacement privy at Gem Lake. The challenge was for this privy to be safe, accessible, and durable; blend into the surroundings; use materials available from the site;

We hope our students will make giving back to their communities a part of their own practices.”

— Rick Sommerfeld,
CU-Denver

and incorporate a modern waste collection system.

While the park and visitors will enjoy tangible benefits of the new privy, CU-Denver’s architecture and planning students also benefit in the learning experience and the ethos, said Rick Sommerfeld, faculty liaison for the project.



New privy in place on Gem Lake Trail.

“We hope our students will make giving back to their communities a part of their own practices,” he said. “In the meantime, they get to see how ideas manifest in an actual building. And for many of the students, this may be their first opportunity to envision and physically construct a facility in a natural setting.”

The project began with CBW accepting the task with the desired outcomes

and brainstorming solutions. “We wanted to see what we could do with dead-standing beetle-kill wood in the park,” said Sommerfeld. “Our process is to then provide up to three options, get feedback, and build a mockup.” Interestingly, the beetle-kill wood that was used for the building’s cladding was salvaged from an area of the park that burned in the East Troublesome Fire that swept through Rocky in 2020.

After park officials checked out and approved the CBW mockup, it was disassembled and transported to Estes Park, and from there moved

up the trail using park horses and mules. The on-site installation began in June. When complete, the privy will incorporate a urine diversion system which should decrease the number of trips required by the park’s wilderness crews and llamas to service the privy. The system also makes for a waste product that is safer for wilderness crews to remove and haul.



Gorgeous view from inside the privy.

Prior partnerships with the park resulted in new privies along the busy Longs Peak trail, which incorporate rock found in the area in the construction to blend into the above-tree line environment. Future collaboration may include ideas and designs to replace aging trailhead signage with models that are more durable, sustainable, and flexible to reduce lifecycle costs and reduce “sign clutter.”



Rocky Mountain Conservancy Park Puzzler

Across

1. The Continental Divide Research Learning Center is based at this historic ranch.
3. The common name for *Rosa acicularis*.
5. This lake in the Wild Basin area is named after a fruit.
9. A well-known geographic feature along the Fern Lake Trail.
10. Scientists in Rocky study this chemical biproduct of agricultural and industrial operations to track the effects of air pollution in the high country.
14. The name of this exotic-looking amphibian of Rocky Mountain National Park is inspired by its bold stripes like those found on large African cats.
15. A pass across the Continental Divide along Trail Ridge Road.
17. This lake is the largest natural body of water in Colorado.

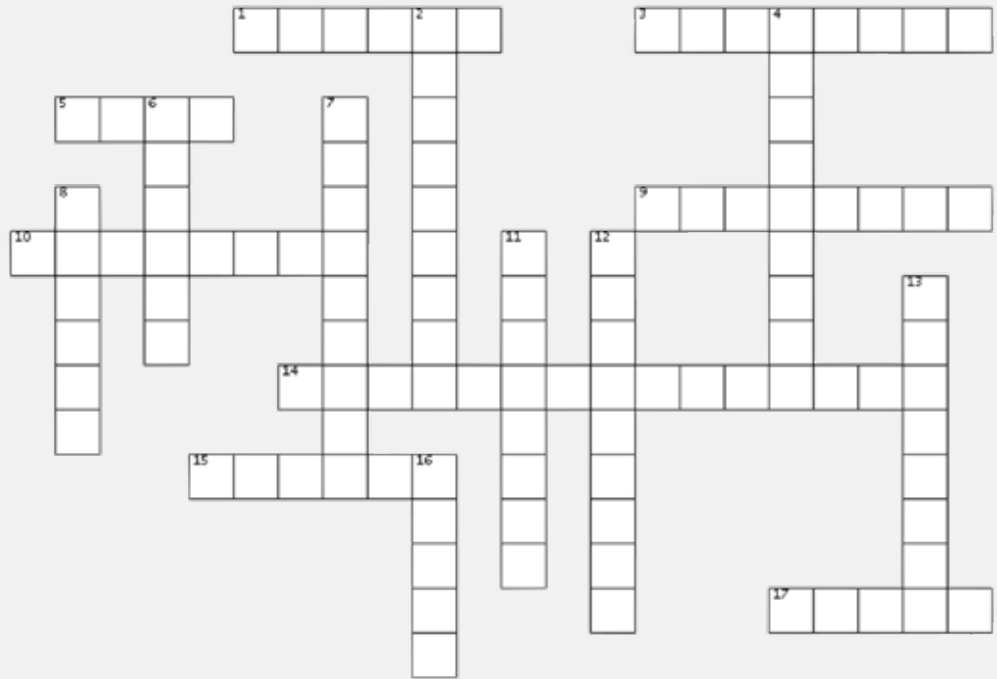


Park and CBW team members with the mockup of the privy before it was moved to Rocky.

Down

2. "Beacon Park" at Hidden Valley is an area for winter recreationists to test or train to use transceivers which are safety equipment for this alpine danger.
4. Along with Lulu City, this abandoned mining community was established in the late 1870s.
6. First name of the renowned western artist for whom Bierstadt Lake and Bierstadt Mountain are named.
7. The zone beneath the snow where small mammals live during the winter.
8. An amphitheater-like valley formed by glacial erosion.

11. Equine footwear or the name of one of the most popular valleys on the park's east side.
12. This park is a relaxing picnic spot along the Bear Lake Road with views of the Mill Creek Basin.
13. The surname of sisters Kitty and Annie who homesteaded in the late 1880's in the Kawuneeche Valley.
16. The national forest that borders Rocky Mountain National Park to the north and west.



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Rocky Terraces

Continued from page 1



Seasonal staff enjoy the furnished decks of Rocky Terraces.

taken the lead in confronting an issue facing every national park gateway community in the west,” said Conservancy Board President Walt Borneman. “The Conservancy recognized a need, and through the generosity of several large donors and the support of many of our other donors and members, we brought this vision to fruition.”

“Attracting the best and brightest talent to conduct research and educational programs in the park is core to the mission of Rocky Mountain Conservancy,” added Charles Cofas, Conservancy board vice president and chairman of the facilities committee. “Constructing this housing is the single largest project ever undertaken by the Conservancy and will enhance the Conservancy’s direct support to the park.”

Kathryn Conley, a field coordinator for the Conservancy’s Conservation Corps, was one of the first residents, moving into a private bedroom just hours after Larimer County issued the temporary certificate of occupancy. “I’ve spent plenty of time living in tents and out of the back of my Subaru, so I was happily surprised

by the quality and convenience of the units,” Conley said. She also appreciates being able to take walks or trail runs alongside the nearby Big Thompson River.

Housemate and Conservation Corps crew leader Emily Dewing is equally enthusiastic and says seeing the units for the first time was “the shock of a lifetime.”

“I’ve never lived in such a nice place,” Dewing said. “It’s super convenient and I’m able to walk to work.” The duplexes have fully furnished living rooms, kitchens, decks, and laundry rooms. Each bedroom includes a full-size bed, dresser, nightstand, and closet. The complex includes garage and off-street parking, and one unit includes accessibility modifications for team members with disabilities.

Rooms are available for National Park Service seasonal staff to rent

as well. The proximity to the park is particularly helpful for park staff who assist with search and rescue operations.

Rocky Terraces is not the Conservancy’s first collaboration with the park on housing. In 2018, the Conservancy funded the work of the Larimer County Conservation Corps to complete the interiors of two new park dormitories which added a total of eight bedrooms and 16 beds to the housing inventory.

Conservancy Executive Director Estee Rivera said, “Rocky Terraces is an exciting milestone for the Conservancy, knowing that talented and passionate candidates can accept jobs and fellowships critical to supporting the park and the Conservancy. In the past, too many exceptional candidates had to withdraw from these life-changing opportunities because of the lack of suitable housing.”

Rocky Terraces was designed by Steve Lane of Bas1s Architecture and constructed by Kinley Built of Estes Park.



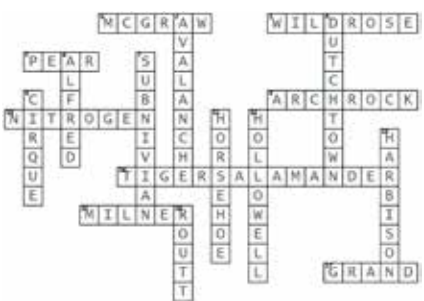
Planned Giving

Continued from page 8

While we always welcome gifts designated “for best use,” hikers may want to support trails, teachers may want to support Rocky’s education and outreach, and wildlife lovers may want to fund research or habitat restoration. But here’s a thought for you: if your financial situation allows, consider making your “legacy gift” now, while you can physically see or experience the impact of your philanthropy. The couple that funded this winter’s Rocky Mountain National Park Biennial Research Conference attended the event and was able to see firsthand the impact of their donation on research and collaboration in the park!

All our donors make a difference. Whether you are a long-time or first-time donor, whether your contributions are large or small, sporadic or annual, we could not fulfill our mission to protect and preserve Rocky Mountain National Park without you. Together we have shared many successes over the years, from Conservation Corps trail work to critical land acquisitions and life-changing education programs. But the challenges facing Rocky are growing. We need you now more than ever. However you choose to contribute personally, we thank you for your support!

Park Puzzler Solution



Indigenous Connections

Continued from page 5

lands, connections to the land remain in the Indigenous Knowledge passed down from generation to generation and in the histories and stories shared through cultural practices. However, many Tribal Nations lack the finances or transportation to journey home to the Rocky Mountains. Today, with the Conservancy’s support of the Indigenous Connections project, tribal consultations between park leaders and leaders of the various Tribal Nations connected to the park are now taking place on their ancestral lands.

This year, the Conservancy has provided over \$95,000 to the Indigenous Connections program. Mikayla Costales, the Indigenous Connections coordinator, works with the park’s east district supervisor, Ranger Jeremiah RisingBuffalo Maybee, to carry out a variety of interpretative projects for the park. Working with Tribal partners, park staff are creating new Indigenous content for the Junior Ranger program and adding a contextual preface to the 1914 Oliver Toll book *Arapaho Names and Trails: A Report of a 1914 Pack Trip*. This text details a trip with Hinono’ei Elders, Gun Griswold and Sherman Sage from the Wind River Reservation in Wyoming, through Estes Valley and over the mountains into Grand Lake and the surrounding area. These initiatives are also supported by the Susan S. Martin Charitable Giving Fund and a National Park Foundation grant for inclusive storytelling.

With support from the Conservancy, Costales will also work with the University of Colorado to develop online and print training modules using updated and accurate Tribal narratives and incorporating contemporary Native themes. The Conservancy also funds a seasonal cultural anthropologist who assists with the identification, evaluation, and management of ethnographic resources which includes both natural and cultural resources. In addition, the Conservancy funds an



archeologist who works with the park’s trails team to identify and protect significant cultural resources during trail repair activities.

With help from the Susan S. Martin Charitable Giving Fund, in 2025, the Conservancy will further fund the Indigenous Connections project, Tribal consultations, and archeological and ethnographic studies. Rocky Mountain Conservancy and the park understand the importance of respectfully engaging Tribal Nations in a process that builds and strengthens relationships with a goal of providing space where all can learn from Indigenous Knowledge and Indigenous histories. Through Tribal consultation and engagement with Indigenous communities, we can all “acknowledge and grow from difficult histories.”

1 Richard West Sellars, *Preserving Nature in the National Parks: A History*. Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 2009 Edition: pg. 38.

2 Stephen H. Lekson, *A History of the Ancient Southwest*, SAR Press: Santa Fe, New Mexico, 2008: pg. 27.

3 Kate Elliott, *Framing First Contact: From Catlin to Russell*, University of Oklahoma Press, Norman, 2020.

4 Each Ute Tribe may have a different spelling.

Scan this QR code to learn more about ancestrally connected Tribal communities at Rocky.





Rocky Mountain Conservancy

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Dick Orleans captured this portrait of a ram at rest. Dick was well known around the Estes Valley as a nature lover, photographer, and musician before his unexpected passing 10 years ago. Dick's family kindly donated many of his nature images to the Conservancy in support of our outreach and education efforts.

Visit RMConservancy.org
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Nature Notes

• On the evening of May 10th and early morning of May 11th, the northern lights made a rare and special appearance across much of the U.S., including Rocky. For **Molly Cross**, it was, "A night of many colors in Rocky Mountain National Park that will forever have a special place in my heart and be a favorite moment in my life. What a wonderful dream come true!"

• **Kit Mulligan** said she captured a "once-in-a-lifetime" photograph of the northern lights from the Sheep Lakes parking lot and was surprised by the amount of ambient light the aurora created. Earlier that evening, in Moraine Park, after a low ground fog moved in, she said everything in the valley suddenly appeared to take on a deep red color.

• **Amber Sovorsky** said the colors were especially vivid after midnight when "the color and pulsing were visible to the naked eye."

• **Dr. Joey Achacoso** took this dramatic photo of the red lights.

• This May, **Marlene Borneman** was delighted to find a very uncommon wildflower for Rocky, the small-flowered woodland star (*Lithophragma parviflorum*) in the Saxifrage family. It's a brilliant white

flower with distinctive petals cut into threes on a slender stem. Marlene said she looks for it every May, sometimes finding a dozen plants, but this year only two. Marlene and her husband, Conservancy Board President **Walt Borneman** enjoyed another treat in late May: seeing a male American goldfinch taking a break on their deck railing.

• On the west side of the park, **Jay and Karen Christopher** enjoyed a Memorial Weekend surprise, watching a mama moose and her newborn calf over the course of three days in the Wind River area. They were amazed how quickly the calf transitioned from barely being able to walk to trotting.

• **Evans Komen** and daughters **Shannon** and **Clare** recently enjoyed a beautiful picnic at Sprague Lake. Mom, **Kelly**, who took this photo said "it's my family's favorite version of 'eating out!'"

When was the last time you picnicked in the park?

• And finally, good news on the beaver front. At a recent park-wide training day, staff members reported beaver sightings and signs of beaver activity in Moraine Park and Horseshoe Park. Conservancy intern **Chiara Brady** saw both a beaver and a muskrat when she was fishing in the Moraine Park area.

